

# INTEGRAL YOGA AND EVOLUTIONARY MUTATION

ITS AID TO HUMANITY AND HUMAN SPECIES

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KIREET JOSHI

THE MOTHER'S INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH



**Integral Yoga**  
**Its Aid to Humanity**  
**and to the**  
**Evolutionary Mutation of Human Species**



*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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*Dedicated to*

*Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*

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## Preface

Yoga has for long been conceived as the discipline that necessitates rejection of life and its activities. The Integral Yoga, on the contrary, maintains that all life is Yoga and that life can greatly be helped if we apply the principles of yoga to the problems of life. All life must be accepted, but all life must be transformed by the application of the Integral Yoga. It is further contended that the contemporary problems of life have reached a critical stage and that criticality can be resolved only if we apply principles of Integral Yoga to the problems of the contemporary crisis.

The purpose of this book is to elucidate this view of the Integral Yoga and to bring out how Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and the Mother (1878-1973), while they were developing Integral Yoga, have confronted the problems of the contemporary crisis and have shown that the Integral Yoga can become an aid to humanity and it can even be used as an aid to the development of the next step of evolution itself.

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the contemporary crisis of humanity is evolutionary in character and that the basic solution to the crisis requires, and even necessitates, evolutionary progression that leads to the emergence of the next species. In 13 volumes of '*Mother's Agenda*', we find an evolutionary graph traced by the Mother between 1951 and 1973 of the descent of the Supramental Consciousness in how the problems of matter and life can be confronted and solved so as to bring about the mutation of

human species. During this process, the problem of the law of physical death has been questioned, and we have an account of the corporeal and psychological difficulties that stand in the way of transformation of the human body and the development of a new instrumental structure of the Divine Body.

All this is directly relevant to all those whose interests extend beyond the present horizons of the current fields of physical and biological sciences as also of the psychological and spiritual sciences. The question of synthesis of science and spirituality is one of the problems that occupies the concerns of those researchers who want direction of science to be centered on the highest human welfare and who feel that spirituality can best sub-serve the highest aspirations for durable peace and new world-order of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The problems and concerns are, indeed, deeper. In this context Integral Yoga can be looked upon as a process by which the synthesis of science and spirituality can be expected to be realized.

This book invites the readers to study the original works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and particularly, Sri Aurobindo's book '*The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*' and 13 Volumes of '*Mother's Agenda*.'

Kireet Joshi



## PART ONE

### Yoga and Evolution

Evolution can, when examined in its inner processes of development, be seen to be basically a process of yoga; and yoga can, when examined from the point of view of the instruments which are selected for application for purification and concentration, be considered to be a process of evolution. However, yoga and its processes aim at acceleration of the processes of natural evolution, and they eliminate more and more effectively the ordinary tardy method of slow and confused growth that we find in the processes of natural evolution. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“...the natural evolution is at its best an uncertain growth under cover, partly by the pressure of the environment, partly by a groping education and an ill-lighted purposeful effort, an only partially illumined and half-automatic use of opportunities with many blunders and lapses and relapses; a great portion of it is made up of apparent accidents and circumstances and vicissitudes — though veiling a secret divine intervention and guidance. In Yoga we replace this confused, crooked crab-motion by a rapid, conscious and self-directed evolution which is planned to carry us, as far as can be, in a straight line towards the goal set before us.”<sup>1</sup>

There are, according to Sri Aurobindo, three stages that cover the entire process of manifestation that is relevant to evolution. An involution of the spirit in the inconscience is

the beginning; 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 self-power of its divine being and consciousness is the culmination. It may be argued that the two stages that have already occurred seem at first sight to deny the possibility of the later consummating state 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, considering that just 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. It is, therefore, contended that it is a supramentalised, 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 or significance, the evolution of a Being in a perfect Becoming.

The three stages of the development of manifestation and the movements can provide us a clue as to how the processes of evolution can be applied scientifically on the evolutionary process itself. This scientific application constitutes the central principle of yoga. For the development of yoga depends on a scrupulous examination of the level at which evolution has reached in our present human consciousness and whether the psychological workings of the human being can be so handled that the causes of the slowness of the natural functionings can be eliminated for the purposes of introducing into the evolutionary process those principles and methods which would facilitate its hastening or

acceleration. Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of the bodily existence.<sup>2</sup>

In this light, yoga no more remains as something mystic or abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary process of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her subjective and objective self-fulfilment. Yoga reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that Nature has already manifested or is progressively organizing in her less exalted but more general operations. It may be said that all natural evolution and life is subconscious yoga, and all life can become in the human being a conscious yoga, as multisided and as integral as life itself, so that one can say in a more perfect and luminous sense: "All life is yoga". The integral yoga that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have proposed is, indeed, a yoga of evolution, based on the perception that the human being is a transitional being and that the human being can be consciously utilized as a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation a farther evolution can be worked out so as to bring about a willed mutation of the human species. The integral yoga is thus, by its very nature, connected with the progress of humanity, with the problems of humanity, and with the ideals that humanity is developing today towards creation of a new order of the world through the instrumentality of which highest state of humanity's fulfillment can be realized.<sup>3</sup>

## **Evolution and Human Progress**

It may, however, be argued that even if there was an

evolutionary stress in the animal kingdom as a result of which man has evolved, that stress must have sunk back into quiescence as soon as the object was fulfilled by man's appearance. It may further be argued that there is no evolutionary stress in humanity; it may be contended that the idea of human progress itself is very probably an illusion, for there is no sign that man, once emerged from the animal stage, has radically progressed during his race-history. It may be conceded that man has advanced in knowledge of the physical world, in Science, in the handling of his surroundings, in his purely external and utilitarian use of the secret laws of Nature. But it may be argued that despite the developments of science, man is what he always was in the early beginnings of civilization: he continues to manifest the same capacities, the same qualities and defects, the same efforts, achievements, frustrations. Again, even if it is contended that there has been progress, it may be argued that progress has been in a circle, at most perhaps in a widening circle. It may be pointed out that man today is not wiser than the ancient seers and sages and thinkers, not more spiritual than the great seekers of old, the first mighty mystics, not superior in arts and crafts to the ancient artists and craftsmen. It may be further contended that the old races that have disappeared showed their potent and intrinsic originality, invention, capacity of dealing with life and that, if modern man in this respect has gone a little farther, not by any essential progress but in degree, scope, abundance, it is because he has inherited the achievements of his forerunners. In any case, it may be argued that nothing warrants the idea that he will ever hew his way out of the half-knowledge, half-ignorance which is the stamp of his kind or, even if he develops a higher knowledge, that he can break out of the utmost boundary of the mental circle.<sup>4</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has examined this argument and even formulated it in full sharpness. He has, therefore, provided basic facts of the urge in the mental man towards evolution of the spiritual man and contended that this evolution is marked by a long process of progression in four fields which are directly relevant to the evolution of spirituality: religion, occultism, philosophy and methodized spiritual effort or yoga. He has also pointed out that the very law of the human type manifests the impulse towards self-exceeding, and that the means for a conscious transition has been provided for among the spiritual powers of man. Sri Aurobindo concedes that what man has up till now principally done is to act within the circle of his nature, on a spiral of nature-movement, sometimes descending, sometimes ascending; Sri Aurobindo concedes that the history of humanity does not demonstrate a straight line of progress or any indisputable, fundamental or radical exceeding of his past nature. At the same time, Sri Aurobindo points out that man has, in due course of development of history, sharpened, subtilised, made more and more complex and plastic use of the natural capacities. Sri Aurobindo further points out 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, manifold development of knowledge and possibility in man's achievements, in his politics, society, life, science, metaphysics, knowledge of all kinds, art, literature; even in his spiritual endeavour, less surprisingly lofty and less massive in power of spirituality than that of the ancients, there has been this increasing subtlety, plasticity, sounding of depths, extension of seeking."<sup>5</sup>

Sri Aurobindo concedes 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; but he points out that these are temporary phenomena, at worst a downward curve of the spiral of progress. Sri Aurobindo acknowledges that the spiral of progress has not indeed carried the race beyond itself, into a self-exceeding, a transformation of the mental being, but Sri Aurobindo points out that we have to judge the development of a species in terms of the law of the action of evolutionary Nature and that in terms of that law, the self-exceeding and transformation of the mental being cannot be expected until the mental being has sufficiently developed up to its utmost capacity, and unless there has been sufficient integration of the powers of the mind with the powers of the lower phenomena of evolution. The action of evolution in Nature in a type of being and consciousness is, Sri Aurobindo points out,

“...first to develop the type to its utmost capacity by just such a subtilisation and increasing complexity till it is ready for her bursting of the shell, the ripened decisive emergence, reversal, turning over of consciousness on itself that constitutes a new stage in the evolution.”<sup>6</sup>

Sri Aurobindo points out that if the animal being of the ape kind evolved into the human being because elements of humanity were already present in that animal being, then the appearance in the human being of a stress of spirituality and the appearance of a spiritual type in mental-animal humanity can be taken as a sign that there is an intention in Nature to evolve a spiritual and supramental being as a next step of the evolutionary movement.

## **Evolutionary Appearance of the Supramental Being**

Sri Aurobindo examines also the suggestion that even if the appearance of the supramental being could be admitted as an evolutionary culmination, and even if man is to be the medium of the next species of the supramental being, it will only be a few especially evolved human beings who will form the new type or move towards the new life, and that once done, the rest of humanity will sink back from a spiritual aspiration no longer necessary for Nature's purpose and remain quiescent in its normal status. In reply, Sri Aurobindo concedes at once that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising in a block to the supramental level. As Sri Aurobindo points out,

“...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. The being will necessarily undergo by this embodiment a change from 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. This transmutation of the consciousness will always remain possible to the human being when the flame of the soul, the psychic kindling, becomes potent in heart and mind and the nature is ready. The spiritual aspiration is innate in man; for he is, unlike the animal, aware of imperfection and limitation and feels that there is something to be attained

beyond what he now is: this urge towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race. The human mental status will be always there, but it will be there not only as a degree in the scale of rebirth, but as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status.”<sup>7</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, the time has come in the evolutionary story of man when human progress demands imperatively an upward curve of the spiritual progress, and this progress impels the race to be carried beyond itself, into a self-exceeding, a transformation of the mental being and even mutation of the human species so as to establish on the earth the rule of the divine life in the divine body. But before the appearance of the divine body, there will have to come about a radical change of consciousness that can be effected by the ascent to the supermind and the descent of the supermind in the physical consciousness. Even in the previous developments of evolution, even when it appeared that the change in the physical organization preceded the change in the manifested power of consciousness, a change of consciousness, according to Sri Aurobindo, was always the major fact; evolution has, Sri Aurobindo points out, always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental, although that relationship 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,” Sri Aurobindo states, “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. It has to be noted that the human mind has already shown a capacity



to aid Nature in the evolution of new types of plant and animal; it has created new forms of its environment, developed by knowledge and discipline considerable changes in its own mentality. It is not an impossibility that man should aid Nature consciously also in his own spiritual and physical evolution and transformation.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Significance of the Evolution of the Supermind for Humanity and Its Problems**

Sri Aurobindo contends that the evolution of the Supramental being would imply that the influence of the divine life on earth would fall upon the life of the Ignorance and impose harmony on it within its limits, and much that is disharmonious in human life would disappear. What is true in the mental ideals and dimly figured in them will tend to be triumphantly fulfilled. At the same time, in the light of supramental gnosis, the many mental idols, constructed principles and systems, conflicting ideals which man has created in all domains of his mind and life, could command no acceptance or reverence as a part of the vision of the divine life. Sri Aurobindo visualizes the development of a system of living which demands imperative rule of the principles of unity, perfect mutuality and harmony. Sri Aurobindo states:

“It is evident that in a life governed by the gnostic consciousness war with its spirit of antagonism and enmity, its brutality, destruction and ignorant violence, political strife with its perpetual conflict, frequent oppression, dishonesties, turpitudes, selfish interests, its ignorance, ineptitude and muddle could have no ground for existence. ...Life and the body would be no longer tyrannous masters demanding nine-

tenths of existence for their satisfaction, but means and powers for the expression of the Spirit. At the same time, since the matter and the body are accepted, the control and the right use of physical things would be a part of the realized life of the Spirit in the manifestation in earth-nature.”<sup>9</sup>

That spirituality and the manifestation of the supramental consciousness on the earth could provide solutions to the problems of humanity may be questioned; it may be argued that whatever has been achieved so far in the course of nature’s evolution of the spiritual man in the human mental being cannot be regarded as the true evolution of consciousness; the evolution of spiritual consciousness may even be stigmatized as a sublimated crudity of ignorance deviating from the true human evolution. It may be contended that the right direction of human evolution should be solely an evolution of life-power, the practical physical mind, the reason governing thought and conduct and the discovery and organizing intelligence. In the contrast of our present celebration of the life of the mind in Matter, spiritual realization and experience can be discredited as a shadowy mysticism. It may be argued that the mystic turns aside into the unreal, into occult regions of a self-constructed land of chimeras. It may even be argued that the spiritual tendency in humanity has come to very little; it has not solved the problem of life or any of the problems with which humanity is at grips. It may be pointed out that the mystic either detaches himself from life as the other-worldly ascetic or as the aloof visionary and therefore cannot help life, or else he brings no better solution or result than the practical man or the man of intellect and reason. It may even be complained that the mystic by his intervention disturbs the human values, distorts them with his alien and unverifiable light obscure to

the human understanding and confuses the plain practical and vital issues life puts before us.<sup>10</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has examined this entire chain of argument in detail. But, in brief, he points to the examination of the significance of the spiritual evolution of man, not from a judgment that proceeds from a view of things which in itself is bound to pass into discredit. For that judgment depends ultimately on the circular argument that the material is the only reality because reality is exclusively material, and this circularity and its consequent dogmatism stand refuted as soon as we begin to investigate the operations of mind and of supermind in themselves, and without the prejudgment that is dogmatically determined from the beginning to see in them only a subordinate term of Matter. Sri Aurobindo points out that the moment we recognize, as our enlarging experience compels us to recognize, that there are in the universe knowable realities beyond the range of the senses and in man powers and faculties which determine rather than are determined by the material organs through which they hold themselves in touch with the world of the senses, the very basis of the argument of the materialist collapses. Sri Aurobindo 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 supraphysical 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, supraphysical and belonging to another world.<sup>11</sup>

But even if the extreme materialistic view of things can be rejected in the light of experiences of various levels of existence, and even if in the light of the science of yoga, truth

of spirituality may be admitted, it may still be argued that spirituality implies detachment from the world and has therefore no possibility of presenting solutions to the problems of human life. In reply, Sri Aurobindo points out that while there has been a strong tendency in mysticism towards asceticism and other-worldliness, that is not the total account of mysticism. It may even be argued that asceticism or other-worldly tendency can be looked upon, in the context of evolutionary experiments of Nature, as an experiment to examine how far the spiritual consciousness can transcend the world; and it can even be affirmed that the ascetic has succeeded in proving that he can transcend the limitations of the body-life-mind complex and can gain the capacity of voluntary escape from the limitations imposed by material Nature. It is true that this proof does not amount to the proof of the power of the Spirit to transform Nature; but it can be argued that the capacity of the Spirit to transcend Nature can serve as a basis for a farther possibility of transforming Nature and even of solving the problems of humanity. In the total view of spiritual history of humankind, it can be said that the spiritual man has not stood back altogether from the life of humanity. On the contrary, the sense of unity with all beings, the stress of a universal love and compassion, the will to spend the energies for the good of all creatures, are central to the dynamic out-flowering of the spirit.<sup>12</sup>

Spiritual leaders, seers, prophets and saints have turned to help and to guide, and they have even produced results which can be considered to be prodigious. It is true that human life has not come to be transformed, and the spiritual tendency has been to look more beyond life than towards life. It is also true that spirituality has been successful in the life of individuals but not in the field of collectivity. At the same

time, it needs to be underlined that the solution of the problems of human life which spirituality offers is not a solution by external means, though these also have to be used, but by an inner change, a transformation of the consciousness and nature. Humanity normally expects political, social or other mechanical remedies; but these remedies succeed in altering outward environment, and the human beings continue to be moved by ego and governed by vital desires and passions of the needs of the body; and these are the basic causes of pain and suffering, and they cannot be remedied except by spiritual methods. To discover the spiritual being in oneself and to help others towards the same evolution is the real service that the spiritual leader can render to the race; outward help can indeed succor and elevate, but that is not enough; humanity needs a more radical help, but for that help to be effective, humanity itself has to develop much more than it has done so far. On the other hand, spirituality itself has to develop a higher instrumental dynamic power than what the mind can provide.

As Sri Aurobindo points out, the spiritual evolution of Nature is still in process and incomplete; its main preoccupation has been to affirm and develop a basis of spiritual consciousness and knowledge and to create more and more a foundation or formation for the vision of that which is eternal in the truth of the spirit. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, points out:

“It is only when Nature has fully confirmed this intensive evolution and formation through the individual that anything radical of an expanding or dynamically diffusive character can be expected or any attempt at collective spiritual life, —

such attempts have been made, but mostly as a field of protection for the growth of the individual's spirituality, — acquire a successful permanence.”<sup>13</sup>

Again, Sri Aurobindo points out that if it were the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from Nature or Prakriti of the three gunas, or from the Ignorance in which Nature as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, then the task of spiritual evolution has in essence been already accomplished. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, and all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But then the collectivity of humanity will have to remain confined to the perpetual conflict between the individual and the collectivity, within the circle of the ego and its dualities, and the evolutionary stress in humanity will have to be denied its urge to complete what is intended in the involution of the supermind in the Inconscience. That would mean at the present stage of evolution, a constant state of crisis and ultimate recourse to the transition to a new supramental species by means of leaving humanity aside and not fulfilling the human urge to exceed the limitations of humanity as an open passage. But as against this possibility, Sri Aurobindo points out that there is in Nature a farther intention, — not only a revelation of Spirit but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. According to Sri Aurobindo, this farther intention can be read in the evolutionary process itself, and from the point of view of that intention, it becomes obvious that not only is the Spirit to be liberated from Nature but Nature herself is to be liberated from her own limitations.

What is to be attained is to secure a complete and radical change of Nature which can establish a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The mind has evolved, but not the supermind, the spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thence forward be the leader of that Nature.<sup>14</sup> According to Sri Aurobindo, the unaccomplished task has now to be worked out, and it is that unaccomplished task, in the process of its progression and high levels of accomplishment, that holds out the promise of an invaluable and indispensable aid to the solution of the problems of humanity.

## PART TWO

### **Human History and the Problems of the Harmony between the Individual and the Collectivity**

The spiritual consciousness is spontaneously universal, and spirituality, in its embrace of universality, is drawn to work for humanity, to uplift humanity and to establish in humanity the operation of an instrument greater than the instrument of the mind, to develop supramentality by which a new world order can be securely established, – a new world order which has come to be glimpsed from time to time, such as that of the kingdom of heaven on the earth. That new world order has still to be worked out and realized, not merely for the fulfillment of a few individuals but for all, increasingly and progressively.

If we make a serious study of history, as Sri Aurobindo has done in his two major works, *“The Ideal of Human Unity”* and *“The Human Cycle”*, we shall find that humanity has reached at the present juncture of its development at a point where the search for the ideal law of social development has become inevitable. According to Sri Aurobindo, if that search and its results cannot be implemented, there is bound to be the development of a situation as the one that obtains today. Sri Aurobindo calls that situation as that of evolutionary crisis.

Sri Aurobindo points out that human history may be considered as a long story of the sway of the developing consciousness between three pre-occupations of human



idealism, — the complete single development of the human being himself, the perfectibility of the individual, a full development of the collective being, the perfectibility of the society, and, more pragmatically restricted, the perfect or best possible relation of individual with individual and society or of community with community.<sup>15</sup> Hence, we find in human history that sometimes an exclusive or dominant emphasis is laid on the individual, sometimes on the collectivity and society, sometimes on a right and balanced relationship between the individual and the collectivity. According to one ideal, freedom and growth of perfection of the individual is to be held up as a true objective of our existence. This ideal is sometimes conceived as that of a mere free self-expression of the personal being or a self-governed whole of complete mind, fine and ample life and perfect body or a spiritual perfection and liberation. In the perspective of this view, the society is conceived only as a field of activity and growth for the individual mind and serves best its function when it gives as far as possible a wide room, ample means, a sufficient freedom or guidance of development to his thought, his action, his growth, his possibility of fullness of being. The opposite ideal gives to collective life the first or sole importance; the existence, the growth of the race is of the highest value in this view; the individual is expected to live for the society or human kind or even, he is considered only a cell of the society and he has no other use or purpose of birth, no other meaning of his presence in Nature, no other foundation. Or, it is sometimes held that the nation, the society, the community is a collective being, revealing its soul in its culture, power of life, ideas, institutions, or its ways of self expression. In this context, the individual life has to cast itself in the social mould, serving the power of its life, consent only to exist as an instrument for the maintenance and

efficient existence of the society. In a third ideal, the perfection of man lies in his ethical and social relations with other human beings, his social being and his love for society, for others, for his utility to the race. In this view, society exists for the service of all, to give them the right framework of relations, education, training, economical opportunity, and right frame of life.

Sri Aurobindo points out that in the ancient cultures, the greatest emphasis was laid on the community and a fitting of the individual into the community. Even then, however, there grew up an ideal of a perfect individual and it is found that the idea of the spiritual individual as a perfect individual was dominant in ancient India, although the society was of extreme importance and the individual had to pass first to the social status of the physical, vital, mental being before he could reach fitness for the true state of free spiritual existence, — for the state of liberation or moksha from the bonds of Nature or Prakriti. In contrast to this, Sri Aurobindo finds that in recent times, the whole stress has fallen on the life of the race to search for a perfect society, and the right organization and scientific mechanization of the life of humankind as a whole. Under this circumstance, the individual now tends to be regarded only as a member of the collectivity, as a unit of the race whose existence must be subordinated to the common aims and total interest of the organized society, and much less or not at all as a mental or spiritual being with his own right and power of existence. The conflict between the individual and the collectivity has, however, continued to persist, and a stage has been reached at present when there is an acute conflict of standards, which presses us towards a search for a unifying and harmonizing knowledge, and even integrality of knowledge.

In Sri Aurobindo's view, the individual is the key of the evolutionary movement;<sup>16</sup> for it is the individual who finds himself and becomes conscious of the Reality and his relationship with the collectivity. Indeed, Sri Aurobindo acknowledges that so long as human being is undeveloped, he has to subordinate himself, particularly his undeveloped self, to whatever is greater than it. As he develops, he moves towards a spiritual freedom, but this freedom is not something entirely separate from all existence. As he moves towards spiritual freedom, he moves also towards spiritual oneness. And yet, for the awakened individual the realization of his truth of being and his liberation and perfection must be his primary seeking. For, firstly, that is the call of the Spirit within him, and, secondly, it is only by liberation and perfection and realization of the truth of being that man can arrive at truth of living. Sri Aurobindo points out that a perfected community can exist only by the perfection of its individuals, and perfection can come only by the discovery and affirmation in life by each of his own spiritual being and the discovery by all of that spiritual unity and a resultant life of unity. There can be no real perfection for the individual and for the society except through the inner self and truth of spiritual existence; the individual has to take up all truths of the instrumental existence into oneself and give to it oneness, integration, harmony. The real freedom comes to individual by the discovery and disengagement of the spiritual reality from its bondage to Nature and its instruments; and our only means of true perfection is the sovereignty and self-effectuation of the spiritual Reality in all the elements and instruments of our nature.

The problems of the conflict between the individual and the collectivity become more and more acute depending upon

the framework in which these problems are confronted, depending upon whether the framework is built on the principle of centralization or that of decentralization, whether freedom and diversity are allowed to contribute to richness and vigour and to the health and cohesion. And these problems cannot be solved, unless an ideal law of social development is discovered and applied. Sri Aurobindo discovers and formulates the ideal law of social development that can be applied, if the world is to be united and which is yet to provide to the individual the needed freedom of his growth, self-discovery, self-realisation and self-perfection. Sri Aurobindo states this law in the following words:

“Thus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within, aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals

and constituent aggregates.”<sup>17</sup>

Sri Aurobindo acknowledges that this ideal law has never become operative in the imperfect states through which humankind has so far travelled, and it may be very long before that law can be attained. But Sri Aurobindo maintains that the present is the stage of what he calls the subjective age of humanity, when knowledge is increasing and diffusing itself with an unprecedented rapidity, when individuals, societies and nations are attempting to discover their potentialities and their inner subjective states and selves, when capacity is generating itself, when men and nations are drawn close together; this is the time when we can justifiably develop a conscious hope to arrive at a conscious discovery of that ideal law of social development and its conscious application. He finds that the present moment is opportune for an upward march, particularly when people of the entire globe are getting united, although partially and in an inextricable entanglement of chaotic unity. For this is the moment where we are being compelled to know each other and impelled to know more profoundly ourselves, humankind, and the world, and when the idea of self-realisation for ourselves and nations is coming consciously to the upper and outer surface. This is the time, according to Sri Aurobindo, for the human being, in particular, to know himself, to find the ideal law of his being and his development and to hold that law before him and to find out gradually the way by which it can become more and more moulding principle of the individual and social existence.

