

Evolution of Consciousness both Cosmic & Individual

The “The Life Divine” as it begins: An essential understanding of the opening chapters of the Shri Aurobindo's magnum opus “The Life Divine”

The first chapter of “**The Life Divine**” opens up with a very significant quotation from the Rig Veda. It is a very famous quotation on Usha, the Dawn. Perhaps, through the quotation and symbol of Dawn, Shri Aurobindo wants us to get a subtle but a profound glimpse of the Dawn – The incoming of the Transcendental Light of the **New Age**.

“She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond. She is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming – Usha widens bringing out that which lives awakening someone who was deadwhat is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine ? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forward her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come “

Let us shed some light on this important sentence of the above stated lines “**What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that must shine**”

This is but, one profound line that is a single line synopsis, encapsulating the entire content and classical prodigy of the book “**The Life Divine**”

“**The Life Divine**” is a book that harmonises all philosophical, ancient, occult and metaphysical thoughts of mankind that “**shone out before and those that must shine**”

It is interesting to see that how Shri Aurobindo analyses the different schools of thought and arguments of different philosophers starting from the west and the east as well the noble Indian rishis and “**acharyas**” like Shankaracharya, Madhavacharya and Ramanujacharya, whose thoughts and philosophy has stood the test of time and is a cult of its own. In fact all these philosophies of the Masters gain its fulfilment in this book, because all the philosophical concepts and spiritual experiences of both the east and west, that are time tested, and is necessary for the progressive evolution of mankind has find a major place in “**The Life Divine**”

“**The Life Divine**” is like a “**cosmic puzzle**”, where different arguments from different perspectives conjoin with different schools of thought. It seems, as though they are the perfect pieces of puzzle, coming together, and synthesizing the whole concept of living a ‘**Divine life**’

This is because Shri Aurobindo himself had been through the experiences and realizations that these logos of cosmic puzzles bring in, throughout the different gradations of the evolution of the “Being”.

The Human Aspiration

The highest thought and aspiration of Human Kind since eternity and time immemorial is the Consecration of the Divine within Him. The highest and utmost thoughts that mankind could ever envisage is the experience of the totality of Perfection, Pure Bliss and the Absolute Truth of Infinity –where one is free from the shackles of birth and death and is ever – living, ever-alive and ever – blissful.

We have seen that Man has always run after Wisdom & Knowledge. Despite exploiting the externalities of Nature in the Physical Dimension, he still remains dissatisfied. Though, his quench of thirst may be satiated, through various scientific discoveries, but what his soul yearns for is satisfaction & Contentment. Exploiting the externalities of nature did not give him the wisdom in its truest sense – that is **God, Light, Freedom and Immortality**.

The Problems of Human Race

Sri Aurobindo says in his book that Human Race is destined to be illumined and its ultimate aim and goal in life is to reach the state of existential bliss and Absolute Freedom.

However these deeper experiences and the insights one gains is seen to be acutely difficult to mankind in his daily pursuit of normal life where his life energies are only directed to fulfil his basic needs.

Thus we find that God – Realization and Transformation is a matter of steady evolutionary progression and of course a revolutionary effort on the individual front.

Hence Mankind who is obscured in the veil of egoistic consciousness and thinks himself to be a separate identity, is coloured by the animosity of nature, this transformation to realize and consecrate the Supra-mental Consciousness – that brings in infinite freedom and bliss to the world, a world which is layered in its own chaotic delusions of mind body and its mechanical necessities is indeed a process of realizing God in Matter. However, all this is a predestined path that humanity will traverse and its occurrence is profound to earths evolution, there by every stage in the history of evolution of Mankind is happening with the complete Divine Sanction.

Nature and its Existential Problems

All existential problems are essentially problems of Harmony. They arise from the perception of unresolved discord or the instinct of lack of agreement of the concept and the experience of Oneness and Unity.

A fully illumined mind can never be contented with the discord until and unless he discovers its roots thus realizing its truth. Only the lower – animal part of man can live with such a discord or escape it through some of his unillumunated thoughts and compromises.

What is Evolution?

According to Sri Aurobindo **evolution** is a word which only states the phenomenon without explaining it. For in the Ordinary Consciousness there can be no reason why someone accepts the logic that there is life in matter or the probability of Mind present in Matter. Unless we

accept the Vedantic solution that life and mind is already present in Matter. In fact Matter is a form of veiled life and life is but a form of Veiled Consciousness.

In that case there is less doubt in the proposition of understanding that Mental Consciousness is actually a form and a veil of the higher states that is beyond Mind. Thus the unquenchable thirst of Man towards the ultimate glory & aspiration towards God, Light, and Bliss & Freedom is inevitable. Hence the Human Aspiration and thirst is simply a natural progression in which "***the nature is seeking to evolve beyond mind***". This can also be said as the natural "***impulse towards mind***" which the divine has planted in certain forms of life.

Since Man is inundated with the form of Mind and it has necessary faculties of thinking, so it is obvious that his mind and body is preparing for a higher and divine life. In fact Evolution is a progressive manifestation of Nature in which the Divine secretly worked out or rather it can be said that it is an "overt realization" of what her fundamental nature is, that is in layman's words it can be explained that evolution itself is growth and everything whether it is Mind, Matter or Soul is continuously growing in its evolutionary process of growth which as explained earlier is "its" fundamental nature. In fact the Reality of Nature goes without saying that everything that has to survive in this universe has to grow.

