

SRI AUROBINDO

THE LIFE DIVINE

Introduction to Chapter I: *The Human Aspiration*

by

KIREET JOSHI

Transcriptions of lectures given at SUPER SCHOOL

I.

I was very pleased last time when we had a dialogue on what is science, what is philosophy, what is religion, what is yoga. Every one has a copy of the results of our dialogue.

Then I had asked that every one read the first chapter of *The Life Divine*. I want to concentrate on that chapter today. You have a good but not sufficient background for this chapter. Therefore, we need to go a little farther.

"The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality."

The first paragraph of *The Life Divine* is a summary of the whole book. So if you just understand the first paragraph, you have the key to the whole book. And, that is why I always take a long time to expound the first paragraph of the first chapter. Basically, it consists only of three sentences. From the point of view of English, it is a rather difficult sentence because it contains one parenthesis. And every sentence that contains a parenthesis is somewhat difficult to understand because you have to connect the main clause with the subordinate clause minusing the parenthesis and yet taking advantage of the parenthesis. But the first paragraph is a summary of the whole, the entire history of the world. And it opens out to the future as well. It is something which Mother has asked us to do in the third article of the Auroville's charter. I don't know if you remember the third article of the Charter of Auroville.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

“Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realizations.”

This is exactly the idea of the first paragraph. All that mankind has done in the past, even what mankind is doing today and therefore what can be foreseen so that we can spring towards the future, is given in the first paragraph. Now let us see. *“Its earliest preoccupation...”* So it starts with the past right from the time when man began to think consciously; because it says *“in his awakened thoughts”*. This is a very important qualification. When man began to think consciously, that thought reflected a preoccupation. That preoccupation, says Sri Aurobindo, — now you need to concentrate on the parenthesis, what does it say? *“For it survives the longest period of scepticism and returns after every banishment”*. This preoccupation survives the longest periods of scepticism. Now the word, scepticism is a philosophical term for an attitude, for a theory, for a principle which raises doubts regarding every belief, every proposition, or every claim of truth. The history of the world can be seen as punctuated by periods of doubts. As is the present period. For the last two hundred years, mankind has been passing through a great period of scepticism, a great period of doubt. This is only the most recent one, but there have been many other periods of scepticism in the history of mankind.

Sri Aurobindo summarises, in a few words: *“The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thought which survives”*, that occupation does not lie down. Every period of scepticism is followed again by the return to the same preoccupation. This is a very great reading of the history of mankind. I have spoken to you the tradition of India at length. I have not spoken sufficiently of the tradition of the West. That remains to be done. And in due course I shall come to that aspect also, because you should have both — the tradition of the East and the tradition of the West. And then you can appreciate this sentence very much. You have seen the tradition of India starting with the Veda and the constant terms in the Veda are the last four words which are written in the paragraph. God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality. The entire Veda is nothing but filled with these four or five words. God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. It is a repeated refrain. So, it is a proof, that right from the beginning man has been preoccupied with these four things. God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. If you read the Western tradition, we shall come to it in due course, you will find the same preoccupation.

Yesterday we had a very good discussion on *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. We were reading the story of *Odysseus*, the story of *Iliad*. And the one theme that was common was the interest of Gods in the world, the participation and intervention of Gods in the world. The whole preoccupation of these two great epics of Greece, written by Homer, is with Godhead. All Gods are recognised as immortal. In these two epics, the theme of immortality is present. There is intervention all the time of Light. There is a theme of bondage of man and freedom of man. So once again you find in these two great epics the same preoccupation: God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is in the earliest times.

One of the earliest thinkers in the West was Plato. And the most important element in Plato is his theory of The Good. The highest according to Plato is the Good. When we study Plato we shall find out what is the meaning of The Good. According to him The Good is what you normally mean by God. There is a difference between God and Good, but in broad terms, in rough terms, by Good he means what we mean by God — the Supreme — that which is comprehensive of everything, beyond which there is nothing else. So the quest for The Good is the summation of the entire philosophy of Plato. His emphasis on immortality is so great, that Bertrand Russell — you have heard the name of Bertrand Russell perhaps, I have brought a book by him here. It is called *The History of Western Philosophy*. Bertrand Russell is one of the thinkers of our own times. He passed away only a few years ago at a very ripe old age, and to my mind he represents a culmination of one line of thought; not every line of thought, but one line of thought. If you run on one line which he has chalked out, he marks a culmination. He himself can be called a sceptic of a kind. He does not believe in God, Immortality, and all such things. So he marks that line of thought in which God, Immortality is banished. And yet, when writing on Plato, he has given one full chapter to *Plato's Theory of Immortality*. This is one of the proofs, that one of the most ancient thinkers of the world was actually occupied with the theme of immortality.

I am showing you this because as young students, you should have in your mind a real concrete understanding, that this sentence that Sri Aurobindo has written is an authentic statement. Word for word it is accurate. And this is Sri Aurobindo speciality; every word of Sri Aurobindo is authentic, and I am saying this not because I am his disciple, but rather that I am his disciple because he is so authentic! It is the other way round! Every word of Sri Aurobindo is measured, accurate, authentic, illuminating. Sri Aurobindo said one time, in 1912 or 1914, “I want to show mankind Truth in his entirety, without any error”. This was his promise to the world, before he started writing *The Life Divine* and other works that we are familiar with. “I want to show to people the truth without any error”, and when you read Sri Aurobindo you can always keep this in mind, and try critically to examine

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

whether this great promise is fulfilled or not, and always you will find yourself rewarded. You will find not even a single comma out of place. It is so authentic. And therefore, when he speaks of the earliest preoccupation — the Veda you know sufficiently well, of the West I am showing you one of the earliest thinkers, Plato, and his main preoccupation was his theory of immortality, a fact acknowledged by a philosopher of present times, who was himself a sceptic. He did not believe in immortality, so he does not bring it out of any partiality towards Plato. Actually he is a great critic of Plato. But Plato's emphasis on immortality is so great that he cannot escape it and so he has to give a full chapter to that aspect. Both in the Eastern tradition and in the Western tradition there is this emphasis upon immortality.

Then you examine the whole history of mankind. This is the reason why I have said that we should have one full session, or at least six sessions on world history. Because I would like you to study world history in this context. If you study the whole history of mankind, it is nothing but a perpetual song of God. If you really see from above, stand above the time, the stream of time which has been running on; and if you stand like a bird, above the time, you will see the whole murmur of the river of time singing the song of God. It is nothing but a song of God. You read history, the whole occupation of man, is God. Even when you doubt, and doubt so strongly — whom? Your preoccupation is still with God! You doubt God! You cannot escape Him, even when you want to escape from Him, you doubt whom? For doubting you should be occupied with Him. The whole history of mankind is connected with God. I spoke of the ancient times — but take the Middle Ages. What are the Middle Ages? One of the main events of the Middle Ages was the Crusades. Crusades were the wars between Muslims and Christians. And both of them believe in God, but the way in which they believed, they wanted that the whole world should accept that belief. They were so concerned with their own belief of God, that they wanted all others to accept that belief and therefore the wars. Terrible wars between two groups of religious people, in which, not only the religious people but kings and soldiers and men and women, all were involved in these wars. Thus the Middle Ages were nothing but a great preoccupation with God.