### **Contemporary Age of Reason and the Ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity**

At the same time, Sri Aurobindo regards the present

moment of human history as a moment of acute crisis. For the process of self-realisation, both for the individual and the collectivity, is always difficult, and it is marked by an acute struggle of groping in the darkness and the welter of conflicts and uncertain alternatives. In Sri Aurobindo's analysis of the psychology of the process of maturation of self-finding, Sri Aurobindo examines in his work, "*The Human Cycle*", the psychology of barbarism, philistinism, and of the rational, ethical and aesthetic culture; he also examines the means by which the society manages to arrive at some kind of cohesion at different stages of development, namely, through symbolism and later by typical thought, conventional thought and by subjective self-awakening, both of the individual and collectivity. In the subjective age, which is marked by preponderance of Reason as also by revolt against conventions, customs and traditions, Sri Aurobindo perceives the possibility of true flowering of the inner spirit, which can harmonise the individual good and the social good, and in the context of which progressive forms of world unity could be sought to be invented so that human beings of the entire globe would be able to live together in progressive states of peace and harmony.

In this context, Sri Aurobindo finds those three great ideals that were put forward forcefully during the French Revolution to be most significant, namely, the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He finds that these three ideals served the purpose of motivating great experiments that humankind conducted during the curve of the Rational Age,<sup>18</sup> the Age which was ushered in by the Renaissance in Europe, — the age through which humankind is at present passing, and the age which has now reached an end that signals the possibility of opening the gates of a new age.

During the Age of the Reason, there has been rapid exploration of the possibilities and capacities of the human race in its march towards self-realisation and self-perfection. For a long time, Reason conducted its search on the assumption and faith that it can successfully create right means and systems and can govern the process of progress towards its highest fulfillment. This age of Reason, after good deal of experimentation, is able to perceive, dimly at first but more and more clearly in due course, that the role of Reason is not to govern but to become a medium and an intermediate power that can lift human life from the levels of blind impulse to the realms of the light of the Spirit. It is becoming clearer that the real governor can only be that light and knowledge, which is integral and which unites the individual with the universal without requiring the individual to be abolished and which shows, both to the individual and to the universal, that their source is in the same transcendental that is the foundation of oneness and unity of existence.

The Age of Reason, according to Sri Aurobindo, has shown that when the ideal of liberty is emphasized and sought to be implemented, the ideal of equality tends to be sacrificed; and when the ideal of equality is emphasized and sought to be implemented, the ideal of liberty tends to be strangled. Towards the end of the Age of Reason, there emerges, therefore, the ideal of anarchism and the question arises whether anarchist thought can any more successfully find a satisfying social principle. Sri Aurobindo points out that the anarchist thought, although it is not yet formed in its assured form, cannot develop any appropriate basis for harmony as long as it relies on the powers of the intellect. He points out that rationality cannot give to humanity safety from the pull from lower existence of the Unreason, nor deliver it from the

attraction that comes from higher regions of the Spirit. In due course, there will be increasing pressure to replace the outer law by the inner law, and there is bound to be pressure also to demand from the State the abolition of governmental compulsion. But this would also mean increasing demand on human beings to live together by free agreement and co-operation. But free agreement and co-operation can truly be secured by a power greater than that of Reason. On this line of development, Sri Aurobindo points out that it is not intellectual anarchism but a spiritual or spiritualized anarchism that can bring us nearer to the solution or at least touch something of it from afar. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“It is a spiritual, an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is a spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. But this brotherhood and love will not proceed by the vital instincts or the reason where they can be met, baffled or deflected by opposite reasonings and other discordant instincts. Nor will it found itself in the natural heart of man where there are plenty of other passions to combat it. It is in the soul that it must find its roots; the love which is founded upon a deeper truth of our being, the brotherhood or, let us say, — for this is another feeling than any vital or mental sense of brotherhood, a calmer more durable motive-force, — the spiritual comradeship which is the expression of an inner realization of oneness. For so only can egoism disappear and the true individualism of the unique godhead in each man found itself on the true communism of the equal godhead in the race; for the Spirit, the inmost Self,



the universal Godhead in every being is that whose very nature of diverse oneness it is to realize the perfection of its individual life and nature in the existence of all, in the universal life and nature.”<sup>19</sup>

## **Contemporary Evolutionary Crisis**

According to Sri Aurobindo, the present age of human development has a possibility of becoming a gate for the arrival of a Spiritual Age in which the ideal of brotherhood can come to be practised; it is only in that condition that a new form of human unity can be forged in which the individual and the collectivity, even on a global scale of organization, can come to be harmonized. In the meantime, however, it is to be realized that the advent of the Spiritual Age and even a transition to that advent is bound to be difficult, and it is, in fact, riddled with a series of crisis. And there are deeper reasons for this crisis.

Sri Aurobindo considers the present stage of crisis as an evolutionary crisis in which the human will is called upon to make a free choice. This is the crisis where the human reason has evolved up to a point where it is obliged to play the role of lifting up humanity to create a life of unity, mutuality and harmony. On the other hand, there is a force that is striving to assert stark barbarism which has still survived in the civilized man. There is thus an acute conflict between the ideals of Reason and the gravitational pull of barbarism supported by Unreason. Within the larger framework of this conflict, there are three alternative possibilities, which are also in conflict with each other. For it is possible that the humankind may be able to utilize the present scientific and technical knowledge to such an extent that an order of existence can be created in

which physical and vital wants of the human being can greatly, if not fully, be satisfied, and it may also be conceived that this order of existence can be maintained by mechanical devices and application of the power of machines. This possibility may push humanity to the creation of a framework that can be sustained only by the imprisonment of the human spirit. There is also a second alternative in which human reason can continue to spin out larger or narrower circles propounding great dreams but find itself unable to fulfill them. But there is also a third alternative in which the human beings might consent to rise to the higher levels than those of the Reason and consent to be spiritualized.

The central question rests on the power of the Reason and the answer that the Reason can give to the issue that faces the present evolutionary moment. It is easy for Reason to refuse to make a choice; it is easy for Reason to spin itself so as to develop arguments against the need to open up the domains of the supra-rational consciousness; it is difficult for Reason to resist the cacophony of declarations that the supra-rational is non-existent or unreal and that the best counsel for Reason is to limit its activities to the practical and immediate problems of the material existence in the world. It is true that the demand of the present evolutionary moment may push a forward progression of the human race, and the inner spiritual necessity may even seem to be overwhelming. But if the pressure of that necessity is refused or renounced, there is bound to occur a crisis. In fact, that crisis is already to be found behind the contemporary crisis that we find in various domains of sociology, politics and economics. In reality that crisis is what Sri Aurobindo calls an evolutionary crisis.

An evolutionary crisis can occur only at an extremely crucial moment of the life of a species. It occurs when a

certain level of consciousness has effected an ascent to the next level of consciousness, when it has integrated the powers and activities of the lower consciousness into those of the higher level of consciousness, and when the integrated powers have achieved acute subtilisation and refinement necessitating a leap into a still higher level of consciousness. If, at that moment, there is obstruction or failure to secure the necessary push, a crisis sets in which continues to concentrate on the issue of the next step of the ascent until the necessary conditions are created which would facilitate the ascent or mutation of the species. Or else, if there is repeated failure, the concerned species becomes extinct or stagnant, and a new species develops on another line of evolution through which ascent to a higher level can be effected. From the point of view of evolution, humanity today seems to have reached a critical point; this is evidenced by the fact that its highest faculty of Reason has reached acute subtilisation and amplitude of multisided development. At the same time, having reached that stage of accomplishment, the limitations of the Reason have been made bare and acknowledged. It is very clear that Reason cannot govern the society and lead it to embody those ideals which it places before it. It becomes clearer that the higher powers lying behind Reason need to be discovered, but they are being blocked by the achieved circuit of grooves set up by Reason. It is only if Reason consents to allow the greater powers to rise to a new stage of the ascent that further progress of humanity could be possible. Or else, Nature will have to pursue her evolutionary curve to manifest the supramental power through another line of evolution.

At the present stage of evolution, Sri Aurobindo considers the contemporary stress on the material and economic life to be the first peril. For this stress may lead to the resurgence of

barbarism in the present set up of civilization. This danger could be further accentuated, if Reason ceases to collaborate with the evolutionary urge that is pressing forward for a new ascent of consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The first danger is a resurgence of the old vital and material primitive barbarian in a civilized form; the means Science has put at our disposal eliminates the peril of the subversion and destruction of an effete civilization by stronger primitive peoples, but it is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilised man, that is the peril, and this we see all around us. For that is bound to come if there is no high and strenuous mental and moral ideal controlling and uplifting the vital and physical man in us and no spiritual ideal liberating him from himself into his inner being. Even if this relapse is escaped, there is another danger, — for a cessation of the evolutionary urge, crystallization into a stable comfortable mechanized social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome. Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is a mediator between the life and body and something higher and greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what is there yet unrealized within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual *nisus*. That renounced, he must either relapse and begin all over again or disappear like other forms of life before him as an evolutionary failure, through incapacity to maintain or to serve the evolutionary urge. At the best he will remain arrested in some kind of mediary typical perfection, like other animal kinds, while Nature pursues her way beyond him to a greater creation.”<sup>20</sup>

The constructions that have been built up so far in human life have been a combination of association and regulated

conflict; these have been imperfect mental constructions struggling to create frameworks of accommodation of egos and interests grouped or dovetailed into each other; they are attempts at consolidation by common general life-motives, a unification by need and the pressure of struggle with outside forces. But as humanity moves forward, it is becoming clearer that the evolution of Mind working upon Life has developed an organization of the activity of Mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change. Humanity has reached a point where demands of unity, perfect mutuality, and harmony have become imperative. Humanity has developed a structure of external life, and this structure has become more and more huge and complex; on the other hand, it is becoming clearer that this hugeness and complexity cannot be handled by limited mental capacity and understanding; there is an increasing pressure to expand spiritual and moral capacity, if man is to escape disastrous consequences of continued blunders of his ego and appetites. The burden that is being laid on humankind is too great for the present littleness of the human personality and its petty mind and small life instincts. The scale of life has become too large for the human reason and will to handle. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the problem is fundamental and in putting it, evolutionary Nature in man is confronting herself with a critical choice which must one day be solved in the true sense if the race is to arrive and even to survive. The solution can be reached only if there appears in humanity a greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power; for then alone all that is being developed, can be welded into a greater unity of whole-life.

Describing briefly the nature of the contemporary crisis and its remedy, Sri Aurobindo states:

“At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man’s ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organized collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilization which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilize and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. ...The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the Spirit, must welter in a universalized confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life. Man has harmonized life in the past by organized ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-

system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more intermingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only help by standardizing, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanized unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life.”<sup>21</sup>

## **Integral Yoga and Its Aid to the Evolutionary Crisis**

The issue for the contemporary humanity is thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, that of a farther step in evolution which would bring about manifestation of the comprehensive consciousness and power on the earth. The entire effort of the integral yoga that has been developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother aims at this manifestation which can weld all into a greater unity of whole-life. But this manifestation cannot be brought about, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, by seeking refuge in a return to the religious idea and a society governed or sanctioned by religion. As Sri Aurobindo points out, organized religion, though it can provide a means of inner uplift for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for its opening into spiritual experience, has not changed human life and society. Religion, in governing society, had to compromise with the lower parts of life and could not insist on the inner change of the whole-being. As a result, it could insist only on a credal adherence, a formal acceptance of its ethical standards and conformity to institution, ceremony and ritual. Religion, therefore, can generalize to some extent an incomplete spiritual tendency, but it cannot transform the

race, and it cannot create a new principle of the human existence. Sri Aurobindo points out that only a total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can lift humanity beyond itself.

Sri Aurobindo points out the need of the discipline and the way by which each individual can be developed in accordance with his or her line of development towards integrality and all-embracing perfection. At the same time, there is a need to create a process of social development by which the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity can be harmonized. Ordinary means which have been so far utilized for securing social progress have failed to harmonise these ideals; even when liberty and equality have to some extent been pursued and even when they have sought to be accommodated with each other, there has never occurred any satisfying harmonization. The ideal of fraternity has hardly been attempted, and that is because fraternity demands the awakening of the inmost soul of man and manifestation of the soul-power in governing social development. As a result, it can be seen that liberty and equality can have a chance of harmonization only by the power of fraternity, and these three ideals, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, can be harmonized only by a total spiritual direction to the integrality of life and nature. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“Yet is brotherhood the real key....The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in



man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit.”<sup>22</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, the human ego and vital nature have been found too strong for religion to arrive at any measurable success. Even the idea of the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, and the idea of the brotherhood or unity of all in the faith or in the discipline to strive by a religion cannot succeed. The solution that Sri Aurobindo proposes is the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the supermind which is the native light and power of the integral Transcendental Reality and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental Supernature.

Sri Aurobindo acknowledges that at first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; but even if this were so, Sri Aurobindo points out that it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition. Hence, if this is not the solution, then there is no solution. Then the terrestrial evolution must pass beyond man as it has passed beyond the animal and a greater race must come that will be capable of the spiritual change, a form of life must be

born that is nearer to the divine.

At the same time, Sri Aurobindo points out that the solution that he proposes is not altogether distant, and it is not radically impossible. As Sri Aurobindo states:

“But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.”<sup>23</sup>

## PART THREE

### **Experimental Nature of the Integral Yoga**

The unique feature of the integral yoga is that it is not based on speculation but it has been built and is even being built by rigorous methods of experimentation, based on the relevant accumulated knowledge of the past experiences and realizations as also on the basis of a constant thrust towards what is needed unprecedentedly for the evolutionary manifestation of the supramental consciousness and power on the earth. Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's works testify to the long and arduous process of experimentation carried on day after day for years and decades. If we study the life and works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we shall see that prior to their first meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1914, both of them had a vast and laborious period of preparation. From that momentous date of the first meeting, when the Mother came from France to Pondicherry in order to meet Sri Aurobindo, they consecrated themselves entirely to the task of discovering the most effective means of meeting what seemed to be insuperable obstacles that the contemporary crisis presented. From that day, they began to prepare new conditions on the earth so that, by the process of the yoga of conscious evolution, humanity could not only survive the crisis but also arrive at the eventual fulfillment of the deepest aspirations for establishing on the earth the kingdom of mutuality, harmony and unity.

In this conscious yoga of evolution, both Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother interwove their entire being and their powers of consciousness into a living laboratory. As envisaged, they nourished that trend in humanity shared by those who felt that there is no other solution than the spiritual. As a part of the nourishment of this trend, there began to develop a collective form where individuals could organize under their guidance and leadership a growing group directed towards a concentrated collective effort, not towards other worldly spiritual seeking, but towards the transformation of the whole being, transformation of the mental, vital and physical nature by the increasing descent of the supramental consciousness. The creation of that collective laboratory of research at Pondicherry, which came to be known as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram<sup>24</sup> from 1926 onwards, became a place of an unprecedented experiment in evolution. To this laboratory, a number of men and women offered themselves to respond to the yogic and evolutionary demands of the experiment. This laboratory reveals a continuous burning of the fire of aspiration and a continuous movement of achievement. At a certain point of achievement, this laboratory developed a new laboratory of integral education<sup>25</sup> where a nucleus of children and teachers developed a new methodology of education suitable to the discovery of the psychic being and supramental power and their manifestation.

It is not easy to expound the enormous value of the work of these two laboratories of research and experimentation, and one cannot easily explain the reasons for Sri Aurobindo's passing in 1950. Fortunately, thirteen volumes of Mother's Agenda give an account of how Sri Aurobindo, even after leaving his body, has continued to hasten the process of the yoga of evolution, and how, day after day, the integral yoga has continued to develop through microscopic process of

research for the establishment of the supramental consciousness on the earth.

The enormity of the task and the enormity of the difficulties of the task are unimaginable. In the first place, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had to work out all ways, follow all methods, and develop a new method of integral realization and integral transformation. Besides, the aim was not only to hew the path but also to test every step and its results and to present to humanity a science of integral yoga. Sri Aurobindo has written of all these difficulties in one of his letters to a disciple:

“As for the Mother and myself, we have had to try all ways, follow all methods, to surmount mountains of difficulties, a far heavier burden to bear than you or anybody else in the Ashram or outside, far more difficult conditions, battles to fight, wounds to endure, ways to cleave through impenetrable morass and desert and forest, hostile masses to conquer — a work such as, I am certain, none else had to do before us. For the Leader of the Way in a work like ours has not only to bring down and represent and embody the Divine, but to represent too the ascending element in humanity and to bear the burden of humanity to the full and experience, not in a mere play or Lila but in grim earnest, all the obstruction, difficulty, opposition, baffled and hampered and only slowly victorious labour which are possible on the Path.”<sup>26</sup>

The evolutionary laboratory or The Ashram consisted, first, of a nucleus of a few. Later, hundreds were recruited so as to make a small representative world constituting of specimens of each type of human consciousness and development. The formation of this evolutionary laboratory had become necessary, first, to provide a secure atmosphere,

a place and life apart, in which the consciousness of the individual might concentrate on its evolution in surroundings where all was turned and centered towards the one endeavour and, next, when things were ready to formulate and develop the new life in those surroundings and in this prepared spiritual atmosphere. But it was also envisaged that while that laboratory would facilitate the effort in many ways, there are bound to be enormous difficulties as well. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“It might be that, in such a concentration of effort, all the difficulties of the change would present themselves with a concentrated force; for each seeker, carrying in himself the possibilities but also the imperfections of a world that has to be transformed, would bring in not only his capacities but his difficulties and the oppositions of the old nature and, mixed together in the restricted circle of a small and close common life, these might assume a considerably enhanced force of obstruction which would tend to counterbalance the enhanced power and concentration of the forces making for the evolution.”<sup>27</sup>

In the integral yoga, apart from the difficulties of integration of different paths of yoga that would respond to each individual's need of free development, a special difficulty arises from the fact that this yoga aims at transformation of human nature, even while accepting what Sri Aurobindo calls the works of life-force, — the works that involve acquisition, possession, relationship, enjoyment and influence. These works of life-force are normally shot through and through with desire and ego, and the aim is to accept these works in the conduct of yoga and to dissolve from the very fibre all elements of desire and ego. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The integral Yoga cannot reject the works of Life and be satisfied with an inward experience only; it has to go inward in order to change the outward, making the Life-Force a part and a working of a Yoga-Energy which is in touch with the Divine and divine in its guidance.”<sup>28</sup>

In the integral yoga, the aim is the divine fulfillment of the objects of the Life-Force. Those objects remain the same in essence, but transformed in their inner motive and outer character. Life-Power is to be divinized, and the Divine Life-Power is a will for growth, a force of self-affirmation, but affirmation of the Divine within us, not of the little temporary personality on the surface. This affirmation implies growth into the true divine Individual, who can emerge only by the subordination and disappearance of the ego. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“This is life’s true object: growth, but a growth of the spirit in Nature, affirming and developing itself in mind, life and body; possession, but a possession by the Divine of the Divine in all things, and not of things for their own sake by the desire of the ego; enjoyment, but an enjoyment of the divine Ananda in the universe; battle and conquest and empire in the shape of a victorious conflict with the Powers of Darkness, an entire spiritual self-rule and mastery over inward and outward Nature, a conquest by Knowledge, Love and Divine Will over the domain of the Ignorance.”<sup>29</sup>

In this yoga, where all life is accepted but all life is sought to be transformed, it becomes inevitable that a divine solution is sought for the problems connected with the integration of the supracosmic, supraterrrestrial and cosmic aims of life and these problems become much more formidable when each individual is to be encouraged to aim at the perfection of the

mental being, vital being and the physical being under the guidance of the psychic being and of the Divine Will. For this perfection implies a constant effort of purification and renunciation of desire and ego. There is a constant stress in this yoga towards the perfection of equality, not only in status of being but also in action. There is also a continuous stress on the development of personality and of the powers of the personality that grows, — not under the impulsion of lower nature, *Apara Prakriti*, — but under the impulsion of divine nature and of divine shakti, *Para Prakriti*. The three *gunas* of *Apara Prakriti* need to be purified, quieted, brought under the control of all that is highest in *Apara Prakriti*, and that is to be followed by extremely long and difficult task of transformation of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the *gunas* of the *Apara Prakriti*, by the descent of their counterparts in the higher nature, *Para Prakriti*. Thus, in the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“Tamas in the spiritual being becomes a divine calm ...Rajas becomes a self-effecting initiating sheer Will of the spirit, ...Sattwa becomes not the modified mental light, *prakāśa*, but the self-existent light of the divine being,  *jyotiḥ*, which is the soul of the perfect power of being, and illumines in their unity the divine quietude and the divine will of action.”<sup>30</sup>

The aim in this yoga is not only to arrive at liberation from Nature, *Apara Prakriti*, but also the liberation of Nature itself from its own limitations by the descending power of *Para Prakriti* or Supermind. Ascent to the supermind and the descent of the supermind are extremely difficult processes; the ascending path itself involves combination of various processes, and then there is a descending path for bringing down highest level of consciousness, including supermind,



into lower levels of matter, right up to the lowest, which is the inconscient, in order to bring about transformation.

It has been argued that there is no certainty of the reality of the descent of the supermind in our earthly being. It is pointed out that Light has often tried to descend upon the earth but the light remains unfulfilled and incomplete; it is further argued that even if the light descends, man may reject it. It may be acknowledged that this doubt is justified to a certain extent by the actualities of the past and still existing possibilities of the future because the endeavour is new and unprecedented. This doubt may itself be a factor of the difficulty of the endeavour. It is only when one is able to look straight at the whole truth of the world as it is and draw from there the right conclusion as to what the world must be and cannot fail to be that the trouble of uncertainty can be met. The effort of integral yoga demands that one is free from too hasty and one-sided facts of the world. Sri Aurobindo points out that there has been in the past an idea of the earth as a world of ignorance, suffering and trial and that our only future lies in an escape into the secret essence of the being or to the heavens beyond. This idea has disabling effect on the effort to bring down supermind into Matter. Against this disabling idea, Sri Aurobindo points out:

“If we look closely, we shall see that there is a straining of mind and life on their heights toward their own perfection, towards some divine fulfilment, towards their own absolute. That and not only something beyond and elsewhere is the true sign, the meaning of this constant evolution... But it is only by the descent of supermind and the fulfilment of mind and life by their self-exceeding that this secret intention in things, this hidden meaning of Spirit and Nature can become utterly overt and in its totality realizable.”<sup>31</sup>

Sri Aurobindo further states:

“In this vision of things the universe will reveal itself in its unity and totality as a manifestation of a single Being, Nature as its power of manifestation, evolution as its process of gradual self-revelation here in Matter. We would see the divine series of the worlds as a ladder of ascent from Matter to supreme Spirit; there would reveal itself the possibility, the prospect of a supreme manifestation by the conscious and no longer a veiled and enigmatic descent of the Spirit and its powers in their fullness even into this lowest world of Matter. The riddle of the universe need be no longer a riddle; the dubious mystery of things would put off its enigma, its constant ambiguity, the tangled writings would become legible and intelligible. In this revelation, supermind would take its natural place and no longer be a matter of doubt or questioning to an intelligence bewildered by the complexity of the world; it would appear as the inevitable consequence of the nature of mind, life and Matter, the fulfilment of their meaning, their inherent principle and tendencies, the necessary perfection of their imperfection, the summit to which all are climbing, the consummation of divine existence, consciousness and bliss to which it is leading, the last result of the birth of things and supreme goal of this progressive manifestation which we see here in life.”<sup>32</sup>

## **Central Objective of the Yogic Experiments of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**

A progressive realization of this vision is interwoven with the life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and after a series of experiences and realizations, particularly after the Mother's first meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1914, the

central concentration was on the descent of the supermind on the earth. In 1920, when the Mother returned to Pondicherry from her sojourn in France and Japan, a decisive event took place on 24<sup>th</sup> April, when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were standing side by side gazing out through the open window in Sri Aurobindo's room. The Mother has described that moment as follows:

“We were standing side by side like that, gazing out through the open window, and then TOGETHER at exactly the same moment, we felt, ‘Now the Realisation will be accomplished.’ That the seal was set and the Realisation would be accomplished. I felt the Thing descending massively within me, with the same certainty I had felt in my vision. From that moment on there was nothing to say — no words, nothing. We knew it was THAT.”<sup>33</sup>

## **Mother's Agenda**

The entire development has been experimental and experiential, and glimpses of the rapid development that took place in the evolutionary moment of the earth can be studied scientifically in thirteen volumes of *‘Mother's Agenda’* (1951–1973). This tremendous document relates the Mother's explorations, which cover the discovery of the origin of Matter and of how the evolution of the earth came to be developed. It also gives us the accounts of how Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had reached at the crucial moment in the twentieth century, as also of the descent of the supermind that took place in 1956, and of the subsequent story leading to the victorious fixing of the supermind in the physical consciousness. Satprem, to whom the Mother narrated day after day her experiences and realizations and

who has brought together these accounts in the *Agenda*, comprising more than six thousand pages in thirteen volumes, has stated the following about this fabulous document:

“It is a veritable document of experimental evolution. A revolution in consciousness that alters the laws of the species. And it is the question of our times — for whatever the appearances, we are not at the end of a civilization, but at the end of an evolutionary cycle. Are we going to find the passage to the next species... or perish? As scrupulously as a scientist in his laboratory, Mother goes back to the origin where matter was first formed, to the primordial code, and there, ‘by chance,’ stumbles upon the mechanism of death — upon the very power that changes death — and upon a ‘new’ Energy that curiously parallels the most recent theories of atomic physics and Matter. The key to Matter contains the key to death... and the key to the next species.”<sup>34</sup>

Based on the contents of the thirteen volumes of ‘*Mother’s Agenda*’, Satprem has narrated the biography of the Mother in three volumes.<sup>35</sup> Volume I, ‘*The Divine Materialism*’, concerns the Mother’s life from her birth in Paris in 1878 to Sri Aurobindo’s departure in 1950. It recounts the Mother’s spontaneous early experiences as a child, her friendship with the great impressionist artists of the time, her first lessons of occultism with Max Theon in Algeria, her journeys to India, and her meeting with Sri Aurobindo and her evolutionary work and development of integral yoga jointly with Sri Aurobindo until Sri Aurobindo’s departure in 1950. Volume II, ‘*The New Species*’, recounts the Mother’s life from 1950 to 1968, during which the Mother continues the work of Sri Aurobindo with constant help of Sri Aurobindo, whom she discovers in his full majesty in his abode of the subtle physical. This volume describes the long and arduous

“descent of the supramental consciousness on the earth and into the mysteries of the human body, through the various webs” that keeps us subservient to so-called laws of nature. The most important account in this volume is that of the Mother’s discovery of the key in the cells — ‘*The Mind of the Cells*’. Volume III, ‘*The Mutation of Death*’, evokes the Mother’s last five years, from 1968 to 1973. It describes the victorious accomplishment of the task given by Sri Aurobindo to the Mother, namely the fixing of the supramental consciousness in physical consciousness, and her subsequent journey towards the formation of the divine body in her own supramentalised new matter, which, in due course of evolution, could manifest in a physically visible material envelope. According to Satprem, the period covered in this volume was the most critical and poignant period, and it also marked the imperative need of some degree of participation and understanding from the collectivity that was organized in her evolutionary laboratory (Ashram). Indeed, a greater development of the divine body was possible, and that depended on the collaboration of a representative collectivity, — the collaboration that did not come forth. This volume puts forth many questions that are related to the theme of the mutation of the human species, the development of the divine body which would be a visible proof of the coming on the earth of the next species, the supramental species.

