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Stained glass at Auroville solar kitchen. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)

Life Divine Study Guide



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Sri Aurobindo at work. (Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram)



About *The Life Divine* and *The Life Divine Study Guide*

by David Hutchinson



David Hutchinson.
(Photo by Vishnu
Eschner)

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About SAA: The primary purpose of SAA is to distribute information about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and Auroville and to support various projects related to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville, and Integral Yoga activities in America. Current officers: Theresa Boschert, executive coordinator; Vishnubhai Eschner, secretary; Kalpana Patel, treasurer; David Hutchinson, Lynda Lester, Bhuvana Nandakumar, board members.

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Sri Aurobindo wrote *The Life Divine* over the seven-year period of the journal *Arya*, from 1914–1920. In the *Arya* were serialized many of his works, including *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Upanishads*, and *The Secret of the Veda*. Later he made significant revisions, most notably to the final chapters which deal with the evolution of consciousness, higher ranges of consciousness, and the gnostic being.

One of the best introductions to *The Life Divine* can be found in *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography* by Peter Heehs. With dry wit, Peter notes the paradox of a major work in philosophy being written without the aid of thought, by a person who says he never was a philosopher. The true source, he points out, was Sri Aurobindo's own experience in higher ranges of consciousness, rather than a mere intellectual statement of ideas.

A close reading of *The Life Divine* can radically change your entire perspective, yet it can be daunting, even heartbreaking. One of the joys and challenges of reading Sri Aurobindo is the sweep and depth of his thought, which, despite its exactitude, covers large ranges in a single paragraph or sentence. Because of this, it is a common experience for readers to finish a section of text in a state of expansive befuddlement.

The Life Divine Study Guide distills each paragraph into a single idea. This will hopefully assist readers in getting an overview, a sense of the flow of ideas through each chapter and the book, rather than getting lost in the glorious depths and heights of *The Life Divine*. The study guide cannot and should not substitute for reading the book itself, any more than reading can take the place of direct experience.

Anyone writing on the Integral Yoga has to face the imponderable question of capitalization, more specifically the abstruse, cryptic, and ultimately unique method that Sri Aurobindo used. Rather than spend a lifetime on the distinction between Nature and nature, or mind and Mind, I have cut this Gordian knot by simply capitalizing Sanskrit words and using lowercase for English words. Each of us will have to find the true Self alone; only the Guide, not a style guide, can point the way.

About the author

David Hutchinson is a long-time student and sadhak of the Integral Yoga. From the beginning, he has grappled with the philosophy and intellectual understanding of yoga, in addition to its practice, and he believes that a clear mental vision of the truth can open the mind to higher realities.

He was born in the early 1950s, and came of age during the tumultuous and world-changing era of the 1960s. After taking a degree in physics and working with children for a few years, he studied Indian philosophy and Sanskrit at the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco (CIAS). At CIAS he wrote his first paper on the yoga, as part of a tutorial on *The Synthesis of Yoga*. He then obtained a degree in nursing and turned to the practical work of health care, again working with children. With the emergence of the Internet and expanded means of communication and collaboration, he



moved to building, implementing, and training staff in clinical information systems.

David has written various articles about this yoga over the years, most of them published in the journal *Collaboration*. He has also published several books on medicine and the Internet.

His two great loves in the yoga have been *Savitri* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. In the early 1990s, he wrote a similar study guide for *Synthesis*, which is available online along with an electronic version of the *Life Divine Study Guide* at <http://www.collaboration.org>.

In addition to a local study group, his participation in the

collective life of the Integral Yoga has been primarily through the web and electronic forums. He helped to create the Miraura web site, and over the years has moderated several online discussion forums, including the general-purpose forum Auroconf, another on *Synthesis*, and a discontinued experimental study group on Integral Yoga. He is a current member and past president of the Sri Aurobindo Association.

David lives in Sacramento, California, with a red-haired wife and a calico cat, surrounded by medieval castles, the wonder of nature, the magic of consciousness, and the silence of the infinite.

*The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real.
The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and
eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss.*

—Sri Aurobindo, from a letter, *The Life Divine: Abridgement, Book One*,
ed. Satya Bose (Calcutta: Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, 1976), p. vii.

Where to purchase *The Life Divine*

The Life Divine, along with other books by Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, and books on the Integral Yoga, can be obtained from the following distributors.

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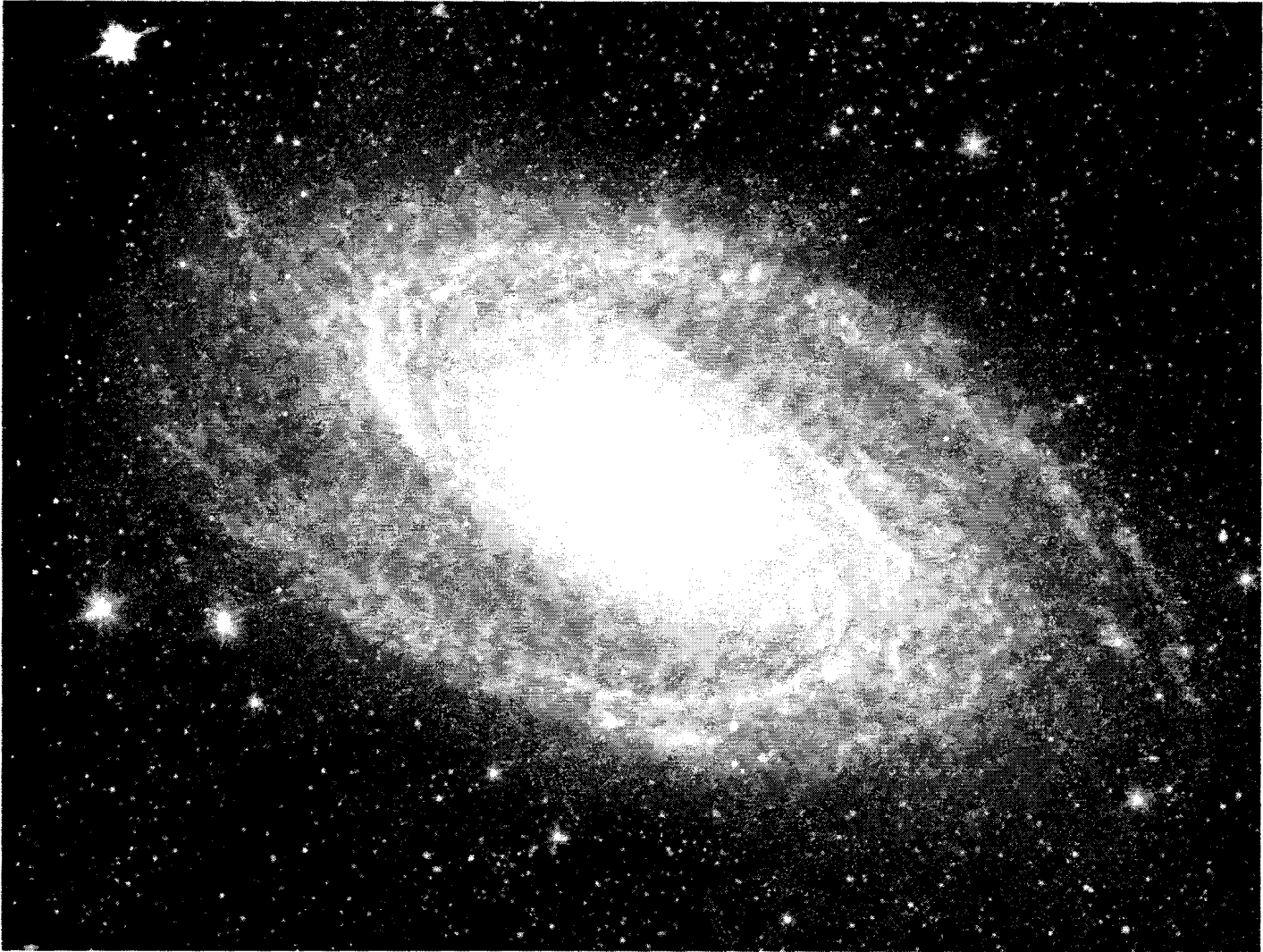
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Sri Aurobindo's Life Divine: A Study Guide

Book One: Omnipresent Reality and the Universe

Chapter 1: The Human Aspiration Impulse toward perfection.

Impulse

- Impulse toward perfection, truth, bliss, light immortality.
- Contradicted by normal experience.

Harmony

- But all problems are of harmony. The greater the disorder, the greater the spur.

Emergence of consciousness

- The impulse is part of a series of consciousness emerging.

Chapter 2: The Two Negations— The Materialist Denial

The materialist negation denies spirit, and affirms that only matter or force is real.

Reconciliation needed

- Mind must seek reconciliation between spirit and matter.
- It needs to test each assertion separately.



- The materialist asserts that senses are the sole means of knowledge.
 - *This argument convicts itself of insufficiency.*
 - *But is useful sometimes to correct errors by restraint of sensible fact.*

Knowledge, agnosticism

- A kind of agnosticism (all form as symbol) is the final truth of all knowledge.
- The core of materialism is the search for knowledge.
 - *Knowledge by whatever path tends to become one.*

Energy, force, will

- Matter expresses itself eventually as energy, force.
- And mind, life will be found also to be that one energy in three forms.
- Energy is will, will is consciousness applying itself to a result.
- And its will in humanity is unending life, knowledge, power.

Chapter 3: The Two Negations— The Refusal of the Ascetic

The ascetic insists on pure spirit as the sole reality, free from change, death.

Suprasensible reality

- A consciousness transcendent of the universe is attainable.
- Realities that are supra-sensible are borne out by evidence and experience.
 - *Though they are still imperfectly or crudely re-searched.*
 - *Denial can only be by a mind shut in the brilliant shell of the (materialist) past.*
- The question whether reality exists outside of the observer is crucial to the goal and efforts that we apply.
- Both the materialist and the ascetic, at the extreme, arrive at the insignificance of the individual and the purposelessness of human existence.

Cosmic consciousness

- Only through extension of field or instruments of consciousness can the quarrel be decided.
 - *The extension must be inner enlargement into the cosmic existence.*
- Cosmic consciousness is real to those who have had contact with it.
 - *The world is also real to it, but real because it exists only in consciousness.*
 - *Yet this conscious being is more than the universe.*

Transcendent consciousness

- Transcendent consciousness can bring a rejection of existence.

- *When the mind arrives here without intermediate transition, the world seems unreal.*
- *This sense has dominated the Indian mind since Buddhism.*
- We seek a larger affirmation: both “One without a second” and “All this is Brahman”

Chapter 4: Reality Omnipresent

World and non-being are affirmations of omnipresent reality.

Reconciliation between spirit and matter is needed

- Must find a truth that reconciles claim of both freedom of spirit and matter as the mold.
- Reconciliation proceeds by mutual comprehension, leading to oneness.
- This takes place in cosmic consciousness.
- Can perceive the possibility of a divine life in the world.
- Silent and active self, Brahman, must also be reconciled, harmonized.

Negation of the non-being, Nihil

- Is really a something beyond positive mental conception.
- Non-being is the affirmation of freedom from cosmic existence.
- This denies limitation, not existence itself.
- It is a result of narrowness of experience and concentration.

Reconciliation

- Affirmations are either assertions of status or of freedom from status.
- Positive basis of the reality admits all things as the one Brahman.
- World is originated in the reality, made of that reality.
- Omnipresent reality and non-being are different states or affirmations of the reality.

Chapter 5: The Destiny of the Individual

Liberation of the individual is the keynote of the definitive divine action.

Omnipresent reality

- Omnipresent reality is the truth of all life.
 - *It is an indefinable or unknowable that appears in many states.*
 - *Source of the teaching that one must know God equally, everywhere, without distinction.*
- The truth of the two extreme points of view.
 - *In the world of form, nothing is valid until it has possessed the physical consciousness.*
 - *Also true that form and matter asserting themselves as self-existent reality are an illusion.*



- True rule of self-realization is a progressive comprehension.

Individual and universe

- Individual activities are consistent with cosmic, transcendent, and supracosmic consciousness.
- The individual is a center of the universal; the individual is necessary to the action of the transcendent.
- Individual salvation has no sense if existence is an illusion.

Solution

- Must put aside the antinomy between self and world.
- Self-formative power of reality, Maya.
 - *Makes a scheme of itself in cosmos, using complementary terms of unity and multiplicity.*
 - *Also establishes the three terms of subconscious, conscient, supraconscient.*
- Ego is the superficial point at which awareness of unity emerges.
- Liberation of the individual is keynote of the definitive divine action.
 - *Divine soul reproduces itself in other souls, by a lateral unity.*

Chapter 6: Man in the Universe

Universe and individual are necessary to each other, and the conditions of the universe provide the means for our progress.

Meaning of the universe

- The meaning of the universe is a progressive revelation of a great, transcendent, luminous reality.
- Ascent to this is the real human task and journey.
- Reality is declared to be Sacchidananda: infinite self-conscious existence and bliss.

Universe and individual

- Universe and individual are two essential appearances through which the reality has to be approached.
- Ascent and revelation are necessarily progressive.
- Universe and individual are necessary to each other.
- Universe is a diffusion of the Divine all, individual is its concentration within limits.
- By means of the universe, the individual is compelled to realize himself.
 - *We must necessarily universalize and impersonalize.*

Universe comes to individual as life

- Mind, thinker, mental man, soul in mind is the middle term.
- Affirmation of something greater is basis of divine life.

Opposites (death, error, etc.)

- Is the result of a wrong relation.
- Are the conditions of progress.

- We cross over death by means of the ignorance.
- If they are the manifestation of a divine reality, then transmutation becomes conceivable.

Chapter 7: The Ego and the Dualities

Dualities (pain, etc.) are the first inevitable outcome of the attempt to realize unity through the self-limitation of the ego.

Present consciousness

- If all is Sacchidananda, then dualities are creations of a distorting consciousness.
- Dualities are not applicable to something transcendent of the forms.
- We must first realize that the terms of duality are not the only ones possible, or not complete.
 - *States of consciousness exist in which death is a change in immortal life.*
 - *Sense values hold good in their field, and can be accepted until a larger harmony is ready.*
 - *A basis of knowledge is necessary when substituting the egoistic for the truth, that the Divine is itself the center.*

Transition to higher consciousness

- Difficult for mind to conceive of higher existence.
 - *We see it as the absolute of our positive concepts.*
- Reason errs by excessive subjection to apparent fact.
- We seek to eliminate pain, etc., but because we envisage only external causes, we don't see the possibility.

Solution: Brahman as Sacchidananda

- Solution is the experience of Brahman universal and as Sacchidananda.
 - *All life is the movement of a universal and immortal existence.*
 - *Ego is a temporary self-limitation, a willed ignorance.*
 - *By eliminating ego-determined reactions, true values emerge.*

Chapter 8: The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge

Vedanta starts from reason but uses intuition as the final authority, in order to know truths that are beyond ordinary experience.

Senses and reason

- Question: how does Sacchidananda work in the world, and what relation does it have with the ego?
- Divine existence is reached by going beyond senses.
- First instrument to do this is the reason.



- Pure reason is not fully satisfying, because we want to experience things as well as conceive of them.
- Psychological experience can also be pure, when we seek to be aware of our self as subject.
- Mind is accustomed to depending on the senses, which is why it is in sleep that the subliminal mind is liberated.
- Sense-powers and inner senses can be developed in themselves.

Awareness of truths beyond phenomena

- Experience of truths beyond senses requires something else, however.
- Intuition is the common property between subconscious and superconscious.
- The foundation of intuition is knowledge by identity.
- The concept of Brahman, pure existence, is beyond ordinary experience.
- Intuition is always behind reason, but it cannot give an ordered and articulated form until it is organized in our surface being.
 - *This is why the age of intuitive knowledge had to be followed by the age of reason.*
- Indian philosophers started from reason, but used intuition as the final test and authority.

Chapter 9: The Pure Existent

The pure existence can be known by identity, intuition, but not by thought.

Our perception of things

- Looking at one aspect or another, we make the illusion of quality, or quantity, or size.
- That makes one thing greater than another.
- The first reckoning we have to make is between this all and ourselves.
 - *It must be infinitely important to us, as we are to it.*
- To do this, we have to know it.

The pure existent

- It must be infinite, since reason, experience, imagination point to no end.
- Even eternity, infinity are categories or symbols of the reason.
- It is indefinable.
- A pure absolute, it is not summed in quantity, qualities, forms.
- It can be known by identity, through intuition, though not by thought.
- Movement, energy is a fact, like the pure existent.

Chapter 10: Conscious Force

The existent is also a self-aware force of consciousness, Chit.

Indian description of matter and force

- All phenomenon resolves itself into a force.
- Matter is the most intelligible to the mind/brain.
- Indian physicists resolved matter into a presentation of force in five states; Sankhya added two non-material principles, Mahat and Ahankara, to explain conscious sensation.
- Modern science also concludes that the world arises from an action, force of some sort.
- How did it arise? Indian mind says that force is inherent in existence, so question does not arise.
- If existence is conscious being, then the question arises, why manifest, why not remain concentrated in itself?

Relation between force and consciousness

- So, what is the relation between force and consciousness?
- We must first realize that consciousness is wider than waking awareness.
- Contrary to materialistic notions, the physical organs of thought are habitual instruments, but not the generators.

Consequences of consciousness not being dependent upon physical organs

- A universal subconscient may be in everything
- A superconscient exists beyond our normal range.
- There are submental forms of consciousness (vital, physical) in ourselves, in the plant and animal, even in matter.
- "Consciousness" then becomes a self-aware force of existence of which mentality is the middle term.
 - *Which is the Indian conception of Chit, conscious energy.*
- This is supported by the evidence of purposefulness throughout nature.

Chapter 11: Delight of Existence— The Problem

If delight is the nature of existence, how can pain exist?

Absolute delight

- The question is: why Brahman, perfect, needing nothing, would throw out this force of consciousness?
- Can only be for one reason: delight.
- All absoluteness is pure delight; there can be no negation of delight in it.
- So what has thrown itself out is Sacchidananda, existence-consciousness-bliss.
- All things are terms of that force, delight, existence.



Problem of pain and evil

- Why are pain and grief present at all?

Ethical problem of pain

- Secondary problem: how can this conscious being have allowed pain?
- The question only arises if God is extracosmic, outside the universe.
- So real problem is how the infinite admits into itself that which is not bliss.
- Half of the problem disappears if it is the question of cruelty to others, because all is Brahman.
- World itself is not ethical; ethics is a stage in evolution; animal below is infra-ethical, and beyond humanity may be supra-ethical.

Problem of pain

- Delight is different from sensational pleasure, just as consciousness is different from waking awareness.
- Universal, this delight is not dependent upon particular causes.

- When we are in harmony with universe, the utility of pain ceases.
- Pain and pleasure are actually currents of delight, of Rasa.
- Art and poetry enable us to approach a universal appreciation, Rasa, even for the sorrowful or the terrible.
- Elimination of suffering first comes through facing and enduring the shocks of existence.
- The reason for this movement lies in the variable realization of delight in its possibilities.
- Delight loses itself in insensible matter and emerges first as the discordant rhythm of pain/pleasure, then into the unity of Sacchidananda.

Chapter 12: Delight of Existence— The Solution

Delight is at the root of all experiences, hidden behind our superficial responses.

- The essential delight is normally hidden, subconscious, to our ordinary self.

Relation of the eternal to the play of existence.

- From the aspect of Sat in the surface consciousness, the world appears as Maya.
- From the aspect of force of consciousness, the world appears as Prakriti.
- From the aspect of delight, the world appears as Lila.
- Since delight is the root, it must be one conscious being behind all our experiences.
- And our experiences are imperfect responses, first divided rhythms or reactions.

Consequences of delight as the root

- Pain, pleasure is a superficial arrangement, behind which is a profounder response.
- By living within we can perceive this.
- Pain and pleasure, being superficial, are merely habit, are not inevitable.
- This freedom is easier to experience in mind than in body or nerves.
- But also seen in the physical in periods of exaltation, hypnosis.
- Pain is nature's device to assist a limited being in meeting the shocks of existence.



The Mother. (Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram)



Chapter 13: The Divine Maya

The power of the self-existence to measure out and order itself is the higher Maya. At the level of mind, this is seen as a lower Maya.

Overview of the world process

- Existence is the self-manifestation and action by the power of its pure delight of conscious being.
- So all things seek to arrive at their intended form, consciousness, power, delight.
- Goal is completeness of self-existence, delight, power, consciousness.
- This goal is only possible in the infinite consciousness, not the individual.
- Thus, first there is an involution for the purpose of variation, then emergence of self-imprisoned force, then release into the infinite.

How the reality has turned into this phenomenal world

- There seems to be a law, development of past energy, which is a self-determining power in universal consciousness to perceive or direct a certain truth or force of creation.
- Infinite consciousness produces only infinite results; to have a fixed truth requires a selective faculty.
- Vedic seers called this Maya, the power of infinite consciousness to measure out, delimit name and shape, become ordered.

Lower and higher Maya

- Mental illusion of Maya, the deluding Maya, is that each being is separate.
- Illusionistic philosophies missed the distinction between lower and higher Maya.
- See mind as the creator of the world.
- Integral view is that the creative conscious-force is the real-idea, a power born of real being, reality throwing itself into forms of its own substance.
- This explains the instinctive aspiration in the mental being toward perfectibility, and the surge beyond to the transcendent.

Characteristics of mind

- Mind is the faculty which interprets truth for practical uses. It is not a faculty of knowledge itself.
- Mind is a reflective mirror, receiving and representing images of pre-existent truth.
- Even an infinite mind of this character would only result in illusionism or nihilism.
- If we suppose mind as we know it is the highest force in the universe, this would be the only wisdom.
- As long as we work with the mind, we can only infer the immanent truth.



Chapter 14: The Supermind as Creator

Supermind is the intermediary creatrix between the one and the divided many. It puts forth forms out of its own substance.

General description

- The creatrix supermind is accessible on the heights of our own being; it is not inaccessible.
- Mind is a development by limitation out of the supermind, and therefore can resolve itself back into the supermind by expansion.
- The Vedas describe it as vast all-comprehensiveness; luminous truth and harmony; truth of law and act.
- It has two primary faculties: sight and hearing, reflected in mental faculties of revelation and inspiration.
- Supermind is the intermediary between the eternal and immutable one, and the flux of things.
- So it is the beginning and end of all creation.

Problem of how the world can be created at all

- For the one, the division into a trinity of existence, consciousness, bliss is inadmissible; but the mind can conceive divisions as real.
- Mind is a preparatory form of consciousness, which removes the difficulty it has with unity.
- Supermind differentiates, manifests, but does not divide.
- This carries with it the other powers of involution, envelopment, making implicit.



Process of creation

- Real-idea puts forth principles, forces, forms which have the rest of existence implicit within them.
- So each thing implies infinite possibilities, but is kept to one process by the will and knowledge-force of the conscious being.
- For the real-idea, all being is a vibration of itself.
- In supermind, being gives the effect of substance; consciousness gives the effect of knowledge; will gives the effect of force.
- In supermind, substance, knowledge, and force are not differentiated or separate.

Chapter 15: The Supreme Truth-Consciousness

The supermind is a cosmic vision and a power of projecting concentration, everywhere present as an ordering self-knowledge.

Supermind and the divisions of time and space

- Supermind is the Divine as creator, not as absolute.
- It is everywhere present as an ordering self-knowledge, holding all together in a general determining harmony, the source of law in the world.
- The development of the world according to a truth of its own being implies the succession of time, relation in space, and interaction of things by causality.
- To consciousness higher than mind, time may be an eternal present, and space a subjective, indivisible extension.
- Supermind embraces and unifies the successions of time and the divisions of space.
- Because different forms are embodied, placed in space/time, they appear to struggle with each other to work out.
- But this is only because we see each thing separately in itself, rather than what the supermind sees, the ever-developing harmony.
- Each thing is governed by an indwelling vision and power, which is inconscient to us but not to itself.

First principle of supermind: cosmic vision

- First principle of supermind is that it is a cosmic, comprehensive, all-pervasive vision, where the knower/known/knowledge are fundamentally one.
- Mind can understand this unity, but cannot make it the practical basis of action.
- Divine as will does not guide, but consummates itself in the world.
- To get rid of the error of the analytic mind, we must insist on this truth of the supermind containing multiplicity without losing its own unity.

- To the supermind there is no independent center, no separate ego; each thing contains an equal pervasive concentration of the Divine.

Second principle of supermind: projecting, concentration

- Second principle of supermind is the creative power of a projecting, concentrating in which knowledge stands back and observes its works.
- Results in the soul observing himself in other forms from the artificial and practical center.
- Pursued farther, this becomes the false unity of the ego, Avidya.
- The real change has been an unequal concentration of consciousness and force.

Chapter 16: The Triple Status of Supermind

Supermind takes a triple status in its role as the intermediary between the absolute Sacchidananda and the separate mind. The triple status is: 1) equal self-extension, 2) individual Divine, Jivatman, 3) Divine projected into existence, the psychic.

Supermind as intermediary

- Mind and the unity of Sacchidananda seem to be opposite entities, one of which must be abolished for the other to be enjoyed.
- The solution must be an intermediate link that can establish a relation between them. That link is the truth-consciousness, the supermind.
- The link is a logical necessity if Sacchidananda is timeless/spaceless absolute, but the world is an extension in time and space and causality.
- Supermind is Sacchidananda in the aspect of cosmic creation, with knowledge and will as the forms that the power takes.
- This conscious being must be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent; for nothing is external to it.
- It is not limited to one form or poise, and in fact has three general poises.

