

The Sunlit Path



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India

15 July, 2022

Volume 15, Issue 148

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Editorial

My dear friends,

I am happy to bring to you 15th July, 2022 issue of The Sunlit Path.

The issue contains two important writings: ‘Supermind in the Evolution’ written by Sri Aurobindo and ‘True Humility – Supramental Plasticity – Spiritual Rebirth’ written by The Mother.

I do hope that you will find the contents deeply meaningful and enlightening.

Dr Bhalendu Vaishnav



The logo consists of a blue oval with a white rectangular box in the center containing the text "Living Words" in a dark blue font.

Supermind in the Evolution

Sri Aurobindo

A NEW humanity would then be a race of mental beings on the earth and in the earthly body, but delivered from its present conditions in the reign of the cosmic Ignorance so far as to be possessed of a perfected mind, a mind of light which could even be a subordinate action of the supermind or Truth-consciousness, and in any case capable of the full possibilities of mind acting as a recipient of that truth and at least a secondary action of it in thought and life.

It could even be a part of what could be described as a divine life upon earth and at least the beginnings of an evolution in the Knowledge and no longer entirely or predominantly in the Ignorance.

How far this would go, whether it would eventually embrace the whole of humanity or only an advanced portion of it, would depend upon the intention in the evolution itself, on the intention in whatever cosmic or transcendent Will is guiding the movements of the universe.

We have supposed not only the descent of the supermind upon the earth but its embodiment in a supramental race with all its natural consequences and a new total action in which the new humanity would find its complete development and its assured place in the new order.

But it is clear that all this could only come as a result of the evolution which is already taking place upon earth extending far beyond its present bounds and passing into a radically new movement governed by a new principle in which mind and man would be subordinate elements and no longer mind the utmost achievement or man the head or leader.

The evolution we see around us at present is not of that kind and, it might be said, shows few signs of such a possibility, so few that the reason, at present our only sure guide, has no right to hazard belief in it.

Earth, the earth we see, with its life deeply immersed and founded in inconscience and ignorance, is not built for such a development or capable of holding such an advent; its materiality and limitations condemn it to be permanently the field of a far inferior order. It may be said too that for such an order there must be a place somewhere and even if supermind is not a mere unwarranted speculation and is a concrete reality, there is no need and no place for its embodying itself here.

Mind, as marking the full play of the knowledge possible to the ignorance, must have its field somewhere and to keep the earth as its natural field would best serve the economy of cosmic Nature.

A materialistic philosophy would admit of no possibility of a divine life in Matter; but even a philosophy admitting a soul or spirit or a spiritual terminus of the evolutionary movement here could very

well deny the capacity of earth for a divine life: a divine existence could only be achieved by a departure from earth and the body.

Even if cosmic existence is not an illusion or Maya, a divine or a completely spiritual being is likely to be possible only in another less material world or only in the pure spirit.

At any rate, to the normal human reason the odds seem to be heavily against any early materialisation on earth of anything divine. Again, if too strong a stress is laid on the present or apparent character of the evolution here as it is presented to us by physical science, it might be urged that there is no warrant for expecting any emergence of a principle higher than human mind or of any such thing as superhuman beings in a world of Matter.

Consciousness is itself dependent upon Matter and material agencies for its birth and its operations and an infallible Truth consciousness, such as we suppose supermind to be, would be a contradiction of these conditions and must be dismissed as a chimera.

Fundamentally, physical science regards evolution as a development of forms and vital activities; the development of a larger and more capable consciousness is a subordinate result of the development of life and form and not a major or essential characteristic or circumstance and it cannot go beyond limits determined by the material origin of mind and life.

Mind has shown itself capable of many extraordinary achievements, but independence of the material organ or of physical conditions or

a capability for any such thing as a power of direct and absolute knowledge not acquired by material means would be beyond the conditions imposed by Nature.

At a certain point therefore the evolution of consciousness can go no further.

