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*New Race*

*Blessings*



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# NEW RACE

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*From the editor's desk...*

Dear Readers,

Darshan greetings to all!

The Mother once said this about the teacher's role when working with learners studying any work of Sri Aurobindo: "The important thing is that Sri Aurobindo's writings should not be chewed and presented to the students as a semi-digested food. The teacher may give all the elements of appreciation but the students should have the direct contact, the joy of illumination. The teacher should be careful not to interpose himself as a screen between the mind of the student and the great consciousness of Sri Aurobindo..." (CWM, 12, p. 209)

At SACAR, this has been one of our fundamental guiding principles in our work of facilitating courses in Sri Aurobindo's thought and vision. Our learners discover the joy of direct contact with Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings, and with a few pointers provided by their facilitators as and when required come to their own understanding and appreciation of the truths hidden in these works. Through the pages of *New Race*, we feel happy in sharing with our friends and well-wishers a small selection of the written works prepared by some of our learners, which demonstrate these learners' processes of comprehension, reflection and creative imagination as they experience the joy of illumination through their direct contact with the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In the pages of this issue we have brought together an essay inspired by a learner's reading of *The Life Divine* and another one inspired by *The Ideal of Human Unity*. We also present a creative rendering of a learner's evolving understanding of some of the key principles of Integral Education which he presented in the form of a stage play. And last but certainly not the least, we include a summary article which presents a learner's review of some of the central themes discussed by Sri Aurobindo in his major works. We hope that readers will be inspired by the perceptions and perspectives shared by some of our students.

Till next time....

*Beloo*

## THE TRUE NATIONAL EDUCATION



India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit. Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic, a vital and physical being, but all these have been seen as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth, and yet they are not all the soul, because at the summit of its ascent it arises to something greater than them all, into a spiritual being, and it is in this that she has found the supreme manifestation of the soul of man and his ultimate divine manhood, his *paramārtha* and highest *puruṣārtha*. ...the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation. That is the principle on which we must build, that the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being.

SRI AUROBINDO  
CWSA, Volume 1, pp. 426-427

## THE ULTIMATE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE OF LIFE IN THE INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO

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The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is 'truly integral' as it reveals the subtle associations between all that is known and beyond, the animate and inanimate, the human and the Divine and seeks to unify them in an undiminished entirety. This philosophy describes the ultimate unifying principle of life that transcends the universe, which is the utmost or extreme reality to physical science. It is revelatory of the integral purpose of existence which humanity has perennially been in search of and is integrally transformative in its approach towards attainment of the purpose. The philosophy forms the basis of an Integral Yoga which takes all life to be yoga unlike other systems of yoga which are exclusive pursuits for uniting with the Divine. The Integral Philosophy resolves and reconciles all dualities of our existence as an Integral Knowledge becomes the basis for arriving at an essential unity in all existence.

### **A Unifying Principle that Transcends the Universe**

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Philosophy describes a unifying principle of life which transcends the world and even the universe known to us as the only reality and entails integration of the Unmanifest and the Manifest, Spirit and Matter, the Being and the Becoming, the One and the Many, the consciousness of the Individual and the Divine.

### **Integral View of Spirit and Matter as the Unmanifest and the Manifest**

Sri Aurobindo awakens us to the fact that humanity has since time immemorial aspired for "*God, Light, Freedom and Immortality*". This is possible only through manifestation of the Divine in the human. To the human mind such reconciliation between matter and spirit is inconceivable though to the mystic vision of the Upanishads and of Sri Aurobindo the two are indivisible. But until the rationalist mind comes to terms with this idea of oneness and the possibility of the reconciliation of the two, it will not be able to make a conscious progress for realizing divinity within the being and the idea of a Divine life

upon earth will remain unrealized. If we consider only pure spirit as real, the world becomes an illusion. If we are lost in *Prakriti* and become occupied in worldly activities as reality we will end up denying God. But the nature of the mind is to view and understand things separately, only after which it becomes capable of seeing them integrally. Hence the consonance of the two needs to be effectuated under experiential enlightenment. This entails testing each separately by experiencing it to the limits of its possibility. The West has experimented with matter to the extreme and experienced both the positive and negative results. The East has engrossed itself with realizing the spirit but has ended up with only personal salvation at the cost of breaking up earthly ties. It will not be inapt to say that both have come out with the conclusion that an isolated pursuit of matter or the spirit is insufficient to fulfill the eternal aspirations of humanity. It is only after this realization that the mind can rise to a state of higher consciousness from where it is able to get an integral view of spirit and matter and hence achieve a luminous reconciliation of the two. Sri Aurobindo's writings enlighten us that we are capable of grasping that Reality, that unity and integration of Spirit and Matter, the integral existence of Unmanifest and Manifest, by rising to a supramental truth consciousness. We will then be able to experience the original calm and passivity of the Unmanifest Brahman in our own life, enabling our ultimate perfection in this Manifest existence and the realization of our cherished aspirations.

### **Integral view of Being, Becoming and Being in Becoming**

According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three aspects of the Divine. There is Being, Becoming, and Being in Becoming. Being is the essential spiritual nature of the Divine who is the Supreme Truth, Consciousness, Bliss i.e., Sat-Chit-Ananda. Becoming is universal existence i.e. life and Nature. Being in Becoming is the spirit in life and Nature. In terms of time we can say that there is timelessness, time, and timelessness in time. Timelessness is of the Being, time is of the Becoming, and timelessness in time is of Being in Becoming. The consciousness present in the above three aspects is the transcendental consciousness, the cosmic consciousness and individual consciousness respectively. By ascending in consciousness we can discover the Being in Becoming i.e., the spirit within, and in every object and life surrounding us. The mental consciousness of the individual has to grow cosmic to interpret its right relation with the Universal in which it exists. We have to realize the one

universal consciousness, of which our consciousness is a manifestation for the play of a smaller act in the play of the larger work of the transcendental purpose. When one discovers the true individual self by discovering one's soul, one is also able to see and fulfill one's universal and transcendental purpose. It is in the supramental consciousness, that the three can be seen as unified. This consciousness has the knowledge of the multiplicity and the knowledge of the Oneness simultaneously, because it is the reconciling consciousness. In the cosmic consciousness, there is no disharmony, no duality and no conflicting contraries; and so it can become the basis for an absolute synthesis of all opinions, views and beliefs.

### **Integral View of the One and the Many**

The reality intelligible to the mind is life and its multi-forms of existence but our reasoning intellect fails to make out a definitive pattern and purpose for the reason of their being and the relation between them in context of the happenings and occurrences that dominate, influence and surround life. An Integral knowledge brings us to the reality that Brahman is the One; nothing else exists. It is the Absolute and the relative; the corporeal and incorporeal. This Reality exceeds all definitions of mind and is the supreme knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo gives us the basic law of the movement of existence when he writes,

“That law is that all things are one in their being and origin, one in their general law of existence, one in their interdependence and the universal pattern of their relations; but each realises this unity of purpose and being on its own lines and has its own law of variation by which it enriches the universal existence.” (*The Human Cycle, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo [CWSA], Vol. 25, p. 63*)

The beautiful aspect is that the Oneness is not imposed on the individual but has to come with a gradual self-realization. Groups or individuals aid one another on this path by support or even through opposition. The individual grows in the highest pursuits of wisdom, strength, harmony and perfection towards a stage where there would be no impulse or need to assert one's individuality since the ideal of One for All and All for One will have been realized. Hence we get an insight into the movement of Nature which is integrative and unifying and is trying its best to harmonize and integrate the human stuff at its disposal.



