SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

4. APPROACHES TO KNOWLEDGE AND PERFECTION

Name of the Publisher: Peoples awakening and Service organisation

Name of the Printer : Peoples awakening and Service organisation

Name of the Owner : Peoples awakening and Service organisation

Printed at : Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Press
Seth Rambilasrai Kothi, Khetan Mohalla
Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan

Published at : Mira Ambica Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla,
Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan
email: srimaa@vsnl.com,
sadlecjjn@rediffmail.com

Editor : Anjana Dharnidharka

Price : Rs. 15/-

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 4

Knowledge of the Scientist and the Yogi 6

II. THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE AND PERFECTION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL 9

1.The Nature and Limitations of the Scientific Approach 9

(a) Science and the Deeper View of Existence 9

(b) The Nature of Scientific Laws and their Limitations . 12

(c) The Reason Behind the Present Day Prominence of Science 18

2.The Necessity and the Importance of the Scientific Approach in Terrestrial Evolution 20

III. THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE AND PERFECTION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL 27

1.From Mental Knowings to Spiritual Knowledge: The First Steps on the Journey 28

2.The Spiritual Approach to Knowledge: Some Cosmological Findings 35

(a) The Process of the Creation of the Cosmos 35

(b) The Origin and the Reality of Matter 40

3.The Materialistic Science's View of Spirituality 47

(a) The Nature of Subjective Experiences and the Working of the Occult Planes of Existence 48

(b) Some Popular and Captivating Criticisms of Spirituality and the True Significance of Spiritual Evolution in Terrestrial Nature 54

(i) Spirituality has failed to solve the problems of human life 55

(ii) Spirituality has failed in the human mass – its results have been limited to individuals 57

(iii) The method of spirituality is purely subjective and lacks objectivity 58

LIST OF REFERENCES: 62



I. Introduction

"Spirit is the crown of universal existence; Matter is its basis; Mind is the link between the two. Spirit is that which is eternal; Mind and Matter are its workings. Spirit is that which is concealed and has to be revealed; mind and body are the means by which it seeks to reveal itself. Spirit is the image of the Lord of the Yoga; mind and body are the means He has provided for reproducing that image in phenomenal existence. All Nature is an attempt at a progressive revelation of the concealed Truth, a more and more successful reproduction of the divine image.

But what Nature aims at for the mass in a slow evolution, Yoga effects for the individual by a rapid revolution. It works by a quickening of all her energies, a sublimation of all her faculties....Nature seeks the Divine in her own symbols: Yoga goes beyond Nature to the Lord of Nature, beyond universe to the Transcendent and can return with the transcendent light and power, with the fiat of the Omnipotent.

But their aim is one in the end. The generalisation of Yoga in humanity must be the last victory of Nature over her own delays and concealments. Even as now by the progressive mind in Science she seeks to make all mankind fit for the full development of the mental life, so by Yoga must she inevitably seek to make all mankind fit for the higher evolution, the second birth, the spiritual existence. And as the mental life uses and perfects the material, so will the spiritual use and perfect the material and the mental existence as the instruments of a divine self-expression."[1]

The scientific and spiritual approaches have traditionally been characterised by a lack of mutual understanding and appreciation because, as discussed in the last issue of 'The Real Awakener', the method of science is just the opposite of the spiritual way of doing things. Science makes the inner

a result of the outer, fundamentally a phenomenon of Matter and it works upon this view of things. Most psychologists and other scientific minds working in various branches of science which deal with occult phenomena and mystic experiences subscribe to this method and this view of reality. As we had seen in the last issue, the neurotheologists believe that all the mystical experiences and the reality of God spring entirely from a peculiar wiring of the human brain and have no independent existence. Scientists are trying to trace all mental events to chemical reactions in the brain. They are measuring minuscule amounts of brain chemicals, tagging them and tracing their intricate pathways to identify mental events – memory, concentration, fear, love, aggression, etc. – as basically chemical events. The reductionist movement – the movement to reduce all deeper and higher things to the working of material forces – shows no signs of abating. The aim of modern biology seems to explain all biology in terms of physics and chemistry. And all this denial of the higher domains is continuing along with a strong revival of occultism, Eastern mysticism and spiritual disciplines in all the four corners of the non-Islamic world. Speaking about the reason behind this denial by the scientists, the Mother observed, "…when you do not have the experience yourself, another person's experience is not convincing, it cannot convince you….A thing one has not experienced does not exist.

Even if some kind of miracle were to happen in front of them, they would have a material explanation for it; for them it would not be a miracle in the sense of an intervention of a force or power other than the material forces and powers. They would have their material explanation. For them it would not be convincing.

You can only understand if you yourself have touched this domain in your experience.

…And precisely because they have acquired the capacity to explain, they explain external phenomena to themselves in such a way that they remain in their denial of the reality of inner phenomena – they say that these are, as it were, extensions of what they have studied.

Only, because of his very constitution, because there hardly exists a human being who hasn't at least a reflection, or a shadow, or a beginning of a relation with his subtle being, his inner being, his soul – because of that there is always a flaw in their denial. But they consider that to be a weakness – it is their only strength."[2]

Knowledge of the Scientist and the Yogi

"The climax of the ordinary consciousness is Science. For Science, what is upon the earth is true, simply because it is there. What it calls Nature is for it the final reality, and its aim is to build up a theory to explain the workings of it. So it climbs as high as the physical mind can go and tries to find out the causes of what it assumes to be the true, the real world. But in fact it adapts "causes" to "effects", for it has already taken that which is for the true, the real and seeks only to explain it mentally. For the yogic consciousness, however, this world is not the final reality. Rising above the mind into the overmind and then into the supermind, it enters the divine world of first truths, and looking down from there sees what has happened to those truths here. How distorted they have become, how completely falsified! So the so-called world of fact is for the Yogi a falsehood and not at all the only true reality. It is not what it ought to be, it is almost the very opposite; whereas for the scientist it is absolutely fundamental.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is, is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But, really speaking, the laws of which he usually speaks are of his own mental making; and because he accepts Nature as it is as the very basis, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognizes that the laws are mere mental constructions. There are only cases, and if the mind could apply itself to all the circumstances it would find that no two cases are similar. Laws are for the mind's convenience, but the process of the supramental manifestation is different, we may even say it is the reverse of the mind. In the supramental realization, each thing will carry in itself a truth which will manifest at each instant without being bound by what has been or what will follow. That elaborate linking of the past with the present, which gives things in Nature such an air of unchangeable determinism is altogether the mind's way of conceiving, and is no proof that all that exists is inevitable and cannot be otherwise.

The knowledge possessed by the Yogi is also an answer to the terrible theory that all that takes place is God's direct working. For once you rise to the Supermind you immediately perceive that the world is false and distorted. The supramental truth has not at all found manifestation. How then can the world be a genuine expression of the Divine? Only when the Supermind is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must steer clear of the dangerous exaggeration of the sense of the falsehood of the world, which comes to those who have risen to the higher

consciousness. What happened with Shankara and others like him was that they had a glimpse of the true consciousness, which threw the falsehood of this world into such sharp contrast that they declared the universe to be not only false but also a really non-existent illusion which should be entirely abandoned. We, on the other hand, see its falsehood, but realize also that it has to be replaced and not abandoned as an illusion. Only, the truth has got mistranslated, something has stepped in to pervert the divine reality, but the world is in fact meant to express it. And to express it is indeed our Yoga."[3]



II. The Scientific Approach to Knowledge and Perfection: A Critical Appraisal

"The world of living beings abounds in the unexplained. Scientists have devised crafty ways to explain it away. The first way is to simply deny. One shuts one's eyes and says it is not true, it cannot be so, one must be mistaken. Thus their mind selectively keeps out data.

The second way is to indulge in mathematical juggling. Here, a veil of statistics is put on the 'anomalies' by saying that its probability of occurrence is not significant enough and hence can be attributed to chance! This is strange logic, for even a single case deserves our attention and needs to be explained. Even if the probability of its occurrence is low, it is still a possibility whose small door may lead us to a vast store of knowledge and power.

Finally, the most cunning device is to explain it away. Here through mental gymnastics, a hypothesis is put forward based on 'known material processes' but confined to the strictly mechanical model. This dogmatic assertion, that whatever the evidence, I shall not deviate from my belief that material reality is the sole reality, actually becomes unscientific.

Yet, the anomalous abounds and mocks our dogmatic assertions. It forces itself upon our beliefs and disbeliefs. It knocks at the gates of our senses seeking admittance. It enters from a vast unknown, surrounding us on all sides, smashing our safe boundaries. The old gives place to the new. Thus science moves from wonder to greater wonder..."[4]

1. The Nature and Limitations of the Scientific Approach

(a) Science and the Deeper View of Existence

"The material universe is only the facade of an immense

building which has other structures behind it, and it is only if one knows the whole that one can have some knowledge of the truth of the material universe. There are vital, mental and spiritual ranges behind which give the material its significance."[5]

"Scientific laws only give a schematic account of material process of Nature – as a valid scheme they can be used for reproducing or extending at will a material process, but obviously they cannot give an account of the thing itself. Water, for instance, is not merely so much oxygen and hydrogen put together – the combination is simply a process or device for enabling the materialisation of a new thing called water; what that new thing really is, is quite another matter. In fact, there are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called causal (Karana) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state; that accounts for dematerialisation and rematerialisation. These are occult processes and are vulgarly regarded as magic. Ordinarily the magician knows nothing of the why and wherefore of what he is doing, he has simply learned the formula or process or else controls elemental beings of the subtler states (planes or worlds) who do the thing for him….The direct power of mind-force or life-force upon Matter can be extended to an almost illimitable degree. It must be remembered that Energy is fundamentally one in all the planes, only taking more and more dense forms, so there is nothing *a priori* impossible in mind-energy or life-energy acting directly on material energy and substance; if they do, they can make a material object do things or rather can do things with a material object which would be to that object in its ordinary poise or "law" unhabitual and therefore apparently impossible."[6]

