

Sri Aurobindo's Theory of Spiritual Evolution

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Abstract - The Western theory of Evolution is a great asset for Aurobindo in realizing the necessary reconciliation between the material and the spiritual, the world and God. Such reconciliation is made easier by the fundamental Indian concepts that Reality is One that serves as the starting point. It is this One that manifests through Many. This is the starting –point for Aurobindo. He accepts the vedantic idea that “Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life essence Matter is form of veiled Life, Life, a form of veiled Consciousness.” Sri Aurobindo accepts partially the theory of evolution put forward by Charles Darwin and Henri Bergson, but he criticizes them for their conception of evolution as automatic mechanism. Evolution, instead, is a willed descent or the self-lowering of God or *saccidananda* into matter. One finds a twofold movements in evolution, namely, an upward movement of the material towards the divine (Ascent) and a downward movement of the divine into the material (Descent). Such a movement continues till the involved Supreme being is fully evolved. To accept such a position Aurobindo had to make the Supreme Being subject to change and evolution. Naturally the centrality of his philosophy is the concept of an involving and evolving Absolute.

Evolution is the development of consciousness in Matter with a growing perfection of form until the form can reveal the spirit. Evolution is two-fold, namely, physical and spiritual. The latter refers to soul-evolution and the emphasis is on the growth of the soul through the ascending process, whereas physical evolution is kept up through heredity. The heart of evolution is the self-evolution of consciousness and the emphasis is on spiritual evolution because that alone brings about the perfection of man and the divinization theory will tell us, according to Sri Aurobindo, that man is basically a transitional being and not a final product. The new consciousness he acquires transforms his nature and raises him to the status of the Divine.

KEY WORDS: *Saccidananda, consciousness, evolution, involution, Matter, Life, Supermind, consciousness-Force etc.*

I. INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATION OF EVOLUTION

Evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo is “the progressive unfolding of the Divine.” It is then a spiritual evolution, and in presenting this spiritual evolution, he criticises both the materialistic and idealistic theories of evolution. Materialism fails to indicate how an unconscious principle evolves into life and consciousness. In the same way, Idealism is wrong to hold that reason is the highest stage of evolution. Sri Aurobindo, instead, presents the spiritual evolution, according to which the Spirit, which is the Supreme Reality, is the source of creation and evolution, and the end of realisation. Evolution is a process of the manifestation of the Spirit. It is a process of the perfect and complete revelation of the Spirit where “it would be no longer an evolution through strife; it would become harmonious development from stage to stage, from lesser to greater light, from type to higher type of the power and beauty of a self-unfolding existence.” The purpose of the evolution is the absolute and complete manifestation of the involved principle of *saccidananda*. The

origin, the content, the initial and the ultimate Reality of all that is in the cosmos, is *Saccidananda* which is a triune principle of transcendent and infinite Existence, Consciousness Force, and Bliss. It is an integration of Being and becoming. The whole cosmos is the manifestation of the Divine. The higher involves itself into the lower and there evolves a double line process: Involution and Evolution.

Evolution is the inverse of the process of creation, and it is only by linking to creation that we can understand the process of evolution. It is because the Spirit is already involved in Matter that matter can evolve into life, life into mind, and mind into Supermind. Evolution is then understood as the return of the Spirit to itself. The spirit which out of its own sheer joy of self-expression (*lila*) projected itself out of itself, reaching the farthest limit of such self-projection in matter, has to come back to itself. This coming back to itself is called evolution. It is the “home-coming of the Spirit.” The process continues till it reaches the highest stage, the Ultimate Reality of *saccidananda*. Thus Aurobindo supplies the missing link in the various theories of evolution.

This coming back of his is the reversal of His going out. The former is the Ascent and the latter, the Descent. The order of involution, according to Sri Aurobindo, is Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Psyche(Soul), Life, and Matter. Evolution is the reversal of the sequence. Ascent or Evolution is only possible because there has been Descent or Involution. Matter can evolve because there has been a descent of the Spirit into Matter. Defining evolution, Sri Aurobindo writes: "All evolution is in essence a hightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into the spirit." According to this definition, everything has some part of consciousness-force of the Spirit, though varying in degree. Evolution is then making more and more manifest the unmanifest consciousness-force that dwells in every being, and therefore it is an ascent from a less manifest condition of the consciousness to a more manifest condition.

