

Renaissance

Sri Aurobindo Society
INDIA FROM PAST DAWNS TO FUTURE NOONS

RENAISSANCE REDUX

Theme: Sri Aurobindo, Seer of Light

Vol. 2, Issue 3
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BhāratShakti
Sri Aurobindo Society



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BHĀRATSHAKTI
INDIA – FROM PAST DAWNS TO FUTURE NOONS

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EDITORIAL

Beloo Mehra

Greetings for this special month of August!

August 15 is a special day for all those who have turned to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We celebrate the birthday of Sri Aurobindo, the Eternal Presence, the Maharishi, the Mahayogi, the Avatar who is guiding the onward march of Earth-consciousness to its inevitable destiny.

From 1923 to 1926, it had become customary that on his birthday, Sri Aurobindo would deliver a small speech about Yoga for his close disciples. In his message of 15 August 1926 Sri Aurobindo gently guides us all on how we can make every August 15 a definitive step in our inner progress on the Sunlit Path. His words point to the inner preparation with which we should approach this significant date. We open the third issue of Volume 2 of the quarterly *Renaissance Redux*, released on this occasion of Darshan, with a special video featuring inspiring words from Sri Aurobindo which reveal the deeper significance of this Darshan day for Yoga.

We also celebrate this day as the birthday of the modern nation of India that is Bhārat, one of the oldest living civilisations that is advancing confidently on her way to renew and express her timeless spirit in new forms. In this connection, the issue features some important words of the Mother where she helps us clarify an essential point about “cause” and “effect.” These words are not to be missed by any aspirant on the path of Integral Yoga, or anyone who has turned to the teachings and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

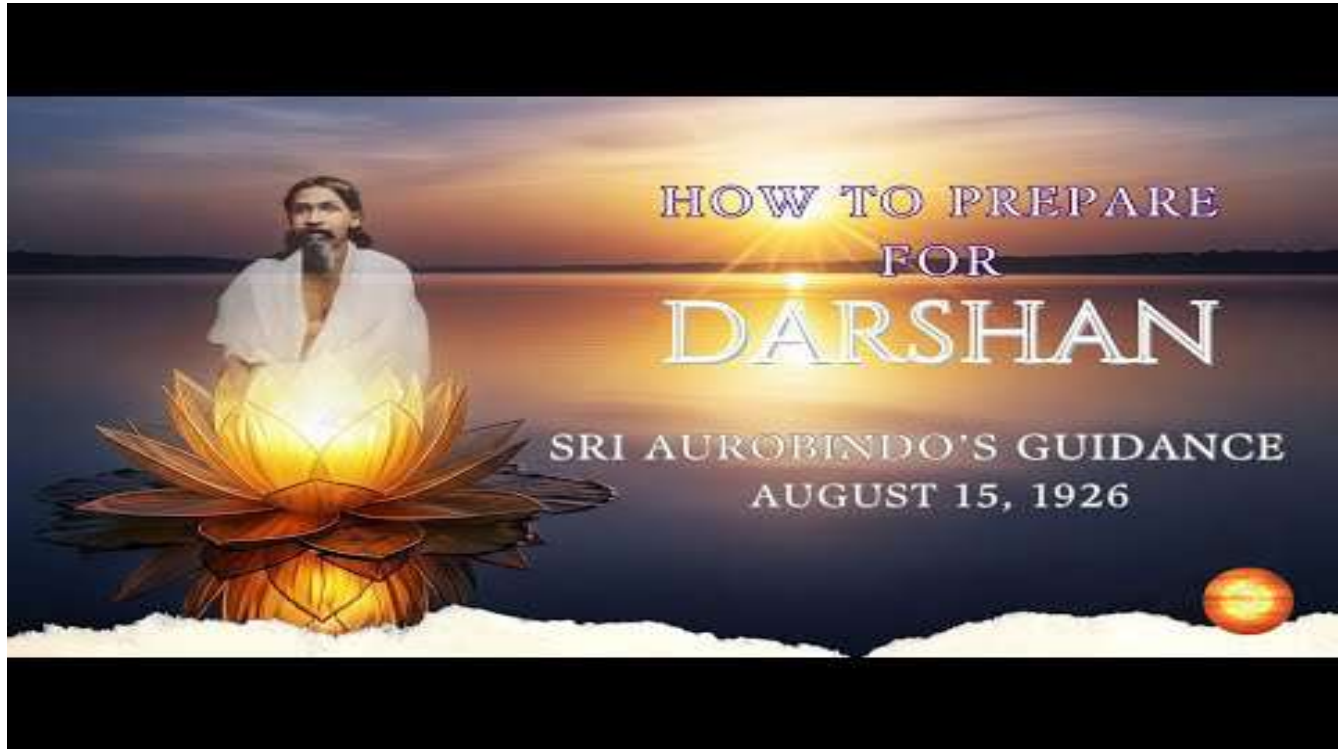
Sri Aurobindo has emphasised that the age of an ascetic yogi in a cave far away from the maddening crowd of life must give way to an age of yoga in real-life, in real-time which aims at the transformation of one’s entire being, the life and the world. The feature article in