*Consciousness One with the Divine Consciousness*  
Photo credit: [www.blossomlikeaflower.com](http://www.blossomlikeaflower.com)

### **Integral View of the Individual and the Divine Consciousness**

The ordinary existence of a human being is an egoistic consciousness which associates itself with mind, life and body as the "I". Almost all of us live in a surface consciousness and so are oblivious of the integrality of our being. The role of the individual is significant as it is a focused concentration directed towards its own growth; with the development being conserved from birth to birth. The mode of development of the mass as a whole would be a comparatively slower process. According to Sri Aurobindo, "[b]y detaching himself from all identification with mind, life and body, he can get back from his ego to the consciousness of the true Individual, the Jivatman, who is the real possessor of mind, life and body." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23-24, p. 409) Jivatman is a portion of the Divine, the real Self that upholds the soul-form for a play of the transcendent and the universal. Once the realization of the real Self comes, one can become a conscious contributor towards the development of one's own individual being, thus aiding Nature's yoga. The yoga of the individual is a seeking to merge the individual consciousness with the Divine consciousness.

In the Divine reality - the source of all creation, the essence of all being, there is an original integral consciousness, reflected as unity, wholeness, perfection, and infinity of knowledge. In the emergence of the Universe from a Divine source i.e., in the process of involution, the original integral consciousness and knowledge became oblivious of its luminosity and turned into inconscience and ignorance. Since all the higher potentialities are only latent in the inconscient, there is also a reverse process, process of evolution which basically is an evolution of consciousness at each step of the ladder. The same steps are taken backwards and we witness the subconscious rising

from the inconscient, the conscient from the subconscious with further possibilities of the superconscient rising from the conscient. The limited consciousness of an individual cannot widen and heighten itself on its own but if it so intends and deeply aspires, is lent a helping hand by a greater consciousness which is transformative and integrative. Sri Aurobindo indicates that for a recovery of our essential whole reality, "There must be a replacement of a limited and separative by an essential and integral consciousness identified with the original truth and the whole truth of self and existence." (*The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 21-22, p. 659) This will enable us to shed our divided nature by perceiving the unity and oneness of all things and developing a truer view of life. The things that appear to the limited consciousness as being in opposition will appear as true complements and perfectly reconcilable.



*Transformation, the goal of creation*  
 Photo credit: [www.blossomlikeaflower.com](http://www.blossomlikeaflower.com)

## **A Revelatory and Transformative Philosophy**

The Integral Philosophy reveals the integral purpose of existence which is not to involve oneself in exclusive pursuits of materialism and individualism but to grow in spirit and possess an equal concern for all else and all others. Sri Aurobindo does not leave us here with this wisdom but goes further to provide insight on how this may be achieved, bringing to light the need for an integral transformation of consciousness.

### **The Integral Purpose of Existence**

Man as a mental being is unable to see the integral purpose of existence. Even if one makes an effort at it, one arrives at something like 'this worldly' and 'the other worldly' and hence subscribes either to the materialist or to the ascetic view. This leads to a denial of either spirit or matter because these two



entities seem too contradictory to support any progress if simultaneously recognized by the reasoning mind. The materialist has over the past years met with tremendous success in science and technology but it is also amply clear that until and unless an individual grows in truth and goodness on the inside and realises a connection with the entire existence, all prized inventions are sure to spell disaster and bring doom to humanity. Without a proper understanding of the purpose of our being we can only foresee a future of dissatisfaction, strife, vanity, insecurity and crisis. Sri Aurobindo enlightens us about the integral purpose of our being when he writes,

“Man is there to affirm himself in the universe, that is his first business, but also to evolve and finally to exceed himself: he has to enlarge his partial being into a complete being, his partial consciousness into an integral consciousness; he has to achieve mastery of his environment but also world-union and world-harmony; he has to realise his individuality but also to enlarge it into a cosmic self and a universal and spiritual delight of existence.” (ibid., p. 711)

The thought is sublime because though its context is the development of the individual, it has no room for even a grain of low consciousness or an egoistic pursuit. Virtue and consideration for ‘the other’ is inherent in the agenda for man to surpass himself.

### **Integral Transformation of Consciousness**

The problems and evils of the world spring from a divided consciousness which results in a wrong knowledge, a wrong will and wrong doing. To come out of the inconscience and ignorance Sri Aurobindo is for a total change of consciousness and a radical change of nature. He writes,

“[T]his change must consist in an integration, a healing of the divided consciousness of our being, and since that division is complex and many-sided, no partial change on one side of the being can be passed off as a sufficient substitute for the integral transformation.” (ibid., p. 651)

For the realization to be complete, all of the being and nature must be included and transformed. A lower consciousness perceives the separateness and opposition of things. It is with a higher consciousness, that we are able to see the mutuality, necessity, and unity. We realize that we are not only an individual being, but a world being; an eternal individual capable of transcending all limitations of unconsciousness, ego, division and ignorance. Sri Aurobindo writes, “An integral consciousness will become the basis of

an entire harmonization of life through the total transformation, unification, integration of the being and the nature." (ibid., p. 753) A transformation of consciousness will enable us to rise above the vital-mental consciousness to a psychic or spiritual consciousness where one finds that the individual exists in the Transcendent which itself is concealed in the individual. The soul which comes in contact with the transcendent gets the realization that all is in each and each is in all, all is in God and God is all.

### **A Philosophy to Resolve All Dualities of Life**

A reasoning intellect fails to decipher the cause behind the happenings and occurrences that dominate, influence and surround our life. We are met with dualities at each step of our lives. The integration of dualities such as knowledge and ignorance, pleasure and pain, positive and negative, good and evil, truth and falsehood, happiness and suffering forms the basis for a greater wisdom and ascension. Sri Aurobindo brings a fresh outlook to our accustomed way of thought when he writes,

"in the duality of pleasure and pain, we have seen that pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to bear the touch of delight that would otherwise be felt in it; it is a perverse reaction of Consciousness to Ananda, not itself a fundamental opposite of Ananda: this is shown by the significant fact that pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both resolve into the original Ananda." (ibid., p. 515)

Such reconciliation cannot be realized with an objective view of things but by recognizing the self and all that is; as expression of a greater existence. When we perceive the true nature of the Reality we resolve the contradictions, divisions, and dualities of life; overcome our divided nature and thereby fulfill our human aspiration.