Evolution is not merely an ascent from the lower to the higher state, rather there is an integration of the higher with the lower. When the higher descends into the lower, the latter is transformed into the higher. Evolution is then "an uplift and transformation of all the principles." The Supramental light that is received by the mind is to be transmitted to the matter for the total transformation. It is only when matter is also transformed, cosmic transformation is possible.

The individual plays a significant role in the process of evolution. Involution is a process of entering into the lower realities, and consequently there is the losing of self. The object of evolution is then the recovery of the self. It is through the consciousness of the individual being that the self is recovered. The destiny of man is not to be mere man, but to be something infinitely higher. Sri Aurobindo visualizes the urge of man towards a spirituality: "Man's urge towards spirituality is the inner driving of the spirit within him towards emergence, the insistence of the Consciousness-Force of the being towards the next step of its manifestation." It is an urge for the emergence of Superman.

II. TWO MODES OF EVOLUTION

Evolution is a graded unfolding of the Supreme Reality and it strives to realize the unity already inherent. The nature of the Supreme Reality is comprised of a "sevenfold chord" or eight principles: Matter, Life, Psyche, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force, Existence. The whole process works with a continuous movement of involution and evolution, i.e., an emanation from the source of all. And a transformation of cosmos by an ascension to the source. The seven notes of the chord of Being become now the rungs on the ladder of descent and ascent, of involution and evolution. Both these movements are nothing but the divine *lila* of the Supermind:

If we look at World-Existence rather in its relation to the self-delight of eternally existent being, we may regard, describe and realize it as Lila, the play, the child's joy, the poet's joy, the actor's joy, the mechanician's joy of the Soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation,- Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground.

The ascent or the evolution is the self-unveiling of the Reality, while the descent or the involution is self-concealing. There is the mutual interplay between both evolution and involution. While the involved consciousness gradually rises up to reach the Supreme consciousness, the same descends to lower planes to facilitate speedier ascension of the lower levels:

The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of Supermind towards the divine being.

The evolution of the principles of matter, life and mind into the status of the Spirit is possible on account of the involution of Spirit into them. The double process of involution and evolution explains the whole of the cosmic working and its order. According to Sri Aurobindo, the higher principle evolves out of the lower simply because it is already present in the lower in a latent manner. The lower principles are the subordinate forms of the higher principles. Mind, Life and Matter are the subordinate forms of Supermind, Consciousness-Force and Existence respectively. Soul is the projection of the Bliss. Thus, existence, according to Sri Aurobindo, "is a sort of refraction of the divine existence in inverted order of ascent and descent," and it could be presented as:

Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss
Supermind
Mind, Life, Matter.

In the course of evolution, there is the constant interplay between the higher existence (Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss) and the lower existence (Mind, Life, Matter) and Supermind functions as the intermediary principle between them.

1. Involution of the Divine

According to Aurobindo, the Absolute manifests itself in two terms, namely, the Being and the Becoming: "The Being is the fundamental reality; the Becoming is an effectual reality: it is a dynamic power and result, a creative energy and working out of the Being, a constantly persistent yet mutable form, process, outcome of its immutable formless essence."



The manifestation of the Being takes the shape of involution, which is also the beginning of evolution. He presents the theory of emanation when he explains about the phenomenon of evolution. Everything is the self-diffusion of the Divine. It is a descending process by which the Infinite conceals itself or puts veil upon veil on itself, and finally reaching till the inert matter. Involution is, therefore, a "progressive self-limitation, or self-absorption of *saccidananda* outwards or downwards by increasingly veiling and consequently diminishing the glory of His pure Existence. Consciousness-Force, Bliss and the creative medium Supermind." In this Process of descent, the Absolute Spirit and the Matter become the two poles of the same reality; Matter is only the outcome of the Spirit's "plunge into the inconscience" and it is the "last word in the descent."