Even if a something definite and independent which we call a soul exists, it is limited by its natural conditions here where Matter is the basis, physical life the condition, mind the highest possible instrument; there is no possibility of an action of consciousness apart from the body or surpassing this physical, vital or mental Nature. This fixes the limits of our evolution here.

It might be suggested also that until something clearly recognisable like supermind manifests itself with some definiteness and fullness or until it descends and takes possession of our earth-consciousness, we cannot be certain that it exists; till then mind holds the place as a general arbiter or field of reference for all knowledge and mind is incapable of any certain or absolute knowledge; it has to doubt all, to test all and yet to achieve all, but cannot be secure in its knowledge or its achievement.

That, incidentally, establishes the necessity of such a principle as the supermind or Truth-consciousness in any intelligible universe, for without it there is no issue, no goal for either life or knowledge.

Consciousness cannot achieve its own entire meaning, its own supreme result without it; it will end in an inconsequence or a fiasco.

To become aware of its own truth and all truth is the very aim of its

existence and it cannot do so, so long as it has to tend towards truth, towards knowledge in ignorance and through the ignorance: it must develop or it must reach a power of itself whose very nature is to know, to see, to possess in its own power. This is what we call supermind and, once it is admitted, all the rest becomes intelligible.

If the evolution tends from Matter to Supermind, it must also tend to bring down Supermind into Matter and the consequences are inevitable.

The whole trouble of this incertitude arises from the fact that we do not look straight at the whole truth of the world as it is and draw from it the right conclusion as to what the world must be and cannot fail to be.

This world is, no doubt, based ostensibly upon Matter, but its summit is Spirit and the ascent towards Spirit must be the aim and justification of its existence and the pointer to its meaning and purpose. But the natural conclusion to be drawn from the supremacy and summit existence of Spirit is clouded by a false or imperfect idea of spirituality which has been constructed by intellect in its ignorance and even by its too hasty and one-sided grasp at knowledge.

But if supermind exists, if it descends, if it becomes the ruling principle, all that seems impossible to mind becomes not only possible but inevitable. If we look closely, we shall see that there is a straining of mind and life on their heights towards their own

perfection, towards some divine fulfilment, towards their own absolute. That and not only something beyond and elsewhere is the true sign, the meaning of this constant evolution and the labour of continual birth and rebirth and the spiral ascent of Nature.

But it is only by the descent of supermind and the fulfilment of mind and life by their self-exceeding that this secret intention in things, this hidden meaning of Spirit and Nature can become utterly overt and in its totality realisable.

This is the evolutionary aspect and significance of supermind, but in truth it is an eternal principle existing covertly even in the material universe, the secret supporter of all creation, it is that which makes the emergence of consciousness possible and certain in an apparently inconscient world and compels a climb in Nature towards a supreme spiritual Reality.

It is, in fact, an already and always existent plane of being, the nexus of Spirit and Matter, holding in its truth and reality and making certain the whole meaning and aim of the universe.

If we disregard our present ideas of evolution, all changes, — if we can regard consciousness and not life and form as the fundamental and essential evolutionary principle and its emergence and full development of its possibilities as the object of the evolutionary urge.

All the objections to a complete evolutionary possibility then fall

away; it would, on the contrary, be the inevitable consequence contained not only in Nature as a whole but even in material Nature. In this vision of things the universe will reveal itself in its unity and totality as a manifestation of a single Being, Nature as its power of manifestation, evolution as its process of gradual self-revelation here in Matter.

We would see the divine series of the worlds as a ladder of ascent from Matter to supreme Spirit; there would reveal itself the possibility, the prospect of a supreme manifestation by the conscious and no longer a veiled and enigmatic descent of the Spirit and its powers in their fullness even into this lowest world of Matter.

The riddle of the universe need be no longer a riddle; the dubious mystery of things would put off its enigma, its constant ambiguity, the tangled writings would become legible and intelligible.