You come to the present time. As I said, we are passing through a period of scepticism. And therefore you may find — you may ask where is God in the present world. It is there that Sri Aurobindo writes a very significant sentence for the present times

"Today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings." This sentence gives you the study of the present times. Today's humanity has spent centuries in science. One of the greatest gifts of the modern times is science. And what is science? Science is the analysis of Nature: What is Matter, what is Life, what is Mind? — These are the three terms of nature. Matter, Life and Mind. The last four, five centuries, mankind has spent in analyzing Matter, Life and Mind. But science analyses at a certain level. There can be deeper analyses, deepest analyses, but there can also be superficial analyses. There can be external examinations; there can be internal examination.

Now, if you study the science of today, or at least of the last four hundred years, we shall find that humanity has studied or analysed externalities not the depths, the profundities of Nature. Only externalities of Nature. It has seen matter from outside; it has not found ways of examining matter from inside. It is only recently that even through that outside analysis, it has gone deeper, deeper, and deeper. Today we speak of quantum physics. Physics at the deepest, narrowest atomic level. Even below atomic, sub-atomic level. And when scientists come to that point they find very surprising things, and they feel baffled. The modern physicists are baffled by what they see at the quantum level. It is unundstandable. Modern physics started with this statement: "You should believe only what you can see". Then as they began to go deeper and deeper and they found that these quanta cannot be seen at all. They themselves have agreed now that quanta exist, but they cannot be seen. So, it is a sign that we have now come to a very bottom point as it were, you have reached a bottom point from which you are returning You cannot sustain yourself there. You are baffled by the mystery. On this subject, we shall return again and again — it is a very important subject — and I think that we should have, at least, six sessions on the subject of the frontiers of knowledge today. We should cover this analysis of the knowledge we have of the modern world, so that we can know quite confidently where we have reached in our analysis of matter. The very concepts which were challenged in the beginning by Physics are being adopted such as only that which you see has to be believed in. Now what you don't see, even that has to be accepted.

I had once spoken of the Law of Contradiction according to which two contradictory attributes cannot be attributed to one thing, in the same place, at the same time, in the same sense. And this is the law that physicists had put forward very strongly. Wherever you find self-contradiction it was not acceptable. Today they find that after going deeper and deeper, the deepest thing is at once a wave and a particle. You can see that particle and wave are opposed to each other, are contradictory of

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

each other. If it is a particle it cannot be a wave, if it is a wave it cannot be a particle. And yet they are obliged to admit, that the bottommost point of matter is at once a particle and a wave. It is also another sign that you have reached the bottom point from where you have to return.

That is why Sri Aurobindo says: *"Preparing to return to the primeval longings"*. Science has been trying to analyse the externalities of nature and having analysed, here is a very beautiful phrase: *"humanity is satiated but not satisfied"*. There is a difference between satiation and satisfaction. Satiated means that you cannot take any more. If you are served with sweets — more and more and more — you may have space to eat more, but yet you say "I am satiated, I cannot take any more". You may not be satisfied, but you are satiated. You cannot take any more. This phrase is so important; it describes exactly, accurately, the state of humanity today. We are satiated, so that we can say— now no more on this line. This doesn't mean we are satisfied to such an extent that we do not want to make further inquiry at all. We want to make further inquiry because we are not satisfied. But on this line we are satiated, because it is enough; we have reach the bottom point. We want to move forward. Move forward to what? To the primeval longings. Once again, God is standing there before you and is inviting you to knock at his door. We are now preparing ourselves to return to that. This is our modern mood. This is an accurate statement of whatever is happening today, either people are in the state of satiation but not satisfaction, or having seen this for a long period, they are now trying to wonder where shall we move forward. What will be the field of our enquiry now? And some others have already found the new field of enquiry, and that is why you find mankind today running away from the field of reason, from the field of mind. Even in the field of philosophy, which is the field of the mind proper, there is today the rise of Existentialism. There is emergence of Phenomenalism. There is emergence of Pragmatism. All these movements criticize the role of reason. All of them. They all describe a new call. If you read some of the latest writings from the late Ninetieth and Twentieth Century, some of the most preeminent thinkers have deviated from this quest of the reason. They find Will. Not reason, but Will, emphasis is on Will. The emphasis is upon Unreason — discovery of the Unconscious. If you see even the art of the modern times, Picasso and others, you will find the objects seen in the unconscious — you find a half body, crossed by a human head, with violin lying at the back, or a knife being plunged into a part of the body, which seems to be irrelevant. There is no rational exposition. It is reality seen in the unconscious, in which reality is all topsy-turvy. And these are supposed to be some of the miracles of modern art.

It is an evident demonstration that you are satiated but not satisfied, and you want to do something else. A new domain is opening up. So in this way Sri Aurobindo describes: *"The earliest preoccupation of man"*, the constant preoccupation of man, and today's preoccupation of man. And everywhere you find these four words ringing in you. Again and again: God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

This is all that the first paragraph says. Mankind has always been looking for God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. Even today we are preparing ourselves in the same way and Sri Aurobindo says that *"the earliest formula of Wisdom also promises to be the last"*.

There is one sentence, however, which from the philosophical point of view is perhaps the most important. Now you find a sentence which I have not referred to so far. I have referred to practically all the sentences excepting one which is the most important sentence: *"It is also the highest which the thought can envisage"*. This is a very important phrase. You will find a peculiarity in this phrase. In other phrases you will see the words "seems", "promises". But this is the only sentence in regard to which Sri Aurobindo says, **Is** also the highest". You examine the whole paragraph; with regard to other sentences you find "seems", "promises". What is the difference between "seems", "promises" and "is"? Yes?

Answer: Seems and promises denotes a certain doubt and...

Correct. We cannot make an affirmative statement absolutely. While when you say "is", it is a confident statement. The other statements are historical in character. This statement is philosophical in character. This is the value of this sentence. When you speak historically, what will happen tomorrow nobody can say is bound to happen. You can only say it seems, it might rain! Nobody can say it is bound to rain. Even if you say so, scientifically it is not correct.

Therefore in regard to all historical statements Sri Aurobindo says "seems" or "promises", but there is one domain where you can be sure. That is the philosophical domain. If you think philosophically, you can be sure. If your statement is philosophically valid you can say, "it is". In other words what Sri Aurobindo says is that mankind has been pursuing God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. These four terms are from the point of view of Truth inevitable, and definitively inevitable. As far as thought is concerned, for thought the highest — whether ultimately man will get God or not, that will be a different matter, he may he may not, but for thought, God is inescapable. You cannot but think of

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

God when you reach in your thought the highest. It is a metaphysical statement, a philosophical statement. Now this is a subject on which I have to tell you a lot. This sentence is a very important sentence; today I will only give an introduction.

I will give an introduction from Western Philosophy: There was one philosopher in ancient Greece, even before Plato, called Parmenides. You should write down his name, because he is one of the philosophers whose thought has played a great role in framing Western Philosophy. I shall give you a sentence which he wrote, which is extremely important in the history of western philosophy, and which is connected with this sentence which you are reading now.

I shall dictate to you the whole sentence, please write it down because you should have it before your eyes. This is a sentence on which you need to contemplate. It is not very easy to understand at first sight. It is a very interesting statement.

"Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it; for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be."

It is a very simple sentence. In philosophy this is one habit that one should cultivate, to write accurately and thoroughly. No haziness, no ambiguity.

Every word is captured? Now be quiet for three-four minutes and try to understand it. We shall read it twice together. Since it is very important sentence, I am dwelling upon it. And since it is coming from the West, nobody can say it is a biased statement from East.

"Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible..." Can you ever know what is not? That is the question that is asked. You can know only what exists! You cannot know what does not exist. So, *"Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it..."* What is not existent, how can you speak of it? *"... for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be."* You can think only of that which exists — that which can exist. I think it has a meaning now.

"Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it; for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be." Thought can only be about that which exists. If you examine the nature of thought, thought cannot escape that which exists. Thought can never speak of that which does not exist.

Question: Is imagination not a thought?

All imagination, you examine imaginations — you can imagine only that which exists. Not here, it may exist somewhere. "Your face is like a moon" Your face exists, the moon exists. It is an imagination but only because thought can capture only what exists!

Question: One can imagine that immortality does not exist. This is a thought. Yet it actually exists!

These are just words. Thought that has no meaning in it. Every thought to be a thought has a meaning. Otherwise it is not a thought. They are only words. Like abracadabra. Thought, to be a thought, we must really think it. It must have a meaning and the meaning can be derived only from that which exists. In any case Parmenides says that you can be sure of only one thing. Existence. That which is not you cannot know, it is impossible. There he does not say it may be impossible or probably impossible. That is impossible. He makes a categorical statement. It is certain and that is a metaphysical point. When you arrive at a metaphysical thinking, there is no may be or may not be. Historically you may have statements that are may be — may not be. Metaphysically the proposition must end in pure categorical statement. And this is what is here. Parmenides is absolutely certain.

Now if you define God as that which exists thoroughly, then you can say that the highest that the thought can envisage is God. So Sri Aurobindo says, that which thought can envisage is the highest. And it is marked by a categorical statement. Not may be or may not be. Not "probable", not "promises". "It is also the highest that the thought can envisage". It is regarding the Godhead. God, Immortality, these are all the words that basically mean the same. God is immortal, God is Light, God is Freedom — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. These four terms mean that which exists thoroughly. Without any compromise whatsoever. It is perfect in existence. Therefore for thought, it is the highest that the thought can envisage.

And I am giving you a statement from Parmenides. This is a statement that until today has been a puzzle for philosophers. As with what you said, such arguments have been put forward again and again, and again and again. They have been answered; people feel dissatisfied even when answered, some new propositions are made... In this very book, Russell has given an argument to disprove Parmenides. But when you read it, again you feel, no, no, Bertrand Russell has not been able to answer. I shall read out his last paragraph, Bertrand Russell's own argument.

After discussing Parmenides he says "Parmenides may refute me in the following manner". Then he gives in what manner. Then he adds *'I will not attempt to meet this argument now'*. That

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

means the proposition is so solid. This was written by Parmenides in which year? He lived in 450 BC. Now see how many years have passed since then and how many people have tried to understand it, dispute it, answer it and answer again and answer again, and now this is the last sentence written in the twentieth century by Bertrand Russell: *"I will not attempt to meet this argument now"*. Why? He says, *"because it requires a discussion of memory"*. He says that unless you discuss what memory is, you cannot discuss this question. He says, *"It requires a discussion of memory which is a difficult subject. I have put the argument here to remind the reader, that philosophical theories, if they are important, can generally be revived in a new form, after being refuted as originally stated. Refutations are seldom final. In the most cases they are a prelude to further refinements."* This is the final conclusion of the chapter.

This is a very powerful argument. An argument you can arrive at only when you have gone into the depth of thought, again and again and again and again, and this Sri Aurobindo puts in the very first sentence here. *"It is the highest which the thought can envisage"*. God is the highest which the thought can envisage, you cannot escape it.

Now I shall give you one more sentence. It is an elucidation of this very sentence from Parmenides:

"How could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of."

The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same; for you cannot find thought without something that is as to which it is uttered."

Now you think about it for today. I will not discuss this today. It is the same thing that is written in the first two lines. It is the elucidation of the same thing. It only says that that which exists is the highest that thought can envisage. That which exists thoroughly, that which does not come into being now or tomorrow is that which is the highest which the thought can envisage.

I had given you earlier a sentence from the Rig Veda. I shall repeat it *"nanuram asti noshwaha"* It is not today nor is it tomorrow. *"Kastadveda yad adbhutam"*. Who knows it which is wonderful? That which comes now or which is tomorrow is not the wonderful one. That which is not now is that which is wonderful, that which *is* — it is that which is wonderful. This is a Vedic statement, which Parmenides has put in his intellectual terms. It is the same proposition. That which is wonderful, when you think and when you admire all the time in thinking and contemplation, which you cannot escape, *that* is God. That is why Sri Aurobindo says, *"It is also the highest that thought can envisage"*. Although in the previous sentences he says it *"seems"* historically. It seems it may be the highest, historically. But philosophically, it *is* the highest. This book is basically a philosophical book. Therefore you now have here a definition of philosophy.

Philosophy is the implication of the nature of thought. All philosophical thought is the implication of the nature of thought. What is thought? If you think about what is thought, then from thought itself, the statement which can come out is philosophy. And the only implication of thought is God. Therefore I call it the first and the last lesson of philosophy. It is a very short study. Philosophy is a very short study. It is only one line. *"The highest that thought can envisage is God"* Full stop! The first lesson and the last lesson. Philosophy is over. This is all that philosophy is ultimately to tell us. And this is the very first sentence that Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Life Divine*.

"The earliest preoccupation of the man in his awakened thought", and as it *"seems"* and then he gives the reasons, why it seems. And after giving the reason he says: *"It is also the highest that thought can envisage"*. So where it is an historical statement, Sri Aurobindo puts the word *"seems"* but where it is absolutely certain in the terms of thought, he uses the word *"is"*. This is the accuracy of Sri Aurobindo. Perfect!

[In answer to a question on scepticism...]

The present state of mankind in the West, particularly, is sceptical. Sri Aurobindo says we are passing through a period of scepticism. But scepticism can survive only if you don't think sufficiently. This point is very important! You can be sceptical only so long as you don't take the trouble to think up to the end. As Sri Aurobindo says, scepticism claims to inquire but refuses to inquire. This is a special self-contradiction of scepticism. It claims to inquire, but at a certain stage he says it refuses to inquire. Then only scepticism can survive. Otherwise it cannot survive. Scepticism is not a resting place. Nobody can ultimately rest in scepticism, that is certain. As philosophy can tell you, it is certain nobody can rest in scepticism. It can be a station on the way of your journey, for some time you can stay and amuse yourself with scepticism, but when you come to the crunch, both psychologically and logically, you are obliged to arrive at God. There is no other resting place. You can do whatever you like. You can doubt — it doesn't matter. It is an amusement. Go on doubting. Certainly you can doubt in many

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

hundred ways but your thought, really, when you examine thought, it will say only one thing — God. And that is all. The highest. After doing everything that you want to do, you can somersault on the same point if you want. Or on other points if you want, but ultimately, you come to this conclusion. And that Sri Aurobindo states in his very first sentence.