How is it possible that the Supreme Reality or the *saccidananda* which is characterized as timeless and spaceless existence manifests Itself in time and space? How can the infinite One become the multiple finites? In the eyes of Aurobindo such a transition, according to Sri Aurobindo, is possible only through an intermediate link, which exists between the finite and the infinite, and Aurobindo calls this intermediate link as Supermind:

There is no escape unless there be an intermediate link between the two which can explain them to each other and establish between them such a relation as will make it possible for us to realise the one Existence, Consciousness, Delight in the mould of the mind, life and body. The intermediate link exists. We call it the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness.

It is through the integral knowledge or superior consciousness that Supermind becomes the intermediary link: "It has the knowledge of the One, but is able to draw out of the One its hidden multitudes; it manifests the Many, but does not lose itself in their differentiations. Supermind thus functions as the creative consciousness of the higher into the lower hemisphere.

Involution is the self-effectuation of Brahman. The efficient cause as well as the material cause of the process of involution is Brahman itself. In this process of involution, there is no new creation. Creation is not the production of something different from the creator, but a movement within the creator. It is a "self-projection." If everything is the "self-projection" of the Brahman, there is hardly anything which is excluded from Brahman. Even Matter is Brahman and "it is nothing other than or different from Brahman." Involution, thus, brings before us the identity between the world and the Brahman.

Involution is the foundation of evolution. The evolution of matter is possible only because there has been an involution of the Spirit into Matter. Ascent without descent, or evolution

without involution is unthinkable. There is the creative spirit latent in the inconscient, and it is the mutual correspondence that effects various manifestations.

According to Aurobindo, the higher emerges from the lower because it is eternally present in the lower. It is a logical contradiction to assume that physical energy, which is inconscient and blind, is the exclusive source of consciousness, or even of life. To make this assumption is to derive consciousness and the immense possibilities inherent in conscious being, from accidental concatenations of physical constituents: in other words, to accept the conclusion that the consciousness has no adequate ground. This is certainly not so reasonable as to assume that the higher modes of being are eternally immanent in the lower and that in this immanence rests the power for the possible ascent.

Brahman is the beginning and the end of evolution. Brahman is the secret Reality of all existing realities, or the truth behind the manifestation of the entire universe. It is present in all without losing its individuality and transcendence: "Spirit inhabits each and all, but is more than all...It becomes each thing without ceasing from its own larger all-containing existence." All the finite beings are the expressions and the manifestations of the Absolute. Their existence depends on Brahman, and nothing can have its existence without It: "Nothing can manifest that is not justified by some self-power of the original and omnipresent Reality."

2. Evolution of the Material

Evolution, according to Aurobindo is "an inverse action of the involution: what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence." Evolution is a movement backward, a return journey from Matter towards the Spirit. It is the gradual disclosure and deliverance of the Spirit, the ascension and revelation of the involved consciousness through a series of awakenings- matter wakening into life, life awakening into mind and mind now seeking to awaken into something beyond the mind, into a power of conscious Spirit.

The Matter is the first to emerge in the evolution as it is the last term of involution, and the Spirit, which is the original involutory factor, is the final evolutionary emergence. It is also a returning to the origin of the very process of the Divine, Aurobindo calls it "the progressive unfolding of Spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being." The evolutionary process manifests a spiritual nature; primarily its concern is the emergence of the Spirit, while secondarily it deals with the scientific theory of evolution. Accordingly, the process of evolution has a double

dimension: the inward or invisible, and the outward or visible dimension, in other words, the consciousness, and the physical manifestations, respectively. It is the growth in consciousness that determines the evolution of the physical form and not vice-versa.

There are two forces at work in the very process of evolution: the upward-tending force from below, and the upward-drawing and downward pressing force from above. The finite beings have a tendency to manifest that is latent in them, and it is the Supramental Consciousness-Force that pushes forward the evolutionary movement. "The Consciousness secretly indwelling in Matter, the occult Inhabitant, is able thus to make its way upward from the lower to the higher gradations, taking up what it was into what it is and preparing to take up both into what it will be." Evolution is thus a mutual collaboration between the Inconscient and the Supramental forces.

