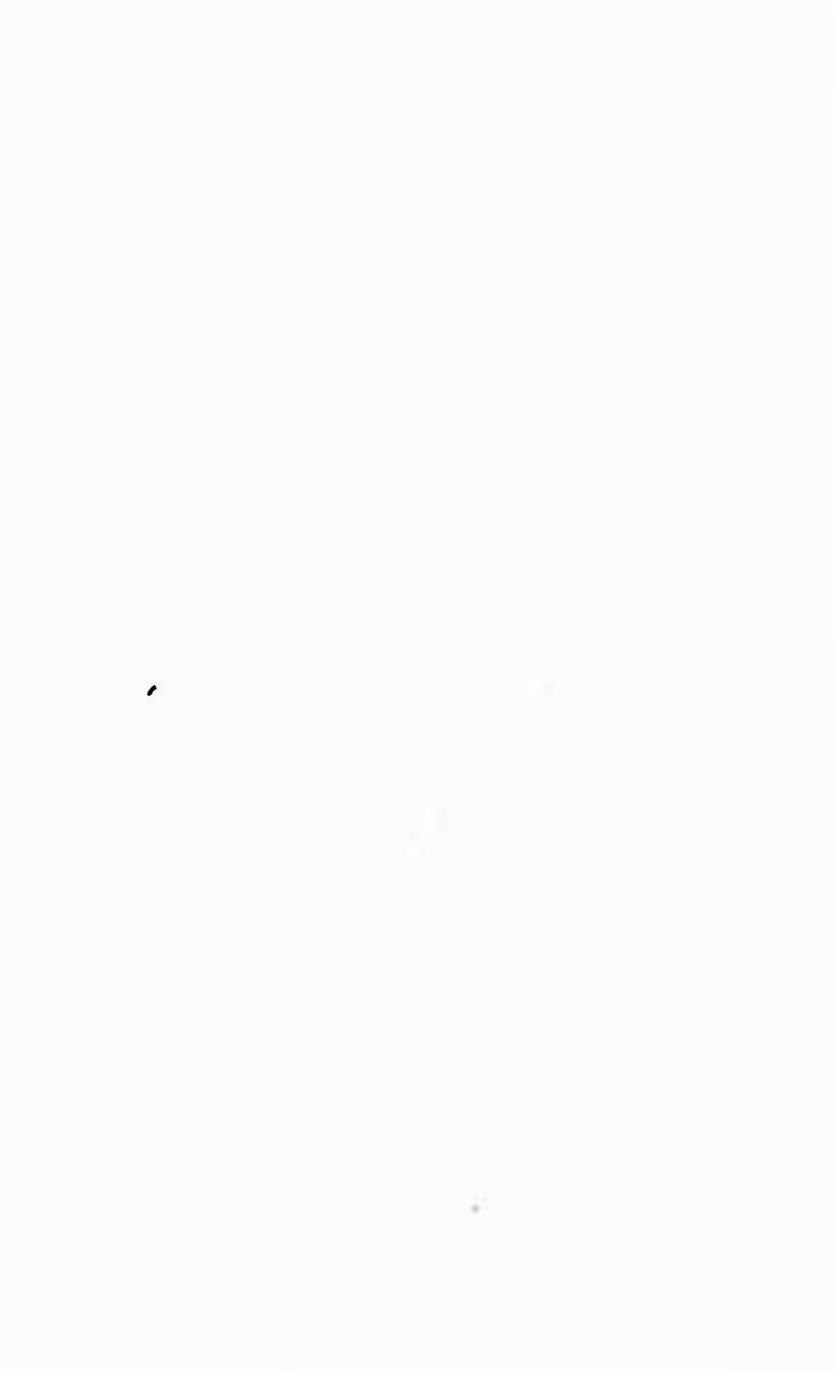


# INTEGRAL YOGA, EVOLUTION AND THE NEXT SPECIES

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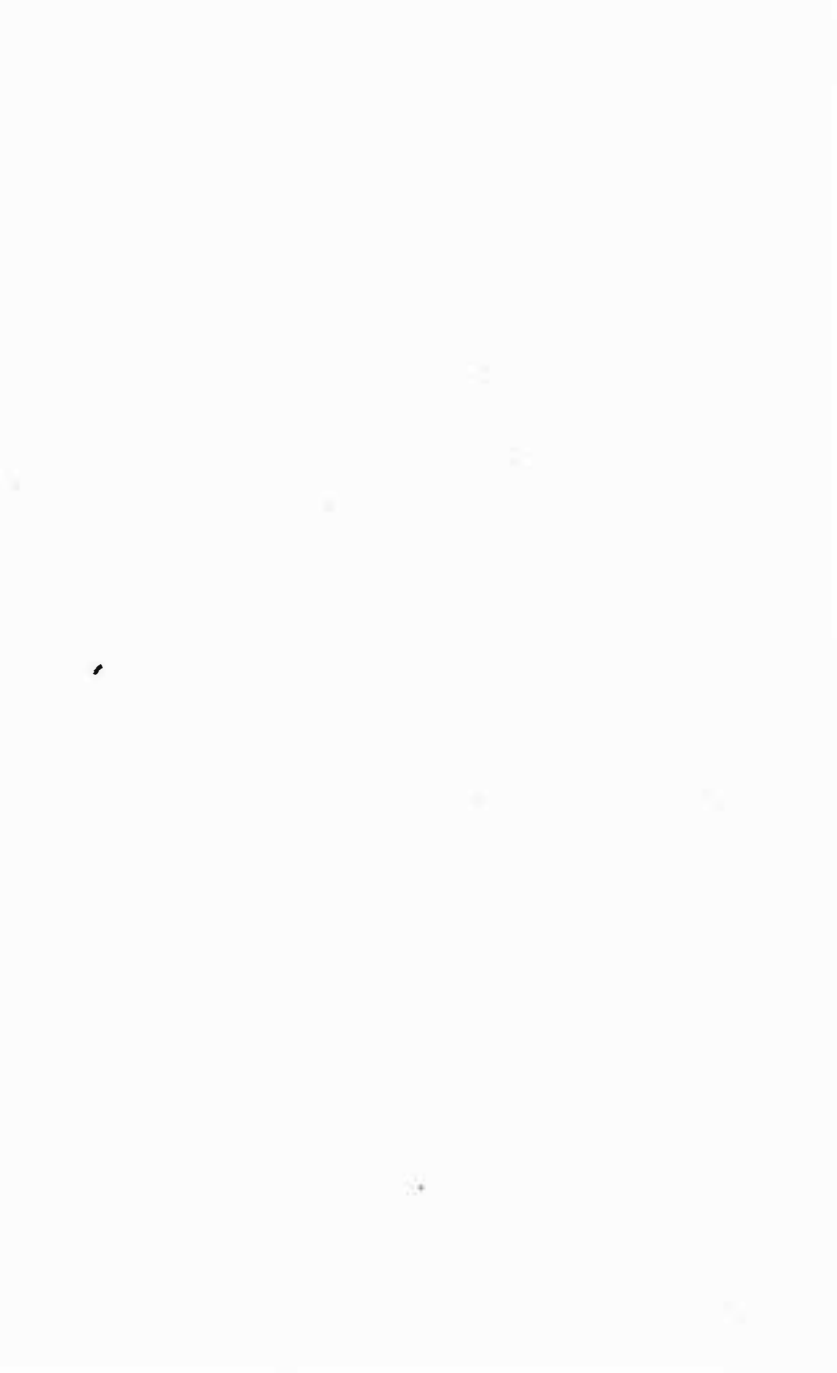
KIREET JOSHI

THE MOTHER'S INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH



Integral Yoga,  
Evolution  
and the  
Next Species

*Lokniketan*



*This book is addressed to all young people who,  
I urge will study and respond to the following  
message of Sri Aurobindo:*

***“It is the young who must be the builders of the new world, —  
not those who accept the competitive individualism, the  
capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as  
India’s future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old  
religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and  
transformation of life by the spirit, but all those who are free  
in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for  
a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate  
themselves not to the past or the present but to the future.  
They will need to consecrate their lives to an acceding of their  
lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all  
human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable  
labour for the nation and for humanity.”***

*(Sri Aurobindo, ‘The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth’  
Vol. 16, SABCL, p.331)*



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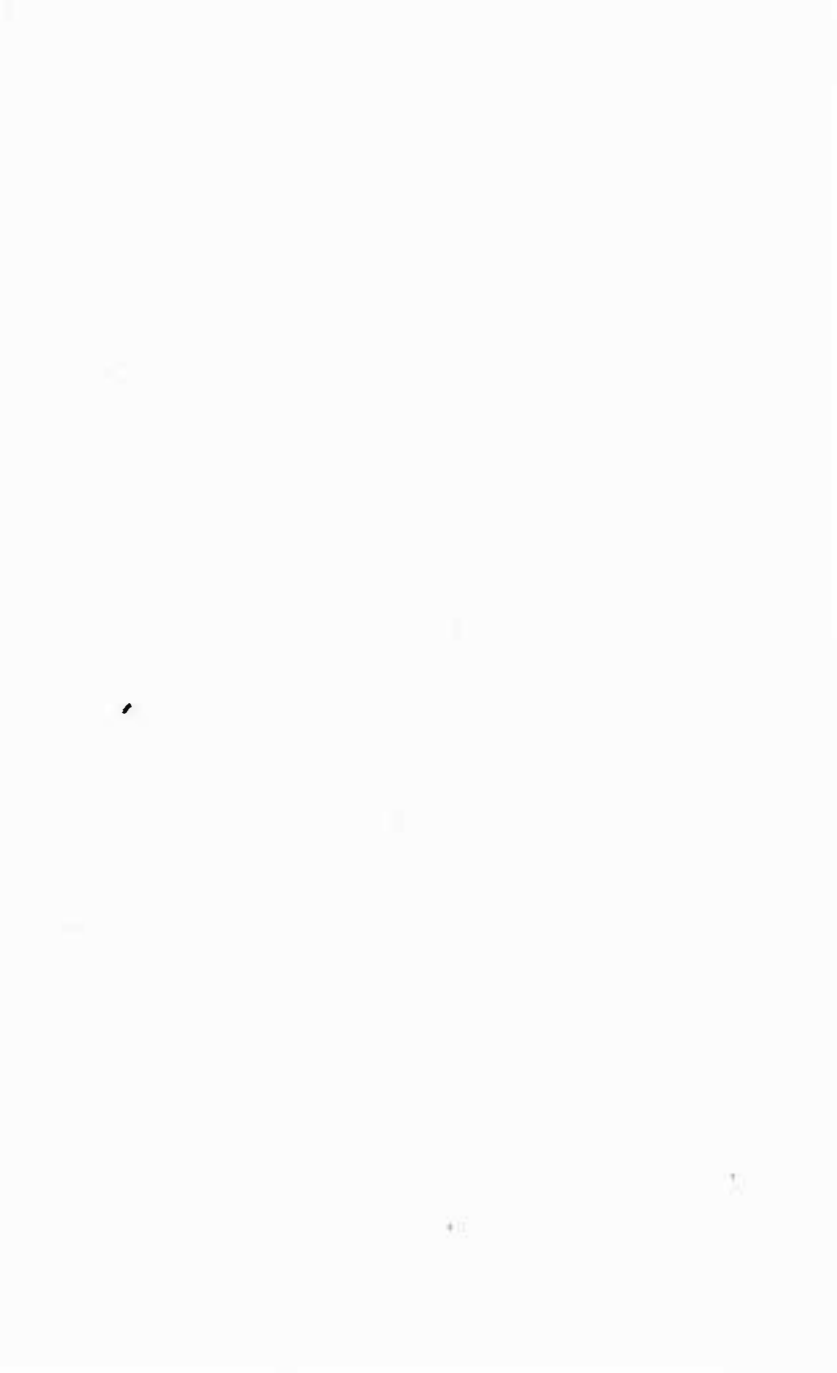
*Integral Yoga and Evolutionary Mutation*