### **First Supramental Manifestation and Next Steps**

The capital event in the unfolding of the evolutionary development of the earth took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1956, and the Mother has described this event that took place, at a collective Meditation at the Ashram Playground, as the first supramental manifestation. In a message that was given

on that day, she stated:

“This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that ‘THE TIME HAS COME’, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”<sup>36</sup>

From that momentous evening of 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1956, the Mother began to have from week to week, from day to day, various experiences of the supermind in Matter. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1958, the Mother had for the first time a radical experience in which she went strolling in a concrete way in an objective supramental world — a world that exists in itself beyond all subjectivity. Towards the end of 1958, the Mother came to a precision and formulated the central question that she was exploring ‘How does one FIX the supermind in the body?’ The entire enterprise was new in the history of the earth, and the Mother was obliged to hew a new path in a virgin forest. On July 24, 1959, the Mother recounted her unique experience, when for the first time the supramental light entered directly into her body. And during this experience, she found herself in another world, which was almost as substantial as the physical world. She stated:

“There were rooms — Sri Aurobindo’s room with the bed he rests on — and he was living there, he was there all the

time: it was his abode. ... And Sri Aurobindo was there, with a majesty, a magnificent beauty. .... I remained there for one hour (I had looked at my watch before and I looked at it afterwards). ...”<sup>37</sup>

The Mother added that when she awoke, she did not have the feeling returning from afar. It was simply as though she was in that other world, and then she took a step backwards and found herself in this physical world again. She further added that the next two days were of absolute felicity. Sri Aurobindo was with her the whole time, — when she sat down he sat next to her. When she asked Sri Aurobindo when that other world, the world of the abode of Sri Aurobindo, would come to take the place of our world of falsehood, he replied “Not Ready”.

After this experience, the Mother met Sri Aurobindo frequently in the subtle physical. There were ecstasies of experiencing the Supreme in the body, and there were excruciating pains when the work had to be concentrated upon the transformation of the subconscious and inconscient. Her discoveries were momentous, particularly in regard to the nature of Pain and Death. Gradually, she was building a new body within her own body — material body — of this supramental light and power. There were experiences from day to day, from hour to hour, and many of them have been recorded in the Agenda.

On January 21, 1961, the Mother spoke of the consciousness of the body, and she said that the body-consciousness had the perception of the EXTREME RELATIVITY of the most material expression. She added,

“Suppose, for example, that there was a disorder here or there in the body, not actually an illness....not an illness, a

disorder, a functional disorder. Well, it was all utterly unimportant: IT IN NO WAY CHANGES THE BODY'S TRUE CONSCIOUSNESS. Although we are in the habit of thinking that the body is very disturbed when it is ill, when something is going wrong, it's not so. It isn't disturbed in the way we understand it. ....Oh, it's the physical mind, this stupid mind! It makes all the trouble, always. ....The body is VERY enduring. ....Suffering also comes through the physical mind, because if this entity is calmed down, we no longer suffer — exactly what happened to me!

The physical mind, you see, makes use of the nervous substance; if we withdraw it from the nervous substance, we no longer feel anything, for that's what gives us the perceptions of sensation....We know something is wrong, but we no longer suffer from it.”<sup>38</sup>

On the night of April 12-13, 1962, after she had gone through a great ordeal that had threatened her physical existence, she had suddenly a formidable and decisive experience. She stated:

“Suddenly in the night I woke up with a full awareness of what we could call the Yoga of the world. The Supreme Love was manifesting through big pulsations, and each pulsation was bringing the world further in its manifestation. It was the formidable pulsations of the eternal, stupendous Love, only Love: each pulsation of the Love was carrying the universe further in its manifestation.

And the certitude that what is to be done is done and the Supramental Manifestation is realized.

Everything was Personal, nothing was individual.

This was going on and on and on and on....



The certitude that what is to be done is DONE.

All the results of the Falsehood had disappeared: Death was an illusion, Sickness was an illusion, Ignorance was an illusion — something that had no reality, no existence.... Only Love, and Love and Love and Love — immense, formidable, stupendous, carrying everything.

And how, how to express in the world? It was like an impossibility, because of the contradiction.... But then it came: “You have accepted that this world should know the Supramental Truth ... and it will be expressed totally, integrally”. Yes, yes, .... And the thing is DONE.”<sup>39</sup>

Things were becoming more and more incomprehensible. During a course of conversation with Satprem on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1963, the Mother said:

“I don’t know whether I am dead or alive.”<sup>40</sup>

One of the most important processes of physical transformation that the Mother spoke of was that of the fusion of the subtle physical and the ordinary physical. She said:

“...The most material physical substance no longer has that unreceptive sort of density, a density that resists penetration: it is becoming porous, and thus can be penetrated. Several times, in fact, I’ve had the experience of one vibration quite naturally changing the quality of the other — the subtle physical vibration was bringing about a sort of ...almost a transformation, or in any case a noticeable change in the purely physical vibration.

That seems to be the process, or at least one of the most important processes. ...”<sup>41</sup>

The process of transformation, according to the Mother,

not only tends to eliminate the illness of the body but also the death of the body. More and more we find the Mother asking the question: "What is death?" In an enigmatic short statement during a conversation with Satprem on 9th March, 1963, the Mother said:

"On a few occasions, you know, I was like this (Mother makes a gesture of hovering between two worlds), as if I were really put in contact with what I have called "The death of death." It was the unreality of death. From a COMPLETELY material standpoint. It was a question of cells ..."<sup>42</sup>

The important conditions that the Mother discovered for the physical transformation are the purification, universalisation and impersonalisation of the physical consciousness; but even more important thereafter was the process of PENETRATION, Permeation, of the supramental consciousness directly into the physical consciousness.

A question was often raised by the Mother whether the process of transformation would continue uninterruptedly and produce a new "divine" body or whether it may be dissolved at a certain stage. On this question, the Mother made several statements from time to time, but She indicated that She had no assurance that a new "divine" body would emerge from her body or that her body would not be dissolved.

Between 1962 and 1967, the Mother had numerous experiences of the mastery over and liberation from the hold of the material mind. At the same time, she underwent the training of the cells resulting in the growth and development of the mind of the cells. These five years were marked by non-stop illness and countless heart problems which led her to find

the key to the functioning of the cells. In order that the cells of the body could function ‘purely’ — without any intrusion of factors foreign to its substance, the body had to be emptied completely of its old habits and its old coatings. This meant direct contact of the Supermind with the cells without the need to pass through the layers of the intellectual mind, the vital mind, the sensory mind and the physical mind. All the protective walls of the species had to disappear so that the new species could emerge. In an important experience, the Mother spoke of the transfer of power, — the transfer of power from the state where the cells used to obey the psychic consciousness or the mental consciousness to a state where the cells would obey the supramental consciousness. She stated:

“...A transfer of power.

The cells, the whole material consciousness, used to obey the inner individual consciousness — the psychic consciousness most of the time, or the mental (but the mind had been silent for a long time). But now this material mind is organizing itself like the other one, or the other ones, rather, like the mind of all the states of being — do you know, it is educating itself. It is learning things and organizing the ordinary science of the material world. ... That’s very interesting. It wants to know. You see, all the memory that came from mental knowledge went away a long, long time ago, and I used to receive indications only like this (gesture from above). But now it’s a sort of memory being built from below, ...

... It’s like a shift in the directing will. .... It’s no longer the same thing that makes you act — “act” or anything, of course: move, walk, anything. ...”<sup>43</sup>

## Mind of the cells

In answer to the question about the material mind that underwent the transfer of power, the Mother made a distinction between the physical mind and the mind of Matter. The Mother stated:

“That isn’t the physical mind. The physical mind, it’s a long time since ... It is the material mind — not even the material mind: the mind OF MATTER. It is the mental substance that belongs to Matter itself, to the cells. ... That’s the mind I mean, that completely material mind. The other one, the physical mind, has been organized for a long time. ...

The physical mind is the mind of the physical personality formed by the body. It grows with the body, but it isn’t the mind of Matter: it is the mind of the physical being. ... And it is part of any integral yoga: you discipline this physical mind. I have done it for more than sixty years. ...

This cellular mind exists in animals, and there is even a faint beginning (but very faint, like a promise) in plants: they respond to a mental action. They respond. As soon as Life manifests, there is already the beginning, like a promise of mind, of mental movement. And in animals, it’s very clear. Whereas that physical mind really began to exist only in man. That’s what a very small child already has: it already has a physical mind; ...

No, the physical mind, as soon as you do an integral yoga, you are obliged to deal with it, while this material, cellular mind, I can assure you that it’s absolutely new! Absolutely new.

It is the mind that was like an uncoordinated substance,

with a constant, unorganized activity (Mother gestures to show a constant tremor). This is the mind which is being organized. That's what is important, because Sri Aurobindo said it was unorganizable and the only thing to do was to reject it from existence. And I was under that impression, too. But when the transforming action on the cells is constant, this material mind begins to become organized, that's the wonderful thing! It begins to become organized. And then, as it becomes organized, it learns to FALL SILENT — that's the beautiful thing! It learns to keep calm, silent, and to let the supreme Force act without interfering.

The most difficult part is in the nerves, because they are so habituated to that ordinary conscious will that when it stops and you want the direct Action from the heighest height, they seem to become mad. Yesterday morning I had that experience, which lasted for more than an hour, and it was difficult; but it taught me many things — many things. And all this is what we may call the “transfer of power”: it is the old power that withdraws. But then, until the body adapts to the new power, there is a period which is, well, critical. As all the cells are in a state of conscious aspiration, it's going relatively fast, but still ... the minutes are long.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Three Inter-related Processes of the Yoga of the Body**

The Mother's body had become a living and conscious laboratory of the next species. Three simultaneous and inter-related processes were going on in the Mother's body. Firstly, there was a progressive dissolution of the Inconscience at its utmost bottom. Secondly, there was the infiltration, penetration, permeation and invasion of the Supermind in the cellular consciousness and in the physical consciousness so

as to counteract the Falsehood in Matter, Life and Mind. Thirdly, there was a gradual transformation of the body by means of collaboration and change of the physical and material mind and by means of radical changes in various functionings of organs and faculties.

At the same time, some radical changes were appearing in the functioning of the two collective laboratories that the Mother had organized, namely, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. There was felt a need to establish a third collective laboratory of evolution. A greater and greater stress was laid on the creation of collective consciousness, and as the Mother explains, the realization under community or group conditions would clearly be far more complete, integral, total and probably more perfect than any individual realization.

In due course, the idea of an ideal city began to take shape, and the Mother took a decision to establish a new collective laboratory in the form of a small international township, which she named "Auroville".<sup>45</sup>

While Auroville was growing rapidly after its establishment on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1968, there came about a great turning-point in the yoga of the Mother between 10<sup>th</sup> August and 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1968. In a note of the night of 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August, she had written: 'Powerful and prolonged penetration of the supramental forces into the body, everywhere at the same time....'

A radical operation was effected; the vital and the mind were "sent packing so that the physical may truly be left to its own resources."<sup>46</sup>

The Mother explained her experience of the night of 26<sup>th</sup>

to 27<sup>th</sup> August as follows:

“Penetration into the body. Yes, penetrations of currents I had had several times, but that night ..., what came all of a sudden was as though there was nothing anymore except a supramental atmosphere. Nothing remained except that. My body was in it. And it was PRESSING to enter, from everywhere, but everywhere at the same time—everywhere. You understand, it wasn’t a current flowing in, it was an atmosphere penetrating from everywhere. It lasted for at least four or five hours. ...

It’s the first time. For hours. Only That remained. And this (the body) was like a sponge soaking up. ...

Ah! I noticed that the cells, everywhere, you know, constantly, all the time, were repeating, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE ... constantly, all the time.”<sup>47</sup>

This entire experience was crucial and radical. One has to imagine a true body growing up in an old body at the very cellular level, where there is no intermediate between the supermind, on the one hand, and the cellular consciousness of the body, on the other. The cellular consciousness was liberated from all the intermediate levels, including the physical mind. Here was the possibility of infusing a new genetic code in the cell — the code of the supramental vibration of knowledge, power, harmony and immortality. A new mind in matter began to work. A new mind of the cells. The key to transform the body was turned.

## **Descent of the Superman Consciousness**

The 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1969, marked the descent of the superman

consciousness, the consciousness of the superman, an intermediate between the human and the supramental being. The Mother said:

“The intermediary between the two. May be the superman: it was very human, but a human of divine proportions, ....”<sup>48</sup>

The Mother called the consciousness of the superman as “New Consciousness”. The advent of this New Consciousness may be regarded as a crucial development of the Mother’s yoga of the Body. Indeed, this consciousness was the supramental benevolent consciousness of Power working through an intermediate body — a body, human in origin but thoroughly purified and refined right up to the cellular level and thus capable of the operation of the Supermind directly in the physical body. True, the entire physical body was not yet fully transformed, but it was yet a vehicle in which the cells had begun to be so much supramentalised that their physical substance was that of real matter—which the Mother had described as something much more dense and compact and plastic than the gross physical that we see; that real matter could manifest, operate and produce results in and through the outer body. This ‘New Consciousness’, the Mother explained later, began to operate when her body lost all sense of separative individuality. Since the arrival of this consciousness, things began to precipitate and there was an extraordinary rapidity of movement in the circumstances. This method of working consisted of putting people in front of themselves and to apply a pressure so that all that resisted in the nature would come out on the surface. The Mother said that she saw all this all the time, for small things as well as for big things, for the political affairs of the country as well as for the organization of a household.<sup>49</sup>



## PART FOUR

### **The Problem of Death and Physical Immortality**

In the beginning of 1970, the Mother spoke of the replacement of knowledge-processes in her body by a new perception which was total, something that comprehended at the same time hearing, vision and knowledge. There was, she said, no differentiation among her organs. She pointed out that the new consciousness insisted on surpassing all divisions and all exclusiveness, including the great division of life and death. The Mother discovered 'over-life', which is at once life and death or which is rather something that cannot be described either as life or as death, but some other third state in which the contradiction of life and death is overcome. The question of death had begun to receive the Mother's attention more and more pointedly during the last several years. In fact, as the Mother had said, the problem of death was the problem that was given to her to solve.

The question of death and immortality has been explored right from the Vedic times, and the aim of the attainment of immortality has been envisaged right from the Vedic times. According to one view, the human body is by its very nature mortal, and it is destined to get dissolved sooner or later, even though there are a number of examples where individuals have been able to prolong their lives beyond hundred years. According to another view, while death is inevitable, the timing of death could be controlled. According to still another view, the mortality of the body does not affect the immortality

of the soul. Even when, in certain philosophies, the existence of the soul is denied, there is an affirmation of the immortal Eternal Spirit or Self, and the experience of that Self or Spirit is regarded as the experience of immortality and even of attainment of immortality. There is also a view that immortality need not be pursued as an ideal, since the body gets worn out in due course of development and becomes afflicted with increasing disease and incapacity and, therefore, it is best to discard the body and to welcome the mortality of the body. It is true, it is acknowledged, that there is a great urge in most of the human beings to survive in the body as long as possible, and there has been also search for elixir, the administration of which would lead to continuous youthfulness of the body and immortality of the body. In the context of these conflicting views about mortality and immortality, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have confronted the issue centrally and come to the conclusion that the necessity of the death of the body implies deficiency in the manifestation of the spirit in the body and that the full manifestation of spirit in the body would imply optimality of the Will of the spirit to continue in the same body or to leave the body, *ichachā mr̥tyu*.<sup>50</sup> In either case, the necessity of the death would have been overcome.

### **Ultimate Reality and Phenomena of Death, Desire and Incapacity<sup>51</sup>**

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the highest concept and experience of yoga has been that of the Ultimate Reality, which has come to be conveyed through the word '*Sachchidananda*', the inexpressible complex oneness of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Although ineffable, this ultimate reality can still be intellectually grasped through

these three concepts and through two other concepts, namely, infinity and eternity as inevitably fundamental to the concept of Sachchidananda. It is seen that throughout the history of philosophy, Indian and Western, infinity and eternity, — these two concepts — have proved to be rationally inescapable, even though their infelligibility has often come to be questioned. Nonetheless, even when these two concepts have been declared to be intellectual fictions, they have still been found to be inescapable. The infinite existence and the eternal existence, even if intellectually declared to be incomprehensible, seem to impose upon ourselves as soon as we look at the universe and try to comprehend it. In yoga, however, the ultimate reality, at its highest, has come to be experienced and realized as infinite and eternal, both as the highest possibilities of extensions of consciousness and that which lies beyond all extensions. Even if, on a certain line of yogic experience, there is a farther attempt at transcendence, and even if, what is attained in the state of utter transcendence is described intellectually as Non-Being, the one inescapable truth of that experience is its permanence, and it can still be regarded as infinite and eternal and therefore immortal. Beyond all descriptions, That, which can be described as the utter Being or as Non-Being or both, being and a non-being and even beyond both being and non-being, has been affirmed by the Vedic and Upanishadic experience as imperishable and that, which having been attained, nothing further remains to be attained: that is the realization of immortality.

Sri Aurobindo has pointed out that That, which is described as ineffable Sachchidananda is the content of the loftiest experience of the reality, unsurpassed in the history of yoga and even unsurpassable, since That is the ultimate.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother confirmed that the attainment of That is the experience of immortality, and whatever other meanings that may come to be attached to the word immortality must have their foundation in the experience of That unsurpassed and unsurpassable eternal and infinite X.

The enigma for yoga, as also for any philosophical or intellectual enquiry, is the constant experience of impermanence and of constant formation and dissolution of forms, of birth and death. The enigma is felt most acutely when an effort is made to arrive at the reconciliation between immortality and mortality. It was this enigma that the Vedic and the Upanishadic Rishis attempted to resolve, and the answer they came to propose is that although the ultimate Reality is eternal and infinite, the existence of that eternity and infinity is conscious and the consciousness of infinity and eternity has the power of eternal stability and constant mutability in terms of its formations. The eternal stability was experienced as the fullness of potency and therefore not incapable of formulating the endless forms of eternal infinite existence. And they further verified in their yogic experiences that the human being, too, in his consciousness can arrive at eternal stability as also its full potency capable of constant manifestation of endless forms. This Realization, on the part of the human being, arrived at by the pursuit of the methods of the fullest possible extension of his consciousness, can properly be called for the human being the experience of immortality. At the same time, they also pointed out that although that experience of immortality is always possible, the human being is at present found to be in his psychological state confined to relative finitude, which has taken the form of what can be described as the ego. How the consciousness of the human being has come to become

finite and limited in the egoistic consciousness was for these seers a matter for experiential and experimental exploration of consciousness. Consciousness was for them a central object of yogic enquiry, and it was through that enquiry that they sought to answer the enigma of the experiences of immortality and mortality or death.

In fact, death, they found, is intimately connected with the phenomena of desire and incapacity. These phenomena, death, desire and incapacity, are directly linked with the finiteness of human consciousness. The mark of finiteness, they discovered, was the rigid confinement to the apprehension of multiplicity of formations accompanied by the absence of the comprehension of the unity and transcendence of infinity and eternity. That confinement to the exclusive apprehension of multiplicity was termed by the Vedic Rishis as *aciti* and by the Upanishadic Rishis as *avidyā*. According to them, confinement to *aciti* or *avidyā* was the cause of desire or hunger, and they equated hunger with Death (*aśanāyā mṛtyuḥ*).

The individual, on account of limitation of his consciousness within the boundaries of his finitude or ignorance, does not know how to receive the infinitude of the ocean of life that is all around himself. On account of the ignorance, the individual finds himself incapable of receiving in his field the flow of the infinity. This incapacity is sought to be overcome by the finite consciousness, even when the individual does not normally know how to overcome that incapacity. The ignorant seeking of the removal of the incapacity takes the form of desire. Desire is in its ultimate analysis, the ignorant effort of the finite to become the infinite, to receive the infinite and to relate properly with the infinite. But confined to the ignorance and

finiteness, the individual seeks and seeks, — desires and desires, — and indeed, grows and aggrandizes himself, but fails to grow into infinity and to receive the infinity and to relate rightly with infinity. In his extreme effort, the individual gets dashed by the infinity and the finite form in which the individual remains confined gets dissolved, and it is that dissolution that we call death. But if the individual were only a finite form struggling with immense incapacity to embrace the infinity through the impulsion of desire, then the finitude must inevitably get dissolved, and death becomes the unsurpassable law for finite existence. But the Vedic and Vedantic knowledge discovers that the individual is himself an imperishable portion, an individual portion of the imperishable Reality that is at once static and dynamic, and this is the truth of the individual that the Gita formulates in clear terms when it describes the individual as the eternal and imperishable portion of the Supreme, *mama eva amśaḥ sanātanaḥ*.<sup>52</sup> The individual remains always immortal, even though the finite forms in which it is embodied get dissolved.

The question is of ignorance and of the ego. If the ego ceases to be confined to its finitude and if the ego comes to learn and know the truth of the infinity, the imperishable infinity of stability as also the infinity of imperishable flow of Life, and if it comes to know and also applies its knowledge of the Immortal Reality and Immortal Life, then there is no inevitability of these three great deficiencies which seem to be the imperative yoke and law of human life, — incapacity, desire and death. The immortal and eternal portion of the Supreme does not need to remain confined to incapacity, if he knows and practises the truth that he is imperishably connected with the supreme infinite stability which is also imperishable source of Life. He does not need

to desire and does not need to struggle to catch scattered portions from the flow of the infinity and to aggrandize his finitude, if he comes to know that he himself is the imperishable portion of all that is there in the universe and beyond. He does not need necessarily to die, he does not stand in an obligation to dissolve the forms in which he is at present confined, if he knows the art of connecting his finite forms with the rush of the infinite ocean of Life and if he renews his forms at will in accordance with the rhythm of the flow of the infinity of the ocean of life. He may then retain his constantly developing forms of expression; he may enlarge them, contract them and even dissolve them and renew them in harmony with the flow of the universal life-force. He does not need to be besieged constantly by the sting of Death, and he can constantly change his formations or enlarge his formations according to the need of the universal flow of life. He can vanquish the necessity of dissolving the form; he can live immortally with constant renewal of forms and be the master of Life, since he is indeed the imperishable portion of the Master of all existence, static and dynamic.