Three poises of the divine consciousness

- First is the equal self-extension, all-comprehending, all-constituting, without individuation. This is the universal Divine.
- Second is the Divine realizing itself in each form, the same essence. This is the individual Divine or Jivatman.
- Third is the Divine projecting itself into the movement, involved in it. [This is the psychic being that evolves.] This is a sort of dualism in unity.



Chapter 17: The Divine Soul

The divine soul in itself, not descended into the ignorance.

- What would be the existence of a divine soul, not descended into the ignorance?
- It would always be in the immortal, unlimited, pure play of Sacchidananda.
- It would not be limited by any poise or status.
- It would live eternally in the presence of the absolute.
- It would live simultaneously in the absolute and the many.
- It would be aware of all variation as an extension of itself.
- It would be aware of three grades of the supramental existence: all things as the self; all things in the self; and the self in all things.
- It would be capable of returning to any poise or center.
- It would have the delight of variable relation of self with self, form with form.
- Death to it would be a rest, transition, holding back of the eternal being.

Chapter 18: Mind and Supermind

The fundamental error of mind (Avidya), lies in conceiving of things as separate. This is the final stage of the apprehending movement, Prajnana, of the supermind.

The question: what are the supreme sources of mind, life, body?

- Supermind as it has been described so far does not seem to have any relation to our current mind and body.
- What are the connections between Sacchidananda and supermind, with body, life, and mind?
- All that we call undivine can only be a play of these four divine principles.
- So it is probable that mind, body, life must be capable of divinity; they must have pure forms in the divine truth.
- Then it must be possible to manifest the Divine in mind and body. The internal has already been done.
- What are mind, life, body in their supreme sources?

Divine sources of mind, life, body

- Essential characteristic of mind is that it measures, limits, cuts out forms.
- Therefore it cannot possess the infinite; it can only be possessed by it.
- The role of mind is to translate infinity into the terms of the finite.
- The divine mind makes the apprehending movement, Prajnana, a subordinate action of the supermind. It makes the fundamental division of Purusha and Prakriti, conscious-soul and nature-soul/creation.

- Finally it inhabits every form.
- 1) The one extends itself in conceptual time/space; 2) it translates itself into the multiplicity of a conscious soul; 3) it translates the multiplicity of soul-forms into divided habitations, actively identifying with each.

Avidya

- The self-ignoring faculty which separates action of mind from supermind is Avidya. This action of conscious force separates mind from the universal.
- Avidya proceeds from the exclusive concentration, self-identification of consciousness with a particular state and form.
- It then has to recover the rest by linking the succession of moments, points.

Physical, life, mental mind

- This ignorance is deepened by the identification, absorption in the physical workings of the body. This is the physical mind.
- There is a life mind beyond this absorption, but it is still subject to the original ignorance.
- There is also a pure mentality, which can be mistaken for the spirit. But it too is subject to the original ignorance.

Essential error of mind

- When mind is silent and passive to the supramental action, it can perform its function of holding forms apart for a purely formal delineation.



Quan Yin, goddess of compassion and mercy. (Photo by Vishnu Eschner)



- Ignorance does not create a new thing; it merely misrepresents the truth.
- Fundamental error of mind is conceiving of individuality as separate, and thereby losing the universal.
- All error is distortion, not an absolute falsehood.

Chapter 19: Life

Life is a universal operation of conscious-force, acting to create, maintain, and destroy forms.

- Mind is the final strand of the creative action of the Divine; it is a creative cosmic agency.
- This is at work in matter, in life, and in mind itself.
- Supermind is always present where there is mind, compelling right relation, result.
- Life is a specialization of force, of the cosmic energy, positive and negative, that builds up and energizes forms.
- Death is really a rapid disintegration and change of form, not the opposite of life.
- Ordinarily by life we mean animal life, but it really is present in the material and plant as well. There is no rigid demarcation where life begins. Even a “dead” body can be revived.
- Also, certain forms of trance show no reaction to stimulus, but the life has not gone out.
- Life is the dynamic play of a universal force, the interchange of stimulation and response between different forms.
- Is life different in the human and the plant? There seem to be differences in response and locomotion, but no essential difference. The plant seems to have a subconscious mind.
- In certain forms the Prajnana almost or quite ceases to act consciously, such as the automatic movements of the body.
- So it is possible to conceive that in the atom there is something, an attraction and repulsion, that in us becomes will and desire. This is fundamentally the Chit-Tapas, Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta.
- This is evident even if just observing evolution from the surface.

Chapter 20: Death, Desire, and Incapacity

Death, desire, and incapacity are necessary processes of life as it is in a limited form.

- Just as mind is a final operation of supermind, life is a final operation of consciousness-force that creates, maintains, and destroys individual forms.

- Life relates to motions of force and forms of substance, rather than ideas.
- Life has all conscious-force behind it in every one of its workings, and we cannot really know it until we are conscious of that essential conscious-force.
- Because it is subservient to the dividing action of mind, life is subject to death, limitation, weakness.
- By acting as a separate life, the universal life in us has a limited capacity, and cannot freely embrace the shock and pressure of life around it.
- The impulse of all life is to master, know, and enjoy the play of the world.
- Individual life will always be subject to death, desire, and incapacity.

Death is the process by which life renews forms.

- Death is a necessary condition of the individual life, which serves a particular place and scope
- Life in the body has to go through death for a new construction or renewal.
- Life-energy also supplies the material by which the physical form is built up, and if it gets out of balance, disease and decay begin.
- Attempt at mastery creates reactions in the environment, revolts and attacks.
- Embodied life seeks infinite experience in a finite life, which can only be done by dissolving the form and seeking new forms.
- For this purpose change of form, which is the law of death, is essential.
- Thus, death is a process of life, not the denial of life.

Desire is the attempt of life to expand, aggrandize itself.

- The attempt of the individual to aggrandize itself is the whole sense of desire.
- The increase is through possession, absorption, assimilation, enjoyment.
- This is finally through an increasing experience, which is really the impulse to realize the secret all-conscious Divine.
- Vital hunger in the body becomes desire and will in the mental or thinking life.
- Life uses desire as the lever to achieve self-affirmation.
- Desire can only cease by becoming the desire of the infinite. To get there, it must go from devouring to giving, to interchange, to the law of love, unity, immortality.

Incapacity

- Because life is an infinite force working in a finite form, its action must appear and act as a limitation, an incapacity.
- Behind every action, however weak, is the whole infinite force.



- Desire arises because of the gulf between the desire to possess and the capacity.
- In the mind free from ignorance, putting forth an assured force, desire would not intervene.
- The omnipotence of an ignorant force in a finite sphere is unthinkable; hence, life must rise through wrestling with other forces, until it becomes the happy shock of divine interchange.

Chapter 21: The Ascent of Life

Life ascends through four statuses: physical matter, vitality, mind, and spirit. It has different expressions at each stage.

- The first terms of life as it emerges is as the urge of physical energy.
- The middle terms are death, desire, incapacity, the basis of Darwinian evolution. This is a struggle towards expansion, mastery, possession.
- This very struggle, however, compels life towards permanence for the species, which means cooperation, mutual help, and eventually love.

First status: matter

- Life starts with matter, atoms, rigid division, the physical type of the ego.

Second status: vitality

- In the second status, vitality, elements of one life are broken up and enter into others, including those of our subtler life-energy.
- Interchange, intermixture is the law of this second status.
- Nature's main problem was to create a stable form.
- But the two principles have to be harmonized, with the persistence of the individual along with the ability to fuse himself with others.

Third status: mind

- This can only happen with the emergence of the mental being, which the breaking of the physical form cannot destroy.
- Association with love is the principle. This involves conscious acceptance of interchange.
- Those most fit for survival in this tertiary status are those who develop most the law of love, help, unity.
- This is because mind can grow and possess without devouring.

The growth of love

- Desire begins in the second status, but is transformed by the growth of love.
- Love is at first a principle of life, but its true law is to have equal joy in giving and receiving.
- There emerges the recognition of not-self as a greater self, resulting in a relation of mutuality.

- Because mind is an inferior term of supermind, the perfect solution is a fourth status, beyond association, in the unity of the spirit.

Chapter 22: The Problem of Life

The problem of life is that it is an infinite force in a divided action, which results in the clash of forces.

General statement of the problem

- The problem of the clash of opposing forces has to be solved in life, in act of being.
- In the third status, mind, consciousness is delivered out of the form of its own force, but is not yet master because it is an individual, unaware of universality.
- Similarly, the individual cannot reach mastery because he does not know the totality of his being.
- To reach this, humanity must either become divine or give place to another, superhuman form.
- Mental idea must push on to become the whole truth of existence, consciousness, and force.
- The poise of consciousness determines its force at any level; where consciousness is divided, life will be a clash of individuals.
- There are four poises: Sacchidananda, material nature, mind/life, and supermind.

Current difficulties of our poise of consciousness

- 1) We are aware of only part of our being.
 - *We only have power over that which we are aware.*
- 2) We are separated from the universal.
 - *So we are incapable of knowing other beings.*
- 3) There is a division between force and consciousness.
 - *Life, mind, matter are at war with each other.*
 - *Fundamental division is between force of nature and the conscious being.*
- To the extent that we are self-conscious and a thinking being, we try to arrive at a harmony.
- But a perfect harmony in ourselves or with the world is not possible with our current limitations; it can only come from above.

Chapter 23: The Double Soul in Man

Like all principles, the soul has a surface form and a true form. The surface is the desire-soul, whereas the true form is the psychic being, the Caitya Purusha.

Soul as the manifestation of true delight

- The world being a masked form of Sacchidananda, the ascent of life is the ascent of the delight in things.



Buddha. (Photo by Vishnu Eschner)

- But where is this delight? What is the subordinate principle where it manifests in the world?
- That is the soul, the psychic principle.

Double action: surface and subliminal

- As with all principles, there is the true one and there is the surface action in the ignorance.
- The surface action of this is the desire-soul, whereas the true soul is a subliminal psychic entity, a power of delight, love, joy.
- Subliminal soul is open to the universal delight.
- The surface desire-soul responds to the world by a flux of reaching and shrinking.
- Indifference is either the inattention of the surface desire-soul to the Rasa of things, or its incapacity to receive and respond to them.
- The real soul takes joy of all experiences and grows by all of them. It is impelled by the universal to develop by all kinds of experience.
- By bringing the soul forward, pleasure and pain are replaced by an equal, all-embracing delight.
- This can be approached through the impersonality of art, poetry, knowledge, where the individual desire-soul is less prominent.

The secret soul

- Behind the veil, a concealed witness and guide, the inner voice of the mystic.
- Imperishable from birth to birth, the Caitya Purusha, deputy in nature.
- Stands behind the mental, vital, physical beings.
- Grows, changes, develops from life to life.
- Takes the essence of all experiences.
- The true original conscience.

- Mind, vital, physical can be strong and brilliant, but psychic may be weak.

Spiritual and supramental transformations

- Psychic can open to the hidden ranges of our being, but spiritual transformation needed for universality and transcendence.
- Psychic growth brings achievements of the spiritual mind, on its own plane.
- Beyond this is the supermind, truth-consciousness.
- Only supermind can harmonize the opposition of spirit and our world existence.
- Without it, the being can be divided into spiritual within and the natural without.

Chapter 24: Matter

Matter is the result of the dividing action of cosmic mind, causing extreme fragmentation as the basis of evolution. In reality it is a form of conscious-force, but we know it only as the senses contact it.

Problem that mind and life have with matter

- Mind and life depend upon the body; the human body has allowed us to rise above the animal, and by developing a body capable of receiving higher illumination we will rise above humanity.
- Religions see the body as a stumbling block, and at most endure it.
- Even before spiritual awakening, life is at war with the inertia of the body, and mind battles with the limitations of both life and body.

Why has matter arisen at all?

- Matter cannot be the result of human mind, since it pre-existed.
- Since existence is an activity of conscious-force, matter is also a form of spirit.
- The appearance we see is a result of the dividing action of mind.
- Matter itself is the final form taken by the conscious being phenomenally dividing itself.
- It divides because mind carries the principle of multiplicity to its extreme potential; it is a necessary result of the will to multiplicity.
- Substance as we know it is the form that mind contacts the conscious being through physical senses.
- Thus, the action of the cosmic mind is the cause of atomic existence.
- It is the extreme fragmentation of the infinite, as a starting point.



Chapter 25: The Knot of Matter

Matter presents a practical difficulty, due to three characteristics: its self-lost inconscience; its bondage to material law; and the principle of division and struggle.

Division between spirit and matter is not fundamental, but practical

- Division between spirit and matter is not fundamental; there is a manifold oneness, not a struggle between opposites.
- There is a practical difference, however, and that creates the series of world existence.
- There is a series of substance, through mind-stuff and spirit, that sense and knowledge can apprehend.
- It is a spiritually conceptive difference, a difference created by spiritual conception.
- In matter lies the practical key or crux.

The difficulties stated

- 1) Fundamental opposition is that consciousness has lost and forgotten itself.
 - *Out of this inconscience, minds emerge and struggle.*
- 2) Matter is the culmination of bondage to mechanical law and inertia.
 - *Presents to life and mind an inertia in response to their demands.*
- 3) Culmination of the principle of division and struggle.
 - *Union at this level means either aggregation of units or destruction of one unit.*

Pain, suffering the result of the fundamental oppositions

- These difficulties impose the law of pain and suffering on the mental and vital existence.
- In self-conscious humanity, the limitations become too keenly sensible to be borne.
 - *The finite cannot remain content if it is conscious of a greater existence.*
- The rigid division results in the law of discord in what would otherwise be a movement from joy to joy in evolution.
- Brings into body, life, mind the qualities of attraction and repulsion, truth and error, pain and pleasure.
- Which is the basis of the spiritual pessimist, asserting that the world is delusion.

Solution: the conscious being is hidden in the forms of the universe

- So there must be another term, the supramental, yet to emerge.
- This may liberate the body from its current law of death.
- Will use body as a subordinate term.
- May develop a divine body.

Chapter 26: The Ascending Series of Substance

Substance itself has an ascending series from matter to the spirit, and in each level there is less bondage to form, greater force, flexibility, and power of transmutation.

Principle of an ascending series

- Substance seems to the senses more real, in proportion as it is solid. And touch is the basis of the senses in this regard.
- In the ascending series of substance, there must be less bondage to form, more flexibility of force, more interpenetration and power of transmutation.
- This is of great importance in terms of the possible relation of the soul to the physical body.
- There may be other relations, laws, even a different substance of body.
- Even in the physical cosmos there is an ascending scale between inconscient substance and conscious self-extension.



Ascending stairs. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)



- One formulation is matter, life, mind, supermind, Sacchidananda.
- Substance bases itself upon each of these principles in turn.

Different bases and worlds

- Matter as the basis
 - *In material world, matter is the basis.*
 - *Life, thought, obey its laws.*
- Life and desire as the basis.
 - *Basis is cosmic vital energy, vital seeking, not the inconscient.*
- Mind, supermind, bliss, being, conscious power can be the basis.
- All existence is a complex harmony.
- The more subtle is the more powerful.
- Pressure from these planes assists the emergence of the principles out of the material.
- Pressure increases as each principle evolves here.
- Consciousness is not limited to current possibilities. It has different bodies, sheaths, that the soul simultaneously inhabits.
- Opening up of the veil is the cause of “psychic” phenomena.
- Main principle is that behind the gross physical being there are other grades of substance with finer law, and by their pressure we can evolve different conditions of being.
- Because being is an uninterrupted whole, the ascent opens the possibility of a conquest of physical limitations through the power of supramental substance.

Chapter 27: The Sevenfold Chord of Being

Mind, life, matter, supermind, Sat-Chit-Ananda is the sevenfold chord. The nodus of the psyche adds an eighth.

The eight principles

- Origin is triune Sacchidananda.
- Nodus of creative action is the supermind, the real-idea.
- Creation moves between unity and multiplicity, creating an ordered relation.
- Mind, life, matter are the aspect of these principles to our superficial awareness.
- The fourth principle which comes in as a nodus is the soul, or psychic being.
- The soul is a projection of Ananda, bliss, delight.
- So all told there are eight principles: existence, consciousness-force, bliss, supermind, matter, life, psyche, mind. These are essential to all creation, and are there in ourselves.

Higher trinity

- Higher trinity is the source and basis of all existence.
- There must be also a power of knowledge and will, fixing determined relations, laws.
- But no law is absolute; everything contains endless potentialities.

Mind, life, matter

- Mind, life, and matter also indispensable to cosmic being.
- Mind is the faculty that measures and limits.
- Life and form of substance follow from mind; even if different from physical matter, some form would always be necessary.
- Where one principle is present, all the rest must be not merely present, but secretly at work.

Chapter 28: Supermind, Mind, and the Overmind Maya

Overmind is the link between supermind and mind, and has ranges (higher mind, etc.). Overmind itself is still a realm of knowledge, the higher Maya.

- How did the lapse into ignorance occur?
- Must be an exclusive concentration on one movement or status of conscious being.
- There is a gulf between mind and supermind, so there must be an intermediate power somewhere in the ascending scale of being.

Can we have contact with this intermediate range?

- Even this intermediate power must be superconscious to human mind.
- Appears as if we have no contact with higher ranges.
- But that is deceptive; intuition is the first direction in which consciousness reaches beyond the mind.
- Impersonality, universality also are indications of reaching of mind beyond ego. Genius comes from this widening.
- Mystic and spiritual experience also pushes beyond normal bounds.

Two movements by which we access superior gradations

- 1) Inward toward the subliminal.
 - *Can be gradual or vehement.*
 - *Inner soul, mind, life, subtle-physical are discovered.*
- 2) Ascent upward beyond the mind.
 - *Normally first discovers a vast, silent self, or a Nirvana of our active being.*
 - *Can also open into a cosmic awareness.*
- Transition to the supramental is through the opening upward.



Scale of intensities is discovered.

- Higher mind: spontaneous knowledge, with the nature of thought, cosmic character.
- Illumined mind: more force; luminosity.
- Intuition: more intimate contact.
- Overmind: the original determinant of our mental energies; covers the whole lower hemisphere with a brilliant golden lid.

Overmind as the link

- Formulates the realities of the supermind, in a vision of the truth but allows a free transmission. A change is compelled in the transition.
- The integrality of supermind no longer here, but it is aware of the essential truth of things.
- Oneness is realized, but dynamic movement not directly determined by it.





- Gives each aspect an independent action, a separate importance.
- Distinction between soul and nature, Purusha and Prakriti, begins.
- Releases a million godheads, each capable of creating its own world.
- Global in cognition; can hold seemingly fundamental differences in a reconciling vision, as correlatives.
 - *Such as world-formulas of matter, mind, life, spirit.*
- No fall from truth yet; what is worked out is the truth of each aspect.
- Vast and endless catholicity; each idea admits the right of the others.
- Concerned mainly with pragmatic truths, not absolutes.
- Differs from mind in that it would allow a harmony, the practical working out of each thing (e.g., each religion). Mind cannot arrive at this true harmonic control.

Overmind is original cosmic (higher) Maya

- A Maya of knowledge, not yet ignorance.
- But overmind reaches a line which divides truth from ignorance, where the emphasis on separateness of consciousness-force hides the unity.
- The veil here is opaque, unlike the veil between overmind and supermind.
- As it passes into cosmic mind, it is unaware of its source in the spirit.

Subliminal or inner mind

- But in this cosmic mind, a large power of mutuality and communication remains.
- It is a plane of ignorance, but not yet falsehood.
- When involution reaches the point of separating consciousness from force, or consciousness is lost in form, then error and falsehood are possible.
- But even ignorance is in reality a knowledge seeking for itself.
- Fulfillment of transformation made easier because intuition, even supermind operates secretly, giving us flashes and openings.

One sees it as a mystery or one speaks of it or hears of it as a mystery, but none knows it.

—Bhagavad Gita, II. 29

Book Two: The Knowledge and the Ignorance—The Spiritual Evolution

Part I: The Infinite Consciousness and the Ignorance

Chapter 1: Indeterminates, Cosmic Determinations, and the Indeterminable

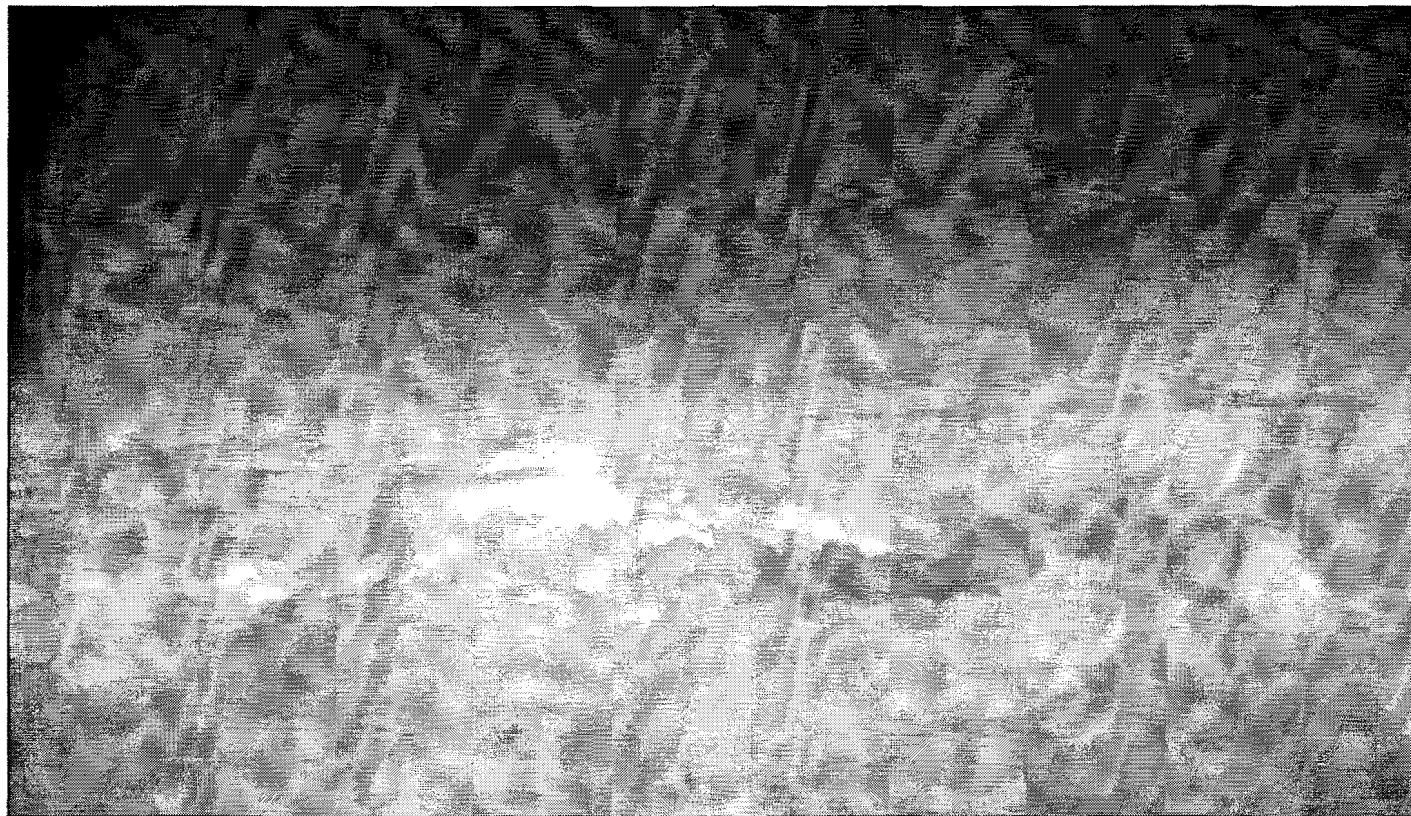
Specific things (determinates) arise in the infinite (indeterminable) because a secret involved consciousness is behind the material universe. The freedom of the infinite from specific form is positive, not negative.

Question: how have specific “determinations” arisen in the original infinite?

- Consciousness and knowledge emerge from the ne-science in small bits, quanta, and have a slowly increasing organization.
- When our consciousness meets the foundation of existence, it appears to be a blank.
- The superstructure, all the specific things (determinates) seem to have no relation to this underlying indeterminable.
- Main question: how did the universe arise at all?
- The mind cannot assign a limit to the universe, so the question remains how all these specifics (determinates, determinables, distinct entities) could arise in the infinite.
- Science explains the pragmatic formulas, the practical “how” of processes (like atoms forming molecules), but not the intrinsic how or why. At its furthest divergence, we cannot see how atoms and molecules can produce works like Hamlet.
- There are generic determinates, such as states of matter (gas, solid) or states of life (plant, animal), but these also do not seem to determine the more specific forms that derive from them. The same question remains: what determines the specifics?

Possible explanations

- Force might be a self-organizing dynamic chance, working in a boundless possibility.
 - *But the presence of so much order seems to rule this out.*
- Mechanical necessity might govern everything.
 - *But this is contradicted by so much variation.*
 - *And the emergence of consciousness argues against this.*
- Consciousness could be the creator, out of an original inconscience.



- *The world is then the thoughts of an extracosmic divinity.*
- *Or could be immanent in the universe, but not overt.*
- *But if so, why all the suffering and ignorance?*
- *Why didn't God have better thoughts, or create a better universe?*
- Secret involved consciousness could be behind the material universe.

Involved consciousness as the source

- Inconscience of matter would be a necessary condition, in growing out of its opposite.
- Forms that we see would be the general determinates of truths of its own being.
- Free variation of possibilities natural to an infinite consciousness would explain the apparent aspect of inconscient chance.
- Explains processes of nature like design, number, quality, growth.
- Explains why physiology determines psychology: the body is a secretly conscious energy. And how mind can transmit to the body.