Thus the Realization of Divine within and without is the ultimate Reality and an evolutionary progression, so any religiosity or rationalistic view cannot be negated as it is a part of the process of Realizing the Divine in Matter.

It has been seen from the times of History, that Mankind has an inherent nature of enquiry, where in attempts have been made to know the reality through logical questionings. These logical thought and the mental activities has been persuaded for immediate solution to material existence but such limited mental activities were never permanent in their effect.

For example in scientific discoveries of man, we see truth changing constantly. It was in 400 B.C. Democritus posited about the atomic theory that Matter is made up of small indestructible units, he called Atoms. In fact in 1718 Newton accorded the atomic theory proclaiming that God made atoms – the smallest unit of matter and it is indestructible. According to him in his book "On the nature of things" what God made "no ordinary power" could divide and if it could be broken "the nature of things" will change. Then came the discovery that atoms are subdivided into subatomic particles called proton, electron and neutron and then with further research comes the quantum theory or high energy physics that gives us a different reality altogether. And yet, the research of discovery and rediscovery continues. Every discovery, after a passage of time limits mankind, binds and frustrates him, forces him to take the next quantum step in the search of truth.

These constant limitations, awakens mankind more impulsively for a further and more expansive enquiry to bring in immediate solution. By that the hunger, the business of religion and mysticism might profit but only for a shorter duration and not permanently. This is because such inquiry is only an inquiry but not equipped enough to suffice the truth of Reality & Divine.

Such evasions of mankind from the knowingness of the Cosmic Reality only because it is "***arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results***" and is considerably "***slow in its regulating process***" eventually leads to rejection or non- acceptance of the Holier Truth, which

in itself is a rebellious action against the nature – but at the end all this happens as per the Divine Will.

This is because the Divine Mother will never allow Mankind to accept this truth through myopic instincts, unclear intuition or “**random aspiration**” blinded by mere logical reasoning’s and “**self-guiding**” will power. It can only happen from a higher illumined mind or intuition though obscured of real wisdom, but is not to be stopped as this aspiration is a process of the Higher Mind Itself.

Thus this slow and a gradual awakening is a divine process, guided by Divine Will , to the manifestation of the next stage of Higher Consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil. Thereby as the mind gets unveiled by the Light & Truth of wisdom, our natural progression of self-enlargement happens and continues to “**whatever highest state, humanities ultimate resting place is**”

Thus in this first chapter of “**The Life Divine** “ Sri Aurobindo discusses clearly about Man incessant search of Truth, which was always there from the beginning of time and will be there till time ends and eloquently professes the noble truth of “**Aspiration**”. Aspiration is the loftiest path which enables mankind to know and realize the Divine Truth. Aspiration is the guide which builds the Divine qualities of surrender and helps him to open up to the Divine Mother in a gradual process. In his book “Lights on Yoga”, he brings in different methods of “**Sadhana**” but ultimately leaves to the Sadhak to find his own “Holy Truth”.

The Materialist Denial

One of the principles of Nature is “As is above , so is below. As is below so is above”. This happens to be one of the principles of Correspondence.

This affirmation of Divine Life upon earth or the conscience of infinity in our mortal existence is fundamental to the realization of the eternal spirit as the “inhabitant of this bodily mansion” – “the wearer of the mutable robe” but also accepts the truth that Matter is made of “Brahman” and it is through “Brahman” that he constantly weaves his garbs and builds recurrently the unending series of his mansions.

Now the insight of the ancient that “Matter is also Brahman” has to be logically and empirically proved to the rational mind. Hence this can be explained as a series of ascending terms (Life, Mind, Super Mind and the grades that link Mind to Super Mind) between Spirit & Matter.

The nature of Purusha & Prakriti – their passively luminous soul of the sankhyas and their mechanically active energy , does not share any commonality – not even their opposite modes of inertia. Shankaras wordless inactive self and his “Maya” of many names and forms are also equally different and are irreconcilable entities who have their own individual differences can be dissolved only in truth of eternal silence.

For the materialist – the field is easier as they deny the existence of Spirit and readily accept Monism – the conception of Monads and singularity of Matter. But it becomes too difficult for him to persist in this rigidity of understanding permanently. He too positions the existence of silent Atman as inert and obscure which projects his excuse for refusing to extend his limit to enquiry.

Therefore the Human Mind can never be satisfied in this “barren contradictions” laid by its Rational Mind. Hence “ he must seek a complete affirmation” which can only be found when it has the luminous openness to far powerful supra-physical Truths. To reach that understanding it must traverse the depths and degrees that our inner consciousness is enriched with. This can be done either through Objective method analysis of Life and Mind to Matter or by a subjective synthesis and enlightenment that unfolds with the realization of “ultimate unity’ without denying the essence and energy of expressive multiplicity.

It is only in such an all-embracing truth, can all the multiform existences which apparently is self-contradictory and manifold conflicting forces, governing our senses and thoughts can find its stability in the eternity of the central truth of existence. The world in its actuality is a depiction of a play of archetypes, which are essentially symbological in its content and essence. It is only through the central truth of existence that Man can reach its centeredness through all its whirlwind course of play and work, just like the Brahman of Upanishads, knowing fully its aim and thereby serving its purpose with a “serene and settled joy of light as well as with rhythmically balancing energy.