### **The Integral Yoga that Integrates all Systems of Yoga and the Entire Life**

Yoga is the pursuit of integrating the being with the Divine. Each school of yoga selects a different aspect of the being for coming in contact with the divine. Hathayoga uses the body and the vital; Rajayoga, uses the mind; *karma* yoga, *bhakti* yoga, *jnana* yoga use some part of the mental being i.e., will, heart, or intellect. Sri Aurobindo says, "*All life is Yoga*" which means that we ought to consciously take up everything around us that we come

across in life as an opportunity and a field to raise ourselves in consciousness. Yoga according to him is not an activity or pursuit divorced from the routine and petty looking activities of life. A sadhaka of integral yoga must conquer forces of ego, falsehood and disorder in the world as well as in the self and has to harmonize knowledge, will, and emotion. According to Sri Aurobindo, "It is the method of an integral God realisation, an integral self-realisation, an integral fulfillment of the being, an integral transformation and perfection of the nature". (*Essays Divine and Human*, CWSA, Vol. 12, pp. 357-358) The way for the integral yoga is a surrender of the whole being to the Divine so that the whole nature is changed into the divine nature. The highest stage of surrender is to become a living instrument of the Divine. Integral yoga seeks to put the whole conscious being into contact with the Divine and call Him in to transform us with his *Shakti*. By doing this the yoga becomes the self-fulfillment of the *Purusha* through his Energy. All of our nature is used, nothing is rejected. The divine power uses all life with its experiences to divinise the physical, vital and mental aspects of the being.



*Integral Harmony*

*Photo credit: www.blossomlikeaflower.com*

### **An Integral Knowledge, the Basis for Achieving Unity in All Existence**

Sri Aurobindo views all problems of existence as arising out of the ignorance of the inherent unity in things, the forgotten Oneness which is the eternal reality. Sri Aurobindo observes, "For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity."

(*The Life Divine*, CWSA, Vol. 21-22, p. 4) Unity is indispensable to progress, be it unity within the self, unity in a family, an organization, an institution, or a community. Unity comes with a common aim and purpose. Real progress comes through focusing on the central aim and being guided by it, rather than seeking contentment in an egoistic identity. Sri Aurobindo sets before humanity the highest possible aim of a spiritual realization through a revolutionary self effort rather than going through a gradual process of evolution. As one grows in Integral Knowledge one is able to realize the integrality of one's being with the One and its multiplicity. Sri Aurobindo's writes,

"This is the characteristic of the integral knowledge that it unifies all in Sachchidananda because not only is Being one in itself, but it is one everywhere, in all its poises and in every aspect, in its utmost appearance of multiplicity as in its utmost appearance of oneness."  
(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 23-24, p. 419)

## Conclusion

The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo weaves out a magnificent fabric out of the smallest grains of matter and strands of life, each contributing to the beauty of the 'entire'; nothing is left out, each is carefully harmonized with the other, finally revealing the divine scheme and intent. We belong to the universe in time and space, and to the transcendent in eternity, yet have been given the freedom and opportunity to discover our unity and integrality. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy unites humanity with inanimate matter, the environment, cultures, nations, the whole world, the entire universe and even the transcendent. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy ushers forth an integral idealism that is realizable, as the fundamental spiritual principles of existence that reflect the One Being, such as peace, power, knowledge, goodness, truth, beauty, love, joy, delight, creativity etc., reflect as practical values in life experienced as influence from the psychic presence within. Sri Aurobindo dispels all doubts of the impossibility of such unity and integration when he says,

"Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Power is the strain, Knowledge is the performer, the Infinite All is the composer and audience. We know only the preliminary discords which are as fierce as the harmony shall be great; but we shall arrive surely at the fugue of the divine Beatitudes." (*Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*, CWSA, Vol. 13, p. 204)

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### **The Cosmic Spirit**

*Sri Aurobindo*

I am a single Self all Nature fills.  
Immeasurable, unmoved the Witness sits:  
He is the silence brooding on her hills,  
The circling motion of her cosmic might.

I have broken the limits of embodied mind  
And am no more the figure of a soul.  
The burning galaxies are in me outlined;  
The universe is my stupendous whole.

My life is the life of village and continent,  
I am earth's agony and her throbs of bliss;  
I share all creatures' sorrow and content  
And feel the passage of every stab and kiss.

Impassive, I bear each act and thought and mood;  
Time traverses my hushed infinitude.

## THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR HUMAN UNITY

LAKSHMI JYOTHI MANAPRAGADA

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*Photo credit: www.freedigitalphotos.net*

Human unity is one of the major works, or perhaps an important consequence and outcome of the spiritual work undertaken by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. While Sri Aurobindo unravels in his treatise *The Ideal of Human Unity* the modalities of working out such an ideal, the Mother, through Auroville, presented to the earth a working model of the concept. According to them, unity in spiritual aspiration and a collective progress towards an ultimate spiritualized society and its manifestation on earth is the key to absolute and enduring peace and happiness on earth.

It appears from history that man is, consciously and unconsciously, goaded towards an ever increasing unity, expanding from family to community to nationality. Presently he is moving towards the threshold of the challenging stage of uniting the whole humanity. Last century witnessed some commendable efforts in bringing an understanding among the various peoples and nations of the world.

### **Present Scenario**

The devastation of the world wars brought in a vague realisation of the necessity of mutual co-operation among the nations. It was a shock to witness centuries of constructive endeavours reduced to smithereens in no time. The League of Nations was established with the main objective of prevention of war and conflicts between nations. But aggressive nations such as Germany and Italy withdrew their support as they felt the dictates

violated their sovereignty and the league collapsed. Yet another gruesome experience, World War II, prompted the formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Despite decades of cold war between the two great superpowers which finally had to crumble down, a semblance of peace and co-existence could be established. Benefits were being reaped and the co-operation extended to trade and commerce and other areas of mutual aid such as creating equal opportunities in the fields of health and education. Over time the United Nations branched into several specialized agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), etc. Several other organizations based on shared ethnicity, shared borders, shared economic and scientific advances came into existence such as SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), EU (European Union), AU (African Union), G-20 (Group of Twenty – a group of finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 economies), and many others.

These efforts were corroborated by scientific breakthroughs in transport and communication that have shrunk the earth. Computers, internet and mass media brought in the information revolution. Quantum Physics has established the inter-connectivity of the entire creation, strangely echoing the age-old Sanskrit tenet *isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*.<sup>1</sup> Environmental crises thrust the burden of shared responsibility. Several environmental organizations, such as Green Peace and World Wildlife Fund, are working across several nations to ensure safe and healthy environment. On the whole, sharing with others and supporting the weak or underprivileged has now gained general acceptance.

Despite all these efforts to foster unity and togetherness, the world is still not a happy place to live in. It is said that as god grows so does the devil to give an equal fight. Religious clashes, terrorism, corruption, power mongering are still the reigning gods and material monstrosity digs into the natural resources. Secularism is defeating its purpose with the danger of losing religions rather than retaining their spiritual essence and transcending them. Scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita or the Old Testament contain spiritual truths that have shaped characters for ages and cannot be abandoned because of the sectarian approach taken by a certain fanatical priesthood. There is an emergence of a global mono-culture that is stifling the creativity and inherent wisdom traditions of native cultures. Economics ridden material culture is fast replacing the inward orientation that is the hallmark of many native cultures. Greece has already lost its unique identity

couched in its mythology and India and China are on the verge of joining the bandwagon. Where did we go wrong or what are we short of?