*Dedicated to*

*Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*



# INTEGRAL YOGA, EVOLUTION AND THE NEXT SPECIES

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## Preface

The theory of evolution is not entirely new. The Nasadiya Sukta, the Purusha Sukta, and the Aghamarshana Sukta of the Rig Veda indicate that the Vedic Rishis were aware of the evolutionary process, which begins with the Inconscience as a starting-point and higher levels of consciousness evolve step by step from the original starting-point of the Inconscience. The Sankhyan theory of Prakriti also refers to a process of evolution. But the facts of the universe as marshalled by Darwin have demonstrated to the contemporary scientific world some clues to the process of evolution. Even then, the scientific theory of evolution has not yet received universal acceptance. Many philosophers have provided new accounts of the process of evolution. These philosophical theories, such as those of Bergson, Whitehead, and Pierre de Chardin are speculative, and they do not carry scientific conviction. In contrast, the spiritual theory of evolution as developed by Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and the Mother (1878-1973) is experimental in character and it is this theory which has been expounded in this book as briefly as possible. The consequences of the spiritual theory of evolution are for the individual momentous, since it is the developed individuals who will lead the evolutionary process to the next step. The next species will emerge from the present human species, and those individuals who will consciously work upon their evolved state of body, life and mind, utilizing the same as laboratories of evolution will lead the evolution towards the next species.

The question is as to how we can look upon ourselves as the thinking and living laboratories of the next species and what we need to do to move forward and contribute our best to the evolution of the next species.

The purpose of this book will be served best if it enables the readers to reflect seriously on this question and lead them to study original works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, particularly, '*The Life Divine*', '*The Synthesis of Yoga*', '*The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*', and 13 volumes of '*Mother's Agenda*'.

Kireet Joshi



## Introduction

The process of evolution seems to have been detected in ancient times. In the Rig Veda, the *Nāśadiya sūkta*<sup>1</sup> refers to the “darkness wrapped in darkness” and points out that from the breath that stirred in that original darkness, there stirred the life-force as desire, and that that desire was the seed of the mind. In the Aitareya Upanishad, there is a fable which tells us that the gods rejected the animal forms successively offered to them by the Divine Self and only when man was produced, cried out, “This indeed is perfectly made,” and consented to enter in the human body.<sup>2</sup> In the Sankhya philosophy, the infinite existence of Force was figured as a sea, initially at rest and therefore free from forms, but the first disturbance, the first initiation of movement necessitates the evolution of forms of Matter which grow gradually from its subtle states until solid states evolve. Upon these forms of Matter depend all our sensible experience; what we call the power of sensations, of vibrations of the mind, of the ego-sense and even of intelligence, which has the faculty of discrimination, is involved in Matter; and because of that involution, the evolution of what is involved takes place. According to the Sankhya, nothing comes out of nothing and that whatever manifests is inherent in the original state of Prakriti or the Force of energy.<sup>3</sup> The Sankhyan theory of

Prakriti and of the evolution of the universe that we see and experience is adapted in several other systems of Indian philosophy, including the Vedanta. In ancient Greece also there were important ideas of evolution. But subsequently, the creation of the world was largely set aside by the account of creation that is to be found in the story of the Genesis as narrated in the Old Testament.

## Part One

### **The Modern Scientific Theory of Evolution**

The modern theory of evolution began to develop in the 18th century through the work of Linnaeus (1707-78), Buffon (1707-88), Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Lamarck (1744-1829), and in the 19th century in the works of Charles Darwin (1809-82) and his followers. '*On the Origin of Species*' written by Charles Darwin (1859) gave details and demonstrations of his scientific theory of evolution, according to which, life on the earth evolved by a gradual and yet continuous process from the earliest forms of living organisms to the latest product, man. Natural selection, variation and heredity are said to be the factors through the operations of which new species arise out of existing ones. When new characters are produced by the variability of organisms, natural selection decides their survival or death. If the characters do not adapt to their environment, they are eliminated in the competition. If, on the other hand, they equip themselves better for the struggle, they tend to survive. The offsprings of the successful tend to resemble the parents in exhibiting the favoured variation to a greater degree than the parents, and a new type becomes established by a continuous piling up of small useful accretions through many generations.

The two original components of Darwin's theory were (i) that evolution is gradual, and (ii) that the nature of the change is dictated by natural, not divine, selection. Both of these are closely interlinked, and both are at the heart of controversy today, as they were in Darwin's time.<sup>4</sup>

## **Inadequacies of the Scientific Theory**

Many naturalists<sup>5</sup> accepted Darwin's gradualism because it accorded well with what they saw in living species. But critics could not accept that all the world's marvellous species and their extraordinary structures, such as those of the eye, could have arisen only by chance. Some biologists accepted that minor changes might be the result of natural selection, but held that beyond extremes within a range of variation, a new species could not arise by natural selection alone. The only way in which the boundaries of species might be breached, they contended, would be through a sudden jump.

Paleontologists<sup>6</sup> who dug up and classified the remains of extinct species raised another major objection to gradualism. They argued that if Darwin was right, they should be able to find a series of specimens that could be laid out in a gradual continuum from one major type of animal to another. If, for example, reptiles evolved into mammals, there should be fossils representing every gradation between these two groups. Instead, the paleontologists found more gaps than continua. Darwin conceded this, but he thought that further researches would reveal the intermediate links. As it turned out, only a few links have been found, and this issue is a part of today's controversy.<sup>7</sup>

There are biologists today who maintain that the

evolutionary process jumps from one species to another. Their theory is called 'saltationism' (from Latin *saltáre* to leap). The early geneticists maintained that plants and animals sometimes produce offsprings with unusual abnormalities or variations that could be considered well outside the normal range of variation. These odd offsprings were called sports. Hugo de Vries, an early Dutch geneticist, also observed that the sports undergo some kind of permanent, large-scale alteration of the hereditary units. He called the change a mutation. On the other hand, gradual changes or variations were called by him fluctuations.

In the early twentieth century, evolutionists were divided into two camps. There were geneticists, who saw only evidence for sudden discontinuous change or mutation. They supported the saltationist view. On the other hand, there were naturalists who supported Darwinian gradualism. By the 1930s, however, the rift between these two camps came to be healed by a new evolutionary theory that Julian Huxley named the 'modern synthesis'. As part of the new theory, Dobzhansky emphasized the need for what he called isolating mechanisms. He recognized that a new species could not emerge from an old one in the wild, if its early members continue to breed with the parent stock. The novel features would either be swamped by the parent stock, or they would be spread throughout the existing species, causing the entire species to evolve slightly. If part of the species population is to split from the parent stock, it must be isolated from the larger population of stock. A river, mountain range, or some other geographic feature must prevent the small variant group from breeding with its original stock. Eventually, the isolated population would become so different that biological differences would

prevent inbreeding. In 1972, Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge asserted that evolutionists had become too rigid in insisting of gradualism. They put forth a new theory that reduced gradualism to a rare event and named the dominant phenomenon ‘Punctuated Equilibria’. According to them, species are, for most of their existence, in evolutionary equilibrium or stasis. They change very little, if at all. But once in a while the stasis is punctuated by a sudden ‘speciation event’; somehow, a small population of the parent species begins evolving rapidly and, within a relatively few generations, becomes a distinct species.<sup>8</sup>

### **Scientific Theory of Evolution vs. Theory of Intelligent Design**

‘ There has been a debate between the scientific theory of evolution and the special creation theory. This debate is most acute in the United States, where Christians faithful to the creation account in the Book of Genesis have seized upon “intelligent design” (I.D.) to show that the blanks in the evolutionary narrative are meaningful. (Vide an account of a debate between Richard Dawkins, who holds the view that on the basis of the physical evidence that we possess today of the universe, evolution should lead towards atheism, and Francis Collins, who holds the view that material science not only points to Immanent God but also to Transcendental God, who exists outside of space and time, — the account was reported in *Time*, January 15, 2007). We may also refer to Roger Sperry, who made the following important statement in 1995:

“With a scientist's faith in empirically verified truth and a long commitment to research in the brain, behavioral and

life sciences, I spent most of my working years accepting the scientific account of the nature and origins of life and the universe. If science said that human life is lacking in any ultimate purpose, value, or higher meaning — that we and our world are driven merely by mindless, indifferent physical forces — I was prepared to face this. Like many scientists, I preferred to seek out and confront the truth, however harsh, rather than live by false premises and illusory values. The more I learn about the workings of the brain and how it processes information, the stronger becomes my allegiance to the type of truth that receives consistent empirical validation in the outside world.

“Nevertheless, without abandoning or compromising scientific principles, I have come around almost full circle today to reject the type of truth science traditionally has stood for, along with its dominant central tenet that everything in our universe, including our human psyche, can be accounted for in terms entirely physical — that science has absolutely no need for recourse to conscious mental or spiritual forces. As a brain scientist, I have come to believe in the reality and power of conscious mental/cognitive entities of the mind or spirit and the indispensability of their causal control for both brain function and its evolution — and that science has been wrong all along with categorical denial of this.”