But when one the rhythm of energy gets disturbed, man should go to the two extreme opposites of reality and experiment it subjectively only to come back to the objective reality of whole and completeness. In the meantime, there might be some interventions and man might negate the truth by replacing it with mere sensation of ideas. But still in its mental understanding Mankind knows that there is something in him that is more than the vital breath and it is either Spirit or Matter can give its realization of the ultimate reality but not the intervening principles. Thus it is necessary for the Mind to experience the two polar opposites of existence, there by coming to the realization that everything reduces to all single life force – that which cannot be defined or described, but is not only real but attainable. Be it whatever road we take and travel, that is always the end at which we arrive and we can escape it, if we only refuse to complete our journey.

On this context we find, that world has been saturated, despite, its triumphant mastery over the material possession and riches, of the deep richness and self fulfilment the realization of the divine brings in. Thus the longing for self fulfilment and ever-existent-joy-bliss has become integral to the existence of an individual and the race, and the time has also ripened for illumination to set in. Infact there has been a growing tendency of man and thought to the comprehensive affirmation of the inner and outer richness of experience and not to the superficiality of experiences that mind brings in.

The Materialist have always denied the Spirit behind Matter and the denial had always been insistent and immediately successful than the thoughts of an Ascetic who has perilously refused to such concepts. The Materialist has always opinionated that physical senses are our sole means of knowledge and reason by no means can escape from their domains. It must always and solely depend on the facts they suggest and by no means can these suggestions go beyond its origins as prescribed by them refuting completely to the possibility of the existence of far powerful and less limited faculties that can take us to another domain, and for which a new kind of inquiry has to be instituted.

The Materialist rigid dogmatism has always clearly refused the existence of faculties - that might be latent in human kind. It refused to investigate the supra-physical phenomena, which are

however conceived as subordinate activities of the Material world. The intellectual and rational mind swept out clearly the blind dogmas of existence so naturally an advancement of further inquiry was imperative. Thus in one way the thought of "pure reason" and rationalistic tendencies has done a great service to mankind.

However, Sri Aurobindo clearly states, that though, advancement of self knowledge is the ultimate destiny and necessity of mankind but it has to be done with a purified mind, body and sensibilities or else it becomes a premature adventure. The footing always has to be the ground and Man has to keep himself grounded in the soil of earth, whenever "it images the self in the manifestation of the universe".

In fact the Supra-physical can be more deeply grasped when the Knowledge and the grip of the physical is more profound and sure. It is certainly a fact that the wider we extend and surer we make our knowledge of the physical world the wider and sure will be our foundation and depth of the Higher Knowledge. This rings true even for the highest, even for the Brahma Vidya.

A certain kind of Agnosticism is the final truth of all knowledge. This is because all knowledge expresses itself in symbols. Symbols that images the unknowable truth or that which cannot be expressed or beyond expression in thoughts and words. But by unknowable it is meant, that it might not be equivocally expressed in a form thought or language but it can be attained by Supreme effort of Consciousness. But there is also a kind of knowledge through which all these reveal itself. It is through names and phenomenons of existence concealed to the ordinary mind. Thus through this Materialistic process we can scrutinize Life, mind and Super Mind in the phenomena that are characteristics of them and not in those subordinate exchanges which reflects itself in Matter.

Matter, expresses itself as a formulation of some unknown force. Life too, through its obscured mysticism begins to reveal itself, having a sensibility, but imprisoned in its manifestation. As Shri Aurobindo has said what is that work and result - if it does not involve an expansion of Consciousness in form and self-evolution out of form in order to actualize a mighty possibility in the universe which it has created. And what is it, if it is not a will to unending life, to unbounded knowledge and unfettered Power. As such the Material Science itself is inquiring the dream of the Physical Conquest of Death and omnipotence of the terrestrial humanity.

It is in the fiery adventure of making Man the Master of Circumstances, where space & time vanishes and contracts in its works thereby lightening the "fetters of causality". Gradually Man starts understanding that idea of impossibility is but a vague idea, as Man realizes the truth, that what a Man Wills to do, he must be eventually able to do - "for the consciousness in the race eventually finds the will".

It is not in the individual that omnipotence expresses itself but it is in the Collective Will of Mankind that works out with the individual as a means. And yet when we look deeply it is also not in the conscious will of the Collective Humankind but a Super conscious will - the Divine Will that uses the individual as a centre and means and the collectivity as a condition and field.

In fact according to Shri Aurobindo it is - God in Man, the infinite identity, the multidunous Unity, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent - who have made man in his own image- with the ego as a centre of working, the "visvamanava" as the mould and circumscription seems to express in them, some image of unity, omniscience, omnipotence which are essentially self conception of

the Divine. Infact it is this vast “Cosmic impulse” which the modern world without quiet knowing its own aim, yet serves in all its activities and labours subconsciously to fulfil.

But there is always a limit and encumbrance in this material world –however , Mankind through Practical Science is constantly endeavouring to simplify and reduce to the point zero – the machinery by which the greatest effects is produced. Infact the material life has to have a higher purpose . A selfless purpose which it should be aimed at. However for the Material Science its real utility is in finding final harmony , even if all its existent forms has to be demolished.

The Refusal of the Ascetic

And still there is a yet something beyond.

For on the other side of cosmic consciousness, there is a consciousness, attainable to us, which transcends not only our ego but the entire cosmos itself. It stands in front of it like a picture, a film against an infinite background. It is that infinite , which supports the “ universal activity “ and embraces life in all its vastness or may be rejecting it from its infinitude. In fact if the Materialist has its justification that the Material world is the only reality and the relative world has in some sort is evident, thereby proclaiming the supra-physical world is “unknowable”, thus nonexistent and abstract, and something which can be said an imagination of the mind and does not fall within the realms of the so called reality visible to our outer senses so also the justification of a “Sannyasin” can also be considered to be true, who has realized the Absolute and know the “Spirit” to be only the truth ,which is free from the shackles of birth and death and the relative is nothing but a creation of the mind and the senses , a dream that is completely contrary to the “Mentalism ”.