this issue ‘Sri Aurobindo, The Reconciler of Light and Life’ by Rishabhchand presents the Master’s illuminating exposition of the origin of life and the aim and steps of its evolutionary progression. First published in the 1951 annual issue of *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, we present the article in 2 parts, with a few minor formatting updates for digital presentation.

As always, we offer this work at the Lotus Feet of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Ever in gratitude.



VIDEO: How to Prepare for Darshan Words of Sri Aurobindo¹



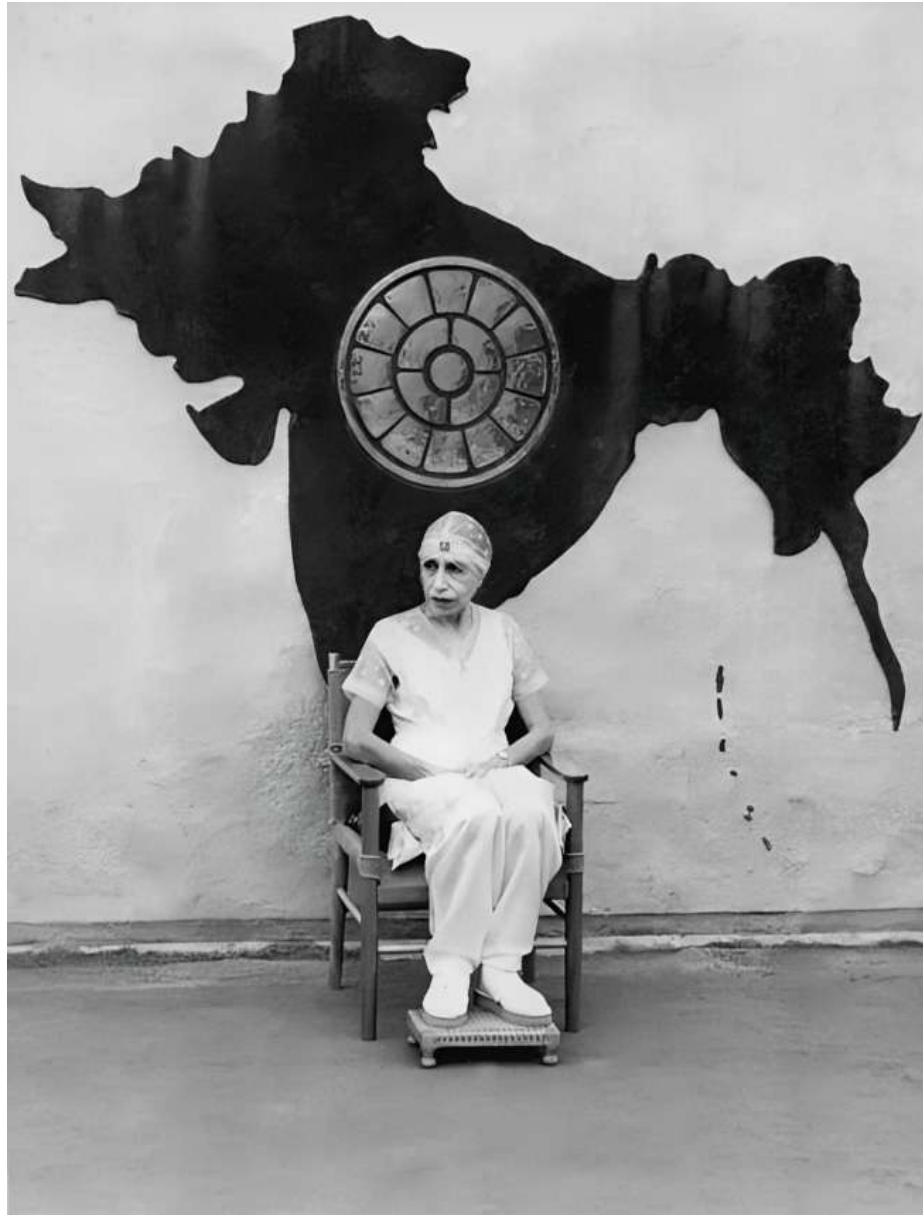
Click on image for the video.