Evolution is "a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into the spirit." In this process of evolution there is a triple process of heightening, widening and integration. In the heightening process, matter is raised to life, life to mind and so on. Along with the process of heightening there is also the process of widening. With the emergence of life, matter widens itself so as to accommodate life in itself. With the process of heightening and widening, the lower principles are not neglected; instead, the higher ones get integrated with the lower ones. Integration thus implies a descent of the higher principle into all the lower ones, and it is in fact an "ascent through descent." The spiritual evolution, thus, effects a total transformation of all the lower principles towards higher forms of existence. With this new evolution, the whole cosmos attains salvation. Thus the Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo does not reject the lower principles like matter, life and mind but it views them as the different forms and grades of the Absolute. By the triple process of widening, heightening and integration, evolution proceeds from Matter to Life and then to Mind.

The destiny of evolution does not end with Mind. As Sri Aurobindo affirms: "man as he is, cannot be the last term of the evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit." The evolution has to proceed to the Supramental status, and then there will be the emergence of the divine man or the Gnostic being. The starting point of evolution is inconscience (matter) and the final goal is the Knowledge. Evolution first takes place in matter, and then there is the further evolution a life substance and conscious substance, but maintaining at the same time some of the characteristics and limitations of the previous stages. The search has to be continued till the attainment of the Ultimate or Supramental

Consciousness, which is higher than the mind consciousness and more powerful than material energy. The emergence of the Supramental Consciousness is the goal of the evolutionary process, and it will effect a conversion of the inconscient into conscient, and will plant the law of Gnostic consciousness in the whole of our being and finally will change the mental into Supramental being.

The evolutionary process reaches its climax through the consciousness of man. Therefore Sri Aurobindo attaches special attention to the transformation of the individual:

The immense importance of the individual being, which increases as he rises in the scale, is the most remarkable and significant fact of a universe which started without consciousness and without individuality in an undifferentiated Nescience. This importance can only be justified if the Self as individual is no less real than the Self as cosmic Being or Spirit and both are powers of the Eternal.

Man is an eternal portion of the Eternal Spirit, and it is through him that the Spirit discloses its being. When man identifies the Eternal Spirit in himself, there is the discovery of the Cosmic Self and the Supreme Reality. Man is destined to become the Gnostic Being or the Supermind, that can transform the cosmos and the whole of creation. Such a new vision of existence is possible by a "vow of self-surrender to the Divine, - a vow of total, unreserved and active self-surrender to the Divine Will."

III. STAGES OF EVOLUTION

It is the nature of the Absolute to manifest itself. The Universe, according to Sri Aurobindo, is an involution and an evolution of the Absolute. Involution is the descending of the Absolute into the inconscient, and evolution is the unveiling or liberation from the inconscient, and thus attaining the original state. It is in this process of liberation that the world emerges. Aurobindo clarifies this point when he says that "the secret of the terrestrial evolution is the slow and progressive liberation of this latent indwelling spirit." He distinguishes the Absolute in two planes, or hemispheres: the higher and the lower." The higher hemisphere is the original state of the Absolute, which is full of knowledge and Consciousness, whereas the lower one is characterized by ignorance and less consciousness. Though apparently the two hemispheres share the contrary natures, in reality, there is close relation between the two." Matter, Life and Mind seem to be opposed to the Absolute due to the fact that the Absolute has not manifested itself fully in them. They are destined to make an ascent to the status of Spirit and manifest fully its light and power in the course of evolution. Matter, life and mind are merely the different modes of Reality; they represent the different levels of existence, the different gradations of Reality. It is the intermediate Supermind that



connects both the lower hemisphere and higher hemisphere. Evolution brings out the growth of the consciousness from the Inconscient to the Absolute. In the process of evolution, Aurobindo distinguishes various stages before attaining the original state of the Absolute, i.e., *saccidananda*. The four stages of evolution are Matter, Life, Mind and Supermind.

1. Matter

In the ascending order of evolution, Matter is the first step toward *saccidananda*. It is from matter that life, mind, Supermind and the higher degrees of the spiritual existence evolve. It is the earthly pedestal, the terrestrial base of the whole evolutionary movement and it contains the different elements that have to evolve further. Matter has a particular influence on the development of the body which can consequently attain divine manhood. Therefore matter has a special place in the evolutionary march towards the Absolute. It is a "conceptive self-extension of being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness." It is then the self-projection or emanation of *saccidananda*.