Validating the hypothesis

- Cannot be done from the material end.

- At level of life or mind, also not possible.
- Quieting mind gives the first clue: first, mind is a subtle substance (general determinate); next that currents of mental energy enter from outside; finally that there is a mental being supporting the energy.
- To know whether everything is a phenomenon presented to mind, must enter a cosmic state of being: the overmind.

Overmind awareness

- In overmind it becomes evident that both the individual and the cosmos come from a transcendent reality.
- But overmind doesn't answer the original question: is the universe a self-determination; a creation presented by nature; or a cosmic imagination?
- Fundamental dichotomy remains in higher ranges of mind of a pure self, without features, versus the universe, a determinative knowledge-power. Nirguna and Saguna.
- Overmind maintains these two equally, but does not resolve them.
- But absolute cannot be a pure indeterminable, otherwise no universe is possible. There cannot be a dualism at the source. Whatever is created must be of the substance of that reality. The supreme existence must be capable of creating true self-determinations.



Supramental

- Is the self-awareness and the power of self-determination.
- An infinite of power, but not in quiescence. In action these appear to us as formulations.
- Imperatives, possibles, actuals: our mind sees only the last two.
- The fundamental trinity (existence, consciousness-force, delight) are inseparable in the supermind, even if one can stand in front.
- The first action of each reposes on a triad.
 - *Knower, knowledge, known; lover, beloved, love; lord, object of will, executive force.*
- All powers and aspects are determinations of the fundamental spiritual determinates: energies, conditions. Imperatives, possibilities, actualities.

Indeterminability and specific determinations

- Absolute is not limited or determined by any one thing or all things; it exceeds any definable totality.
- In experience this becomes the self, Nirguna Brahman, featureless existence, unknowable.
- But it is also the source of all things, determinations.
- Separate cognition of this self and world is a valid spiritual experience, because they are fundamental spiritual determinates.
- Negative experiences carry the freedom of the infinite from limitation; on the dynamic side, the freedom of consciousness not to be bound by the world it creates.
- Passage to the supramental must always go through a realization of the pure self.

Place of the ignorance

- Inconscience is the infinite's power of plunging consciousness into a trance of self-involution.
- It is one term, one formula of the infinite and eternal existence.
- This means that our individuality and knowledge of the world are in their origin a play of the infinite, and ignorance is only a subordinate movement, a temporary phenomenon.

Sacchidananda and supermind

- Supermind is not absent in Sacchidananda; its determinations there are plastic, interfused, a boundless finite.
- But relations would not be excluded: it is not a realm of blank indeterminability or a vacancy.



Chapter 2: Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara; Maya, Prakriti, Shakti

In each status of being, the spirit takes a poise proper to that level. Brahman meets us in three general modes of self (Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara) and power of self (Maya, Prakriti, Shakti). The reality can simultaneously inhabit the individual and the cosmic, time and timelessness, etc.

Three modes of the absolute

- The absolute, indefinable by mind, yet determines itself to our consciousness in the universe by real and fundamental truths of its being.
- Needs a poetic, intuitive language to express the experience; way of knowing must be appropriate to the thing known.
- This existence reveals itself to our experience in three modes: self (Atman), conscious spirit (Purusha), and God (Ishwara).
- Brahman is all three at the same time; it is the absolute that takes on different relativities, by the force of its Yoga-Maya, consciousness-force.
- The power of the reality also meets us in three modes: creative (Maya), executive (Prakriti), and conscious divine power (Shakti).

Suprational and the reason

- Looked at by the intellect, the totality thus described is a miracle or suprational mystery, a magical power that is other than our own wisdom.
- But the cause of this impression is due to the inability of a finite consciousness to measure the infinite. The conceptions or standards of one order of reality (e.g. atoms, cells, human body) do not necessarily apply to another level.
- And each finite has behind it an infinite, and the finite thing cannot be totally understood without a knowledge of what is behind it.
- Similarly, the reason cannot necessarily deal with the infrational (such as life, instinct) or the suprational.

Logic of the infinite

- Suprational has a logic of relations and connections, a complex nexus of forces (actualities, possibilities, imperatives). These are not observable to the reason, but are to the direct awareness of the intuition.
- Such a larger awareness need not act in harmony with the conclusions of the reason, though it might be perfectly "rational" in relation to a larger motive and data.
- An infinite consciousness would not have rules, but rather the free adaptation of intrinsic truths. This freedom might seem to the reason to have no standards whatever.



- Though we cannot abandon the intellect in favor of a half-organized intuition, we should open it to an awareness of other states and possibilities, and strive for an utmost plasticity.
- The infinite is at once an essentiality, a boundless totality, and a multitude.
- We must not seize one truth (e.g., silent self, dynamic Ishwara; soul, nature; spirit, matter; own-self, other-self) and miss the other side.

Indeterminability and determination

- Source of the problem is conceptual, verbal, and not real. The contradiction disappears if we realize that the indeterminability of the infinite is not negative, not a limitation or imposition of incapacity.
- Indeterminability is a condition of free self-determination.

Different experiences of the being of the reality (Brahman)

- It is an infinitely variable oneness, moving between diversity and unity. This can be seen in the following experiences:
 - *Qualities/featureless.*
 - *One/many.*
 - *Immobile silence/dynamic movement.*
 - *Formlessness/forms.*
 - *Finite/infinite.*
 - *Immutable/variation.*

Different experiences of the consciousness of the reality (Maya)

- Also not bound by a finite restriction to one state or law of action. Can put out many states or dispositions of its force.
- 1) We only have to admit that there can be different real statuses of consciousness.
- 2) We must also admit that it has the power of self-limitation, or secondary self-formation. This means that each individual is a center of self-vision. The circumference may be the same for all, but the psychological center may be different for each.
- Must also be a power of cosmic self-limitation, the ability to limit its action so as to base a given world and keep it in its own harmony and order.
- 3) Third power is its power of self-absorption, where self-awareness exists but not knowledge. This is ultimately the dark state called the inconscient, a trance of self-absorption.
- The possibility of simultaneous different statuses of consciousness (static/dynamic, etc.) explains why we can be aware of several different states at the same time.

Self, Brahman, and Maya

- Brahman or Purusha experienced as self is usually aloof, silent, but not dynamically active. It is an exclusive concentration that limits itself to a spiritual status away from activity. This is an essential realization, but not the total realization.
- This experience usually has also a realization of self as impersonal automatic power, world-activity.
- Self can be felt as the individual, but always has the character of universality, freedom, impersonality, and transcendence; it is the straight way to liberation.

Purusha-Prakriti

- Universal-individual, support and witness. Intimately connected with nature.
- Experience of Purusha-Prakriti has pragmatic importance, because if Purusha is passive, then soul in mind, life, body is subject to nature. Standing back, it is the first step to the soul's freedom.
- Sankhya idea is that they are eternally separate entities, but in relation to each other. Prakriti is purely mechanical, and the light of the soul imparts the workings of intelligence. There are many independent purushas.
- All these are pragmatic truths, but not the whole truth.

Reason for duality

- So that nature and the spirit can have a free action, and so that the spirit can withdraw at any time to enforce a new or higher formation.
- In each status of being, the spirit takes a poise proper to that level. In the embodied being it assumes variously the mental, vital, physical being, and behind all stands as the psychic being.

Ishwara-Shakti

- But whatever the poise, the spirit is fundamentally lord or ruler of the nature.
- This aspect of the divine being is the most comprehensive, where the spirit is supracosmic and intracosmic. It exceeds and supports and inhabits all individuality. Not the same as a personal God or the Saguna Brahman.

Personality and impersonality

- Personality is a limitation to certain powers, qualities, habitual forces; it is a formation of the superficial consciousness.
- But the person behind is one, eternal, and can take many personalities.
- It is the mind's ignorance of the true person that creates the opposition between personality and impersonality—in reality, an eternal infinite person, the same self or spirit, manifests in the multiplicity.



Ruler

- An issue with mind's concept of Ishwara is that a ruler imposes laws on the world.
- But the Divine can act by laws without being bound by them, because they are the expression of the truth of things, what is within them.
- Divine is present in the workings, but can exceed them.
- Mechanical law is a fact, but within it there is a spiritual law of consciousness that gives it freedom.

Synthesis: Ishwara-Shakti

- Consciousness is at play with being, it is itself the consciousness-force, Maya, Shakti, the power of the being.
- Whatever nature does, the spirit does also. There is no fundamental duality.
- We are looking at an infinite of which the self-power is capable of many movements.
- In this light a dual person emerges, Ishwara-Shakti, divine self and divine creatrix (mother) of the universe.
- These are fused in the superconscient, but in pragmatic reality of the universe they emerge.
- We can fall into silence, but to realize a higher formation it must be done through the divine Shakti; our surrender to the divine being must be through the divine mother.
- The reason uses abstract concepts to grasp the impersonal truth, but the spiritual vision is needed to see or express it completely.

Relation between the individual and the divine being

- In this view the individual is an immortal portion of the Divine, is the Divine in our inmost reality.
- This dependence is concealed by the ego.
- That in us which is transcendent of nature is so by its dependence on the Divine. In other words, our dependence on the Divine is the door to the realization of our identity.

The manifest and the non-manifest

- Is all said so far true of an inferior order of manifestation, below a supreme non-manifest?
- Raises the problem of relation of time to the timeless spirit; whether what is in time is an expression of the time-eternity.
- What is meant by the timeless is a spiritual status not subject to time movement; it is not a blank.
- Time and timeless are the same eternity in a double status.

Space and time

- Space may be Brahman extended, while time is Brahman in movement.
- Space and time must be fundamental conditions of spirit which assume a different appearance according to the status of consciousness they manifest.
- So there is a different time and space for each status of consciousness.

- By withdrawing from the physical, we can experience a pure spiritual space, where time may no longer exist.
- Similarly, time itself is real and eternal even if time movement is relative.
- And each state of consciousness has its own time.
- There is a certain relation between different time statuses, but not the same measure.

Eternity and status of consciousness

- The being can have three states in regard to its own eternity.
- 1) Immobile, self-absorbed, no development; timeless eternity.
- 2) Block time: simultaneous whole-consciousness.
- 3) Progressive movement
- All three can be taken simultaneously in experience.

Chapter 3: The Eternal and the Individual

The question of the individual comes from the reason thinking of the temporary ego as the individual. In reality there is a person (Purusha) behind the individual, which has a spiritual unity with other selves and the world. All particulars have the absolute behind them, and the presence of the human individual is the key to the divine unfolding.

Question and its origin

- Even admitting the immanence of the Divine in us and our individuality as a progressive evolutionary unfolding, is it true that the individual is in any sense eternal or persistent?
- Problem comes from the logical reason, and must be met on its own terms, with a clearness, precision, and subtlety.
- This will make the origin, nature, and escape from the difficulty clear.

First difficulty: conception of ego

- Reason always identifies ego with the individual, but the ego is not fundamentally real, rather a practical formation of consciousness devised to centralize the activities of nature in us.
- We think of ourselves as this formation of experience, which is temporary.
- We have to see that behind it there is a consciousness that is not determined.

The person behind the individual

- Both the person (Purusha) and the world-material are necessary for our present experience of individuality.
- Purusha in the end sees itself as one with the world-being.
- But truth of individualization is not thereby abolished; it individualizes and still embraces the wider consciousness.



- The soul can then still make the world-becoming its material for individual experience, but also perceive its true self as one in being with the transcendence.

Unity with the world-being

- Our unity with the world-being is the consciousness of a self that is both cosmic and individual, and both are aware of the same self.
- The power of its being is in cosmic differentiation and multiple individuality; there is no necessity to hold up motionless identity as the aim of our being.
- It may be that the perfect undifferentiated unity is in status of consciousness, not act of consciousness.
- There is a practical difference between dynamic union with other selves, and awareness by the Purusha of its own action. With other selves, we are concerned not directly, but indirectly through union with the Divine.
- Differentiation has a divine purpose of allowing greater unity, through other selves. This is not a return to the absolute.

Type of unity that the individual has with the cosmic

- Both the cosmic and the individual are becomings of the self; unity is not a merger of the individual into the cosmic.
- The plane of consciousness to which this mutual inclusion belongs is not dependent upon the physical world.
- So this is a spiritual and psychological inclusion, and the self is indivisible even though seeming to be divided.

Plane of this experience, and limits of reason

- Reason is not applicable, because we are speaking of divine infinitudes.
- The problem is that the word “individual” normally applies to the separative, temporary ego, a thing that stands apart from everything else, not the true spiritual person, Purusha.
- It is necessary to mean by the individual a conscious power of being of the eternal, always existing by unity and capable of mutuality.
- However, by trying to get away from the idea of the ego, we fall into a too abstract language.
- We arrive at primary relations of the absolute (I in the world, God in me, myself in God), but these seem to the normal mind a mass of contradictions.

Absolute and contradictions

- The reason sees the absolute as without relations, and the opposite of the relative; or cosmic and transcendent.
- The attempt to be as God, to be three things at once, seems either logically confusing or practically impossible.
- We mean by the absolute the supreme reality, the ineffable, by which all things remain in existence.
- But the logical reason then takes the step of speaking as if

it were incapable of relations, bound to its freedom from limitation.

- This false step creates an impasse, and the universe itself becomes a mystery. Our mental difficulty becomes the impossibility of the universe to exist at all.

Solution

- The mistake is in making an all-exclusive negation, we imagine that the absolute is a zero.
- In fact, the absolute cannot be limited by positive or negative definitions.
- The positives of the absolute are its various statements of itself to our consciousness; the negatives bring in the rest of its positivity.
- At first there are the large primary relations: finite/infinite; then transcendent/cosmic, universal/individual; finally the dualities of negative/positive.
- In the absolute all of these find a reconciliation, not a denial.
- Absolute cannot be bound by our law of contradictions—that is necessary for practical thinking and acting, but less rigidly binding as we move upward from the material level.

Distinctions and classifications; essentiality, commonality, individuality

- Practical distinctions are the first step, but deeper knowledge sees the common truth among things.
- This deeper knowledge does not deprive the other of effectiveness.
- All things, even while different, are yet one.
- This is true in looking at the levels of plant, animal, human, and what is beyond human.
- One can only understand a thing if it is known in its totality and essentiality, not just its present individuality.
- In practical dealings and in their own field, we have to make distinctions (good, bad, just, unjust).
- But these must be understood as practical distinctions, not absolutes.

Absolute behind particulars

- No particular thing is absolute (e.g., no action has absolute justice), but behind all there is an absolute. The same is true of beauty, good.
- The concept of time does not reconcile contradictions; it is only our means of realizing things in succession; it is not an absolute and cannot explain the primary relations of the absolute.
- All persistent realities stand in a primary relation to each other, but these are not irreconcilable or separate from each other.
- We have to make distinct spiritual realizations which may seem contradictory, but they should not be intellectualized into sole truths.



Individual and eternal

- Transcendental, universal, individual are three terms of the reality, and each always contains secretly or openly the two others.
- Human being is the highest power of the individual and the critical turning point for evolution of the divine consciousness.
- Existence of the individual is not an error, or a subordinate circumstance in a divine Lila, but the key to the unfolding of the Divine.

Chapter 4: The Divine and the Undivine

The experience of what is undivine (suffering, limitation, etc.) is because consciousness is limited, not the divine being. It is a necessary consequence of the Divine limiting itself, and of a progressive evolution. Even so, our revolt against them is necessary, and part of the adventure of the soul in self-concealing and self-finding.

The question: is there a divine and undivine?

- By speaking of the divine life as the culmination of an evolutionary process, we imply that everything below that is undivine.
- The question of divine/undivine is of practical significance.
- Being satisfied with something incomplete and inharmonious is the mark of the undivine.
- The divine life may be progressive, but it would be harmonious in principle and detail.



Scope of the problem

- What tends to baffle the reason when looking for the divine presence is suffering and evil, but there is also the deficiency of knowledge, truth, beauty, power, unity.
- The essential problem is the general principle of imperfection.
- Because we can conceive of perfection, we see our current state as a lapse from it, or that perfection exists only as an ideal.

Limitation and its effects

- The core issue is that in our experience there is an effective division or rupture in the unity of the divine existence.
- In practice, this division becomes a limitation: of consciousness, knowledge, delight, good, harmony.
- A secondary effect is a perversion or contradiction of the highest elements; and there is an attachment to this experience of division.
- If the Divine is there in essence in all things, why does the Divine tolerate or maintain imperfection and limitation?

Possible solutions

- Cling to the essence and deal with the external; escape; call everything illusion, and reach for Nirvana.
- Through inner concentration, we can immerse ourselves in the silent divinity.
- But the need of the total being, the whole Divine, does not rest satisfied with that.
- Also, does not give us the vision of real harmony; takes insufficient account of the psychic element in us; and is a complacent intellectual/philosophical view.

Psychic element

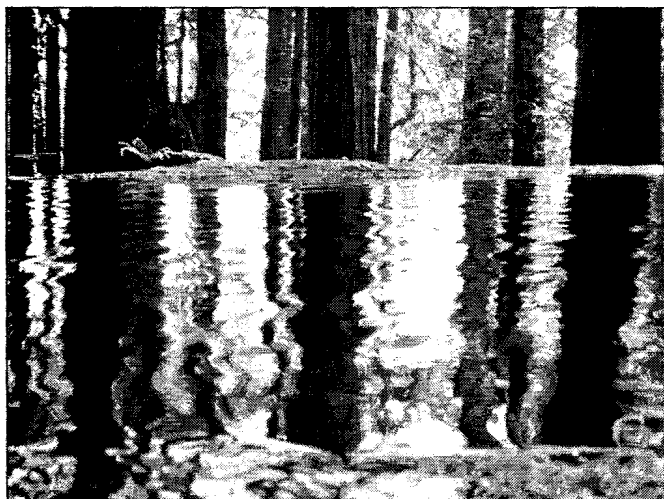
- The psychic part in us also recognizes imperfection; it is a divine dissatisfaction.
- To find the spiritual key is the law of our being; its sign is a striving to transform the law of the external forms of our life.
- It is the concealed divinity that keeps our discontent alive and gives us the image of the ideal.

God and the world: three propositions

- If we admit a divine existence, then there are three propositions about God and the world, but the third does not harmonize with the first two.
- 1) Omnipresent divinity, pure, perfect. All exists by and in this being.
- 2) All things are ordered and governed in their fundamental processes by this being. (A consequence of #1)
- 3) But because what we experience is imperfection, then the divine reality must be different in essence, or order.

Possible solutions: duality

- A supreme or silent God aloof from the world.
- Practically, this ends in a duality, God and nature, soul and nature.



Reflections of a forest. (Photo by Nilauru Markus)

- An active creating God and an observing inactive God, or a static and dynamic Brahman.
- But once we admit the divine governance of the world, it must be complete and absolute, so these dualities cannot be true.

True solution: limitation is in consciousness, not the reality itself

- Limitation, ignorance need not be a denial of the divine being, power.
- A part may be imperfect when broken off, but recover its place when seen in the whole.
- The ego and separateness is itself a power of infinity, a face of the universal being.
- So there is no limitation of being, but there is a limitation of consciousness. It is a practical but not a fundamental division.
- The phenomenon of ignorance is a superficial movement; it is itself a frontal power of the all-consciousness.
- This is a power of concentration, similar to human concentration.
- This putting forth of what seems to be a limited knowledge is a great power of the Divine; the miracle of omniscience is most striking in what seems to be the inconscient.

Consequences of the ignorance

- Limitation and incapacity is so that the surface energy shall be in exact correspondence with the work it has to do.
- Again, this ability to limit itself and work through that self-limitation is a proof of its absolute omnipotence.
- Similarly, suffering is the restriction of delight, and again nothing but the all-delight could impose such experiences on itself.

- Similarly, only the inalienable unity and harmony could work through such disharmony and discord.

Working with the ignorance

- Even with the above view, grief, pain, etc. are facts of the world-consciousness, and our sense of them is in part true.
- Imperfection is to us evil, but it is in travail of the eternal good.
- Our revolt against imperfection is necessary, because we have to ultimately reject, overcome, and transform them, because our outer nature has a right to deliverance.
- Suffering may be a consequence of the mind consciousness, but mind is itself a creation of the divine consciousness, and these limitations have a persistent reality and importance in our present phase.

Imperfection as fixed: world as play, Lila

- But if these are taken as a fixed law of imperfection, then our life loses its meaning, and we can never deliver ourselves out of the falsehood, and human existence is perpetually undivine.
- In this case, the only explanation is that the world is an inexplicable mystery, a cosmic game, Lila.
- But if the play has fixed grades but is a progressive ascent, then the human consciousness becomes a necessary transition point.
- The gradualness necessitates a partial unfolding, and this incompleteness requires imperfection.

Why a progressive unfolding

- Remaining question is why a progressive manifestation is necessary.
- The play of self-finding, the joy of discovery, is one of the greatest joys of conscious being.
- It is not imposed on an unwilling creature, but rather a great adventure of the soul.

**Chapter 5: The Cosmic Illusion—
Mind, Dream, and Hallucination**

Dreams and hallucinations do not provide a valid analogy for the world, since they are themselves based on realities. Dreams are a transcript or symbol of reality, but so is the surface consciousness. It appears that mind is not an original creator, but rather an instrument of ignorance of a truth-consciousness.

Origin of the negation of cosmic existence

- Mind has affirmed or negated all ideas; it starts from facts, pursues possibilities, then questions everything.
- At the outset we live in our physical mind and perceive the actual as fact, self-evident, without question.
- Physical science is an extension of this mentality.



- But the life-mind seeks a subjective, imaginative, emotive satisfaction. It seeks always for more.
- In consequence the human mind is always seeking, breaking bounds.
- This constant unrest leads to a loss of certitude and a questioning of all knowledge.
- This gives rise to the discovery that all are mental constructions, a cosmic illusion.
- In turn this gives rise to the great world-negating religions and philosophies. Two of the greatest in India have been from Buddha and Shankara.
- These have three great formulas: chain of Karma; escape from rebirth; Maya.

Vital recoil from life

- Comes from a sense of disappointment.
- Mind supports this, because it sees that all effort turns in a circle, is not permanent, definitive.
- And if fundamental laws are fixed, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that either the world is the result of an inconscient energy, or a deliberate world of failure, or a vast illusion.

Mental/spiritual basis for negation

- It can be contended that the very nature of the world is an illusion; no reasoning from its features could raise it into a reality; there is only one transcendent reality.
- This depends on whether the mind's experience of reality is valid, conclusive, or imperative.

Illusion as a subjective dream or hallucination

- Based on the analogy of dream or hallucination.
- The physical mind has difficulty accepting this.
- Dream seems unreal because it ceases when it is over.
- But different states of consciousness may have their own realities, and this sense of unreality may be normal in passing from one to the next.
- Also, a dream has no antecedents or consequents, no coherence, unlike waking life.
- Our lack of significance may be due to our limitation of understanding.
- There are too many differences between dream and waking life to allow the analogy to be applicable.

Nature of dreams and sleep

- Maybe they are a symbolic transcript of real things.
- In sleep, consciousness withdraws from waking experience.
- Inner activities take place, only a part of which is recorded.
- Many dreams are a creation of a subconscious part, throwing up elements of life, or fantasy.
- The subconscious is really the border of an inner existence, where it meets the inconscient.
- Dreamless sleep is a profounder layer of the subcon-

scient, where we are unable to grasp or retain the dream figures.

- Or we have gone inward and lost all connection with our surface parts.
- If the subliminal comes to the front, a subliminal intelligence may become active, and dreams become a series of thoughts: warnings, premonitions, indications, symbol-images.
- And happenings on other planes can enter in.
- It is also possible to become wholly conscious in sleep, and sleep life can be coherent.

Subliminal consciousness

- Subliminal is a meeting place of the inconscient and the consciousness descending from above.
- It has inner senses, and can enter into mental, vital, subtle-physical planes.
- Waking state is unaware of the connection, but receives inspirations, urges, etc. from the subliminal.
- The surface is really a transcriber, whereas the subliminal is the seer.
- The Upanishad called the subliminal the dream self, and the superconscient the sleep self, but regarded both as a field of reality.

Dreams revisited in terms of the subliminal

- In this light, dreams are not unreal, but are a transcript of reality, just as our waking experience is a transcript of reality, through the senses.
- Our sensory experience is validated by an intuition in consciousness, and both are amplified by the reason understanding the law of things.
- Even if our images are incorrect, they endeavor to show realities.
- So the dream metaphor has no value for a metaphysical inquiry into existence.

Hallucination

- Hallucinations are either mental or sensory.
- An example of a mental hallucination is a mirage, for example a rope seen as a snake.
- This is an imposition of an unreal figure on a reality.
- But the image comes from another reality, is a resemblance to a reality.
- So the analogy (saying that the world is an imposition on the sole reality of Brahman) is unhelpful.
- All mental errors and illusions are a miscombination of data from a reality, a wrong perception of realities.
- But a cosmic illusion has no basis of reality.
- Other analogies (dreams, visions, imagination, illusions) also compare a present with an absent reality, and are not applicable to an imposition of a mutable unreality on a sole immutable reality.



Nature of mind

- What is the role of mind in all these illusions?
- Mind is not an original creative power, it is derivative.
- So errors of mind may not illustrate the action of an original creative illusion or Maya.
- Mind receives truths actual, essential, or possible from the inconscience and superconscience, from above and within, and selects and constructs.
- Mind discovers, it does not manifest the unknown. It does not have omnipotence. It creates, but it is not an original creator.
- But Maya must be an original creator.
- Mind works best when working with a substance, with actualities.
- But Maya must create a superstructure which has nothing to do with the reality.