Indeed, the knowledge by which the individual can recover his awareness of immortality, of the immortality of the supreme of which he is a eternal portion and the Knowledge of the imperishable stability of the infinite and the eternal and the imperishable flow of the ocean of the eternity, — if that knowledge happens to be merely intellectual, it cannot bring about an effective dissolution of the operation of the twilight of the ignorance by which the individual is surrounded and to which he is tied. That knowledge is to be Yogic knowledge, and that Yogic knowledge can be developed by the process of rising upwards from the plane of the mind to the supermind; all this

was known and affirmed by the Rishis of the Veda and the Upanishads. Even then, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother point out that there was still in their knowledge and in their yogic discipline incompleteness. According to them, there is a need of the descent of the supermind and its permanent establishment in the earth plane, if the full consequences of the premises of the knowledge of the Sachchidananda are to be concretely realized in the life of the earth. And it is here that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother conducted a fresh research, and they discovered that which had still remained undiscovered; and they opened the way by which the supermind can be manifested on the earth as a gradation of the earth-life, and, as a result, there could appear even in physical life, by the very process of transformation of matter itself, a divine body, which shall be free from the inevitability, even in the earth life, of the law of Death.



## PART FIVE

### **Stages of the Evolutionary Mutation of the Human Body into the Divine Body**

There are various factors to be considered for developing the yoga of the evolutionary process leading to the fabrication of the Divine Body, which will be the supramentalised robe for the eternal Spirit as its appropriate habitation. The development of the divine body, which will be free from the limitations of the human body subject to the necessity of dissolution and death, is implied, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in the evolutionary urge embedded in the Inconscience. For Nature seeks complete harmony; life and matter have been harmonized in the evolutionary process, but not up to the point of its logical completeness; life and mind have also been harmonized, but still there is a vast room of conflict between the two; Nature is striving towards that complete harmony; the mind is seeking Truth and Light; but this seeking has behind it an urge to possess Truth and Light,— an urge that can be fulfilled by the evolution of the supermind which inherently possesses Truth and Light. Nature is, therefore, labouring to evolve supermind in living and thinking material life. As Sri Aurobindo points out, if it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and, if apparent Nature has within it secret God, even though as a veiled state of Sachchidananda, then Nature must ultimately unveil and manifest Sachchidananda in its fullness. To discover and realize the immortal life in a body

that would manifest conscious delight of manifestation is, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the next step of the evolutionary future.

It is true that immortality of spirit and the immortality of the individual soul can be experienced and realized, even when the human body has not undergone the kind of transformation that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have envisaged. It is, therefore, often asked as to why, then, that radical transformation should inevitably be sought. The ultimate answer to this question is that that is the aim that the supermind embedded in the inconscient and the supermind that is acting upon evolutionary process wills it. The aim of evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is not merely to arrive at a point where spirit and soul can be realized as immortal; the intention is to manifest the immortality of the spirit and the soul in the body, and for that purpose, the human body as evolved so far is far too inadequate. The human body is imperfect, and cannot manifest the powers of the spirit or soul in their completeness. If the soul has entered into evolutionary process, it cannot be for returning from that process and for going back to its earlier state where it was already aware of its own immortality or of the immortality of the eternal Spirit. The soul has entered into evolutionary process as an aid to the full manifestation of Spirit in Matter. It is to create out of Matter a temple of divinity, and therefore, even if its task is avoided by some or many, the original intention of evolution and the original reason of soul to descend in the evolutionary process will tend to prevail. According to some, the soul has fallen, by an error, into Nature and in the evolutionary movement. But the soul living originally in the company of the Supreme could not have fallen into an error;

it must be a deliberate will inspired by the Supreme Will for accomplishment of a special purpose. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“Not to return as speedily as may be to heavens where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly, — in that case the ignorance would be either an inexplicable blunder of the All-conscient or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable, — but to realize the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of an embodied material existence, by struggle therefore towards the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the labour of the human race in the series of its cycles. The Ignorance is a necessary, though quite subordinate term which the universal Knowledge has imposed on itself that that movement might be possible, — not a blunder and a fall, but a purposeful descent, not a curse, but a divine opportunity. To find and embody the All-Delight in an intense summary of its manifoldness, to achieve a possibility of the infinite Existence which could not be achieved in other conditions, to create out of Matter a temple of the Divinity would seem to be the task imposed on the spirit born into the material universe.”<sup>53</sup>

The building of the divine temple would mean the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth, and this kingdom would include living manifestation of harmony of fraternity, and as a foundation of it, the coming on the earth

of superhumanity governed by supramental consciousness. But this will also mean an evolving humanity under the guidance of the supermind. In that humanity, there could be gradations of more and more evolved consciousness represented by human beings whose minds, lives and bodies would be in the process of supramentalisation. This growing process of supramentalisation would presuppose a certain degree of generalization of what Sri Aurobindo has called the Mind of Light.

The Mind of Light is the mind, which is the last action of the supermind in its involutionary movement; supermind, leaning downward towards overmind, intuitive mind, illumined mind and higher mind, has in that gradation, the Mind of Light below the higher mind. In the involutionary process of descent, the Mind of Light is the stage where, at one downward move, the process of ignorance begins, and there is the formation of the involutionary ignorant mind. It is when this involutionary ignorance descended downwards that it reached the point of the Inconscience. The Inconscience is the base on which the evolutionary ladder begins to be built, and there is first the emergence or evolution of Matter, and this is followed by the evolution and development of life; life is then established as a grade of the evolutionary ascent, and it is followed by the development and evolution of the mind. But every stage of evolutionary ascent is preceded by three stages: there is, first, multiplication of powers and capabilities of the grade of consciousness which has been established in the ascending order of evolution; there is, next, growing pressure of the higher grade of consciousness which is involved and struggling to evolve upwards; as a result, there is an upward ascent to the higher grade of consciousness in the form of

aspiration, effort and increasing labour; consequently, in response to that ascending aspiration, there comes about, thirdly, the descent of the corresponding grade of consciousness which is already in operation in the higher relevant typal world. With the descent of that higher grade of consciousness, there is a meeting-point of that which is evolving from below and that which has come from above. That which has come from above can be said to have come down by the process of evolutionary descent, since that descent is an aid to the upward evolutionary movement. As a result of union of the grade of consciousness which is struggling from below and the corresponding grade of consciousness which has descended from above, there comes about the establishment of that grade of consciousness as a stage of the evolutionary ascent. It can be said, for instance, that when the animal consciousness had developed multiplicity of its capacities and various forms in which these capacities were embodied, there was still an upward evolutionary urge of the Mind that was involved in the animal consciousness. In the Darwinian Ape, that pressure of the involved mind could surge upwards; at that point, the mind which has been operating in the typal world, —descended in the earth plane. It was then that the mind that came from above and the mind that was surging from below came to arrive at a junction. As a result, the evolutionary movement could be said to have made the evolutionary ascent in the form of the permanent establishment of the mind on the earth.

Mental consciousness is only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind: hence, the mind which has evolved manifests the impulse towards the higher states more or less obscurely in different vessels of the human body

with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be. As a part of this process, a stage was reached when the Mind of Light came to be established, according to the Mother, when Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body. Let us try to understand this important stage of evolution.

When Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, the supermind was already working in the physical, but indirectly through intermediaries of the mind and the vital. The question was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said that it could be possible only if the physical mind received the Supramental light; the physical mind was the instrument for the direct action upon the most material. The Mother added that when Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, the physical mind received the supramental light. Then she further added that that was the moment when the Mind of Light got realized here.

Describing the Mind of Light, Sri Aurobindo has stated in his *'The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth'*, as follows:

“What we have called specifically the Mind of Light is indeed the last of a series of descending planes of consciousness in which the Supermind veils itself by a self-chosen limitation or modification of its self-manifesting activities, but its essential character remains the same: there is in it an action of light, of truth, of knowledge in which inconscience, ignorance and error claim no place.”<sup>54</sup>

It was this Mind of Light, which got established as a part of ascending order of the evolution. While describing the transition from Mind as it has evolved and as it is at work as a part of the evolutionary ascent towards the Mind of Light,

Sri Aurobindo states as follows:

“...in the ascending order of the evolution we reach a transition in which we see the light, are turned towards it, reflected in our consciousness and one further step carries us into the domain of the Light.”<sup>55</sup>

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the development of the mind of light on earth and points out that as it progresses, humanity of today will be led to a “new humanity” endowed with “mind of light” from among which will be recruited the race of supramental or divine beings on earth. Sri Aurobindo points out further that, “A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or a race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but...it would be possessed already of what could be called mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. Even, the highest manifestations of a mind of Light would be an instrumentality of the supermind, a part of it or a projection from it, a stepping beyond humanity into the superhumanity of the supramental principle.”<sup>56</sup>

Sri Aurobindo points out that this advance like others in evolution might not be reached and would naturally not be reached at one bound but from the very beginning it would be inevitable. The new humanity, on account of its possession of the Mind of Light, “would enable the human

being to rise beyond the normalities of its present thinking, feeling and being into those highest powers of the mind in its self-exceedings which intervene between our mentality and supermind and can be regarded as steps leading towards the greater and more luminous principle.”<sup>57</sup>

As noted above, the realization of the mind of light on the earth took place in 1950 when Sri Aurobindo left his body. The subsequent descent of the superman consciousness that took place, as the Mother recorded it in the Agenda, on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1969, may be regarded as the next gigantic step in the story of the ongoing evolution of humanity towards the realization that Sri Aurobindo envisages as inevitable in the steps where the supermind would be fully manifesting on the earth. The new humanity possessed of the mind of light would march forward towards the development of the race of the supramental beings, on the one hand, and towards the stage of the life of humanity when it would be enlightened, uplifted, governed, and harmonized, on the other. As Sri Aurobindo has further envisaged, even the body would become something much less powerless, obscure and animal in its propensities and capable instead of a new and harmonized perfection.<sup>58</sup>

But these steps of evolution have to be followed by still greater gigantic steps. What the Vedic Rishis had attained in terms of the widening of physical consciousness by the visitation of the supramental consciousness<sup>59</sup> and what they had declared of the state of immortality was itself a gigantic step in the history of human evolution; but when we study the story of the experiences and realizations of the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we find that new and great discoveries were needed to avoid the incomplete results that the Vedic Rishis had arrived at. Widening and



universalisation of physical consciousness, which was the culmination reached by the Vedic Rishis, was not enough. As the Mother said:

“According to the ancient traditions, this universalisation of the physical body was considered the supreme realization, but it is only a foundation, the base upon which the Supramental can come down without breaking everything.”<sup>60</sup>

The universalisation of the bodily consciousness that is witnessed in the hymns of victory of the Vedic Rishis can be considered to be a foundation, and even though that foundation could be rightly considered to be the state of immortality, what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have conceived as the new victory, even in terms of immortality, consists of what may be called perfect manifestation of the supermind in all parts of being and in every detail. The widening and universalisation of the physical consciousness by the descent of the supermind has to be followed, — and this was the new discovery of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, — by the penetration of the material mind by the supramental consciousness so that the supreme power and light of consciousness can be fixed and permanently established in the material mind and in the mind of the bodily cells.

The perfect manifestation is, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, implied in the unmistakable urge of the evolutionary force, and it has, therefore, to be worked out right up to the point where the human body and even its structure would evolve into a divine body capable of manifesting supermind and eventually Sachchidananda in fullness on the earth.

## **Immortality of the Spirit; Immortality of the Psychic Being, and Immortality of the Mind, Life and Body**

Sri Aurobindo speaks of immortality in its essential meaning as also in its all comprehensive meaning. There is, first, the realization of immortality when one arrives at union with the immortal and eternal Divine Self or Divine Spirit or the Supreme Divine. And without that foundational realization of immortality, there cannot be the fullness of the immortality in all parts of the being and fullness of manifestation of the divine consciousness on the earth.

When we analyze this fullness of immortality, there is, in the Integral Yoga, the inescapable role of the psychic entity, which is the truth of all individualizing processes. Individualization and universalisation are mutual, in the sense that the true individual cannot realize his true individuality without universalisation, and the universal always tends to summarize itself in fullness through the individual. The true individual and the true universal are both representations in manifestation of the transcendental Supreme of whom the vast extension is the universal and whose eternal portion is the individual. Matter, Life and Mind and other planes of consciousness between the mind and the supermind are various gradations of the universal consciousness, and on each plane, there is a constant process of individualization which constantly proceeds by some degree of universalisation. The individual is as immortal as the universal and the transcendental, and the total manifestation of immortality cannot be attained without the realization of the immortality of the individual that is represented as psychic being, the evolving psychic entity in every individual human being; the psychic being is immortal

but evolving formation that constantly guides and inspires the body, life and mind to grow into its own image of immortality and to manifest that immortality. In human life, the central occupation of the immortal psychic being is to impart the truth of its own nature, particularly of its nature of divine love, to the mind, life and body. As a part of that work, the psychic consciousness, the true individual consciousness, strives to arrive at the individualization of the mind, life and body, and this individualization spreads from its inmost centre of consciousness to the outermost surface consciousness. According to Sri Aurobindo, immortality can be translated into the mental immortality, vital immortality and even physical immortality, when the mental, vital and physical in the human being can be individualized even on the outermost fringes of the surface consciousness and when these instruments (mental, vital and physical) can, by psychycisation and by supramentalisation, attain the power of continuous and harmonious progression in consonance with the highest movement of the indwelling Divine Will.

While explaining the complete sense of immortality, Sri Aurobindo states as follows:

“It is that secret Spirit or divinity of Self in us which is imperishable, because it is unborn and eternal. The psychic entity within, its representative, the spiritual individual in us, is the Person that we are; but the “I” of this moment, the “I” of this life is only a formation, a temporary personality of this inner Person: it is one step of the many steps of our evolutionary change, and it serves its true purpose only when we pass beyond it to a farther step leading nearer to a higher degree of consciousness and being. It is the inner Person that survives death, even as it pre-exists before birth; for this constant survival is a rendering of the eternity of our timeless

Spirit into the terms of Time.

“What our normal demand of survival asks for is a similar survival for our mind, our life, even our body; ... But this aspiration could only succeed if the mind, life or body could put on something of the immortality and divinity of the indwelling Spirit.”<sup>61</sup>

But what can we mean by the mind, life and body putting on something of the immortality and divinity of the indwelling Spirit? While elucidating this important point, Sri Aurobindo states as follows:

“There are certain circumstances in which the survival of the outer mental personality representative of the inner mental Purusha could be possible. It could happen if our mental being came to be so powerfully individualized on the surface and so much one with the inner mind and inner mental Purusha and at the same time so open plastically to the progressive action of the Infinite that the soul no longer needed to dissolve the old form of mind and create a new one in order to progress. A similar individualization, integration and openness of the vital being on the surface would alone make possible a similar survival of the life-part in us, the outer vital personality representative of the inner life-being, the vital Purusha. What would really happen then is that the wall between the inner self and the outer man would have broken down and the permanent mental and vital being from within, the mental and vital representatives of the immortal psychic entity, would govern the life. Our mind-nature and our life-nature would then be a continuous progressive expression of the soul and not a nexus of successive formations preserved only in their essence. Our mental personality and life-personality would then subsist without

dissolution from birth to birth; they would be in this sense immortal, persistently surviving, continuous in their sense of identity. This would be evidently an immense victory of soul and mind and life over the Inconscience and the limitations of material Nature.”<sup>62</sup>

But even then this would not be the consummation that is envisaged for the supramental manifestation and transformation of the physical life. For even then there will be the necessity of discarding the physical form. The law of death which is imposed on the bodily existence attached to all the forms of life and mind would still remain, and the Spirit would still remain under the obligation of discarding the physical body. And this obligation contradicts the sovereignty of the Spirit, the very nature of which is that of freedom and immortality. Immortality of the body consists, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, of the physical body capable of manifesting the sovereign divine will to manifest itself through the physical instrumentality as much as it wants, as long as it wants and the manner in which it wants. In other words, a condition must be attained where the law of obligation under which the body has to be discarded because it has become incapable of manifesting the sovereign will of the Divine Consciousness no more persists in its operation. Sri Aurobindo asks if there is any reason why the Spirit should not be able to liberate the bodily existence from the present obligation of the law of death, division and mutual devouring and use individualization of body as merely a useful subordinate term of the one divine Conscious-Existence made serviceable for the joy of the Infinite in the finite. Or, he asks, why should the Spirit not be free in a sovereign occupation of form, consciously immortal even in the changing of its robe of Matter,

possessed of his self-delight in a world subjected to the law of unity and love and beauty? If man be the inhabitant of terrestrial existence through whom that transformation of the mental into the supramental can at last be operated, is it not possible that he may develop, as well as a divine mind and a divine life, also a divine body?<sup>63</sup>

In answer to these questions, Sri Aurobindo points out that the one thing that can stand in the way of that ultimate terrestrial possibility is if the substance of matter as we see it today is the only substance that there could be for Matter. But there are, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, other states of Matter itself; there is undoubtedly an ascending series of the divine gradations of substance; there is, therefore, the possibility of the material being transfiguring itself through the acceptance of a higher law than its own which is yet its own because it was always there latent and potential in its own secrecies.<sup>64</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the material creature opens to a wider and wider play of the activities of the higher grades of consciousness in Matter, and all that is needed is a receptacle, medium, instrument. And that possibility is provided for in the body, life and consciousness of man. The ancient occult science had discovered and the oldest Vedantic knowledge tells us of five degrees of our being, the material, the vital, the mental, the ideal, the spiritual or beatific (*annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijnānamaya and ānandamaya*), and to each of these grades, there corresponds a grade of our substance, a sheath (*koṣa*) as it was called in the ancient figurative language of the Upanishad. Hathayoga and Tantricism, which had reduced this entire psychophysical knowledge to a science had discovered six nervous centres of life in the dense body

corresponding to six centres of life and mind faculty in the subtle, and they had found out subtle physical exercises by which these centres now closed could be opened up and even the physical and vital obstructions to the experience of the ideal and spiritual being would be destroyed. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo refers to the one prominent result that is claimed by the Hathayogins for their practices, and which is verified in many respects; this is the control of the physical life-force which liberated them from some of the ordinary habits or so-called laws which are considered to be inseparable from life, and the body. Indeed, these powers and achievements can be attained also by the methods of the integral yoga, in which the practices of Hatha yoga are optional. But what is important is to note that there is a greater and truer existence behind the forms and consciousness and power which are seen manifested in the material evolution. Our substance of the human body, thus, does not end with the physical body. As a result, subtler grades of substances with a finer law and a greater power can therefore impose their law on our dense matter and substitute their purer, higher, intenser conditions of being for the grossness and limitation of our present physical life and impulses and habits. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, concludes:

“If that be so, then the evolution of a nobler physical existence not limited by the ordinary conditions of animal birth and life and death, of difficult alimentation and facility of disorder and disease and subjection to poor and unsatisfied vital cravings ceases to have the appearance of a dream and chimera and becomes a possibility founded upon a rational and philosophic truth which is in accordance with all the rest that we have hitherto known, experienced or been able to think out about the overt and secret truth of our existence.”<sup>65</sup>

In terms of evolution, therefore, Sri Aurobindo envisages the evolution not only of states of untrammelled consciousness, of mental immortality and vital immortality, but even of a physical life fit for divine inhabitant and, — not out of the sense of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body, — the conquest of death, an earthly immortality.

The difficulty of physical immortality is seen by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to be of enormous proportions. To connect supermind and human body where that body could ever arrive at a more perfect form and where it would become a more perfect vessel of a higher range of the expressive powers of divinity has rarely in the past been envisaged, except for the body which cannot exist here upon earth. There have been visions and imaginations of higher and subtler states of body, and they have been regarded as the privilege of celestial beings. Indeed, in certain forms of yoga there is the conception and realization of a spiritualized conscious body, *chinmaya deha*; there has been also the conception of a radiant or luminous body, which might be the Vedic *dyotirmaya deha*. A light has been seen by some, radiating from the bodies of highly developed spiritual persons, even extending to the emission of an enveloping aura. There have also been conceptions of extraordinary powers of the human body, as a result of which it can be seen physically, and in contradiction of the laws of the physical life on the earth, to be present at more than one place at the same time. But these experiences and these conceptions, which can be realized and are valid, do not fulfill the aim that Sri Aurobindo speaks in regard to the total transformation. There is no doubt that the attempt to transform the body by



the supramental power was attempted in the Vedic period, since we find references in the Veda and the Upanishads, but as the Mundaka Upanishad points out, one can enter into the higher realms of consciousness and can enter again into the physical life but one cannot return to the bodily life if one enters into the supramental Sun and arrive at the Immortal, the Spirit, the Self, undecaying and imperishable.<sup>66</sup>

That supermind can descend into the body and the body can become universalized has been affirmed in the Veda, but something more radical and something which is much more difficult has to be worked out. For purposes of evolution, this task is inevitable, even though it can be attempted in the beginning only by a few and even though it can be accomplished successfully only by one or two individuals; it is, however, indispensable that it should be attempted and accomplished, first, by some rare individuals and then extended to larger collectivities and even subsequently generalized for humanity. For humanity, which is itself a product of evolution, will be required by the very logic of evolution to participate in the onward march of evolution or else to allow the growth of another species to grow and develop the highest perfection that evolution demands. As Sri Aurobindo points out, man is a transitional being, and the law of transition will oblige man to evolve himself into the next step of evolution. Since the supermind is involved in the inconscience, and since evolution is a process of development of what is involved in the inconscience, supermind has to evolve, and this evolution will necessitate the Herculean labour to fix the supermind in matter and even transform the substance of matter into a substance which can bear the flow of immortalizing supramental bliss. As Sri Aurobindo states in the language of the Veda:

“For from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into these jars of mentalised living matter; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature.”<sup>67</sup>

Total transformation of mind, life and body by the discovery of a new method, an integral method, of fixing the supermind in the physical consciousness was therefore the aim that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother put before themselves, and they also envisaged the development of the Divine body as an eventual goal, even though the accomplishment would require centuries. In terms of evolution, two or three centuries are but minutes, and the whole humanity is ticking with the throb of evolution, and even if it refuses to collaborate, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother envisage that humanity will continue to tick the throb of evolution, and even if there is a crisis, that crisis can be overcome. They have therefore envisaged a number of steps through which the evolutionary process has to pass, and they have also envisaged the possibility and even inevitability of physical immortality. Indeed, physical immortality will be marked by the liberation of the yoke of the law of death, but at the same time, it would not mean the yoke of the obligation of the spirit to continue for ever and ever in the same physical body. Physical immortality will mean the capacity of the body to respond to all the demands of the will of the immortal spirit and also pliability by which the spirit can terminate its abode in a physical robe at will. The conditions of attaining this immortality will include the mental and vital immortality but also much more. As Sri Aurobindo states:

“The physical being could only endure, if by some means its physical causes of decay and disruption could be overcome and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it must be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence.”<sup>68</sup>

In the footnote to the above, Sri Aurobindo has pointed out: “Even if Science, — physical Science or occult Science, — were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being.”