By science we can arrive at a more and more powerful manipulation of circumstance, but not an essential control because by this approach we know the processes of things but not their essence. The human mind is not at all enough for the knowledge of the essence, for even the largest play of its intelligence creates only a qualified half-light. "Even the truth of physical things cannot be entirely known, nor can the right use of our material existence be discovered by physical Science and an outward knowledge alone or made possible by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone: to know, to use rightly we must go beyond the truth of physical phenomenon and process, we must know what is within and behind it. For we are not merely embodied minds; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of Nature. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, to widen by that still more largely, even universally and infinitely, our range of being and our field of action, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and on a larger plan, in the light of the spiritual truth of existence. Our labour of mind and struggle of life cannot come to any solution until we have gone beyond the obsessing lead of an inferior Nature, integralised our natural being in the being and consciousness, learned to utilise our natural instruments by the force and for the joy of the Spirit. Then only can the constitutional ignorance, the ignorance of the real build of our existence from which we suffer, change into a true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For what we are is spirit, – at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field but not our only field of experience; but this is only at present. Our imperfect mental instrumentation is not the last word of our possibilities; for there are in us, dormant or invisibly and

imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and closer to the spiritual nature, there are more direct powers and luminous instruments, there is a higher status, there are greater ranges of dynamic action than those that belong to our present physical, vital and mental existence. These can become our own status, part of our being, they can be principles, powers and instruments of our own enlarged nature."[7] In other words, it is necessary for us to realize that "….the terms in which our present consciousness renders the values of the universe, though practically justified for the purposes of human experience and progress, are not the sole terms in which it is possible to render them and may not be the complete, the right, the ultimate formulas. Just as there may be sense-organs or formations of sense-capacity which see the physical world differently and it may well be better, because more completely, than our sense-organs and sense-capacity, so there may be other mental and supramental envisagings of the universe which surpass our own. States of consciousness there are in which Death is only a change in immortal Life, pain a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight, limitation a turning of the Infinite upon itself, evil a circling of the good around its own perfection; and this not in abstract conception only, but in actual vision and in constant and substantial experience. To arrive at such states of consciousness may, for the individual, be one of the most important and indispensable steps of his progress towards self-perfection."[8]

(b) The Nature of Scientific Laws and their Limitations

"The laws of atomic physics are statistical laws, according to which the probabilities for atomic events are determined by the dynamics of the whole system. Whereas in classical mechanics the properties and behaviour of the parts determine

those of the whole, the situation is reversed in quantum mechanics: it is the whole that determines the behavior of the parts.

The concepts of nonlocality and statistical causality imply quite clearly that the structure of matter is not mechanical…

The apparent similarities between the structure of matter and structure of mind should not surprise us too much, since human consciousness plays a crucial role in the process of observation, and in atomic physics determines to a large extent the properties of the observed phenomena. This is another important insight of quantum theory that is likely to have far-reaching consequences. In atomic physics the observed phenomena can be understood only as correlations between various processes of observation and measurement, and the end of this chain of processes lies always in the consciousness of the human observer. The crucial feature of quantum theory is that the observer is not only necessary to observe the properties of an atomic phenomenon, but is necessary even to bring about these properties. My conscious decision about how to observe, say, an electron will determine the electron's properties to some extent. If I ask it a wave question, it will give me a wave answer. The electron does not have objective properties independent of my mind. In atomic physics the sharp Cartesian division between mind and matter, between the observer and the observed, can no longer be maintained. We can never speak about nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves.

In transcending the Cartesian division, modern physics has not only invalidated the classical ideal of an objective description of nature but has also challenged the myth of a value-free science. The patterns scientists observe in nature

are intimately connected with patterns of their minds; with their concepts, thoughts, and values."[9]

"The fact that all the properties of particles are determined by principles closely related to the methods of observation would mean that the basic structure of the material world are determined, ultimately, by the way we look at this world; that the observed patterns of matter are reflections of patterns of mind."[10]

All scientific laws are based on the linking of a cause to an effect. The notion of "Causality" depends on the peculiar way of the working of human mind. Ultimately all causation springs from free Divine Willing and there is no reason why one event should "cause" another except that it is the Divine Will that it should do so.

Another way of looking at this issue is to observe that since no two universal combinations are alike – i.e. no universal combination can ever repeat itself – how can laws be truly established and what is the real validity of such laws? It can only be an appearance and it is only the limitations of human perception – due to which man is able to observe some of the ponderables but miss the all important imponderable – that enable man to perceive fixed rigid laws. But all such laws can only be tentative and cannot be expected to be held valid for long because, as greater and greater heights and depths are sounded as a result of man's unending quest for discovery, new irregularities and unexplained phenomena requiring at least a modification of the existing laws and theories will become apparent which will again be subjected to the same fate as its precursor and this process, inherent in the working of rational human mentality, is likely to continue as long as scientists persist in their attempts to

discover fixed laws or theories – or even a Theory of Everything (TOE) – governing the workings of the material nature. A most recent example of this kind of thing is the discovery, possibly, of a hitherto unexplained flaw in the theory of General Relativity proposed by Albert Einstein. Here are the relevant excerpts from a recent issue of the Economist – " 'ASSUME nothing' is a good motto in science. Even the humble pendulum may spring a surprise on you. In 1954 Maurice Allais, a French economist who would go on to win, in 1988, the Noble prize in his subject, decided to observe and record the movements of pendulum over a period of 30 days. Coincidentally one of his observations took place during a solar eclipse. When the moon passed in front of the sun, the pendulum unexpectedly started moving a bit faster than it should have done.

Since that first observation, the 'Allais effect', as it is now called, has confounded physicists. If the effect is real, it could indicate a hitherto unperceived flaw in General Relativity – the current explanation of how gravity works.

That would be a bombshell – and an ironic one, since it was observations taken during a solar eclipse (of the way that light is bent when it passes close to the sun) which established General Relativity in the first place. So attempts to duplicate Dr. Allais's observation are important. However, they have had mixed success, leading skeptics to question whether there was anything to be explained. Now Chris Duif, a researcher at the Delft University of Technology, in the Netherlands, has reviewed the evidence.... Dr. Duif has examined various conventional explanations for the Allais effect. He finds the most obvious suggestion – that it is a mere measuring error – unlikely, because similar results have been found by many different groups, operating independently and, in at least one

case, without knowledge of Dr. Allais's results….Although Dr. Duif discounts each of the conventional explanations on its own, he admits that they might, in combination, account for Allais effect. But the possibility also remains that General Relativity – Einstein's sacred child – is wrong.

This suggestion would fit in with another odd phenomenon: the fact that the *Pioneer* 10 and 11 space-probes, launched by NASA, America's space agency, in the early 1970s, are receding from the sun slightly more slowly than they should be.

According to a painstakingly detailed study by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the part of NASA responsible for the craft, there is no conventional explanation for this. There may, of course, be no relationship with the Allais effect. But Dr. Duif points out that the anomalous force felt by both *Pioneer* probes (which are traveling in opposite directions from the sun) is about the same size as that measured by some gravimeters during solar eclipses.

So what are alternatives? One possibility (though it could not account for the *Pioneer* observations) is known as Majorana shielding. This eponymous theory is that large masses (such as the moon) partially block the gravitational force from more distant objects (such as the sun). Another idea is "MOND", or Modified Newtonian Dynamics, a theory put forward in 1983 by Moti Milgrom of the Weizmann Institute in Israel. MOND suggests that at very low accelerations gravity gets a bit stronger. An even stranger suggestion, made in 2002 by Mikhail Gershteyn, then at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is that the force of gravity is different in different directions. Most physicists do not like that one at all. It requires that the conceptual "frames of reference" against which movement, acceleration and so on are measured, are not

uniform in all directions. But it was similarly radical idea – that there is no absolute frame of reference in the universe, only local frames that can be measured relative to one another, which put "relativity" into relativity theory in the first place…."[11]

The human mind makes many laws, and the surface very obligingly seems to comply with these laws, but it is only an appearance which, when taken seriously, cuts one off from the creative Power of the Spirit – from the Power of the Grace. "…if by your aspiration or your attitude you introduce a higher element, a new element – what we may now call a supramental element – into the existing combinations, you can suddenly change their nature, and all these so-called necessary and ineluctable laws become absurdities. That is to say that you yourself, with your conception, with your attitude and your acceptance of certain alleged principles, you yourself close the door upon the possibility of the miracle – they are not miracles when one knows how they happen, but obviously for the outer consciousness they seem miraculous. And it is you *yourself*, saying to yourself with a logic that seems quite reasonable, 'Well, if I do this, that will necessarily happen, or if I don't do that, necessarily this other thing will happen', it is you yourself who close the door – it is as though you were putting an iron curtain between yourself and the free action of the Grace.

How nice it would be to imagine that the Supreme Consciousness, essentially free, presiding at the universal Manifestation, could be full of fantasy in its choice and make things follow one another not according to the logic accessible to human thought but in accordance with another kind of logic, that of the unforeseen!

Then there would no longer be any limits to the possibilities, to the unexpected, the marvelous; and one could hope for the most splendid, the most delightful things from this sovereignly free Will, playing eternally with all the elements and creating unceasingly a new world which logically would have absolutely nothing to do with the preceding one."[12]

Because, as the Mother wrote on 11.1.1914 in her spiritual diary, "Every moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us, every moment the universe is created anew in its entirety and in every one of its parts. And if we had a truly living faith, if we had the absolute certitude of Thy omnipotence and Thy sole reality, Thy manifestation could at each moment become so evident that the whole universe would be transformed by it. But we are so enslaved to everything that is around us and has gone before us, we are so influenced by the whole totality of manifested things, and our faith is so weak that we are yet unable to serve as intermediaries for the great miracle of transfiguration…. But, Lord, I know that it will come one day."[13]

(c) The Reason Behind the Present Day Prominence of Science

In spite of the limitations and the narrowness of its approach science, with its laws and discoveries, has been enormously successful during the last two centuries in implanting itself deeply into the human consciousness. This has been primarily due to its power to change appearances and transform things, circumstances and the world as it appears to us. For the most universal proof of the validity of an individual or collective experience has to be its power to make things – the appearance that we call the world – different from

what they are. In this respect spirituality at its present level comes no where even close to material science. The effect of the spiritual experience on an individual consciousness, for the one who attains bliss, sovereign peace, unchanging delight, the profound knowledge of things is undeniable. But since an individual experience is good only for the one who experiences and not for those who do not share his experience; it is not considered objective. Only the power over other people and things – if that comes coupled with the subjective experience – will be considered objective by the ordinary consciousness. If a person who attains a higher state of consciousness has the power of communicating it to others it will be, at least partially, a proof of the reality ("objectivity") of his experience. "….but further, if the state of consciousness in which he is – for instance, a state of perfect harmony – could create this harmony in the outer world, in what apparently is not harmony, it would be, I think, the proof most readily accepted, even by the materialist scientific mind. If these illusory appearances could be changed into something more beautiful, more harmonious, happier than the world we live in now, this would perhaps be an undeniable proof. And if we take it a little farther, if, as Sri Aurobindo promises us, the supramental force, consciousness and light transform this world and create a new race, then, just as the apes and animals – if they could speak – could not deny the existence of man, so too man would not be able to deny the existence of these new beings provided that they are different enough from the human race for this difference to be perceptible even to the deceptive organs of man."[14] The present day prominence of science is likely to continue until some such manifestation takes place.