Imaginations

- Mind can take its own structures (imaginations) as true. Could this be an analogy for Maya?
- Because our knowledge is limited, imagination is a construction of possible actuals, a variation of actuality, a way of summoning possibilities out of the infinite.
- Imaginations may become realities, like the persistent imagination of human flight, so they are not purely illusory.
- Even extravagant imaginations take actuals for their basis, like griffins or chimeras.
- The illusions of the mind start from a basis of some kind.
- Mind is an instrument of a cosmic ignorance, but does not act like a power of cosmic illusion.
- So there is either an original power of illusions with mind as its instrument, or a supreme truth-consciousness with imperfect mind capable of error and misrepresentation. The inquiry so far leads to the second conclusion.

Chapter 6: Reality and the Cosmic Illusion

Classical theory of illusion is that there is a sole reality, and the phenomenal world is an illusion. But the premises for this do not hold up. The true premise is that an eternal oneness supports an eternal dynamism, and there are multiple real statuses of being and consciousness. So the real question is how these statuses (knowledge and ignorance) arose, and what is the relation between them.

Question: what is the nature of the reality and our perception?

- The question remains of the nature of the reality, the validity of it and what it presents to our consciousness.
- It might be maintained that all the truths, possibilities of the cosmic system are put forth by Maya.

- Reality may be real, but the individual and the perception be an illusion.
- Then energy remains as the sole reality.
- Seeing the percipient, perception, and percept as a construction of karma led Buddhism to its affirmation of the non-being, void.

Classical theory of illusionism

- A sole existence is the only reality.
- Then how does the illusion come into being?
- If all that is, is Brahman, then the power to bring the illusion into being must be a power of Brahman. The illusion must have some kind of existence.
 - *Then it is at the same time real and unreal, existent and non-existent.*
- If Brahman is the observing consciousness, then the illusion could not persist, since Brahman is conscious only of its own existence.
- If Maya is in some way real, then Brahman could be the observing consciousness.
 - *Then there must be a double status of Brahman-consciousness, one of the sole reality, the other of the constructions.*
- These unrealities cannot be made of the same substance; they are created by the perceiving action of Brahman—the perception is a half-real creator of unreal percepts.

Maya as the sole conscious power of Brahman

- If there is not the dual consciousness, and Maya is the sole conscious power, then:
 - *Either Maya is a subjective (and unreal) action of Brahman.*
 - *Or Maya is a power of cosmic imagination, creating names and forms out of nothing.*
- But then imagination would be the sole power of the eternal; and what would compel it to create all this?
- The idea of a purely subjective unreal reality comes from our distinction of objective and subjective.
- But this could not exist in a Brahman where there is no subject and object, so it looks like an imposition by our mind.
- Or it creates a dualism between the being and consciousness of Brahman, which is not tenable.

Dual consciousness and Brahman

- Cannot be valid for the supreme existence, because this imposes our own principle of ignorance on the eternal self-awareness.
- It must be a self-awareness coexisting with a voluntary will to erect a world of illusions that take place only in the illusory world itself.
- This implies a need or urge or will to create the drama; but this is a contradiction of the static nature of Brahman.



- It is not credible that the sole power of the reality would be to create something contrary to itself.

Maya as absolutely unreal

- This gets rid of the duality problem, by saying that the universe is non-existent, Maya is unreal.
- But we are still bound to ask how it came into being or manages to exist.

Observing consciousness as the individual

- If Brahman is not the percipient, then it must be the individual.
- But since the individual is itself an illusion, this deprives everything of significance, including spiritual existence and our salvation from Maya.
- If the individual and its salvation is real, then a reality has been attributed to something that belongs to the illusion.
- If the individual is also an illusion, and it is a reflection of Brahman that is caught and released, then the question arises whose consciousness suffers. It cannot be Brahman.

Individual and percept are unreal, but Maya acquires a certain reality

- But for whom does it acquire reality, and for whom does it cease?
- The real being of Brahman must in some sense be projected into the world of Maya.
- Or if the world is imposed on Brahman, it must come from somewhere—from Brahman.
- This drives us back to the dual being or consciousness of Brahman, and the only answer is that it is a mystery.

Illusion consciousness that is part of the reality:

Upanishads

- From the four-fold Brahman of the Upanishads.
 - *Pure self, absorbed, superconscious, free, silent.*
 - *Sleep self, deep sleep, massed consciousness, the origin of cosmic existence.*
 - *Dream self, all subtle, subjective, or supraphysical experience.*
 - *Waking self, the field of Maya, physical experience.*
- Maya is real because it is the self's experience of the self, but it is unreal because it is a transient state.
- There is a multiplicity of status of being.
- But the Upanishads do not say this is a creation of an unreality or an illusion; on the contrary, they say that the Brahman becomes all these beings.
- And these states seem to be figurative names for the passage of mind to another consciousness.

Failure of the premises

- All of the above fail to establish illusion as conclusive.
- They only make it conceivable.
- The theory of illusion gets rid of one contradiction, but creates irreconcilable terms.

True premise

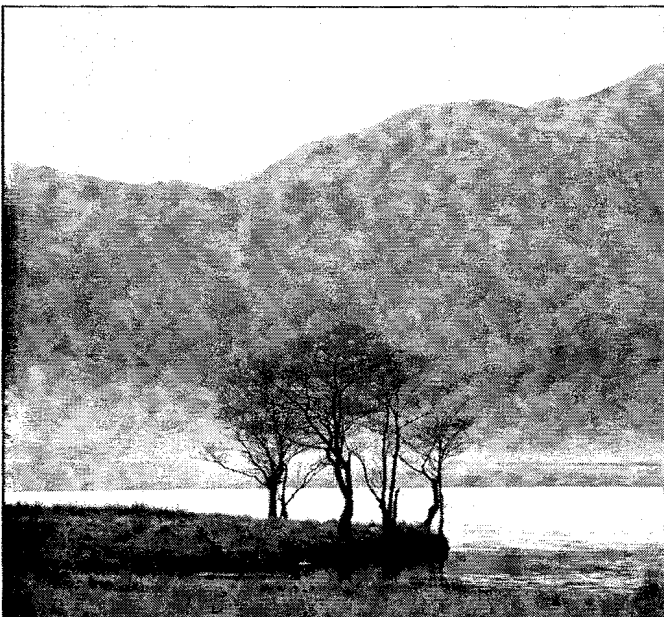
- Reality is an eternal oneness that supports an eternal dynamism.
- Multiple real statuses of consciousness of Brahman.
- Shankara takes a step towards this with a qualified reality for Maya.
- But the question of the nature and extent of this reality arises again.
- Once any reality is conceded to ourselves and the universe, it should be a true reality within its limits.
- The cosmic can only exist by dependence on the supracosmic, time on the eternal.

Temporary as evidence of unreality

- Analogy of the pot, made of earth, being a temporary form.
- But the pot is real by virtue of the earth being real.
- So the cosmic is a different order of the real from the supracosmic; time is not cancelled out of existence by the timeless eternity.
- Basis of this is the concept of reality as immutable.
- But there is no reason not to suppose that the reality can contain in itself an eternal force of being, and that it can be simultaneous with the immutable.
- Beings may be temporary, but they are real as long as they endure.

Experience of silence as realization of the infinite

- This is where we normally feel the infinite; so it is reasoned that all action limits the perception of the infinite.
- But this looks only at our mental perception.





- If we get into the inner being, our true self, action does not limit or bind.
- The limitation is imposed by our inner spiritual being on our outer, not a bondage on the ever-free spirit.

Conflict between intuition of reality, and intellectual reasoning about phenomena

- Felt most strongly in the philosophy of Shankara, as follows:
 - *Transcendence is self-existent, immutable, and the world is temporal.*
 - *Reality manifests as self.*
 - *The creative Maya of the self constructs the temporary world.*
 - *The world is imposed through our concepts/percepts on the self.*
 - *Reality appears in the phenomena as the self of the individual.*
 - *When individuality is dissolved by intuitive knowledge, the phenomenal being is released, and no longer subject to Maya.*
 - *The world continues to exist as the creation by the self's Maya.*
- This puts everything into relation, but is not a solution.
- If the individual can enter into the transcendence, he must be a reality of that transcendence.

Suprarational nature of the transcendence

- If transcendence is seizable only by suprarational intuition, then the mystery of the universe is also suprarational.
- The intellectual reason creates the contradiction, but cannot solve it.
- The truth of the world must be seen from the superconscience.

Progressive self-expression

- The reality does not reveal itself in its forms because it is a progressive manifestation, an evolving development.
- In this sense we can say that it is that and not that.
- It is indicative of a will to creation, self-expression, the necessity to see itself in time, a force of being, of power in action.
- The one thing that is unreal is the sense of separateness, but this is a pragmatic necessity for the surface consciousness to operate.
- Entire separateness is not necessary for individual reality.

General problems with a theory of illusion

- It nullifies everything: ourselves, the universe, all knowledge, all experience, even spiritual experience.
- This is what led the Buddhists to deny the reality of the self, as a construction of the mind.

- This ultimately does not account for our existence and world existence.
- It is an escape, not a solution, and erects a separation from nature, not a fulfillment of nature.

Final test is spiritual experience, not reason

- The experience that illusionism is based on (sense of pure selfhood) is powerful, and valid.
- The question is whether this is one among many, or the final realization.
- There is another experience which is said to have a greater divine unity and integral reality.
- All spiritual experiences are true, but they need a reconciliation.
- In the passage from mental to overmental, a many-sided unity is the leading experience.
- If illusion is not obligatory, that leaves us free to explore a more plastic course of thought.
- We can concentrate on the problem of the knowledge and the ignorance.

Essential reality and our experience

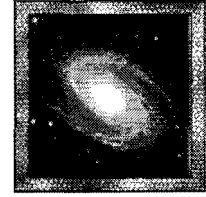
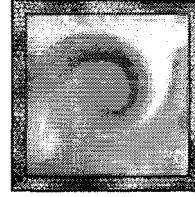
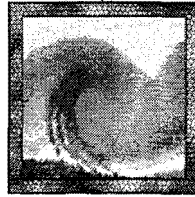
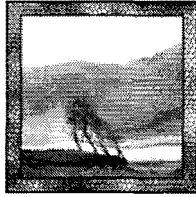
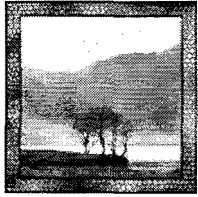
- Senses give us a practical base for experience, but science often contradicts the senses.
- Each kind of probing (scientific, psychological, spiritual) brings up a greater order of the real.
- The reason has to make selections and distinct definitions.
- But when seen integrally, phenomenal reality would take on a different appearance than when viewed by the reason.
- The canons of reason would appear to be partial constructions, both real and unreal; but this would not make the world itself unreal.

Original and ultimate consciousness

- Would be unitarian, all-embracing.
- Would see complementaries, not contraries, in the finite/infinite, individual/cosmic.
- On this basis, a world-creation is natural and normal and inevitable.
- But is this true only of an absolute, cosmic consciousness?
- The absolute can be approached through negation, affirmation, delight, etc.
- This can only be accounted for if the absolute is so far above our experience that it can correspond to all of these.

Being and existence

- A distinction is sometimes made between being and existence.
- But if self is real, the thoughts, states, etc. that lead to it cannot be unreal.



Forms of one reality. (Image series by Vishnu Eschner)

- Only explanation is that the forms are real, but a different order of reality.
- All manifestation depends upon consciousness as well as being.
- Each status (involved inconscient, superconscience, undifferentiated) has a reality and a power of consciousness proper to its level.

Unreality as a formation of consciousness

- Even if there is no absolute unreality, there is still a power of ignorance.
- The mind can conceive of things that are not real.
- Where does the ignorance begin and end? Does the removal of ignorance remove the world?
- Our consciousness is a mixture of true and false; it is a half-comprehension, not a mix of unreal and real.
- If the world has an evolutionary principle, then a greater manifestation is possible.
- Mind insists on a standard of fact, of actuality.
- Yet new realities can emerge, other truths; even what is nowhere actual may be potential; it can be not unreal but unrealized.
- So the real question is the origin of the ignorance and inconscience, and the relation of knowledge and ignorance to the original superconscience.

Chapter 7: The Knowledge and the Ignorance

If mind were the original form of consciousness, then illusion might be the source of the world. But the integral view (from the Vedas), is that ignorance is a limited form of knowledge.

- The central question is how the knowledge and the ignorance coexist, since reality is one, but our practical basis is one of laboring through ignorance.
- Seven principles of existence are one in their fundamental reality, but here the world is based on an original ignorance laboring toward knowledge.
- In the reality there seems no reason for such an ignorance.
- But in practical terms for us, our experience is a subjection to blind force and original ignorance, where the inconscient seems the beginning and the end.

- Most people turn away from hope of a full success, of ordered harmony.
- The materialist, the religionist, and the philosophic mystic all reject the possibility here.
- But because there are two sides, the bridging ought to be possible.
- Our intuition of this success lacks a firm basis.
- We recognize the dualism, and then an irreconcilable opposition.
- So the central question becomes the matter of the co-existence of the knowledge and the ignorance.
- Separation, with its roots in the dividing nature of mind, is the very soul of ignorance.

Declaring the problem insoluble

- Thinkers such as Buddha have refused to consider the metaphysical problem, or declared it insoluble.
- They state that it is a simple fact, and we have to recognize the means of escape.
- But without solving the root question, we have no way to know if the remedies are correct.
- And the nature of the human, as thinker, is to know.
- The first origin of the ignorance is beyond the mind, because the mind lives in the ignorance, but this is true of the fundamental truth of all things.

Ignorance in the Veda and Upanishad

- In the Veda, ignorance is the absence of the divine eye of perception; it is the non-perceiving principle in our consciousness; a limited or false knowledge based on the fragmentary; it is the undivine Maya creating false mental forms and appearances.
- It is a dividing mental knowledge which does not grasp the unity, essence of things, but instead works on separate phenomena.
- In this conception, ignorance is a kind of knowledge, but limited and open to falsehood.
- Upanishad gave the antinomy of Vidya and Avidya.
- These more philosophic terms began to separate the two.
- This naturally went to its extreme analytic view, where there is a pure opposition between the two, where Vidya is pure knowledge, and Avidya is pure ignorance, a creation of illusions and delusions, and the world can have no real being.



Integral view of ignorance and knowledge

- Departs from the dialectical Upanishad and returns to the Vedantic.
- This admits the sole reality of Brahman, and the fact of our current ignorance.
- But does not admit the two as independent, equal powers, in which case the possibility of cosmic illusion comes in again.
- The solution must be reached not by analysis of ideas alone, but total observation of all facts of consciousness, including those above or below the surface.

Scope of the effort

- Dialectical intellect cannot judge essential or spiritual truths; for that, we have to see the origin and scope of consciousness and mentality.
- We have to approach being through consciousness.
- But in ourselves, consciousness seems identical with mind.

If mind were the original consciousness

- Then illusion might be the source of all things.
- And the world could be a subjective construction, or mind the matrix where such a construction is made by a power such as Maya.
- But this imposes a cosmic imagination or illusion consciousness on the eternal reality.
- Maya would be the power of Brahman to delude itself, and mind its power to take that delusion as reality.
- But if Brahman is essentially one, this trick would not be possible.
- If the fundamental reality is a mystery, this might be true, but it might equally be true that the infinite is capable of manifesting many processes, all true.

Mind's power for knowledge

- The mind has a power for knowledge as well as ignorance; even if it is only images or representations it creates, still, these can be reflections of truth.
- If mind does transmit or receive other realities, then we have to examine other supramental and inframental powers of consciousness.

Duality, multiplicity, and consciousness

- Unity is always apparent, below the surface of multiplicity; all resolves itself into one being, consciousness, delight.
- This holds for all dualities: pain/pleasure resolves to Ananda, weakness to force, etc.
- In the same way, what we call ignorance may really be a power of the one divine knowledge-will; it would be a limitation of knowledge, not its opposite.

Three forms of conscious action

- First, a consciousness behind all, aware of itself, the divine knowledge.

- Second, the extreme opposite, an effective dynamic, creative inconscience.
- Third, a partial, limited self-awareness, which we call ignorance.

Next steps

- To verify the interpretation of cosmic existence that we started from, that ignorance is a limitation of knowledge, we have to observe the structure of our surface consciousness, and its relation to what is above and below it.

Chapter 8: Memory, Self-Consciousness, and the Ignorance

A consideration of memory leads us to see an eternal conscious being who supports the action of mind in time on a basis of stable consciousness free from time. Our surface being is really our deeper self adventuring through time, using memory as coin of experience.

Memory

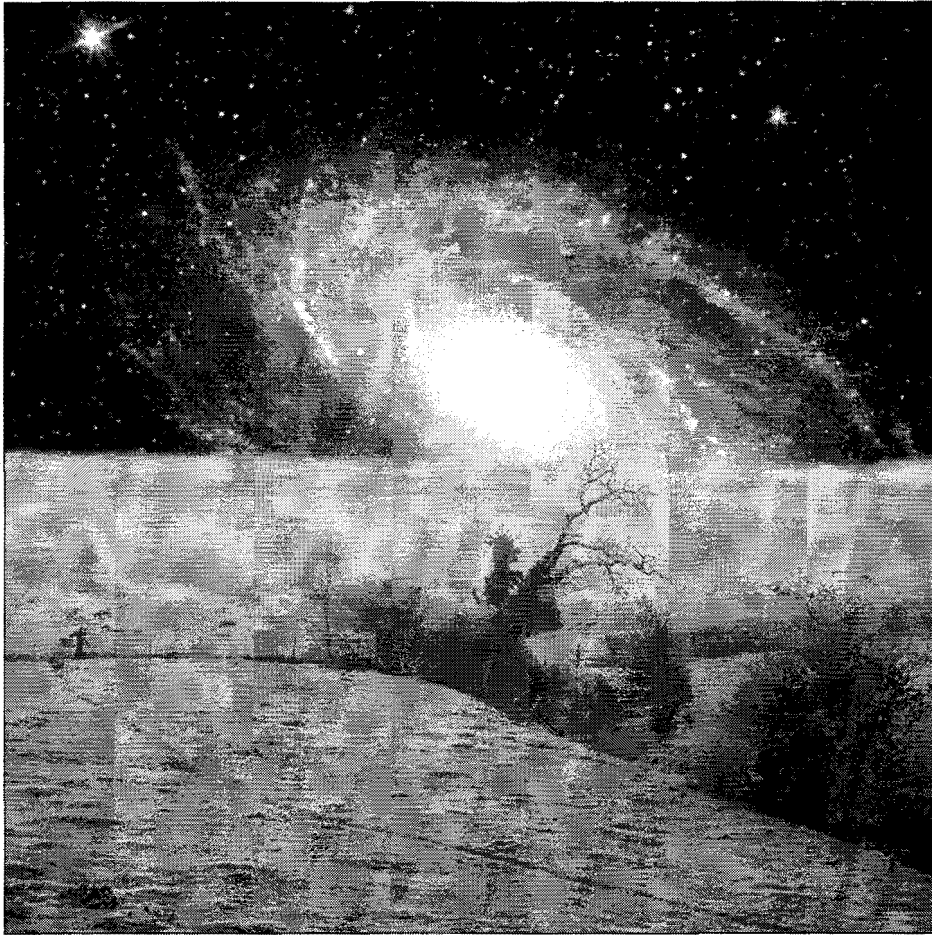
- We need to look at the essential movements in our current awareness.
- Memory is often given great stress as the thing that holds our personality together.
- Memory is one of the workings of consciousness, but not the only one.
- There are two kinds: memory of self, and memory of experience.

Memory of self

- Memory of self applies itself to the fact of our continuing in time, and says "I was in the past, so I will be in the future."
- It is a sense of persistent continuity, and can lead to a conviction of eternity.
- The surface mind cannot determine whether this sense of eternity is real or not; our belief in our immortality is only a faith.
- In fact it is our sense of a continuous succession of moments, and it is really time that is eternal.
- If there is an eternal existence, then, it must be beyond time.

Mind as ignorance

- The one fact that emerges from these considerations is that the nature of the mind is ignorance; it is limited in its memory of past, inference of future.
- If the real being is eternal in time, then we do not know it; and if it is a time-transcending eternity, we do not know that by mind either.
- So if there is a power of knowledge in being, it must be different from mind.



Galaxy rise. (Collage by Vishnu Eschner)

- These two powers must be either disconnected, or have some connection.

Larger view

- The larger view would be that the superconscious sees time within itself, while the ignorant consciousness sees itself in time.
- It would not make sense that the superconscious would be incapable of knowing time and space and causality; that would be another kind of ignorance.
- So the larger (Vedantic) view is that we are one conscious existence with a double phase.
- When the Upanishad says that the simultaneous knowledge of Brahman as both the knowledge and the ignorance, it means that the reality is aware of the timeless and things in time. Either one by itself is a kind of partial knowledge.

Purpose of memory

- Because mind can be aware only of the present, it uses memory, imagination, and thought as devices to represent to itself things beyond the present moment.

- Because the one thing we know directly is self-consciousness in the present moment, we are tempted to call all the rest not just phenomenon, but illusion.

Stable consciousness behind mind

- Behind mind is a stable consciousness, which we experience first in its immobile status, in which there is no binding division between itself in the past, present, or future.
- This can become alone real to us, with the rest seen as non-existent.
- But the real self is obviously capable of both mobility in time and immobility beyond time.
- A consideration of memory of experience leads to the same end.

Time and being

- Time is the great bank of conscious existence turned into values of experience and action.
- Ignorance is a way of making self-knowledge useful for time-experience.
- Our surface being is really the deeper self adventuring through time.



Chapter 9: Memory, Ego, and Self-Experience

Memory and ego are devices used by the mental being; they do not constitute direct or continuous experience of past, present, future. There is in fact one being, but the immutable self is not experienced by the surface mental consciousness.

Surface consciousness

- Direct self-consciousness of the mental being is not affected by past, present, future.
- Can also regard time experience reflected, or see it as the cause of experience.
- This is the surface time-self, which leads to the conclusion of Buddhists that all is a stream.
- Surface consciousness is purely subjective, and in constant change.
- It sees this change as modification of its mental personality, and the source of causation.
- There are two parts: the mutable subjective states, and the changing environment.
- Memory simply reminds the surface self that it existed in the past, but memory alone does not constitute the ego-sense.

Four parts of mentality

- Object, act, occasion, subject.
- Also can be applied to subjective states.
- But in subjective states, the person and action are not sufficiently detached from each other, and also not from emotional movements.
- By detaching, we become aware first of the sheer ego, then of the witness self or mental Purusha.

One being

- There is one conscious being that throws itself up in waves of force.
- And in deeper knowledge perceives an immutable being, not phenomenal.
- The succession of phenomena are experienced not directly, but through the mental being.

Memory

- This brings in the device of memory, for it divides experience by moments of time.
- There is no need of memory in immediate mental experience; memory comes in when experience is related to succession in time.
- Because the past cannot be kept with us in the surface, we have to recover it through memory.
- Memory is not the essence of undivided or persistent experience.
- The division is not in experience itself, but by the observing mental consciousness.
- So in reality inner movements are a continuous flowing stream.

- Memory can prolong it, but does not cause it.
- Memory is the device that the mind uses to relate movements and coordinate them with the reason.

Ego sense

- Is a point of reference, a coordinate center.
- Memory reinforces it, but does not constitute it.
- Begins as sensation in the animal, but is a united mental action in humanity.
- It is nearer to self-knowledge than the memory and ego sense of the animal.
- Dissociation of personality shows the importance of memory.
- Hypnosis, other states also show the link.
- Mind sense is the basis, memory the thread, but all is coordinated by mind, which relates experience to an "I."

Ego as preparation

- Ego sense is a preparatory device for real self-knowledge.
- But is incomplete; based on superficial mental activity; only of individual experience; worked out by ignorance.
- True relation between being and becoming cannot be seized, because to the surface they always appear discordant.
- Just as ego-sense is a diminished form of a deeper truth, so also memory, imagination, perceptions are diminished forms of deeper powers.

Chapter 10: Knowledge by Identity and Separative Ignorance

Knowledge goes from identity in the absolute to separative ignorance on the surface. Opening to the subliminal is the critical movement in developing knowledge by direct contact, and the cosmic being.

Fourfold order of knowledge

- Knowledge by identity, by intimate direct contact, by separative direct contact, by indirect contact.
- Surface only has knowledge by identity in awareness of its own existence; it has no other content.
- Happens to some degree in knowledge of movements of our subjective consciousness.
- This identification is possible because the movements are becomings of our being.
- But also a detached observation is possible.
- In the surface, three movements come together: a kind of knowledge by identity, by direct contact, and a wholly separative knowledge dependent on them.

Thought and knowledge by identity

- Separation of thinker and thought more difficult; but a simultaneous action and conscious direction can be done.



- But still, the knowledge of our inner movements is of a double nature, separation and direct contact.
- Separative is method of the reason, intimate is method of the sensation, emotional mind.

Knowledge of external things

- Entirely separative and indirect, through the senses.
- But there is a sense-mind and vital intuition which intervene, equating the image with the object or with the idea of the object.
- But the image and the intuition are limited.
- Finally, supplemented and coordinated by the reason.
- Even so, this knowledge is narrow and imperfect.