If you want to play with scepticism, we shall find three-four sessions and I shall run with you in all sceptical propositions one can make. In my life I have spent five years in scepticism. But this statement is the one that remains after all that. So I can certainly say that all scepticism is an amusement. You can play. You can say I am very rationalistic, I am agnostic, I accept only what can be seen, what can be experienced; I don't accept anything else. Fine! Wonderful! Please keep up the whole enquiry, I will say don't refuse enquiry at the end. The difficulty arises when a sceptic at a given point gives up and says: "I don't want to enquire now. It may be. I don't want it. How do you know?" And that is the end of the matter. He does not enquire. He says *you* prove to me. You can see that the argument of the sceptic is ultimately: *you* prove to me. He does not want to make the enquiry himself. Tell him: Make the enquiry, go till the end! His proposition is: No, no you prove to me. Until that time I have nothing to do. When you come with your proof, then I shall see whether you are right or not. This is his majesty! So you can play the game of scepticism for ten years, fifteen years and sit in your chair and say like a judge: You come with a proof. The onus of proof is on you. But ultimately you must say, "look my dear friend, do you want to enquire yourself? Do you want to take the trouble? Are you really keen on knowledge? If he really takes it in his hands and says: "Yes I want to enquire", then he will come to this conclusion.

II.

Yesterday I spoke to you of the argument of Parmenides. This argument is a good exercise for philosophical thinking, so I shall dwell a little upon it. You know as students of philosophy there is a need for you to learn the art of argument. All philosophical statements in the world have taken the form of argumentation. So we should first understand what is the need for argumentation, secondly, what is the art of formulating an argument, and thirdly, how to evaluate an argument. We shall do all three things regarding this particular example.

First, what is the need of argumentation? There are situations where arguments are not necessary. For example we sit around this tree, and I make a statement: "Here is a large tree before us". We all see it and I don't need to make any argument and say that now a formulation is necessary. Everybody agrees, so there is no need of argument. In other words, whenever there is a statement, which one can verify in a common manner there is no need of an argument. You can make a statement and there is no argument — the statement only describes what is seen. But supposing we are all blind and sitting around the tree, a visitor enters, who has good sight, he enters and he says: "Oh you are all sitting under the shade of a tree!" then we are all surprised. And here, there is a need for that person to convince us that we are indeed sitting under a shade of a tree. If someone among us tells him "How do you know that we are sitting under a shade of a tree?" His first answer will be: "It is obvious!" Because it is obvious to him, he will say, "It is obvious". This is the first statement. This also is an argument. The statement "it is obvious" is also an argument. Why? Because it is not obvious to us, therefore it is an argument.

Most of the philosophers have made a lot of arguments, and when you dig deeper and deeper and deeper, you will find at the bottom, they say: "It is obvious". You may not find it immediately on the surface, but when you dig deeper, you will find at the base there is this statement "it is obvious".

I was at one time, a student of Bertrand Russell, I used to read Russell a lot. I was greatly impressed by him. Even today I admire him for many things, although I have left him and turned to other lines of thought. After lot of understanding pursuing his line of thought I discovered that his whole philosophy is based upon one statement: "It is obvious" — I am now formulating his argument — "that complex sentences, complex objects, complex situations, can all be reduced by analysis to simple statements, simple situations, simple sentences". In other words, his whole philosophy is based upon a statement that however complex is the world, it is obvious that this complexity is nothing but a combination of simple things. Meaning by which that *simple* doesn't consist of *complex*. In other words he says: It is obvious that *simple* doesn't consist of *complexity*. This is his basic argument. It is the basic argument because even this statement can be questioned. It seems to be very obvious. At a

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

later stage I will tell you what is the meaning of *simple*, and it is not as simple as we think it to be. If you go into the depth of reality, there is no such thing in the world as simple. Russell said that everything that is complex can be reduced ultimately to simple. If you have a complex building, you can say ultimately this complex building has been constructed out of simple bricks. So many bricks put together give a structure to them, therefore the structure is complex but this complexity is a result of simple bricks. It seems logically clear, clean, *net*. But let us take a simple leaf of a tree. No leaf is simple. Every leaf has so much complexity in it. And you can further argue that even that complexity can be reduced to simplicity. Unfortunately you don't find anywhere in the world, anything that is simple. And yet Russell says, it is obvious that complex must be consisting of simple.

Similarly, you go to many other philosophical systems — I am only giving you one example that a man who comes from outside into an assembly of blind people who are sitting under a tree which is large and shady, would say "it is obvious that you are sitting under the shade of a tree". This is his answer: "it is obvious". But you may like however to be convinced that we are really sitting under a tree which has a large shade over us. Therefore, in India there is a very famous story, of an elephant and seven blind people. It is a very famous story, a parable told all over the country. And each philosophy student is told this story. The reason why is because it is assumed that we are all blind in this world. Philosophy has no reason to exist, in the way in which it exists today, if we were not blind. Assumptions behind every philosophical thinking is that we are all blind. If our eyesight was absolutely clear and clean and we could see the world within and without then argument would not be necessary. It would be simply obvious. But because we are blind, because, even with physical eyes open, our mental eyes are blind, our experiential eye is blind, our sensitivity is blind, emotionally we are blind, in many ways we are blind, therefore there is a need to state what some people think they are seeing. Anybody who feels he sees makes a statement. To him it is obvious but to the others it is not.

The story of the blind men and the elephant is that an elephant is put before the blind people and each blind man observes by touching and then describing. One who takes hold of the leg or the foot says it is like a trunk, but one who touches the ear feels it is like a vessel or a fan, and so on. If every part of the elephant is taken into account by each one touching it separately you will get seven different descriptions and none of them correct. And yet, for every one whatever is said is obvious.

So, I was asking you the question why there is a need of an argument at all. Behind every philosophical activity the assumption is that there is a huge world around us. This huge world is full of phenomena. There is one statement which you can make because of these phenomena which cannot be doubted, and it is this: "There are events". This is one statement which you can make and you can say "it is obvious" and perhaps even the blind people will accept this proposition: there are events. Indubitable statement, you cannot doubt it at all. But having said "there are events", doesn't giving us any wisdom, it doesn't give us any kind of a clue. What kind of events, interconnection of events, interconnection of these events with you, interconnection of all this with the totality, if there is any totality at all. These questions are not answered merely by saying "there are events". And philosophy has even a deeper question to ask, not merely to see that so many events exist in the world or happen in the world, but what is the meaning or the significance of these events.

You remember when we were defining what is philosophy, and I now turn to the one who has written down the definition; (to Anandamayi) I don't know if your definition includes this particular word, tell me whether it includes this word or not. Philosophy is a quest of knowledge. Tell me... [Anadamayi reads:]

"Philosophy is a quest for knowledge pertaining to all domains, including the quest for perfection both individual and collective, which results in the formulation of an idea/ideas pertaining to the totality which includes all that we see and experience or think of, and beyond that which may, may not exist, in search of the presence or absence of the meaning of all, beyond all and all particulars."

The word 'meaning' is present in that definition; therefore it is a correct definition. The essence of philosophical quest is to find the meaning. First of all we have to ascertain what are the facts, what are the events, their inter-relationships, what is behind them, whether there is any ultimate reality or not which you do not see but which is there as a source which may exist may not exist, and you search for whether there is a meaning in it or not. This being the meaning of philosophical enquiry, whenever any statement is made it takes the form of an argument. This is the necessity of argument, and the reason why all philosophical books abound with arguments. Sometimes people who are not familiar with the idea of philosophy get tired of philosophy because they say, "Oh! It is nothing but meaningless debate, meaningless argumentation coming to no conclusion. It has no sense in it." But that is because, it is not understood that philosophy is a very serious enquiry in which you should not become tired if you really want to discover, to find out the meaning. If you don't want to find the meaning and you are satisfied with what you are, don't enter into philosophy. But if you want to find

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

out the meaning, and since we are blind, and since there are many events happening, there is a need to inter-connect them. And because in the beginning of our search we happen to be blind we are likely to be struck only by one aspect rather than another aspect. Therefore if we are struck with that particular aspect you need to be told there is another aspect also. And when you say there is another aspect also, this statement takes the form of an argument.