(Video by Suhas Mehra)

¹ Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, as recorded by A.B. Purani (1995 edition, pp. 504-508). The full message can be read [HERE](#).

Sri Aurobindo's Birthday and the Birth of the Nation

*The Mother*²



Today, there came into my hands one of those greeting cards which people send on puja days or for the new year or other such festivals; and on this card was written something like this—I don't recall the exact words—but anyway they were, "Greetings on the occasion of

² CWM, 8: 264-265

this memorable day of the birth of our nation.” It is sent by someone who, I think, proclaimed himself a disciple of Sri Aurobindo quite a long time ago....

That seemed to me one of those enormities which human stupidity alone can commit. If he had said: “On this memorable day of the birth of Sri Aurobindo *and* its natural consequence, the birth of the nation”, it would have been quite all right. But still, the important point was left out and the other mentioned, which is quite simply a consequence, a natural result: it *had* to be like that, it could not be otherwise.

But people always think like that, the wrong way up. Always. They take the effect for the cause, they glorify the effect and forget the cause. And that is why the world walks on its head with its feet in the air. Quite simply, there is no other reason.



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Sri Aurobindo, The Reconciler of Light and Life³ **(Part 1)**

Rishabhchand

The inner history of human culture is an unwritten record of the widening rupture between Light and Life. In remote, pre-historic antiquity, there was, it is believed, in some forms of highly evolved culture, a natural play of Light in life. An intuitive knowledge regulated and directed the movements of the nature of man, giving them an upward turn. Life was then much simpler and its scope less ample than now. As a result the rhythms of Light could be reproduced more or less easily and successfully in it.

But as the reasoning mind of man began to develop and assert itself, life became complex, expansive and more manifold in its self-expression. And its lucid spontaneity was lost in the increasing intricacies of its seekings and strivings. Light receded as reason came to dominate and constitute itself the leader of life. For some time, however, the glow of the setting light lingered on over the reasoning mind, and then faded away, leaving the latter in its native twilight.

This declining curve of the cultural evolution of humanity has not been a movement of unqualified fall. The loss of the summits was to a certain extent compensated for by the conquest and consolidation of the lower elevations and the plains. The higher reason and the lower, the vital-emotional and the aesthetic, the hedonistic, economic, utilitarian and material parts of the human being have each had their specific and distinctive development. Thus when the curve of evolution would come full circle, there might be the utmost richness of an organic, integrated perfection.

³ *Renaissance*, Vol. III, Issue 8 (originally published in Sri Aurobindo Circle, 1951)

Even the present materialistic age, which marks a total alienation of life from Light, an uncontested sovereignty of unbridled desire as the sole guide of human nature and a passionate hugging of the dust as if it were gold, is not an epoch of unmixed degeneracy. It is shot through with unprecedented possibilities of material conquest and a better ordering of the bases of human existence. Shorn of its extravagant Matter-worship, modern Science is a heroic and abiding affirmation of the truth of life in the material world and a determined preparation of the pedestal upon which the evolving Spirit will one day stand in its inevitable apocalypse in human form.

But life, as rationalistic materialism has made it, is a steady drift away from its source and essential truth. Not that material pursuit in itself is an evil; on the contrary, it is a legitimate and indispensable medium of the self-expression of the Spirit in Matter. But what cannot but be regarded as evil is the self-imprisonment of the human being in its material pursuits, its utter self-complacency in sheer physical well-being and an exclusive employment of all its faculties, including even the intellect, to further and fortify its material advancement.