Limitation of surface state

- Evidently a mix of knowledge and ignorance.
- Cause is our concentration on the surface.
- And ego-individual has to defend itself against the cosmic infinite, shuts it out as not-self.
- Senses are provided by the body so that we can know and master the external to some degree.
- Knowledge gained is pragmatic and limited.
- This self-limitation is only a provisional means of the consciousness-force, to establish an instrumental formation in the ignorance.
- This can only grow towards self knowledge as we open to a greater inner existence, and break down the walls of ego and sense.

Awakening to inner realities

- Prior necessity before opening to the cosmic.
- Surface knowledge of self is only a sum of sections, and vitiated by the vital being's self-affirmation, desire, ego.
- This adds an organized self-deception to the organized ignorance.
- Inner has a larger mental, vital, subtle-physical being.
- Opening this up, we find the separate sources and pure operations and powers, which on the surface are vague, confused, and intermixed.
- Contradictions of the surface are largely the result of mutually discordant tendencies of these parts.
- Once the inner is opened, a harmonization by the mental being or psychic being is possible.
- And also the ability to distinguish what arises from within and what comes in from the outside.

Knowledge of the inner being

- Same elements as the surface, but greater clarity, more powerful instrumentation, better arrangement.
- Knowledge by identity deepens and enlarges.
- Greater detachment and control.
- More accurate mental feeling and vision.
- But also the possibility of a greater, because more self-affirming ignorance, because it is not an integral knowledge. May be contact with powers of the ignorance.

Contact with the world

- Subliminal has larger direct contact with the world.
- Images, scenes, symbols of powers or potentialities.
- Here is where telepathy, clairvoyance, etc. are located.
- But can be confusing or misleading.

Direct contact with other consciousness and objects

- Through a self-communicating impact of thoughts, feelings, forces.
- Fragmentarily called "psychic" phenomena.
- Abnormal to the surface, but normal to the subliminal consciousness.
- Can only be truly explored and explained by opening up the wall to the inner.

Surface knowledge of others

- This is only partial, through sympathy, mutual experience, inference.
- But there is a constant mental, vital, subtle-physical interchange between all who meet or live together.
- When the subliminal opens, this can become conscious.

Dealing with world forces

- On surface we get premonitions, attractions, warnings, suggestions.
- Inner being has a greater action to sense coming events, distant happenings.
- Still a mixture of knowledge and ignorance, because it is knowledge by direct contact, not identity.
- This can be cured by going deeper, to the psychic being.

Exact character of the deeper cognition

- Knowledge by direct contact with the object or other consciousness.
- Which is itself an outcome of a secret knowledge by identity.
- In subliminal, arises as a thing remembered or seen, self-evident.
- Unlike on the surface, where it arises as seen from outside, learned.
- Inner is separated from the cosmic by the more transparent sheaths of the mental, vital, subtle-physical beings, as opposed to the body and senses that the surface self uses.
- These form the circumconscient, which allows the inner to deal with contacts before they enter.
- The circumconscient can be widened indefinitely, and eventually can enter into the cosmic being.
- This is the merger of the ego into the world-being.

Cosmic consciousness

- Knowledge here is founded upon identity.
- One with all that it contains.
- There is a power that prevents it from being imprisoned in the objects it contains.
- Individualization is proper to the object, but not the cosmic being.



- On the side of action, moves in masses, waves, currents constantly constituting beings and objects.
- Individuals are really dynamos for reception and propagation of these forces.
- In the individual the selection of these is necessarily incomplete.

Knowledge by identity

- To get this, must go farther, into the subconscious or the superconscient.
- The subconscious is blind; must be done in the superconscient.
- In the timeless existence, the being is aware absolutely, without need of act of knowledge.
- This is the essential knowledge by identity.
- Another status can develop, a subordinate awareness by inclusion and indwelling.
- Becomes the triple knowledge: all in the self; all as the self; the self in all.
- Which leads to knowledge as we know it, with separation of knower, knowledge, object.

Tertiary powers

- Enter in when the subject draws back from itself as object.
- Vision, feeling, conception, emotion, joy.
- In origin these are essential, not instrumental—they are the luminous self-aware substance made active on itself.



Nataraj. (Photo by Vishnu Eschner)

Origin of separative knowledge

- Arises when the sense of differentiation overwhelms the sense of identity.
- Ends with the loss of identity.
- Even so, there is some power of the original knowledge.
- At that point, externalized existence has to be included by an attained knowledge, a concentration.
- All the powers are there (penetration, contact), but limited.
- This is the first separative ignorance, a knowledge by direct contact.
- It is native to the inner being and its main instrumentation, but foreign to the surface.

Entire separation

- Direct contact is entirely veiled.
- Nature then uses indirect means: physical organs of sense, nerves, mind.
- Also reason, intelligence, intuition assist.
- Ultimately, the inconscience is a vast involved trance, but has still a concealed knowledge by identity.
- This acts through an automatic energy, a mute and involved real-idea, an intrinsic knowledge.

Material existence

- Has a material individuality, with a subliminal presence determining its operations.
- From outside, things (plants, animals) have properties, but no faculty or means of communication.
- This opens into life vibrations, then overtly conscious life.
- This then has a growing ability to receive and respond.
- Sense, life-mind, emotion, thought all emerge.
- But all are obscured by the separative ignorance, until the subliminal is open.

Chapter 11: The Boundaries of the Ignorance

In our surface mentality we are ignorant of our own inner being, of the world around, and of our superconscient being. The world currents run in us, but we think that these things take place separately.

Separative knowledge

- A succession of waves from below and above, which become mentalized cognition.
- Coordinated by perception, memory, intelligence, and gathered into consistency around the ego-sense, which gives it a first basis of coherence.
- The ego-sense and ego-idea maintain a constructed symbol of self, so the surface mentality is always ego-centric.

Surface consciousness

- Small part of sensations and perceptions used by surface mentality.



- Greater part is used by nature, and stored, to be used subconsciously.
- We are even ignorant of a great part of our own individual being; of our subconscious, or subliminal, we are unaware.

Inner being

- Perceives all that touches us or enters our environment, and retains everything.
- Can grasp significance immediately.
- Perceptions are not limited to the physical senses.

Limits of inner being, and relation of subconscious to the subliminal

- Subconscious is not synonymous with subliminal; inside there is a greater consciousness.
- Mind is largely unaware of body and vital movements.
- But this is because we identify mind with consciousness, so that all consciousness seems to be mental.
- In reality, life, body have a consciousness of their own. These are submental, not really subconscious.
- There is a gradation of nervous and sensation consciousness, different from the mind.
- True subconscious is below this, in the inconscient.

Subliminal self

- Full possession of a mind, life-force, subtle-physical sense.
- Also a direct awareness of being, which exceeds the physical organs.
- Only subconscious in the sense of not bringing it all to the surface.
- In reality, it is a secret circumconscient, because it envelops and supports.

Three elements in our being

- 1) Submental and subconscious.
- 2) Subliminal or inner being.
- 3) Waking consciousness.

Superconscient

- High above both surface and inner, and envelops both.
- A supreme reality, God, oversoul, spirit.
- Ultimately, it is our own highest and deepest self.
- Reflected in ourselves as Sacchidananda; has descended into the inconscient; dwells in the inner being.
- An ether which constitutes, contains, overroofs, determines the movements of the sea.
- The succession of moments is only one of its modes; not limited by time.
- But the surface mind knows only our physical birth.

Ignorance of the surface mind

- Ignorant of both the superconscient, and the world around.
- Evidence of this ignorance is our treating the world as separate.

- Also thinks of God and even subliminal as separate from self.
- Also limited in consciousness to a single body in space.
- We imagine that we live, think by ourselves; but the world lives, thinks in us.

Chapter 12: The Origin of the Ignorance

Being is unitary, so ignorance must be a movement of the one conscious reality. Just as the experience of passive and active Brahman must be a seeming alternation, not a fundamental one, so the ignorance cannot be primal and original—it must be a partial and relative movement of the reality.

How does this self-limiting knowledge or separative ignorance arise in an absolute consciousness?

- Being cannot be ignorant of itself.
- But we are certainly ignorant of ourselves and things.
- Even if mind is a thing of Maya, still, Maya must be a power of Brahman.
- So ignorance must be a part of the movement of the one, knowingly adopted.
- Cannot say that Jivatman and supreme are not one—easier to accept the fact of unity in difference.

Unknowable

- May be a supreme state of Sacchidananda, beyond conception.
- May be the inmost sense of Nirvana.
- Out of absolute nothingness, nothing can come. So the being must be an absolute potentiality.
- May be an absolute chaos, where anything may be true.
- But with this starting point, all opinions become equally valid or invalid.

True starting point

- An absolute in which all truths can stand and find reconciliation.
- That absolute is in its manifest nature Sacchidananda.
- Solution must be an action that limits knowledge in such a way as to create ignorance.
- Since ignorance is a creation of the force of consciousness, we must consider that force.
- In us the force of consciousness can be applied to ourselves or to external objects. In Sacchidananda, this distinction would not apply.
- Also the distinction between conscious and subconscious would not apply.

Relation of the force to the immobility

- In us there seems to be an active consciousness, and a passive one existing only as a status.
- Is the force really absent in the passive?



- By opening to the passivity in us, we can find a greater power working through us.
- In the static, there is a concentration of consciousness, of power.
- It is equally by force of Tapas that force of being is dispensed and drawn back; the passive and active are not different and incompatible.
- In our minds we make the distinction between passive and active Brahman, but in reality there is one Brahman.
- The opposition of passive and active is true only in relation to the activities of its consciousness.
- The alternation between Pravrtti and Nirvrtti happens because only part of our being performs the movement.

Integral reality of Brahman

- Cannot pass alternately between passive and active, because if so, while the universe existed, there would be no passive Brahman, or vice versa.
- So both are simultaneous; the seeming alternation is by some partial activity in us.
- Brahman cannot be unaware of both or separated from its own activities.
- Which again means that the origin of the ignorance cannot be in the integral Brahman; it must be in some partial action of our being.
- Which means that there can be no original and primal ignorance.

Nature of ignorance

- If it is a power of Brahman, must be a transcendent knowledge.
- Can only be a partial and relative movement.
- Physical body is the outward sign and lowest basis of the apparent division.
- In the soul-consciousness, obstacles to unity lessen.
- So division is not inherent in multiplicity of souls.
- And since Brahman is aware of the multiplicity of souls, it cannot be the origin of ignorance.
- Ignorance comes in at a later stage, in some self-absorbed concentration of Tapas, conscious force.
- In us this takes the nature of mind identifying itself with separative movements.

Chapter 13: Exclusive Concentration of Consciousness-Force and the Ignorance

Ignorance is really a positive power of the infinite for exclusive concentration. It is required for the individual to exist and evolve in the cosmos. The ignorance of inconscient matter is complete, but superficial, and underneath it is the awareness of the eternal.

Ignorance as exclusive concentration

- Ignorance must be a subordinate phenomenon, an exclusive concentration, taking place in the force of active being, Purusha.
- This is the only possibility that squares with the facts of existence.
- Ignorance is not the natural character of the soul, but rather the outcome of some particularizing action of conscious force, absorbed in its works.

Nature of concentration

- Four states of concentration, Tapas.
- 1) The essential, superconscious silence, self-gathered of the eternal in itself.
- 2) Total consciousness of Sacchidananda, a total-multiple, integral, supramental.
- 3) Multiple, globalizing overmental.
- 4) Separative, characteristic of the ignorance. This is not a denial of the spirit's awareness, but one form of the self-gathering of Tapas. It erects a wall limiting itself to a single field, so that all else appears outside itself.

Mental concentration

- Ordinarily by the person we mean the sum of apparent inner and outer movement, the stream of energy in time. Behind this there is the sea of consciousness which is aware of the stream, but not vice-versa.
- Tapas in the superficial person is concentrated on the surface, and all the rest it has put behind.
- The sea is not ignorant, even if the wave is absorbed in its movement.
- This is the limited, practical self-oblivion, the exclusive concentration.

Living in the present

- Even though the stream is capable of acting only by force of its past force, it yet lives absorbed in the moment.
- The true consciousness within holds the past active, and can open to future knowledge.
- This living in the present is the second absorption of exclusive concentration.

Pragmatic effects

- By memory and anticipation we link to the past and future, with an ego-sense and intuition of self tying them together.
- Our existence in the moment is a practical truth of our being, but not the whole truth.
- The knowledge behind really determines all.
- Analogy of the person who plays a role (poet, soldier): success is due to the putting aside the rest of oneself, but the stamp of the work depends on the whole person.
- The present actor is a force of being organized for a particular kind of action.



- Similar in kind to the deeper self-absorption, though the wall of separation is less complete and enduring.
- Power of exclusive concentration can extend to the particular action; we can become lost in a work; a person becomes anger, or the force of inspiration.

Inconscience

- This power of concentration reaches its extreme in material nature.
- Here the universal consciousness of Prakriti is bound in a swoon of concentration, unable to go back to its real self.
- The executive force becomes unaware of the conscious being, Purusha.
- This too is superficial, like the waking consciousness, but it is complete.
- Only through evolution does it come back to itself.
- In general, such ignorance is effective and valid within its bounds, but phenomenal, partial, superficial—not essentially real, not integral.

Reason for the ignorance

- Without it the world would have been impossible.
- It was the only way that the human could exist in the stream of time and work out relations from the knot of individuality.
- The egotistic ignorance was necessary to protect the individual from the light and largeness of the universal; behind this defense, a temporal individuality can be worked out.
- Without this exclusive concentration, the manifestation would be limited to the higher worlds, or a typical non-evolving cosmos.
- It was needed so that the spirit could have the joy of self-finding in the apparent opposites of its being—to realize the Ananda of the self in other conditions than the supracosmic.
- It was a purposeful descent, to create out of matter a temple of divinity.

Mind and integrality

- Ignorance is in the apparent Prakriti, not the soul.
- And there, only on the plane of mind.
- Yet the integral force is present, simply occult to the frontal awareness.
- To remove the veil, conscious force uses a reverse action of the exclusive concentration.
- It quiets the frontal movement in the individual and concentrates on the inner being.
- Once done, it can resume its integral consciousness.
- This power of self-limitation is one of the powers we should expect from the infinite.
- The ignorance is a natural capacity of variation in knowledge, one possible poise.

Chapter 14: The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong, and Evil

Origin of falsehood and evil is a limited consciousness growing out of nescience, personal attachment to the limitation, a consciousness governed by the life-ego. The true solution is to find the soul, become one with all beings, realize the Divine, and heal the division between nature and supernature.

Question of evil

- If ignorance is a form of self-limiting knowledge, then what of the problem of evil?
- There must be some necessity for contrary phenomena; they cannot come about by chance, nor a mystery to the indwelling spirit.
- Can be approached by three points of view: relation to the absolute; in cosmic workings; in the individual.
- Falsehood and evil are not in the absolute, but results of the ignorance.
- So there can be no absolute of falsehood—but there can be no obstacle to the absoluteness of truth and good.

Relativity of truth

- Truth is relative in us because our knowledge is surrounded by ignorance.
- No mental statement can be altogether true; mental word is not directly real.
- But there is a direct action of consciousness that can have a limited but authentic knowledge by identity.
- Ignorance is a limitation of knowledge, but knowledge rises from a native existence in the depths.

Good and evil

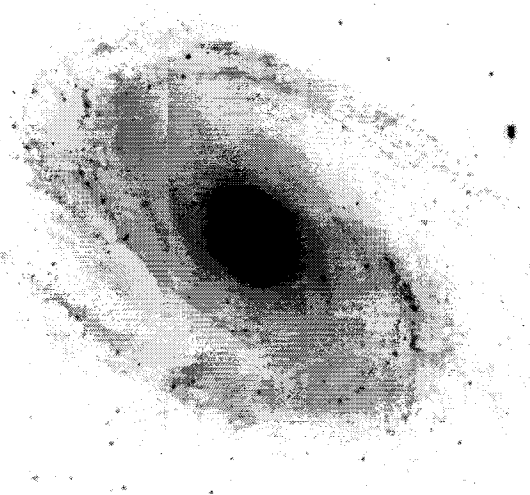
- Similarly, good exists by a true consciousness but evil only by wrong consciousness.
- Human and historical values of good and evil are relative, but this is a circumstance and not the fundamental truth. The relation is not mutual, but more like light and shadow.

Possibility of evil

- Once a good manifests, its opposite becomes possible.
- This is only in cosmic manifestation, not the timeless being, and only by limitation of the good.
- Where there is oneness or sufficient mutuality, harmony and truth will be sovereign.
- There is no inevitable cosmicity of falsehood and evil.

Where opposites enter in

- In the mental/vital planes, or only on the physical?
- Traditional knowledge tells us that there are supraphysical beings attached to ignorance and darkness.
- Supported by experience.
- Whatever is formulated in the cosmos has forces to support it.



- The forces of light and darkness struggle: this has given rise to idea of titan/gods, Asura, Zoroastrian, etc.

Cosmic forces

- If we go beneath the surface consciousness, we find that we are moved by forces not in our control.
- These seem to belong not just to the physical, but to the planes of mind and life.
- Seem often to surpass human measures, and a person may be pushed to immense excesses.
- But this is immense, not absolute.
- Their appearance does not extend beyond the lower life planes; they are creations of life or of mind in life.

Emergence from the inconscient

- World of pure matter is neutral.
- Duality first begins with life, vital mind, with sensation. Here is the sense of evil.
- But even in animal life the moral and mental idea is missing.
- May be thought that these are mental constructions, but although below and above morality is absent, it has a place in awakening us in the middle ground.

Awakening to good in the human

- First in the vital, as sensational.
- Then utilitarian and social.
- Then intellectual, rational, idea of law.
- But real sanction is deeper, spiritual, psychic.
- The soul-personality insists on the distinction, because it points always toward the higher light.
- It takes delight in all experiences, but it is the secret divine sense and essence.

How evil and falsehood arise in the inconscience

- Mind awakes in an indeterminate stuff of vital and physical consciousness.

- And life has to affirm itself against the principle of inanimate inertia, and the outside world.
- These give rise to the self-affirming vital/physical individual.
- The rise of consciousness in matter cannot be accounted for unless there is an inherent, native, concealed consciousness.

Emergence of consciousness

- In the animal, the conscious-force sends a modicum of intuition, which becomes instinct.
- Can err if intelligence enters in, or becomes mechanical.
- Other source is contact with the world, but in fact this depends on the subliminal latency.
- The subliminal has a direct contact, but the evolutionary intention is to evolve through a growing surface awareness.
- Mind slowly disengages itself from these automatisms.

Intelligence

- This adds conscious will and intention.
- Which interferes with intuition and instinct.
- The range is greatly widened, but so is the capacity for error.
- If it were always open to intuition, error would not be possible.
- But the hold of inconscience on the surface consciousness makes this impossible.

First general condition: surface nescience

- In the evolution, the conscious being works between two poles: a surface nescience and the secret consciousness-force.
- The surface works as a nescience trying to be conscious, and the means used is contact with the world.
- This releases a spark of awareness, but by receiving it imperfectly, the surface changes it and obscures it.
- So error is a necessary condition or step toward knowledge.
- At each step in mentality, different possibilities of fact, relation present themselves.
- Consciousness thus proceeds from the unknown to the known, and builds up a structure comparing past to new knowledge.

Second general condition: ego

- This is bent on vital self-affirmation; the surface mental individuality is ego-centric.
- This is a huge source of distortion, will to error, preference.
- In Sankhya terms, there is the tamasic physical, rajasic vital, and a sattwic mind.
- The tamasic physical is obscure, recalcitrant, inert to new ideas.



- The rajasic is defensive, violent, aggressive, passionate, insistent.
- The sattwic is open and balanced, but unable to enlarge itself completely, and still has a mental ego.
- The limitation by personality is an inevitable source of error.

Vital element

- Same is true in the realm of action, where the vital element is concerned with self-affirmation and satisfaction of desire, for possession, growth.
- This spirit of self-affirmation also comes into the realm of ideas and religion.
- Vital element is not itself evil; it affirms alike the good and the evil.

Summary

- Origin of falsehood and evil is a limited consciousness growing out of nescience, personal attachment to the limitation, a consciousness governed by the life-ego.
- Ego is a pragmatic fiction used by the cosmic force in its drive for self-expression.
- Because the will to expand and possess takes place in a separate ego, discord and conflict arise.
- Nature accepts these as necessary circumstances; evil as well as good is used, and evolutionary nature seems to have no preference for either.

How the evolutionary intention fulfills itself

- In mind, through selection and rejection, an ethical ideal or moral rule.
- But such standards are relative and symptomatic.
- Next, more profound motive is to reshape ourselves, our nature, according to an ideal.
- But because these ideals are selective, they cannot meet the call of the infinite.
- Then the only remedy is the push for escape, which is the way of religion.

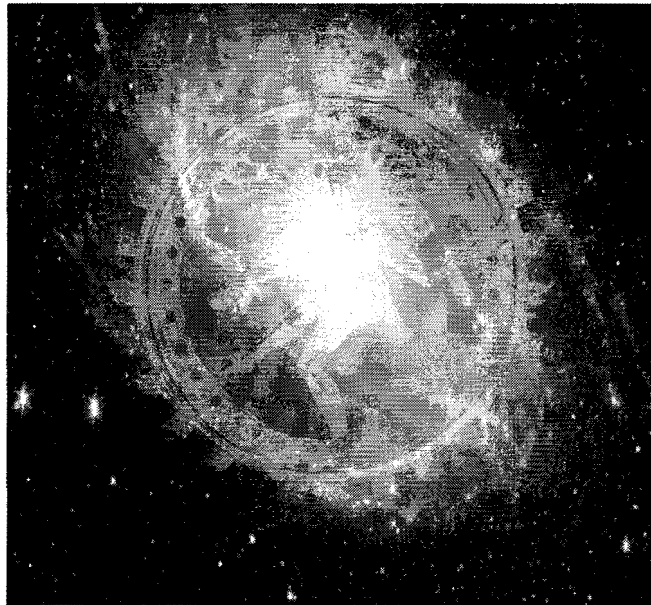
Solution: heal the divide of the ego

- Because the cause is our roots in the obscurity of the inconscient, the only true solution is a transformation of our nature.
- Because the cause is limited and separative consciousness, the solution must be an integration.
- First division to be healed is that of the ego division from others.
- But larger mind, heart, altruism is insufficient, because still essentially egotistic.
- True solution is to become one self with all beings.
- Even this must be oneness in the soul, not with their ignorance.

Three steps to achievement

- Discovery of the soul.
- Awareness of the eternal unborn self.

- Knowledge of the divine, cosmic, transcendent being, becoming channels of that Shakti.
- Lastly, healing the division between our nature and supernature.



"Knowledge of the divine, cosmic, transcendent being . . ."
(Digital collage by Vishnu Eschner)

Part II: Knowledge and the Spiritual Evolution

Chapter 15: Reality and the Integral Knowledge

Integral conception sees finite/infinite, many/one, etc. as complementary. Both the subjective and the objective must be known, in their entirety, and we must have freedom in our methods. The sevenfold ignorance must be replaced by a sevenfold knowledge.

Integral reality and the ignorance

- Boundaries of the ignorance are determined by our separative consciousness.
- Return to integrality is by overpassing the separateness.
- The knowledge is not new, but something to be uncovered.
- Integral consciousness is interpretative; it does not abolish the universe. It presupposes an integral reality.
- Absolute transcendence must also be transcended.
- Upanishads affirm the absolute, but also the cosmic and the reality in the individual.



- Absolute can be presented as an eternal sole being, or as an absolute that is not limitable by either positives or negatives.
- No rejection of the universe is inevitable. Such a rejection is a product of our mental consciousness passing beyond its limits.

Condemning the becoming

- Can be based on the partial, misleading reality of the relative universe.
- Supposes a fixed opposition.
- The inconscient is a sleep or prison.

Integral conception

- Sees finite/infinite, etc. as complementary, not opposites; two faces of one reality.
- Knowledge of the becoming is only ignorance because we are imprisoned in it.
- Brahman is not only featureless, but also the multiplicity.
- Details are the expression of it, and it finds itself there.
- To reveal the superconscient in the inconscient is the aim and delight of the Divine.

View that all is a creation of mind

- Objective reality is an illusion.
- All objects are merely mental structures.
- This view only true if we regard the surface as the whole of consciousness.

Creation out of consciousness

- Then everything is a subjective creation of that consciousness.
- Leads to a duality of being and consciousness.
- Also depends on whether the consciousness is of the nature of mind, or something else.

Creation as mind or truth consciousness

- Mind is obviously a secondary power, limited.
- A consciousness proceeding from the essence, and knowledge, would not be mind.
- The truth in this idea is that objects proceed from something within them and independent of the interpretation our minds give them.
- All things are symbols through which we approach the reality.
- The things themselves are not symbols, but rather realities.

Objective reality as the entire truth

- Physical existence has the sole reality; all else is derivative.
- Leaves much unexplained; looks only at one side of existence.

Subjectivity and objectivity

- Depend upon each other; are the reality looking at itself as subject or object.

- Objective is in fact only known through the subjective, through senses.
- Understanding and verification is necessary in both; but the supraphysical must have another method than the physical.
- Objective order of reality is only one; there are others.
- Subjective is known to oneself, but inward lives of others are known indirectly.
- This egocentric limitation of the physical mind, the requirement that experience be verified by common experience, is a recent standard, and a superstition of the physical mind.
- Refusing to inquire on different grounds is a kind of obscurantism.
- Inner discoveries cannot be brought before the tribunal of the common mind, just as scientific truths cannot be judged by untrained minds.
- The spirit must be free to sound the depths of inner reality.