Argument basically is nothing but stating one aspect of data and trying to join with it another aspect of data in a meaningful manner. The minimum is that there should be a connection on one aspect of data with another aspect of the data.

You know the meaning of data? Data means that which is given. It comes originally from a Sanskrit word: *datam*. That which is given. From *datam* comes data. *Datam* is singular and data is plural. Given facts are called data. Because normally we are seized with one set of data and we are do take into account another set of data, philosophy makes you aware that you need to connect one set of data with another set of data. But even these two sets of data are not enough. There is a third set of data, a fourth set of data, a fifth set of data, there is plenty of data, and that makes the whole complexity of philosophical argument.

Having done this kind of exercise to begin with, you come across certain data which are of such a nature that they are all comprehensive, knowing which all things are known. You can have such data, knowing which all the data can be known. This kind of thing also happens in our search. It is like a key. You may have so many rooms in a big castle and suddenly you find a key and when you find this key you can open the whole and everything is open to you.

Parmenides' argument which I gave you last time, is a peculiar one of this kind. It is an argument which gives you absolute certainty. You read that argument again, and we shall see what kind of certainty is involved in that argument. Let me read out once again: "*Thou canst not know what is not*", you can see the direct statement; "*Thou canst not know what is not*", this is a certainty; you can never know that which doesn't exist, you can know only that which exists. It is a very sweeping statement. You can be sure of this statement. And therefore he has put a parenthesis: "*That is impossible*". Absolutely certain, there is no question of doubt about it. So he picked up such a statement, such a *datam* that is clinching. This is what happens when you become true a philosopher. So many facts are given to you and you are able to pick up one *datum* which is sweeping. That is why people like to read philosophers, because philosophers are able, after a lot of thinking, after tremendous exercises of dealing with data, to pick up some such statements, and they are able to formulate them. This is the peculiarity of this argument: "*Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it; for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.*" It is a very simple statement actually, it says: if you examine your nature, you will always examine data in the light of your thought, it is the first thing that is said. Whatever you are going to decide, whatever you are going to judge, whatever you are going to know, it says first of all, it is by the instrument of thought that you will do it. This is the finding of the philosophers that thought is so constituted that it can only focuses upon that which exist. That which does not exist can never be applied to thought. Such is the nature of the thought. It is the key. Now this is an irrefutable statement because it describes the very nature of thought. So if you can find out the nature of thought, which is the instrument of knowledge at least at our present level, then you can be sure of this statement. For thought can be applied only to that which exists.

The second statement which is made — although yesterday I put it to you with some kind of force, at this next stage now when you are more mature today than yesterday — this second statement, when you examine it you will find fault with it, although it looks very much convincing and very clinching too, but you will find fault with it. It says: "*How, then, can what is going to be in the future, or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not. Nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing_away not to be heard of. The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same for you cannot find thought without something that is as to which it is uttered.*" This third statement is only a repetition of the first statement, it is clinching, but the second statement, the middle argument, although it may seem to be only an elucidation of the first, says something more and it is illegitimate. I will not ask you now to find out where is it this illegitimacy. Let it dwell in your mind for sometime, we shall come to this second statement and find out where there is a fallacy in this argument. It is an argument which seems only a restatement of the first, but it is not. It is something much more.

I leave it to you now and come back to the basic question which I raised with you: what is the need of an argument? How do you formulate an argument and how do you evaluate an argument? These are the three things that every student of philosophy should learn. My first answer is: you need to argue because even though we are sure that there are events in the world; there are phenomena in

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

the world, our perception of these data is limited, and different individuals perceive different data and each one claims that his perception of data is obvious. And therefore, when they sit in an assembly like ourselves now, there is this comparison of data and while comparing the data there is the birth of an argument.

These arguments are of different kind. This argument of Parmenides is what is called a logical argument. There can be many other kinds of arguments, but this one is a logical argument. In larger terms it is called an epistemological argument. You remember I told you sometimes ago of the study of epistemology. These words don't worry if you don't remember, because you will come across again and again and in any case will learn them. So don't try to memorise them. Each time I shall explain these terms because they need to be repeated. Epistemology is a study of the means of knowledge, of the nature of knowledge, of the standard of knowledge, of criteria of knowledge. It is a study of why we call something knowledge at all. How do we decide this is knowledge. What are the conditions that should be fulfilled for any statement to be called a statement of knowledge? If a statement consists of an error surely we will not call it knowledge. There must be standards by which you can say that this statement is to be called knowledge. It must satisfy certain criteria. The study of this domain is called epistemology.

Logic is a part of epistemology. Why? Because logic states that thinking or thought is one of the processes of knowledge. You arrive at knowledge by a process of thinking. That is a claim, whether it is right or wrong is a different matter. The claim is that thought is a means of knowledge. And thought, if it follows certain criteria, is bound to give a correct knowledge, without error. That is the study of Logic. Logic says that thought, if it follows certain standards, is bound to be correct. Because correct, therefore knowledge. I had given you an example earlier, a very simple example: "All planets rotate around the sun". This is a statement which we know is valid, because it is a fact, let us say it is obvious. Now you reverse it: "Therefore all that rotates around the sun are planets". Is it a correct statement? No. Why, because this does not follow the criteria of correct thinking. You are reversing the statement, in logic it is called the process of conversion. A statement is given, then you convert it, that is to say you make it reverse, as I did just now. "All planets rotate around the sun, therefore all that rotates around the sun are planets." This statement is not correct; there is an error in it. What is the error? Logic points out what is the error in this kind of conversion. I shall tell you afterwards what is the error exactly but we know that it is not correct because there are comets also which rotate around the sun. Therefore it is a fact that this statement is not correct.

So, logic is a science in which criteria are laid down as to when a process of thinking is correct or when it is not correct. All men are mortal — convert it — all mortals are men. Is it correct? No. There is something in this conversion which has gone wrong. Logic finds out what is wrong in it. Very often when people argue heatedly they make this kind of mistake. They just put one statement, then they reverse it. And they try to prove to you their statement is true. But if you are a good logician, a good student of epistemology you will say: "Please wait, don't be heated, argue very quietly, let us see your statement, we shall examine whether your argument is valid or not." So, converting a statement is also called an argument. Making a statement and converting it is an argument. An argument is manipulation of thought which deserves to be examined. This is the meaning of an argument. You start with process of thinking and then you manipulate that process of thinking. You can manipulate any process of thinking in many ways. A is equal to B, B is equal to C, C is equal to D, D is equal to E, E is equal to F, therefore A is equal to F. You are manipulating the whole process of thinking. There are many other ways of manipulating thinking. Epistemology or logic tells you whether that manipulation can be properly examined, and after examination you can arrive at a judgment whether it is without error or there is error in it. An argument is a manipulation of a thought process which deserves to be examined, which is to be tested.

Now this particular statement that I made from Parmenides, is also a kind of manipulation of thought process. Parmenides found out that all process of thought, whenever you think, always has an object. Thought does not exist without an object. It is one conclusion, one obvious proposition, which has been found out by Parmenides. It is on that basis that this argument is now formulated. And you examine it, and the peculiarity of this examination is, that the moment you examine it, it is asserted. To examine you have to say: "No this is not true". Starting point of examination is "This is not true". If it is not true, then you have to find a thought which has no object. But the moment you think there is always an object. Therefore this statement is reasserted by itself. And this is one of those prized arguments in the history of philosophy. You will find this kind of argument repeating itself in different forms, but the same argument comes again and again. As I told you in the twentieth century Bertrand Russell at the end of the examination of this argument says "I postpone this examination".