Refusal of the “ultimate reality” is a rustic error of the rationalist mind , since the physical world also has the existence of certain realities which is our physical senses cannot cognize. Hence the denial of the supra- physical, which is a result of “constant sensuous association “ is a mere illusion and hallucination as it invalidates its own argument which it is trying to establish.

The Materialist world constantly has asserted itself through its humane experience and belief , since its “origin of thought” and since the scientific research is in vogue at present times, and thus the more open and outward mind are coming up with discoveries of “telepathy”, which obviously is accessible to the reasoning minds who are brilliantly captured in the shell of the past or limited intellect, or those who have confused enlightenment and reason with their constant repetition of formulas that is given to us from the bygone centuries and “ jealous conservation” of dying intellectual dogmas. Sri Aurobindo , states it very clearly to these rustic and crude minds that, yes, the “world beyond “ exists in their universal rhythm, grandeur and might , self – existent laws , and their justified and illuminating knowledge. Not only this, they also exercise their influences here in the physical bodies and the physical world, here also they organize their “means of manifestation” and “ commission their messengers and witnesses”.

The Master more asserts, that the worlds are only paradigms for our experiences and the senses our instruments of “experiences and conveniences”. Consciousness is the huge underlying fact of existence, for whom the world is field of experiential interplay and senses its instrument.

In fact, the existence of the physical and supra physical world is no peculiar to the constitution of Humanity and its outlook of an objective world as a witness, as it is the very nature of existence itself. All the phenomena of existence consist of an objective witness with an amalgam of active objectivity. In fact the action of objectivity cannot be acted upon or actualized if there is not a witness of its objectivity.

Action cannot proceed without the witness and universe exists only in and for the consciousness that observes and has no independent reality of its own. In fact it has been said, that the material universe is eternally self-existent and has been there before life and mind has manifested into it and will survive even after they have disappeared not troubling them with their limitedness and transient, eternal and inconscient energies. However though the difference may be apparently metaphysical but is of utmost importance to humanity and mankind as it will determine and influence the whole outlook of a human being and decide his goals and assignments and decide the field he should focus or circumscribe his energies. This essentially is important as it raises the question of cosmic existence and more so the "value of human life".

Sri Aurobindo further says that when the concept of materialism is pushed more far, we are either left with an option to snatch the utmost of the present to "live his life" considering that it is transient or rather live a more dispassionate life, that doesn't serve a purpose for the race as it knows that everything is but a essentially is of a little long lived "nervous spasm of matter". We work or enjoy the material energy being rather delusive of life or may be, a more nobler delusion of leading an ethical life of mental consummation. However, the Master enviably asserts, that it is too not good to lead a life of Spiritual Monism, because if we stress too much on the unreality of the objective world, we can go to different path, which obscurely draws the conclusion of the "fictitious character of ego" or the unreality and purposelessness of life, thus returning to the stage of Non-being or the "relation less Absolute which is nothing but a rational escape from the meaningless tangle of phenomenal life.

Hence the extent of our Consciousness can be perfected with the understanding that the witness is not an individual embodied mind but the Cosmic Consciousness embracing the universe and is permanently Intelligent in which, where in both the world exists, in its own active existence from which it is born and disappears by an "act of knowledge" or an "act of power". Yes, it is not the mind, but the calm and eternal, which exists equally in the living earth and the living human body, to which the mind and senses are just transient instruments, is but, the Witness of the Cosmic Existence and its Lord.

The possibility of Cosmic Consciousness in humanity is being gradually recognised as they seem to acknowledge the existence of other elastic threads of knowledge, though still classifying them as hallucination and creations of mind. However, psychology of the east has always recognized its existence and a reality of subjective progression. In fact, when we enter into a deeper Consciousness, we continuously start welling in universal existence. Then we become more aware, so does our sensations matter where we are aware that everything exists in an independent reality of itself and again in its multiplicities and contradictions, everything through different threads of physical senses establishes communication with the multiple points of its being.

Similarly we accept Mind and life existing on its own , separate in its own existence yet unified through a common point and yet if we go farther through the linking points , we might reach the super mind – get into its awareness, not only by being conscious of it but by being it – receiving it in sensation , yet entering into it in awareness. In it we live , as we lived in ego – consciousness, active, more and more in contact, with other minds and other lives, other bodies , than the body organism we called ourselves, producing effects not only our moral and mind planes but also on the subjective being of others and our world and events occurring in it than what could not be fathomed in the capacity of ego consciousness.

Whoever has experienced that cosmic consciousness, a higher reality than the physical reality , real is that world, in its work and effects. So the world is also real to him and it does not exist independent of itself. For in that higher experience , all being is a part of supreme consciousness, and all consciousness is self existence, eternal in existence and real in form and is neither a dream or evolution. The world is real precisely for it exist in Consciousness for it is the conscious energy one with being that has create it. The conscious being has its own existence, in its own inexpressible vicissitudes and infinity as well as in its own cosmic harmonies. The world lives by that, but it does not live by the world. Then once we get into cosmic consciousness and become one with the cosmic existence then we get into the world – transcending consciousness and thus become superior to all the cosmic existence. Then the question arises which first occurred to us , whether this transcendence is also a rejection? “ What relation this universe has to the Beyond”

For at the gates of that Transcendent World – stands that “ mere and perfect” Spirit, complete in its wholeness, luminous, pure , sustaining the world yet inactive in it, without the waves of energies , flaws of duality, indivisible, unique, free from the appearances of relation and multiplicity. This is what the “Pure Self “ of Advaitins is, the inactive Brahman or the Transcendent Silence is. And when the mind suddenly goes through this intermediate transitions, receives the sense of the unreal world and the Ultimate reality of Silence, it becomes one of the most powerful experiences that human mind is capable of. Here in this perception of this pure Self, or Non-Being, we have the starting point of the second negation – the refusal of the Ascetic.