The descent of the supermind and fixing of the supermind in the physical consciousness and the eventual development of the Divine Body would mean the consummation of a triple immortality, — (i) immortality of the mind, life and body or immortality of the nature, completing (ii) the essential immortality of the spirit and (iii) the psychic survival of death. This consummation, “might be the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the material Inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of the reign of Matter. But the true immortality would still be the eternity of the Spirit; the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the Spirit’s victory here over Death and Matter.”<sup>69</sup>

## **Why is the conquest of the Law of Physical Death so difficult?**

There are three conditions that combine together in the nature of Matter as we experience it which render acuteness of the opposition of Matter to Spirit. It is this acuteness of opposition that has been responsible for the development of asceticism and rejection of material life and for the declaration that spiritual life is inconsistent with material life and that ultimately the higher spiritual life can be lived only by transcending to some celestial plane of existence or by attaining supracosmic or acosmic spirit or the state of Nirvana. First of all, matter is found to be the culmination of the principle of Ignorance and it is thus completely opposed to the spirit, which is self-luminous, infinitely aware of itself behind all workings of force and their master. It is true that out of the inconscience of matter, life and mind have emerged, and even if life struggles towards fullness and immortality, it is obliged to work under the law of matter, which appears to be insurmountable. Even if mind appears in the evolutionary movement, it cannot liberate itself from the threads of ignorance which are deep-rooted in the life of Matter. The second fundamental opposition that Matter offers to Spirit is that it is the culmination of bondage to mechanistic Law and opposes all that seeks to liberate itself. Matter is seen as a rigid chain that is fixed, mechanical and inert, not in the sense of absence of motion but in the sense of bondage. Thirdly, Matter offers fundamental opposition to Spirit because of the fact that it is the culmination of the principle of division and struggle. It is found that ignorance, inertia and division of matter impose on the vital and mental existence the law of pain and suffering and the unrest of dissatisfaction. And yet, when man becomes wholly self-conscious, pain and discord

of the world become finally too keenly sensible to be borne with contentment. As Sri Aurobindo points out, man is a finite — seeming infinite — and cannot fail to arrive at a seeking after the infinite, and therefore, even if one is led to escape from the yoke of ignorance, inertia and division by means of rejection of material life, he cannot but lead the evolutionary process to bring into the material life infinite light, joy and power. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“He is the first son of earth who becomes vaguely aware of God within him, of his immortality or of his need of immortality, and the knowledge is a whip that drives and a cross of crucifixion until he is able to turn it into a source of infinite light and joy and power.”<sup>70</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, the descent of the supermind would not only liberate the mind and liberate the life but would also use the individualization of mind as a useful subordinate action of its all-embracing consciousness and would use the individualization of life as a useful subordinate action of the one Conscious-Force, but would also liberate the body and use the individualization of body as a useful subordinate term of the one divine Conscious-Existence made serviceable for the joy of the Infinite in the finite.

## **Supramental Transformation of the Human Body and Development of the New Instrumental Structure of the Divine Body**

The transformation of the bodily life on the earth is indispensable, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, if humanity is to be led towards durable harmony and unity. Evolution has within itself the irresistible urge for the

manifestation of supramental perfection, and therefore, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have put forward the ideal of the Divine Life, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on the earth, — life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on the earth in the conditions of the material universe. This process of transformation would lead to the perfection of the body, and in the process of arriving at that perfection, there must come about the sovereign reign of a supramental truth-consciousness to which all other forms of life would be subordinated and depend manifestly upon the supermind as the master principle and supreme power. In this context, the human body would need such a radical transformation that it would lead even to a change of what might be called its instrumental structure, its functioning and organization. Sri Aurobindo compares the evolution of the human body with a similar or even a more radical evolution of the divine body involving the modification of the previous animal form. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“Especially, as the human body had to come into existence with its modification of the previous animal form and its erect figure of a new power of life and its expressive movements and activities serviceable and necessary to the principle of mind and the life of a mental being, so too a body must be developed with new powers, activities or degrees of a divine action expressive of a truth-conscious being and proper to a supramental consciousness and manifesting a conscious spirit. ...In this progression the body also may reach a more perfect form and a higher range of its expressive powers, become a more and more perfect vessel of divinity.”<sup>71</sup>

As Sri Aurobindo points out, the body has evolved out of the Inconscience; it is itself inconscient or only half-conscious; in man the body, in its developed form, serves the

intellectual mind and more complete intelligence as the physical base, container and instrumental means of our total spiritual endeavour. Even then, its animal character and its gross limitations stand as an obstacle to the process of spiritual perfection. On the other hand, the body has also developed a soul or rather the soul has been able to evolve by its psychic powers higher and higher sheaths or *koṣas*, the physical, vital and the mental, and it has also evolved a growing psychic being; this may indicate that the body is capable of further development and may become a shrine and expression of the spirit; the body may come to reveal a secret spirituality of matter. In that case, the body may be regarded as capable of becoming a complete instrument of divine life; but for arriving at that point of development, the inconveniences of animal body and its animal nature and impulses have to be overcome. This would imply full and fundamental liberation of the body from its inconscience or half-conscience, even transformation of the inconscience.

Sri Aurobindo has examined in detail the necessity of this task and the difficulties of the task which seem to be almost impossible. For the body binds the mind, soul and life-force to matter, to materiality of all kinds and to the call of the unregenerated earth-nature. The materiality of the body brings to the physical being a bondage to the material instrument, to the brain and heart and senses; this brings physical being to be tied to materialism of all kinds and to the bodily mechanism and its needs and obligations. The physical being is also tied to imperative need of food and preoccupation of the means of getting it and storing it as one of the besetting interests of life, to fatigue and sleep, to the satisfaction of bodily desire. These obligations and the obligation of the body to undergo infirmities and diseases of

the body and ultimately to death,—all these compulsions are inconsistent with the nature of the Spirit; and spiritual transformation of the body would imply a conquest of unprecedented dimensions. Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's realizations of the powers of supramental truth and of the divine nature have led them to conclude that the conquest of obstacles on the path is possible and it must be carried out and can be carried out. As Sri Aurobindo states:

“These obstacles can be overcome, the denials and resistance of the body surmounted, its transformation is possible. Even the inconscient and animal part of us can be illumined and made capable of manifesting the god-nature even as our mental humanity can be made to manifest the superhumanity of the supramental truth-consciousness and the divinity of what is now superconscious to us and the total transformation made a reality here.”<sup>72</sup>

The difficulties are, however, psychological and corporeal; they arise from the unregenerated animality evidenced by the insistence of the body's gross instincts, impulses and desires. The corporeal difficulties arise out of our corporeal structure and organic instrumentation imposing its restrictions on the dynamism of the higher divine nature. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the psychological difficulties are easier to deal with and conquer; but difficulties arising out of our corporeal structure are of such a magnitude that major changes of that structure will need to be effected. The divine body will have a new corporeal structure and organic instrumentation appropriate to the divine nature, although it will retain all those aspects of structure and instrumentation of the human body which would be experimentally found to be capable of manifesting the divine nature.



## PART SIX

### **Difficulties and Remedies**

#### **Psychological Difficulties and Remedies**

In regard to the psychological difficulties, certain impulses and instincts of the body have been found especially harmful by the spiritual aspirant. Sri Aurobindo points out that sex and sexuality and all that springs from sex and testifies to its existence had to be banned and discarded from spiritual life. Sri Aurobindo points out that though this is difficult, it is not at all impossible and can be made a cardinal condition for the spiritual seeker.<sup>73</sup> In the practice of integral yoga, all gross animal indulgence of sex desire and impulse would have to be eliminated; it could only continue among those who are not ready for the higher life or not yet ready for a complete spiritual living. Sri Aurobindo further points out that all who aspired for spiritual life but could not yet take it up in its fullness, sex will have to be refined, submit to the spiritual or psychic impulse and a control by the higher mind and the higher vital and shed all its lighter, frivolous or degraded forms and feel the touch of the purity of the ideal. At the same time, all recognition of the sex principle, as apart from the gross physical indulgence of sex-impulse, could not be excluded from divine life upon earth. In its human action on the mental and vital level, sex is not altogether an undivine principle; it has its nobler aspects and idealities, and it has to be seen in what way and to what extent it can be extended into the new and larger life.

Sri Aurobindo points out, "Love would remain, all forms of the pure truth of love, in higher and higher steps till it realized its highest nature, widened into universal love, merged into the love of the Divine."<sup>74</sup> Sri Aurobindo also points out that the love of man and woman would also undergo that elevation and consummation; for all that can feel the touch of the ideal and spiritual must follow the way of ascent till it reaches the divine Reality. Similarly, the body and its activities must be accepted as part of the divine life and must all follow the process of higher elevation and consummation. At the same time, Sri Aurobindo underlines that, as in the other evolutionary transitions, what cannot accept the law of the divine life must fall away from the ascending nature.

Another difficulty which has to be confronted relates to the body's dependence for its very existence upon food, and here, too, are involved the gross physical instincts, impulses and desires that are associated with this difficult factor. These include the essential cravings of the palate, the greed of food and animal gluttony of the belly. The higher human in us has attempted to overcome this difficulty by seeking refuge in a temperate moderation, in abstemiousness and abstinence or in carelessness about the body and its wants and in an absorption in higher things. In certain forms of asceticism, long and frequent fasts are recommended, and although these fasts might lift up the spiritual seeker temporarily out of the clutch of the body's demand and help him to feel in himself a pure vacancy of the wide rooms of the spirit, this does not mean liberation, and the question may be raised whether the divine life must submit to the necessity of fasting. Sri Aurobindo himself had made experiments, and he has confirmed that even while fasting for long periods, it is

possible to maintain the full energies and activities of the soul and mind and life, even those of the body.<sup>75</sup> He points out that one can remain awake but concentrated in yoga all the time, or think deeply and write day and night, to dispense with sleep, to walk eight hours a day, maintaining all these activities separately or altogether and not feel any loss of strength, any fatigue, any kind of failure or decadence. He also found that at the end of the fast one can even resume at once taking the normal or even a greater than the normal amount of nourishment without any transition, precautions such as medical science enjoins, as if both the complete fasting and the feasting were natural conditions, alternating by an immediate and easy passage from one to the other, of a body already trained by a sort of initial transformation to be an instrument of the powers and activities of Yoga. He, however, found one important but unacceptable consequence; he found that one does not escape the wasting of the material tissues of the body, its flesh and substance. Hence, his conclusion was that unless a practicable way and means could be found by which that invincible obstacle too might be overcome, one has to go back to food and the established material forces of Nature. In other words, food and the ordinary process of Nature can be accepted although its use has to be liberated from attachment and desire and the grosser indiscriminating appetites and clutch at the pleasures of the flesh. Indeed, so long as the food is accepted, a refined pleasure in it may be permitted and even a desireless ananda of taste take the place of the physical relish and the human selection by likings and dislikings which is our present imperfect response to what is offered to us by Nature.

Sri Aurobindo considers and answers an important question raised by sex for those who dedicate themselves to

the integral yoga, — and that problem is related to the necessity of the prolongation of the race for which the sex activity is the only means already provided by Nature for living beings and inevitably imposed upon the race. In answer,<sup>76</sup> Sri Aurobindo points out that there will always be the multitude who do not concern themselves with the pursuit of a divine life or who are not ready for its complete practice and to these can be left the care for the prolongation of the race. But Sri Aurobindo acknowledges that there may be circumstances in which a voluntary creation of bodies for souls that seek to enter the earth-life to help in the creation and extension of the divine life upon earth might be found to be desirable. In these circumstances, the necessity of a physical procreation for this purpose could only be avoided if new means of a supraphysical kind were evolved and made available. It is true that even physical science is trying to find physical means for passing beyond the ordinary instrumentation or procedure of Nature in the matter of propagation. But these means, even when found, would not be able to avoid the limitations, degradations, incompleteness and heavy imperfection of the results which would be available when physical means are used, which are under the yoke of the law of material force. Sri Aurobindo refers to the Indian view held from the earliest times of the possibility and reality of the use of occult powers by men with an advanced knowledge of occultism or men with a developed spiritual knowledge and experience and dynamic force. Sri Aurobindo also speaks of the Tantra where there is an organized system of the method and practice of the use of occult powers for producing results by the use of occult forces; but there is here still the necessity of a resort to the normal means of propagation and the gross method of physical Nature. Thus, the resort to the sex impulse and its

animal process can be transcended only if there was a possibility of a purely occult method and a resort to supraphysical processes acting by supraphysical means for a physical result. In this context, Sri Aurobindo refers to the actuality of the occult methods by which materialization and dematerialization can be effected. In the theory of the occultist and in the gradation of the ranges and planes of our being which Yoga-knowledge outlines, there is not only a subtle physical force but a subtle physical Matter intervening between life and gross matter and to create in this subtle physical substance and precipitate the forms thus made into our grosser materiality is feasible. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo states:

“It should be possible and it is believed to be possible for an object formed in this subtle physical substance to make a transit from its subtlety into the state of gross Matter directly by the intervention of an occult force and process whether with or even without the assistance or intervention of some gross material procedure. A soul wishing to enter into a body or form for itself a body and take part in a divine life upon earth might be assisted to do so or even provided with such a form by this method or direct transmutation without passing through birth by the sex process or undergoing any degradation or any of the heavy limitations in the growth and development of its mind and material body inevitable to our present way of existence. It might then assume at once the structure and greater powers and functionings of the truly divine material body which must one day emerge in a progressive evolution to a totally transformed existence both of the life and form in a divinized earth-nature.”<sup>77</sup>

This possibility and inevitability shows us the gigantic proportions of the work that the evolutionary manifestation

of the supramental being on the earth places before humanity. Indeed, such a programme as this, even if conducted quickly and effectively, would extend over a long period, even though, as we find it in 'Mother's Agenda', the essential task of this work was accomplished by the Mother in 1970.

As noted earlier, the first major task connected with this essential task was accomplished in 1950, when Sri Aurobindo left his body, and the Mother stated in a conversation that the Mind of Light was realized on the earth. She had explained at that time that even though Supermind had descended long ago into the mind and even into the vital, and even though it was working by the year 1950 in the physical also but indirectly through the mind and the vital, the question was about the direct action of the supermind in the physical. She had added that according to Sri Aurobindo, it would be possible only if the physical mind received the Supramental light, since the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. According to the Mother, when Sri Aurobindo left his body the physical mind received the supramental light, and that meant the descent and operation of the Mind of Light on the earth. Thereafter, the second major accomplishment connected with this essential task took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1969,<sup>78</sup> when the Mother had an experience of "new consciousness", the consciousness of the superman, an intermediate between the human and the supramental being. But the third and final accomplishment of the essential task was what the Mother described on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1970,<sup>79</sup> when she said that she had accomplished the work that Sri Aurobindo had given to her.

Explaining this momentous accomplishment, the Mother

pointed out that one can attain the supramental consciousness when one goes up to the supramental consciousness but the difficulty was that of fixing the supramental consciousness in the physical so that the physical life is thereafter irrevocably directed by the supramental consciousness. She further explained why all those who did not foresee the possibility of this new accomplishment had said that the best is to get out of the body. She then added that the change that was brought about by the accomplishment that was achieved proved that that necessity of getting out of the body or the necessity of leaving the physical consciousness was no longer unavoidable. She said:

“All that has become so clear! But this change, the fact that it’s NO LONGER inescapable, that is the great Victory: it’s NO LONGER inescapable. You feel — feel and see, and the body itself has experienced — the possibility that soon, here too, things will be truer.

There is ... there is really something changed in the world. ...

Naturally, for things to be truly established, it’s going to take time. That’s the battle going on. From every side, on every plane, there’s an onslaught of things coming to say outwardly, “Nothing has changed” — but it’s not true. It’s not true, the body knows it’s not true. And now it knows, it knows in what sense. ...

Now I see, I see how his [Sri Aurobindo’s] departure and his work so ... so immense, you know, and constant in this subtle physical, how much, how much it has helped! How much he has (*Mother gestures as if kneading Matter*) ... how much he has helped prepare things, change the structure of the physical. ...

It has to be *worked out*, as they say, realized in every detail, but the change IS DONE — the change is done.”

Explaining what was done and what change was effected, the Mother added:

“Which means that the material conditions, which were elaborated by the mind, FIXED by it (*Mother clenches her fist tight*), and which appeared so inescapable, to such a point that those who had a living experience of the higher worlds thought one had to flee this world, abandon this material world if one really wanted to live in the Truth (that’s the cause of all those theories and beliefs), now things are no longer like that. Now things are no longer like that. The physical is CAPABLE of receiving the higher Light, the Truth, the true Consciousness, and of man-i-fest-ing it.

It’s not easy, it calls for endurance and will, but a day will come when it will be quite natural. It’s only just the open door — that’s all, now we have to go on. ...

It has taken this Consciousness ... a little more than a year to win this Victory. Naturally, as yet it’s visible only to those who have the inner vision, but ... it’s done. ...

That was the work Sri Aurobindo had given me, that was it. Now I understand.”<sup>80</sup>

As will be noticed, the Mother speaks here of the help that Sri Aurobindo continued to give to the Mother from his subtle physical abode for arriving at the above accomplishment. In fact, this also explains that Sri Aurobindo left his body in order to be able to work out and arrive at this accomplishment more quickly and more effectively through the Mother’s body. Secondly, it is clear that the work that was



accomplished required to be worked out in every detail, but what was DONE, was the most essential task, and it was the task that Sri Aurobindo had given to the Mother to be accomplished in her body and in her physical consciousness. Thirdly, the Mother speaks also of the work concerning the structure of the body. But it is also clear that the tasks that Sri Aurobindo envisages in regard to the structure of the body were consequential to the task that was accomplished by the Mother, and that those tasks could even take centuries. In fact, this is what Mother said in the same conversation of the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1970:

“And all, all circumstances are as catastrophic as they can be: troubles, complications, difficulties, everything, just everything goes at it relentlessly like that, like wild beasts, but ... it’s over. The body KNOWS that it’s over. It may take centuries, but it’s over. To disappear, it may take centuries, but it’s over now.

This wholly concrete and absolute realization that one could have only when going out of Matter (*Mother brings a finger down*), it’s sure, sure and certain that we will have it RIGHT HERE.”<sup>81</sup>

The Mother reiterated during her conversation with Satprem on 29.04.1970 that the object to be accomplished was a change in the physical consciousness, that the change in the physical appearance was a secondary consequence, and that that would be the last thing to change. She said emphatically that the thing that had to be accomplished was accomplished. In her own words:

“... We think that this, this appearance (*Mother points to her body*) is ... to the ordinary consciousness it seems to be the most important thing — it’s obviously the last thing that

will change. And to the ordinary consciousness, it seems to be the last thing that will change because it's the most important: that will be the surest sign. But it's not that at all!... It's not that at all.

The important thing in this change in the CONSCIOUSNESS — which has taken place. All the rest is a consequence. And here, in this material world, it appears the most important to us because it's ... everything is upside down. I don't know how to explain.

For us, when this [the body] is able to visibly be something different from what it is, we'll say, "Ah, now the thing is done." — That's not true: the thing IS DONE. This [the body] is a secondary consequence. ..."<sup>82</sup>

That secondary thing, the appearance of the divine body with a new structure appropriate to the function and manifestation of the supramental consciousness is, as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo, in terms of evolution, quite radical and visibly different in many respects from the human body. Sri Aurobindo points out that the material history of the development of animal and human body is bound to a minutely constructed and elaborated system of organs and a precarious order of their functioning. It is that precarious order that constitutes corporeal difficulties in the form of the supramental transformation and development of the Divine Body.

## Corporeal Difficulties and Remedies

As Sri Aurobindo points out, the precarious order of the human body often becomes a disorder; it is open to general or local disorganization; it is also dependent on an easily

disturbed nervous system and commanded by a brain whose vibrations are supposed to be mechanical and automatic and not under our conscious control. The subjection of the body to these limitations is so great that, Sri Aurobindo points out, it cannot arrive at a divine transformation if there were no radical change in the bodily instrument itself and in the organization of its material workings.<sup>83</sup> For at a certain stage of the process of supramental transformation, the individual undergoing transformation would be bound and stopped by the physical organism's unalterable limitations. Even if the modification is carried out to a large extent, it would remain imperfect owing to the original animal that is inherent in the human process of evolution. There would be possibilities of disorders, derangements and maladies native to the physical arrangements of the body; these could only be shut out by a constant vigilant or perpetual control obligatory on the corporeal instrument's spiritual inhabitant and master. This, Sri Aurobindo points out, could not be called a truly divine body, since there would be an inherent freedom in a divine body from all these things; and this freedom would be natural and perpetual, it would be a normal and native truth of its being and therefore inevitable and unalterable. It would, therefore, be imperative that the functioning and even the structure of the body would need a radical transformation; the mechanical and material impulse and the driving forces of the bodily system will have to be radically transformed.

Sri Aurobindo asks if there is something in us, some agency within our own body which can be used for this all-important liberation and change. Or is there something that has to be developed? Is there something that can be called a central and still occult part of our being containing forces whose powers are not yet visible or only visible fractionally

which can be developed and made complete and dominant and utilizable for the object in view? Sri Aurobindo points out that in the system of Chakras revealed by Tantrik knowledge and accepted in his system of yoga, we shall be able to find what we are looking for. The Chakras or conscious centres, as known and developed in the system of yoga, are sources of all the dynamic powers of our being; they organize their action through plexuses which are arranged in an ascending series from the lowest physical, *mūlādhāra*, to the highest mind centre and spiritual centre called a thousand-petaled lotus, *sahasrāra*, where ascending Nature which is called the Serpent Power in the Tantrik yoga, meets the Brahman and is liberated into the Divine Being. These centres are closed or half closed within us and have to be opened before their full potentiality can be manifested in our physical nature. In the Tantra, these centres are sought to be opened by the process of Hatha yoga, *prānāyāma* and *āsana*, and the Serpent Power is raised from below upwards. But in the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the descending power from above can open the centres from upward below, and this movement does not imperatively require the methods of Hatha yoga. But the important point is that once these centres are opened and completely made active, no limit can easily be set to the development of their potencies. These potencies could be utilized for the purpose of total transformation.

The results of the emergence of these powers of the chakras and the liberated and diviner action on the body itself could be numerous. According to Sri Aurobindo, these results would include the following:

- (i) The first necessary change would be liberation of mind, the life-force and the subtle physical agencies and the

physical consciousness into a freer and a diviner activity;

- (ii) Next, a many-dimensional and unlimited operation of the consciousness operative in the freer and diviner activity;
- (iii) A large outbreak of higher powers and the sublimation of the bodily consciousness itself, of its instrumentation, capacity, capability for the manifestation of the soul in the world of Matter;
- (iv) The subtle senses now concealed in us might come forward into a free action and the material senses themselves become means or channels for the vision of what is now invisible to us or the discovery of things surrounding us but at present unseizable and held back from our knowledge;
- (v) A firm check might be put on impulses of animal nature or they might be purified and subtilised so as to become assets and not liabilities and so transformed as to be parts and processes of a diviner life.

But even though all those results would take the process of transformation to a very high level, they would, according to Sri Aurobindo, still leave a residue of material processes keeping the old way and not amenable to the higher control and, if these could not be changed, the rest of the transformation might itself be checked and incomplete. A total transformation of the body demands a sufficient change of the most material part of the organism, its constitution, its processes and its set-up of nature.

As against the proposal of total transformation of the body, it will be argued that what would be sufficient is a full control instead of transformation. It may be argued that the

knowledge and vision of the organism of the body and its unseen action and an effective control determining its operations according to the conscious will should be regarded as sufficient for the manifestation of divine life on earth. It may even be pointed out that this possibility has been affirmed as something already achieved and it is a part of a development of the inner powers in some individuals who have been practicing certain processes of Yoga. It is true that several phenomena of the power of the will over the body are known such as those of the cessation of breathing while still the life of the body remain stable, the hermetic sealing up at will not only of the breath but all the vital manifestations for long period, the stoppage of the heart, similarly at will, while thought and speech and other mental workings continued unabated; there are well-attested examples of this kind of mastery. Sri Aurobindo acknowledges the validity of this mastery but points out that these are occasional or sporadic successes and they do not amount to transformation. Transformation would mean not only total control but also a natural mastery. Sri Aurobindo goes even farther that even if that is achieved, something more fundamental might have to be demanded for the complete liberation and change into the divine body.

According to Sri Aurobindo, a form of the body and bodily connection containing the earth-dynamism and its fundamental activities must remain, but the connection with the body and bodily action should not be a bond or a confining limitation or contradiction of the totality of change. He observes that the maintenance of the present organism without any transformation of it would not but act as a bond and confinement within the old nature; the material base would still be earth-nature, and old and not a new earth

with a diviner psychological structure. The diviner psychological structure would be out of harmony with the old system and that system would be unable to serve its further evolution or even to uphold it as a base in Matter. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“It (the old system) would bind part of the being, a lower part to an untransformed humanity and unchanged animal functioning and prevent its liberation into the superhumanity of the supramental nature. A change is then necessary here too, a necessary part of the total bodily transformation, which would divinize the whole man, at least in the ultimate result and not leave his evolution incomplete.”<sup>84</sup>

According to Sri Aurobindo, even if the instrumentation of chakras, the conscious centres, and their forces reign over all the activities of nature with the entire domination over the body, even then there would have to be a change in the operative processes of the material organs themselves, in their very constitution and their functioning. They could not be allowed to impose their limitations imperatively on the new physical life. They have to become more serviceable for the psychological purposes of the transforming agent, less blindly material in their responses, more conscious of the act and aim of the inner movements and power which use them.