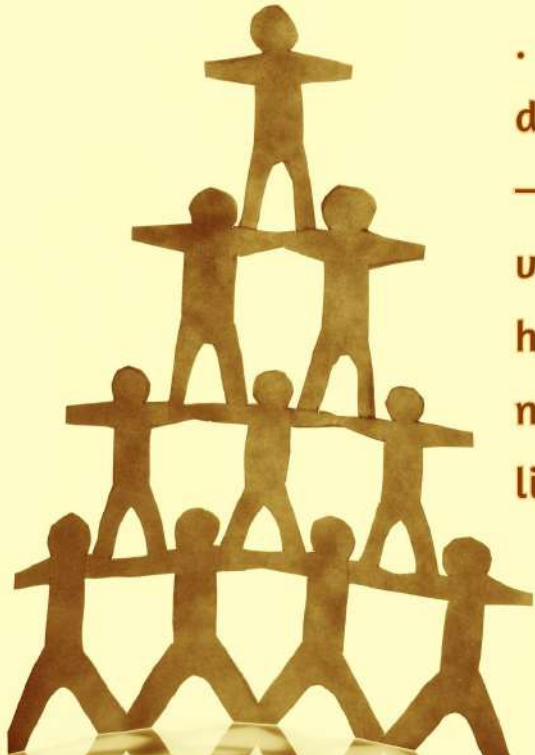
It is this overmastering obsession with Matter, this falsifying identification, and the complete reliance on the reason and the senses as the means of knowledge that have veiled from man his infinite spiritual heritage, atrophied his higher and subtler faculties and shrouded the light which is inalienable to his inner being. His philosophy, his arts, his science, even his religion have become a cult and ritual of Matter-worship, drilled to its demands and faultlessly loyal to its inveterate limitations.

It is true that man's consciousness, immured and engrossed in Matter, has gained a concrete definiteness, precision and sureness in its dealing with material things. But it has also lost its wideness, subtlety, intuitive perception and higher aspiration. It has become a little too materialised, gross and dense, of the earth, earthy. Its creations in the material field have become too unwieldy for its grasp and too overpowering in their action and

influence upon it. It is, indeed, they that are leading it from struggle to struggle, from discord to discord, from infatuation to a wilder infatuation — to what end?

The age-old division between Light and Life has to be healed, if Life is to rise from the dust and scale the golden heights of its possibilities. Its interest in Matter must remain, for, Matter is the final mould and manifesting channel of the Spirit in terrestrial existence. But its blinding obsession must go for ever. Life must look within to discover the infinite treasures which lie in its depths, and bring them out to enrich and ennoble its self-expression on earth.

But where is the teacher who will lead humanity to the luminous depths of its life and reveal to its wondering gaze the treasures it possesses? Who will reconcile Life to its secret source and support, Light? Among the contemporary thinkers many, if not most, are satisfied advocates of Matter. Their teachings, at their very best, prepare humanity for a socio-economic progress, slightly tintured with an ethical idealism.



... humanity, even in its darkest periods of decline, — and the present is the very darkest it has ever had to pass through — has never been widowed of all light-givers.

~ Rishabhchand


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A reformed and efficient education, turning out capable citizens who can successfully grapple with the manifold problems of the material life and evolve, by means of their developed intellect, ideas and theories for the intellectual, economic and general cultural progress of the society, for a better working of democratic socialism, which seems to be the dominant ideology of the modern mind, and for securing and safeguarding the maximum physical well-being of mankind, is the highest flight of the thought and imagination of the teachers and thinkers of the present.

At lower levels they are but unconscious *temporisers* who support the passing tendencies of society and measure their success by utilitarian standards. There may be some thinkers – I hope there are – who have transcended the material formula and can move freely in the realm of higher thoughts. But they often tend to be too abstract, too remote, too ethereal to be able to inspire and influence life and its forces. Besides, the knowledge, not speculative and conjectural, not empirical and hypothetical, but spiritual, direct, revealing and comprehensive, the knowledge that lights up the hidden recesses of life and explains God and Nature and man, and their eternal interrelations, is lacking in the leaders of modern thought.

But humanity, even in its darkest periods of decline, — and the present is the very darkest it has ever had to pass through — has never been widowed of all light-givers. Away from the fanfare and flourish of the intellectuals, unaffected by the apathy or antipathy of mankind to the very thing which brings it health and happiness, they live to inspire faith and hope when doubt and despair darken the mind. But, more often than not, the light they shed illumines the path of retreat and not the path of forward advance. The hope they instil is the hope of a flight from the impending catastrophe, and not of a victory in the very field of battle.

It is true that they possess a knowledge which is not of the intellect and a force which is not of the mental will. They have seen the truth of the Spirit and felt the touch of eternity.

But it is the static truth that they have seen and the still eternity to whose joy they have thrilled. They possess no mastering knowledge of the timeless march of Time, no key to the secret of life's perennial dynamism. Therefore their teaching draws us away from life and leaves the world to its fate. Either a renunciation of life or an ethicised compromise with life in its unredeemed state is all that we can expect from these spiritual teachers of humanity.