We may also refer to Sherwin Nuland, a clinical professor of surgery at Yale University who, in an interview on his book published in 1997 *‘The Wisdom of the Body’*, stated as follows:

“I think there is an evolutionary accomplishment of the human cortex, the cortex of the brain, and the way it relates to the lower centers of the brain and the way it relates to the

entire body, the way it accepts and synthesizes the information, uses information from the environment, from the deepest recesses of the body, the way it recognizes dangers to its continued integrity. And I think this is precisely what the human spirit is doing. The human spirit is maintaining equilibrium, and it largely is related to its normal physical and chemical functioning....

“Here are these seventy five trillion cells, and every cell has hundreds of thousands of protein molecules in it and they are constantly interacting with one another in what would appear to be chaos. And in fact, if you were to be able to lower yourself into a cell, you would be terrified because it would seem so chaotic. If it had sound, you couldn't live with it, it would be so noisy. And yet what is actually occurring is that these reactions are all counteracting threats to the survival of that cell. And I think that there is within the human organism, only the human organism because of our cortex and our ability to process information, I think that there is an awareness of the closeness of chaos.

“And I think there is a lot of evidence for that including cultural evidence.....”<sup>9</sup>.

It can be said that, as the field of research is expanding, both microcosmically and macrocosmically, fresh data are pouring upon us to suggest that the materialistic view of the universe and the materialistic interpretation of evolution should lose force and give way to a new way of looking at the universe and evolution where consciousness may come to be regarded as more primary and fundamentally determinative power.



## Part Two

### Philosophical Theories of Evolution

#### Henri Bergson

Henri Bergson (1859-1941) developed the theory that there is something more in evolution than merely mechanical urge. He pointed out that the molluscs in the order of evolution proceed by steady steps to develop an eye, which resembles the eye developed by the independent line of vertebrates. How does it happen, he asked, that similar effects appear in two independent lines of evolution, if they were purely accidental? He pointed out that the two developments must have been governed by a common vital impulse to this useful end. He is inclined to attribute a 'rudiment of choice' to the species which, traveling by different paths, reach the same goal. Given a new situation, the 'urge' (*élan vital*), common to all members, impels them to lead it by a new method. According to Bergson, it is the inner urge, or life-force, or an upward drive that incites the whole species in a definite direction. The striving of the organism is a creative effort to which evolution is due.<sup>10</sup>

#### Herbert Spencer

Among the alternative explanations of the evolutionary process, we may also refer to Herbert Spencer (1820-1903),

who questioned the assumption that life always came from life. He attempted to give a philosophical account of the rise of the living from the non-living, of the mental from the non-mental. According to him, the differences between these are due to the degree of the complexity of the organization. But still the question can be raised as to why life should occur at all. The theory of the survival of the fittest does not carry us so far. Life has little survival value as compared with Matter from which it is supposed to have sprung. A rock survives for hundreds of millions of years, while even the oldest tree is only a few thousand years old. If survival was the aim of nature, life would never have appeared.<sup>11</sup>

### **Samuel Alexander**

According to Samuel Alexander (1859-1938),<sup>12</sup> the whole process of universe is an evolutionary growth from space-time. The original matrix is space-time. Time is the mind of space. In course of time, space-time breaks up into finites of ever-increasing complexity. At a certain point in the history of things, finites assume new empirical qualities which are distinctive levels of experience — primary qualities, matter, and secondary qualities, life and mind. As explained in his book, *'Space, Time and Deity'*, the cosmic process has now reached the human level, and man is looking forward to the next higher quality of deity. According to him, men of religious genius are preparing mankind for this next state of development. The divine quality or deity is a state in time beyond the human. The whole world is now engaged in the production of deity. As time is the very substance of reality, no being can exhaust the future. Even god is a creature of time.

Alexander's philosophy is called the philosophy of

emergent evolution. According to him, when physical structure assumes a certain complexity, life 'emerges' as something new. When the physical structure alters in complexity, as it does when it produces a central nervous system, 'mind' emerges, and the gap between life and conscious behaviour is supposed to be covered. Alexander finds explanation of the evolutionary process in a nissus or thirst of the universe for higher levels. It is the nissus that is creative and seeks to satisfy the underlying thirst.

### **Lloyd Morgan**

Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936), who comes very close to Alexander in his account of emergent evolution, acknowledges God as the nissus through whose Activity emergents emerge, and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed. According to him, God is not the emergent deity, but an Activity within which qualities emerge. God is the breath of the whole movement, the deep root which feeds the whole tree. The course of history is the gradual coming of God to Himself. Lloyd Morgan contends that emergent evolution is not predictable. But it is not in the strict sense undetermined like Bergson's creative evolution, not only unpredictable for human minds but, in principle, for all minds. Lloyd Morgan infers the coming of divinity from the purposeful direction of the universe, and is inclined to conceive of his God as completely immanent. He maintains that the whole course of events subsumed under evolution is the expression of God's purpose.

Lloyd Morgan is basically an adherent of Spinoza, and although he speaks of 'emergence' in the evolutionary process, it appears that changes occur according to rule, and

there is no spontaneity.

## **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

According to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), the evolutionary process cannot be evaluated in terms of its origin. What comes later is more than what was there earlier. There is, according to him, a developing process marked by increasing complexity. Powers and properties of matter, life, mind, and values are not entirely different; they interpenetrate and produce an increasing complexity and concentration. In man, evolution becomes conscious of itself. Tracing the story of evolution, he examines the phenomena, big and small, from sub-atomic particles and cells to stellar galaxies, bio-spheric and noo-spheric. There are, according to him, two complementary tendencies in the evolutionary process, *differentiation* and *integration*. In his paleontological studies, he found that evolution tends towards unification.

According to him, all energy is essentially psychic. In his book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, he conceives for man a superhuman future and presents a transcendental vision of omega-workings. Evolution is pushing man towards a higher goal, an omega-point, which can be described as collective divinity. A cosmic divine manifestation is in the making.<sup>13</sup>

## **Whitehead**

Whitehead (1861-1947), who recalls the Platonic view of the cosmic process, maintains that nothing can emerge in the evolutionary process of the universe if its constituents were not already in existence. The qualities which are said to emerge historically are ingredients into events from the

beginning. There are, as in Plato, eternal objects, and ingreience of these objects into events are the explanation of the historical becoming. He admits that at every step there is the emergence of what is genuinely new. Every event, according to him, is a miracle, but it embodies an idea from beyond the developing series of events in the universe. Whitehead suggests an eternal order and a creative reality. The cosmic series has a nusus towards the eternal order which is beyond itself, though it is increasingly realized in the cosmic.

According to Whitehead, an actual event is the meeting point of a world of actualities, on the one side, and a world of ideal possibilities, on the other. He maintains that eternal objects, in interaction with creative passage, manifest themselves in actuality, reckoning with space-time limitation, casual push or drag of the past, and that ultimate irreducibility which we may call God. It is God who envisages a realm of possibilities and the word of actuality so as to focus the possibilities on each occasion for the creation of something new. It is He who determines the ideal plans of events by the imposition of His nature. The universe exhibits, according to Whitehead, a creativity with infinite freedom, and a realm of forms with infinite possibilities; but this creativity and these forms are together impotent to achieve actuality apart from the complete ideal harmony, which is God. God, according to Whitehead, is the home of the universals and the ideal harmony.

‘Ingressive evolution’ is a phrase that aptly describes Whitehead’s theory. There is, according to Whitehead, a progressive ingression and incorporation into the cosmic series of the eternal order which God embraces in Himself.

The 'primordial' nature of God is capable of harmonious concurrent realization. The members of the realm of possibility are called by Whitehead 'eternal objects'. They are eternal forms or ideas, to use the Platonic expression, but unlike Plato's ideas, they are not substances, but possibilities, conceptually realized in God. They are not imaginary and abstract. Some of them are apprehended as possibilities logically prior to their manifestation in actuality of existence and others as symbols of values that we pursue. The relation of form to the temporal world is that of potentialities to actualities. In the view of Whitehead, the temporary actualities realize the possibilities surveyed in God's nature. The order and purpose we see in the world is a result of actuality fulfilling the highest possibilities it sees before itself, which is a vision of God as relevant for it.

It can be seen that these philosophical theories depart in different degrees from the materialistic interpretation of the evolutionary process, and although they admit the world movement as an evolutionary process and admit also some or many of the elements of the scientific theory of evolution, they endeavour to explain, in some ultimate terms, the rationale and objects of evolution by a process of philosophical speculation.<sup>14</sup>

## Part Three

### **Spiritual Theory of Evolution**

In contrast to these theories, the spiritual theory of the evolutionary process expounded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is not speculative in character, but it is based upon the results that they obtained through a rigorous experimentation in the domain of yogic experiences and realizations. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, having made detailed yogic study of consciousness and of the methods of their operations in the material world and in the worlds that lie beyond the material world, arrived at the conclusion (i) that the mysteries and laws of evolution, when thoroughly understood and mastered, indicate that a divine supramental consciousness and power is secretly at work in the world, (ii) that this working has reached a point of crisis at the present juncture of evolution, which can be resolved only if (a) some knowledge that has been missing so far is discovered, attained and utilized for arriving at a new synthesis of yoga, and (b) the resultant synthetic or Integral Yoga can be successfully employed so as to discover the as-yet undiscovered new knowledge and new processes of developing supramental consciousness on the earth conditions and in the physical consciousness of the human body itself. The resultant spiritual theory of evolution is experimental in character and involves a long process of

yogic development and research.<sup>15</sup>

An important discovery that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had made is that various systems of yoga can best be understood as accelerated processes of evolution and that although all those systems of yoga have resulted in verifiably true knowledge, and although some of the past systems of yoga are in many ways synthetic or integral, there is yet something radically new to be discovered, something new to be experimented upon, and something new to be accomplished. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the knowledge that was gained through the past systems of yoga consisted, at its highest, of the discovery and realization of a supramental consciousness and the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality as Sachchidananda (Existence - Consciousness - Bliss), which has been so authoritatively expounded in the Upanishadic Vedanta. There was, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, a great attempt to scale the heights of the supermind and even an effort to connect the supramental consciousness with the material body by certain processes and methods, but the utmost that was attained could not succeed in bringing about the descent of the supermind in the human body. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother acknowledge that the Veda had advanced far enough in the discovery of the Supermind and arrived at a point where the supramental consciousness could come down in the human instrument, and, as a result, the consciousness of the human body could attain wideness and universality. There was, however, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, arrestation in the Vedic experiment and, therefore, the possibility and inevitability of the penetration and permeation of the supramental consciousness in the human body could not be explored. What is new, therefore, in Sri