## Results of the Conquest of the Difficulties

As a result,

- (1) The brain would be a channel of communication of the form of the thoughts and a battery of their insistence on the body and the outside world where they could then become effective directly, communicating themselves

without physical means from mind to mind, producing with a similar directness effects on the thoughts, actions and lives of others or even upon material things;

- (2) The heart would equally be a direct communicant and medium of interchange for the feelings and emotions thrown outward upon the world by the forces of the psychic centre;
- (3) Heart could reply directly to heart, the life-force come to the help of other lives and answer the call, in spite of strangeness and distance, of many beings without any external communication and thrill them with the message and meet in the secret light from one divine centre;
- (4) The will might control the organs that deal with food, safeguard automatically the health, eliminate greed and desire, substitute subtler processes or draw in strength and substance from the universal life-force so that the body could maintain for a long time its own strength and substance without loss or waste, remaining thus with no need of sustenance by material aliments, and yet continue a strenuous action with no fatigue or pause for sleep or repose;
- (5) The soul's will or mind's will could act from higher sources upon the sex-centres and the sex organs so as to check firmly or even banish the grosser sexual impulse or stimulus and instead of serving an animal excitation or crude drive or desire turn their use to the storing, production and direction towards brain and heart and life-force of the essential energy, *ojas*, of which this region is the factory so as to support the works of the mind and soul and spirit and the higher



life-powers and limit the expenditure of the energy on lower things;

- (6) The soul, the psychic being, could more easily fill all the organs with the light and turn the very matter of the body to higher uses for its own greater purpose.

Sri Aurobindo considers all these developments as results of a first potent change; but he envisages the evolutionary urge to proceed to a change of the organs themselves in their material working and use; this would diminish greatly the need of their instrumentation and even of their existence. As Sri Aurobindo points out:

“The centres in the subtle body, *sūkṣma śarīra*, of which one would become conscious and aware of all going on in it would pour their energies into material nerve and plexus and tissue and radiate them through the whole material body; all the physical life and its necessary activities in this new existence could be maintained and operated by these higher agencies in a freer and ampler way and by a less burdensome and restricting method. This might go so far that these organs might cease to be indispensable and even be felt as too obstructive: the central force might use them less and less and finally throw aside their use altogether. If that happened, they might waste by atrophy, be reduced to an insignificant minimum or even disappear. The central force might substitute for them subtle organs of a very different character or, if anything material was needed, instruments that would be forms of dynamism or plastic transmitters rather than what we know as organs. This might well be part of a supreme total transformation of the body, though this too might not be final.”<sup>85</sup>

## Divine Body: Even more radically different

It is quite possible that the new body, the divine body, would be even more radically different from the present form of the human body since, Sri Aurobindo points out, no limits can be imposed on the evolutionary urge. At the same time, Sri Aurobindo points out that all has not to be fundamentally changed, since all has to be preserved that is still needed in the totality; but all has to be perfected and overcome; what has become unhelpful or retarding can be discarded and dropped on the way. Whatever is necessary or thoroughly serviceable for the uses of the new life on the earth must be preserved; whatever is still needed and will serve the purpose of the new life, even though imperfect, will have to be retained on the condition that it will be farther developed and perfected. At the same time, whatever is no longer of use for new aims or is a disability must be thrown aside. Since the foundation of the physical world in which life and mind have evolved and in which supermind will also evolve, the necessary forms and instrumentations of matter must remain. But the materiality of the divine body will have to be refined, uplifted, ennobled, illumined, since Matter and the world of Matter have increasingly to manifest the indwelling Spirit. Sri Aurobindo has stated quite clearly that even if the divine body will be radically different, there must be a continuation from the human to the divine body, and it must continue the already developed evolutionary form. Even if the form be new to the extent to which it would be indispensable for the manifestation of the indwelling spirit, it must not be something unrecognizable; it will be a high sequel to what is already achieved and in part perfected. Indeed, new powers have to be acquired by the body, and these new powers will be unimaginable or even undreamt. Describing these powers,

Sri Aurobindo has stated:

“The body itself might acquire new means and ranges of communication with other bodies, new processes of acquiring knowledge, a new aesthesis, new potencies of manipulation of itself and objects. It might not be impossible for it to possess or disclose means native to its own constitution, substance or natural instrumentation for making the far near and annulling distance, cognizing what is now beyond the body’s cognizance, acting where action is now out of its reach or its domain, developing subtleties and plasticities which could not be permitted under present conditions to the needed fixity of a material frame. ...There could be an evolution from a first apprehending truth-consciousness to the utmost heights of the ascending ranges of supermind and it may pass the borders of the supermind proper itself... The transformation of the physical being might follow this incessant line of progression and the divine body reflect or reproduce here in a divine life on the earth something of this highest greatness and glory of the self-manifesting Spirit.”<sup>86</sup>

## **The Mother’s Journey Towards the Divine Body**

In the light of the possibilities that Sri Aurobindo had envisaged, the Mother’s own journey, as recorded in the thirteen Volumes of *‘Mother’s Agenda’*, traces a curve of development that passes through extremely difficult passages, and as we noted in her record of the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1970, she had accomplished by that date that task which Sri Aurobindo had wanted her to accomplish. Indeed, what was accomplished was far from realizing the divine body, but it can be said that she had established on the earth a secure and

irreversible status of the supermind in the material consciousness of Matter, so that, in principle, the supermind was FIXED as a new principle of evolution. The '*Mother's Agenda*' gives also an account of the extraordinary powers and capabilities which became manifest, not as supernormal qualities, but as natural capacities of her body as a part of the new nature of the material body, accessible and transmittable to any physical body on the earth which may have developed the required degree of sensitivity and the power to absorb by mere contagion.

### Mind of the Cells: Its Significance for the future Evolution of the Human Species

One of the most important discoveries that was made by the Mother was concerning the "mind of the cells". It is true that Sri Aurobindo had spoken of the mind of the cells in his writings, but the way in which the mind of the cells reacted to the incoming of the supermind in the body and the way in which the mind of the cells came to develop its potencies was, in the Mother's evolving body, entirely new. As a result, the enormous importance that needs to be given to the understanding of the human cell deserves to be specially underlined for any scientific investigation that pertains to the problems of the future evolution of the human species. Based on the experiments of the Mother, it can be said that if the evolutionary research of the future is to run on the lines which are salutary for the human race, the infusion and penetration of the supramental consciousness in the cellular consciousness is indispensable, and that for the purposes of the future of evolution, which can now be designed and perfected by deliberate means of the human will, it would be best to study the Mother's account of the experiences

through which she has passed. In that context, it is extremely important to study the account of the victory that has been accomplished by the Mother in fixing of the supermind in the earthly evolved cells.

With the accomplishment of the work of which the Mother spoke on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1970, a momentous stage was reached. An irreversible stage was reached. The essential work, the real work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, was to open up the consciousness of the cells by fixing the supramental consciousness in the body-consciousness. This work was done; the rest was to be a secondary consequence. To bring about that secondary consequence, namely, the formation and the manifestation of the divine body with its further momentous results for human evolution and for the highest welfare of humanity, had yet remained to be worked out in all its details. Sri Aurobindo had said that it would take at least three hundred years. But the supramental consciousness imparts to the evolutionary movement an unimaginable acceleration to the process of transformation. It does not stop anywhere, it moves on as rapidly as possible towards a point where the transformation would be instantaneous.

The onward journey of the Mother was then directed towards the total transformation of the body, so that even the residue of the old would undergo the change. In this process, the Mother made many new discoveries; she passed through hell of resistances of the whole world, — even after building up in her body a new body of the awakened cells where there is no 'life' and 'death' but 'over-life'. This journey, although perilous and colossal, was also microscopic in its detailed operations. There were moments when the body felt immeasurable force, and there were moments when the body

could not keep itself standing. And this was for a reason that the body no more obeyed the same laws that keep us on our feet.<sup>87</sup>

## Visions in the Subtle Physical Being of the New Body

In a conversation with Satprem on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1970, we find a new phenomenon that was shaping a new body out of her own supramentalised cells. In that conversation, the Mother describes, what she saw in her subtle physical being, her new body, how it would be! It was a body not very different but extremely refined, and it had an orange colour. The body was vibrant, and it had a kind of luminosity. The skin was ‘efflorescent’. As she said:

“And that was the point: no sex, neither man nor woman — no sex. It was a form like this (*Mother draws a svelte figure in space*), ...”<sup>88</sup>

We read in the Mother’s Agenda an account of a gradual expansion of the body of the awakened cells in the Mother’s gross body. Organ by organ or part by part was being transferred to the rule of the Supermind; there was still the residue of coarse matter, where the battle was being fought. There was already transformed matter in the Mother’s body — the matter which had a different air and a different manner of being, the matter which had uninterrupted life and which can be physically visible to the physical eyes which have a different way of seeing.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1972, the Mother had a vision of the new body that was forming within her body. As it is important, the following extract may be given below of this conversation of the Mother with Satprem:

“Yes, I WAS like that. It was me; I didn’t look at myself in a mirror, I saw myself like this (*Mother bends her head to look at her body*). I was ... I just was like that.

That’s the first time. It was around four in the morning, I think. And perfectly natural — I mean, I didn’t look in a mirror, it felt perfectly natural. I only remember what I saw (*gesture from the chest to the waist*). I was covered only with veils, so I only saw .... What was very different was the torso, from the chest to the waist: it was neither male nor female.

But it was lovely, my form was extremely svelte and slim — slim but not thin. And the skin was very white, just like my skin. A lovely form. And no sex — you couldn’t tell: neither male nor female. The sex had disappeared.

The same here (*Mother points to her chest*), all that was flat. I don’t know how to explain it. There was an outline reminiscent of what is now, but with no forms (*Mother touches her chest*), not even as much as a man’s. A very white skin, very smooth. Practically no abdomen to speak of. And no stomach. All that was slim.

I didn’t pay any special attention, you see, because I was that: it felt perfectly natural to me. That’s the first time it happened, it was the night before last; but last night I didn’t see anything. That was the first and the last time so far.

*But this form is in the subtle physical, isn’t it?*

It must be already like that in the subtle physical.

*But how will it pass into the physical?*

That’s the question I don’t know....I don’t know.

I don’t know.

Also, clearly there was none of the complex digestion we have now, or the kind of elimination we have now. It didn't work that way.

But how? ... Food is already obviously very different and becoming more and more so — glucose, for instance, or substances that don't require an elaborate digestion. But how will the body itself change? ... That I don't know. I don't know.

You see, I didn't look to see how it worked, for it was completely natural to me, so I can't describe it in detail. Simply, it was neither a woman's body nor a man's — that much is certain. And *the outline* was fairly similar to that of a very young person. There was a faint suggestion of a human form (*Mother draws a form in the air*): with a shoulder and a waist. Just a hint of it.

I see it but.... I saw it exactly as you see yourself, I didn't even look at myself in the mirror. And I had a sort of veil, which I wore to cover myself.

It was my way of being (there was nothing surprising in it), my natural way of being.

That must be how it is in the subtle physical.

*But what's mysterious is the transition from one to the other.*

Yes — how?

But it's the same mystery as the transition from chimpanzee to man.

*Oh, no, Mother! It's more colossal than that! It's more colossal for, after all, there isn't that much difference between a chimpanzee and a man.*



But there wasn't such a difference in the appearance either (*Mother draws a form in the air*): there were shoulders, arms, legs, a body, a waist. Similar to ours. There was only....

*Yes, but I mean the way a chimpanzee functions and the way a man functions are the same.*

They are the same.

*Well, yes! They digest the same, breathe the same .... Whereas here....*

No, but here too there must have been breathing. The shoulders were strikingly broad (*gesture*), in contrast. That's important. But the chest was neither feminine nor even masculine: only reminiscent of it. And all that — stomach, abdomen and the rest — was simply an *outline*, a very slender and harmonious form, which certainly wasn't used for the purpose we now use our bodies.

The two different things — totally different — were procreation, which was no longer possible, and food. Though even our present food is manifestly not the same as that of chimpanzees or even the first humans; it's quite different. So now, it seems we have to find a food that doesn't require all this digesting.... Not exactly liquid, but not solid either. And there's also the question of the mouth — I don't know about that — and the teeth? Naturally, chewing should no longer be necessary, and therefore teeth wouldn't be either .... But there has to be something to replace them. I haven't the slightest idea what the face looked like. But it didn't seem too, too unlike what it is now.

What will change a great deal, of course — it had acquired a prominent role — is breathing. That being depended much on it.

*Yes, he probably absorbs energies directly.*

Yes. There will probably be intermediary beings who won't last, you see, just as there were intermediary beings between the chimpanzee and man.

But I don't know, something has to happen that has never before happened."<sup>89</sup>

As we read the '*Mother's Agenda*', it appears that there was a great possibility of the Mother's journey towards a transformed body to go right up to the end where the new supramental and divine body could emerge, even if it took a very long time. But she had also spoken of other possibilities, in January 1967; the Mother had spoken of the possibility of a cataleptic trance for purposes of physical transformation. Earlier, she had also indicated that taking recourse to cataleptic trance was to adopt the path of laziness evidently; she wanted to avoid it. On the question of the death that might occur to her body she had spoken as far back as 1964 and again in 1967 and 1969. Again, since her conversations on this question are very important, we may give a few relevant extracts.

## On Death

The Mother had spoken of the problem of the physical death in 1964 as follows:

"You see, for our consolation we are told in every possible way that the work done isn't lost and that all this action on the cells to make them conscious of the higher life isn't lost — that's not true, it is absolutely lost! Suppose I leave my body tomorrow; this body (not immediately, but after a time) reverts to dust; then all that I've done for these

cells is perfectly useless! Except that the consciousness will come out of the cells — but it always does!...

... it's a pure waste....

On the physical level, it's pure waste. The mind and vital are another affair, that's not interesting: we have known for a very long time that their life doesn't depend on the body.... I am speaking of the body, that's what interests me: the body's cells. Well, death is a waste and that's that....

.... That is to say, before this body dissolves, a new creation should be there....

.... a certain quality of cells should be able to allow the form to become different (the form can change, it changes all the time, it's never the same), but with the conscious interrelationships of the cells persisting."<sup>90</sup>

No solution to this problem was found for several years. In the meantime, she made several experiments. In February 1966, Mother said that she was trying to find out the secret of the process of death so that one could undo it. A fortnight later, she said: 'I am like a dead person who lives on the earth.' She said that it was a different way of living, independent of physical laws, but dependent exclusively on the Supreme Will. Two months later, she spoke of a curve of experiences which demonstrated repeatedly the difference between being in the body and being without the body as far as the consciousness is concerned. Then came the question of eating. She said that she could no more eat; in fact, this problem would remain right till the end — it was very difficult for her to eat, as though eating would mean swallowing the difficulties of the external world. She was rapidly proceeding towards preparing the cells that would be

capable of sustaining the Supramental consciousness. This required, she found, an utter plasticity that is impossible in the skeleton with all the rigidity of the bones. Indeed, the supramental body which would be a condensation or densification of 'some stuff' could be utterly plastic, but the question was how to graft that body in the body that we can see and touch. The gulf between the two was too great to be covered except by several intermediate stages.

Could this process be accelerated by recourse to a cataleptic trance? Mother had felt the need of such a trance from time to time, but she had always considered it to be the method of inertia and laziness. However, on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1967, she dictated a note<sup>91</sup> in which she said that she might need to enter into a cataleptic trance and that her body should be left in peace. 'This could last several days, perhaps weeks or even more.' But she preferred that the need for immobile repose be replaced by the power of an inner concentration.

She began to perceive two states of Matter more and more persistently, the state of Matter as we ordinarily see, and the state of what she called the true Matter, a luminous Matter, Matter of multi-colored light associated with shades of all colors.

This gave rise to the possibility of a transition so that the outer body would be gradually replaced by the new body of true matter. Mother found that a local or momentary manifestation would not be impossible; but more and more she felt that there had to be a sufficient collective transformation for achieving durable manifestation.

During the first months of 1968, Mother had repeated experiences of a state that determines the rupture of the equilibrium, the dissolution of the form which we call death.

This was at one extreme; and, at the other extreme, she had repeated experiences of the state of unmixed Bliss. She said that the fusion of these two states would mean the supreme Power and that if That would be realized physically, the problem would end. The work consisted of bringing about that fusion, and this required the change of the consciousness of all the cells. Indeed, this was a gradual process, and it proceeded by taking up groups of cells or parts of faculties, one after the other.

It was against this background that the Mother had an important experience in early February 1969.

“...it was ... Never, never had the body been so happy! It was the complete Presence, absolute freedom, and a certitude: these cells, other cells (*gesture here and there showing other bodies*), it didn't matter, it was life everywhere, consciousness everywhere.

Absolutely wonderful.

It came effortlessly, and it left simply because ... I was too busy. ....

... And it's the DIVINE SENSE, you understand, that's what having the divine sense means. During these few hours (three or four hours), I understood in an absolute way what having the divine consciousness in the body means. And then, this body, that body, that other body ... (*gesture here and there, all around Mother*), it doesn't matter: it moved about from one body to another, quite free and independent, aware of the limitations or the possibilities of each body — absolutely wonderful, I had never, ever had this experience before. Absolutely wonderful. It left because I was so busy that ...

... that state, which lasted for several hours ... never had this body, in the ninety-one years it's been on earth, felt such happiness: freedom, absolute power, and no limits (*gesture here and there and everywhere*), no limits, no impossibilities, nothing. It was ... all other bodies were itself. There was no difference, ....<sup>92</sup>

About a month later, the Mother said:

“The body consciousness has become individualized<sup>93</sup> and at the same time independent, which means it can enter other bodies and feel quite at ease there. I made the experiment one day (“I made,” it wasn’t the body that made it, it was “made” to make it, precisely by this Consciousness) of entering three or four people like that, one after another, and of feeling in each one the BODY’s way of being: it wasn’t at all a vital or mental entry, it was a bodily entry. And that was really interesting. ....

...That completely changes the body’s attitude with regard to solutions: there’s no more attachment or sense of extinction, you understand, since the consciousness ... it’s the body consciousness that has become independent. And that’s very interesting. In other words, in any physical substance sufficiently developed to receive it, it can manifest. ....<sup>94</sup>

A week later, the Mother said the following:

“... This question had been asked: “All this work of transformation of the cells, of consciousness in the cells, with the ordinary way [of dying], won’t it be wasted since the body is going to disintegrate? ...” Then there came in a very precise, almost concrete manner: there is a way, which is, before dying, to prepare within oneself a body with all the

transformed, illumined, conscious cells, to collect them together and form a body with the maximum number of conscious cells; then, when the work is over, the full consciousness enters it and the other body can dissolve, it no longer matters.”<sup>95</sup>

When Sri Aurobindo left his body, the accumulated result of all his physical consciousness was transmitted to the Mother’s body, and thus there was no waste. But now, apart from the Mother’s body, there was no other body which was so developed that it could receive, if the Mother left her body, the accumulated result of her physical consciousness. This was a formidable problem. But as we see from what she said, this problem was now resolved. Even if she left her body, the work would not be spoilt, there would be no waste. The work could continue.

The Mother passed through one of the most important processes of transformation, when her nervous system was transferred to the supramental. She said:

“My nervous system is being transferred to the Supramental. It feels like ... you know, what people call “neurasthenia” — they have no idea what it is; but the entire nervous system is.... It’s worse than dying.

But I think ... I think I can transmit the divine Vibration.”<sup>96</sup>

On the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1973, Satprem had many questions to ask when he went to Mother. The Mother asked him:

“And you [no question]?”

*I was thinking about something Sri Aurobindo wrote.... In “Savitri,” he clearly says, “Almighty powers are shut in*

*Nature's cells."* [IV.III.370]

... Ohh! ... Oh, that is interesting!

*ALMIGHTY powers.*

... But you see, my physical, my body is deteriorating very rapidly — what could stop it from deteriorating?

*Mother, I do NOT believe it is deterioration — it's not. My feeling is that you are physically being led to a point of such complete powerlessness that the most complete Power will be forced to awaken....*

Ah! ... you're right. ...

...I was told that the beginning would take place when I am a hundred; but that's a long way off!

*No, Mother, I don't think it will take that long. I don't think so. I really don't think so. Another type of functioning is going to set in. But the end of the old has to be reached, and that end is the terrible part!*

Oh ... I really don't want to say (*Mother shakes her head*), I don't want to insist, but ... truly ... (*Mother speaks with her eyes closed, all the pain of the world is in the shake of her head*).

....The consciousness is clearer, stronger than it has ever been, and I look like an old....”<sup>97</sup>

This happened to be the last meeting of Satprem with the Mother. Thereafter, he had no further interview with her. On 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1973, the Mother appeared on her balcony. This was Sri Aurobindo's 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. She remained on the balcony for a few minutes. A big crowd of people had gathered below in the street to have her Darshan. A vast



peace reigned there over the crowd. Then, slowly, very slowly, she disappeared into her room.

Indeed, the Mother's consciousness was clearer and greater than ever. She was the seer *par excellence*. She was living with a new mode of being that was turned exclusively towards the Divine with complete self-effacement right up to the cells in utter surrender. And yet, she had all the dynamism of a hero-warrior engaged in the battle to fight all that resisted or obstructed the effort to bring about the rule of the divine supermind on the earth. On November 14, at midnight, she began to feel that she might get paralyzed. She asked to walk. She said: 'I want to walk, otherwise I'll become paralyzed.' She held on to the arm of the one of the attendants and walked... until she turned blue.

During the next days, she would ask to be lifted from her chaise longue. On the night of November 16, she again asked to walk: 'I want to walk,' she said. She continued to fight till the very end. On the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the signs of choking grew worse. At 7.10 p.m. her doctor massaged her heart. At 7.25 p.m. her breathing stopped.

In the subtle physical, a supramental body, which the Mother had seen twice, was already formed. In the gross physical, most of the parts were already transferred to the governance of the supramental. The true matter of that gross physical was already in a state of over-life, transcending what we call life and death, capable of physical action on the earth and events. There was, indeed, the residue, still susceptible to 'death', and the Mother's conscious body entered there all alive. Even though placed in the tomb, the cells of her body are conscious. As Satprem points out:

"... Each of her cells repeats and repeats the Mantra,

endlessly, like a golden little pulsation. She is undergoing the formidable operation. She is rebuilding the base of life. The 'process' continues. This is what she had been prepared for for months: 'My body is being accustomed to something else;' this is why she was not told anything, because she had to enter there alive — I still hear her little cry the first time she had the vision of her death. *Nothing, absolutely nothing works in the usual way anymore! The body can no longer eat, no longer ... And the Consciousness that is devoted to helping it in the work made ab-so-lu-te-ly clear to it that leaving is not a solution. Even if before there was some curiosity to know what will be, that curiosity is gone. As for the desire to stay, it's been gone for a long time. And any possible desire to leave when things get a bit... stifling has gone with the idea that it won't change anything. So there's only one thing left for the body to do: to perfect its acceptance. That's all. The only thing that comforts it (and not for long) is the idea that: what you are doing is useful to all; you are not doing this for you, a small silly person, but so the whole creation benefits from it.... I don't know, I don't know what's going to happen. But I'd like... I'd like not to be put into a box and stuffed into... because it will know it, it will feel it, and that will only add one more misery to all those it's already had.... It doesn't desire it, it doesn't fear it — it will be as it should be, that's all. However, it really would like people to understand... to appreciate the effort it has made and not decide to box it up and throw dirt on it. Because, even after the doctors have declared it dead, it will be conscious. The cells are conscious. That's all I have to say.*

She is there, alive.

Aeschylus and Orpheus look pale."<sup>98</sup>

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother came to open up the consciousness of the cells to the supramental consciousness and power; this was accomplished; the old genetic code that keeps the human race bound to its limited boundaries was shattered; the new species having a new supramental-material way of knowing and acting has come into being; it is at work; it is not limited to any particular body; it is working everywhere, but more powerfully and triumphantly where there is greater receptivity and intensity of aspiration.

The Mother made an attempt to arrive at a complete transformation of the body, although she had no assurance whether this goal could be reached or not. The effort went up to the extreme point of acuteness; that effort had long ago become the effort of the body of the earth; that effort continues. The Mother had said that it would require three hundred years to bring about the transformed body. She had also spoken of the need to follow the rule of several intermediate bodies as in the case of the evolution of man in succession of the chimpanzee. That work is on, and there is no obstacle. There is continuity; in that continuity all the bodies are involved; the body of each one of us is in the cauldron of transformation. This is the cosmic yoga, which none can escape, and in which salvation and realization are at once physical and collective.

## PART SEVEN

### **Integral Yoga: Synthesis of Science and Spirituality**

The integral yoga as developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is, although perfected in all its aspects, still an unfinished chapter opening itself to the future that is in the making. It is impossible to turn this yoga into a religion; it has no dogmas and rituals that can be mechanically believed in or practised. It is a multisided Way that is still being traversed; it is open to any individual for his or her free choice to traverse in the way that is suitable to his or her own law of nature and development; it is also available to humanity as an indispensable aid to its advance towards the highest ideals of unity and harmony that have come to be envisaged at this initial junction of its journey.