But what we sorely need today is a teacher who will not inspire the impulse to flight, but the iron will to fight, and, delivering us from all corrupting compromises, lead us to the epiphany of Light in the transfigured limbs and lineaments of life itself. **What we need today is a teacher who will not widen the gulf between Light and Life, but bring them closer together till they unite and become one.** A seer of Light, not in its transcendence alone, but in the very heart of universal and individual life, a knower of the essential truth of life and its purpose in the material world, and a master of the spiritual force that can conquer and convert life into the light-filled, ecstatic dance of Shiva, is the Saviour whom humanity awaits in the hour of its gravest crisis.

It is in the teachings of Sri Aurobindo that we find the reconciliation between Light and Life, which is the secret of the regeneration of the modern man and the inauguration of a new culture in human society. He is as much against world-shunning asceticism as against the clumsy, degrading compromise with the life of ignorance, which goes by the name of worldly wisdom and catholic adaptability. He bridges the gulf between Light and Life and fuses them into the inalienable unity of the Spirit.

In this article we propose to follow him in his illuminating exposition of the origin of life and the aim and steps of its evolutionary progression. We shall see, as we proceed, that the divorce between Light and Life is but a temporary phenomenon, which is bound to disappear in the final union. Life is destined to be a rich and manifold expression of Light.



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~ Rishabhchand

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When we study this Life as it manifests itself upon earth with Matter as its basis, we observe that essentially it is a form of the one cosmic Energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant act or 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. This would tend to show that the natural opposition we make between death and life is an error of our mentality, one of those false oppositions—false to inner truth though valid in surface practical experience—which, deceived by appearances, it is constantly bringing into the universal unity. Death has no reality except as a process of life. Disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, maintenance of form and change of form are the constant process of life; death is merely a rapid disintegration subservient to life's necessity of change and variation of formal experience⁴.

⁴ Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 21: 188

But what is this cosmic Energy that creates, maintains and destroys in order to new-create millions and millions of forms in the universe? Is it a blind material energy or is it conscious and works in the light of its own creative truth? Is there a governing principle and a self-fulfilling, purposive Will behind the multifarious, incalculable movements of life?

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~ Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 21: 188

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Sri Aurobindo, The Reconciler of Light and Life (Part 2)⁵

Rishabhchand

According to Sri Aurobindo, life is a play of the Force which is “fundamentally the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta, consciousness-force, inherent conscious force of conscious-being, which manifests itself as nervous energy full of submental sensation in the plant, as desire-sense and desire-will in the primary animal forms, as self-conscious sense and force in the developing animal, as mental will and knowledge topping all the rest in man”.⁶ He writes further:

Life is a scale of the universal Energy in which the transition from inconscience to consciousness is managed; it is an intermediary power of it latent or submerged in Matter, delivered by its own force into submental being, delivered finally by the emergence of Mind into the full possibility of its dynamis⁷.

We see, then, that as the Sat of Sachchidananda has become Annam or Matter by involution in Inconscience, so the Chit-Tapas or Consciousness-Force has become Life. Life is, therefore, Consciousness-Force, veiled or half-veiled, and labouring in the course of evolution to unveil its plenary splendour and power in the material world. Even when it is unconscious or subconscious in its primary manifestations in matter, its essential consciousness remains unchanged in the depths. And the original, fundamental Will ever works itself out behind the confusion and uncertainty of the surface movements. This gradual unveiling and eventual self-revelation of the supreme Consciousness-Force and a

⁵ *Renaissance*, Vol. III, Issue 8 originally published in Sri Aurobindo Circle, 1951)