The world is still in the age of individualism and reasoning with the ego still riding high behind the veil of developments and unifying efforts. A well safeguarded ego or its euphemism 'self-respect' is the underlying motivation for most of the activities, be it security measures or ambitious achievements. The unity among nations is too facile perched on strong national egos that can give way under provocation. Each nation, whatever its contribution to unity, is working under the garb of its own ego and identity and not consciously in response to a higher truth.

### **Dynamics of Unity**

Unity, however much it is desirable, has several inherent challenges at various levels. Men are active, evolving organisms with a will of their own and great vital and mental powers at their disposal. Each man harbours both unitive and divisive powers within himself. Life is complex with layers of forces acting upon the individuals and communities. Uniting such mass of forces, energies and self-interests is no easy walk. A study of the undercurrents of history, not just narration of stories of glory and fall of its heroic figures and significant revolutions, can give away certain inherent tendencies in men and nature that either obstruct or support the great ideal of Human Unity. The American war of independence, French revolution, and industrialization, for example, need to be psychoanalyzed to encounter the psyche of the collective consciousness fighting for freedom and rights – a cry for individual liberty and equality. But an individual does not live in a capsule. One grows within and with the help of the group one lives in. Sharing and sacrificing are not only instinctive but inevitable. It is a single earth and one is bound to share the resources with one and all. Furthermore, collectivity can check negative tendencies in individual human beings. The immense advantages of a group-soul or a collectivity cannot be overstated nor can we ignore the urge in each individual to grow according to his or her needs. Thus, the individual and the collectivity are interdependent and injustice to one will upset the other.

Forced unity is always challenged by the people. England dominated the world and established her colonies only to be retaliated against and thrown out. Socialism and communism which equated unity with uniformity also failed. Individuals refused to be sacrificed at the altar of the group requirements. God's creation is great and abounds with diversity—no two individuals are alike. Individual freedom is very crucial for evolution. All major advancements are initiated by



individuals which later become mass movements. Sri Aurobindo goes to the extent of saying that anarchy is preferable to leveling with force in which creativity and subsequent progress are stifled.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, organizing people into groups helps in pooling resources — material, intellectual or spiritual — and ensures security. Therefore, the individual and the community grow through a constant interchange of energies and the balance between the two is the secret to a productive yet peaceful human unity. Unity in diversity is the ineluctable law of progress.

### **Ways of Nature's Working**

Sri Aurobindo says that Life has a meaning and nature follows its own destiny. One should understand the work of the Nature. "For man alone of terrestrial creatures to live rightly involves the necessity of knowing rightly, whether, as rationalism pretends, by the sole or dominant instrumentation of his reason or, more largely and complexly, by the sum of his faculties; and what he has to know is the true nature of being and its constant self-effectuation in the values of life, in less abstract language the law of Nature and especially of his own nature, the forces within him and around him and their right utilization for his own greater perfection and happiness or for that and the greater perfection and happiness of his fellow-creatures."<sup>3</sup>

Sri Aurobindo's theory of the Evolution of Consciousness is a breakthrough in knowledge that can shift the paradigm of our outlook on life and happenings. There is an evolution of life on earth as revealed by even an apparent study — from matter to life to mind. Nature is seeking to express, rather increasingly manifest, herself. The wills or determinations of individuals or masses are just a part of the larger play of the nature's forces. She is relentlessly and covertly working towards her ideal and perfection in her own uncanny style, strengthening some concepts and ideas for a period of time, breaking the same for a greater cause and reaffirming them when required. Thus, she consolidated the individual ego only for it to be given up and evolve into the next stage. She built up national egos through crude external methods to bring about a rudimentary sense of unity among people. Now those very egoistic barriers and those very methods are being challenged for a greater unity and a greater life. She uses external methods until man's inner psychology is ready to accept the new principle of life manifesting from a higher consciousness.

Paradise on earth as expounded by many religious books is indeed Nature's goal but it is the pure and enduring bliss she seeks and not pain afflicted temporal pleasures. Such an ethereal condition is not met in a single step. Within every individual there should first be a harmony of all

parts led by the psychic entity. Spiritual development should become the norm of life in which sacrifice results in higher knowledge. Humanity has to reach a stage in evolution wherein people begin to experience the inner, spiritual unity.

Human aggregates, societies, cultures, nations have only recently begun to move in the direction of concert and cooperation. Referring to a “law of graduality of spiritual advancement of humanity,” Sri Aurobindo writes, “The first stage is the period of conflict and competition which has been ever dominant in the past and still overshadows the present of mankind. For even when the crudest forms of material conflict are mitigated, the conflict itself still survives and the cultural struggle comes into greater prominence. The second step brings the stage of concert. The third and last is marked by the spirit of sacrifice in which, because all is known as the one Self, each gives himself for the good of others.”<sup>4</sup>

Nature is seeking a concert among races, cultures and the entire humanity and it is man’s indispensable purpose to follow nature’s law.



*Photo credit: www.auroville.org*

### **The Ideal of Human Unity**

Sri Aurobindo’s Ideal of Human Unity guarantees the individual freedom within a well-organized collectivity that effectively channelizes all energies towards the sublime goal of enduring peace and happiness on earth. It is liberty with law and co-operation with competition. The first principle of the ideal is the free and natural grouping of nations united not by repression or compulsion but by a free choice based on a common psychic bent of mind towards growth and perfection. A deeper psychological element other than language or race binds people together beyond all restlessness.

Every nation keeps its unique identity through self-determination but also fulfils its part in the larger unity of humanity. While some countries contribute in technology and economics, yet others make up for the spiritual deficit. Each nation contributes in its unique way in keeping with its soul-nature.

Human beings have to transcend all the barriers which they have built around themselves, and the most formidable perhaps is the religious barrier. A 'deeper awakening' within oneself beyond the ego and its insecurities will make the work easier. There is a spiritual reality within oneself that unites the entire creation which brings a spontaneous joy with every sacrifice made towards higher realization. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three aspects to reality—individual, universal and transcendental. As one moves deeper into oneself and identifies with the soul within, one becomes the universe. On further expansion of consciousness, one can unify with the transcendental *sachidananda* or the sublime stage of unity in absolute existence-consciousness-force-bliss. With increasing inner awareness one's voluntary participation quickens the process.

### **Modus Operandi to Reach the Ideal**

Growth is not a linear process but an integral progression on several fronts. Several parameters are simultaneously worked upon to achieve perfection. Both the external and internal methods should complement each other for a holistic development of human unity.

Externally, all the international organizations and associations which are operational at present should promote goodwill and camaraderie by keeping up their good work in helping nations collaborate in areas of security, commerce and scientific knowledge. They should make as their primary objectives eradication of global poverty and provision of basic amenities such as education and health care to all the peoples and nations of the world. Physical and emotional needs form the foundation for channeling the energies towards higher purposes.