Aurobindo's and the Mother's experiments in evolutionary yoga is (i) the discovery of the evolutionary intention of the supramental consciousness to penetrate through the blockade between the descending supermind and the physical consciousness in the human body and (ii) consequently, the development of new methods (which included or incorporated also the methods of the past systems of yoga) by means of which the blockade could be removed and the supramental consciousness could be made to permeate the physical consciousness of the human body for its permanent establishment as a grade of evolution on the earth. The entire experiment of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has resulted, as can be seen from the relevant records of the entire experiment, in the fullness of the knowledge of the supermind, the knowledge of the secrets of the evolutionary process, and eventual accomplishment of establishing supramental consciousness in the physical consciousness in the human body. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as a result of this accomplishment, the evolutionary process itself is bound to undergo a change, and this would inevitably lead to the development of the next supramental species. As all this work is not speculative but experimental, and as the accomplishments of this experiment are actually at work according to what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have indicated and expressly stated,<sup>16</sup> and since their accomplishments have a direct relevance to the resolution of the crisis through which humanity is passing today, it would be truly useful and fruitful to expound, briefly but in comprehensive essentials, the theoretical and practical aspects of evolution and of the evolutionary experiments conducted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

## Part Four

### **Sri Aurobindo's criticism of Materialism: Evolution and Consciousness**

#### **Materialism**

It is true that, as Sri Aurobindo points out, the materialist has an easier field; it is possible for him to deny consciousness to arrive at a more readily convincing simplicity of statement of the monism of Matter. The premise of materialism is that the physical senses are our sole means of Knowledge and that Reason, therefore, cannot escape beyond the domain of physical existence even in its most extended and vigorous flights. Indeed, this premise is both arbitrary and it assumes its own conclusion as its underlying basis. Sri Aurobindo points out that the world of Matter is affirmed by the experience of the physical senses which, because they are themselves unable to perceive anything immaterial or not organized as gross Matter, would persuade us that the supra-sensible is unreal. Sri Aurobindo points out, however, that even in the world of Matter there are existences of which the physical senses are incapable of taking cognizance. He further points out that not only are there physical realities which are supra-sensible, but if evidence and experience are at all a test of truth, there are also senses which are supra-physical and can not only take cognizance of the realities of the material world without the

aid of the corporeal sense-organs, but can bring us into contact with other realities, supra-physical and belonging to another world. Sri Aurobindo concludes:

“The increasing evidences, of which only the most obvious and outward are established under the name of telepathy with its cognate phenomena, cannot long be resisted except by minds shut up in the brilliant shell of the past, by intellects limited in spite of their acuteness through the limitation of their field of experience and inquiry, or by those who confuse enlightenment and reason with the faithful repetition of the formulas left to us from a bygone century and the jealous conservation of dead or dying intellectual dogmas.

“It is true that the glimpse of supraphysical realities acquired by methodical research has been imperfect and is yet ill-affirmed; for the methods used are still crude and defective. But these rediscovered subtle senses have at least been found to be true witnesses to physical facts beyond the range of the corporeal organs. There is no justification, then, for scouting them as false witnesses when they testify to supraphysical facts beyond the domain of the material organization of consciousness. Like all evidence, like the evidence of the physical senses themselves, their testimony has to be controlled, scrutinized and arranged by the reason, rightly translated and rightly related, and their field, laws and processes determined. But the truth of great ranges of experience whose objects exist in a more subtle substance and are perceived by more subtle instruments than those of gross physical Matter, claims in the end the same validity as the truth of the material universe.”<sup>17</sup>

The scientific theory of evolution, which is still

dominated by the materialistic interpretation, has come to be examined by several eminent philosophers. An important question that has been asked is: "Why do variations occur?" It has been contended that whether these variations are small or great, gradual or abrupt, it is not always easy to trace them to the influence of the environment. For types without variations seem to be just as well adapted as those with them. It is even argued that Darwin's view of chance variations is virtually a confession of his inability to explain the source of variations.

It is true that there is in the world unaccountable freak and fantasy in the cosmic phenomenon we call Nature. But on the other hand, we can also observe inevitable order. Sri Aurobindo points out that, in view of this paradox of inevitable order and freak and fantasy, it may be argued that the world can be explained as a self-organizing dynamic Chance that is at work. It may be contended that an inconscient and inconsequent Force acts at random and creates this or that by a general chance; a persistent repetition of the same rhythm of action appears as repetitive rhythm. And yet this explanation seems unconvincing, when we find that there is too much of an iron insistence on order, on a law basing the possibilities. The theory of self-organizing dynamic chance may therefore come to be replaced by the theory of a mechanical necessity in things, its workings recognizable by us as so many mechanical laws of Nature. But the theory of Mechanical Necessity does not elucidate the free play of the endless unaccountable variations which are visible in the evolution. Moreover, as Sri Aurobindo points out, the emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient is a stumbling block in the way of this theory; for it is a phenomenon which can have no place in an all-

pervading truth of inconscient Mechanical Necessity. For it may be asked as to what this Mind is, this Consciousness which differs so radically from the Energy that produced it that for its action it has to impose its idea and need of order on the world she has made and in which it is obliged to live. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“There would then be the double contradiction of consciousness emerging from a fundamental Inconscience and of a Mind of order and reason manifesting as the brilliant final consequence of a world created by inconscient Chance.”<sup>18</sup>

Sri Aurobindo concedes that these things may be possible, but they need a better explanation than of any yet given before we can accord to their acceptance. And this opens the way for other explanations.

The theory of evolution which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have put forward aims at explaining the world-process as a movement of Conscious-Force that we see being revealed more and more visibly in the evolutionary movement that is emerging in cosmic Inconscience. In his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo has expounded this theory elaborately and points out that the evolutionary process cannot be explained unless Inconscience is conceived and realized as involved Superconscience, which, in turn, points to the higher and highest operations of the Supermind. The argument that he puts forward is stated as follows:

“We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For

there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. ...As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organization in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. ...If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realization of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.”<sup>19</sup>

Sri Aurobindo points out that although Spirit and Matter appear to be entirely opposed to each other, and although this direct contradiction between the two could be put forward as the final argument against the possibility of the manifestation of the Spirit in Matter, Sri Aurobindo points out that the entire evolutionary process, when examined from the point of view of what appears to be Nature's profoundest methods, that possibility will be found to be the only logical completion of the evolutionary movement of Nature. Sri Aurobindo states the argument as follows:

“The greater the apparent disorder of the materials

offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilized, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or sub-conscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.”<sup>20</sup>

## **What is Consciousness?**

According to the modern science, the entire evolutionary process has behind it a movement of Force which expresses itself as struggle for existence, but if that Force has a method, which can be detected to be operating in the manner in which Sri Aurobindo suggests, then that Force must have some secret consciousness. And, in that connection, it becomes

necessary to arrive at a more precise meaning of the term “consciousness”. According to Sri Aurobindo, if we examine the totality of phenomena of consciousness, it becomes clear that our first obvious idea of a mental waking consciousness such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence cannot be accepted as the fundamental nature of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo points out that there is something in us which is conscious when we sleep, when we are stunned or drugged or in a swoon, which are all apparently unconscious states of our physical being. He also points out that even in our waking state what we call our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being. Sri Aurobindo refers to phenomena of a vaster system of psychology, based upon verifiable data of yoga, — the true science of consciousness and Conscious Force, — which demonstrate that (i) behind the surface consciousness in which we are awake in our waking state, there is a subliminal consciousness, (ii) there is, below our waking state, the subconscious mind which has at its depth totally unconscious rock from which the strivings of the subconscious mind seem to emerge, (iii) above our surface consciousness, there are greater and higher heights of consciousness which are yet to be measured or climbed by the latest trends of quest and research. Sri Aurobindo further points out that it is becoming always clearer that not only does the capacity of our total consciousness far exceed that of our organs, the senses, the nerves, the brain, but that even for our ordinary thought and consciousness these organs are only their habitual instruments and not their generators. These are even abnormal instances which go to prove that the heart-beats are not absolutely essential to life, any more than is breathing, nor the organized brain-cells to thought.



“Our physical organism no more causes or explains thought and consciousness than the construction of an engine causes or explains the motive-power of steam or electricity. The force is anterior, not the physical instrument.”<sup>21</sup>

In the light of the expanding knowledge of consciousness, Sri Aurobindo asks the question;

“Is the material state an emptiness of consciousness, or is it not rather only a sleep of consciousness ? even though from the point of view of evolution an original and not an intermediate sleep?”<sup>22</sup>

Sri Aurobindo points out that sleep in the human example teaches us that it is not a suspension of consciousness, but it is gathering inward away from conscious physical response to the impacts of external things. If so, Sri Aurobindo points out, this material world is all existence that has not yet developed means of outward communication with the physical world. The subconscious mind is, again, not entirely different from the outer mentality, but only a grade of consciousness acting below the surface, unknown to the waking man, which has a deeper plunge and a larger scope. Referring to the phenomena of the subliminal consciousness, Sri Aurobindo points out, that they far exceed the limits of what we mean by surface mentality or sleep or subconscious mentality. The subliminal consciousness includes an action not only immensely superior in capacity, but quite different in kind from what we know as mentality in our waking self. Similarly, the phenomena which are superconscious rise high above that psychological stratum to which we give the name of mentality. All these phenomena, including what can be called the phenomena of vital and physical consciousness, suggest that in the plant and even in the metal, there is a force

to which we can give the name of consciousness, which is not human or even animal.

Sri Aurobindo refers to those phenomena of vital consciousness which are operations or acts in the cells of the body; these operations are automatic vital functions which indicate purposefulness and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger. These operations can be found to be even more important in animals, even in plants; these movements are manifest as a seekings and shrinkings, their pleasure and pain, their sleep and their wakefulness and all that strange life whose truth has been brought out by a modern Indian scientist by rigidly scientific methods. Sri Aurobindo also refers to the development of research that seems to point to a sort of obscure beginnings of life and perhaps a sort of inert or suppressed consciousness in the metal and in the earth and in other 'inanimate' forms, or at least the first stuff of what becomes consciousness in us. According to Sri Aurobindo, there is an underlying unity, an unbroken unity that enables us to arrive at the existence of consciousness in all forms of the Force which is at work in the world.