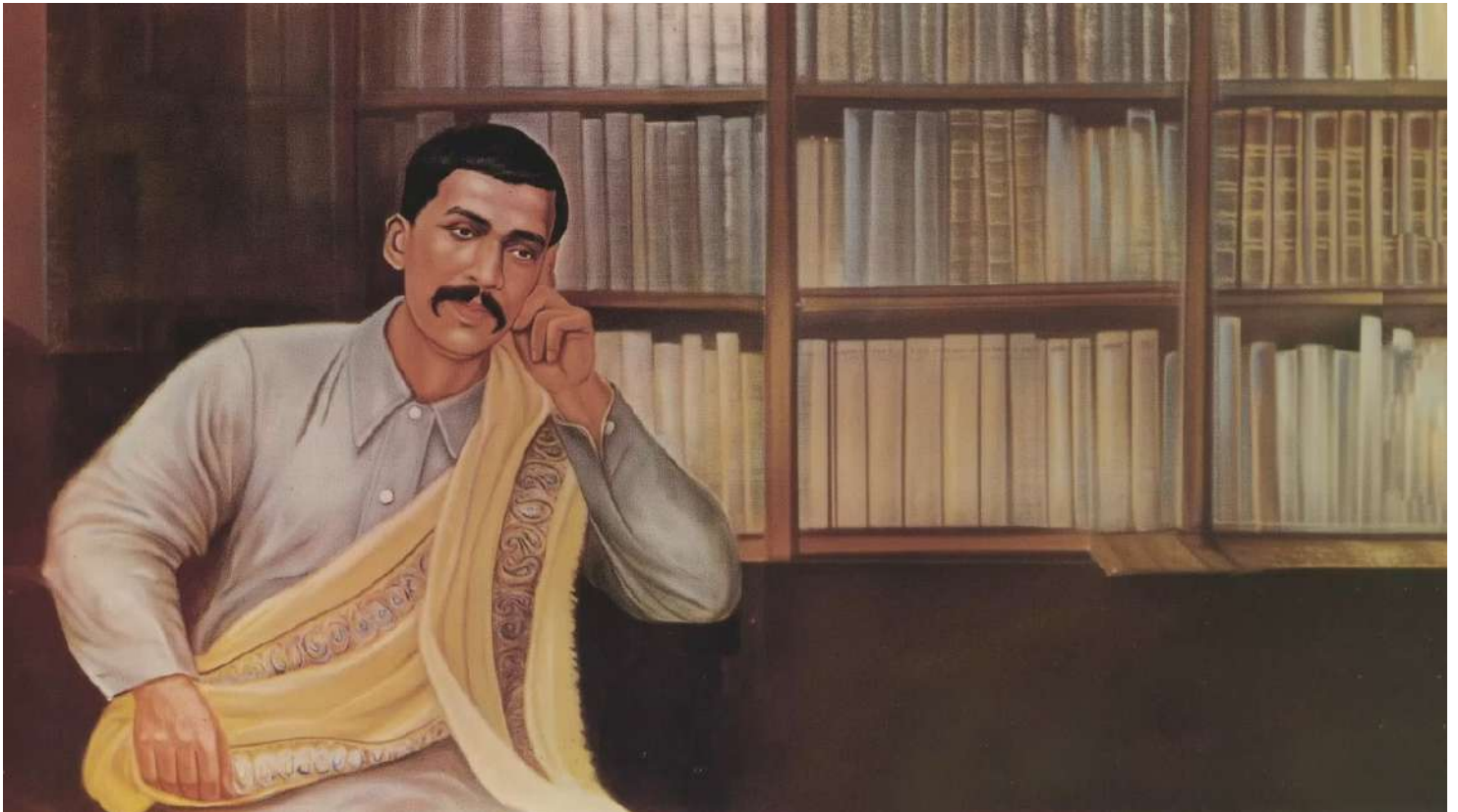
⁶ CWSA, 21: 196

⁷ *ibid.*

consequent divinisation and illumination of the whole life of man is inevitable. For, what is involved must evolve and find a full and perfect self-expression in Matter.

Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of Life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself.⁸

Therefore, says Sri Aurobindo, “to fulfil God in life is man’s manhood.”⁹ But how can human life, a turbid thing of obscure seekings and struggles, become the Life Divine, the life of infinite light and power and creative delight? Sri Aurobindo shows in an elaborate exposition how life ascends from status to status till it reaches the summit of its evolution and becomes one with and a dynamic movement of Light.



⁸ CWSA, 21: 41

⁹ *ibid.*

The first status of life is in the infinite divisions of Matter, in the drift of the combining and colliding atoms, where, as a blind, inconscient energy, it builds the teeming marvel of the material world. Its consciousness eclipsed, its light veiled, its will manifesting itself as a dumb, impetuous urge, it works as a dark force, deluding the scientists into swearing by its inconscience. Failing to pierce through its disguise, they credit it with the creation of consciousness as an epiphenomenon and regard it as the unintelligent source of the works of our intelligence.

Its second status is in the incipient emergence of consciousness characterised by hunger, mutual devouring and death. That which was a dumb urge tends to become, in the second status, first, a subconscious and then a conscious hunger, a desire to devour and possess. Life now ceases to be inconscient and begins to betray more and more definite signs of a set drive, a premeditated purpose and an ordered, mounting progression. This status is marked on the surface by desire and struggle, clash and confusion, and an invincible push towards survival and self-affirmation of the developing ego, which, as it becomes more and more conscious, chafes against the limitations it has to labour under.