Internally, the authentic spiritual groups of the world, regardless of the country to which they belong, should use their influence to urge these international organizations as well as the common masses to make spiritual advancement as the ultimate ideal for humanity, not as a theory or a dogma but in practice. This ensures loosening up of the egos and looking deep within oneself for the place of permanent harmony and happiness. It creates a vision beyond the immediate material and vital needs and ensures a peaceful journey towards the ideal of human unity. Countries like India and China have a great role to play. The paths of Yoga, Tao and Buddhism, to name a few, have developed time-tested methods in attaining inner realization and leading perfect and beautiful lives. Renunciation of life is a misconception that surfaced in the Middle Ages. Perfection of life, manifestation of divinity on earth is the essential aim of spirituality. A

psychic culture must be worked out and developed within humanity which would herald the onset of the subjective age as explained by Sri Aurobindo.

In a subjective age, humanity is no more ruled by rationality or ego-based individualism, but by the inner divinity called the psychic. This identification and gradual governance by the psychic need to happen not only on the individual level but also on the collective level, level of the nations. "For it is necessary, if the subjective age of humanity is to produce its best fruits, that the nations should become conscious not only of their own but of each other's souls and learn to respect, to help and to profit, not only economically and intellectually but subjectively and spiritually, by each other." <sup>5</sup>

Humanity should first become conscious of a larger, happier life of sharing and fortifying each other beyond petty demands and insecurities. It is not an easy trek. The path is gorged with several challenges and miles to go before one rests assured. While nature is sure of her goal, willing contribution by humanity can mitigate disastrous consequences and ensure a smoother and swifter journey towards the goal.

A great opportunity awaits humanity!

## References

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3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, CWSA, Vol. 25, p. 417
4. Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance of India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*, CWSA, Vol. 20, p. 59
5. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, CWSA, Vol. 25, p. 40.

## INTEGRAL PHYSICS

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### Cast of Characters

1. SIDDHARTH
2. AMBIKA
3. PREM
4. MANOHAR
5. BALWINDER
6. TUHINA
7. CHRIS
8. NICOLE
9. AKRITI
10. SNEHA
11. PRAJWOLITA

### ACT I (THE ONLY ACT)

Scene 1 (The only scene)

The stage is at the center of the theater (an open air theater is ideal) with audience galleries all around. Ten students namely AMBIKA, PREM, MANOHAR, BALWINDER, TUHINA, CHRIS, NICOLE, AKRITI, SNEHA, and PRAJWOLITA are out in the open; they are sitting rather casually on benches scattered around. There is no blackboard. In case the play is being staged indoors, artificial trees with toy birds could be used to depict an outdoor setting.

AMBIKA: So today we are going to have our classroom in the open.

BALWINDER: Under the blue sky.

PREM: Why is he doing this anyway?

AKRITI: Who? The new Physics teacher you mean?

PREM: Who else? All this is his brainchild.

NICOLE: But I am really enjoying it, it really feels wonderful to have the breeze caress you as you learn.

MANOHAR: O come on...it's not going to be a poetry class.

SNEHA: I agree with Nicole, it is wonderful to sit outside.

PRAJWOLITA: I wonder why Mr. SIDDHARTH wants an open classroom, indeed if he were to teach us English poetry it would still be understandable...but the idea of teaching Physics in the open is surely strange.

CHRIS: Mr. Siddharth was impressive yesterday!

AMBIKA: You really think so?

CHRIS: Yes.

AMBIKA: But he just came for five minutes yesterday...he did nothing except for introducing himself, what was so impressive about that?

CHRIS: The way he speaks is impressive...his voice has an unmistakable warmth.

TUHINA: That is right, he is very impressive no doubt. He asked each one of us to talk about ourselves, and in the end he told us briefly about himself and how he wants to approach the subject.

AKRITI: His approach appears to be interesting, isn't it?

CHRIS: Well, I find it interesting...he said that he wants us to feel the subject rather than studying it mechanically. But what special is he going to do, there is not even a blackboard over here, where is he going to write.

NICOLE: He also said that good learning is possible only when the student finds the learning process enjoyable. I am really waiting to see how he makes Physics enjoyable, this subject has been a real thorn in my neck for a long time.

BALWINDER: Even I don't believe Physics can be interesting...all those derivations and numericals, I would never have opted for Physics had it been an optional subject.

Siddharth, a man appearing to be in his early forties, enters. The students stand up and quickly organize their benches in rows and sit.

SIDDHARTH: Good morning everyone.

ALL TOGETHER: Good morning Sir.

SIDDHARTH: Well, before we proceed I want to make one thing very clear, I wouldn't want to be addressed as 'Sir'. You (more)

SIDDHARTH: (cont'd) can call me 'Siddharth' straightaway. I will appreciate that. Also do not sit in rows like this. Rather make a circle around me.

*The students re-organize their benches with Siddharth roughly in the center.*

SIDDHARTH: Now let me see if I remember your names correctly. Well... please raise your hands if I take your names correctly...if I make a mistake, any kind of mistake including pronunciation errors, kindly correct me.

*Siddharth thinks for a while.*

SIDDHARTH: (Pointing at Ambika) I will start with you and then move anti-clockwise. Okay let's see...Ambika, Prem, Manohar, Balwinder, Tuhina, Chris, Nicole, Akriti, Sneha, and Prajwolita.

*The students raise their hands turnwise as their names are taken.*

TUHINA: (Impressed) But Sir, you heard our names just once yesterday... how could you remember them all.

SIDDHARTH: Well Tuhina, before I answer your question I would like to remind you and all other students in the class that I prefer to be called by my name. Don't call me 'Sir'. The words 'Sir' and 'Madam' are good ways of addressing people for there's an element of respect in these words but somehow in my scheme of teaching, or should I say facilitating for nothing can really be taught, addressing one another by names fits far better than any other way of addressing. The words 'Sir' and 'Madam' could cause a bit of a distance between the learners and the facilitator, I mean the teacher in your terminology. So it is better that you call me 'Siddharth'. As for your question as to how I remember all your names, all I can say is that there is no big deal in it. You can all have good memories provided your are ready to train and exercise your memories. I don't claim to have a very good memory but it is reasonable...and this reasonable memory is a result of regular meditation. Yes friends, I meditate every evening and I have been doing so for over three decades now. And trust me it has helped. But one doesn't have to meditate for years to have a good memory. Even a few (more)

SIDDHARTH: (cont'd) months of regular practice can give you remarkable powers of concentration and memory. We can discuss all this later when there is time to spare...now it is time for Physics, some real hard core Physics. First tell me which of you find Physics boring?

*Ambika, Prem, Manohar, Balwinder, Nicole, and Sneha raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: O that constitutes a majority.