Sri Aurobindo concludes: "Necessarily, in such a view, the word consciousness changes its meaning. It is no longer synonymous with mentality but indicates a self-aware force of existence of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which are for us subconscious; above, it rises into the supramental which is for us the superconscient. But in all it is one and the same thing organizing itself differently."<sup>23</sup>

## **Consciousness and Teleology**

Indeed, consciousness implies some kind of intelligence,

purposefulness, self-knowledge. It is true that these operations of consciousness take forms in our mentality of which we are habitually aware in human consciousness. But, as Sri Aurobindo points out, there are, in the animal, operations of a perfect purposefulness and an exact, indeed a scientifically minute knowledge which are quite beyond the capacities of the animal mentality; even man himself can only acquire that kind of knowledge by long culture and education and even then can use it with a much less sure rapidity. We find that even in the insect the conscious Force is at work which manifests greater intelligence, greater purposefulness, greater awareness of its intention, its ends, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth. Even in the operations of inanimate Nature, we find, Sri Aurobindo observes, the same pervading characteristic of a supreme hidden intelligence, "hidden in the modes of its own workings." In the light of these operations, it can be said that the emergence of consciousness out of the original inconscience is no more a paradox. And it can be rationally argued that man's consciousness is there in other evolved forms below mind, that it emerges in Mind, and shall ascend into yet superior forms beyond Mind. Moreover, this rational argument can be supported by a vast fund of yogic knowledge that can be verified by following a scientific rigour through the methods which have been developed and tested. Thus Reason and yogic experience support each other. And it is on the same grounds that Sri Aurobindo concludes that "the Force that builds the world is a conscious Force, the Existence which manifests itself in them is conscious Being and a perfect emergence of its potentialities in form is the sole object which we can rationally conceive for its manifestation of this world of forms."<sup>24</sup>

The supreme conscious being and its infinite awareness is free, in the sense that it is not subject to any being and power other than itself, since the ultimate reality is One without the second. It is also free in the sense that it is not obliged to manifest or to remain unmanifest, and that if it freely determines to manifest itself, it is not obliged to manifest all the possibilities or only some of them. It is also free in the sense that every possibility has equal divine value as any other possibility. Moreover, the conscious Force has a power of Tapas or concentration, and it is capable of maintaining simultaneously all the possible poises of concentration. A power of self-limitation is also a capacity of its omnipotence. The power of concentration may be essential; it may be even a sole indwelling or an entire absorption in the essence of its own being, a luminous or else a self-oblivious self-immersion. Or it may be an integral or else a total-multiple or a part-multiple concentration. Or it may be a single separative regard on one field of its being or movement, a single-pointed concentration in one centre or an absorption in one objective form of its self-existence. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The first, the essential, is at one end the superconscious Silence and at the other end the Inconscience; the second, the integral, is the total consciousness of Sachchidananda, the supramental concentration; the third, the multiple, is the method of totalizing or global overmental awareness; the fourth, the separative, is the characteristic nature of the Ignorance. The supreme integrality of the Absolute holds all these states or powers of its consciousness together as a single indivisible being looking at all itself in manifestation with a simultaneous self-vision.”<sup>25</sup>

It is on account of these powers of the nature of

consciousness and because of the operation of exclusive concentration of consciousness that there can come about the process of involution of the supramental consciousness in the Inconscience and of the evolution of that supramental consciousness out of the Inconscience.

## **Two Aspects of Evolution: Cosmic and Individual**

According to Sri Aurobindo, evolution has two aspects: there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as its machinery, — for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity; there is, at the same time, an invisible process of soul evolution with rebirth into ascending grades of form and consciousness as its machinery. As a result, there is a cosmic evolution and there is the process of individual evolution. As a result of cosmic evolution, there arise ascending grades of cosmic manifestation, and each type of form that can house the indwelling Spirit is turned by rebirth into a means for the individual soul or the psychic entity to manifest more and more of its concealed consciousness.<sup>26</sup> In this double process of evolution, a stage is reached where the sense of good and evil begin to arise and it is the evolutionary psychic entity or the psychic being, which insists on the distinction, though in a larger sense than the mere moral reference. The psychic being has a spontaneous turn always towards Truth, Good and Beauty, and therefore it perceives their opposites very clearly; but being aware of its intentions and the role it has to play in the evolutionary process, it utilizes these opposites as a necessary part of experience. The very principle of the delight of life, which is inherent in the psychic being, gathers out of all contacts and happenings their secret divine sense

and essence, their divine use and purpose, so that by experience our mind and life may grow out of the Inconscience towards a supreme consciousness, out of the divisions of the Ignorance towards integralising consciousness and knowledge.

## **Role of the Individual**

The role of the individual in the evolutionary process is, according to Sri Aurobindo, of fundamental importance. In the evolution, the individual, as distinguished from the ego, is capable of universal consciousness, and therefore, can summarise within his own consciousness the evolutionary experiences of cosmic evolution and lead it to a higher grade of evolution in individual formations, even when the cosmic evolution or terrestrial evolution is still confined to a lower grade of consciousness. On account of the fact that the supermind is involved in the Inconscience, there is in the evolutionary movement, the propelling force towards the supermind, and because the individual has within him the psychic being, which is the divine spark growing towards fullness of light, it has within it the secret propelling force of leading evolution upwards. The entire evolutionary movement is fundamentally a spiritual phenomenon. Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution can, therefore, be regarded as a spiritual theory of evolution.

According to the spiritual theory of evolution, the upward progress of consciousness emerging from Matter is aided by the typical worlds of subtle Matter, of Life, Mind and still higher worlds between mind and supermind, as also by the supramental integral consciousness, which remains undiminished, even while involutionary process takes place in a

part movement of conscious force. The typical worlds are also called the involutory worlds, since they came to be built up in the course of the involutory process. In contrast to the scientific theory of evolution, according to which the development of material forms and their growing complexity are primary conditions that occasion the manifestation of different degrees of what is called consciousness, the spiritual theory of evolution perceives the pressure of underlying consciousness as the primary condition, which occasions the development of material forms and their growing complexity. Evolution is thus a phenomenon of a gradual and graded self-building of Spirit on a base of Matter, which is itself a formation of spiritual reality.<sup>27</sup>

### **Evolutionary Process: Its triple character**

The evolutionary process manifests a triple character. There is, first, an evolution of forms of Matter more and more subtly and intricately organized so as to admit the action of a growing, a more and more complex and subtle and capable organization of consciousness. Evolution thus establishes an indispensable physical foundation. Next, there is an upward and evolutionary progress of the consciousness itself from grade to higher grade, an ascent. As a result, there is a spiral line or emerging curve that is described on the material foundation. There is, next, a third movement in which there is a taking up of what has already been evolved into each higher grade, and this results into a transformation more or less complete, so as to admit of a total changed working of the whole being and nature, integration. Multiplication of forms and their growing complexity is the first step; ascent to a higher level of consciousness manifesting through a more developed form or a more

organized or more capable form is a second step; an integration of the lower into a higher grade is the third step. These three characteristics of evolution can be seen by what has evolved so far.<sup>28</sup>

Existence appears out of the inconscience in a first evolution as substance of Matter. As the material forms multiply and become more and more organized and complex, consciousness that is involved and non-apparent in Matter begins to emerge; there is the ascent of consciousness and it manifests in the disguise of vital vibrations, animate but subconscious; all organisms pulsate in the substance of matter; but the life-force which operates in the organism, in an attempt to integrate the materiality of the material forms, effects changes in matter itself, — in the sense that the constituents of matter alter their rigid positions to some degree, and thus the living matter betray some kind of transformation of the original materiality of matter. With the multiplication of life forms and their complexity, consciousness attempts at further ascents, and there emerge imperfect formulations of a conscient life; thereafter consciousness strives towards self-finding through successive forms of the material substance, forms more and more adapted to its own complete expression. Consciousness and life, throwing off the primal insensibility of a material inanimation and nescience, labours to find itself more and more entirely in the ignorance (a middle term between inconscience and plenary consciousness) which is its first inevitable formulation. But it achieves at first only a primary mental perception and a vital awareness of self and things, a life perception which in its first forms depends on an internal sensation responsive to the contacts of the other life and matter. Consciousness labours to manifest, as best as it can,



through the inadequacy of sensation, its own inherent delight of being; but it can only formulate a partial pain and pleasure. But when we come to Man, we find that the energizing consciousness appears as Mind more clearly aware of itself and things. This is still a partial and limited, not an integral power of itself; but a first conceptive potentiality and promise of integral emergence is visible. That integral emergence is the goal of evolving Nature.

### **Man and Evolutionary Process**

The appearance of Man in the evolutionary movement is, according to this view, highly significant. His first and primary business is to affirm himself in the universe. Therefore, man's development is centered on developing his own physical powers and to secure a safe and congenial physical environment; and even when his vital and mental activities begin to grow, these activities aim constantly at securing for themselves a sound civilizational framework where physical life is sought to be established on some permanent basis. But although this is the first phase of the development of man, he tends to evolve more and more the powers of the mind, and he develops various forms of culture, which manifest the triangular powers of the Mind, namely the powers of the rationalistic mind, ethical mind and aesthetic mind. But this is not all. He also tries to control and integrate these powers of the mind; in doing so, man, the mental being, begins to exceed himself, and bring out in different degrees higher powers of consciousness, the powers of inspiration, revelation and intuition. It is these powers, which impel man to develop different varieties of religion; man even seeks to control and integrate the physical life, vital life and mental life under the guidance of various

religious forms, which also shape more and more organized and complex formulations. Religion tends to be the governor of life, and it may be said that a large part of human history has been the history of religions, which, in turn, is marked by conflict of religions with the normal powers of the mind, vital demands and necessities of physical life. Even now, human history stands today at a point where under the pressure of the need of integration and harmony, man appears to be preparing himself to exceed himself. It appears that man's chief business is to enlarge his partial being into a complete being, his partial consciousness into an integral spiritual and supramental consciousness. At the same time, he is obliged to achieve mastery over his environment, but also world-union and world-harmony. He has to realize his individuality but also to enlarge himself into a cosmic self and undergo a process of a transformation, a chastening and correction of all that is obscure, erroneous and ignorant in his mentality, so as to arrive at a free and wide harmony and luminosity of knowledge and will and feeling and action and character.<sup>29</sup>

## **Man and Evolutionary Law of Ascent and Integration**

The evolutionary law of ascent and integration can be seen more clearly when we compare the higher animal with man. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the higher animal is not the somnambulist, but it has only a limited waking mind, capable of just what is necessary for its vital existence; but when we come to man, we find that the conscious mentality enlarges its wakefulness and though not at all first fully self-conscious, it can open more and more to his inner and integral being. There is, first, an ascent from the animal mentality to human mentality resulting in heightening of the

force of conscious existence to a new power and a new range of subtle activities; whereas in the higher animal, mind is limited to the vital existence, the human mentality rises up to reflecting and thinking mind; there is developed a higher power of conservation and invention; there is consciousness of process and result; there is also a force of imagination and aesthetic creation, a higher more plastic sensibility; and, finally, there develops the coordinating and interpreting reason, the values no longer of a reflex or reactive but of a mastery, understanding, self-detaching intelligence. There is also a widening of the range of the consciousness. Man is able to take in more of the world and of himself as well as to give to this knowledge higher and completer figures of conscious experience. We also find in man the operation of the law of integration, and we find that the human mind takes up the lower grades and gives to their action and reaction intelligent values. He takes up the mental life of the animal, as well as the material and bodily. It is true that he loses something in the process, but he gives to what he retains a higher value.