But whatever the outer aspect of this status of struggle and conflict, one can always perceive a harmony and unity slowly, perhaps very slowly, tentatively, emerging and taking shape in the distant background, as if the object of Nature was to abrogate the basic divisions of the first status, and, without abolishing the phenomenal distinctions and diversities, lead the evolving consciousness, through whatever disorders and discords, to unity and harmony, which are the essential truth of all existence. **As the first status was preponderantly *tamasic*, inert in its subjection to the leaden rule of Matter, so this second status is predominantly *rajasic*, restless with many hungers, impatient of all restraints and violent in the self-assertion of the growing ego. But the surface symptoms belie and betoken at the same time the harmony which is building within.**

In the third status, with a pronounced development of the mind, the fever and heave of the second status seem to subside and melt into an increasing equipoise. Instead

of aggression and grabbing, association, accommodation and mutual interchange begin to dominate the interrelations of life. **The growing urge and impetus in this status is towards self-giving and self-fulfilment by fusion with others.** What was survival of the fittest by struggle and mutual devouring in the second status, becomes survival by self-adaptation to others, association with others and even self-sacrifice. Love emerges as the most powerfully cohesive and unitive potential, as the greatest regulating and governing force in the changing dispensation of life. But it is love, cramped within the confines of the mind, soiled by the ego, and not reigning in its immaculate purity and unwallled sovereignty.

The mind gives, and grows by giving, but, unless a higher principle begins to be operative, even in its most unstinted giving there is always a self-regarding delight, a subtle and secret gratification of the ego. The balance, achieved in the nature, is a new and considerable advance, a definite departure from the rocking instabilities of the second status. There is even a distant or intermittent perception of one's own fulfilment in others and one's individual existence expanding into universality. But in all its movements of progress there is invariably a dogging sense of insufficiency, of knocking against a wall that refuses to give way; life seems to be dashing against a barrage of rigid limitations. Evidently, therefore, **this third status of life cannot be the last, it cannot be the summit of life's ascent.**

Life has not certainly emerged from inconscience and developed consciousness, evolved order out of chaos and love out of hunger and desire and made such remarkable progress towards unity and universality, (as is evidenced in the elite of humanity), only to stop short at a half-result and rest content with the wider confines and the flickers and flashes of the human mind. It is big with a divine destiny. **The fourth status is reached when life passes out of the precarious poise of the mental consciousness into the self-existent unity and harmony of the Supermind.**

. . . the perfect solution of the problem of Life is not likely to be realised by association, interchange and accommodations of love alone or through the law of the mind and the heart alone. It must come by a fourth status of life in which the eternal unity of the many is realised through the spirit and the conscious foundation of all the operations of life is laid no longer in the divisions of body, nor in the passions and hungers of the vitality, nor in the groupings and the imperfect harmonies of the mind, nor in a combination of all these, but in the unity and freedom of the Spirit.¹⁰

The fourth status is, therefore, the destination of the evolutionary life. It is the status of the self-manifesting Spirit, the native abode of the Consciousness-Force of which our life is a delegated image here in the material world. Because the supreme Consciousness-Force is here involved in its own delegate, its perfect evolution is an inevitable outcome. Cured of the initial division and yet rich in diversity and distinction, liberated from all desires and omnipotent in the works of the Supreme Will, and securely poised above the seekings and shrinkings of the mind, Life, on the summit of its evolution, will become indistinguishable from Light. Deploying infinite variations out of an unassailable harmony, infinite multiplicity out of an all-constituting unity, infinite energies out of an all-achieving creative Force, it will reveal the splendours of That which it holds hidden below its turbid surface.

We have spoken of the ascent of life, but this ascent, we must remember, is preceded by **two collateral movements of capital importance: transformation and integration.** It is always the central, the most evolved part of human consciousness that first rises out of the ruts of life's ragged normalcy and ascends to the higher planes, and yet higher, till it reaches the Supermind, the supreme Truth-Consciousness. And then as an answering Grace the Supermind descends to the earth-plane to effect a complete release and ascension of the whole being into its own supernal glories.

¹⁰ Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 21: 219

The work of integration and ascension or sublimation presupposes a transformation of the nature, radical and integral, without which the ascent of life to the fourth status and its possession of the crown of its evolution will not be possible. The mere ascent of the central consciousness is not enough to raise life or transfigure it. Life is rooted too deeply in the frozen slime of the subconscious or the Inconscient to achieve such a lightning ascent. The supramental force has to labour hard and long for this great evolutionary consummation. A radical transmutation of life is the sole pre-condition to its permanent establishment in the fourth status, the supramental life, the Life Divine.