2. The Necessity and the Importance of the Scientific Approach in Terrestrial Evolution

"All things are a manifestation of the infinite spirit out of its own being, out of its own consciousness and by the self-realising, self-determining, self-fulfilling power of that consciousness. The Infinite, we may say, organises by the power of its self-knowledge the law of its own manifestation of being in the universe, not only the material universe present to our senses, but whatever lies behind it on whatever planes of existence. All is organised by it not under any inconscient compulsion, not according to a mental fantasy or caprice, but in its own infinite spiritual freedom according to the self-truth of its being, its infinite potentialities and its will of self-creation out of those potentialities, and the law of this self-truth is the necessity that compels created things to act and evolve each according to its own nature. The Intelligence – to give it an inadequate name – the Logos that thus organises its own manifestation is evidently something infinitely greater, more extended in knowledge, compelling in self-power, large both in the delight of its self-existence and the delight of its active being and works than the mental intelligence which is to us the highest realised degree and expression of consciousness. It is to this intelligence infinite in itself but freely organising and self-determiningly organic in its self-creation and its works that we may give for our present purpose the name of the divine supermind or gnosis.

The fundamental nature of this supermind is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness and even when it makes numberless apparent divisions and discriminating modifications in itself, still all the knowledge that operates in its workings, even in these divisions, is founded

upon and sustained and lit and guided by this perfect knowledge by identity and oneness. The Spirit is one everywhere and it knows all things as itself and in itself, so sees them always and therefore knows them intimately, completely, in their reality as well as their appearance, in their truth, their law, the entire spirit and sense and figure of their nature and their workings. When it sees anything as an object of knowledge, it yet sees it as itself and in itself, and not as a thing other than or divided from it about which therefore it would at first be ignorant of the nature, constitution and workings and have to learn about them, as the mind is at first ignorant of its object and has to learn about it because the mind is separated from its object and regards and senses and meets it as something other than itself and external to its own being. The mental awareness we have of our own subjective existence and its movements, though it may point to, is not the same thing as this identity and self-knowledge, because what it sees are mental figures of our being and not the inmost or the whole and it is only a partial, derivative and superficial action of our self that appears to us while the largest and most secretly determining parts of our own existence are occult to our mentality. The supramental Spirit has, unlike the mental being, the real because the inmost and total knowledge of itself and of all its universe and of all things that are its creations and self-figurings in the universe."[15]

It is not the supramental spirit but the highest layer of the mind – termed overmind by Sri Aurobindo – which supports the present evolutionary universe in which we live here in Matter. "If supermind were to start here from the beginning as the direct creative Power, a world of the kind we see now would be impossible; it would have been full of

the divine Light from the beginning, there would be no involution in the inconscience of Matter, consequently no gradual striving evolution of consciousness in Matter. A line is therefore drawn between the higher half of the universe of consciousness, *parārdha*, and the lower half, *aparārdha*. The higher half is constituted of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Mahas (the supramental) – the lower half of mind, life, Matter. This line is the intermediary overmind which, though luminous itself, keeps from us the full indivisible supramental Light, depends on it indeed, but in receiving it, divides, distributes, breaks it up into separated aspects, powers, multiplicities of all kinds, each of which it is possible by a further diminution of consciousness, such as we reach in Mind, to regard as the sole or the chief Truth and all the rest as subordinate or contradictory to it. To this action of the overmind may be applied the words of the Upanishad, 'The face of the Truth is covered by a golden Lid', or those of the Vedic *ṛtena ṛtam apihitam*. Here there is the working of a sort of *vidyā-avidyāmayī māyā* which makes possible the predominance of *avidyā*."[16]

The overmind, which is a divided, many-sided play of the Truth, can easily be mistaken by the Mind for the supramental. According to Sri Aurobindo, Mind, when flooded by the overmind light feels itself living in a surprising revelation of Truth. The difficulty comes when one deals with the vital and still more with the physical. In fact the true defect of overmind, the limitation in it which gave rise to this world of ignorance, becomes fully apparent only when one looks at it from the physical consciousness. Here one can clearly see how the dividing action of overmind is responsible for the Ignorance. Without this dividing consciousness, the involution

of the Spirit in Matter and this slow, difficult and painful evolution out of it would not have been possible. Because the direct action of the supermind would have – right from the beginning – created immortal forms in the physical and the manifestation of a world like ours would have been impossible. Nor could there be a play of egoistic separative consciousness in the light of the supramental consciousness. Man, "...living in the universal self and not in the egoistic separative consciousness,...could not have evolved that separate action, personality, outlook from himself as the sole or the initial centre and point of reference which is the contribution of the ego-sense to the world-workings."[17]

The Ignorance is assumed in Nature by the secret spirit for the joy of tracing the cycle of self-oblivion and self-discovery. "It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms. It is in those forms that the slowly awaking soul has to accept the phenomenal action of an ignorance which is really knowledge awaking progressively out of the original nescience, and it is in the new conditions created by these workings that it has to rediscover itself and divinely transform by that light the life which is thus labouring to fulfill the purpose of its descent into the Inconscience. Not to return as speedily as may be to heavens where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly, – in that case the ignorance would be either an

inexplicable blunder of the All-conscient or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable, – but to realise the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of an embodied material existence, by struggle therefore towards the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the labour of the human race in the series of its cycles."[18]

Given the nature of the original Inconscience with its power for limitation, its law of difficult development, its immense force for retardation and frustration, the consciousness emerging from it under the evolutionary pressure takes the general shape of a mentality struggling towards knowledge but itself an ignorance. Mankind, with such a struggling mentality, has first to seek knowledge through the external and objective life and nature because until the mentality is sufficiently developed, spiritual knowledge is not really possible for it. The spiritual knowledge, termed higher or subjective knowledge is not at all easy – in fact it is one of the most arduous and difficult things – to approach or attain even for a developed mentality. Ordinarily, it is supposed that when one attains the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge becomes of no concern to him/her. But in truth these are two sides of one seeking, for all knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Since art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, action itself are means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life.

The first tendencies of science tend to be materialistic and its triumphs limited to the knowledge of the physical universe and the body and the physical life. But this is only natural because whatever its initial or apparent tendencies, it has really been an assertion of man the mental being and the supremacy of intelligence. Science in its very nature is knowledge, is intellectuality, and its whole work has been that of the Mind turning its gaze upon its vital and physical frame and environment to know and conquer and dominate Life and Matter. The scientist is Man the thinker mastering the forces of material Nature by knowing them. Science is indispensable for man at this stage of his evolution. It enables man to establish his control over physical phenomenon.

All advances in knowledge whether higher or lower lead man closer to the integral knowledge which both science and spirituality, knowingly or unknowingly, aim at. The wider we extend and surer we make our knowledge of the physical world, the wider and surer becomes our foundation for the higher knowledge. Scientific method helps to refine and to train the human intellect to a clear austerity. The vast field of subjective evidence and experience – the territory of higher knowledge – can only be safely entered when the intellect has been so trained. Seized by unripe minds, it – the untrained intellect – lends itself to the most perilous distortions and misleading imaginations. Actually, in the past it encrusted the real nucleus of truth with such an accretion of perverting superstitions and irrationalizing dogmas that all advance in true knowledge was rendered impossible. It is in this light that we should look at the materialistic wave through which humanity has been passing. It came because of a certain necessity in human development to destroy the bondage of old forms and leave a field for new truths and new forms of

truth and action in life as well as for what is behind life. In such waves it becomes necessary, for a time, to make a clean sweep not only of the disguises of truth but of the truth itself in order that the road might be clear for a new departure and a surer advance.

The very self of modern science is the search for knowledge, it will not be able to limit its search to the sense knowledge and the reasoning based on it. Its very soul will carry it into the supraphysical or supra-sensible worlds which it will explore in its own way and throw an added light on our knowledge of these realms which have so far been the exclusive province of the subjective approaches to knowledge – which have other – other than the scientific – and more powerful and direct means of acquiring knowledge. However, as long as man is limited to mental consciousness – even if it be to one of its highest levels – he cannot arrive at an integral knowledge of the Divine because that is beyond the highest flight of the totality of all his subjective and objective approaches to knowledge. It is only in the supramental consciousness in which the distinction of subjective and objective ceases and which contains the totality of all the other consciousnesses in itself that one can know everything on all the planes of the being. It is only the supramental that can give us the total and integral truth. However, at least until this divine consciousness takes possession of the terrestrial nature, science has an important role to play in the progression of the terrestrial nature towards the manifestation of an ever growing* perfection.