*The students giggle.*

SIDDHARTH: Let's hope by the time we finish this class, the number will change. Okay, now when I was coming over I heard Balwinder say that it is hard to believe that Physics could be interesting. Well, with all due regards to him and all of you who think likewise I must say that nothing could be further than the truth. Look, Physics per se is extremely interesting but I don't blame any of you for thinking otherwise...perhaps you didn't get to study the subject in an interesting way. Let's see if I can help you enjoy Physics. Unfortunately, I am joining you in the middle of your session. Therefore, I cannot take up the entire syllabus with you but let us all try to make the best of the remaining time. I have been given to understand by the Academic Head that when your previous teacher left, the topic being discussed in the class was Special Theory of Relativity... you were studying time dilation, right?

*Manohar raises his hand.*

SIDDHARTH: Yes Manohar.

MANOHAR: Siddharth, to be very honest we hardly understood anything about the Special Theory of Relativity.

SIDDHARTH: Okay, so would you all like me to take up the topic right from the beginning?

ALL TOGETHER: Yes.

SIDDHARTH: All right, as you say. Before we start with Special Theory of Relativity, I have a question for all of you just to demonstrate how interesting Physics could be.

AMBIKA: We have already started enjoying it Siddharth.

SIDDHARTH: That's very nice to know Ambika, I hope I can sustain this interest in all of you. All right then, it's time for the question.

*Students appear interested and full of attention.*

SIDDHARTH: (Addressing Balwinder) Balwinder, I guess you, and for that matter all other students in the class, were born either in 1994 or 1995.

BALWINDER: That's right Siddharth, I guess all of us were born in 1994.

SIDDHARTH: All right, I was born in 1951, and I am due for retirement in 2011. Incidentally, yours is the last batch I am facilitating.



*The students look amazed.*

BALWINDER: That's incredible Siddharth!

SIDDHARTH: What's so incredible?

BALWINDER: Siddharth, you don't even look fifty! It is unthinkable that you are going to turn sixty.

NICOLE: What fifty, you hardly look more than forty two or forty three. Sixty is hard to believe!

SIDDHARTH: (Smiling) Well, I take that as a compliment, thank you very much. Again the reason for looking much younger than my real age is because of regular meditation. Meditation is one of the highest forms of yoga and it can really retard the process of ageing, that's scientifically proved. And now, the question...I was born in 1951 and Balwinder in 1994. You have to tell me who is older in terms of physical age. Let me repeat the question and please pay attention -who is older in terms of physical age. I will give you three options, only one (more)

SIDDHARTH: (cont'd) of these is the correct answer. The options are -Balwinder is older than I, I am older than Balwinder, or Balwinder and I are of the same age. Please think hard...the question may not be as simple as it sounds.

*All the students seem to work on the question in their minds. A minute's silence follows.*

SIDDHARTH: All right, you can come up with your answers but just the answer will not do, you must also substantiate it. I will ask each one of you turnwise starting with Balwinder...after Balwinder, it will be Tuhina, then Chris, and so on. Okay then, your answers please...

BALWINDER: Obviously you are older for you were born much before me.

TUHINA: Yes Siddharth you are older for the same reasons given by Balwinder.

CHRIS: Same answer, Siddharth.

NICOLE: I think there's a trick involved...may be Balwinder is older in the sense that he has a lot many more years to live, therefore there are more possibilities open to him, that is, he is richer in possibilities in terms of available physical age...that perhaps makes him older although I am not sure.

AKRITI: I have a gut feeling that Nicole is right.

SNEHA: Nothing doing, surely Siddharth is older for the simple reason that he was born in 1951 and Balwinder in 1994.

PRAJWOLITA: I completely agree with Sneha and others who say that Siddharth is older in terms of physical age.

AMBIKA: Me too, same answer and for the same reasons -Siddharth is older.

PREM: I have this strange feeling that for some reasons Balwinder is older.

MANOHAR: No one has chosen the third option, so I go by it -both are of the same physical age, but please don't ask me the reasons.

*The students laugh, Siddharth also smiles.*

SIDDHARTH: Okay, it's my turn now. First I will give the answer and then the reason. Well, you can clap for Manohar, his answer is correct.

*The students clap.*

SIDDHARTH: But I wish he had known the reasons as well...anyway I will tell you the reasons now. Every entity in the physical universe, animate or inanimate, is made up of two things only -matter and energy. Putting it differently, everything that you see or perceive in the physical universe is nothing but an agglomeration of matter and energy. Now there are two fundamental laws in Physics which you have studied while you were in Standard VI or VII -the law of conservation of matter, and the law of conservation of energy. Have you studied or not?

ALL TOGETHER: Yes.

SIDDHARTH: Who will explain the laws?

*All raise hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Okay, let Nicole answer, yes Nicole...

NICOLE: Sir, the law of conservation of matter states that neither can matter be created nor can it be destroyed. And according to the law of conservation of energy neither can energy be created nor can it be destroyed. Of course matter and energy can change into each other, but the sum total of matter and energy in the physical universe will always remain the same.

SIDDHARTH: Perfect, now, by the logic that all entities in the physical universe are made up of only matter and energy both I and Balwinder are also made up of the same. Now the matter and energy I am composed of always existed, still exists, and will continue to exist by virtue of (more)

SIDDHARTH: (cont'd) law of conservation of matter and law of conservation of energy. Because of the same reasons the matter and energy constituting Balwinder always existed, still exists, and shall continue to exist. So nothing is really born, and nothing really dies. This is exactly what Bhagawad Gita teaches. But then this is true even from the perspective of pure Physics as we have just seen. Since the constituents that make me and Balwinder up are ageless in terms of Physics, it could be said in broader terms that Balwinder and I are of the same physical age -no body is older or younger than the other. Putting it differently, I and Balwinder always existed, still exist, and shall continue to exist -so none of us can claim to be older or younger than the other. I believe the reason is clear.

TUHINA: It's a great explanation, Siddharth, never thought about this aspect of physical age. So we are also perfectly justified in calling you by name, isn't it? After all, all of us are of the same age.

SIDDHARTH: (Smiling) Indeed, consider any two entities of the physical universe -living or non-living -they are bound to be of the same age. Let's now start with Special Theory of Relativity. In fact we shall start with time dilation, don't worry, although I am starting at the point where your previous teacher left you, I shall cover Special Theory of Relativity fully. Today, honestly speaking, I am not going to tell you much about the theory. I just want you to feel the subject of Special Theory of Relativity first before you jump into learning its deeper aspects. Now, can someone tell me who wrote the novel 'The Time Machine'?

*Ambika, Akriti, and Chris raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Okay Akriti, it's your take.

AKRITI: Siddharth, 'The Time Machine' was written by H.G. Wells...what a novel it is!

SIDDHARTH: Perfect answer, now can someone tell me what is the theme of that novel?

*Again Ambika, Akriti, and Chris raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Yes Chris.

CHRIS: Siddharth, it's about time travel. With the help of the time machine the protagonist could move back and forth in time.

SIDDHARTH: That's right, now how many of you have wondered as to whether time travel is possible?

*All raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Tell me now, can you travel in time?

*Students look at one another.*

SNEHA: No Siddharth, I don't think so.

SIDDHARTH: (Addressing Sneha) All right, I will come back to time travel a little later, before that I shall talk about something similar. Tell me Sneha, can we peep into the past?