In this revelation, supermind would take its natural place and no longer be a matter of doubt or questioning to an intelligence bewildered by the complexity of the world; it would appear as the inevitable consequence of the nature of mind, life and Matter, the fulfilment of their meaning, their inherent principle and tendencies, the necessary perfection of their imperfection, the summit to which all are climbing, the consummation of divine existence, consciousness and bliss to which it is leading, the last result of the birth of things and supreme goal of this progressive manifestation which we see here in life.

The full emergence of supermind may be accomplished by a

sovereign manifestation, a descent into earth-consciousness and a rapid assumption of its powers and disclosing of its forms and the creation of a supramental race and a supramental life: this must indeed be the full result of its action in Nature.

It is this certainty that authorises us to believe that mind and humanity also will tend towards a realisation that will be far beyond our present dreams of perfection. A mind of light will replace the present confusion and trouble of this earthly ignorance; it is likely that even those parts of humanity which cannot reach it will yet be aware of its possibility and consciously tend towards it; not only so, but the life of humanity will be enlightened, uplifted, governed, harmonised by this luminous principle and even the body become something much less powerless, obscure and animal in its propensities and capable instead of a new and harmonised perfection.

It is this possibility that we have to look at and that would mean a new humanity uplifted into Light, capable of a spiritualised being and action, open to governance by some light of the Truth-consciousness, capable even on the mental level and in its own order of something that might be called the beginning of a divinised life.(1)

True Humility – Supramental Plasticity – Spiritual Rebirth The Mother

As I have often been questioned about it, I shall touch briefly on the meaning of true humility, supramental plasticity and spiritual rebirth. Humility is that state of consciousness in which, whatever the realisation, you know the infinite is still in front of you. The rare quality of selfless admiration about which I have spoken to you is but another aspect of true humility; for it is sheer arrogance that refuses to admire and is complacent about its own petty achievements, forgetting the infinite which is always ahead of it. However, you need to be humble not only when you have nothing substantial or divine in you but even when you are on the path of transformation. Paradoxical though it may sound, the Divine who is absolutely perfect is at the same time absolutely humble — humble as nothing else can ever be. He is not occupied in admiring Himself: though He is the All, He ever seeks to find Himself in what is not-Himself — that is why He has created in His own being what seems to be a colossal not-Himself, this phenomenal world. He has passed into a form in which He has to discover endlessly in time the infinite contents of that which He possesses entirely in the eternal consciousness. One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter.

The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or tamas or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical.

The bodily transformation will be the supreme spiritual rebirth — an utter casting away of all the ordinary past. For spiritual rebirth means the constant throwing away of our previous associations and circumstances and proceeding to live as if at each virgin moment we were starting life anew. It is to be free of what is called Karma, the stream of our past actions: in other words, a liberation from the

bondage of Nature's common activity of cause and effect. When this cutting away of the past is triumphantly accomplished in the consciousness, all those mistakes, blunders, errors and follies which, still vivid in our recollection, cling to us like leeches sucking our life-blood, drop away, leaving us most joyfully free. This freedom is not a mere matter of thought; it is the most solid, practical, material fact. We really are free, nothing binds us, nothing affects us, there is no obsession of responsibility. If we want to counteract, annul or outgrow our past, we cannot do it by mere repentance or similar things, we must forget that the untransformed past has ever been and enter into an enlightened state of consciousness which breaks loose from all moorings. To be reborn means to enter, first of all, into our psychic consciousness where we are one 176 1930-1931 with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of Karma. Without becoming aware of the psychic, it is not possible to do so; but once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins afresh, then the past no longer cleaves to us. To give you an idea of the final height of spiritual rebirth, I may say that there can be a constant experience of the whole universe actually disappearing at every instant and being at every instant newly created! (2)

Acknowledgements



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1. Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 13, 578-84
2. The Mother, CWM 3, 175-77

The Sunlit Path is an e magazine of Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies, Sardar Patel University. It is being brought out fortnightly during 150th year of Sri Aurobindo's Birthday. It can be viewed at the University webpage: http://www.spuvvn.edu/academics/academic_chairs/aurobindo/

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