**"In the deep there is a greater deep, in the heights a greater height. Sooner shall man arrive at the borders of infinity than at the fullness of his own being. For that being is infinity, is God."*[19]

III. The Spiritual Approach to Knowledge and Perfection: A Critical Appraisal

"Every law, however embracing or tyrannous, meets somewhere a contrary law by which its operation can be checked, modified, annulled or eluded."[20]

"The most binding Law of Nature is only a fixed process which the Lord of Nature has framed and uses constantly; the Spirit made it and the Spirit can exceed it, but we must first open the doors of our prison-house and learn to live less in Nature than in the Spirit."[21]

"There is no law of Nature that cannot be overcome and changed, if we have the faith that all is ruled by the Lord and that it is possible for us to come into direct contact with Him, if we know how to escape from the prison-house of age-old habits and give ourselves unreservedly to His will. In truth, nothing is fixed, everything is in perpetual change; and this ascending transformation will lead this inconscient and mortal creation back step by step to the eternal and all-powerful consciousness of the Lord."[22]

"Law is a process or a formula; but the soul is the user of processes and exceeds formulas."[23]

"Live according to Nature, runs the maxim of the West; but according to what nature, the nature of the body or the nature which exceeds the body? This first we ought to determine."[24]

"O son of Immortality, live not thou according to Nature, but according to God; and compel her also to live according to the deity within thee."[25]

"The laws of Nature are imperative for the physical nature only so long as this nature is not under the influence of the psychic being (the soul); for the psychic being is in

possession of the divine power which can, for its own ends, use all processes and formulas and transform them at will."[26]

1. From Mental Knowings to Spiritual Knowledge: The First Steps on the Journey

"When we have passed beyond knowings, then we shall have Knowledge. Reason was the helper; Reason is the bar."[27]

"This is about the mental being in man, that is, his mental activities; and Sri Aurobindo contrasts knowings with Knowledge."[28]

Now what are knowings? "It is everything that can be learnt through the study of outer phenomena and in all fields of mental activity, all that can be learnt by material observation and technical studies in different subjects, scientific, artistic, philosophical, literary; in fact all that the human mind has produced through the external study of life and things: all that can be found in books, all that can be found through the direct study of Nature and all that can be found by reasoning, deduction, analysis and all the speculative activities of the human mind.

And Sri Aurobindo puts reason at the summit of man's mental activity; he tells us that in the development of the mind, reason is the surest guide, the master, so to speak, who prevents you from deviating from the path or taking the wrong one, from straying away and losing your common sense. He makes reason the arbiter of man's mental activity, which guides and controls; and so long as you have to deal with mental activities, even the most speculative, it is reason which must guide you and prevent you from going astray from the right path and entering more or less fantastic and unhealthy imaginations.

But if you want to attain true knowledge, that is, spiritual knowledge, which can be obtained only through identification, you must go beyond this reason and enter a domain higher than the mind, where one is in direct contact with the Light either of the Overmind or the Supermind. And Sri Aurobindo says this, that so long as you are in the mental field, reason helps you, it is your helper, your guide; but if you want to have true knowledge by identity, reason becomes a limitation and a bar. That is not to say that you should lose it! But it must be subordinated to your movement of ascent. Sri Aurobindo does not tell you to become unreasonable, he says you must pass beyond reason into a higher Truth and Light.

And what is interesting in the structure of this section is that the reflection Sri Aurobindo makes about the mental being, the intellectual activity of man, he also makes for the vital activity, the power of action and realisation. He takes mental activity as the basis of human life, for it belongs to man in his own right, exclusively; and in the process of life, that is, of human existence, human realisation, thought normally comes first. Man, because he is a thinking being, first gets an idea, then he invests this idea with a force, a vital power, a power for action, and changes it, transforms it into will. This will is then concentrated on the object to be realised, and with the vital force and effort added to the thought, the conception, it becomes the lever of action.

But here Sri Aurobindo uses a word which is not "will", he speaks of 'willings':

'When we have passed beyond willings, then we shall have Power. Effort was the helper, Effort is the bar.'

And he contrasts these 'willings' – that is, all these superficial wills, often opposite and contradictory and without

any lasting basis because they are founded on what he calls a 'knowing' and not on knowledge – with the true will. These willings are necessarily fragmentary, passing, and often in opposition to one another, and this is what gives to the individual life and even to the collective its nature of incoherence, inconsistency and confusion. The word 'will' is normally reserved to indicate what comes from the deeper being or the higher reality and what expresses in action the true knowledge which Sri Aurobindo has contrasted with knowings. So, when this will which expresses the true knowledge manifests in action, it manifests through the intervention of a deep and *direct* power which no longer requires any effort. And that is why Sri Aurobindo says here that the true power for action cannot come until one has gone beyond the stage of willings, that is, until the motive of action is the result not of a mere mental activity but of true knowledge.

True knowledge acting in the outer being gives true power.

This seems to be an explanation, the real explanation of that very familiar saying which is not understood in its essence but expresses a truth: 'Where there's a will, there's a way', to will is to have the power. It is quite obvious that this does not refer to 'willings', that is, to the more or less incoherent expression of desires but to the true will expressing a true knowledge; for this true will carries in itself the force of truth which gives power – an invincible power. And so, when one expresses 'willings', to be able to apply them in life and make them effective, some effort must come in – it is through personal effort that one progresses, and it is through effort that one imposes one's willings upon life to make it yield to their demands – but when they are no longer willings, when it

is the true will expressing the true knowledge, effort is no longer required, for the power is omnipotent.

Now, I should like you to ask me questions on what I have just told you.

So? Nothing ?

Mother, what is the first step to take to have knowledge?

The first step?... To get rid of the illusion of the absolute value of 'knowings', that is, of human knowledge and mental activity. First, to come out of the illusion that they really have a concrete and absolute value.

And you will notice that this is perhaps the most difficult thing to do; it is the most difficult step, for, when you study general subjects like science, the different branches of science or philosophy and all such activities, when you study them a little seriously and deeply, you very easily come to the sense of the relativity of this knowledge. But when you come down a step again, just to the next level of mental activity and look at the different problems of life – for example, what should be done in this or that case, the conditions for realising something, a skill one wants to learn, or even the different necessities of life, the conditions of living, of health – you will find that generally a rational being, or somebody about to become one, forms a set of ideas for himself, which are really knowings: such a thing will produce such an effect, or in order to obtain this thing, that other must be done, etc. And you have a whole mental construction in yourself, made of observations, studies, experiments; and the more you advance in age, the greater becomes the number of experiments and results of study and observation. You make for yourself a sort of mental structure in which you live. And unless you are powerfully intelligent, with an opening to the

higher worlds, you have an innate, spontaneous, unshakable conviction of the absolute worth of your observations, and even without your having to think, it acts automatically in your being: by a sort of habit this thing inevitably brings that particular result. So for you, when this has happened quite often, the habit of associating the two movements naturally gives rise within you to the feeling of the absolute value of your ideas or your knowings about yourself and your life. And there it is *infinitely* more difficult to come to an understanding of the relativity – the uncertainty bordering on illusion – of that knowledge. You find this out only if, with a will for spiritual discipline and progress, you look at these things with a deep critical sense and see the kind of bondage into which you have put yourself, which acts without any need of intervention from you, automatically, with the support of the subconscious and that kind of automatism of reflexes which makes causes and effects follow each other in a habitual order without your being in the least aware of it.

Well, if you want to attain knowledge, the first thing, the first indispensable step is not to believe in the validity of those things. And if you observe yourself, you will realise that this belief in the validity of these observations and deductions is almost absolute in you. It expresses itself through all sorts of ideas which reasonably enough appear evident to you, yet are exactly the limitations which prevent you from reaching knowledge by identity. For instance, if a man plunges into the water without knowing how to swim, he will be drowned; if there is a fairly powerful wind, it will upset things; when it rains, you get wet, etc. – you see, there are instances like this at every second, it is like that. And this seems so obvious to you that when you are told, 'Well, but no, this is a relative knowledge, it is like that but it could be different', the one

who tells you this seems to you *a priori* half-mad. And you say, 'But still, these things are concrete! These are things we can see, touch, feel, these are proofs our senses give to us every minute, and if we do not take our stand on them, we are sure to go astray and enter the irrational.'

So, if you remember what Sri Aurobindo has said, you will understand that the first condition for having knowledge is to go beyond reason. That is why he says, 'Reason was the helper' – yes, during the whole childhood of humanity and the whole period of growth of the individual being – but if you want to go beyond the human being, the ordinary human state, well, you must go beyond reason; and these things which seem to you so obvious that they are indisputable, you should be able to understand, to feel from within yourself that they are absolutely relative and that what seems completely similar, identical in everyone's experiences, these very things, if seen from above with a higher consciousness, become absolutely subjective and relative and are only individual formations adapted to the individual need and consciousness, and that instead of having an absolute reality, they have only an altogether relative reality which completely disappears as soon as you rise to a higher level.

So now, if you look at the state of your thought in this light, you will see that it is not so easy to take even this first step.

Examples can be given, but they are superficial examples, very fragmentary in themselves, and have only an altogether relative value, as for instance this, which I have many a time given you, about medical knowledge in the world: if you have studied enough or lived long enough, that is, a fairly good number of years, you will find that with the same authority,

the same certitude, the same conviction, at one time certain things are not only considered bad, but on the basis of an absolute knowledge, an unquestionable observation, they are reputed to have a certain effect, and at another time these very unquestionable observations lead to diametrically opposite results. Very often I give an example which I happened to observe, especially as regards the value of certain foods and their effects on the body, like certain fruits or vegetables: at a particular time in medical history – not so long ago, about fifty or sixty years ago – when you had a certain illness, the doctor gave you a list of things recommending to you with absolute seriousness not to touch any of these lest you become even more ill – I could give you the list, but it is not interesting. Well, about these very same things, fifty or sixty years later, not the same doctor perhaps but another one will tell you with the same seriousness, the same unquestionable certitude and authority that these are the very things you must eat if you want to be cured ! So if you have observed things pretty well and have a slightly critical mind, you can tell yourself, 'Oh! it must depend on people or perhaps on the period.' And I shall tell you, as the doctor-friend I knew in France forty or fifty years ago used to tell all his patients, 'Take a remedy while it is in fashion, for then it will cure you.' There.