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

Even a dialectic argument is logical in character, but not vice-versa. All dialectical arguments are logical, but all logical arguments are not necessarily dialectical. So, there is a difference between the two. All arguments, in a certain sense you might say, not only dialectical argument, all arguments in philosophy are logical or they ought to be logical, but therefore all logical arguments are not necessarily dialectical.

What is the nature of a dialectical argument? I shall now give an example of a dialectical argument. If you open *The Life Divine* and see the second paragraph of the first chapter you will find an example. You saw that the first paragraph consisted of two arguments. One is a logical argument and the second argument in the first paragraph is a historical argument. Let us see where the logical argument is in the first paragraph. We had pointed out yesterday: "*The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts is also the highest which thought can envisage*", this statement is a logical argument. It is in the nature of thought. The nature of thought is such that at its highest it will affirm whatever is the content of the earliest preoccupation of awakened thought. Yesterday I explained to you that this statement is one of the most important statements in the paragraph. It is a logical argument. The earliest preoccupation of man is God. God is that which exists thoroughly. That which exists thoroughly is the highest that thought can envisage — unquestionably. Therefore this argument is a logical argument. The rest of the statements which are made in this paragraph are historical arguments. It brings the historical data — what are the historical data? You examine the earliest man, examine the periods of skepticism, examine the present man, his present preoccupations, his scientific enquiry, the conclusions of the present enquiry and the conclusions that emerge out of it. Because of the difference of nature of the two arguments you will find that these two arguments have different emphases. The logical argument is asserted in term of certainty. The historical argument is presented in term of probability. You will see that Sri Aurobindo uses the word 'seems', isn't it? Then the word 'promises'. These two words, 'promises' and 'seems', are words of probability because these two statements come within the context of historical argument and the conclusions of historical arguments cannot be definite. This is the rigor of the first paragraph as you see it. Because historical conclusions cannot be absolutely certain. Therefore, whenever you make an historical argument you have to remember, as a philosopher, not to make a dogmatic statement of certainty. Whenever you state an historical argument your conclusions must have seems, probably, etc. Don't make assertive statements if your argument is historical. You can make a statement in certainty form if your argument is logical in character.

We come now to a third kind of argument, which I told you is dialectical in character. Let us read this: "*These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained in their organised entirety by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression.*" It is a very long sentence, a very difficult sentence, therefore it deserves to be read three or four times, and we can divide the sentence into three or four parts. First of all it says: "These persistent ideals". God, Light, Freedom, Immortality, are the ideals which he calls persistent. Why persistent? Because throughout the ages they present themselves. Even after periods of skepticism they again reaffirm themselves. These ideals are persistent ideals, they come again and again. These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience. This is an argument in the sense that you are given a fact, and this fact is presented to you for examination. Therefore it is an argument. What is the examination you have to make? Sri Aurobindo says: these ideals are contradicted by our normal experience. In our normal experience we always find matter and matter and matter. Whether you turn this way or that way or that way you find nothing like God, you don't find Light, you don't find Immortality, you don't find Freedom. Our normal experience is simply of matter which is dark, matter which always binds you, it is a fetter, and matter is something that is perishing all the time, it dissolves all the time. So the natural experience of matter, which is all our normal experience, does not give you any kind of a clue of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. These persistent ideals of the race are a contradiction of the normal experience. But this sentence is not complete; it is only a part of the sentence. But they are also affirmations, they are contradictions on one hand of the normal experience, but they are affirmations of another experience, of higher and deeper experiences. That is to say if however you make an effort to go beyond your normal experience, then in those abnormal conditions you will find God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. They are affirmations of your deeper experiences. These deeper experiences come to you when? *They can be attained in their organised entirety...* Sometimes you do gain something, if you read the accounts of many people's experiences, you find them writing suddenly that I felt somebody was standing behind me. This is an ordinary experience of many people. You are alone and suddenly you find the presence of somebody around you. Sometimes. But to find the presence of God constantly, that experience in

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

its entirety you can have only by two methods: *by a revolutionary individual effort*. You know, there is a story of Sri Ramakrishna. He wanted to have a real perception of Divine Mother, of Kali, and he was making a lot of effort, but he was not succeeding. So one day he decided and told Kali: "If you do not appear before me, I shall cut off my head." Such a tremendous revolution in his being! "Why should I not see Kali? If she is there I should be able to see her!" Now this is a revolutionary individual effort. Not to be recommended, but sometimes desperation is so great, if your aspiration is so great that you can say: "All right now, do or die! Either I have it or I don't want to exist. What is all this." Then a revolution comes into your being and by revolutionary effort you may have this experience. Or else, *by evolutionary general progression* of mankind. Grow gradually, as humanity develops more and more, we should also benefit from it gradually and have this experience more easily. So these are the two methods by which you can have this experience.

So now let us repeat the whole argument: These persistent ideals are a contradiction of our ordinary experience, but they are affirmation of higher experiences, deeper experiences which can come to you either by revolutionary individual effort or by evolutionary general progression of mankind. It is a very simple statement. These ideals are a contradiction if you are only looking at ordinary experience, if these are your only data, then from those data you will say: All this is nonsense, talking of God or Light. Show me where is He? So we agree that if you limit yourself only to your present blindness, then you will contradict what I am saying that there are ideals of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. But against it I give another argument, that they are affirmed at another level of deeper experiences. So something which is affirmed at one level, something else that is affirmed at another level and when you put them side by side it is called a dialectical argument. Something that is stated at one level and something that is stated at another level and you compare them by relationship of negation and affirmation is called a dialectical argument. That is to say, if you want to examine it very logically, the usual form of a dialectical argument is the following: if you limit yourself to ordinary experience the conclusion is denial of these ideals of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is the first statement, if you limit yourself. It starts with *if*. All dialectical arguments can more easily be seen to be dialectical if you put in this form. *If* you limit yourself to the ordinary level of experience, then the experience of God, Light, Freedom and Immortality will be contradictory — negation. *If* you enter into deeper and higher experiences, then the conclusion is you will affirm God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. You have as a result, if you start with one proposition, one consequence, if you start with another proposition you will arrive at another proposition, and both of them will be contradictory of each other.

One of the very simple dialectical arguments is: "If reality is one, it cannot be many. If reality is many it cannot be one." A proposition from which you derive a thesis, another proposition from which you derive antithesis. You are able to derive a thesis and an antithesis which impels you to find something which will synthesise. So, thesis, antithesis and synthesis, any argument which takes this form is called a dialectical argument. Normally you will find in human thought whenever it examines data, there is a tendency to arrive at a thesis, to contrast it with antithesis and then to be impelled to derive a synthesis. This is one of the best ways of educating young people. If you want to develop the thought power of individuals always give them statements from where they will derive a conclusion, then give another statement so they will derive another conclusion, then you will find that both are opposed to each other and you ask how to synthesise. This whole paragraph is actually a dialectical argument. We have read only the four lines, but if read in detail, the whole paragraph is a dialectical argument.

III.

The first chapter includes everything. So, if you study it very well you have a good foundation. Do not worry if it goes slowly and please stop me if you think that I am going fast. I am prepared to do this chapter with you hundred a times if necessary. But we must do it very well.