It is this revolt of Spirit against Matter, since 2000 years, since the advent of Buddhism, that has been disturbing the old Aryan world has been dominating the Indian Mind. The general conception of existence has been permeated with Buddhist Philosophy of the chain of karma, and the consequent antinomies of bondage by birth, the liberation coming with cessation from birth. Therefore everybody joined in the collective consensus, that not in the world of dualities, can the kingdom of heaven be consecrated nor the Krishna Consciousness be eternal , because it is beyond all manifestations of ineffable Nirvana or we all the separate experience of formless unity is lost in some indefinable Existence. It is infact sad to see a race so knowledgeable and luminous to be lost in the shadows of doubt and ignorance, but again it is true that the refusal of ascetics cannot be refuted totally and is an indispensable element of human perfection, neither this ideology can be negated, as long as the other end liberated its intellect or vital habits from the subjection to an insistent animalism.

Thus “ All this is Brahman” has not been read and experienced sufficiently . The passionate aspiration of Man to reach upward to the divine has not been sufficiently related to the essential downward movement of the divine in embracing its manifestation eternally. Its meaning in

matter has not been so well understood as the “ Truth “ in its Spirit. The reality of the Sannyasin has been grasped in its full height but not by the ancient vedantins in its width and depth.

Hence Sri Aurobindo says that as we have seen how Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so we must acknowledge the greater service of the Ascetism to life. Thus the Master Asserts in preserving the truths of Material Science and its real utilities in the final Harmony , though many of its existing forms has to be broken at last. And infact, a right preservation of the knowledge and utilities of material science will be required to guide us when we deal with the legacy , which though has been diminished and depreciated , by the Aryan past.

Reality Omnipresent

Shri Aurobindo here says, For whom the Brahman is Non –Being, he becomes nonexistent and for whom the Brahman “is”, then is he known “real in his existence”.

It is since then, we admit to both the claims of the “Pure Spirit “ to manifest in us or the Matter as the conditioned manifestation, we have to find a truth that amalgamates both the conclusions and justifications in Thought. This would be done neither by taking off its rights or denying the sovereign truth though erred or exaggerated in its own capacity , draw so a flush of constant strength.

This is because whenever we are given such arguments and proposition that stands so strong in its truth and makes such a powerful appeal to human mind, we have to understand that such arguments stands are not mere errors or imaginations and hallucinations of Human Mind but has some truth in it, which demands our enquiry , and which if ignored and negated will definitely avenge itself.

Thus it is very difficult to arrive to a conclusion and derive finality through the reconciliation of both these truths. Reconciliation here in means not a mere compromise of two conflicting things but an unification or an harmonisation that comes through a deeper mutual understanding and “intimate oneness” . It is therefore through the ‘utmost possible “unification of Spirit & Matter that we arrive to possible harmony, unified and strong in foundation, for a comprehensive and ‘reconciling” practice in the inner life of the individual and his outer experience.

The meeting point of Spirit & Matter is actually the Cosmic Consciousness. It is the reconciling Consciousness that aims to bring in harmony. When one is this Consciousness one is conscious of the Unity of Existence or Oneness (transcendental) of Spirit as well as the multiplicities of matter. In the Cosmic Consciousness there can be no disharmony, paradoxes, contraries, therefore it becomes the basis for an Absolute Synthesis.

In fact the “The Life Divine” itself is a synthesis based on the outlook of Cosmic Consciousness.

Herein we can even say what “The Mother” told us is how Sri Aurobindo has spoken about all the theories and the arguments of different Philosophers and Spiritual Visionaries and then binds all the divergent theories into a harmonious whole by presenting his own synthetic vision of the Reality. Therefore, one could very well say that “Life Divine” was written from a Cosmic over mental Consciousness.

It is as if the cosmic over mental consciousness has translated itself into a logical , rational language which Sri Aurobindo can use as a vehicle of expression in “Life Divine”. Therefore , we constantly face this two simultaneously moving thoughts. One which presents the concept of synthesis and the another which presents the viewpoints of multiple thinkers. This leads to a confusion in the readers minds which is accustomed to unilinear dimensions of logic.

Therefore the solution to this is to reach Cosmic Consciousness, which herein is the expansion of the Mental Consciousness into the Cosmic Consciousness. In Cosmic Consciousness , the mind is illumined and perceives both the truth of unity and that of multiplicity. Matter reveals itself as the body of Spirit & Soul , and Spirit reveals itself as a self existing extension of Soul finding its presence and essence in Matter. This could be a satisfactory basis on which divine life can be led by the Humanity.