Well, there is a kind of finely sensitive state, in which one understands this extraordinary relativity of things, a state in which it becomes so acute that to affirm something, to say 'This is like that' or 'Such a thing has that particular result', spontaneously seems to you a stupidity.... But before reaching that point, one may reflect a little and say, 'After all, we shall believe in a particular thing so long as it is in fashion.' "[29]

2. The Spiritual Approach to Knowledge: Some Cosmological Findings

In Sri Aurobindo's Life Divine we find, among other sublimities, an in-depth and complete enumeration of the whole mechanism of the cosmos. It provides a deep insight into the purpose and the process of the creation of the cosmos and the true nature and constitution of Mind, Life and Matter. Here we reproduce, by way of an example, two important passages from this work which was originally written during the first quarter of the last century.

(a) The Process of the Creation of the Cosmos

"First, the infinity of the One has translated itself into an extension in conceptual Time and Space; secondly, the omnipresence of the One in that self-conscious extension translates itself into a multiplicity of the conscious soul, the many Purushas of the Sankhya; thirdly, the multiplicity of soul-forms has translated itself into a divided habitation of the extended unity. This divided habitation is inevitable the moment these multiple Purushas do not each inhabit a separate world of its own, do not each possess a separate Prakriti building a separate universe, but rather all enjoy the same Prakriti, – as they must do, being only soul-forms of the One presiding over the multiple creations of His power, – yet have relations with each other in the one world of being created by the one Prakriti. The Purusha in each form actively identifies himself with each; he delimits himself in that and sets off his other forms against it in his consciousness as containing his other selves which are identical with him in being but different in relation, different in the various extent, various range of movement and various view of the one

substance, force, consciousness, delight which each is actually deploying at any given moment of Time or in any given field of Space. Granted that in the divine Existence, perfectly aware of itself, this is not a binding limitation, not an identification to which the soul becomes enslaved and which it cannot exceed as we are enslaved to our self-identification with the body and unable to exceed the limitation of our conscious ego, unable to escape from a particular movement of our consciousness in Time determining our particular field in Space; granted all this, still there is a free identification from moment to moment which only the inalienable self-knowledge of the divine soul prevents from fixing itself in an apparently rigid chain of separation and Time succession such as that in which our consciousness seems to be fixed and chained.

Thus the depiecing is already there; the relation of form with form as if they were separate beings, of will-of-being with will-of-being as if they were separate forces, of knowledge-of-being with knowledge-of-being as if they were separate consciousnesses has already been founded. It is as yet only 'as if'; for the divine soul is not deluded, it is aware of all as phenomenon of being and keeps hold of its existence in the reality of being; it does not forfeit its unity: it uses mind as a subordinate action of the infinite knowledge, a definition of things subordinate to its awareness of infinity, a delimitation dependent on its awareness of essential totality – not that apparent and pluralistic totality of sum and collective aggregation which is only another phenomenon of Mind. Thus there is no real limitation; the soul uses its defining power for the play of well-distinguished forms and forces and is not used by that power.

A new factor, a new action of conscious force is therefore needed to create the operation of a helplessly limited as

opposed to a freely limiting mind, – that is to say, of mind subject to its own play and deceived by it as opposed to mind master of its own play and viewing it in its truth, the creature mind as opposed to the divine. That new factor is Avidya, the self-ignoring faculty which separates the action of mind from the action of the Supermind that originated and still governs it from behind the veil. Thus separated, Mind perceives only the particular and not the universal, or conceives only the particular in an unpossessed universal and no longer both particular and universal as phenomena of the Infinite. Thus we have the limited mind which views every phenomenon as a thing-in-itself, separate part of a whole which again exists separately in a greater whole and so on, enlarging always its aggregates without getting back to the sense of a true infinity.

Mind, being an action of the Infinite, depieces as well as aggregates *ad infinitum*. It cuts up being into wholes, into ever smaller wholes, into atoms and those atoms into primal atoms, until it would, if it could, dissolve the primal atom into nothingness. But it cannot, because behind this dividing action is the saving knowledge of the supramental which knows every whole, every atom to be only a concentration of all-force, of all-consciousness, of all-being into phenomenal forms of itself. The dissolution of the aggregate into an infinite nothingness at which Mind seems to arrive, is to the Supermind only the return of the self-concentrating conscious-being out of its phenomenon into its infinite existence. Whichever way its consciousness proceeds, by the way of infinite division or by the way of infinite enlargement, it arrives only at itself, at its own infinite unity and eternal being. And when the action of the mind is consciously subordinate to this knowledge of the Supermind, the truth of the process is known to it also and not at all ignored; there is no real division but only an infinitely

multiple concentration into forms of being and into arrangements of the relation of those forms of being to each other in which division is a subordinate appearance of the whole process necessary to their spatial and temporal play. **For divide as you will, get down to the most infinitesimal atom or form the most monstrous possible aggregate of worlds and systems, you cannot get by either process to a thing-in-itself; all are forms of a Force which alone is real in itself while the rest are real only as self-imagings or manifesting self-forms of the eternal Force-Consciousness.**

Whence then does the limiting Avidya, the fall of mind from Supermind and the consequent idea of real division originally proceed? exactly from what perversion of the supramental functioning? It proceeds from the individualised soul viewing everything from its own standpoint and excluding all others; it proceeds, that is to say, by an exclusive concentration of consciousness, an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a particular temporal and spatial action which is only a part of its own play of being; it starts from the soul's ignoring the fact that all others are also itself, all other action its own action and all other states of being and consciousness equally its own as well as the action of the one particular moment in Time and one particular standing-point in Space and the one particular form it presently occupies. It concentrates on the moment, the field, the form, the movement so as to lose the rest; it has then to recover the rest by linking together the succession of moments, the succession of points of Space, the succession of forms in Time and Space, the succession of movements in Time and Space. It has thus lost the truth of the indivisibility of Time, the indivisibility of Force and Substance. It has lost sight even of

the obvious fact that all minds are one Mind taking many standpoints, all lives one Life developing many currents of activity, all body and form one substance of Force and Consciousness concentrating into many apparent stabilities of force and consciousness; but in truth all these stabilities are really only a constant whorl of movement repeating a form while it modifies it; they are nothing more. For the Mind tries to clamp everything into rigidly fixed forms and apparently unchanging or unmoving external factors, because otherwise it cannot act; it then thinks it has got what it wants: in reality all is a flux of change and renewal and there is no fixed form-in-itself and no unchanging external factor. Only the eternal Real-Idea is firm and maintains a certain ordered constancy of figures and relations in the flux of things, a constancy which the Mind vainly attempts to imitate by attributing fixity to that which is always inconstant. These truths Mind has to rediscover; it knows them all the time, but only in the hidden back of its consciousness, in the secret light of its self-being; and that light is to it a darkness because it has created the ignorance, because it has lapsed from the dividing into the divided mentality, because it has become involved in its own workings and in its own creations.

This ignorance is farther deepened for man by his self-identification with the body. To us mind seems to be determined by the body, because it is preoccupied with that and devoted to the physical workings which it uses for its conscious superficial action in this gross material world. Employing constantly that operation of the brain and nerves which it has developed in the course of its own development in the body, it is too absorbed in observing what this physical machinery gives to it to get back from it to its own pure workings; those are to it mostly subconscious. Still we can

conceive a life mind or life being which has got beyond the evolutionary necessity of this absorption and is able to see and even experience itself assuming body after body and not created separately in each body and ending with it; for it is only the physical impress of mind on matter, only the corporeal mentality that is so created, not the whole mental being. This corporeal mentality is merely our surface of mind, merely the front which it presents to physical experience. Behind, even in our terrestrial being, there is this other, subconscious or subliminal to us, which knows itself as more than the body and is capable of a less materialised action. To this we owe immediately most of the larger, deeper and more forceful dynamic action of our surface mind; this, when we become conscious of it or of its impress on us, is our first idea or our first realisation of a soul or inner being, Purusha."[30]

(b) The Origin and the Reality of Matter

"In a certain sense Matter is unreal and non-existent; that is to say, our present knowledge, idea and experience of Matter is not its truth, but merely a phenomenon of particular relation between our senses and the all-existence in which we move. When Science discovers that Matter resolves itself into forms of Energy, it has hold of a universal and fundamental truth; and when philosophy discovers that Matter only exists as substantial appearance to the consciousness and that the one reality is Spirit or pure conscious Being, it has hold of a greater and completer, a still more fundamental truth. But still the question remains why Energy should take the form of Matter and not of mere force-currents or why that which is really Spirit should admit the phenomenon of Matter and not rest in states, velleities

and joys of the spirit. This, it is said, is the work of Mind or else, since evidently Thought does not directly create or even perceive the material form of things, it is the work of Sense; the sense-mind creates the forms which it seems to perceive and the thought-mind works upon the forms which the sense-mind presents to it. But, evidently, the individual embodied mind is not the creator of the phenomenon of Matter; earth-existence cannot be the result of the human mind which is itself the result of earth-existence. If we say that the world exists only in our own minds, we express a non-fact and a confusion; for the material world existed before man was upon the earth and it will go on existing if man disappears from the earth or even if our individual mind abolishes itself in the Infinite. We must conclude then that there is a universal Mind,* subconscious to us in the form of the universe or superconscious in its spirit, which has created that form for its habitation. And since the creator must have preceded and must exceed its creation, this really implies a superconscient Mind which by the instrumentality of a universal sense creates in itself the relation of form with form and constitutes the rhythm of the material universe. But this also is no complete

---

**Mind, as we know it, creates only in a relative and instrumental sense; it has an unlimited power of combination, but its creative motives and forms come to it from above: all created forms have their base in the Infinite above Mind, Life and Matter and are here represented, reconstructed – very usually misconstructed – from the infinitesimal. Their foundation is above, their branchings downwards, says the Rig Veda. The superconscient Mind of which we speak might rather be called an Overmind and inhabits in the hierarchical order of the powers of the Spirit, a zone directly dependent on the supramental consciousness.*

solution; it tells us that Matter is a creation of Consciousness, but it does not explain how Consciousness came to create Matter as the basis of its cosmic workings.