SNEHA: No Siddharth.

SIDDHARTH: Okay, let's find out. Look around yourselves, the answer whether we can peep into the past lies around you.

*The students look around appearing curious.*

SIDDHARTH: What do you think now Sneha?

SNEHA: My answer is still the same, Siddharth. We cannot peep into the past.

SIDDHARTH: Would anyone like to differ?

*Nobody responds.*

SIDDHARTH: I am afraid Sneha's answer is incorrect. We are actually always peeping into the past. The truth is we (more)

SIDDHARTH: (cont'd) can never see the present. For example you can never see how I look at the present moment. What you see is how I looked in the past. I will tell you why...we see an object only when light after getting reflected from that object reaches our eyes. Now although light is very fast it would still need some time, no matter how small that period of time is, to reach the observer's eyes after getting reflected from the object. So practically, the observer can only see how the object looked that much time back. If the object is luminous, we shall see the object as it looked as much time back as its light rays would need to reach our eyes. For instance, light needs roughly eight minutes to travel from Sun to earth. So we can see the Sun as it existed eight minutes back. We can

never see the present state of Sun or for that matter of any other object. There are numerous stars in the sky that exploded and died millions of years back. They are no longer present. And yet we can see them for light from those stars took millions of years to reach our eyes. I am sure many of you already knew this but you could not answer my question for you did not think creatively. Now I will revert to my original question -can we travel in time? Kindly note, I am not talking about peeping into the past, I am clearly asking you if we can go into the past or into the future? Sneha has already answered in the negative, would anyone like to differ.

*The students look at one another for a while.*

MANOHAR: I am sure Sneha's answer is incorrect, but none of us can tell you why.

*Students laugh, Siddharth also smiles.*

SIDDHARTH: Manohar is again correct; Sneha's answer is incorrect. Special Theory of Relativity suggests that we can actually travel in time. Now travelling into past and travelling into the future are two different aspects altogether. Travelling into the past could cause some extremely difficult paradoxes. Can you think of such a paradox? Please think, may be with your eyes closed.

*The students begin to think, some with closed and others with open eyes. Siddharth waits for a minute for them to think.*

SIDDHARTH: Okay, any answers.

*Akriti and Prajwolita raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Prajwolita.

PRAJWOLITA: Siddharth, say I go into the past and look at myself. How can two 'I's exist at the same time?

SIDDHARTH: Great answer, that could be a paradox for future time travel as well. Very good. Okay, Akriti.

AKRITI: What if I go into the past and change the sequence of events. Suppose I don't let my parents to ever meet in the past. How will I be born then? And if I was never born, who is this 'I' who has travelled from the present to the past?

SIDDHARTH: Great answer again...this class has real brains, I can see. Okay, two wonderful paradoxes have been identified, or must I say

discovered, by Prajwolita and Akriti. These paradoxes have led many physicists to suggest that travelling into the past is not possible. But future time travel is possible, at least theoretically.

*The students listen to Siddharth intently.*

SIDDHARTH: According to the principle of time dilation, the time in respect of a moving object moves slower than the corresponding time in respect of a stationary object. Putting it plain and simple time is not a constant physical quantity as we normally tend to believe. The elapse of time could vary in accordance with the speed of the object concerned. So time in a planet that travels faster than earth would move slowly as compared to the rate of passage of time on earth. Making it even simpler, when I am walking my watch should move slower as compared to when I am standing. Similarly, when I am running, my watch should move even slower than when I am walking. Is the concept clear.

*The students nod.*

TUHINA: O Siddharth, I am really feeling Physics!

SIDDHARTH: Great to know that, I shall continue. Now it must be clear that the faster a body moves the slower should be the passage of time in it. The fastest possible speed known in the physical universe, I am sure all of you know, is that of light. So if an object can move at speeds comparable to that of light then its time will move extremely slowly. Although it is not practically possible at the moment to achieve speeds even distantly comparable to speed of light, but suppose one day our science develops so much so as to achieve this feat! Can you tell me what will happen then? Just close your eyes and think for sometime.

*The students close their eyes for a while.*

SIDDHARTH: Any answers, my friends.

*Manohar, Tuhina, and Chris raise their hands.*

SIDDHARTH: Yes Manohar.

MANOHAR: Well, Siddharth the people travelling by a spacecraft moving at speeds comparable to that of light will age slowly as compared to those who are ageing normally on planet earth. When the spacecraft returns to earth, the travellers will still be young while their contemporaries will have grown older.

SIDDHARTH: Great answer Manohar! In the light of what Manohar said, understand this that the travellers of that spacecraft will have virtually travelled into the future. Do you people understand?

*The students nod.*

TUHINA: We never understood this subject better, Siddharth.

SIDDHARTH: Great, that's indeed great going. So if you have understood what I have told you so far, you have also understood time dilation. This is how we are going to understand all the topics of Special Theory of Relativity, and also the other topics in your syllabus. Don't worry about the mathematical derivations that go alongside these concepts. If you grasp the concept well, that is if you begin to feel the concept, then the mathematics that goes alongside it will be a real cakewalk.

*The students appear contended and happy.*

SIDDHARTH: Now tell me, which of you find Physics boring?

*No hands are raised.*

SIDDHARTH: Okay, which of you find Physics interesting?

*All hands go up.*

SIDDHARTH: Fantastic, I am really very happy.

TUHINA: Siddharth, you are amazing!

SNEHA: Undoubtedly, you are an amazing teacher!

BALWINDER: If someone can raise interest for Physics in me, then he surely has to be amazing!

SIDDHARTH: Thank you very much all of you for all these kind words. But trust me, whether I am amazing or not, you all are truly amazing! I hardly taught you anything, you learnt the subject yourself...by listening with interest, assimilating, and then expressing what you understood.

AMBIKA: It's really true, I feel as if what you explained was already inside me...it just came out because of some push given by you.

PREM: I perhaps can understand now as to what is feeling a subject like.

SIDDHARTH: I am very happy that you all have been able to feel Physics. I took special permission from your Principal to give me an extended class, that's because I did not want the topic to be lost midway due to the end of what we call 'period'. Tell me, like Ambika, have all of you felt

that the topic of discussion was already inside you and it just came out because of a bit of fuelling. (continued)

ALL TOGETHER: Yes.

SIDDHARTH: That is how you should approach every subject and for that matter life itself, for life is the greatest subject to be learned. Internal learning is the best learning...trust me everything is inside you, what is needed to bring it out is a little push...the push can come from a facilitator like me or it can even come from yourself. You might have wondered when you people assembled here in the morning today as to how can Physics be taught or learnt without a blackboard. Remember, the blackboard may be needed of and on, but the real blackboard is inside you. You should always work upon the topic of discussion on the internal blackboard first before expressing it on an external blackboard or your notebooks. So is it a promise that you will never again say that Physics is boring.

ALL TOGETHER: Promise Sir.

SIDDHARTH: Thank you very much, I take that promise as my reward.

CHRIS: (Standing up) Give a big hand to Siddharth.