We were talking yesterday of the dialectical argument. The dialectical argument is placed in a setting in which one set of phenomena seems to contradict another set of phenomena, demanding a necessary blending of the two. This method of argument dates back to ancient times. Plato used this

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

argument in a very large way, and in modern times Hegel gave it a very definitive form. I don't know if you have heard the name of Hegel, but let me tell you about Hegel.

He was a German philosopher. His dates are 1770 to 1831. He examined the nature of thought. How do people think was his basic question. What is the movement of Reason? He found a special connection between Reason and Reality. Between reality which is supposed to be there and Reason which is supposed to be here, he found a correlation. And therefore he found the key to reality in reason. If you want to know what is There, you examine Here, inside, in your process of reasoning, you will find out what is There. It is as it were a key. And he found that just as reason develops inside your thinking process so does reality move in the outside world. His famous sentence was: "*Reason is real and real is rational*". This sentence can be criticised in many ways depending upon what we mean by reason. If you go to Hegel himself, without imagining what he meant, this word reason can be regarded as super-reason. It is not exactly reason as we understand normally, in our normal process of thinking, but it is reason as a creative — not only a thinking instrument — but a creative instrument. Normally we mean by reason a thinking instrument, an instrument of discrimination which distinguishes one from the other. But in Hegel, the word reason since it is creative is creative by distinguishing. Real according to him is concrete. Reason in its creative process brings out differentiations and manifest them. This is the process of becoming. Therefore becoming is a process of abstraction. Real is concrete, the reason distinguishes the contents of the Real and brings out these distinctions, and as they come out they become abstractions.

And then there are steps. Each step is more remote than the next. The first step is nearer to the concrete; the next step is farther from the concrete. Until we come lower and lower down to all that we see. The more concrete we are the nearer we are to the Real. The farther we are from the Real the more abstract we are. So according to him we move from concrete to abstract and then, we ascend from abstract to concrete. So the more we think, and think really, the more we reach the Real. That is why he taught that if you exercise the reason fully you can grasp the Real. You become more and more concrete, you become one with the Real. And we are constantly to approach the real, so that we become more and more concrete. Now in the process he discovered what we call the process of dialectic, the process by which the concrete become more and more abstract and the process by which the abstract become more and more concrete.

This process according to him has a design. He felt that every human being endowed with reason moves in a particular fashion. Unfortunately, reason cannot approach the real without going through steps. It will be ideal if you straight away are able to become identified with the Real and become concrete, but that is not the power of the reason. He does not speak of any other power that can be, this is the limitation of Hegel. He thinks reason is the only power we have and it can go from abstractions to concrete gradually, its goal is to become completely one, with the Real, but only Real can be concrete. You and I who are instruments of reason can approximate as much as possible, but only the real can be what it is. The real is the concrete experience according to him, the total experience, everything is included in it. So his advice to mankind is to rise from one's lower limited visions and reach up to the top. You cannot of course reach the top but may approximate it as far as possible. This is where Hegel's idea of reason stops short of the supermind. The supermind becomes one, itself concrete with the Supreme, with the Absolute, with the Real. But you can see, although we fall short of the highest, he has conceived the process by which you can become less and less abstract, more and more concrete. This description of reason, although not the supreme description, is already a preparation for the supreme description of what we call super-reason or supermind.

According to Hegel, reason in the beginning, perceives only one set of phenomena. When you strain it further, there comes before it another set of phenomena. When you go farther you are able to see the two sets together in some kind of combination, some kind of synthesis and you begin to perceive another set of phenomena, and then again beyond that another set is seen which is a combination of the previous two, and the previous two already combines the previous synthesis that you had already achieved. So there is a progressive synthesis in which you move forward and upward.

He found that any human being who uses his reason properly will follow this movement, which he called dialectic movement. You start with one perception and continue to perceive it, try to understand it, more and more, there will arise from itself another set of phenomena which you will discover are exactly the opposite of the first. And then the next one will synthesise the previous two which he calls the thesis and the antithesis and when the two are united he calls it the synthesis. So in the process of thinking, according to him, if you really follow the process, you will come across these stages of development.

There are many psychologists who have considered this argument. Is it really true that you move from thesis to antithesis to synthesis, then that synthesis becomes a thesis which produces

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

antithesis and that again produces synthesis? Does it really happen? Do we really perceive the world in this fashion?

Many people disputed his theory, many people agreed. One of the most famous men who agreed with Hegel, who had a tremendous influence on the history of the world was Karl Marx. Marx agreed that our thinking process is certainly of this kind.

But whereas according to Hegel the concrete was spiritual, not only real, but spiritual in character, according to Marx the concrete was matter. It is the big difference between the two. That is why Marx's philosophy is called *Dialectical Materialism*. He accepted Hegel's idea of the movement of thought and also that the movement of the real is dialectical in which one set of phenomena manifests first, and then the next one is the manifestation of a set of phenomena which is the exact opposite of the first. But whereas according to Hegel the first to manifest is the Real and Concrete and Spiritual, according to Marx the first that manifests is the Concrete, the Real but Material. It is exactly the opposite of the theory of Hegel.

You know that Karl Marx made such a tremendous impact on history, that Marxism is one of the major trends of thought today and for some time in the Twentieth Century it ruled a part of humanity with a tremendous power. What is called the Russian Revolution was a result of Marx's thought. It is only now, that mankind is drawing away. Marx's dialectical movement was for the modern times centered on the idea of the State. What is the State? State is a collectivity which we call society. Any group of human beings is a society, but there is a difference between a society and a state. No state can exist without society first — that is why I defined state with a society first — so society is a basic group. But that basic group is not equivalent to State, State is that part of the society which governs the society, which has the power to govern the society. So unless there is society, there can be no question of governing it. Marx's thought was centered on the idea of the State and he perceived that every society tends to govern itself through an instrument, through a body, through an organisation of governance. So the governing body of a society is State.

The question is: who becomes the governing body? If there is a society, a number of people are assembled in the society, who and how does that body come to be governed. According to him, in the natural process, those individuals who are powerful, separate themselves as it were from the society in a certain way, and because of a certain power which they have, come forward and sit upon the higher pedestal of the society. They separate from the totality because of the power which they possess and they come up to the higher point of governance. So the state arises out of the movement of the powerful who achieve this by dissociating themselves in one way or the other and coming to the point of governance.

What is the power by which these people are able to come out? According to Marx the people who are governing today, have arisen because of the power of wealth. According to him a few individuals by virtue of possession of tools — tools which are able to produce wealth — begin to manufacture wealth. They accumulate that wealth, and by the accumulated wealth they come to power. This accumulated wealth is called *capital*. This word capital is used very often in normal parlance, so if you want to define what is capital, it is accumulated wealth. Because of this accumulation of wealth, there arises in the society two classes: those who possess tools that is those who possess wealth or accumulated wealth, and those who don't have the tools and accumulation of wealth. So now you see if the wealthy are thesis, those who don't have wealth are antithesis. Those who have wealth produce their antithesis — that is those who don't have wealth.

According to Marx there is a struggle between those who have and those who don't have. This is what is called *class struggle* — the struggle of classes. He said every society tends to build up this struggle — those who have the wealth, versus those who don't have it. And then they fight with each other. There is a thesis and an antithesis. Now they must arrive at a synthesis. According to him there is an inevitability of arrival at a synthesis. Now, how can this synthesis arise? It is this movement which is particularly seen as a *dialectical movement* and there is some kind of inevitability because of the laws of thought. Because thought always moves according to Marx as according to Hegel in this dialectical process. And as in thought, so in reality. So what is in thought happens actually in the world?