We shall understand better if we go back at once to the original principle of things. Existence is in its activity a Conscious-Force which presents the workings of its force to its consciousness as forms of its own being. Since Force is only the action of one sole-existing Conscious-Being, its results can be nothing else but forms of that Conscious-Being; Substance or Matter, then, is only a form of Spirit. The appearance which this form of Spirit assumes to our senses is due to that dividing action of Mind from which we have been able to deduce consistently the whole phenomenon of the universe. We know now that Life is an action of Conscious-Force of which material forms are the result; Life involved in those forms, appearing in them first as inconscient force, evolves and brings back into manifestation as Mind the consciousness which is the real self of the force and which never ceased to exist in it even when unmanifest. We know also that Mind is an inferior power of the original conscious Knowledge or Supermind, a power to which Life acts as an instrumental energy; for, descending through Supermind, Consciousness or Chit represents itself as Mind, Force of consciousness or Tapas represents itself as Life. Mind, by its separation from its own higher reality in Supermind, gives Life the appearance of division and, by its farther involution in its own Life-Force, becomes subconscious in Life and thus gives the outward appearance of an inconscient force to its material workings. Therefore, the inconscience, the inertia, the atomic disaggregation of Matter must have their source in this all-dividing and self-involving action of Mind by which our universe came into being. As Mind is only a final action

of Supermind in the descent towards creation and Life an action of Conscious-Force working in the conditions of the Ignorance created by this descent of Mind, so Matter, as we know it, is only the final form taken by conscious-being as the result of that working. Matter is substance of the one Conscious-Being phenomenally divided within itself by the action of a universal Mind*, – a division which the individual mind repeats and dwells in, but which does not abrogate or at all diminish the unity of Spirit or the unity of Energy or the real unity of Matter.

But why this phenomenal and pragmatic division of an indivisible Existence? It is because Mind has to carry the principle of multiplicity to its extreme potential which can only be done by separativeness and division. To do that it must, precipitating itself into Life to create forms for the Multiple, give to the universal principle of Being the appearance of a gross and material substance instead of a pure or subtle substance. It must, that is to say, give it the appearance of substance which offers itself to the contact of Mind as stable thing or object in an abiding multiplicity of objects and not of substance which offers itself to the contact of pure consciousness as something of its own eternal pure existence and reality or to subtle sense as a principle of plastic form freely expressive of the conscious being. The contact of mind with its objects creates what we call sense, but here it has to be an obscure externalised sense which must be assured of the reality of what it contacts. The descent of pure

**Mind is here used in its widest sense including the operation of an Overmind power which is nearest to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and which is the first fountain of the creation of the Ignorance.*

substance into material substance follows, then, inevitably on the descent of Sachchidananda through Supermind into mind and life. It is a necessary result of the will to make multiplicity of being and an awareness of things from separate centres of consciousness the first method of this lower experience of existence. If we go back to the spiritual basis of things, substance in its utter purity resolves itself into pure conscious being, self-existent, inherently self-aware by identity, but not yet turning its consciousness upon itself as object. Supermind preserves this self-awareness by identity as its substance of self-knowledge and its light of self-creation, but for that creation presents Being to itself as the subject-object one and multiple of its own active consciousness. Being as object is held there in a supreme knowledge which can, by comprehension, see it both as an object of cognition within itself and subjectively as itself, but can also and simultaneously, by apprehension, project it as an object (or objects) of cognition within the circumference of its consciousness, not other than itself, part of its being, but a part (or parts) put away from itself, – that is to say, from the centre of vision in which Being concentrates itself as the Knower, Witness or Purusha. We have seen that from this apprehending consciousness arises the movement of Mind, the movement by which the individual knower regards a form of his own universal being as if other than he; but in the divine Mind there is immediately or rather simultaneously another movement or reverse side of the same movement, an act of union in being which heals this phenomenal division and prevents it from becoming even for a moment solely real to the knower. This act of conscious union is that which is represented otherwise in dividing Mind obtusely, ignorantly, quite externally as contact in consciousness between divided

beings and separate objects, and with us this contact in divided consciousness is primarily represented by the principle of sense. On this basis of sense, on this contact of union subject to division, the action of the thought-mind founds itself and prepares for the return to a higher principle of union in which division is made subject to unity and subordinate. **Substance, then, as we know it, material substance, is the form in which Mind acting through sense contacts the Conscious Being of which it is itself a movement of knowledge.**

But Mind by its very nature tends to know and sense substance of conscious-being, not in its unity or totality but by the principle of division. It sees it, as it were, in infinitesimal points which it associates together in order to arrive at a totality, and into these viewpoints and associations cosmic Mind throws itself and dwells in them. So dwelling, creative by its inherent force as the agent of Real-Idea, bound by its own nature to convert all its perceptions into energy of life, as the All-Existent converts all His self-aspectings into various energy of His creative Force of consciousness, cosmic Mind turns these, its multiple viewpoints of universal existence, into standpoints of universal Life; it turns them in Matter into forms of atomic being instinct with the life that forms them and governed by the mind and will that actuate the formation. At the same time, the atomic existences which it thus forms must by the very law of their being tend to associate themselves, to aggregate; and each of these aggregates also, instinct with the hidden life that forms and the hidden mind and will that actuate them, bears with it a fiction of a separated individual existence. Each such individual object or existence is supported, according as the mind in it is implicit or explicit, unmanifest or manifest, by its mechanical ego of force, in which the will-to-be is dumb and imprisoned but none the

less powerful, or by its self-aware mental ego in which the will-to-be is liberated, conscious, separately active.

Thus not any eternal and original law of eternal and original Matter, but the nature of the action of cosmic Mind is the cause of atomic existence. Matter is a creation, and for its creation the infinitesimal, an extreme fragmentation of the Infinite, was needed as the starting-point or basis. Ether may and does exist as an intangible, almost spiritual support of Matter, but as a phenomenon it does not seem, to our present knowledge at least, to be materially detectable. Subdivide the visible aggregate or the formal atom into essential atoms, break it up into the most infinitesimal dust of being, we shall still, because of the nature of the Mind and Life that formed them, arrive at some utmost atomic existence, unstable perhaps but always reconstituting itself in the eternal flux of force, phenomenally, and not at a mere unatomic extension incapable of contents. Unatomic extension of substance, extension which is not an aggregation, coexistence otherwise than by distribution in space are realities of pure existence, pure substance; they are a knowledge of Supermind and a principle of its dynamism, not a creative concept of the dividing Mind, though Mind can become aware of them behind its workings. They are the reality underlying Matter, but not the phenomenon which we call Matter. Mind, Life, Matter itself can be one with that pure existence and conscious extension in their static reality, but not operate by that oneness in their dynamic action, self-perception and self-formation.

Therefore we arrive at this truth of Matter that there is a conceptive self-extension of being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness and which

cosmic Mind and Life in their creative action represent through atomic division and aggregation as the thing we call Matter. But this Matter, like Mind and Life, is still Being or Brahman in its self-creative action. It is a form of the force of conscious Being, a form given by Mind and realised by Life. It holds within it as its own reality consciousness concealed from itself, involved and absorbed in the result of its own self-formation and therefore self-oblivious. And, however brute and void of sense it seems to us, it is yet, to the secret experience of the consciousness hidden within it, delight of being offering itself to this secret consciousness as object of sensation in order to tempt that hidden godhead out of its secrecy. Being manifest as substance, force of Being cast into form, into a figured self-representation of the secret self-consciousness, delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object, – what is this but Sachchidananda? **Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence."**[31]

3. The Materialistic Science's View of Spirituality

The materialistic science's distrust of spirituality and mystic pursuits springs not only from the surface mentality's basic inability to understand deeper things – which is the reflection of a much deeper problem and is not easily remediable – but also from the popular misunderstanding or lack of understanding of the nature and mechanics of subjective experiences and occult planes of existence and the true significance of spiritual evolution in terrestrial nature. We shall take both of these in turn.

(a) The Nature of Subjective Experiences and the Working of the Occult Planes of Existence

The following two quotations from the Mother provide an insight into the true nature of these things and the basis of popular misunderstandings about them.

"….in the normal course, to the degree that you progress inwardly, every step that you take towards the true consciousness is accompanied by a certain number of experiences corresponding to it which allow you to understand the situation you are in: this of course is normal. It ought to be like that.

But these usually are no such sensational experiences as to be made much of. People often have all of a sudden an illumination of consciousness, an inner indication, an unusual perception. But when they are not turned exclusively towards the desire to have experiences, they don't attach much importance to it. Sometimes they don't even attach enough importance. The indication came, showed them something, but they were not even aware of it. Yet it is not these things which give you the impression that you are living in a wonderful world. These things are quite normal. Suddenly an opening in the mind, a light that comes, one understands something which he did not before. You take that for a very natural phenomenon. But it is a spiritual experience – or the clear seeing of a situation, the understanding of what is happening in oneself, of the state one is in, the indication of the exact progress one ought to make, of the thing that's to be corrected. This too is an experience and an experience that comes from within; it is an indication given to you by the psychic. People take this also as quite a natural fact. They do not attach any importance to it.

Usually people mean by 'experience' either altogether extravagant phenomena, levitation and things like that, or else sensational visions: being able to see the future or seeing at a distance or maybe ordinary things like being able to tell where a lost object can be found or all kinds of little tricks like that. This is what people call 'experiences'.

Well, usually people who have these faculties are not well educated, but for some reason they are born with a gift, as some are born musicians, others painters, and others scientists. These are born clairvoyants, and so it may be, when they are in need they use this faculty to earn their living, and they spoil it completely. If they happen to be in comfortable circumstances and do not need to earn their living, then they become famous among their friends. In any case, this is always an opportunity for a certain kind of commercialism. There are very few who can have these gifts without using them either to make a name for themselves or to earn money. But these gifts are not of a very high level. One can have them without having a very spiritual life. They do not depend at all on an inner spiritual height. One should not mistake them for signs of progress.