Then Sri Aurobindo takes up the Problem of The Silent and the Dynamic Brahman of The Ascetics. Now let us understand what was the realization of the Ascetics? The ascetics have found the Absolute Reality in Silence. So if Silence is the Absolute Reality, how does the Dynamic Brahman become the Reality? If Silence is the sole reality of Consciousness how does Dynamic or active part of Brahman becomes the reality? This is because Human Mind cannot accept the possibility of the two simultaneously existing truth of One or Many or the Comprehensive truth of Silence & Dynamism, Passivity and activity. This is because of the Mental Logic, which says either this or that but cannot accept the incompatibility existing in two different states of Consciousness. But Sri Aurobindo does not state it to be polar opposites, but says clearly the existence of One Without The Two.

He says the silent and active Brahman are not different. They One Brahman in its two aspects. Silence is the basis and support of creation. In fact without silence there can be no creation. Each exists because of the other.

What is Silence?

Silence is nothing but a gathering of energy. It is not shunya or nothingness. Infact it is the ungathering of the consciousness of energy or of force; it is the ingathered poise of Brahman.

On a deeper level, without silence there can be no “ words”. Words are an expression of the Consciousness of Emotion, thoughts that we retain within. The more we are poised and settled in calmness, quietude and peace within the more coherent our expression of thoughts and action will be.

When we go deeper into these things we realize how feeble , these things are in their self assertiveness and how confusing in their misleading distinctiveness are the words and terminologies that we use. In fact we start realizing that the limitations we impose on Brahman, is largely influenced by the shadows and narrowness of our limited minds and experience. We focus ourselves on one aspect of the Unknowable and thus proceed farther to deny or negate the rest. We constantly affirm the truth of the Supreme with our own rigid constraints of mind and relativity and passionately keep on discriminating and asserting our own egoism in the partial understanding of the divine against the opinions and partial experiences of others. Thus it is wiser to wait and learn and grow, since we are duty bound in the aspiration of self perfection to speak of these things which otherwise is incomprehensible and difficult to explain in words to

search for the “ widest the , most flexible , the most catholic affirmation possible and found in it the largest and most comprehensive harmony”.

Thus we realize that one can enter into a consciousness where all the relative experience disappears and the conception of self dissolves into it. This possibility of non-Being , of a calm, motionless, impersonal existence in which all the existences manifests itself in its multiplicities but yet, it is inert, inactive, pure and luminous in its own existence impassioned by the verity of forms and illusions but its outward works of Love, Truth & Righteousness is the real core of Buddha’s teaching. This is all so superior to the ego, but not gilded with an escapist mindset from the trouble and suffering of mankind since its birth.

Thus after “reconciling “spirit and matter in the cosmic consciousness, we realize the union in the transcendental consciousness, deep in the final assertion of all and of all its possible negations. We get to understand all affirmations are “assertions of status in activity” whereas all negations are assertions of freedom from “both in that status or activity”. **The unknowable is something, supreme to us, wonderful , blissful and luminous which constantly formulates itself to our consciousness and continuously escapes itself from the formulation it has made.** Now, as the Master asserts this is not a mere malicious attempt of falsehood and mere trickery of some magician, but as even here **“the wise beyond our wisdom” guiding us from reality to an even vaster reality, more profound and vaster, until and unless we reach the profoundest and vastest of which we are capable of. An omnipresent reality is the Brahman not an omnipresent cause of persistent illusions.**

In fact if we thus accept the positive basis of harmony , and then enquire where more this Harmony can be founded. It is in the conceptual formulations of the truth and the unknowable , where in each of the sutras represent truth that is beyond conceptualization. All these truths can be understood and explained in relation with each other and the effect they have upon life. This should not be done separately or exclusively or through complete negations of all other affirmations. The real Monism or adwaita essentially says the that “All is Brahman” , without separating or bisecting them into real or unreal, truth or falsehood, Self and Not-Self. If we take an argument that the Self is the only Reality then all Brahman is the Self and if it is all powerful, boundless in Spirit and form, conscient in its essence then there might be definitely some powerful and potent reason lying within its manifestation, which naturally invokes us to further investigation of its nature and energy. In fact in whichever forms, Reality or Truth manifests itself, the ultimate aim of humankind is to win over evil as we all know that the good always triumphs over bad.

Brahman is present in all things and yet whatever manifests in the world is willed by the Brahman. In fact all necessary transient existences of pleasure, pain, evil and devil of the cosmos is necessarily a by product of the relative consciousness of mankind which chooses to get baffled and turmoiled by its very presence. To validate this argument, Mankind, has made Brahman assume a responsibility on itself, and thus erected a polar opposite argument of “Maya or Mara” , which is Conscious Evil or Self Existing principle of Evil. In actuality there is only one Lord & Self and everything else is his “representations and becoming”.

Again if ever, for us the Reality is a mere dream or an illusion , how can cosmic substance be within and without its own Consciousness. If there is vessel of Gold, how do we accept the argument that the vessel is a mirage? Thus these words and expressions are mere ‘tricks of

speech”, habitual conditioned address of the relative consciousness; yes they represent a certain truth, in fact a much bigger truth but they also misrepresent it, just the way Non-Being can be conveniently misrepresented as the nullity or the void of existence, so that cosmic dream can turn out to be another product fantasy or hallucination. But no, Phenomenon is not “Phantasm” but an essential truth of Cosmic Existence.

We can then say that the conception of an Omnipresent Reality is neither the Non –Being at the end of the Self at the other end both presenting each other’s fallacies to nullify and annul each other. They are in fact different realms of reality, obverse and reversely affirmed. The highest experience of this reality has a conscious existence of its own, supremely intelligent and powerful with its essential Self Existent Bliss, **and beyond the universe, there is still an unknowable existence, something infallible and more Blissful.** Thus we are justified , in our conceptions of the existing dualities which might be partially cogent to our sensations, but can only be properly understood and comprehended with a more liberated intelligence and experience.