Aurobindo's conception of matter differs from that of the traditional Western concept, which conceives matter as against form, and presents the characteristics of matter as passive potency, incomplete bodily substance and possessor of accidents. But Aurobindo delineates a positive and dynamic conception of matter. Matter, according to him, is a "substance of the Eternal," "form," "power and degree," "self extension," and the "bodily mansion" of the Spirit. "Matter also is Brahman and it is nothing other than or different from Brahman." Thus, for him matter is the outmost or nethermost pole of One Spiritual Existence."

Matter also has qualities that create obstacles to the evolutionary ascent of the Spirit. It is "the culmination of principle of division and struggle", and of "ignorance." It is "a colossal inertia," and the culmination of bondage to mechanical law. The nature of inertia prevents Life and Mind from going beyond the limitations of Matter, and the multiplicity of matter hinders the supreme unity in diversity. Matter also causes ignorance of the presence of Spirit. The three main obstacles of Matter are inertia, division and ignorance, but they are sidelined because of the indwelling presence of Brahman in matter. Aurobindo recognizes Spirit involved in Matter, and nature becomes "secret God." Matter stands for the lower world which also represents the Reality. It is also a self-extension of the Being, and Brahman in its self-creative action.

Aurobindo's comprehensive conception of matter can be summed up thus:

We arrive at this truth of Matter that there is a conceptive self-extension of being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness and which cosmic Mind and Life in their creative action represent through

atomic division and aggregation as the thing we call Matter. But this Matter, like Mind and Life, is still Being or Brahman in its self-creative action. It is a form of the force of conscious Being, a form given by Mind and realised by Life.... Being manifest as substance, force of Being cast into form, into a figured self-representation of the Secret self-consciousness, delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object, - what is this but Sachchidananda? Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence.

2. Life

Life ordinarily denotes that which moves and breathes, and consequently it is referred to animal activity, where there is the discharge of energy. But life cannot be limited to mere motion and breath, and Sri Aurobindo widens its concept to three levels, namely, the Mind-energy in the animal, the Life-energy in the plant, and the Material-energy in the mineral. Through these three levels, the Consciousness-Force manifests itself through the medium of life. Aurobindo sees Life as

a form of the one cosmic Energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant actor play of the Force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance.

Life contains therefore, disintegration and renewal, stability and change, and birth and death. Life is a universal conscious-force acting subconsciously in matter, and it is much more than the physical force. It is "a form of veiled Consciousness," and it contains the vital activity.

Life is a vital activity which is universal, and is manifested everywhere in different degrees. There is everywhere the same birth, growth and death, energy and depression of life dynamisms. There is a life-force which runs through the development, i.e., the supreme Consciousness. Aurobindo also identifies Life with the Absolute, when he affirms, "all being is a supreme consciousness." Life is essentially the Operation of the Consciousness-Force supporting and modifying the substantial existence of its own forms. Life is also an intermediary power between the inconscient Matter and the conscious Mind. It pushes forward the Consciousness-Force towards the Mind, and realizes the advanced manifestation of the Absolute.

3. Mind

Mind is the principle or faculty of knowledge in man. It is mind which enables man to be aware of himself and of the subjective and the objective orders of existence. Its main function is to interpret the truth of the higher existence to the

lower level. The basic characteristic of mind is consciousness. It conceives, perceives and senses things. It follows the methodology of analysis and synthesis, and directs these from ignorance (*avidyā*) to knowledge (*vidyā*).

Though mind in essence is consciousness, yet it projects only a limited consciousness, because of its nature of ignorance :

The very nature of our mind is Ignorance; not an absolute nescience, but a limited and conditioned knowledge of being, limited by a realisation of its present, a memory of its past, an inference of its future, conditioned therefore by a temporal and successive view of itself and its experiences.

Mind could also be considered “a creator or parent of ignorance.” Due to its nature of ignorance, it does not provide essential knowledge, but can only perceive each reality as a separate whole or as a thing-in-itself. Mind thus loses the fundamental truth of Oneness in multiplicity and limits itself to diversity in nature. Aurobindo sees such a shortcoming as the fundamental error of the mind: “The fundamental error of the Mind is, then, this fall from self-knowledge by which the individual soul conceives of its individuality as a separate fact instead of as a form of Oneness and makes itself the centre of its own universe instead of knowing itself as one concentration of the universal.”