*All the students stand up and clap and Siddharth acknowledges with a smile.*

Based on some thoughts as to how Physics, or for that matter, other Science subjects should be approached; this stageplay is dedicated to all my SACAR friends.



## SOME CENTRAL THEMES IN SRI AUROBINDO'S MAJOR WORKS

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Some of the major works of Sri Aurobindo can be listed as *Savitri*, *The Life Divine*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and the *Letters on Yoga*. *Savitri* is the poetic rendering of *The Life Divine*; the two of which constitute the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. *The Secret of the Veda* introduces us to the philosophical roots or the origins of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and gives us the insights into the language that Sri Aurobindo found to describe his spiritual experiences. It can even be said that *Savitri* is the translation of Sri Aurobindo's experience of the Vedas in the English language. *The Synthesis of Yoga* deals with the psychology and application of this philosophy, while the *Letters on Yoga* serve as a day-to-day guide for its practice. The central themes proposed by Sri Aurobindo for the first time in the spiritual history of the earth are as follows:

1. **Concept of Involution and Evolution of Consciousness:** Involution is the process by which the Absolute Reality or the Samam Brahman / Sachichidananda, through the various steps of manifestation, limits itself successively and descends through many grades of consciousness, viz. the Supramental, the Overmental, the Mental, the Vital and finally culminates in the Physical Consciousness. Evolution is the reverse movement, the upward march of this Physical Consciousness back into its Source. It is the progressive development from the first inconscience in matter into life (movement, sensation, etc. and living physical beings), to mind (in conscious being, animals, including the human, the self-conscious thinking animal), to spiritualized mind, culminating in Supermind, the Truth Consciousness (as Supramental individuals, leading to a Supramental, i.e. a divine life on earth.)
2. **Concept of the Dynamic Truth or Supermind:** The crux of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, its recurring theme and its culmination is the Dynamic Truth, the Supermind that can descend into matter and divinise Life on earth. This concept of the Supermind existed in the Vedas and also finds a brief mention in the Upanishads but is lost in the later texts. According to Upanishads, those who ascended into the rays of the Sun, the *Svar*, or the *trirochanas* – the illumined regions of the Mind between the Supermind and the human intelligence, namely, The Intuitive mind,

The Overmind and the Overmental Gnosis regions could come back but those who crossed the gates of the Sun never returned (Chandogya Upanishad). The Vedic Rishis envisaged the ascent into the Supermind but not the descent and the organisation of the Supermind here on earth. Sri Aurobindo enabled the descent of this Supramental Truth, and established it in the earth's consciousness. Some of the properties of the Supermind, as enlisted by Sri Aurobindo include:

- a. Knowledge by Identity: "When it (the Supramental Consciousness) 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 Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 21, p. 757)
- b. Total Knowledge: Supramental vision is transcendental, universal and individual simultaneously. "It knows rightly the relative because it knows the Absolute and all the absolutes to which all the relatives refer back and of which they are the partial or modified or suppressed figures." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 21, p. 758)
- c. It contains all knowledge in itself. "All below that from overmind to Matter is Ignorance – an Ignorance growing from level to level towards the full knowledge." (*Letters On Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 19)
- d. Oneness of movement of Knowledge, Will, Love and Action in a state of intimate fusion as it has the vision of the three times, *trikaladrishti*, seeing them as an indivisible movement and sees too each containing the others.

**3. Psychisation, Spiritualisation and Supramentalisation:** The evolution of the present levels of consciousness into this Supramental Truth can be progressively achieved through the triple process of Psychisation, Spiritualisation and Supramentalisation. The Psychic entity is the Divine spark in us, which through various lifetimes grows into an independent being, the Psychic Being. Psychisation is the coming forward of this Psychic Being, breaking through the veil of the mental, vital and physical personalities dominant in man, subordinating this triple world of ignorance of the mind, life and body to itself and becoming the leader of our lives. This is the first stage of yoga where the cleavage of the Ego and the True Self takes place and the True Self or Soul becomes the master of Nature. "In psychic transformation all is in contact with

the Divine through the individual psychic consciousness." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, p. 95) Spiritualisation is the next step wherein having realised the True Self in oneself, one sees that same Self everywhere, in all manifestation. It also called Universalisation or Realisation of the Cosmic Being and results in the opening up of the Mind to ranges above it. "Spiritualisation means the descent of the higher peace, force, light, knowledge, purity, Ananda etc. which belong to any of the higher planes from Higher Mind to Overmind." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 106) "In spiritual transformation all is merged in the Divine in the cosmic consciousness." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, p. 95) The third and the crowning step is Supramentalisation, which involves the ascent to the supermind and the bringing down of it into the mind, life and body so that they may transform. In the supramental consciousness, "all becomes supramentalised in the divine Gnostic consciousness. It is only with this that there can begin the complete transformation of mind, life and body – in my sense of completeness." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 95)

**4. Divine Fulfillment of Life: Physical Transformation or Physical Immortality:** So far the immortality sought in the spiritual history of India has been the immortality of Consciousness, which constitutes in the Liberation of the Soul merging into the Transcendental Being. For the first time, Sri Aurobindo introduces the concept of Physical Immortality or Physical Transformation wherein not only would the consciousness be liberated, but also transformed; the very physical cells of our bodies would undergo a change, a transmutation of properties and a radical transformation. "Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but as a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate and incidental, but as a distinct and central object... Here ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and the seal of the sadhana." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 100)

**5. Integral Yoga:** Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is integral in its aim and its means. Here, the aim is that of total and integral change of the consciousness and nature. It requires the taking up all the aspects of the human being, the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual and educating them through the triple path of Yoga of Knowledge, Yoga of Love and Yoga of Works towards their Perfection. It includes the essence of all the approaches of the past and exceeds them. There is no

element left untouched, no movement left unpurified. Every moment and every movement is offered at the altar of the Sacrificial Fire, Agni, to be transmuted into its Divine counterpart.

6. **Collective and not Individual Achievement Alone:** The aim of this Yoga is not only individual perfection and realization for the sake of the individual, "but something to be gained for the earth consciousness here." This transformation is impossible through individual solitary transformation unconcerned with the work of the earth. "Also, no individual human being can by his own power alone work out the transformation, nor is it the object of the yoga to create an individual superman here and there. The object of the yoga is to bring down the Supramental consciousness on earth, to fix it there, to create a new race with the principle of the Supramental consciousness governing the inner and outer individual and collective life. That force accepted by individual after individual according to their preparation would establish the Supramental consciousness in the physical world and so create a nucleus for its own expansion." (*Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, p. 14)

These are some of the central themes discussed in Sri Aurobindo's major works. It can be seen that all the tenets proposed are novel and radical and any attempt to practise them is akin to a spiritual adventure for they have never been attempted before. They have been revealed to the humankind for the first time in the spiritual history of the world. To know them and to aspire to live them is a matter of rare honour and privilege, a direct action of the Grace of the Divine!

By studying carefully what Sri Aurobindo has said on *all subjects* one can easily reach a complete knowledge of the things of this world.

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