There are, however, two sections of humanity that are likely to study more readily this integral yoga with the highest degree of earnestness. These are: seekers who are wedded to scientific knowledge and scientific method, and the seekers who are wedded to the methodical quest of psychic, spiritual and supramental realization. Both these categories of seekers will find, in the Records of Experiments and Realizations left by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the required testimony of the promise that they are likely to cherish and to pursue for the fulfillment of their quest.

There are today an increasing number of scientists who have begun to open themselves, without abandoning their

scientific rigour of quest, to the insights and illuminations that can come to them from the domain of spirituality and spiritual quest; on the other hand, there are increasing number of spiritual seekers who value greatly science and scientific method and who are keen to develop scientific and illumined synthesis of science and spirituality. It may even be said that the thesis of the synthesis of science and spirituality is gaining ground among increasing number of seekers as the most important thesis of our times. They are likely to ask whether that synthesis has been achieved in the results that have been accomplished in the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Both, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, look upon yoga as Science, and, as Sri Aurobindo points out, "Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the natural force of electricity or of steam to the normal operations of steam and of electricity. And they, too, are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result. ....

"All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest."<sup>99</sup>

Sri Aurobindo has also stated in one of his letters with what scientific rigour he and the Mother have conducted their work of yogic research. He writes:

"....we do not found ourselves on faith alone, but on a great ground of knowledge which we have been developing and testing on our lives. I think I can say that I have been

testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory and his method on the physical plane.”<sup>100</sup>

There is, it can be said, no doubt that Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's account of the integral yoga can successfully stand the most rigorous tests that can legitimately be applied in regard to their methods as also in regard to their results that have been achieved. Sri Aurobindo's *'Record of Yoga'* and *'Mother's Agenda'* are available to anyone who cares to study and inquire.

It can also be said that the body of knowledge that we find in the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother cover large areas of humanistic studies and whatever they have written about their studies of Matter, Life and Mind, and, particularly, on the theme of evolution, on which various sciences, philosophy and yogic systems converge today together, represent an ever growing mass of synthesis of knowledge. Considering this work, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have advanced the theme of synthesis of science and spirituality to a high level of maturity.

But it cannot be said, as yet, that their work represents the summit of the synthesis of science and spirituality. In one of her illuminating conversations with Satprem, while commenting upon two important Aphorisms from the writings of Sri Aurobindo, she has commented on the theme of synthesis of science and spirituality. What the Mother has said, in effect, is that only the fabrication of something that was the subject of her yogic research at that time, i.e., May 24, 1962, would give that assurance that is required for the unshakable synthesis of science and spirituality. From the context in which this conversation takes place, it can be said

that the subject of her yogic research at that time was that of fabricating the supramentalised or divine body, and it can, therefore, be surmised that what science demands for its ultimate proof of utter objectivity of knowledge, and what spirituality ought to demand for its ultimate victory on the earth, can be fulfilled only if supramental consciousness can be demonstratively seen and touched in supramental physical body.

Let us refer to that conversation of the Mother of May 24, 1962:

Satprem read out the following from Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Aphorisms*:

“73 – When Wisdom comes, her first lesson is, “There is no such thing as knowledge; there are only aperçus of the Infinite Deity.”

Very good.

No need for questions.

“74 – Practical knowledge is a different thing; that is real and serviceable, but it is never complete. Therefore to systematize and codify it is necessary but fatal.”

It is real within its own realm — only within its own realm.

[The Mother comments:]

I have looked at this very, very often. There was even a time when I thought that if one could get a total, complete and perfect knowledge of the whole working of physical Nature as we perceive it in the world of Ignorance, then this might be a means to rediscover or reattain the Truth of things. After my last experience [of April 13] I can no longer think

this way.

I don't know if I am making myself clear.... I thought for a time, a very long time, that if Science went to its furthest possible limits (if this is conceivable), it would join up with true Knowledge. In the study of the composition of matter, for example — by pressing the investigation further and further on — a point would be reached where the two would meet. But when I had that experience of passing from the eternal Truth-Consciousness to the individualized world, well ... it appeared impossible to me. And if you ask me now, I think that this possibility of Science pushed to its extreme limits joining up with true Knowledge, and this impossibility of any true conscious connection with the material world are both incorrect. There is something else.

And more and more these days, I find myself facing the whole problem as if I had never seen it before.

Both paths may be leading towards a third point, and that third point is what I am at present ... not exactly studying; I am rather in quest of it — the point where the two paths merge into a third that would be the TRUE thing.

But in any case, if it could be absolutely total (there's an "if" here), objective, scientific knowledge pushed to its extreme limits would certainly bring you to the threshold. That's what Sri Aurobindo means. But he also says it's fatal, because all those who went in for that knowledge believed in it as an absolute truth, thus closing the door to the other approach. In this respect it is fatal.

From my own experience, though, I could say to all those who believe EXCLUSIVELY in the spiritual approach, the approach through inner experience, that this — at least if it's



exclusive — is equally fatal. For it reveals to them ONE aspect, ONE truth of the Whole — but not THE Whole. The other side seems just as indispensable to me, for when I was so utterly in that supreme Realization, this other falsified, outer realization was undeniably just a distortion (and probably accidental) of something EQUALLY TRUE.

This “something” is what our research is about. And perhaps not merely research — we may be taking part in the FABRICATION of it.

We are being made use of in the manifestation of this “something.”

Something none can yet imagine, for so far it hasn’t come into being. It is an expression yet to come.

That is all I can say.

*(silence)*

This is exactly the state of consciousness I am living in now. It’s as if I were facing the same eternal problem but ... from a NEW POSITION.

These positions — the spiritual and the “materialist” (if you can call it that) positions — which consider themselves exclusive (exclusive and unique, and so each one denies the other’s value in the name of Truth) are inadequate, not only because neither one will accept the other, but because even accepting and uniting them both won’t solve the problem. Something else is needed, a third position that isn’t the result of these two but something still to be discovered, which will probably open the door to total Knowledge.

Well, that’s where I stand.

More I can’t say — that’s as far as I have come.

One might wonder how to participate practically in this....

This discovery?

That.... Ultimately, it's always the same thing. It's always the same: realize your own being, enter into conscious contact with supreme Truth of your own being, in WHATEVER form, by WHATEVER path (that's totally irrelevant); it's the only way. We each carry a truth within ourselves, and we must unite with that truth; we must live that truth. And the path we have to follow to realize and unite with this truth is the very path that will lead us as near as we can possibly come to Knowledge.

Who knows? Perhaps the very multiplicity of approaches will yield the Secret — the Secret that will open the door.

I don't think any single individual on earth (as it is now) no matter how great he may be, no matter how eternal his consciousness and origin, can all by himself change and realize.... Change the world, change the creation as it is, and realize that higher Truth, the Truth that will be a new world — a truer, if not absolutely true, world. A certain number of individuals (until now they seem to have come in succession, in time, but they might also come as a collectivity, in space) would seem indispensable for this Truth to be concretized and realized.

On a practical level, I am sure of it.

In other words, no matter how great he may be, no matter how conscious, how powerful, ONE avatar all alone cannot realize the supramental life on earth. Either a group in time, a number of individuals staggered over a certain period of

time, or a group spread out over a certain space — or maybe both — is indispensable for this Realization. I am convinced of it.

The individual can give the initial impulse, point out the path, WALK the path himself (I mean show the path by realizing it) ... but he can't bring the work to fulfilment. The fulfilment of the work depends on certain collective laws that are the expression of a particular aspect of the Eternal and Infinite — naturally, it's all one and the same Being! There aren't different individuals and personalities, it's all one and the same Being. But the same Being expressing itself in a particular way that for us translates as a group or a collectivity.

Well, then — any other questions on this?

*I would like to ask you in what way your vision has changed since the experience of April 13 - what exactly is the difference?*

I repeat.

For a very long time it had seemed to me that a perfect union between the scientific approach pushed to its extreme and the spiritual approach pushed to its extreme, to its utmost realization, a merging of the two would naturally lead to the Truth we seek, the total Truth. But with the two experiences I have had, the experience of the outer life (with universalisation, impersonalization — all the yogic experiences you can have in a material body) and the experience of total and perfect union with the Origin ... now that I've had those two experiences and something has happened — something I can't yet describe — I know that knowing and uniting the two is what is ... in the making. The third thing is what can lead to the Realization, to the Truth we seek."<sup>101</sup>

We may also refer to the Message that the Mother had given on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1956, while declaring the manifestation of the supermind on the earth. The Mother had also proposed in that Message a farther goal that is yet to be fulfilled. She had said:

“The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognize it.”<sup>102</sup>

This message brings out clearly the rigour of the criterion of the final proof that is proposed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There are, indeed, many levels of proofs, and during the course of the progression of the research conducted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, we find various levels of proofs, philosophical, experiential and even scientific, which transcend limits of subjectivity and even the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity. But there is, as seen in this message, an approach which aims at testing the truth of the results of their work on the anvil of the most stringent demands of the materialistic mind.

In any case, it is for each one to make his or her demands of proof, and, in the meantime, to continue to sharpen and sensitize oneself to higher and higher degrees of consciousness. In the pursuit of truth, there has to be no compulsion, and each one has to demand the proof that one needs. In the Records of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, one will find, it may be said quite confidently, the answer that he or she needs for the next stage of development, provided one seeks to make progress in the direction that one thinks is suitable to oneself. Nonetheless, the rigour of proof cannot

be minimized, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have, as we have seen above, aimed at working out the fabrication of the Divine Body, the proof of which will be found to be clinching even for the utmost insensitive human mentality of consciousness. In fact, it is at that level of the proof that we may expect the synthesis of science and spirituality to arrive at its climactic perfection.

What we have presented here in regard to the relevant data, reflections and conclusions concerning the new synthesis of yoga, can be regarded only as an introduction; for the purposes of adequate understanding of the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, there is no substitute to the laborious task that one has to undertake to turn and study the original and voluminous writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (SABCL), Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 20, p. 83.
- <sup>2</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 2.
- <sup>3</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 44.
- <sup>4</sup> Vide., Ibid., *The Life Divine*, Vol. 19, p. 832.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 841.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 841-2.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 842-3.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 844.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 1066.
- <sup>10</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 882-3.
- <sup>11</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 18, p.10.
- <sup>12</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 19, p. 884.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 885.
- <sup>14</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 889-90.
- <sup>15</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 1046.
- <sup>16</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 1050.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., *Social and Political Thought*, Vol. 15, pp.63-4.
- <sup>18</sup> Vide., Ibid., chapters 19-20.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 206-7.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., *The Life Divine*, Vol. 19, pp. 1052-3.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 1053-4.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., *Social and Political Thought*, Vol. 15, pp. 546-7.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., *The Life Divine*, Vol. 19, pp. 1059-60.
- <sup>24</sup> Vide., Ibid., *On Himself*, Vol. 26, Part I, sections IV-VI; Part II, section I-IV.
- <sup>25</sup> Vide., *The Mother*, Collected Works, Centenary Edition, 1978, Vol. 12.
- <sup>26</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 26, p.464.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., *The Life Divine*, Vol. 19, p. 1062.

- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Vol. 20, p. 164.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 165.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., Vol. 21, p. 662.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, Vol. 16, pp. 63-4.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-5.
- <sup>33</sup> *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 2, p. 406.
- <sup>34</sup> Vide., Blurb of the *Mother's Agenda*, Vol. 1.
- <sup>35</sup> Vide., Mother: 1. *The Divine Materialism* (1980); 2. *The New Species* (1982); 3. *The Mutation of Death* (1987), Institute for Evolutionary Research, 200 Park Avenue, New York.
- <sup>36</sup> *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 1, p.69.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 327-8.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 52-3
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 131-2.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 211.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 320-1.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 78.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 224-5.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 229-31.
- <sup>45</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 9, pp. 66-7.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 229.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 232-6.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., Vol. 10, p. 20.
- <sup>49</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 95-8, 147, 172-3, 304-8.
- <sup>50</sup> Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 19, pp. 820-3. A few points may be elucidated as follows: When one realizes the immortality of the Spirit, one can feel free from the sting of death. This essential immortality of the spirit is sought to be attained by several systems of yoga, by practicing the disciplines of which one can arrive at the experience of the immortal Spirit. The main process is that of withdrawal from identification with the consciousness that is riddled with the ego and with the limitations of the body, life and mind. There are also more composite systems of yoga where immortality is sought to be attained not only by withdrawal from the ego and from the life and mind and the body but there are also

processes that aim at enlargement of the powers of the mind and life and body to their maximum level of perfection; even then the bodily perfection and immortality of the body is still considered to be impossible. That the soul is immortal is acknowledged in a number of religions and systems of yoga, as a result of which survival after death is admitted and therefore life after death in one form or the other is also admitted. But mere survival after death is not realization of essential immortality; it may only mean continuation of life in other planes of existence, or else travel of the soul in other planes of existence and rebirth or series of rebirths. In the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the individual soul is experienced as the eternal portion of the Supreme Spirit, and just as the immortality of the Supreme Spirit is an object of yogic realization, immortality of the individual soul is also an object of yogic realization. In fact, conquest of the necessity of death of the body cannot be attained without the realization of immortality of the Supreme Spirit and immortality of individual soul. But even if these two kinds of immortality are realized, the question of the rationale of the embodiment of the soul in body, of rebirth and its real purpose remains unanswered.

In the history of yoga, the greatest experiment that we can see ever conducted in the past in regard to the purpose of human embodiment is to be found in the yoga of the Veda. The Veda constantly speaks of the attainment of the path to immortality and of attainment of immortality. In one of the hymns, Parashara speaks of the path which leads to immortality. In Rig Veda, I.72.9, Parashara describes the ancient Rishis as possessed of the power to enter into all things that bear ripe fruits, and he speaks of the path towards immortality which they had hewn out. He states:

“They who entered into all things that bear right fruit formed a path towards the immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the mother Aditi with her sons manifested herself for the upholding.”

If we try to understand the state of immortality that is described in this Rik, we shall find that it consists of the visitation of physical being by the powers of the higher planes of existence, who reign on those planes. These powers are those of the great gods or sons of the supreme creative Mother, Aditi. As a result of these powers in the physical being, the limits of the physical being are broken, and physical being opens



out to the immortal light; and the physical being is upheld in the wideness by the infinite consciousness, Mother Aditi. In other words, the attainment of the Rishis of the Veda consisted not only of rising to the higher planes of infinite consciousness but also in bringing down that consciousness right up to the physical being, so that the physical being breaks its limits, attains new wideness by the help of the infinite consciousness, and the physical being is upheld in that wideness. Sri Aurobindo, while explaining this Rik states that “the physical being visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above and by the power of the great godheads who reign on those planes breaks its limits, opens out to the Light and is upheld in its new wideness by the infinite Consciousness, mother Aditi, and her sons, the divine Powers of the supreme Deva.” (Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Veda*, SABCL, 1971, Vol. 10, pp.191-2.) This is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the Vedic immortality. What is attained is a sense of the universal diffusion of Truth and the birth and activity of all the divine powers in the body. The impulse of the Truth, the thinking of the Truth pervades all the life and in it all fulfill their workings. Parashara states in Rig Veda I.71.3 of those who had attained immortality as follows:

“They held the truth, they enriched its thought; then indeed, they, the aspiring souls, holding it in thought, bore it diffused in all their being.”

The truth in the Veda refers to supramental consciousness, and immortality, therefore, would mean diffusion of supramental consciousness in physical body, so as to render it wide and universal in its consciousness. The question is whether the physical being, by visitation of universality of consciousness, would be rendered capable of surmounting the necessity of death.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who attempted and reworked all the great achievements of past systems of yoga have confirmed the truth and validity of Vedic realizations, but they have not found in the Veda that key to the conquest of the necessity of death which, according to them, is required for the full manifestation of supermind in Matter. The Mother has stated the following:

“According to what Sri Aurobindo saw and what I saw as well, the Rishis had the contact, the experience — how to put it? ... A kind of lived knowledge of the thing, coming like a promise, saying, ‘THAT is what will be.’ But it’s not permanent. There’s a big difference between their experience and the DESCENT — what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘The

descent of the Supermind': something that comes and establishes itself. "Even when I had that experience [the 'first supramental manifestation' of February 29, 1956], when the Lord said, 'The time has come,' well, it was not a complete descent; it was the descent of the Consciousness, the Light, and a part, an aspect of the Power. It was immediately absorbed and swallowed up by the world of Inconscience, and from that moment on it began to work in the atmosphere. But it was not THE thing that comes and gets permanently established; when that happens, we won't need to speak of it — it will be obvious!

"Although the experience of '56 was one more forward step, it's not.... It's not final.

And what the Rishis had was a sort of promise — an INDIVIDUAL experience." (Mother's Agenda, Vol. 2, p. 376)

The coming down of the supermind right up to the physical level, and the widening of the physical being, the universalisation of the physical consciousness can be regarded as a capital experience, although not as a culminating experience. In that context, the description of that Vedic experience given by the Rishis as that of immortality needs to be underlined and understood in its proper context in the history of spiritual and supramental yogic history of the world. But Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have pointed out that the universalisation of physical consciousness by the visitation of the Supermind is not enough. That does not lead to the conquest of the Law of Death. Their experiments have shown that the Supermind needs to penetrate and permeate the mind of the cells and fix itself in it so as to build the foundation of the establishment of the supramental consciousness in the physical and material consciousness. The conquest of the Law of Death would be the ulterior consequence, and farther consequences would include mutation of the human species and development of the supramental beings on the earth. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have, therefore, spoken of the appearance of the Divine Body as a part of the next step of evolution.

<sup>51</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 18, chapter 20.

<sup>52</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, XV.7.

<sup>53</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 18, pp. 591-2.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, Vol. 16, p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 65-6.

<sup>59</sup> Vide., *Rig Veda*, I.72.9.

<sup>60</sup> *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 1, p. 294.

<sup>61</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 19, p. 821.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 821-2.

<sup>63</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 250.

<sup>64</sup> Vide., Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>66</sup> Vide., *Mundaka Upanishad*, I.2.5-6, 10-11.

<sup>67</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 18, p. 261; see also the following note extracted from the forthcoming monograph on *Katha Upanishad* (to be published by S.K. Foundation, New Delhi, 2008, entitled *The Story of Nachiketas*), which deals with the problem of immortality:

The *Katha Upanishad* states that the doors of the body face outward; these doors are the doors of the senses, and it is true that all the senses are naturally sensitive to the impacts coming from outside. It is difficult for man to turn inward. That is the reason why the *Katha Upanishad* compares our senses with the horses or the steeds that are wild and in their natural condition uncontrolled and run about unless the mind is able to control them.

*Katha Upanishad* rightly compares the human body with a chariot and senses as the horses, which are yoked to the chariot, and it compares the objects of the senses as the paths in which they move.

But the *Katha Upanishad* rightly speaks of the soul when it compares it with the master of the chariot. Between the soul and the chariot are the Reason and the Mind. The Reason is compared with the charioteer and the Mind is compared with the reins by which the senses i.e. the horses can be controlled. The *Upanishad* points out that the first thing that one needs to do is to have the knowledge by means of which the mind applies itself to control the senses. When the senses are controlled by the mind, these senses behave like noble horses that obey the driver.

But this is the first step, and if this first step is not taken, one remains

unmindful and unclean, and one wanders helplessly in the cycle of phenomena. One does not know why there is this world, why the world is what it is and if the movement in the world has any goal. The next step is to discover the faculty of Reason and to train it.

But Reason is only the charioteer; for Reason can, by the power of Ideas, map out the roads and the interconnections of roads, and can, therefore, drive the chariot in different directions in an orderly fashion. But behind the Reason, there is seated the Soul. The knowledge of the soul, what it is, what it can do and how it can be fulfilled, - this knowledge is the most precious knowledge. This is difficult to attain, and the *Katha Upanishad* aims at raising questions about this soul. When Nachiketas asks a question as to whether man is or man is not after death, the answer lies in the fact that that soul which is the master of the chariot remains, even when the body or the chariot is dissolved. In other words, Nachiketas is ultimately told by *Yama* that what remains after the man is dead is his Soul, because the soul is immortal.

But what is the Nature of the soul? What is its location? How does it function? Why is it located in the chariot as its master?

These questions are answered briefly. First of all, it is said that the soul is no larger than the thumb of a man and that it is seated in the midst of the Self. That soul is the knower of his past and his future. That soul is today and that shall be tomorrow. It is that soul, which is the Dwarf that sits in the centre. When the body is dissolved then it is that which remains. The man lives by breath, but even when the breath ceases, the soul lives and does not need to breathe for its being, since it is imperishable.

After the death, the soul has a journey; according to the actions that were performed during its sojourn in the body, the soul enters a womb for a new embodiment and is thus reborn in a new body. But if, during the sojourn in the body, there has been a pursuit of the Reality that is immovable, and which is the highest imperishable and immortal Reality, then the soul after death of the body follows after the Immovable.

The immovable is the immortal source of the soul. And the soul cannot be known if the Immovable is not known. That Immovable is described by the *Katha Upanishad* as the Unmanifest; but that is an incomplete statement. The *Upanishad* adds that higher than the Unmanifest is the *Purusha*, the Being, who although Immovable, is the originator of the

world and also the indweller of the world. (The word *Purusha* consists of two original words, *Pur* and *vas*; *pur* means the dwelling; the world which is originated is conceived as the dwelling place; *vas* means to dwell. Therefore, *Purusha* means one who originates the dwelling in the form of the world and dwells in it.)

The *Katha Upanishad* does not limit itself to saying that only the soul is immortal and that the source of the soul is immortal. It goes farther and enumerates all that is immortal. It states that the great Lord, the *Purusha*, who is the omnipresent self, is also immortal. The *Jiva* that is described as the 'Eater of Sweetness' (*Madhvadah*), is also immortal. Then it adds, 'This is *Aditi*, the mother of the gods', is also immortal. It states further that He, the Lord is the one in whom are all the gods established. Hence, gods too are immortal. The *Upanishad* speaks not only of the Lord and of the *Purusha* but also of the *Brahman* that is also immortal. It adds that the *Purusha* is called *Brahman*, and is also immortality. (2.2.8). It further says that it is in him that all the worlds are established. Thus we have a full description of the Reality and it is said, 'None goes beyond Him'.

The Reality is described in the *Upanishad* as the *Purusha*, as the *Brahman*, as the great lord, and that ultimate Reality is immortal. That ultimate Reality in whom all the worlds and all the gods are established is also *Aditi*, who is described as the mother of the gods. That Reality is also the *Jiva*, and it is that *Jiva* who is called the Dwarf who is seated in the midst of our being and is no larger than the thumb of a man and who knows the past and also the future.

Yama expounds in this *Upanishad* the totality and integrality of the ultimate Reality, which, in all its aspects, as the *Purusha*, as the *Brahman*, as the Lord, as *Aditi* and as *Aditi* of whom all the gods are children and the *Jiva* who is seated in man in the midst of his being as the Dwarf, the one who is no larger than the thumb of a man – all this is immortal.

The question of Nachiketas was: There is the debate over the man who has passed and some say, 'This he is not' and some say 'He is'; 'what is the correct answer?' *Yama*'s answer is: 'When man passes away, what always remains immortal is the imperishable Reality, who is *Purusha*, *Brahman*, *Ishwara* and who is himself the *Aditi*, the mother of the gods, and is also the *Jiva* who in man is the Dwarf, - all this is imperishable and always remains.'

Indeed, there are many questions that Nachiketas has not asked and therefore we do not find them answered. But some questions do arise. Some other *Upanishads* answer some of those questions and the remaining questions are answered by implication or through hints. If there are still further questions, *Upanishads* counsel that one should find the best teachers and seek the answers:

*uttiṣṭata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata*

‘Arise, awake, find out the great ones and learn of them.’

There is, as we have indicated above, the best teacher, Sri Aurobindo, who has explained the great teachings of the Veda and the *Upanishads* in his voluminous writings, and he has opened a new chapter of spiritual victory over Matter in terms of Supramental Manifestation on the earth. We shall, therefore, refer to his writings for illumining ourselves in regard to the question as to what is the real reality of the human being, and whether after the death of the human being anything remains alive, and if so, what happens to that which remains alive.

What Sri Aurobindo has written confirms what is written in the *Katha Upanishad*, but he has also explained all that in detail and, on account of his laborious research, the question of the human soul and its immortality have been expounded and answered in completeness, in the light of new knowledge.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there is in the human being a psychic entity or the divine individual soul. This soul puts forward a formation, which evolves gradually in the human complex of the body, life and mind. It is that formation which is called the psychic being. This psychic being is constantly at work in order to awaken the body, life and mind, so that by that awakening, these instruments (body, life and mind) turn to the higher realities and the Supreme Divine, who is the ultimate origin of all that is in the universe. The psychic being also acts as a guide and a teacher of these instruments, but like all good teachers, it does not impose itself on these instruments. It acts more through influence, suggestions and counsels, which are heard as it were in deeper recesses of the heart. The psychic being inspires body, life and mind to give their consent for their awakening and their turning to the divine consciousness. This consent, when obtained, is a necessary condition for a rapid growth of these instruments. The more decisive is the consent, the greater is the efficacy of the psychic being. As a result, the psychic being becomes more and more powerful, and ultimately it

floods its light on the instruments and makes these instruments more and more trained, more and more perfect and suffused with the psychic light.