Freedom and exploration

- Integral knowledge demands a freedom to explore all possible domains.
- The inner or occult is one great domain.
- Science itself, by bringing to light hidden formulas, is a kind of occultism.
- The objective as solely real takes its basis on matter.
- But even science shows that behind matter is energy.
- Such an interpretation is based on a one-sided concentration or preoccupation.
- In an integral knowledge, neither the inner nor the objective can be the sole basis.

Integral knowledge

- Must be the knowledge of the truth of all sides, separately and in relation.
- To get there, we had first to discover the extent of the ignorance.
- This take seven forms: 1) absolute: taking partial for the whole; 2) cosmic: taking constant mobility for the whole; 3) egoistic: taking ego for true self; 4) temporal: taking our moments in time as whole in time; 5) psychological: taking surface for whole existence; 6) constitutional: taking our constitution as mind/life/body; 7) practical: practical ignorance in thought, will, action.
- Integral knowledge cancels these seven through self-revelation.
- But it is not intellectual; it can only come through an evolution of our nature.
- Which results from a change in consciousness, in which will and endeavor have a part.



Chapter 16: The Integral Knowledge and the Aim of Life; Four Theories of Existence

The four theories are the supracosmic, terrestrial, other-worldly, integral. Taking into account the absolute as the origin, and involution/evolution, the only sense of life must be that of an evolution in consciousness towards a perfect expression of the spirit here and elsewhere.

Absolute as the origin

- An integral theory of the reality must also determine the aim of life.
- First, the absolute must be the origin and support of all things.
- It manifests in two terms, being and becoming; becoming can only know itself wholly when it knows itself as being.
- To do that is the supreme aim of our existence.

Triple aspect

- Second, that fundamental reality is a divine existence-consciousness-delight, both supracosmic and underlying the manifestation.
- Oneness includes an infinite plurality.
- The being presents to us in three poises: supracosmic, cosmic, and individual self.
- The multiplicity admits of a phenomenal division, an effectual ignorance.
- The triple aspect must be included in the total truth.
- Divine being is both personal and impersonal; the soul must grow into this truth of itself.

Descent and involution

- Seven gradations, with spirit and matter at the poles.
- Three universals (Sat-Chit-Ananda) and supramental truth-consciousness make up an upper hemisphere, with complete freedom and knowledge.
- Three lower (mind, life, matter) make up a lower hemisphere, where a lapse into separation has taken place.
- The lapse into inconscience means consciousness has to emerge by a gradual evolution.
- This evolution is part of the destiny of the soul in the becoming.

Emergence of mind and life

- Matter, life, and mind each have a creative principle, but none are the sole reality.
- When life and mind emerge, they become dominant.
- But mind is derivative and must be supplanted by the divine supermind.
- The three lower are built upon the inconscient, but there is a conscient spirit emerging in them.
- These metaphysical truths must be realizable in our inner being and outer activities.

Four theories of the aim of life

- Supracosmic, terrestrial, other-worldly, integral.

Supracosmic

- Supreme reality alone has meaning; human existence has no meaning.
- Main goal is to escape, get away from all living.
- Rule is an extinction in the absolute, Nirvana.
- But vanity of life is not inevitable; there is room for a truth of the becoming.
- Defect in this view is the absence of reality of the individual or his spiritual activity.

Terrestrial

- Cosmic, terrestrial existence alone is real.
- Accepts or endures our mortality, and deals only with our personal or collective life.
- Works with the laws of the becoming, nature.
- Welfare of humanity is the highest good.

Other-worldly

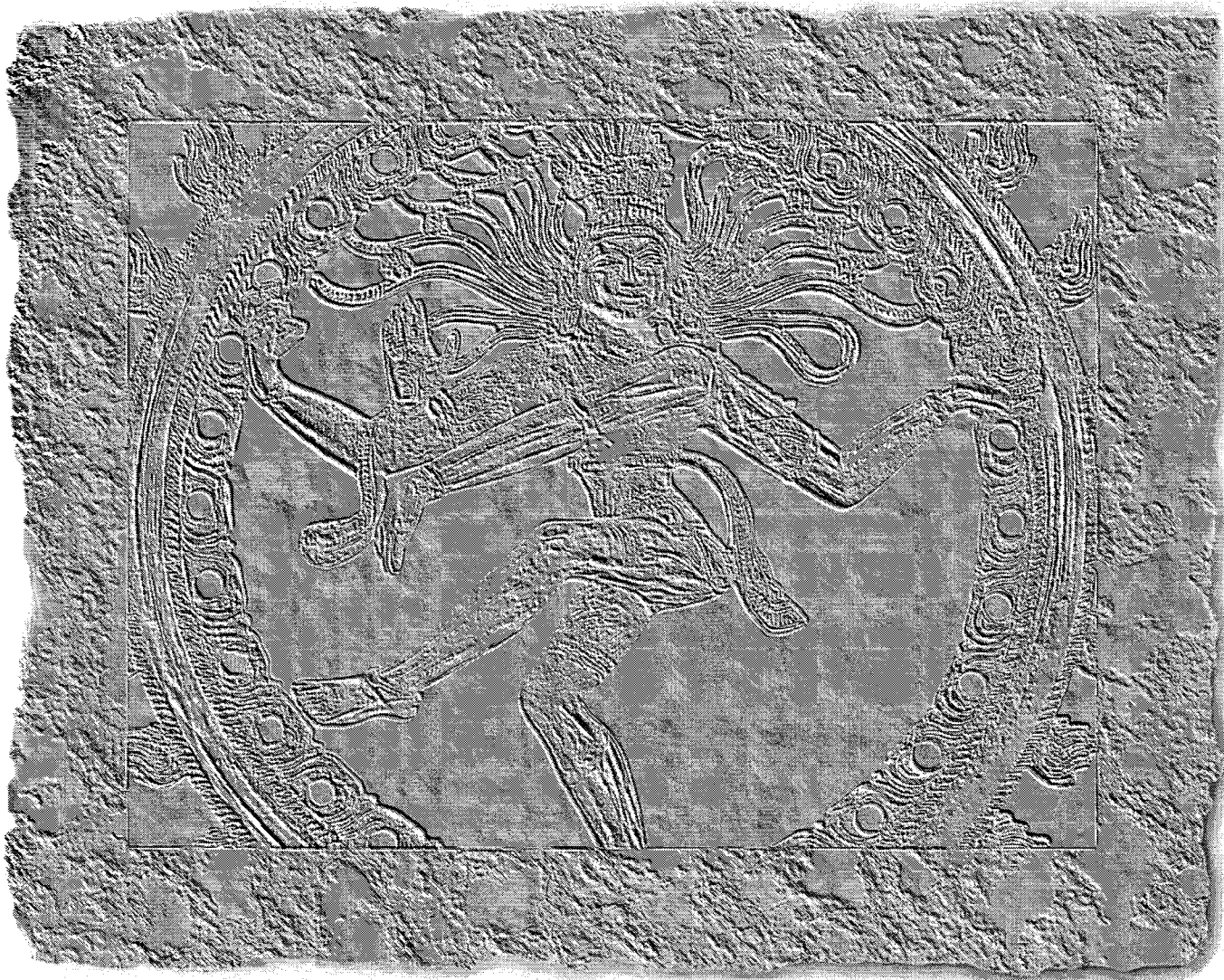
- Accepts the reality of the cosmos, but gives more permanent duration and importance to worlds or heavens beyond; earth life is just an episode.
- Belief in the immortality of the individual spirit is the keyword.
- This life is our one opportunity—this is the least rational form.
- Or life on earth is a stage.
- Has three essential characteristics: individual immortality; earth life as an episode; development of ethical/spiritual being is the highest aim.

General considerations

- Care of the body and terrestrial life is in fact a major part of most person's lives, and any rule which belittles this is unfit or incomplete.
- We also have the intuition of something beyond.
- And a perception that there is something supracosmic, beyond both of these.

Integral conception

- Since development is clearly the law of the soul, it must be an evolutionary synthesis.
- Attempted in India with the four stages of life; but exaggerated the stage of renunciation, which destroyed the symmetry of it.
- Link needed is a spiritual evolution, of which the person is the central instrument.
- And must recognize the three attractions: earth, heaven, supreme.
- Mind and life grow by widening to greater consciousness.
- The spiritual is such a wideness: it is not colorless purity, nor the limitation of heaven.



The Divine in matter. (Digital drawing by Vishnu Eschner)

Supraterrestrial in the integral view

- Is the supreme truth, the highest reach, but has put forth the cosmic.
- Individual must become cosmic, and spirit have a perfect self-expression in the terrestrial.
- Earth life and supraterrestrial are possible worlds; earth is not a lapse.
- Power of a greater consciousness develops there; earth knows itself by opening to its immortality.
- This kind of integration would not be possible if spiritual evolution were not the sense of our existence.
- Involution to inconscience, evolution in ignorance, consummation in spirit's consciousness here is the cycle.

Chapter 17: The Progress to Knowledge— God, Man, and Nature

God, individual, nature are the three categories, approaches in our search for knowledge. In the conscious unity, all three are realized and harmonized.

Emergence of consciousness

- The emergence of consciousness from matter, through vital vibrations and mind, is the goal of nature.
- The human goal is first to affirm oneself, but then to arrive at a free and wide harmony, knowledge, will, action, character.
- Can only be done by widening into a larger being and consciousness.



- Knowledge we need is not intellectual, nor can it be pragmatic or ethical.
- Our surface self is not the spiritual being, so we must exceed ourselves, our current ego.

Intellectual knowledge

- Intellectual knowledge and practical action are devices of nature, but are not our only means.
- We must raise all our means and instruments, and arrive at a divine universality.
- But we are obliged to move step by step, at first obscurely.

God, individual, nature

- These are the three categories in our search for knowledge.
- Individual is what we see.
- Nature or world is the rest of existence, the other.
- The third we sense, the Divine, absolute, cause.
- We have denied one or the other, but must come to a unity of them.

Integration versus exclusion

- Naturalistic atheism does not satisfy the secret knowledge in us.
- Visible cosmos does not explain itself; we feel there must be an infinite.
- Thought needs an absolute, an ultimate truth, a being or creative force.
- Absolute cannot be affirmed by itself; the heart, the will need a meaning.
- We have to enlarge our knowledge of ourselves, the world, and God until we reach a totality and oneness.

Supreme

- Supreme is self-existent, and cosmos/individual exist by virtue of that.
- But we arrive at that through knowledge of self and world, not by rejecting the manifestation.

Early steps

- First preparation is to possess and make rich our individuality; this affirms the ego.
- Egoistic development is necessary, even with all its sins and crudities.

Cosmos and individual

- Evolutionary emergence works through the individual and through cosmos.
- Cosmic remains subliminal to the surface, and creates collective powers.
- Only as the individual becomes more conscious, can the group also.
- The group is itself vague, half-formed, prone to blind movement, customary notions.

- It can have great effect, but is an efficiency of the outer life.
- The growth of the mind and soul depend on the freedom of the individual.
- The individual is the diviner of truth; the group is a field of formation.
- Individual must retire within to find oneness with all; otherwise the individual can become overpowered by the mass consciousness.
- Great evolutionary periods have been when the individual is mentally, spiritual alive.

Perfection of the individual and the collective

- Must be the spiritual individual, not the egoistic person.
- First we must distinguish our natural elements, our own psychology.
- But what we are seeking to discover is perfection of our individual self-existence.
- Because there is a spiritual person, inner divinity, perfection has to be individual, not collective.
- Must get beyond the ego, but find the self that is one with all.

Stages of progress

- First, to realize that this natural life is not all.
- Second, discover that the surface is a small part of our being.
- Third, there is something in us other than the body/life/mind.
- This leads to discovery of self, and God—and the unity of the three categories.

Knowledge of the unity

- By finding unity with cosmos and with God, discover that the self has become all these beings.
- Knowledge of the universe leads to the same revelation.
- Quest for God begins with questioning of nature, a sense of something in her.
- Obscurity of its beginnings do not detract from the value of the quest.
- Unity behind diversity is the secret of all religions and philosophies.
- Because everything is that one, there must be an endless variety in the approach.

Chapter 18: The Evolutionary Process— Ascent and Integration

Evolution has the triple character of development of forms, progress of consciousness, and integration of previous elements. In each, a latent power of consciousness emerges. Human development so far has been on the surface; the next stage is the conscious and inner development.



General principles

- Evolution into spiritual consciousness must have the triple character of development of forms, progress of consciousness, and integration.
- At some point the action of ignorance must be replaced by the action of knowledge, of a fundamentally true consciousness.
- Evolution in its very nature must be a development of something involved in itself.
- What emerges will be modified by what exists, and only the emergence of the original principle of existence will be able to bring about an entire transformation.

Evolution in a material universe

- Mind and life are limited by matter; they modify it, but are bound to death.
- Neither are the original creative power; they are intermediaries.
- The original creative power cannot be an inconscient matter, for then life/mind would not exist.
- So there must be a secret consciousness more essential than any of the three; supramental, spiritual (and not material).
- The full law of the spirit, this supramental, must evolve and decisively change the evolution.

Conditions of the evolution

- Proceeds by an awakening and ascent of the involved consciousness.
- Law of each step is partly determined by the material conditions, form.

- Each grade has a class of existences: vegetable, animal, human.
- Because of continuity of evolution, no rigid separation between them.
- Humanity is at the summit, but is not the culmination; we are transitional beings.

Gradations

- Leap from one grade of consciousness to another seems immense.
- Seems like a transformation rather than a progression.
- Studying physical evolution, science has come to believe in continuity despite missing links.
- Gaps appear narrower but deeper as we rise higher in the scale of nature.

Inner side of the progression

- Difference of the action of consciousness in each lies in the principle of being of each gradation.
- Matter is in the inconscient, plant in the subconscious, animal in the vital mind, human in the mental.
- Ascent does not abandon the lower grades; rudiments of the higher are in the lower, and lower is present and taken up in the higher.
- The lower always reaches a point at which the higher can manifest in it.

Consciousness latent and awaking

- Life, mind, supermind are present but latent even in matter, the atom.
- Matter is the eternal somnambulist, driven by an unfelt existence, he who is awake in the sleeper.
- In the plant this outer form-consciousness is full of nervous dreams, on the point of awaking.
- Animal being is mentally, sensationally aware, and has a wide range of activities: memories, impulses, volitions, emotions, associations, even practical intelligence.

Human level

- Reflective, thinking mind emerges completely.
- Imagination, esthetic creation, intelligence.
- A widening, and a taking up and mentalizing of the lower grades; an intelligent sense of life and body.
- We see the turning downward of the eye of the spirit, in the power of will and of knowledge, and the intention to include the lower notes and raise them up.
- This heightening, deepening, and intensification is the method from the beginning.

Turning the gaze upward

- Gaze upward and inward has become present in the human.
- Natural impulse is to climb to higher altitudes, find a greater scope, by conscious evolution.
- Not individuals only, but the race, all of humanity.



Stages of humanity

- 1) Physical-mental person
 - *Gives most importance to objective things and outer life.*
 - *Concerned with the practical, habitual, common.*
 - *Customary, traditional mentality.*
 - *Subjective life seen as pleasant imaginations, not inner realities.*
- 2) Vital person
 - *Gives most importance to satisfaction of life force.*
 - *Power, ambition, strong character, love, passion, adventure.*
 - *Life experience and experiment; the kinetic individual, fighter, champion.*
- 3) Thinker
 - *Gives most importance to things of the mental world.*
 - *Intellectual, dreamer, person of the word.*
 - *Vital and physical are not the most highly developed.*
 - *Mind of pure intelligence is open to the subliminal plane and influences.*
 - *Sage is the normal summit of this type.*
- 4) Seer and mystic
 - *Uses the inner and higher, whereas the others use the surface.*
 - *This is the secret of a new evolution, by breaking lids and boundaries.*
 - *This has begun the evolution of the spiritual being.*

Spiritual person

- This is our only true way of self-exceeding.
- Differs from the previous in two respects: conducted by conscious effort, and is not confined to the surface.
- For this to happen, have to live deeper within.
- By doing this, we could create a new principle of consciousness.
- The physical intelligence still dominates, giving us skepticism, intellectual timidity, conservatism.
- Not only the individual, but the entire race must advance, or at least a widespread endeavor.

Chapter 19: Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

The method and result of a conscious spiritual evolution is a transformation of the ignorant mental life into the divine life of the truth-conscious spirit, a self-expansion. It is a heightening and a greatening of consciousness.

Evolution

- Evolution is in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness.

- But our call must be to live on a new height with all our being.
- Mental, vital, physical can become much greater, richer, more perfect.

Physical, sense mind (constitutional ignorance) (1)

- Crux of our ignorance is the mental, sense-mind's constitutional ignorance of the true character of our being, our natural materialism.
- This is not complete nescience, but a limiting, dividing, and largely falsifying knowledge.
- Preoccupation with life and matter is necessary in the beginning, but its utmost widening is not the essential goal for us.
- True happiness lies in the growth of the whole being, not just physical comfort.
- First step is growth into the full mental being.

Perfection of the mental being

- Gives us the possibility of a subtler, higher, wider existence, with more power over life.
- Purely mental aims and pursuits get value.
- Harmonizes, refines life.
- This is the Greek ideal.
- But its largest play is a half-light; because we are spiritual beings, we must go into the spirit to heighten our forces of consciousness.

Psychological ignorance (2)

- Limitation to the waking self.
- Must break through to our occult being and live within.
- An obscure activity extends to a submerged sense mind, where all that is rejected from the surface sinks and can take other forms in dreams, unbalance.
- Effects of this on the mind and body are mostly automatic.
- Only by drawing back into subliminal or superconscious can we control this region.
- Must be done, because this area reinforces all in us that refuses to change.
- Intraconscious, circumconscious even more important.
- Inner vital, sense-mind, subtle-physical are here.
- Subliminal forms an envelope around that separates us from the cosmic.
- Higher planes also must be included: mental planes, supramental.
- As a preliminary stage, can receive their influence even if not ascending to them.

Temporal ignorance (3)

- By opening to the inner, can realize our persistent existence in time.
- We are immortal by our self-existence, not fundamentally by a personal survival of the body.



- Comes by knowledge of the self and soul through all changes.
- Also includes the timeless existence.
- An ascent and a stepping back are essential for this step.

Egoistic ignorance (4)

- Ego does not survive as we widen into the spirit and highest self.
- We lose our wall of separation, and become universal.

Cosmic ignorance (5)

- The discovery of the Divine in the universe.
- Through this we can approach the absolute as the source of all.

Practical ignorance (6)

- Self-knowledge cures the wrong-doing, suffering, falsehood, error.

Chapter 20: The Philosophy of Rebirth

If there is an evolution of consciousness in a body, and an individual soul inhabiting the body, then rebirth is a necessary machinery for progressive experience.

- Birth and death are the double mystery of the physical universe.
- The question is what we were before, and what after.

Matter only

- In this case, the “before” and “after” would be physical elements.
- But matter does not explain mind—or indeed itself.

Souls created by God in matter

- Paradox: beings have a beginning but no end.
- Paradox: we are born by the birth of the body, but do not end by its end.

Provisional assumptions

- That which has no end must have no beginning; all that begins has an end.
 - *If soul persists as embodied being, there must be a subtle body.*
- If we see a development in time, there must have been a past.
 - *If soul enters body, it must have been prepared elsewhere.*

Theory of a temporary soul

- Could be the outcome of several theories: modern, Buddhist, sole being, and Maya.
- Persistent self is an illusion, and individuality has a beginning and an end in time.
- What we call soul is a stream of phenomena.
- As each form is developed, a consciousness develops also.
- Rebirth is not necessary.

Modern version

- Starts from the physical body as the basis.
- Mental consciousness is associated with the body, but does not survive its dissolution.
- Nothing compels us to believe in a psychic entity that survives death.
- But if the mental being did not depend completely on the body, then either a psychic entity pre-exists, or the soul develops here in the material world.

Universal life

- Soul may have evolved in lower animal forms, adapting to each shape.
- The animal's conscious individualization does not seem sufficient to bear a transfer.
- Rebirth or transmigration would still not be inevitable; human personality might rise away from the earth on death.
- Personality might still be creation of the universal life; a vitalistic Buddhism.

Mayavada and Buddhism

- Started with the belief in supraphysical planes and a commerce between them and us.
- Admitted the passage to other worlds; but Buddhism denied a rebirth of a real person.
- So rebirth could only mean a kind of continuity, which creates a fictitious individual.
- In Mayavada also, there is no real and eternal individual.
- Even release, escape, Nirvana take place only in the cosmic dream.

Vedanta of the Upanishads

- Each individual is in himself the eternal, and universe is real.
- Kept on the wheel of birth by desire.
- Even here, the reality of the individual is temporal, with no enduring foundation.
- No necessity for the purpose of an individual consciousness.
- And no determining truth to the manifestation.

Integral conception

- Only has to be admitted that the spirit has involved itself in the inconscience and is manifesting itself by evolution.
- Rebirth is then an indispensable machinery for working it out.
- Evolution is inevitable, because that which is involved must emerge.
- It is through the conscious individual that the evolving consciousness is organized and is capable of waking.

Spiritual individual

- In this kind of spiritual evolution, there must be a spiritual person or individual.



- This is where the reality discloses its transcendence and total existence.
- In the real world of difference, the separative form becomes the foundation. So the Purusha has to assume a body, base itself upon a form.
- The assumption of a body is what we call birth.

Birth

- In such an evolution, one isolated birth would have no significance.
- The development of consciousness would need great and slow unfolding through time.
- Ascent can only take place by rebirth in the ascending order.
- And is a complex of two elements, the eternal spiritual person, and the mutable soul of personality.

Succession of forms

- Has a universal and individual aspect.
- Universal grades and ordered variations are developed.
- And individual must have followed this line of development.
- Must be so, because spirit before human level did not depend upon human mentality.
- Spirit assumes various forms, but is not constituted by them.
- Nature takes up past elements and transforms them into the new, such as matter by life, life by mind.

Transmigration and rebirth

- So the soul has had a long succession of rebirths, through lower forms.
- Can the soul go back?
- Unlikely, because the human is a decisive step.
- Why not just one human birth?
- Because humanity is not the final or highest possibility, even perhaps in a Plato or Shankara.
- Inevitable if the mind is not the highest principle, or if there is a supramental principle.

Chapter 21: The Order of the Worlds

Inner experience indicates that there are other worlds, independent of the physical, which communicate with the physical and have influences here. They are based on the seven principles of the spirit (Sat-Chit-Ananda-supermind-mind-life).

- If there is a spiritual evolution with repeated rebirth, then the question arises what the relation is between this process of evolution and the larger totality.

Matter and spirit as only realms

- Abrupt precipitation of soul into the physical world.

- Perhaps an inexplicable urge, fiat, desire for the plunge.
- Whole cosmos would be an evolution out of the inconscient.
- And purpose of evolution of consciousness would only be to escape.
- Such a theory gives premier importance to either mind or the individual; world would have to be created for the play of consciousness of the individual ego.
- But the integral view sees the spirit as the original power.
- The world-participating individual must have been awake before the world existed.
- A will must have originated in it, or in the many who come, to precipitate them downward.
- So the individual soul depends on the all-soul.
- Since this will comes from the supreme, it cannot be desire, which does not exist in the highest reality.
- The material world could be the sole possibility only if matter were the original creative power.
- But that would be a materialistic pantheism; everything has evolved here; and there is no superconscience.
- Problem is that mind and life are too different from matter to be products of it; they must be independent products of a spiritual energy.
- So spirit must be capable of basing its manifestation on mind or life; there should logically be worlds of life or of mind.

Questions about other worlds

- Three questions: Any evidence for them? Their nature? Independent?
- Physical proof would be illogical; ordinarily they would produce an effect on our life-being or mind-being, and only indirectly affect the physical.
- Subtle senses, special states do in fact demonstrate this.
- Such experience may be deceptive, but this is true of physical experience also; this is a reason for scrutinizing it closely.
- Belief by itself is not evidence for reality.

Summary of inner experience

- Conveys the existence and action upon us of larger planes of being and consciousness.
- Which penetrate and envelope the physical.
- In the subjective, they shape in us life-intentions, impulses, and pressure of mind in the form of ideas, suggestions.
- Generally taken as formations of our own life and mind, until we go inward.

Worlds

- Also experiences that are subjective-objective, worlds with a law and substance all their own.
- Often enters into communication with us, though not always.



- Earth can seem a vast field of battle between these supra-physical forces.
- Some beings are divine, benign; others are demonic, harmful.
- Also beings that are behind the veil in this world, rather than part of others.
- In subliminal states, we can enter into these worlds.
- This explanation has been similar in various countries and ages.

Created by mind

- We create the worlds, as a myth of developing consciousness.
- Or cosmic imaginations by the universal idea-force.
- But in this case, everything assumes a hue of unreality.
- But no proof or likelihood that mind can create this way.
- More likely that as mind grows, it comes into contact with these ranges of being.
- We do create images, symbols; but these are not the things themselves.

Worlds created after the physical

- Perhaps they were created after the physical, to help evolution.
- This keeps matter as the basis, and spiritual in a dependence on matter.
- But in fact they seem to be not based on the material, rather they are greater terms of being.
- The human consciousness is rather the intermediary by which they reveal their light, power.

World stair

- Elements of subliminal experience indicate a parallel gradation, for involution and evolution.
- This gives to the ascending gradation a purpose for the worlds and their pre-formations of good and evil.
- Formations in the life world would then have a truth of their own, be able to arrive at their expression freely.
- What is inordinate here would be normal in that domain.
- Powers of mind also have their own field of fullness.
- In other words, the worlds are typical, not evolutionary.
- Our accounts of them includes much that is imagination and translation, but also points to other-world realities.
- Other viewpoints, other ways of grading them are possible.
- If the worlds did not exist, the spirit would depend only on matter, and there would be no place for a full and free manifestation of any power of being.