In the course of the process of integralization of the lower into the higher, man manifests twin power of the being's consciousness-force, — the power of will, and the power of knowledge. As a result, man is able to lay on all that is integrated from below a condition for his continued acceptance the consent of the lower to admit the higher values. This is the real origin, aim and meaning of ethics and of spiritual discipline and askesis. There is, therefore, in man an effort to work on the vital and physical and lower mental life so that that life may be transformed into modes of the higher mental and eventually the supramental harmony. The aim is not to mutilate and destroy the instruments of the vital

and physical and lower mental life but to tame them, to purify them and eventually to transform them. Man does not abandon the animal reactions and enjoyments, but mentalises them more lucidly, finely and sensitively. As he develops farther, he puts his lower being to severer tests, begins to demand from it on pain of rejection something like a transformation.

A special characteristic of human mentality is not only to gaze downward and around himself, but also to gaze upward towards what is above him; and he also looks inward towards what is occult within him. Both these movements mark out man decisively from the animal. The animal lives as if satisfied with what Nature has done for it; but it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously his own business. In the Indian terms of the play of Purusha and Prakriti, it can be said that man is no longer, like the animal, an undeveloped conscious being or Purusha entirely driven by Prakriti, a slave of the executive Force, played with by the mechanical energies of Nature. Man begins to become a developing conscious soul or Purusha and manifest more and more the inherent powers of the Purusha, namely, the powers of witnessing, of giving or withdrawing his consent to the movements of Prakriti, and eventually of exercising mastery over the movements of Prakriti. This is the reason why there is in man the distinctive feature of self-exceeding. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“To climb to higher altitudes, to get a greater scope, to transform his lower nature, this is always a natural impulse of man as soon as he has made place for himself in the physical and vital world of earth and has a little leisure to consider his farther possibilities. ... It is in his human nature,

in all human nature, to exceed itself by conscious evolution, to climb beyond what he is. Not individual only, but in time the race also, in a general rule of being and living if not in all its members, can have the hope, if it develops a sufficient will, to rise beyond the imperfections of our present very undivine nature and to ascend at least to a superior humanity, to rise nearer, even if it cannot absolutely reach, to a divine manhood or supermanhood. At any rate, it is the compulsion of evolutionary Nature in him to strive to develop upward, to erect the ideal, to make the endeavour.”<sup>30</sup>

There is, in the evolutionary process an upward urge, and that urge can be discerned in Man as a conscious uplifting Will, which gradually becomes imperatively decisive. The upward urge at the lower levels of evolution seems to be working almost invisibly or very tardily, but still methodically and regulated by the evolutionary law of ascent and integration. But as that urge becomes more and more manifest as conscious will at the human level, there appears to be the emergence of a new phase of evolution; the human will manifests along with it a larger field of cognition, affection and conation, as also a play in which alternatives are so presented that actualization of some of them and rejection of the others appears to be dependent on the choice made by the conscious will. The choice of the conscious will begins to play a more and more dominant role in the upward level of evolution.

### **Man, Ego, and Yogic Disciplines**

There is also a further complication at the human level of evolution; the upward conscious will is found to be located in a complex network of operations; this complex network

is found to be coordinated by an instrument which can be discerned as that of a limited sense in the individual, a sense which has been called ego-sense which, being exclusively concentrated upon its own task of individuation in a limited individual field, comes to arrogate to itself mistakenly the role of the fabricator of the threads which it coordinates. The limitation of its own consciousness and the mistaken view of itself as a fabricator instead of being only a small coordinator causes in the human consciousness the phenomena of dualities, — good and evil, joy and suffering, life and death.<sup>31</sup>

The task of conscious will and choice among alternative possibilities is its most important element; this task becomes increasingly difficult, since alternatives are not only neutral but they also become suffused with values, — positive and negative, and there are critical moments when the rightness of the choice demands a very vast knowledge of the secrets of the operations of the universe and of the individual and of their interrelationship. For the sake of the evolutionary process itself, man is obliged to pause, gain the right knowledge and make the will capable of following the guidance of the right knowledge. A time comes when the conscious will of man is required to make extraordinary efforts as a result of which disciplines of normative pursuits come to be built up which, in their turn, provide lessons and results which have varying degrees of utility. At the highest of these efforts, Man comes to build up disciplines which demand the breaking up of the ordinary limitations of the present organization of consciousness; for it is seen more and more imperatively that the conscious will in Man requires, in the ultimate analysis, effective and even all-seeing knowledge with the help of which alone can dualities

be removed. But the states of consciousness of all-seeing knowledge have to be possessed in actual vision and in constant and substantial experience. It will be found that for the individual to arrive at such states of consciousness will be one of the most important and indispensable steps of his progress towards self-perfection.

It is in this context that spiritual pursuits of various kinds have come to be designed; a number of yogic methods have been devised, tested and perfected, and the paths of higher evolution have been determined. In this light, the methodized spiritual effort which has come to be known as yoga has evolved by the very pressure of evolution. And in building up the yogic methods, the laws of evolution have come to be utilized, even though not consciously. But, as Sri Aurobindo points out, nature's laws of evolution are, in fact, laws of Nature's yoga, and when Nature reaches the point of the development of conscious will, Nature becomes conscious of its own yogic process through the human instruments which build up yogic processes and methods. Unconscious yoga of Nature begins to grow into a conscious yoga of Nature. Sri Aurobindo goes farther and points out that if the conscious will of man is to be fulfilled in its upward urge in its fullness, specialized systems of yoga will be found to be insufficient, and even the systems of synthesis of yoga of the past are insufficient. A new synthesis of yoga is indispensable. To study evolution integrally and to apply the methods of evolution integrally and consciously, even to enlarge new methods of evolution and even to conceive and work for a development of a new evolutionary process, — all this is necessary and inevitable.<sup>32</sup>

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According to Sri Aurobindo, there is an inherent urge in

the human consciousness to seek constantly to minimize the causes of error, pain and suffering. That is the basic urge of the dreams of science of regulating birth and indefinite prolonging of life, if not of effecting the entire conquest of death. But Sri Aurobindo argues that if we could grasp the essential nature and the essential cause of error, suffering and death, we might hope to arrive at a mastery over them which should not be relative but entire. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“We might hope even to eliminate them altogether and justify the dominant instinct of our nature by the conquest of that absolute good, bliss, knowledge and immortality which our intuitions perceive as a true and ultimate condition of the human being.”<sup>33</sup>

‘There is, according to Sri Aurobindo, available to all of us the Vedantic conception and experience of Brahman as one universal and essential fact and of the nature of Brahman as Sachchidananda. If, as he points out, this view is led to its highest conclusions we can discover not only the methods which have been so far discovered but even new methods which seem necessary so that Sachchidananda can fully manifest in the physical world.

Since Sachchidananda is the foundation, the essence of all life is a movement of a universal and immortal existence, the essence of all sensation and emotion is the play of an universal and self-existent delight in being, the essence of all thought and perception is the radiation of a universal and all-pervading truth, the essence of all activity is the progression of a universal and self-effecting good. Sri Aurobindo explains in the following statement, in very compact and brief terms, the vast knowledge of the world and the way by

which the new synthesis of yoga can determine its objective:

“...the play and movement embodies itself in a multiplicity of forms, a variation of tendencies, an interplay of energies. Multiplicity permits of the interference of a determinative and temporarily deformative factor, the individual ego; and the nature of the ego is a self-limitation of consciousness by a willed ignorance of the rest of its play and its exclusive absorption in one form, one combination of tendencies, one field of the movement of energies. Ego is the factor which determines the reactions of error, sorrow, pain, evil, death; for it gives these values to movements which would otherwise be represented in their right relation to the one Existence, Bliss, Truth and Good. By recovering the right relation we may eliminate the ego-determined reactions, reducing them eventually to their true values; and this recovery can be effected by the right participation of the individual in the consciousness of the totality and in the consciousness of the transcendent which the totality represents. ...

“... We have the dissolution of this egoistic construction by the self-opening of the individual to the universe and to God as the means of that supreme fulfillment to which egoistic life is only a prelude even as animal life was only a prelude to the human. We have the realization of the All in the individual by the transformation of the limited ego into a conscious centre of the divine unity and freedom as the term at which the fulfilment arrives. And we have the outflowing of the infinite and absolute Existence, Truth, Good and Delight of being on the Many in the world as the divine result towards which the cycles of our evolution move. This is the supreme birth which maternal Nature holds in herself; of this she strives to be delivered.”<sup>34</sup>

## **Manifestation of Spirit in Matter: Central Motive of Terrestrial Existence**

According to the spiritual theory of evolution, the evolutionary process aims at evolution of consciousness in Matter in constant developing self-formations till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit. The revelation of the Spirit is the key-note, the central significant motive of terrestrial existence. There is, first, involution of the Spirit, the Divine Reality, in a dense material Inconscient; but gradually consciousness begins to emerge and develops slowly till in more organized forms of living Matter, it reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man. The mental man is greatly hampered and burdened by the control of the original Inconscience, but the upward evolutionary force aims at evolving out of the mental man the fully conscious being, a divine manhood or a spiritual and supramental supermanhood which shall be the next product of evolutionary process. The transition from the mental man to supramental supermanhood will mark the passage from the evolution in the Ignorance to a greater evolution in knowledge founded and proceeding in the light of the Superconscience and no longer in the darkness of the Ignorance and Inconscience.<sup>35</sup>

## Part Five

### **Objections against Spiritual Theory of Evolution: Answers**

Against this spiritual theory of evolution, many objections can be raised.