This process is, in the beginning quite slow, and therefore, the psychic being, lives in the body, life and mind as something not quite fully grown up. That is why the psychic being can be described as a Dwarf or as one that is no bigger than the thumb of a man.

Human life is a process by which, through varieties of experiences, it teaches us that we need to awaken to the presence of the psychic being, who is secretly sitting in the deep cave of the heart. That is why, the great teachers of mankind have counseled us to look deeper and deeper in the heart and enter into a long tunnel at the end of which one can discover that deepest psychic being. Once we can reach that psychic being, we can get true guidance more and more readily, and we can walk on the path of life as on a sunlit path.

As the process of the discovery of the psychic being is long, this process cannot be completed within a short span of one life or even several lives, although once the psychic being is discovered, the full manifestation of the psychic being does not take one or two lives or little more.

In any case, this process is long; the psychic being has to carry on its journey through a number of successive bodies. Hence, when the given human body dies, this psychic being withdraws from the body and travels through various stages. This is because the death of the body does not mean that nothing of the human being that was acting and living in the body also comes to an end. The psychic being is immortal, it continues to live, no more in the body as it was living earlier in the body, and which is now dead, but it has its own inherent life and is able to conduct a journey. When the psychic being leaves the body on the death of the body, it carries with it three elements with it, namely, the mental being, the vital being and the subtle physical being which were developed in the body which is now dead. The departing soul at the time of death chooses what it will work out in the next birth and determines the character and condition of the new personality. That is why it is said that the psychic being has the knowledge of its past births, present birth, and it also knows what has to happen to it in the future. The following statement of Sri Aurobindo gives a brief outline of what happens after the death of the body:

‘It is true that the departing psychic being in the vital body lingers for sometime near the body or the scene of life very often for as many as eight days.... even after the severance from the body, a very earth bound nature or one full of strong physical desires may linger long in the earth atmosphere up to a maximum period extended to three years. Afterwards, it passes through the vital worlds, proceeding on its journey...’ (Volume 22, Letters on Yoga I, pp. 436-437)

We may also study the following statement of Sri Aurobindo:

‘When the body is dissolved the vital goes into the vital plane and remains there for a time, but after a time the vital sheath disappears. The last to dissolve is the mental sheath. Finally, the soul or the psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close...’ (Ibid, p. 433)

Let us also study another statement of Sri Aurobindo:

‘After leaving the body, the soul, after certain experiences in other worlds, throws off its mental and vital personalities and goes into rest to assimilate the essence of its past and prepare for a new life. It is this preparation that determines the circumstances of the new birth and guides it in its new reconstitution of a new personality and the choice of its materials.

The departed soul retains the memory of its past experiences only in their essence, not in their form of detail. It is only if the soul brings back some past personality or personalities as part of its present manifestation that it is likely to remember the details of its past life. Otherwise, it is only by yogadrishti that the memory comes...’ (Ibid, p. 434)

We may also refer to some more statements from Sri Aurobindo:

‘At the time of death the being goes out of the body through the head; it goes out in the subtle body and goes to different planes of existence for a short time until it has gone through certain experiences which are the result of its earthly existence. Afterwards, it reaches the psychic world where it rests in a kind of sleep, until it is time for it to start a new life on earth. That is what happens usually-but there are some beings who are more developed and do not follow this course. (Ibid, p. 435)

‘The movement of the psychic being dropping the outer sheaths on its way to the psychic plane is the normal movement. But there can be any number of variations; one can return from the vital plane and there are



many cases of an almost immediate birth, sometimes even attended with a complete memory of the events of the past life...

'There is no rule of complete forgetfulness in the return of the soul to rebirth. There are, especially in childhood, many impressions of the past life, which can be strong and vivid enough, but the materializing education and influence of the environments prevent their true nature from being recognized. There are a great number of people who have definite recollections of a past life. But these things are discouraged by education and the atmosphere and cannot remain or develop; in most cases they are stifled out of existence. At the same time it must be noted that what the psychic being carries away with it and brings back is ordinarily the essence of the experience it had in former lives and not the details so that one cannot expect the same memory as one has of the present existence.

'A soul can go straight to the psychic world but it depends on the state of consciousness at the time of departure. If the psychic being is in front at the time, the immediate transition is quite possible... On the whole it may be said that there is no one rigid rule for these things, manifold variations are possible, depending upon the consciousness, its energies, tendencies and formations, although there is a general framework and design into which all fit and take their place.' (Ibid, pp. 437-438)

It is important to note that when our knowledge expands, we come to know that the material world that we normally see and experience is not the only world in the universe. The universe has many planes of existence, and it has many worlds in it; the material universe is only the lowest plane in the total scheme of the universe. According to the knowledge that was developed in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and which has been confirmed from age to age, and which Sri Aurobindo also confirms, is that above the physical world, there is a Vital world, above that is a world of the Mind, and then there are several planes between the Mind world and the world of the Supermind; these are worlds of Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind and Overmind. On the top level, there are worlds of the Supermind, of Bliss, Consciousness and of Existence. In the various descriptions of the universe, there are slight variations, but on the whole the most prominent description of the universe is that it is seven-fold. The Veda, therefore, speaks of *Bhur* (Earth plane), *Bhuvar* (world of Life), *Swar* (world of Illumined Mind), *Mahas* (world of Supermind), *Janah*

(world of Delight), *Tapah* (world of Consciousness-Force) and *Satyam* (world of Pure-Existence).

These worlds are connected among themselves, each one having its own influence and pressure. A special feature of the earth plane is that it is evolutionary in character, while other worlds are typical and non-evolutionary. It is on the earth that we find the evolution of Life in Matter, of Mind in Life and we see in our present earth-situation that Mind is also evolving. In the process of evolution, we find certain laws. According to one theory of evolution, which was developed by Darwin, the Law of evolution consists of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. There are, indeed, debates on this theory. But there is also a spiritual theory of evolution that we find in the writings of Sri Aurobindo. He agrees with the scientific theory that the evolutionary history of the earth has witnessed the evolution of Life in Matter, Mind in Life, but the mechanism of the evolution is, according to Sri Aurobindo, not identical with what the Darwinian theory wants us to believe. According to him, the Law of evolution has three processes: There is, first, multiplication of forms of Matter; when these forms become numerous and complex, the evolutionary force, which is working in Matter, brings out from the depths of Matter, Life, which is already latent in Matter. This process of Ascent from Matter to Life is aided by the forces, which come down from the world of Life. In other words, it is by the junction of the Life struggling to burst out of Matter and forces of Life coming down from the typical world of Life that eventually Life could be established in Matter. But after Life comes to be established in the form of minute organisms, it turns its gaze downwards towards Matter and produces and assumes more complex material forms, at least a few of them, assimilated in the Law of Life and gradually the material bodies in which the Life functions tend to grow more and more responsive to the forces of Life. This process is called the process of integration. When this process of integration develops further, there is once again multiplication of forms of organisms; these forms become more and more complex. This complexity is aided constantly by the forces descending from the world of Life and there is a gradual development of new organs, new structures and new modes of functioning. This is the reason why there are countless species and countless forms of bodies in which Life has been struggling to establish itself securely in Matter. There is, in fact, a great struggle between Life and Matter, and although Life has emerged

and Life has developed many forms, we see that no organism has yet been able to secure itself or establish itself so fully in Matter that it can continue to live in Matter without end. There is, thus, the Law of Death; and this Death operates because in the struggle between Life and Matter, Matter continues to impose itself and Matter becomes victorious over Life. This victory of Matter over Life is victory of the Law of Death.

Next, Mind evolves in Life; it is because of the pressure of the Mind, which was already involved in Life, and it was aided by the pressure of the Mind acting from the typal world of Mind. [The worlds of Life, of Mind and other worlds which are above our earthly plane are, as stated earlier, called typal because each of these worlds is non-evolutionary. Only our earth plane is evolutionary.] When the Mind evolves, a new power begins to act, because Mind has the capacity to plan and design; it can foresee the results with some kind of probability; it can therefore change the plan to bring about better probable consequences. This capacity is of tremendous significance. When the human mind develops, it can develop sciences and technologies. Mind can see the outer world, it can also see the inner world; it can come to know by special methods other worlds and can even design and plan how the powers of other worlds can be known and even brought down on the earth.

In India, as elsewhere, many advanced minds have tried to develop not only the sciences of the outer world but also the sciences of the inner world; they also developed the science of living and technology of living. The technology of the highest, truest and noblest living came to be called, in India, Yoga.

Fortunately, the records of the knowledge of the science and technology of Yogic living have been kept intact and alive. The most precious records are those of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. When we read these records, we find stories such as those of Nachiketas, where there are debates and exchanges in regard to the development of the knowledge of what is life, what is death, why are there processes of birth and death and why a human being is obliged to be born as a baby and grow up and achieve many victories and yet why he is obliged to die. This was the central question that Nachiketas had asked. What is death? What happens after death? And is there any Reality which is immortal?

Having given this background, we can see the importance of the question that we have been discussing here. We have seen that according to

the knowledge that is available in Yoga, there is in man a psychic entity or the soul, which is immortal and remains alive even after the death of the body. We have seen that when the soul leaves the body on the death of the body, it travels to the world of Life and then travels to the world of Mind. Thereafter it travels to the world of Souls, the psychic world. According to Sri Aurobindo, the soul rests in the psychic world and during this period of rest it assimilates the experiences that it has gained when it was in its previous body. The mission of the soul is to gradually influence more and more powerfully the powers of the mind, life and body and turn them to receive the higher and highest light from above and to transform them so that they may act in the physical world with the light and power of the highest consciousness. We have seen that this is a very long work, and the mission of that work cannot be fulfilled within a short span of one life. It is for this reason that there is in the world the machinery of rebirth. Rebirth becomes inevitable because the soul's work continues to become more and more victorious in its mission, and in every new body, the soul attempts to create a more and more powerful nucleus of its light from where its rays of light can spread over the mind, life and body. That nucleus of light is called the psychic being. The psychic being is the growing nucleus created by the psychic entity out of its own light and power so that through the instrumentality of the psychic being the mind, life and body can become more and more transformed.

When *Yama* explains to Nachiketas that there is a being in us, which is seated in the center of one's self and which is no bigger than the thumb, he refers to the psychic being. Hence, the first important thing for the individual to do is to get in touch with the psychic being. But this cannot be done if one remains turned outwards. That is why *Yama* points out that one should turn inward. It is by turning inward more and more that one can discover the psychic being. *Yama* also points out that this turning inward would not be easy, if one does not distinguish between what is pleasant and what is good. *Yama* also points that if one seeks pleasure, one will remain constantly in the world of blindness. It is by choosing the good that one becomes able to walk on the path of the discovery of the psychic being.

It is often asked as to why seeking of pleasure leads one to the world of blindness. The answer is that pleasures keep one fixed on the outer senses, and one remains more and more outward, whereas the guiding light of the psychic being is available only when one turns inward. But

the question is- how does one know what is good? One simple answer is that any action or any thought which makes one serious and sincere and leads one to think deeply by going inward, and any action or thought which makes one serious and sincere to live more and more within one's self and to control the outer actions and thoughts, is a good action and a good thought. But this is a simple answer. At a deeper level, it is found that the good is an expression of states of consciousness, which are very wide, very quiet, very stable and very compassionate. These states of consciousness are conducive to the contact with the psychic being. Hence, the more one controls one's desires for pleasures, the wider becomes his consciousness and the nearer he reaches the psychic being.

*Yama* also explains that apart from the psychic being, there is a greater Reality of which the psychic being is a delegate. That greater reality needs to be known, since the knowledge of that reality is a terminal point of the work of the psychic being on the earth, although even after knowing that Reality, a very different task still remains to be done. That task is to create conditions in the Mind, Life and Body by means of which that Reality can manifest fully on this earth. If, therefore, it is asked as to why we are here on the earth, we shall see that it is, firstly, to discover and realize that greater Reality, which is called in the *Upanishad*, the *Brahman*, and, secondly, to manifest that Reality in physical life in fullness. Since this task is a long one, we require to be ready for a long journey and work out patiently these two tasks as quickly as possible but also as perfectly as possible.

The *Katha Upanishad*, like all the other *Upanishads*, is centered on *Brahma-Vidya*, the knowledge of the *Brahman*. The greatness of the *Upanishads* lies in the fact that they give us full description of the essence and nature of the *Brahman*. That knowledge remains perennial, since the essence and nature of *Brahman* is immortal and does not change. That is why the knowledge given in the *Upanishads*, although it is very ancient, has remained true, and even now it is true. The truth of that knowledge can be verified by following the methods that *Upanishads* have given. That is why the *Upanishads* are not dogmatic. What the *Upanishads* had realized about the nature of the *Brahman* has come to be verified again and again, and Sri Aurobindo in his writings has confirmed that in his own experiences he has discovered the essence and nature of the *Brahman*, as it was described in the *Upanishads*. In fact, the knowledge of the *Upanishads* is itself a veri-

fication and restatement of the knowledge of the *Brahman* that we find in the Vedas. Hence the knowledge of the *Brahman* given in the *Upanishads* is also called Vedic Knowledge. According to that knowledge, *Brahman* is immortal, and therefore, when Nachiketas asks as to what remains after the death of a man, *Yama's* reply is not only that the soul is immortal but he also points out that the soul itself is imperishably connected with the *Brahman* who is the source of immortality. Hence, the knowledge of *Brahman* is indispensable. Not only that but the knowledge of the *Brahman* brings about an identity with the *Brahman*, and therefore, one attains to the immortality of the *Brahman*.

Let us, therefore, read once again what *Yama* says about the *Brahman*. First of all, the *Brahman* is described as *Atman* or the Self, since the Self is the essence, which is imperishable. *Yama* says to Nachiketas that the Self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, or by brainpower, or by much learning. None who has not ceased from doing evil, or whose mind has not been tranquillized can attain to Him or to that Self. Moreover, one needs to develop wisdom to attain to Him. One who pursues knowledge and one who becomes constantly mindful and keeps himself pure always, reaches the goal of the knowledge of the *Brahman*.

The *Brahman* is the highest. The *Katha Upanishad* describes that highest as follows:

‘The objects of sense are higher than the senses; the Mind is higher than the object of sense; the Supermind is higher than the Mind; the Great Self is higher than the Supermind; the Unmanifest is greater than the Great Self; the *Purusha* is greater than the Unmanifest. None is higher than the *Purusha*. He is the culmination, He is the highest goal of the journey.’ (See verses 10 & 11, Chapter III, 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle, *Katha Upanishad*.)

The Supreme Reality is defined here as *Purusha*; it will be seen that the word *Brahman* is not used in the above verse. This is because the word *Brahman* and the word *Purusha* are often used interchangeably and they are also used with the specific connotations. If we want to understand the specific connotation of the words *Brahman* and *Purusha*, it can be said that *Brahman* stands for the essence; it also stands for the essence that expands and is, therefore, present everywhere; it also stands for what is understood to be the meaning of self, because self means that which is most essential. For that reason, the word *Brahman* (essence that expands) is also equated with *Atman* (self). *Purusha*, on the other hand, stands for Being. There is a distinction between essence

and being. Essence is that which is what remains whether it manifests or does not manifest. It is true that what manifests can be none other than the essence, and what is spread in the manifestation is also essence. But the concept of *Purusha* brings in a more complex idea; Being is one, who is essence but who also determines whether to remain unmanifest or manifest. Hence, the word *Purusha* means the being who determines or who originates the manifestation. The word *Purusha* has also a further connotation; he is not only the being who determines whether to manifest or not to manifest, not only the originator of manifestation but who also relates himself with what is manifested and dwells in manifestation. (As explained earlier, the word *Purusha* consists of two words – *pur* and *vas*, - *pur* stands for the field or the town or the body or the universe, which is manifested, and *vas* stands for dwelling, to dwell, to live.)

We may also add that the Supreme Reality is often described as *Ishwara*. Again, the words *Brahman*, *Purusha* and *Ishwara* can be used interchangeably, but the specific meaning of *Ishwara* is one who is the Lord of all that is manifested. As the Lord, the relationship with the manifestation is not the same as the *Purusha* has with the manifestation. The relationship between *Purusha* and the power of manifestation (*Prakriti*) is that of eternal companionship, such that *Purusha* consents to *Prakriti* and *Prakriti* consents to *Purusha*, depending upon the nature of the play that they want to play with each other. The relationship between *Ishwara* and manifestation is not that of companionship, but that of a relationship in which *Ishwara* always acts as the Lord of the manifestation, who controls manifestation, who commands manifestation and overrides with his Will so that that Will prevails.

These three words describe the Supreme Reality in its totality in which these three aspects are three poises, and there is still a higher poise, which is attained when all the three poises are transcended. That transcendental is, in a sense, indescribable, but if it is to be described, it is described as a *Parabrahman* or *Purushottama* or *Parameshwara*.

According to the *Katha Upanishad*, when the word *Purusha* is used as the one who is highest, it should be understood that the *Purusha* that is the highest is the *Purushottama*. It is the knowledge of the highest *Purushottama* that one should aim at. It is that *Purusha*, in its highest poise that is the real immortal one, and it is because that *Purushottama* has all the three poises of *Brahman*, *Ishwara* and *Purusha*, the realization of the *Brahman* or *Ishwara* or *Purusha* is also the realization of

immortality. But apart from the highest *Purushottama*, and his three poises, there is also the power of *Purushottama*, which is the power of manifestation. That power of manifestation is known in the *Vedas* as *Aditi* and *Katha Upanishad* also uses the same name and points out that that *Aditi* is also immortal. Further, the *Katha Upanishad* also points out that there is *Jiva*, who is the eater of sweetness, and that *Jiva* is manifested in the *Aditi*, who is herself the ocean of sweetness. That is why *Jiva* is described as the eater of sweetness. That *Jiva* also is immortal. The *Katha Upanishad* also speaks of a being who is no bigger than the thumb (soul or psychic being) and as Sri Aurobindo points out, that being that is no bigger than the thumb is a delegate of the *Jiva* or of the Individual Self. According to the *Katha Upanishad*, that, who is no bigger than the thumb, is also immortal, and it is that one who travels as an individual traveler, who enters into the human body at birth and departs from the body on death of the body; after the death of the body, it travels into different worlds which are other than the worlds of the physical existence; after the intermediary travel and rest in its own world, which Sri Aurobindo calls the Psychic world, after about three years of sojourn in the psychic world, it gets reborn into another human body. This traveler is immortal, and it is that traveler who is obliged to come back again and again into the human body because, as Sri Aurobindo points out, it has an intention, the fulfillment of which can take a very long time, and therefore, until that intention is fulfilled, it comes again and again into the human body, and during each birth, it works out a part of the work which is to be fulfilled over repeated rebirths.

The question is: What is the intention of the soul on the earth, which it intends to fulfill? This question is extremely difficult to answer. A part of the answer is that the soul that enters into the human body has to be awakened to the reality of the *Purushottama*. Hence, the soul constantly works on the consciousness of the body, life and mind to make that consciousness more and more aware of the *Purushottama*. When that awareness is attained in the body, life and mind, it is said to have attained the state of immortality. Indeed, this is a very difficult task, and one mark of that realization of immortality is that one becomes superior to the body, life and mind permanently, and it is no more obliged to become bound to the body, life and mind. Hence, that state is also called the state of liberation or Moksha.

Sri Aurobindo goes further and points out that attainment of liberation



is only the first step of the fulfillment of the purpose for which the soul comes down into the body, life and mind. Hence, a further task remains still to be accomplished. A part of this task is to develop body, life and mind to such a point of perfection that they too become divinised, and one could describe the divinised body, life and mind as the divine temple, that lives physically on the earth and manifests fully the divine consciousness in each and every movement of body, life and mind. This aspect of the work of the soul is not described in the *Katha Upanishad*. But what is left unsaid in the Upanishad remains to be accomplished and it is here that a new knowledge and a new method of application of that knowledge had to be discovered.

Sri Aurobindo made a fresh effort of yogic research and found out that in order to fulfill the soul's task on earth, it is not enough to secure the realization of the immortality of the soul and of the *Jiva* but also to realize the immortality and power of manifestation of *Aditi*, (which Sri Aurobindo also calls Supermind) has also to be known in fullness. Sri Aurobindo goes even further, and points out that the power of *Aditi* or Supermind has to be brought down by its descent, so that the Supramental power can inundate the mind, life and body. It is only when the Supermind has fully inundated the mind, life and body, that the divine temple can be built on the earth. When that state is achieved, not only the mind and life but even the body is fully supramentalised, and the body can also develop a new structure that can manifest Supermind fully. In that state, even the mind becomes immortal, life becomes immortal and even the body becomes immortal. This triple immortality of the mind, life and body is the sign that the *Purushottama* and *Aditi* have become fully manifest on the earth. Indeed, humanity has not yet reached that point, where this ideal can be said to have been accomplished. In the meantime, most of us are still to attain to the first half of the work, which is described in the *Katha Upanishad*, namely, the task of the realization of the immortality of the *Purushottama* and of *Aditi*. Some, who are very advanced, can move forward towards the remaining half of the work; only a few have the capacity of working towards the completion of the task. According to Sri Aurobindo, it may take a few centuries before one can attain to the triple immortality of the mind, life and body. The body's immortality will be the last achievement, and it is towards that achievement that we have to prepare ourselves increasingly and, with the constant help of *Aditi*, work out the attainment of full supramental manifestation on the earth.

It may be added that immortality of the body, when it is achieved, will not mean the obligation or the necessity of the soul to remain in the same body, but it will be free from the necessity or obligation to enter in the state of death. The supramental being will have the freedom to choose to leave the body whenever it so wills. That capacity to leave the body at will is, truly speaking, what can be called *icchā mrityu*. That means that death is not a necessity; at present death has not been conquered by humanity, even though there have been instances when some advanced yogis have been able to postpone the moment of death; but their body itself has not yet achieved that level of conquest where it can be said that the law of death itself has been eliminated from our present state of physical existence.

We have thus covered, not only the teaching of *Katha Upanishad*, but in the light of Sri Aurobindo, also brought out what can be called the complete knowledge, not only of immortality of the Supreme Reality but also the immortality of the instruments of the Spirit on the earth. It is true that one has to make a very large study of the methods by which the conquest of death in the human body can be realised. But for that, the minimum that we can recommend is to study Sri Aurobindo's book: '*The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*'.

<sup>68</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 19, pp. 822-3.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 823.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 247.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, Vol. 16, p. 22-3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 26

<sup>73</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 26-8.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 28-30.

<sup>76</sup> Vide., Ibid., pp. 31-3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-3.

<sup>78</sup> Vide., *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 10, pp. 18-27.

<sup>79</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 11, pp. 99-105.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 101-3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

- <sup>83</sup> Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 16, pp. 34-40.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 36.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 38.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 40.
- <sup>87</sup> Vide., *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 11, pp. 149-159.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 186.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., Vol. 13, pp. 98-100.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 175-6.
- <sup>91</sup> Vide., Ibid., Vol. 8, pp. 21-5.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid., Vol. 10, pp. 63-5.
- <sup>93</sup> Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, Pondicherry, 1971, Vol. 19, pp. 821-3. Sri Aurobindo explains here the conditions under which the mind, life and body could attain victory over death and matter, and these conditions include the individualization, integration and openness of the mental being, vital being and physical being, on the surface, to the supermind.
- <sup>94</sup> *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 10, pp. 86-7.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 95.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., Vol. 13, p. 399.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 417-20.
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- <sup>100</sup> Ibid., *On Himself*, Vol. 26, pp. 468-9.
- <sup>101</sup> *Mother's Agenda*, Institut de Recherches Évolutives, Paris, Vol. 3, pp. 156-9.
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**Y**oga has for long been conceived as the discipline that necessitates rejection of life and its activities. The Integral Yoga, on the contrary, maintains that all life is Yoga and that life can greatly be helped if we apply the principles of yoga to the problems of life. All life must be accepted, but all life must be transformed by the application of the Integral Yoga. It is further contended that the contemporary problems of life have reached a critical stage and that criticality can be resolved only if we apply principles of Integral Yoga to the problems of the contemporary crisis.

The purpose of this book is to elucidate this view of the Integral Yoga and to bring out how Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and the Mother (1878-1973), while they were developing Integral Yoga, have confronted the problems of the contemporary crisis and have shown that the Integral Yoga can become an aid to humanity and it can even be used as an aid to the development of the next step of evolution itself.

This book invites the readers to study the original works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and particularly, Sri Aurobindo's book *'The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth'* and 13 Volumes of *'Mother's Agenda.'*