Besides, one thing is certain: those who do not have these faculties and want to acquire them, for instance the capacity of foresight, foreseeing what is going to come, which is analogous to prophecy, the capacity to know events before they happen – as I said, there are people who have this spontaneously because of some peculiarity from birth – and if one wants to acquire them himself, that is to say, enter into contact with regions where these things can be seen – and not by chance or accidentally or without having any control over the thing, but on the contrary to see them at will – then this indeed means a *formidable* work. And that is why some people

attach a very great value to these things. But they have some value only when they are under one's control, done at will and the result of an inner discipline. In this case, yes, because this proves that you have entered into contact with a certain region where it is difficult to enter consciously, at will, and permanently. It is very difficult, it requires much development. And then, for you to be sure of what you have seen... because I haven't told you that with these people who make a profession of their clairvoyance, it becomes... I said 'commercialism', but it is worse than that, you know, it is a fraud! When they do not see anything, they invent. When they make a profession of it, and people come to ask them something about the future, and they can see nothing at all, they are obliged to invent something, otherwise they would lose their reputation and their clientele. So this becomes a deception, you see, a falsehood, fraud or falsification.

But when one wants to have a pure, correct information, to be in contact with the truth of things, and see in advance – not according to one's petty mental construction, but how things are decreed, in the place where they are decreed and the time when they are decreed – then that requires a *very great* mental purity, *a very great* vital equilibrium, an absence of desire, of preference. One must never want anything to be of one kind or another, for this falsifies your vision immediately.

All who have visions usually deform them, all, almost *without exception*. I don't think there is one in a million who doesn't deform his vision, because the minute it touches the brain it touches the domain of preferences, desires, attachments, and this indeed is enough to give a colouring, a special look to what you have seen. Even if you have seen correctly, you translate it wrongly in your consciousness. This

truly asks for a great perfection. But you can have perfection without the gift of vision. And the perfection can be as great without the gift as with it. If it interests you specially, you can make an effort to obtain it. But only if it interests you specially. If you lay great store by knowing certain things, you can undertake a discipline; you may undertake a discipline also in order to change the functioning of your senses. I think I have already explained to you how one can hear at a distance, see at a distance, even physically; but this means considerable effort, which perhaps is not always in proportion to the result, because these are side issues, not the central, the most important thing. These are side issues which may be interesting, but in itself this is not the spiritual life; one may have a spiritual life without this. Now, the two together can give you perhaps a greater capacity. But for this too you must tell yourself, 'If I ought to have it – if I take the true attitude of surrender to the Divine and of complete consecration – if I ought to have it I shall have it. As, if I ought to have the gift of speech, I shall have it.' And in fact, if one is truly surrendered, in the true way and totally, at every minute one is what he ought to be and does what he ought to do and knows what he ought to know. This... but naturally, for this one should have overcome the petty limitations of the ego, and this does not happen overnight. But it can happen."[32]

"Well, the occult world is not one single region where everything is mixed, which only becomes occult because we can't see it. The occult world is a gradation of regions, one could perhaps say, of more and more etherial or subtle regions, anyway, those farther and farther removed in their nature from the physical materiality we ordinarily see. And each one of these domains is a world in itself, having its forms and inhabited by beings with a density, one might say, analogous

to that of the domain in which they live. Just as in the physical world we are of the same materiality as the physical world, so in the vital world, in the mental world, in the overmind world and in the supramental world – and in many others, infinite others – there are beings which have a form whose substance is similar to the one of that world. This means that if you are able to enter consciously into that world with the part of your being which corresponds to that domain, you can move there quite objectively, as in the material world.

And there, there are as many, and even many more things to see and observe than in our poor little material world, which belongs to only *one* zone of this infinite gradation. You meet all sorts of things in these domains, and you need to make a study as profound, perhaps still more profound than in the physical world, to be able to know what is happening there, to have relations with the beings who live there.

It is obvious that as one goes farther, as it were, from the material world, the forms and consciousness of those beings are of a purity, beauty and perfection much higher than our ordinary physical forms. It is only in the nearest vital world, the one which is, so to say, mixed with our material life – though it lies beyond it and there is a zone where the vital is no longer mixed with the material world – of that material vital one can say that in some of its aspects it is even uglier than things here, for it is filled with a bad will which is not counterbalanced by the presence of the psychic being which, in the physical world, amends, corrects, puts right, directs this bad will. But it is rather a limited zone and, as soon as one goes beyond it, one can find and meet things that are not favourable to human life, beings not on the same scale as human existence, but having their own beauty and grandeur, with whom one may establish relations which may become

quite pleasant and even useful.

Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture into these domains without a previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there all weighed down and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of the consciousness which is absolutely indispensable.

In these invisible worlds there are also regions which are the result of human mental formations. One can find there all one wants. In fact, one very often finds there exactly what one expects to find. There are hells, there are paradises, there are purgatories. There are all sorts of things in accordance with the different religions and their conceptions. These things have only a very relative existence, but with a relativity similar to that of material things here; that is to say, for someone who finds himself there, they are entirely real and their effects quite tangible. One needs an inner liberation, a wideness of the consciousness and a contact with a deeper and higher truth to be able to escape from the illusion of their reality. But this is something almost similar to what happens here: human beings here are mostly convinced that the only reality is the physical reality – the reality of what one can touch, can see – and for them, all that cannot be seen, cannot be touched, cannot be felt, is after all, problematical; well, what happens there is an identical phenomenon. People who at the moment of death are convinced, for one reason or another, that they are going to paradise or maybe to hell, *do find* themselves there after their death; and for them it is truly a paradise or a hell. And it is extremely difficult to make them come out of it and go to a place which is more true, more real.

So it is difficult to speak of all these worlds, these innumerable worlds, in a few minutes. It is a knowledge which needs a lived experience of many years, thoroughly systematic, and which requires, as I said, an inner preparation absolutely indispensable, to make it harmless.

We all get the chance to have a little contact – very partial, very superficial – with these worlds in our dreams. And the study of dreams itself already demands much time and care, and in itself may constitute a preparation for a deeper study of the invisible worlds."[33]

(b) Some Popular and Captivating Criticisms of Spirituality and the True Significance of Spiritual Evolution in Terrestrial Nature

The Nature's evolution of the spiritual man in the human mental being is stigmatized by the materialists, "….as no true evolution of consciousness but rather a sublimated crudity of ignorance deviating from the true human evolution, which should be solely an evolution of life-power, the practical physical mind, the reason governing thought and conduct and the discovering and organising intelligence. In this epoch religion was pushed aside as an out-of-date superstition and spiritual realisation and experience discredited as a shadowy mysticism; the mystic in this view is the man who turns aside into the unreal, into occult regions of a self-constructed land of chimeras and loses his way there. This judgment proceeds from a view of things which is itself bound to pass into discredit, because it depends ultimately on the false perception of the material as alone real and the outward life as alone of importance. But apart from this extreme materialistic view of things, it can be and is still held by the intellect and the physical mind eager for human life-fulfilment, – and that is

the prevalent mentality, the dominant modern trend, – that the spiritual tendency in humanity has come to very little; it has not solved the problem of life nor any of the problems with which humanity is at grips."[34]

(i) Spirituality has failed to solve the problems of human life

"The mystic either detaches himself from life as the other-worldly ascetic or the aloof visionary and therefore cannot help life, or else he brings no better solution or result than the practical man or the man of intellect and reason: by his intervention he rather disturbs the human values, distorts them with his alien and unverifiable light obscure to the human understanding and confuses the plain practical and vital issues life puts before us. But this is not the standpoint from which the true significance of the spiritual evolution in man or the value of spirituality can be judged or assessed; for its real work is not to solve human problems on the past or present mental basis, but to create a new foundation of our being and our life and knowledge. The ascetic or other-worldly tendency of the mystic is an extreme affirmation of his refusal to accept the limitations imposed by material Nature: for his very reason of being is to go beyond her; if he cannot transform her, he must leave her. At the same time the spiritual man has not stood back altogether from the life of humanity; for the sense of unity with all beings, the stress of a universal love and compassion, the will to spend the energies for the good of all creatures, are central to the dynamic out-flowering of the spirit: he has turned therefore to help, he has guided as did the ancient Rishis or the prophets, or stooped to create and, where he has done so with something of the direct power of the Spirit, the results have been prodigious. But the solution

of the problem which spirituality offers is not a solution by external means, though these also have to be used, but by an inner change, a transformation of the consciousness and nature.

If no decisive but only a contributory result, an accretion of some new finer elements to the sum of the consciousness, has been the general consequence and there has been no life-transformation, it is because man in the mass has always deflected the spiritual impulsion, recanted from the spiritual ideal or held it only as a form and rejected the inward change. Spirituality cannot be called upon to deal with life by a non-spiritual method or attempt to cure its ills by the panaceas, the political, social or other mechanical remedies which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything. The most drastic changes made by these means change nothing; for the old ills exist in a new form: the aspect of the outward environment is altered, but man remains what he was; he is still an ignorant mental being misusing or not effectively using his knowledge, moved by ego and governed by vital desires and passions and the needs of the body, unspiritual and superficial in his outlook, ignorant of his own self and the forces that drive and use him. His life-constructions have a value as expressions of his individual and collective being in the stage to which they have reached or as a machinery for the convenience and welfare of his vital and physical parts and a field and medium for his mental growth, but they cannot take him beyond his present self or serve as a machinery to transform him; his and their perfection can only come by his farther evolution. Only a spiritual change, an evolution of his being from the superficial mental towards the deeper spiritual consciousness, can make a real and effective difference. To discover the

spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the same evolution is his real service to the race; till that is done, an outward help can succour and alleviate, but nothing or very little more is possible."[35]

(ii) Spirituality has failed in the human mass – its results have been limited to individuals