Though for further investigation and inquiry, we are constantly, dwelling under the stress of duality, we must support our understanding and perception under the repose of faith. Faith, which the highest of reason and a wider and vaster patient reflection, do not deny, but rather affirm. Faith is a creed given to humanity, in its various stages of development, to support him in his journey, until and unless this faith transforms itself into a product of knowledge and perfect experience and “wisdom will be justified of her works”.

Destiny of the Individual

We find in Life Divine that Sri Aurobindo recapitulates in the first stanza of each chapter what he has discussed in the previous chapter. Thus he once again confirms and affirms of the existence of Brahman as the sole reality in all its form – absolute or relative, Incorporeal or Corporeal, animate or inanimate, Intelligent or Unintelligent, and in all its varying contradictory affirmations and denials , which loses oneself , perhaps in the ineffable, Brahman is the One and the Only Reality.

Again, here we have to understand, that, by telling, Brahman is one and the only reality , Sri Aurobindo does not affirm what Shankaracharya has said about Reality. It is not the illusionists conception of Reality that which he affirms to, But what he wants to say, is , that , Brahman is independent of its own existence, the one that exist without the two, and again in Brahman all the multitudes of realities are born, and in Brahman alone the realities in all its variations and contradictions diffuse. Thus as we know that the sum is greater than the parts, therefore, Brahman is one and not a sum or concourse. Thus Sri Aurobindo says that there is Brahman and there is also Many and the Many is inherent in Brahman

The second concept, that Aurobindo has taken up, is that that, Brahman is indefinable. Indeed when we try to think of a description that our mind can conceive about the Reality or Brahman, It is indeed difficult. In fact, to be true, billions of people in this universe can have their own conceptions and understandings of the "Reality" is. Someone may say Brahman is all Bliss, for others it is Compassion. Thus indeed, Brahman is indefinable; it is difficult to describe it in the world of expression and language. But again, Sri Aurobindo says, that Brahman is "Sat Chit Ananda" So here in we find a contradiction. Actually what the Sri Aurobindo and the sages and rishis said that Brahman might be indefinable but that does not mean it cannot be experienced. In fact people, in their different stages of their own Consciousness and development, experience Brahman at differently. Just like the western world regards Matter as Reality or Brahman. They have plunged into the world of matter and brought up innovations and experiments that was beyond the imagination of mankind. So for them Matter is the only reality. Even the Vedic seers have said that Brahman is also life. But these are only partial experiences or truth of Brahman. The Reality has different higher levels of Consciousness, beyond life, matter, and mind and higher mind. Thus "Brahman" might be indefinable but not inexperiencable.

This truth of Brahman and "sat chit ananda" was perceived so strongly and had been one of the most crowning positive experiences of "Brahman" that the Vedantic seers erected another conception of the reality which they might have perceived which is "that which is beyond" or called "Asat" or Non -Being. By "Asat" it means one which is Absolute, pure Bliss, Pure Consciousness and beyond all manifestations and expressions of its forms. The Upanishads gave us the concept of "sachidananda". But the Vedas went one step beyond, and gave us the concept of "asat" or non -being.

Asat means Non-Existent. But is it possible that there can be something which is Non-Existent . Asat means something beyond Manifestations. Manifestations means "Tat", "Asat" means something which cannot manifest directly. Yet this is something restrictive and limited. One thing we should consider, that the Vedic Seers and Aurobindo believed in the Absolute Freedom of the Absolute. The synthetic Teaching of Upanishads does not put Sat and Asat as antinomies which are opposed or destructive to each other. But it is the last "antinomy through which we look up to the Unknowable". Sri Aurobindo asserts the Upanishads are more realistic in sense since one of the most important concepts that they have behold is that of "One and Many", that is why he says that even "Unity has to make its account in multiplicity; for the Many are also Brahman". It is by "Vidya", the Knowledge of Oneness, that we know God, without it, "Avidya" a relative form of multiple consciousness is a "night of darkness or a disorder of ignorance". But however, this "night of darkness" cannot be avoided or negated, because light cannot exist without darkness, similarly the aspiration of Knowledge cannot exist without Ignorance. So then we become as "men blinded by light" so that we ourselves cannot see the field which the light illumines.

Such is the teaching, "calm, wise and clear", of most of our ancient sages. They were patient and strong and calm enough to know the reality and its truth. They were also grounded and humble to admit to the limitations of knowledge, and perceived the border line that they have to surpass to know the "reality beyond". However it was later the "impatience of heart and mind" and the "trenchant intelligence" of the few, that made them assert only on the existence of one and deny the many as real and unreal. Here by trenchant Intelligence, the master means, the sharp intelligence and intellect, of the acharyas who by means of propositional logic, and the matrix of accepting and negating has hastily come to inconclusive conclusions.

However Shri Aurobindo clearly states, that ancient wisdom , which always said that, to know God really one must know him in all its states, forms and existences equally with no distinction. He has to consider Reality in all its multiplicities and variations and value them equally, though not mastering its oppositions and shining in its glow and thus obsessed and delusional enough to consider it as the only reality.

Now it is clear that those who concentrate on the One or the Many are either Ascetics or Materialists. Different religious philosophies and political philosophies mirror this aspect of the physical reality. Whether it is the Communist ideals and beliefs or its the Democratic systems , both are the reflection of this tendency of thought. In fact, the entire socio-political philosophy is based on this division. The Master says, not to deny anything because both hold the wisdom of the reality. We may have all the idealism in the world , but all these ideals are more or less in the mental level, where it is truly difficult to harmonize them, whether they are ethical , religious or aesthetic ideals.