BRAHMAN IS IN THIS
WORLD TO REPRESENT
ITSELF IN THE VALUES OF
LIFE.

LIFE EXISTS IN BRAHMAN
IN ORDER TO DISCOVER
BRAHMAN IN ITSELF.

~ Sri Aurobindo, CWSA, 21: 41



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The reason why we hail Sri Aurobindo as the reconciler of Light and Life is twofold:

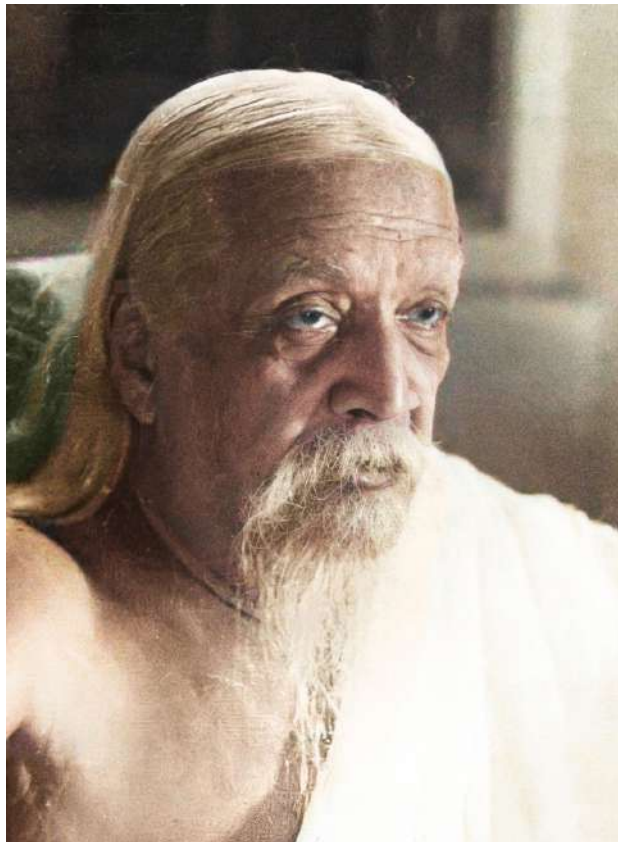
- 1) This reconciliation can be effected only in the Supermind, and on no other plane of Consciousness. Supermind as the Vedic seers knew, is the eternal home of the creative Unity and Harmony, in which alone can take place the final fusion of all phenomenal

opposites. Below the Supermind, there is everywhere, even in the luminous Overmind, a lack of the supreme harmony, an overstress or an under stress. Sri Aurobindo's ascent to the Supermind arms him with the power to accomplish this reconciliation.

- 2) It is the authentic Force of the Supermind which alone can transform material life as an indispensable preliminary to life's ascent to the fourth status. And Sri Aurobindo has brought down that Supramental Force. After about half a century of unrelaxed spiritual labour — his poem, '*A God's Labour*,' suggests something of the nature of this labour — he has achieved what no human being has ever achieved for terrestrial life.

He has placed before humanity the most sublime ideal of the divine or supramental life — the rich, revealing, creative life of unity and harmony and unimaginable perfection and fulfilment. And this ideal is no mental dream, but a crystallisation of his revolutionary spiritual realisations and, according to him, a representation of the Will of the Divine. It embodies the Time-Spirit, and nothing, not even the most adverse circumstances, can baulk it of its destined fulfilment. All other ideals, even the highest and widest spiritual ideals have already lost their lustres in the sun-blaze of this one — **the radical and integral transformation of life and the manifestation of the Divine in Matter.**

And Sri Aurobindo has not only forged the ideal out of his own experiences, he has also brought down the Light and Force which will inevitably realise it for mankind. The Supramental Force is working behind the gloom and turmoil of the present, more effectively in the aspiring consciousness and being of one who is open to it, less in one who is shut, but unmistakably in all. And when the earth nature is purified and prepared, Light and Life, the separated lovers, will reunite in the transfigured terrestrial existence of man for the unimpaired self-expression of the Divine.




INDIA FROM PAST DAWNS TO FUTURE MOONS

*He [Sri Aurobindo] has placed before humanity the most **SUBLIME IDEAL** of the divine or **SUPRAMENTAL LIFE** — the rich, revealing, creative life of unity and harmony and unimaginable perfection and fulfilment.*

~ Rishabhchand

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