"It is true that the spiritual tendency has been to look more beyond life than towards life. It is true also that the spiritual change has been individual and not collective; its result has been successful in the man, but unsuccessful or only indirectly operative in the human mass. The spiritual evolution of Nature is still in process and incomplete, – one might almost say, still only beginning, – and its main preoccupation has been to affirm and develop a basis of spiritual consciousness and knowledge and to create more and more a foundation or formation for the vision of that which is eternal in the truth of the spirit. It is only when Nature has fully confirmed this intensive evolution and formation through the individual that anything radical of an expanding or dynamically diffusive character can be expected or any attempt at collective spiritual life, – such attempts have been made, but mostly as a field of protection for the growth of the individual's spirituality, – acquire a successful permanence. For till then the individual must be preoccupied with his own problem of entirely changing his mind and life into conformity with the truth of the spirit which he is achieving or has achieved in his inner being and knowledge. Any premature attempt at a large-scale collective spiritual life is exposed to vitiation by some incompleteness of the spiritual knowledge on its dynamic side, by the imperfections of the individual seekers and by the

invasion of the ordinary mind and vital and physical consciousness taking hold of the truth and mechanising, obscuring or corrupting it. The mental intelligence and its main power of reason cannot change the principle and persistent character of human life, it can only effect various mechanisations, manipulations, developments and formulations. But neither is mind as a whole, even spiritualised, able to change it; spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being, it helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself, to escape even from itself, it can purify and uplift by the inner influence the outward nature of individual human beings: but so long as it has to work in the human mass through mind as the instrument, it can exercise an influence on the earth-life but not bring about a transformation of that life. For this reason there has been a prevalent tendency in the spiritual mind to be satisfied with such an influence and in the main to seek fulfilment in other-life elsewhere or to abandon altogether any outward-going endeavour and concentrate solely on an individual spiritual salvation or perfection. A higher instrumental dynamis than mind is needed to transform totally a nature created by the Ignorance."[36]

(iii) The method of spirituality is purely subjective and lacks objectivity

"Another objection to the mystic and his knowledge is urged, not against its effect upon life but against his method of the discovery of Truth and against the Truth that he discovers. One objection to the method is that it is purely subjective, not true independently of the personal consciousness and its constructions, not verifiable. But this ground of cavil has no great value: for the object of the mystic is self-knowledge and God-knowledge, and that can only be

arrived at by an inward and not by an outward gaze. Or it is the supreme Truth of things that he seeks, and that too cannot be arrived at by an outward inquiry through the senses or by any scrutiny or research that founds itself on outsides and surfaces or by speculation based on the uncertain data of an indirect means of knowledge. It must come by a direct vision or contact of the consciousness with the soul and body of the Truth itself or through a knowledge by identity, by the self that becomes one with the self of things and with their truth of power and their truth of essence. But it is urged that the actual result of this method is not one truth common to all, there are great differences; the conclusion suggested is that this knowledge is not truth at all but a subjective mental formation. But this objection is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual knowledge. Spiritual truth is a truth of the spirit, not a truth of the intellect, not a mathematical theorem or a logical formula. It is a truth of the Infinite, one in an infinite diversity, and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects and formations: in the spiritual evolution it is inevitable that there should be a many-sided passage and reaching to the one Truth, a many-sided seizing of it; this many-sidedness is the sign of the approach of the soul to a living reality, not to an abstraction or a constructed figure of things that can be petrified into a dead or stony formula. The hard logical and intellectual notion of truth as a single idea which all must accept, one idea or system of ideas defeating all other ideas or systems, or a single limited fact or single formula of facts which all must recognise, is an illegitimate transference from the limited truth of the physical field to the much more complex and plastic field of life and mind and spirit.

This transference has been responsible for much harm;

it brings into thought narrowness, limitation, an intolerance of the necessary variation and multiplicity of viewpoints without which there can be no totality of truth-finding, and by the narrowness and limitation much obstinacy in error. It reduces philosophy to an endless maze of sterile disputes; religion has been invaded by this misprision and infected with credal dogmatism, bigotry and intolerance. The truth of the spirit is a truth of being and consciousness and not a truth of thought: mental ideas can only represent or formulate some facet, some mind-translated principle or power of it or enumerate its aspects, but to know it one has to grow into it and be it; without that growing and being there can be no true spiritual knowledge. The fundamental truth of spiritual experience is one, its consciousness is one, everywhere it follows the same general lines and tendencies of awakening and growth into spiritual being; for these are the imperatives of the spiritual consciousness. But also there are, based on those imperatives, numberless possibilities of variation of experience and expression: the centralisation and harmonisation of these possibles, but also the intensive sole following out of any line of experience are both of them necessary movements of the emerging spiritual Conscious-Force within us. Moreover, the accommodation of mind and life to the spiritual truth, its expression in them, must vary with the mentality of the seeker so long as he has not risen above all need of such accommodation or such limiting expression. It is this mental and vital element which has created the oppositions that still divide spiritual seekers or enter into their differing affirmations of the truth that they experience. This difference and variation is needed for the freedom of spiritual search and spiritual growth: to overpass differences

is quite possible, but that is most easily done in pure experience; in mental formulation the difference must remain until one can exceed mind altogether and in a highest consciousness integralise, unify and harmonise the many-sided truth of the Spirit.

In the evolution of the spiritual man there must necessarily be many stages and in each stage a great variety of individual formations of the being, the consciousness, the life, the temperament, the ideas, the character. The nature of instrumental mind and the necessity of dealing with the life must of itself create an infinite variety according to the stage of development and the individuality of the seeker. But, apart from that, even the domain of pure spiritual self-realisation and self-expression need not be a single white monotone, there can be a great diversity in the fundamental unity; the supreme Self is one, but the souls of the Self are many and, as is the soul's formation of nature, so will be its spiritual self-expression. A diversity in oneness is the law of the manifestation; the supramental unification and integration must harmonise these diversities, but to abolish them is not the intention of the Spirit in Nature."[37]



List of References:

1. [1]*CWM 3, Pages 161-62,*
2. *CWM 10, Pages 210-11,*
3. *CWM 3, Pages 161-62,*
4. [2]*Namah, Jan. 15, 2002 Page 4,*
5. [3]*SABCL 22, Page 212,*
6. *SABCL 22, Pages 214-15,*
7. *SABCL 19, Pages 731-32,*
8. *SABCL 19, Page 52,*
9. *The Turning Point, Pages 76-77, by Fritjof Capra,*
10. *The Turning Point, Page 85,*
11. *The Economist, Pages 66-67 August 21-27, 2004*
12. *CWM 8, Pages 316-17,*
13. *CWM 1, Page 54,*
14. *CWM 9, Pages 240-41,*
15. *SABCL 21, Pages 756-58,*
16. *SABCL 22, Pages 243-44,*
17. *SABCL 19, Page 590,*
18. *SABCL 19, Pages 591-92,*
19. *SABCL 17, Page 2,*
20. *CWM 10, Page 243,*
21. *CWM 10, Page 243,*
22. *CWM 10, Page 243,*
23. *CWM 10, Page 243,*
24. *CWM 10, Page 244,*
25. *CWM 10, Page 244,*
26. *CWM 10, Page 243,*
27. *CWM 8, Page 358,*
28. *CWM 8, Page 358,*
29. *CWM 8, Pages 360-64,*
30. *SABCL 19, Pages 165-69,*
31. *SABCL 19, Pages 234-39,*
32. *CWM 6, Pages 352-55,*
33. *CWM 8, Pages 217-19,*
34. *SABCL 19, Page 883,*
35. *SABCL 19, Pages 883-85,*
36. *SABCL 19, Pages 885-86,*
37. *SABCL 19, Pages 886-88*
38. *Savitri, Revised Ed., Page 46,*

---

[1]*CWM : Collected Works of the Mother*
[2]*Namah: A magazine published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry*
[3]*SABCL : Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*

(All the quotations from Sri Aurobindo are copyright of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002)

List of Our Publications

THE BHAGVAD GITA (pp.660) ISBN 81-86510-01-X
With Shlokas, English translation and commentary in the words of Sri Aurobindo. **Rs. 275/- HB, Rs. 200/- PB**

THE ESSENTIAL GITA (pp.208) ISBN 81-86510-02-8
Wtih Selected Text, English Translation, and commentary in the words of Sri Aurobindo. **Rs. 90/-**

A DIVINE LIFE MANIFESTO (pp. 285) ISBN 81-86549-00-5
Compiled from the Writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother with notes on an integral education for a divine life. **Rs. 250/- HB, Rs. 200/-PB**

SRI HANUMAN CHALISA (pp.20)
With text in Devanagari and Roman, Translation in English, and Notes. **Rs. 10/-**

भजन चन्द्रिका (pp. 128)
श्रीअरविन्द व मीरा माँ को निवेदित कुछ चुने हुए भजन **Rs. 40/-**

शिक्षा पर (pp. 80)
शिक्षा के विषय पर श्रीअरविन्द और श्रीमाताजी की कृतियों में से कुछ चुने हुए उद्धरण **Rs. 30/- HB, Rs.25/- PB**

THE AWAKENER (*Published Occasionally*)

List of Issues Published so far:

1.Sri Aurobindo's Message of 15th August 1947	*Rs.5*
2.The Human Aspiration	*Rs.10*
3.The Nature of the Supreme Reality	*Rs.15*
4.The "Why" of this Creation	*Rs.15*
5.The "How" of this Creation	*Rs.20*
6.The "Whither" of this Creation	*Rs.20*

THE REAL AWAKENER (*Quarterly Magazine*)

Science and Spirituality	
1.Necessary Background – Science	*Rs.15*
Science and Spirituality	
2.Necessary Background – Spirituality	*Rs.15*
*3.**The Socio-Economic Systems***	
(Past, Present & Future)	*Rs.15*
*4.**The Terrestrial Evolution***	*Rs.15*
Sanatana Dharma	
5. The Fundamentals	*Rs.15*
Sanatana Dharma	
6. Evolution and Religion	*Rs.15*
Sanatana Dharma	
7. Structure and Working	*Rs.15*
Science and Spirituality	
8.Views of Reality, Aims and Methods	*Rs.15*
Science and Spirituality	
9. Approaches to Knowledge and Perfection	*Rs.15*
Science and Spirituality	
10. The Future Vistas and the Nature of the Present Crisis Facing Humanity	*Rs.15*

For Order Details Contact

Sri Aurobindo Divine Life
Publication and Distribution Agency
(An Autonomous unit of Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust)
85, Mahavir Nagar, Tonk Road, Jaipur (Raj.)
Phone (0141)2551454
email: sadlpada@yahoo.co.in,
sadlecjjn@rediffmail.com