#### **Metaphysical objection against Evolutionary Teleology**

It may be contended that if there is an ultimate Reality, which is infinite, perfect and absolute, then such a Reality, conceived in the metaphysical theory of the Absolute, cannot have any purpose in manifestation. Even if it is conceded that the Absolute is not only quiescent but also dynamic and therefore capable of manifestation, which could have some kind of purpose, it can have no purpose in manifestation except the delight of manifestation itself. It may further be argued that if an evolutionary movement is a part of manifestation, it can be there only for the delight of the unfolding, the progressive execution, and the objectless serried self-revelation. A universal totality may also, it may be urged, be considered as something complete in itself, and as a totality, it can have nothing to gain or to add to its fullness of being. In reply, Sri Aurobindo points out that the material world here is not an integral totality; it is only a part of a whole, a grade in a graduation; it can, therefore, admit in it, not only the presence of undeveloped immaterial principles or powers belonging to the whole that are involved

within its Matter, but also a descent into it of the same powers from the higher gradations of the system to deliver there kindred movements here from the strictness of a material limitation. This would imply the teleology of the evolution that would consist of a manifestation of the greater powers of Existence till the whole being itself is manifest in the material world in the terms of a higher and a spiritual creation. This teleology does not, Sri Aurobindo points out, bring in any factor that does not belong to the totality; it proposes only the realization of the totality in the part. Teleology as a factor in a part movement of the universal totality can, therefore, be admitted if the purpose is not a purpose in the human sense, but the urge of an intrinsic Truth-necessity conscious in the will of the indwelling spirit. In that sense, the teleological factor is related to the perfect manifestation in the part of the totality of all the possibilities inherent in the total movement. According to Sri Aurobindo, all existence is for the delight of existence, all is a game or *Lila*, as conceived in the Indian theory of *Lila*; but the delight of manifestation or the delight of a game can carry within itself an object to be accomplished in a part movement of the universal totality. Indeed, it may be conceded that a drama without denouement may be an artistic possibility, existing only for the pleasure of watching the characters and the pleasure in problems posed without a solution or with a forever suspended, dubious balance of solution; the drama of the earth's evolution might conceivably be of that character, but an intended or inherently predetermined denouement is also and more convincingly possible. In that case, it may be said that Delight or Ananda is the secret principle of all being and support of all activity of being; but Ananda does not exclude a delight in the working out of a Truth inherent in being, immanent in the Force or Will of

being, upheld in the hidden self-awareness of its consciousness-Force.<sup>36</sup>

## **Inadequacies of the Scientific theories of Evolution**

It may be admitted that Science affirms today an evolutionary terrestrial existence and that there are in recent trends of thinking bold and plausible speculations on evolution and the evolutionary future of man, particularly among philosophers. But it may be argued that the scientific theory of evolution can be challenged on the ground that it is insufficiently founded and that it is superfluous as an explanation of the process of terrestrial Nature. If the facts with which science deals are reliable, the generalizations it hazards are short-lived; it holds them for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalization, another theory of things. No firm metaphysical building can, it may be concluded, be erected upon these shifting quick-sands.

In reply, it may be urged that the theory of spiritual evolution is not identical with the scientific theory of form-evolution and physical life-evolution. According to the theory of spiritual evolution, there are three stages in the process of becoming. An involution of the spirit in the inconscience is the beginning. An evolution in the ignorance with its play of possibilities of a partial developing knowledge is the middle. A consummation in a deployment of the spirit's self-knowledge and the self-power of its divine being and consciousness is the culmination. It is admitted that the two stages that have already occurred seem at first sight to deny the possibility of the later consummating stage of the cycle, but it is stressed that logically they imply its emergence. For, it is argued, if the inconscience has evolved

consciousness, the partial consciousness already reached must surely evolve into complete consciousness. It is contended that it is a supramentalized, perfected and divinized life for which the earth-nature is secretly seeking, and that a progressive manifestation of this kind can only have for its secret of significance the revelation of Being in a perfect Becoming.

The theory of spiritual evolution may accept the scientific account of physical evolution as a support or an element, but the support is not indispensable. What is common between the theory of spiritual evolution and scientific theory is the account of certain outward aspects of evolution, namely, that there is in the scale of terrestrial existence a development of forms, of bodies, a progressively complex and competent organization of Matter, of Life in Matter, of consciousness in living Matter, and that in this scale the better organized the form, the more is it capable of housing a better organized, a more complex and a more developed or evolved Life and consciousness. In regard to these common aspects, there does not seem to be a basis for dispute, once the evolutionary hypothesis is put forward and the facts supporting it are marshalled. The dispute arises in regard to those aspects which are not indispensable for the theory of spiritual evolution, namely, the precise machinery by which the evolutionary process is effected or the exact genealogy or chronological succession of types of being, the development of one form of life out of a precedent less evolved form, natural selection, the struggle for life and the survival of acquired characteristics. These may or may not be accepted. What is of primary consequence is the fact of a successive creation with a developing plan in it. Another conclusion is that there is a graduated necessary succession in the



evolution; first the evolution of Matter, next the evolution of Life in Matter, then the evolution of Mind in living Matter, and in this last stage an animal evolution followed by a human evolution. In particular, the essential point in the theory of spiritual evolution is the fact of the evolution of consciousness, a progression of spiritual manifestation in material existence.<sup>37</sup>

### **Man cannot evolve beyond himself**

Even if all this is accepted, it may still be doubted that Man would evolve so unimaginably as to develop into a superman or supramental species. It may be argued that Man is a type among many types so constructed, and like others, he, too, has his own native law, limits, special kind of existence, within whose limits he can extend and develop, but which he cannot transcend. To exceed himself, to grow into the superman, to put on the nature and capacities proper to the supermind, would be, it may be concluded, a contradiction of his self-law, impracticable and impossible.

In reply, Sri Aurobindo concedes that each type or pattern of consciousness and being in the body, once established, has to be faithful to the law of being of that type, to its design and rule of nature. But he points out that it may very well be that part of the law of the human type is its impulse towards self-exceeding, that the means for a conscious transition has been provided along with the spiritual powers of man, and that the possession of such a capacity may be a part of the plan on which the creative Energy has built him.

It has further been pointed out that there has been a tremendous human progress since man's appearance or even in his recent ascertainable history, and this progress suggests

fresh steps of progression until the highest consummation is reached. It may, however, be argued that the progress that has been registered so far has not carried the human race beyond itself, into a self-exceeding. In reply, Sri Aurobindo contends that that was not to be expected until a critical stage was reached and that it is only now that that stage is being reached. The action of evolutionary nature in a type of being and consciousness is first to develop the type to its utmost capacity by a subtilization and increasing complexity till it is ready for bursting the shell, the ripened decisive emergence and reversal turning over of consciousness on itself.

According to the Spiritual theory of evolution, there are gradations of stages, and at each stage of higher ascent from a lower stage, the higher does not abandon the lower, but its first occupation is to take up and assimilate the lower by intenser cultivation, sharpening, subtilizing and sublimation. As man ascends from the animal, he looks downward from his plane of will and intelligence and enlarges, subtilizes and elevates his use of those elements which are central to the animal — sensation, sense-emotion, vital desire and pleasure. He does not abandon the animal reactions and enjoyments, but more lucidly, finely and sensitively mentalizes them. But as he develops further, he puts his lower being to a severer test, begins to demand from it on pain of rejection something like a transformation; that is the mind's way of preparing for a spiritual life still beyond it. As there are several lower and higher elements in man, the process of assimilation and sublimation becomes long and complex, and there appears to be not a straight line of progression, but development in a cycle. In reality, when the process is examined more closely, it turns out to be a process of spiral progression, in which a

cycle of development ends at a higher point than the point which was earlier reached before entering into a period of a downward curve. Looked at from this point of view, it may be conceded that what man has until now principally done is to act within the circle of nature, on a spiral of nature-movement, sometimes descending, some-times ascending. But what he has achieved — and this is important from the point of view of a preparation for a future secure ascent — is that he has sharpened, subtilized and made an increasingly complex and plastic use of his capacities. In that sense, it can be said that however great the ancients, however supreme some of their achievements and creations, however impressive their powers of spirituality, of intellect or of character, there has been in later developments an increasing subtlety, complexity and manifold development of knowledge and possibility in man's achievements, in his politics, society, life, science, metaphysics, knowledge of all kinds, art and literature. Even in his spiritual endeavour, it has been urged, there has been this increasing subtlety, plasticity, sounding of depths and extension of seeking, even though the heights reached were less surprisingly lofty and less massive in power than those reached by the ancients. It is not surprising that there have been falls from a high type of culture, a sharp temporary descent into a certain obscurantism, cessations of the spiritual urge, plunges into a barbaric natural materialism. Considering the total spiral of progress, these may be viewed as temporary phenomena, at worst, a downward curve, preparing for a higher curve. It is thus true that this progress has not carried the race beyond itself, into a self-exceeding or a transformation of the mental being; but this was not to be expected. All that has developed so far can be regarded, it has been concluded, as a process of developing the human type to its utmost capacity, and it is

only now that we are ready to feel that it has ripened to a point of a decisive emergence or mutation. And the present crisis of mankind is an indicator of the coming movement of that mutation.

According to the Spiritual theory of evolution, the appearance of human mind and body on the earth marks a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of evolution. Up to the advent of man, evolution had been effected, not by the self-aware aspiration, intention, will or seeking of the living being, but subconsciously or subliminally or by the automatic operation of Nature. But in man the necessary change has been made. In him, the self-aware participating individual will has emerged, and the being has become awake and aware of himself. Man has seen that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him. He becomes conscious of a soul, he comes to discover the self and spirit. Until this emergence, evolution was subconscious; with him a conscious evolution becomes conceivable and practicable.

It has been further pointed out that if we observe closely the operations of Nature, we find that in the previous stages of the evolution, nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organization. That change was a pre-requisite of a change of consciousness. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable. It is through his consciousness, through its transmutation, and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation, that the evolution can be effected. It may even be surmised that in the inner reality of things, a change of consciousness was always the major fact, that evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only

instrumental. This relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external inconscience outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance has been righted, it is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body.<sup>38</sup>

### **Only a Few can evolve beyond Human Level**

It may, however, be still argued that if an evolutionary culmination in the production of the spiritual and supramental being is intended, and if man is to be its medium, it will only be a few especially evolved human beings who will form the new type and move towards the new life; that once done, the rest of humanity will sink back and remain quiescent in its normal status. In reply to this argument, the Spiritual theory concedes that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising en masse to the supramental level. What is suggested is nothing so revolutionary and astonishing, but only the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to press towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being. It has further been explained that the being will necessarily undergo by this embodiment a change of the normal constitution of its nature, a change certainly of its mental and emotional and sensational constitution and also to a great extent of the body consciousness and the physical conditioning of our life and energies; but the change of consciousness will be the chief factor, the initial movement; the physical modification will

be a subordinate factor, a consequence. As to whether humanity will sink back after the mutation of the human species, it has been suggested that the urge of man towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race, and that the human mental status will always be there, not only as a degree in the scale, but also as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status.