Order of the worlds

- The reality is free to create a world based on each principle of its being.
- Being (Sat); force/will (Chit); delight (Ananda); supermind; mind; life worlds are all possible.

- Experience shows that these are different harmonies, levels, planes from the physical.
- And that at every moment these are in communication with and acting on the physical.
- They are prior to the physical in consequence, if not temporally, and provide formative powers for evolution here.
- What we create are not the worlds themselves, but images of them, and the fitness of our soul to respond to them.
- The effect of their action on the subliminal self has been to liberate life and mind from matter, lastly a spiritual consciousness.

Chapter 22: Rebirth and Other Worlds; Karma, the Soul, and Immortality

The nature of evolution and other worlds necessitates an inter-natal period, and ultimately the soul goes to its own plane for assimilation of experiences. The processes of reincarnation involve all our energies and bodies, as well as the conscious will of the soul. What continues is the spiritual person, not the outer personality.

- The existence of other worlds raises three questions: process of rebirth, process of passage to other worlds, process of spiritual evolution itself.
- If matter were the only world, there could only be direct transmigration from one body to another.
- But the existence of other worlds means the possibility of projection or transference into them after death.

Period after death

- Interregnum is needed because there is an attraction for the mental and vital being; and an interval is needed for assimilation of life experience.
- But the period may only be needed if the individuality has been sufficiently developed.
- Possibility that direct transmigration is the rule while soul is still unripe.
- In popular ideas of heaven/hell, the idea of spiritual evolution is not explicit.

Necessity for a period after death

- World principles are interdependent and interwoven.
- Immediate transmigration might be necessary until the psychic individuality is sufficiently developed to exist in itself.
- Until then, downward attachment, incompleteness of life-experience might compel soul to immediate rebirth.
- In order to pass to mind or life planes, the mind and life must be sufficiently developed to pass without disintegration and exist there for a time.
- And the psychic person must be individualized enough not to depend on a past mental or life body.



Balancing act. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)

Dwelling place

- Would seem to be on the mental plane, because we are primarily mental beings.
- But our being is more complex, includes vital, soul.
- And post-mortal state must correspond in some sense to the development here—the relation we develop with higher planes while here must be the predominant effect.
- May linger in an annex created by beliefs, images.
- Also desire-worlds may have been built up.
- Because imagination is a creative force in the mental being.
- These would be temporary, however, in the passage to a true supraphysical state.
- Would only be able to live there consciously if there had been sufficient mental or soul development in this life.

- Final stage would be pure psychic; to be awake here, a certain development would be indispensable.

Necessity for internatal periods

- Decisive part played by the higher planes in earth evolution.
- Most development takes place in subliminal, and is stored there.
- And a new life does not take up immediately where the old left off; there must be assimilation, new ordering.
- Probable that the positive preparation would be on the plane of the soul itself.

Multiple beings

- By saying that we evolve a vital, etc., we mean that the soul manifests these (vital, mental, etc. beings) in the conditions of the physical nature.



- And most of their presence is concealed; through these beings we receive shaping influences.
- And logical that through the development of their powers in our conscious evolution should be our internal resort.

Reincarnation as automatic result of karma, desire

- Old view is that karma is the result of desire and ignorance; reincarnation is metaphysical and moral.
- The character of incarnation is automatic, based on good/bad actions in the past.
- This system has no real reason for the world; the only point being to get out of it.
- If we are here for true spiritual growth, this law would be too puerile, barbarian.

All energy has a result

- This is a higher, more plausible principle.
- Each being reaps what he sows, now or afterward.
- What we are now is the result of the past, what we do now is the creator of the future.
- But the simplistic formula of good actions = good results, and law of justice, are overstated.
- Chain of causation of karma is a machinery only, not the sole and absolute determinant.

Spirit and consciousness in addition to karma

- There is being and consciousness in addition to law and process.
- Our fundamental reality is spiritual; soul determines its own evolution; karma is only one of its processes.
- The more we go within, the soul's power of choice is increasingly felt.
- Spirit cannot be an automaton, the secret will cannot be mechanical.
- True principle is the development of the nature through cosmic experience.
- Karma and consciousness are both elements; physical destiny only binds so long as a greater law does not intervene.

Different kinds of energies

- Mind, life, desire, knowledge, ethical good, pleasure, collective objects, etc.
- Morality cannot be the sole cosmic principle.
- The energy put into any area must have a fitting response from nature.
- Giving the credit for good luck to virtuous actions in the past is too simple.
- The standard of good and evil comes from our vital-physical, vital being.
- A system of ethical rewards/punishments debases ethics itself.
- Lines of energy can act on each other, but not by a rigid law.

Cosmic experience

- Reactions of nature are not in essence rewards/punishments.
- Rather there is a relation, and a lesson of experience.
- Soul enters into rebirth for growth; all the rest is accessory.

Survival of the personality

- Rebirth would not have any utility if the superficial person were the same in the next life.
- For growth, a new personality is necessary, otherwise we would repeat the same forever.
- Personality is only the mental, vital, physical form which the psychic puts forward.
- Only the essential elements are kept from birth to birth.
- Latent potentials or contrary elements may emerge in a new birth.

Memory of past lives

- In this view, the false importance attached to memory of past lives disappears.
- If rebirth were a system of rewards/punishments, it makes no sense not to have memory of our past actions.
- But if it is a constant development, then memory might be a serious obstacle, prolonging old temperament.
- Absence of memory is to be expected, if a new personality is taken.
- Subliminal being may remember, but detailed memory is of minor importance to nature.

Immortality of the soul

- The "I" of this life is only a formation, and what is imperishable is the self within, the person that we are.
- Outer personality might survive if powerfully individualized, one with the inner mind and Purusha, and open to the plastic action of the infinite.
- So the old form would no longer need to dissolve to form a new one.
- Such a survival would only persist in the subtle body.
- Might happen with the body, if it were plastic to the progress of the inner person.

Chapter 23: Man and the Evolution

The true meaning of evolution is the evolution of consciousness in matter. It has produced change in outward forms and in principles of consciousness. At the human level, change through consciousness becomes primary, instead of change of form. Human is an intermediate term, with a future supramental level yet to emerge.

Spiritual evolution

- Spiritual evolution is an evolution of consciousness in matter.



Expressions of nature. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)

- It is concealed at first, and only reveals itself slowly, in rudimentary forms.
- The material inconscient nature exerts a downward pull, a retardation, limitation.
- Next product of evolution will be the fully conscious supramental being.
- It has a double process: outward forms, and inward soul evolution.

Challenges to this theory of spiritual evolution

- Even admitting the eternal, grades of consciousness, spiritual evolution of the individual might not be inevitable.
- Each thing could be divine in itself, in no need of change; the Divine has nothing to gain.
- Each type has a pattern; does not follow that it will evolve to supermind.
- Lower half of creation may remain the same, with human as the summit.

Science and evolution

- Does affirm evolution, but only physically.
- Hereditary process is conservative, and types vary within a pattern.
- No proof that each type evolved into the next; all that can be said is that each type (life, animal, etc.) came into being.

Variety of types

- Why then all the different types?
- Could be many processes or patterns of the consciousness-force.
- Humanity is one type, the most complex, but perhaps we cannot go outside the type.
- Perfection then would be within the type, not beyond it.
- And if supramental were intended, it would be a different type.
- Animals do not show evidence of evolving beyond themselves now.
- Humanity itself does not appear to be advancing through history.
- Rebirth may be just transmigration, not for progressive evolution.

Answers to the challenges

- Although some propositions are valid, the above is not conclusive.
- Materialist and metaphysical arguments.
- Materialist assumes all is the work of inconscient energy.
- But there does seem to be an urge of necessity in the inconscient; not irrational to admit a teleological element.
- Metaphysical sees no purpose in a universal totality.
- But the material world is not an integral totality.
- The teleology proposes the realization of the totality in the part; the purpose is the perfect manifestation of all possibilities.

Spiritual evolution versus physical form evolution

- The two are not identical.
- The theory or machinery of forms is secondary, whereas the successive creation is primary.
- The gradation from life, animal, human is self-evident.
- Idea of human as a later creation has precedents in Upanishad, Puranas, Tantra.

Status of the human in evolution

- Either human suddenly appeared, or evolved from animal.
- For the latter, would just need the evolution of the necessary physical organization to support the new faculties of consciousness.
- The mental, once emerged, would then develop, even if small and crude in the beginning.
- A sudden appearance poses problems, and most ways of explaining it imply an evolutionary process, even if pre-existent or other planes are involved.

Types and progress

- Each type has a law, but the law of the human may be towards self-exceeding.
- Human progress is real: there has been an increasing subtlety, complexity, etc. in life, science, society.
- Falls happen, but they are temporary or limited.
- Probable that a few especially evolved individuals would progress before the mass; the human type would need to be preserved as a grade, transition point.
- Change of consciousness will be the chief factor.



Change of form versus consciousness

- Appearance of human mind marks the step where there is a will to grow, widen.
- Previously, the push in evolution had been in the physical form, to aid growth in consciousness.
- In human, this is reversed, and change of body is no longer needed.
- Possible that we will be able to aid nature in our own spiritual and physical evolution, just as we have with plants and animals.
- Emergence of the psychic element will demand a more divine existence.
- Not conclusive that such a transformation can only take place in a heaven beyond; this would only be true if ignorance were the entire meaning of the world.
- Spiritual urge till now has been mainly other-worldly, but aspiration for spiritual mastery has also been there.
- If evolution of consciousness is the hidden truth, then human cannot be the last term.

Chapter 24: The Evolution of the Spiritual Man

Spiritual first emerges in common activities, through the mind or emotions. Has been through religion, occultism, spiritual thought, and finally realization. Spiritual realization so far has not been transformative, but still it is to prepare the being. Though the lines are general, there must be a great variety. What is the process?

- Earliest stages of evolution show life, mind, but the possibility of spirit emerging would still seem impossible.
- At each point there are hints of the next step.
- Central questions: what is the exact nature of the transition from mental to spiritual person, and what is the process of the evolution of the spiritual out of the mental?
- We need to know the clear distinction between the mental and the spiritual.
- Might seem that spirit is only an activity of mind, but this would be superficially looking at the process, not what lies behind.
- Necessary first to posit the spirit as something distinct from the mental being.

Emergence of the spiritual

- Soul at first seems to be mental or emotional activities.
- But a decisive emergence can happen, where in inner silence the being sees itself as spirit in mind.
- This is discovery of the self, and often taken as sufficient.
- Sign of this emergence is status/action of an inherent, self-existent consciousness.
- At first it may confine itself to observation, knowledge, seeing, and not action.

- But it can develop higher states, and bring them down to act and transform the current instruments.

Spirit versus effects

- Emergence is first a mixture and not self-evident; mental aspiration, vital enthusiasm can be mistaken for spirituality.
- But spirituality is not these things, nor idealism, ethical turn, austerity, nor religiosity.
- It is an awakening to the inner reality of the being, to spirit, self other than mind, life, body.

Double evolution

- Evolution of our outward nature, and of our inner being.
- For a long time, the outward nature (including mind) must be nature's preoccupation.
- Emergence has to wait at each step for the instruments to be ready.
- There is always a downward gravitation and mixture, temptation to deviation.
- Which brings the compelling reason for asceticism, other-worldliness.
- Even though end can only be a complete spiritual victory, the first and sole object for a spiritual person must be contact with the spiritual reality.

Means for spiritual evolution

- Four: religion, occultism, spiritual thought, and inner realization.
- All have been connected and simultaneous, with elements of each in all.
- Each corresponds to something in our total being.
- We must know our inner workings, which is the field of occultism.
- We must know the hidden powers and spirit in the world, which is religion.



Pottery workshop in Auroville. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)



- We must be able to accept and correlate with the thinking mind, which is spiritual thought.
- We must have direct experience, established, which is inner realization.

Process of evolution

- Through urges/tendencies, small beginnings, formations, then decisive emergence.

Religion

- First beginnings must be crude and imperfect, even disastrous, with dogmatism, intolerance, narrowness, fanaticism.
- Claim to divine authority is excessive and premature.
- Faith is indispensable, but cannot be imposed.
- Real business of religion is to prepare for the spiritual consciousness, to bring us to the point where the inner spiritual light begins to emerge.
- Truth should not be rejected because of errors, rather errors have to be eliminated.

First awakening to spiritual consciousness

- Vague sense of the infinite and invisible surrounding the physical being.
- Need to determine how to control these; intuitions were first used.
- These were systematized into religion.
- Which created magic and early forms of occultism.
- Later began religio-ethical forms; at first it is an amalgam of intuitions, ritual, ethics, mystical experience, mythical symbols.

Evolution of religion

- Growing force of reason and intelligence diminishes the occult elements.
- Creed, practice, and ethics take more importance, and even experience dwindles.
- Can end in a complete intellectual denial of religion, occultism.
- In our time, there is a return to inner self-discovery.

Stages of religion

- 1) Primitive persons live in a low vital province, corresponding to a like occult plane.
- 2) Followed by polytheistic belief and mythology.
 - *Main factors are worship of divine powers; sacrifice; surface piety; social ethics.*
 - *Core are the religious symbols.*
- 3) System of knowledge, creed, spiritual discipline.
 - *Here we see dynamic expansion and concentrated evolution.*
 - *To be generalized, the spiritual aspiration loses its purity, height, intensity, and is clothed in intellectual forms of creed or emotional forms of ritual and worship.*
 - *Further led to the appeal to the many-sidedness*

(catholic), the other to simple belief and worship (protestant).

Greater synthesis of religion

- In India, allowed all developments, all ways of communion.
- Has produced a durability, generality, universality, subtlety, and wideness.
- Most in consonance with the method of nature herself.

Occultism

- Attempts mastery of mind/life over matter, communication with worlds and entities, and possession of knowledge of higher grades of cosmic being.
- Hypnotism is an example.
- Occultism receded as science took over; also because in the West it never reached maturity.
- Associated in popular mind with magic, formulae, mechanism.
- An overstress on formulation leads to error, convention, misuse, and failure.
- Most important is the discovery of hidden truths and powers.

Intellectual approach

- Indispensable to form a reasoned and systematized idea of the goal.
- Intellect cannot by itself bring us into touch with the reality, but it can help.
- Mind concerned mainly with statement of general spiritual truth and logic.
- But also seeks to exercise a critical control, determine what is significant.
- Means is philosophy, first intuitive, later critical or intellectual.
- Not entirely indispensable, and can be hampering, but the line of development is necessary, because there must be a bridge between spirit and reason.

Spiritual experience

- This is when the real work is done, and the turning point reached.
- Gives the saint, prophet, rishi, yogi, seer, mystic.
- At first tentative, small; spiritualizes or influences our natural activities, and produces the person who lives in the spiritual mind, or heart, or moved by psychic.
- Largest formulation is the total liberation of mind, heart, action.

Spiritual achievement so far in the human

- Material mind says that the spiritual tendency has come to very little, because it has not solved any of life's problems.
- But its real work is to create a new foundation of our being, through an inner change.
- If not transformative, has been because impulse has al-



ways been deflected into other directions such as political or social.

- Tendency has been to look beyond life, and more individual than collective.
- Premature attempts for collective vitiated by incompleteness of knowledge, or by imperfection, vital and physical consciousness.
- Objection to the mystic is that it is subjective, and not a truth common to all.
- But the truth of the spirit is truth of being, not of thought.
- It is one and follows the same general lines, but has numberless possibilities.

Chapter 25: The Triple Transformation

The first transformation comes by the emergence of the psychic being, which uses and then purifies our current instruments through the contact with the Divine. It results in a guidance, and a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience. The second transformation is the descent from and ascent to the infinity and eternal spiritual consciousness above. The higher ranges of mind begin to form, but its work is still hampered by the disabilities of the lower consciousness. These are preparatory to the supramental transformation.

Transformation, not departure

- We have supposed that the intention of the being is not only revelation of the spirit, but integral transformation of the nature.
- The spiritual person has evolved, but not the supramental being.
- So far, the principle of spirituality has been a power for the mental being to escape.
- And instrumentation has been purely an individual achievement, not a normal type.
- Triple transformation necessary: conversion of our nature into soul-instrumentation (psychic); descent of higher consciousness (spiritual); transformation of the entire nature (supramental).

Psychic element

- Psychic element in us is fundamentally the same, ever-pure, intimately aware of truth, good, beauty; but veiled.
- It is covered over by mind, vital ego—at first it supports the natural evolution of body, life, mind.
- So in the early stages, psychic activities are vital, physical, or mental. There is no consciousness of soul.

Psychic being

- This soul-personality slowly develops, and shows as a sensitivity for the good, true, beautiful.
- But it is mixed with ideas, desires, physical tendencies, into idealism, fervor, thrill.

- The composite is often taken for the soul.
- May remain weak and undeveloped, and may be separated from its inner reality by the obscurity of our consciousness.

Elements mistaken for the psyche

- Sub-physical or vital formation of personality (ghost).
- Parts of the inner mind or vital, or the vital or mental self, Purusha.
- Aggregate or amalgam of these is heterogeneous, not harmonious.
- We are in our manifestation of self a multiperson, whose coordination is incomplete.

Different selves and stages of human personality

- If physical Purusha dominates, there is the physical person preoccupied with body, habitual needs.
- Can arrive at the idea of a finer, more perfect physical life.
- If vital being, there is the person concerned with power, excitement, adventure, struggle.
- With the support of the mind, can impose on nature and the environment.
- If mind, then mental ideas, etc. dominate.
- But harder to harmonize because body and life are strong and impose themselves.
- Mind is often impotent before the inconscient/subconscient, and it cannot integrate the nature.
- So at best get an unstable equilibrium.

Soul's emergence

- First condition is a direct contact in the surface being with the inner reality.
- At first sought through outer signs, representations, which have their value.
- Thinking mind at its highest drawn towards the impersonal.
- Higher endeavor of the mind leads to the formless and featureless, where it loses its hold on forms.
- Spiritualized consciousness is achieved, soul merges into silence, but not transformation.
- Heart acts through emotions, devotion, with a force of concrete experience.
- Consecration of the will eliminates the ego and desire.

Shift to the inner

- For the change to reach its widest, center must shift from the surface to the inner.
- To do this, the outer must become quiet, purified, of a finer substance.
- Can also be done by a strong call or vehement will.
- But this can be dangerous, bring a chaos of supernormal experiences, and if there is egoism or other weakness, the person can be seized and misled.



- Dangers only surmounted by a complete sincerity, will for purity, surrender.

Separation of the Purusha

- Facilitates the entry into the inner self.
- Brings liberation, but not necessarily transformation—for that, must reach the psychic.
- Most central way is surrender to the divine being.

Coming forward of psychic being

- Guidance begins, with every movement exposed to the light of truth.
- Purification in this light can be fast or slow, depending on the resistance still left in the nature.
- Second result is a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, as a result of the opening outward of the inmost being.
- These can come before, by the inner vital and mental, but then they are open to ignorance, and can lead to a magnified ego or the titanic or demonic.
- All of this is still limited to the instruments of body, mind, life, a reflection of things whose full reality is above.

Conditions for spiritual transformation

- Psychic change prepares this, by opening to the cosmic and by thinning the wall of separating mind.
- It is an opening upward to the ranges where instrumentation of the self is unveiled and permanent.
- Can also come before the psychic is much advanced.

Spiritual opening

- Either an ascent or a descent.
- Infinity, boundless ecstasy, light, power may be felt or seen.
- May feel an infinite ascension but no memory on return.
- Ascent often takes place in trance, but can occur in the waking consciousness.

Permanent descent and ascent

- Waves or currents that penetrate and touch the lower being.
- New consciousness begins to form, a higher mind (illuminated, intuitive, overmental).
- Ends in the consciousness fixing itself on the higher plane, and from there progressively remolds the mind, then the life, then the physical consciousness.
- Brings the abiding spiritual sense of the infinite and eternal.

Preparation of the nature

- Nature requires that every part, with its past molds, be transmuted.
- The higher consciousness often comes but withdraws or works behind the veil, because the being is impure.
- Seizing on the powers or result can cause disastrous errors, and the power may have to work behind the veil for long periods, or the work stop for a single life.

- And because the force has to descend and work at each lower level, there is a modification and diminution, a hampering of the effect.
- These are the same disabilities that nature encounters in the emergence of consciousness from matter.
- Only the supermind can descend without losing its full power—all the steps before are transitional and require the supermind to complete them.

Chapter 26: The Ascent towards Supermind

Inner awareness and a breaking down of the barrier between inner and outer are the first conditions of this transition. The psychic and spiritual transformations are crucial and prepare the being. The four main stages are higher, illumined, intuitive, and overmind. Each has its own substance, power. The actuality is more complex, owing to the necessity of integration, gradations, interpenetration of degrees, and the necessity to transform the outer, dynamic side of our nature.

Limitations of conceiving of supramental

- Not yet mapped in its completeness.
- Only has a meaning to our intelligence when we have had some experience of the higher consciousness.
- Only abstract generalizations or initial representations can be given.
- But one helpful element is that the process or logic of evolutionary nature continues, even if modified, which allows us to follow the lines.

Transition to supermind

- Past ascensions have acted through the ignorance, but supermind has no organized formations in our subliminal.
- So descent and formulation in our being of its powers is a sine qua non of the transition.
- Conceivably could occur by a long evolution, but this might only result in a superior mentalization.
- For real transformation, needs a direct intervention from above, and a complete surrender of the lower consciousness.

Inner awareness is first condition

- We need to become inwardly aware of our own deeper law and processes.
- Which includes an increasing control.
- Intelligence has will and choice, but is limited.
- Should have an intuition that enters the heart of things, by direct contact.

Action of intuitive intelligence

- Can penetrate and modify, but not abolish the ignorance.
- Would enlarge the individual to an extended vision of the workings of the conscious force.



Gull in flight. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)

- And bring a greater power of choice and free will, through the inner psychic or mental being.

Free will versus mechanical determination

- Generally thought of as independent, isolated action, but we can rise out of subjection only by identification with a greater truth and nature.
- When the will becomes an instrumentation of a higher power, it becomes free from mechanical determinism.
- Individual force, will becomes a formation or center of the universal will, Shakti—and thereby more effective.

Opening, surrender to supernature: first conditions

- This opening to the action of supernature is a condition of the supramental transformation.
- Must be the consent of the Prakriti, the parts of our being, in addition to the Purusha, spirit.

- But each part tends to remain obstinate in its habits or reactions.
- So the second condition for the transformation is the conscious surrender of the whole being to the higher truth.
- Which means that the psychic and spiritual transformations must be far advanced before the supramental can begin.
- Only when the psychic and spiritual are fully emerged, can the mind, vital, physical give up their grooves.

**Breaking down the wall between inner and outer:
third condition**

- Supreme cannot establish itself in our surface consciousness.
- All the chakras must be open, and the psychic be in full control.



- Must be conscious of the higher light, Ananda, power, knowledge, otherwise the highest light will not descend.

Gradations

- Spiritual evolution obeys the logic of a successive unfolding, which follows steps even if it is rapid.
- Thus the evolution of life, mind, spirit have their own times, but are successive.
- Even in this last transition, gradations, degrees, successive levels are necessary.
- The first movements can take place by an invisible action from the psychic, and a consciously felt descent is not indispensable.
- Similarly there can be an occult descent from above, with the source unknown.

Demand for integration

- The demand for integration, an imposing of the higher on the lower becomes more important with this transformation.
- With mind, considerable parts remain subconscious or inconscient, and even the spiritual light using the mind uses an inferior means.
- The lower parts cling to their own self-law, Dharma, even though inferior.

Inner and psychic opening crucial

- These liberate a larger, finer awareness able to communicate with the universal.
- The fundamental inconscience can be penetrated and lessened.
- With the psychic, the higher mind and overmind can fully intervene.
- With the greater results of the spiritual (silence, cosmic, Nirvana, higher force), the spiritual turns to the supramental.

Four main stages: higher, illumined, intuitive, overmind

- All are gnostic in principle and power, and are grades of the energy-substance of the spirit.
- All are domains of being, grades of substance, fields of existence.
- The descent of each affects our entire being, and is a general conversion.
- With each ascent, the substance is finer but stronger, more luminous, more ecstatic.
- When they descend, they change and repair what is below; this can happen because all is fundamentally the same substance, but in different degrees.

Higher mind

- First decisive step out of human intelligence.
- Basic substance is a unitarian sense of being.
- Dominated by thought, a luminous thought-mind, conceiving by self-power of the idea.

- Characteristic movement is a mass ideation, totality of truth-seeing at a single view, where relations of idea with idea pre-exist.
- Also works through the will, on the rest of the being, through the power of idea.

Power of resistance of existing forms

- When the higher forces descend, they meet the resistance of matter, as well as the resistance of established forms (mental, vital, physical) in our nature.
- This may amount to a refusal or a perverse deformation of the higher light.
- Evolutionary nature has given this right of persistence to forms, to bring steadiness into her steps.
- The resistance is more intense the lower we go (life, body, inconscient), because the substance is less conscious.
- The power for quietude, silence, or a controlled passivity of the nature is necessary to allow entry of the higher light.
- An established psychic control also creates a general responsiveness, or a preliminary spiritual transformation.

Illumined mind

- Basic substance is of spiritual light.
- Has an intense luster, a play of lightnings, a fiery ardor and rapturous ecstasy, a luminous inner force and power.
- Works primarily by vision, and thought is a secondary and even dispensable process.
- The origin of thought itself is a cognitive seizing; in the spiritual light there is a deeper perceptive response from the substance of consciousness, an exact revelatory ideograph.
- Brings a more powerful integration and spiritual light into the mind, heart, vital, sense.