In the evolutionary march towards the *saccidananda*, mind has a great mission. “The utmost mission of Mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and this higher ascension.” Mind functions as the middle term of evolution and not as the culmination of evolution. It is an intermediate power valid for certain actualities of being an agent or intermediary. “The real creatrix is a Consciousness, an Energy inherent in the transcendent and the cosmic Spirit.” Mind, then, has to make a passage from its nature of ignorance and division, to infinite, undivided, integral consciousness of the Supermind that conceives the reality as the undivided One.

4. Supermind

According to Sri Aurobindo, mind cannot be thought to be in possession of higher knowledge, since it is guided by ignorance and division. Neither Life nor Mind can qualify as the creative principle of the world. There must be

a secret Consciousness greater than Life-Consciousness or Mind-Consciousness, an Energy more essential than the material Energy. Since it is greater than Mind, it must be a supramental Consciousness-Force; since it is a power of essential substance other than Matter, it must be the power of that which is the Supreme essence and substance of all things, a power of the Spirit.”

The progressive and transformative nature of evolution culminates in a superior consciousness, which is referred to as the Supermind.

Supermind is the intermediary principle between the Infinite Absolute and the finite Becoming, and consequently the dichotomy between the higher and the lower hemispheres vanishes. The whole reality is the One Absolute. The Absolute according to Sri Aurobindo is a simultaneous unity of the static and the dynamic aspects of being; it is not mere being, neither is it mere becoming. It is being-becoming. Considered in its static aspect, it is *saccidananda*, and considered in its dynamic or creative aspect, it is the Supermind. It is through Supermind that *Saccidananda* manifests the universe out of its indivisible unity. It is

the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and the Omega, the starting-point of all differentiation, the instrument of a unification, originative, executive and consummative of all realised or realisable harmonies. It has the knowledge of the One, but is able to draw out of the One its hidden multitudes; it manifests the Many, but does not lose itself in their differentiations.

As intermediary principle between *saccidananda* and the world, Supermind has a twofold process: “a descent from above” and “an ascent from below” or “a self-revelation of the Spirit” and “an evolution in Nature.” The descent is essential for the manifestation of the Absolute because “nothing short of its full descent can thoroughly remove the veil and mixture and effect the full spiritual transformation.” It is because of the descent of the Supermind that the lower hemisphere is transformed, and this in turn enables for the ascent. This interplay of Supermind's descent-ascent reconciles the opposition between the Infinite and the finite, between the Absolute One and the relative many, and has a certain identity of being with both. It synthesizes the indivisible One and the disintegrating universe:

[It is a] firm self-extension in the Truth-consciousness which contains and upholds the diffusion and prevents it from being a real disintegration, maintains unity in utmost diversity and stability in utmost mutability, insists on harmony in the



appearance of an all-pervading strife and collision, keeps eternal cosmos where Mind would arrive only at a chaos eternally attempting to form itself. This is the Supermind, the Truth-consciousness, the Real-Idea which knows itself and all that it becomes.

The Supermind is not only the principle of knowledge but also the principle of will. It is knowledge by which the Absolute is aware of a determinate expression of a certain truth in himself, and it is will, by which the Absolute directs his Force along the lines of that expression. Aurobindo calls it "Truth-Consciousness" or "Real-Idea", because it operates in terms of the fundamental truth of things, which is unity, rather than in terms of the diversity that Mind sees. In the Mind, the multiplicity takes precedence and the conscious sense of the universal oneness is lost, whereas in the Supermind there is the consciousness of the Oneness, i.e., the One in the Many, and the Many in the One. Supermind works as an integrating principle, and considers the apparent opposites as matter and mind, nature and spirit, world and God, the many and the One as "two inseparable poles of the same indivisible and all-comprehensive reality." "Truth-Consciousness" emphasizes Supermind's awareness of itself as holding multiplicity in unity and "Real-Idea" is understood as "effective self-awareness." Supermind is thus seen as a creative subjectivity or Brahman's self-knowledge creating the reality of the universe.

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