However it is also true that in the world of form, the physical reality, in which, we have set for self realization , nothing can be achieved, unless and until this truth is actualized in the physical world wholly , which will possibly bring in balance all over. Because if we see, the world is so full of suffering, falsehood and ignorance, so when this harmony is manifested in the lowest level can it be manifested in the 'highest summits'..

Unless and until the truth of an ideal is imprinted in Matter, it is not permanent until its actualized by the matter, it is not even valid. That is perhaps one of the reason that humanity has not changed since millennia. Ancient sages, philosophers, rishis has gone, but the human nature is yet to be divine, and it has remained more or less in the mental level. At the same time if we overemphasize materialism too much, there might be an imbalance in Spirit & Matter as established by the Upanishads. Materialism is very important, but it should be remembered that, too much stress on physical world or life , should not drag us down or bind us to Matter.

What we have to understand that matter is the mould of the spirit. Whatever Matter we see around is Spirit in form and substance , if we don't realize this integral truth , we will lose the Upanishad equilibrium between Spirit & Matter.

The next argument explains the evolution of Brahman in different stages and how it has manifested itself in its multiple variations. The higher spiritual truths must manifest itself in phenomenal consciousness and in matter. Now, what is the truth behind it? The truth behind this is Brahman is evolving in various stages. In the process of evolution it is not only Man and Nature that is evolving but Brahman itself is evolving in the evolutionary process. 'Life exist is Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself'

Here in the Destiny of an Individual comes in –

Originally it is Brahman itself which is inconscient. From the Inconscient Brahman, it becomes Matter. Then with the maturation of Matter, Life comes into being and then Life evolved into Mind. What is Brahman, if it does not evolve itself in different form, shapes and sizes with different capabilities? But there is one point to note, even when life emerged, Matter did not vanish. Matter was there, is there and will be there. In fact Sri Aurobindo clearly points out, that

Matter has been the base of creation. It could have been fire, water, thus when the Supra mental Age sets in, or man reaches the super mind, the base will always be there though it would be a transformed matter.

So where does an individual fit into the destiny of mankind and Brahman's evolution. Here Sri Aurobindo wants to say, that, although Brahman has evolved in different levels, it is the life which it has kept as its medium. Matter is the base and life is the medium. Between Mind and Matter comes life which Brahman uses as a medium or instrument for evolution. So life is the perfect field of manifestation of the ideas that come from the mind or even higher. So what we see here, is the element of life becomes here the most predominant aspect of the fulfilment. That is why Sri Aurobindo says to fulfil "God in Life is Man's Manhood".

Now we take up the second half of the sentence, "to fulfil God in Life is Man's manhood". When Sri Aurobindo talks about Manhood, what does he mean by man's manhood? Is it the adulthood he is talking about? "Manhood" is the dharma. Thus Sri Aurobindo says it clearly that in order to be "true human beings", one should "Fulfil God" that is knowing and realizing God in his Omniscience and do God's work, be on the path – That is the ultimate Dharma of mankind or Destiny of an Individual or Entire Human Race.

In the next stanza, Sri Aurobindo categorically tells us, that Brahman expresses itself in successive forms and manifestations, just as life unfolds itself to different variations of its heightened provinces, but this does not mean, that to whatever heightened Consciousness it reaches, it starts negating the very base which are fundamentals of Form and Matter. This is because all life and Brahman is all pervasive and all embracing. Even if we reach to the phenomenal heights of Non-Being, we just cannot ignore the Matter, the body self, the basal energies thinking it as lower energies. Then again we are not perfect, we keep on moving around in a different zone and realm of imperfection. Thus lower self has to "transfigured" and transformed on the light of higher selves and energies. The nature of Brahman is integral and all embracing. Brahman at the same time unifies different realms of consciousness, thus, just like Brahman, we have to be integral and whole and embrace everything in the joy of love.

In the next argument, Sri Aurobindo talks about the Ascetic views. The Ascetic has divided Consciousness in three layers, the Individual, The Universal and the Transcendental. It discards and negates the other layers of Consciousness which is equally important. Thus it forms a system of hierarchy and grades levels of consciousness as higher and lower, where actually the philosophy envisaged by Aurobindo is integral, giving everything its equal importance. The ascetics say the God is extra cosmic. Now what do we mean by Extra Cosmic? They perpetrate, that God is outside the Brahman. We have often heard, that God at the top is sitting and seeing us, the God Shiva is in a deep meditation sitting at the top of Himalayas. But As Sri Aurobindo says that God is not Extra – Cosmic but Supra – Cosmic. That means he is beyond the cosmos and the cosmos or Brahman is part of it. The Absolute exists beyond the Brahman but not outside the Brahman. The absolute is in the Brahman but not of the Brahman.

The Transcendental, the Cosmos and the individual are an integral part of the whole. The individual consists of the Cosmos – Brahman, but this does not mean, that if the individual is lost, the Brahman or Cosmos dies to. The Cosmos is eternal and is bereft of the existence of Individual. But in the realm of Existentialism both Cosmos and the Individual Embraces each other.. Similarly Transcendental is beyond the Cosmos but not outside the Cosmos. Thus if we

separate the Individual , Universal and Transcendent ,the Individuals importance is lost . So an integral view of Individual, Universal and Transcendental, there is a change in the “inview and outview of the Individual” .