Intuitive mind

- This is the source of the thought or sight of the previous two.
- Is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch with the consciousness in the object.
- The human mind has such an intuition, but there are also seeming intuitions that are really pseudo-intuitions, communications, often from the vital.
- Because of their uncertain character, we are disposed to use the reason to judge them—but this renders their authority only that of the reason, not direct certitude.
- On its own level its rays are entirely veridical; they are a mass of stable lightnings.
- When it descends, the reason can only act as an observer or register; to verify an isolated intuition, another completing intuition is called for.



... even the world of ignorance and inconstancy might discover
its own submerged secret ...

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 963

- Has a fourfold power of truth-seeing, -hearing, -touch, and -discrimination, so it can perform all the action of reason.

Overmind

- A power of cosmic or global consciousness; a high individual opening is not sufficient.
- To reach it, the inner being must have replaced the surface, and the ego-sense be entirely subordinated in the perception of a universal self and movement.
- Thought, emotions all manifest from above or in cosmic waves, not from the individual.
- Many formulations: uncentered diffusion; universe in oneself; identification with all beings; all beings in oneself; passive or dynamic free play; governance of the Ishwara; impersonal but individual center.
- Varieties are innumerable; may have an organic, cosmic structure that stretches into the infinite.
- All spiritual experiences become habitual, normal, more substantial, global, catholic.

Limits of overmind

- Is a power of the lower hemisphere, an action of division, and a play of possibilities.
- Cannot lead mind beyond itself, and cannot dynamize the transcendence.
- Can transform the conscious being, but cannot transform the inconstancy.
- Each formulation is independent, separate; it does not have the supreme power of unity.
- The pull of the inconstancy to dissolve all formations would still be there.

Schematic map versus intermediate degrees and complexity

- This map is correct in so far that integration of one has to be secure before ascent to the next.
- But nature is a totality, interpenetrating, and each ascent/descent qualifies what it touches.
- So there is not actually a simple series, but a comprehensive complexity of movement, the evolution of the whole consciousness, a tide or mounting flux.
- At each stage, the higher may be provisional while the lower is in formation of the new change.

Consequences of the complexity

- 1) New powers emerge when the former is sufficiently organized, but do not wait for the former to be complete.
 - *Happens because each descending power makes the being capable of a still higher invasion, and also because transformation is aided by each higher power.*
- 2) Need of integration requires that each descending power work first in the mind, then vital, then physical.
 - *And each of these has a mixed nature, partly the old and partly the new.*
 - *So the higher power will descend into the vital before the transformation of the mind is complete, in order to assist the mind, and so on.*
- 3) Consciousness can live in more than one status at a time.
 - *Especially true of the split between inner and outer—the inner is often sufficiently transformed but the outer lags.*
 - *This disparity repeats itself at every step, which requires a constantly repeated labor of assumption, adaptation, orientation.*

Subjective/indwelling spirituality versus an objectivized, dynamic spirituality

- The latter can only happen through receiving influences through the circumconscious.
- The circumconscious must become steeped in the spiritual substance, but this is a difficult perfection.
- Essential difficulty is that our normal substance is molded from the inconstancy.
- This nescience can invade or swallow up into its darkness all that enters it, or at least limit its truth and force.
- Because of this, a full action of any new law of the being is difficult.
- Only the supermind can entirely overcome the law of death, darkness, inertia with which the nescience meets all the spiritual light.

Supramental established in the terrestrial whole

- Individual change will have permanent significance only when the supramental is established in the workings of nature.
- Then the intervening powers of overmind, etc. would be established on their own basis, and a hierarchy of states would rise from mind, and other degrees above mind would be accessible.



Sri Aurobindo. (Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

Chapter 27: The Gnostic Being

The emergence of the gnostic being will be gradual, and it will be continue to evolve, with a great diversity. It will be the consummation of the spiritual life, always having the experience of the Divine, acting from the divine will, in perfect harmony with all forces and beings. Discovery (mind), growth (life), and the body will continue, but based on a divine identity. The person will not be a fixed set of qualities, but rather an index of the infinite behind. Standards of conduct will not be necessary, because the gnostic will automatically obey the inherent law in each instance.

Difficulty of describing the supermind

- Having a clear idea is almost impossible, because it crosses a line where mental forms are no longer sufficient, even goes beyond mental cognition.

- The supramental sees from a basis of oneness, unity, whereas the mind starts from division.
- And acts from the inherent reality of each thing, whereas the mind starts from rule or device.
- But differences could be used to at least describe the transition, or first status.

Transition

- Will be gradual unfolding or forming of the supramental being here, not a sudden descent.
- It will be a progressive revelation, moving in the power of the truth-consciousness.
- A race of gnostic beings will be established, which will follow the pattern of an inflow from above and a taking up of what is below.
- But the veil between inner and outer must have already broken down.

Effect on the rest of evolution

- Will establish a hierarchy of ascending degrees of the gnostic light.
- A stress of harmony, intuition, inner response would affect the whole evolution.
- Inevitable, because supermind is always an integralizing and harmonizing influence.
- The overmind could create knowledge separate from the surrounding ignorance, but the supermind would create a harmonic unity with the still surviving mental world.

Diversity

- Because the law of the supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity, there would be an infinite diversity in the manifestation of the gnostic consciousness.
- Each would be unique, but one with all the rest in essence and sense of oneness.

Consummation of the spiritual person

- Whole way of thinking, acting would be governed by the power of a vast universal spirituality.
- Transcendent self, universal self, world mother, Purusha within, divinity in all movements and beings would be felt always.
- No bondage to inferior forces, but the individual life and all life would be like a perfect work of art, the working out of a multitudinous order.

Perfection of the individual

- Each being would be a new totality, self-equation of the one.
- The will, knowledge, action of the individual would be the expression in diversity of the one.
- It would be a perfect self-expression and mastery.

Relation to the cosmos

- The gnostic being would act in the cosmic consciousness, aware of the cosmic forces.



The Mother. (Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

- So there would not be the disharmony that results from our conflict with the world, its reactions upon our outer being and inner life, our inability to harmonize with it.
- In the mental being, even the pressure of the cosmic consciousness or awareness of the transcendent might not bring this about, but the supramental has the truth of this relation in itself, since both individual and universe are interrelated expressions of the same being.

Delight (Ananda)

- Would be the play of the joy of the spirit.
- One in self with all, the gnostic being would seek the delight of self-manifestation in all, and will be a power for bringing that bliss.
- For this, will not need to efface oneself, nor will there be a contradiction between the good of oneself and of others.

- Nor a need to participate through sympathy with lesser joy and suffering.

Action in the world

- Its action has the knowledge, the power to effectuate, and each action is in unison with a luminous totality.
- The whole sense of an integral being and bliss will be in each action.
- Will consummate the movement in us of molding the outer life by the inner.
- Normally the spiritual person lives within, and must guard the inner life from forces of the ignorance; but the gnostic being will cure this antimony between the inner and the outer.
- The peace of God within will become dynamic, the inner oneness will enter all actions.
- Will be in contact with all beings through a concrete extension of cosmic consciousness; action on the world will be largely inner, through the power of the spirit, with the outer only a fringe.
- Will also have a full power in the mental and vital planes, and can use them for the perfection of the physical existence.

Evolution of the gnostic being

- Unlike on the supramental plane itself, the gnostic being would be an evolving consciousness.
- In the ignorance we are here to grow, to know, and to get something done, but we do not know what to do or what to become.
- The spiritual person lives within, and so will the gnostic; but the gnostic starts from that basis and turns it into a luminous becoming in the knowledge, and a realized power of being.

Knowledge and discovery

- For thinking mind the joy of existence is in discovery.
- The gnostic will fulfill that, but by a bringing out of the known, a finding of the self by the self in the self, in endless forms and ways.
- This will proceed by identification with all, bringing a leap of self-discovery.
- Intellectual seeking will be replaced by an integrated movement of the knower, knowledge, and thing, and it will know the thing as part of itself with a direct internal knowledge.

Life

- Life seeks for possession, growth, mastery, enjoyment, expression, action.
- The gnostic being will act for an increasing possession of the individual and the world by the divine presence, light, power.



- The satisfaction of manifestation, love, joy will be for the manifestation of the Divine, meeting the Divine in the world, joy of identity.

Relationship with the body

- Currently the body limits and determines self-expression, and has a subconscious law and movement.
- The gnostic being will complete the change already started in the intuitive and overmind being of control over the body; the subconscious will have become conscious and transformed into a supporting superconscience.
- This will reverse the necessary separation from body consciousness that is required for the spiritual life.
- Matter will be seen as the Brahman, bringing a certain reverence in all dealings with matter.
- Can establish what the body naturally wants, which is duration, health, strength, liberation from suffering, ease.
- Will liberate the obscured and spoiled intuitive instincts in the body, and flood the whole being with a supreme energy of consciousness-force.

Pain and Ananda

- Pain is the result of the inability of the limited being to meet the shocks of the world.
- Growth in consciousness usually brings more sensitivity, because it is not accompanied by a growth in force.
- But the power of the spirit over its instruments can be developed, leading to peace, willed insensibility, or even a change of the vibrations of pain to Ananda.
- The gnostic completes this reversal and gives the body a power for total delight.

Evolution of the being of bliss

- The demand for delight is in all our parts, but first sought through external means.
- Ananda is the essence of the Brahman, the matrix from which consciousness comes.
- The evolution of the gnostic being would be followed by an evolution of the being of bliss.
- In the gnostic being, peace and ecstasy cease to be different, and become one.
- Even before the gnostic change there can be delight in the mind, the heart, the will, the body's perceptions.

Problem of personality and ethics

- In the ordinary conception, if the person disappears in the impersonal or universal, there is no longer any question of personality, responsibility, or ethics.
- But in the supermind, personality and impersonality are inseparable, not opposites.
- The pure substance or force is impersonal, whereas the expression is what we call the personality.
- The gnostic being repeats the mystery of the divine being—at the same time absolute, universal, and individual.

Gnostic individual or person

- In all persons there is the double element of a fixed set of qualities, and the unformed but limited flux of nature out of which those qualities are formed.
- In the gnostic being, the self-expression would no longer be described by fixed qualities.
- The gnostic would also have a third element, the person, self, soul both in the depths and the surface.
- This can be distinctively felt as a power, a potency, a sea of energy, a someone.
- The individual manifestation may be distinct or protean, but in either case harmonious, and only an index of the infinite that could be felt behind.

Question of ethics, good and evil

- Sin and evil are essentially a wrong dealing with oneself or others.
- The gnostic being manifests the essential truth, good, love; these are not constructed laws but part of the essence, consciousness; all becomes a self-flow of self-nature.
- There is no struggle to observe constructed laws, no sin or virtue.
- The nature of the gnostic being is the conscious process of a reality, in full possession of its own truth, itself a fulfillment of all true laws.

Individual will, conflict, standards

- The all-will of the Divine is one in each gnostic individual and in many gnostic individuals; they are conscious of the same will, self, energy in all.
- This assures a symphonic movement of unity, harmony, mutuality, an entire accord between free self-expression and obedience to the inherent law of the supreme.
- Because there is no separate individuality, there is no conflict with the world or other beings.
- So there is no need of rigid standards, which the mind uses because it is limited in vision.
- The gnostic is bound only by the truth of the whole and the object, not a fixed mental symbol; it would have the self-evolving plasticity of the infinite acting upon its own finites.

Individuality and cosmicity, law and Dharma

- The gnostic individual creates a self-manifestation, but as a center of the universal and a center of the transcendence.
- This would cure the antimony of the Purusha and the Prakriti; the individual nature being an outflowing of supernature, there would be an authentic, automatic, and plastic order.
- We start from the automatic laws of infrarational nature, and then impose standards of thought and life.



- The ideal of the spiritual life is freedom, however; “abandon all Dharmas.”
- Though it is possible to pass through a stage where there is inner freedom but a lack of outer order, to the gnostic, freedom and order are fundamentally one, because they both arise from an identity.
- The freedom of the gnostic is not license; that would be alien to the being, a restriction and not a liberation.
- The absence of a constructed law would not lead to chaos, conflict, or disorder, because the gnostic is self-possessed of a truth universal, inherent, and all actions spring from that.

Ego, super-ego, will

- In mental nature there can be conflict between self-effort and obedience to a higher will.
- But in the gnostic, these two springs of action would be the same.
- The gnostic would see the truth of forces and put forth what was willed to be done, without the play of a separative ego.
- The freedom of the gnostic is founded upon the unity of the will with the eternal will.
- Universal love, sympathy, oneness would penetrate each action, not stand in opposition to other impulses—there would be no conflict between the powers of the nature.

Instrumentation of lower gnostic grades

- Higher, illumined, intuitive, overmind would each have an instrumentation of a different order.
- Thought, vision, direct contact, comprehensive grasp would be the action of these.
- In the true gnosis the basis is identity, but the play of these (thought, etc.) would still be present.
- The knowledge of gnosis is the instrumentation of an operative consciousness of being.

Diversity in the gnostic manifestation

- In the gnostic evolution there would be a great diversity in operation, poise, status.
- It may put forth a partial frontal self-expression and hold the rest behind.
- This limitation would be an act of self-knowledge.

Gnostic collectivity

- Would have the same integration of life and action, realized unity, freedom and order.
- Mental idea of oneness is sameness, but gnostic oneness would have a richness, a complementary plenitude.
- The mind learns with difficulty another’s nature, whereas in the gnostic, there would be a naturally dynamic, spontaneous unity.

Relation to the continued world of the ignorance

- Lower manifestation would continue.

- The higher spiritual mental would draw light and energy from the gnostic, and all that rose into the higher, illumined, etc. would undergo a transmutation.
- Involved power of the gnosis would lay something of its harmony on the inconscience.
- And the untransformed part of humanity might evolve a greater order of mental beings.
- It is unlikely that the evolution from the inconscience would cease, since it is so pervasive, but a first result might be the subjection of the evolution to the law of harmony, of unity, and no longer an evolution in strife.

Chapter 28: The Divine Life

Consciousness and life are the keywords of evolution, but they are still imperfect. The foundation of the spiritual and divine life must be an inner growth; the outer is then transformed by that inner reality.

A gnostic collectivity is held together by the same principle of oneness, mutuality, harmony as the gnostic individual. The supernature that we have to evolve includes new powers of consciousness, which are natural to it. The perfection of society comes by the perfection of the individuals within it. The gnostic collectivity will harmonize with the life of the ignorance around it, and will be the unfolding of a constant, creative miracle, not a monotone.

Consciousness and life

- Consciousness and life are the keywords to what is being worked out in time, but both are unfinished.
- The essence of consciousness is to be aware of itself and its objects; the perfect state of this is beyond the mind.
- That totally self-aware consciousness we have called supermind or gnosis, and we must be becoming of that being.
- Life is the effective power of being in matter, but it is still imperfect, and life evolves through greater consciousness.
- Supermind is the native dynamism of the spirit, so for life to be a manifestation of the spirit, it must be with a gnostic power.

Spiritual life: inner and outer

- Spiritual life is a long growth into divine living, where the mental and spiritual intermingle.
- It must be a remolding of the outer as well as the inner, and this must include a collective life of gnostic beings.
- There can be an inward divine life, not dependent on anything external, with the outer unchanged in principle.
- But for a change of the whole, there must be a new order of gnostic beings.



Sri Aurobindo and disciples circa 1918. (Photo courtesy Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

- The foundation of the gnostic life must be inward; the inner life is of the first importance.
- We must reverse the normal order, and remake the world by the self-conceiving spirit.

Three directions of growth: inner, personal, world

- The mind concentrates on one of these three: inner spiritual growth, development of surface nature, outer world.
- All three are terms of the Divine, and the individual is poised in the middle.
- In the growth to a divine life, the spirit within must be our first preoccupation.
- Once the inner is created, our other preoccupation must be to convert the our surface being.
- Outer action can stimulate inner growth, but the growth must still come from within.
- Knowledge, thought, action are really means of discovering what the spirit seeks to be; the physical mind sees this

upside down, and takes the surface as fundamental.

- In the spiritual stage of evolution, the occult process must be the whole process: the first necessity is for the individual to discover the spirit, the divine reality within.

Attributes of the complete consciousness; to be fully in the reality is to:

- Have self-awareness of one's total being, reality.
- Have the full force of being, which is will, the will of the spirit.
- Have the full, self-existent delight of being.
- Be universally, without the limitations of ego.
- Have the consciousness of transcendent, timeless, eternal being.
 - *Which transcends body, mind, life, even the universe.*

Inward living

- These attributes are impossible for the surface self; to live within is the first necessity for transformation of nature.
- Inward living is difficult for the extroverted mind, and it is not the same thing as the type of introversion that is preoccupied with the life-ego and mind-ego.
- The first reaction of mind is to see darkness, or to recoil from the inner silence.
- But true movement within brings greater experience, vision, joy.

The collective life, and unity

- If done on the surface, it is a make-believe, bound by ego, an association with minor inner result.
- Collective life must be based on an inner inclusion of others in our own being, an inner sense of oneness.
- The gnostic being has a close consciousness of the self of others, and will find himself in the fulfillment of others.
- Individual perfection and inner completeness is our first condition; a perfected relation with all others and things is the second; the third is new world or collective life based on gnosis.
- The gnostic collectivity is held together by a common consciousness, not physical life facts.
- The collective would be based on the same principle as the gnostic individual; they would feel themselves embodiments of a single self and reality.
- Any laws would be self-determined, received inwardly by the inner being.

Diversity versus uniformity

- There would be a considerable free diversity in a community or between communities.
- But it would be a harmonious sense of one truth, one force in many forms and bodies.
- Forms would arise in the right place; there would be no need of struggle.



The delight of the Spirit is ever new, the forms of beauty it takes innumerable, its godhead ever young and the taste of delight, rasa, of the Infinite eternal and inexhaustible.

—Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 1069

- An inner spiritual hierarchy as well as a fundamental spiritual equality would take place, with each in harmony no matter what the position in the whole.
- Unity, mutuality, harmony would be the character of a gnostic collectivity.

Supernature and current nature

- The perfection we seek can only be found by passing out of our current nature of ignorance into a supernature of spiritual self-knowledge.
- Anything we construct cannot be entirely true, effective, because it cannot go beyond our nature.
- Without an inner unity, our social life is a construction or association, marred by discord.
- Only if our nature develops beyond itself, which is the eventual necessity if evolution of being is the law, can we have perfect unity, mutuality, harmony.

Wholeness of sight and action

- Currently we have all kinds of disparity of knowledge, will, capacity.
- An innate character of supernature is a wholeness of sight and action, even if restricted within limits.
- Knowledge is power, but in the current formation this is not apparent, because the conscious mind is a small agent in relation to the automatic inconscient force.
- Even in mentality and life, greater consciousness means greater power.

Subjection to matter

- The subjection of life and mind to matter is not insuperable.
- The mastery of matter by consciousness reaches its acme in the gnostic being.
- This would be a direct, intuitive, and immediate control by the self-effective real-idea.
- Some degree of this is present in the lesser stages leading to the complete gnostic being.

New powers of consciousness

- In addition to the higher over the lower, these would also break down the barriers between soul and soul, life and life.
- It would have the spontaneous, innate power of unity and harmony, bringing a conscious interchange of forces.
- The harmony would be a spontaneous expression, borne of

mutuality of consciousness, direct inner contact and interchange.

- The evolution of these powers is not considered admissible by the modern mind, but in fact they are latent and in rudimentary form in our ordinary composition.
- Mystic experience shows the possibility of new powers of consciousness.
- Nothing is more liable to misuse than power, but when powers come as a result of growth into a greater consciousness, the aspirant does not need to reject them.

Need for new powers

- Currently we have an imperfect understanding, struggle and discord, inability to correlate the new with the old, diversity of life and mind.
- Individuals are not in accord, and neither are the forces in a single individual.
- We have to grow into a more complete spiritual nature.
- The harmony and concord of a gnostic individual would be equally natural to a community of gnostic beings, and it would be able to harmonize its existence with the ignorance around.

Individual and collective perfection

- In the human aspiration toward perfection, the three preoccupations have been the individual, the society, or the relations between individual and society.
- In the distant past and the present, the stress has been on the society.
- India had the ideal of the perfected spiritual individual, but only after passing through the influence of the society.
- The only way to unify the goals of perfecting self versus subordinating self to society is through finding a deeper principle of being.
- This is the reality within each thing, which gives each its power and value, including human and collective life.
- This reality is more than human, and more than the collective; the individual does not cease to exist if the collective ceases.

Perfection of the individual

- The collective is largely subconscious, and has to formulate and find itself through the consciousness of its individuals.



- The allegiance of the individual must be to the spirit, the Divine; one must not subordinate oneself to the mass.
- As long as one is undeveloped, subordination to the greater is required; but in spiritual oneness, a person is preoccupied with the good of all.
- A perfected community can only come by the perfection of its individuals, which in turn can only come by the discovery in each of one's own spiritual being.

Evolutionary crisis

- In our evolution we first had to affirm our material existence, and then the mental.
- Beyond this, the spiritual must become our next preoccupation, or else under the dominant spirit of a utilitarian science, we risk lapsing into a resurgence of vital barbarism.
- Reason cannot maintain the race in its progress.
- We have created a system of civilization that is too big for our mental understanding to manage; we have a chaos of clashing ideas, needs, classes, nations.
- Evolution now calls for a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence.
- A life of unity, harmony, mutuality is increasingly needed, or else we seem to be headed into a prolonged confusion, crisis, and darkness, driven by colossal forces.
- The needed larger mental and vital being needs a supporting soul and spirit to maintain it.

Possible solutions

- The communal goal has been adopted, but this idealized communal ego is a colossal or even fatal error, because it is a forced unanimity and driven by dark subconscious forces.
- An imposed unanimity of mind can only compress thought and life; mind and life must have freedom and be allowed to be progressive until a higher instrumentation is developed.
- An enlightened reason and will, through education, has not been found to change humanity; and it also results in a kind of coercive social machinery.
- Recoiling from the mechanistic, the mind may seek the religious idea or society; but this has not worked because it had to compromise with the ego and vital nature.
- Only the full emergence of the soul can overcome these barriers.

Emergence of the gnostic collectivity

- The insistence on a radical change might seem to put off hope to a distant future, but even so it is the only way, and the whole of evolution has been preparing this.
- The vision or need must arise in some, even if only individuals.
- The collective change can only occur if the gnostic individual finds others with the same kind of inner life; otherwise a common spiritual community will express the same mental values.

- Might be necessary even for the preparation to have a separate community, and in such a concentration the difficulties would present themselves with concentrated force.
- It might be assumed that conflict and collision would be the first rule of the relation between a gnostic collective and the life of beings still in the ignorance, but the new power might be more complete, and be able to establish itself and spread its light on mankind.

The established gnostic consciousness on earth

- The very principle of the gnostic being would ensure a harmony with life still in the ignorance.
- Because our nature is a derivation from supernature, whatever spiritual truth is in it will reappear and be fulfilled in the higher life.
- The mind cannot determine what will survive, and the forms would likely change.
- War and strife would disappear, whereas art and crafts, physical body would remain.
- Because desire would not be a factor, simplicity, asceticism, or a withdrawal from life would not be required.
- Should not be confused with a vital, titanic, exaggerated Nietzschean supermanhood; that belongs to the past, and would only prolong the old lines of development.
- The true supermanhood is more difficult and simple: a self-realized being, a possession of life in the power of the spirit, the self-revelation of the divinity.
- The mind sees cessation of the life of adventure and struggle as a monotone, but this is a misconception: the gnostic consciousness would be an entry into the infinite, inexhaustible, the creative constant miracle.
- If there is an evolution, with consciousness and life as its terms, then this fullness must be the goal of development.



Surf breaking on the cliffs. (Photo by Nilauro Markus)



Yosemite wilderness. (Photo by Bhavi Saklecha)

*All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual
universe of movement in the universal motion.*

—*Isha Upanishad*, v.1, translated by Sri Aurobindo

Apropos

The human mind is a rational mind and I had to give a rational exposition of my thought. That is why the three volumes came to be written.—Sri Aurobindo, quoted by M.P. Pandit in *Talks on The Life Divine*, p. 2.

What I have tried to give in the book is a metaphysical foundation of Yoga and a new view of life.—Sri Aurobindo, quoted by Nirodbaran in *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, p. 214

The Life Divine is the declaration which ushers in a new age for humanity. It is the dawn of a new age, an age in which man will consciously go beyond the at-

tained formula of his nature, an age in which man will establish in himself, by constant effort of individual and groups, a new faculty which has not yet become constantly active in humanity . . .—A.B. Purani, *Sri Aurobindo's Life Divine*, p. 2.

The nucleus, with which the supramentalisation or divinisation or transformation will begin what ultimately will be a racial step forward, is designated by Sri Aurobindo as the Gnostic Community, a small group organised harmoniously according to a perfect inner light, love, and liberty.—K.D. Sethna, *The Development of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual System and the Mother's Contribution to It*, p. 46.

M (after a while): I find *The Life Divine* very difficult, Sir.

Sri Aurobindo: What is the difficulty? The language or the thought?

M: It is the language that I can't follow. Can't it be made easier?

Sri Aurobindo (smiling and shaking his head): Ask the Grace of God to aid you.

—Quoted by Nirodbaran in *Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, p. 213.

The path must be shown and the doors opened but everyone must follow the path, pass through the doors and go towards his personal realisation.—The Mother, *The Life Divine: The Mother's Talks*, p. 130.