Man as he is, it has been affirmed, cannot be the last term of an evolution, if a spiritual unfolding on the earth is the hidden truth of the emergence of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature. He is, it is stressed, too imperfect an expression of the Spirit; Mind itself is a too limited form and instrumentation. Man, the mental being, can only be a transitional being. If man is incapable of exceeding his mentality, it has been suggested, he must be surpassed, and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.

### **In the words of Sri Aurobindo:**

“If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit, Mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; Mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding

mentality, he must be surpassed and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.”<sup>39</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the spiritual theory of evolution is not merely a philosophical theory and a mere matter of philosophical and rigorous speculation of thought. The uniqueness of this theory is that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had developed this theory on the basis of a long and difficult process of experimentation. During the course of this experimentation, they have found it necessary to develop, not only new objects and new methods of yoga, even while incorporating in a suitable manner the objects and methods of yogic systems of the past. As a result, a new synthesis of yoga, involving a long programme of experiments by evolving supramental action in the body itself has been undertaken. This has been a breathtaking endeavour, the glimpses of which one can witness through two volumes of Sri Aurobindo entitled ‘*Record of Yoga*’ and thirteen volumes of the Mother's own account of development reaching up to its climactic point. A study of these volumes and other volumes such as Sri Aurobindo's ‘*The Life Divine*’, ‘*The Synthesis of Yoga*’, ‘*Letters on Yoga*’, ‘*The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*’, ‘*Savitri*’ — an epic written in the English language, as also ‘*The Mother's Conversations*’, ‘*Questions and Answers*’, and several others show that no change has been more radical than the evolution attempted by means of this new synthesis of yoga. Everything in the world follows its fixed habits

which is to it a law and resists a radical change. The revolution attempted in this new synthesis of yoga or integral yoga requires that every vital fibre has to be persuaded to accept an entire renunciation of all that hitherto represented to its own existence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“Mind has to cease to be mind and become brilliant with something beyond it. Life has to change into a thing vast and calm and intense and powerful that can no longer recognize its old blind eager narrow self or petty impulse and desire. Even the body has to submit to a mutation and be no longer the clamorous animal or the impeding clod it now is, but become instead a conscious servant and radiant instrument and living form of the spirit.”<sup>40</sup>



## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> *Rig Veda*, I.129.
- <sup>2</sup> *Aitareya Upanishad*, I.2.1-3.
- <sup>3</sup> This is the Samkhyan theory of *satkāryavāda*, according to which, nothing comes out of nothing and the effect is already present in the cause.
- <sup>4</sup> Vide., Asimov, Isaac, *Asimov's Biographical Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*, Garden City, Doubleday, New York, 1982; vide also, Dobzhansky, Theodosius, *American Biology Teacher*, 1973; Darwin, Charles, *Life and Letters*, John Murray, London, 1988; Kitcher, P., *The Advancement of Science: Science without Legend, Objectivity without Illusions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993; Salmon, M.H., et al., *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, NJ, 1992.
- <sup>5</sup> Vide., Haeckel, Ernst, *History of Creation*, D. Appleton, New York, 1889; Wallin, I.E., *Symbioniticism and the Origin of Species*, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1927; vide also *Scientific American*, Dec. 10, 2007, which refers to human genes undergoing selection and points out that the amount of genetic differentiation between humans and our closest relatives, chimpanzees, suggests that the pace of change has accelerated to ten to hundred times the average long term rate. This article further points out that the history of humanity is beginning to be read out from our genes, thanks to a detailed knowledge of the thousands of them that have evolved recently. Hawks states: "We are going to be classifying these by functional categories and looking for matches between genetic changes and historic and archeological changes in diet, skeletal form, disease and many other things." He adds: "we think we will be able to find some of the genetic changes that drove human population growth and migrations - the broad causes of human history." The latest work on this subject is being conducted by John Hawks, Eric T. Wang, Gregory Kochran, Henry C. Harpending and Robert K. Moyzis. Most of them are working at the

University of Utah. They consider human demographic growth to be linked with past changes in human cultures and ecologies. They also point out that larger populations generate more new selected mutations. They suggest that these factors have contributed to the extraordinarily rapid recent genetic evolution of the human species.

- <sup>6</sup> Vide., Fischer, A.G., Fossils, *Early Life and Atmospheric History*, Proceedings National Academy of Sciences, 1965; vide also, McMenamin, Mark & Dianna Schulte, *Hypersea: Life on Land*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994; vide also, Schrödinger, Erwin, *My View of the World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967.
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- <sup>8</sup> Vide., Hull, D.L., *Philosophy of Biological Science*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, N J, 1974.
- <sup>9</sup> Vide., *American Public Media*, Interview of Ms. Tippet with Dr. Newland, 2007.
- <sup>10</sup> Vide., Moore, F.C.T., *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996.
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- <sup>12</sup> Vide., Alexander, S., *Space, Time and Deity*, Macmillan, London, Paperback edition, 1966.
- <sup>13</sup> Vide., Teilhard de Chardin, P, *Le Phénomène Humaine*, Editions de Seuil, Paris, 1955: Translation by B.wall, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Collins, London, 1959.
- <sup>14</sup> Vide., Lowe, V. Alfred, *North Whitehead: The Man and His work*, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1985, 1990
- <sup>15</sup> Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, last six chapters.
- <sup>16</sup> Vide., *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Evolutives, Paris, and Mira Aditi, Mysore, 1979, 13 volumes.
- <sup>17</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 18, pp. 18-9.

- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 302.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 86.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 88.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 90.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 582-3.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., Vol. 19, pp. 825-6.
- <sup>27</sup> Vide., Ibid., Chs. XXII-XIV.
- <sup>28</sup> Vide., Ibid., Ch. XVIII.
- <sup>29</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 712-25.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., Vol. 19, pp. 716-7.
- <sup>31</sup> Vide., Vol. 18, pp. 51-9; vide also, Ibid., pp. 501-23.
- <sup>32</sup> Vide., Ibid., *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 5-44.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., *The Life Divine*, Vol. 18, p. 57.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-9.
- <sup>35</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 125; vide also, pp. 630-3.
- <sup>36</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 19, pp. 834-5.
- <sup>37</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 841-7.
- <sup>38</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 841-7.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 846-7.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Vol. 20, p. 66.



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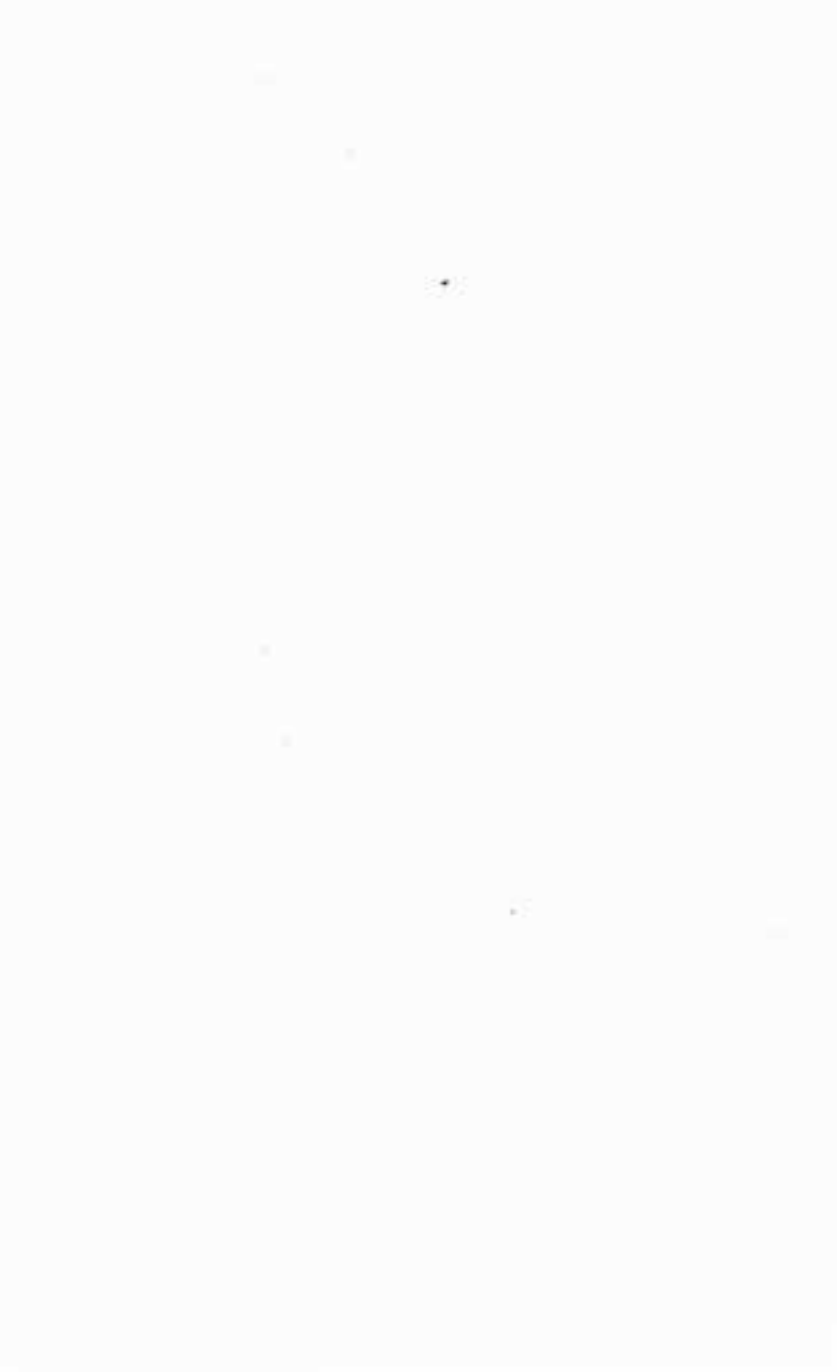
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**T**he spiritual theory of evolution as developed by Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and the Mother (1878-1973) is experimental in character and it is this theory which has been expounded in this book as briefly as possible. The consequences of the spiritual theory of evolution are for the individual momentous, since it is the developed individuals who will lead the evolutionary process to the next step. The next species will emerge from the present human species, and those individuals who will consciously work upon their evolved state of body, life and mind, utilizing the same as laboratories of evolution will lead evolution towards the next species. The question is as to how we can look upon ourselves as the thinking and living laboratories of the next species and what we need to do to move forward and contribute our best to the evolution of the next species.

The purpose of this book will be served best if it enables the readers to reflect seriously on this question and leads them to study original works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, particularly, *'The Life Divine'*, *'The Synthesis of Yoga'*, *'The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth'* and 13 volumes of *'Mother's Agenda'*.