According to Marx we shall move in society to a point where those who do not have will rise. Those who do not have are called by Marx *proletariat*. A time will come when the proletariat who are opposed to the rich will rise. The rich are called *bourgeoisie* (Those people who belong to bourgeoisie are all gentlemen, bourgeois gentlemen, they may be illiterate, they may not even know that they know prose and yet they have got riches and they command the society.) There is a battle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. And as a result of it the proletariat reverses the situation. The proletariat at a given stage of class struggle comes up on the top. And the bourgeoisie comes down. It is a movement of antithesis from the other side. It is not yet a synthesis; it is only a movement from

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

thesis to antithesis. Now, this antithesis becomes its own antithesis, its position is reversed, and when the proletariat becomes the master, the governors, then according to Marx a favorable situation arises for synthesis. What is the synthesis? There will be no masters in the society. This is the synthesis. All become equal, no class struggles. Therefore his famous aim is: withering of the State. The State withers away; there will be no state at all. This is his basic idea.

And when in 1917 (or even before in 1905) the Russian Revolution broke out and Lenin emerged as a great leader of this revolution, this was the ideal. It was the proletariat revolting against the capitalists, against the bourgeoisie, throwing down the bourgeoisie, including the Tsar who was at that time ruling Russia. All were thrown out and the proletariat became the masters. Lenin represented the proletariat and became the ruler. It was the rule in the name of the proletariat. And the idea was, that soon a time would come when equality would be achieved everywhere, class struggle would cease. There would be synthesis. There would be no class struggle, all would be equal and the State would wither away. Now this was the vision put forward when the Russian Revolution broke out. It is that vision which inspired many many people all over the world. That was the real appeal to common people who wanted to see that they are not trampled under the feet of the capitalists. And they were waiting for that bright day when the State would wither away.

But in 1990 it was found that this was not happening and this will not happen. You have heard the name of Gorbachev. He was at that time the President of Soviet Union and he, as it were, pulled back. It became clear that the State instead of withering away had become even stronger. The heavy hand of the State became so strong that the freedom of individuals was strangled thoroughly, and when individual freedom is strangled the motive to work becomes extremely feeble, and if you don't have motive to work who will produce? And when there is not enough production, then people begin to rise in revolt. And that is what happened in Soviet Union, the entire state, which had become very powerful, began to be dismantled. Even in the Soviet Union, the whole Union broke down.

So the idea of thesis, antithesis entering into a synthesis did not work out. Of course, there are many thinkers who believe that the present stage is only a stage, the dream is not to be given up, a time will come again when the state will wither away. But what are the conditions under which the state can wither away really, that is a very big question mark in the history of mankind today. This is one of the reasons why the theory of the dialectical movement has been questioned.

Dialectical movement as described by Hegel and by Marx in such neat terms — thesis, antithesis, synthesis — does not seem to work out thoroughly well. And yet it is to be admitted, there is something like a dialectical movement. It may not be as neat as described by Hegel and Marx but there is something in the world, in the movement of the world, there is such a movement that would answer to the dialectical movement. What is its truth? What is that truth which answers to this idea of dialectical, even though the dialectical idea may not have been fully manifested — even if you find that it does not follow that rhythm all the time — there is something in the world which answers to it.

It is when you read this paragraph — this was the introduction to the second paragraph — when you read the second paragraph of the first chapter of *The Life Divine*, that you begin to hear what the real truth is behind the dialectical movement. Somehow the world itself as it has manifested seems to have taken a decision to move in a particular rhythm. You know in India we have a concept of the world as a dance of Shiva. Every dance has a rhythm, so if you know that rhythm you can predict as to what will be the next step of the dance. In India it was found that this world follows the rhythm of the dance of Shiva. That rhythm could have been different also, it is not that this is the only rhythm possible. According to the Indian concept Shiva is not so limited that he must dance only in one way and there are no other ways of dancing. While starting this particular dance of which we are a part, this dance has taken a special kind of rhythm, out of many kinds of rhythms. That rhythm is that Shiva himself, the Supreme Himself — the Real, the Concrete, in the terms of Hegel —, decided that his very first rhythm would be to manifest his exact opposite. This is the decision taken by Shiva, in this particular dance movement; the first step of manifestation of the dance will be his exact opposite. If it is a thesis the next step will be the antithesis. Because of this decision, in the whole world movement you find an answer to the idea of dialectic. If this decision was not taken by Shiva there would be no dialectic at all. It could have been another method of dancing. But in this particular dance a decision has been taken that the very first movement will be exactly the opposite.

So if the reality is superconscious then the next step will be inconscient. And this is what has happened in this world. Now, that being the fact, our human mind follows the same kind of rhythm. Because human mind is nothing but the movement of the dance of Shiva. If you conceive a huge dance of Shiva then all our minds are actually rhythms of the mind of Shiva. Our minds also move in the same way. That is why our human reason follows the dialectical movement. And what happens? Our thinking is of such a nature, it dwells upon one set of facts. That is we might say the decision of the

movement of the dance, that your mind will set itself upon one set of facts. It is very difficult for the human mind to see everything in a global manner. Whenever it starts thinking, it starts thinking by concentrating upon one set of facts and it dwells upon it tremendously, first. It is with difficulty that you draw out of it and make it aware of another set. And when it sees the other set it moves just to the opposite. That is why our human mind has a dialectical movement. We are not able to see all the facts at once; if we could then dialectical movement will not be necessary. Philosophy takes birth in this movement of mind. If our mind were not of this kind, philosophy would not arise at all. We would see everything at once and there would be no need of argument, no need of dialectical, nothing at all. We would see all the things at once. Our human mind is capable at a given time to see only one set of facts and yet it stirs. In its very stirring there is something by which it opens little by little to another set of facts. And when you see another set of facts you become so much blinded by these facts that you begin to reject the first ones. You will find many human beings holding one view today and surprisingly after a few years when you see them they speak exactly the opposite of what they are speaking today. Watch many people, I don't say this about everybody, but many human beings begin to advocate one view today and after sometimes they begin to advocate the exact opposite view.

In our Ashram School — this is a parenthesis — we started an experiment in which we said all education must take place in a condition of silence. Be absolutely silent, because it is the silent mind which can receive the knowledge, a fact which is true. So, in our experiments we decided there would be no lectures, because lectures are opposite to silence. Everybody should be absolutely silent — they could read, they could contemplate, meditate — but no lectures. Or if the teacher wanted to communicate something he wrote it down and gave that written note to the student and the student read it quietly. If the students had a question to ask they were advised — speak whisperingly. No noise, just whispers. All this was very fine, it was a good experiment — I am only telling you how the human mind works. After a few years of experimenting, not a few years, let us say one or two years, there was a feeling that this was not working very well. And then some other experiments were made and after three, four years those who were advocating complete silence, I myself heard them advocating: “Il faut parler, il faut parler, il faut parler.” Just the opposite — antithesis. Talking was now advocated, and talk and talk and talk is needed if students have to be stimulated; they have to be made enthusiastic. And how do you do this? You talk to the students again and again and again. It would be a new outburst of curiosity and knowledge will spread. This was antithesis. And those who were advocating furiously the first gospel of silence began equally furiously now the gospel of “parler”. Speaking, you must talk. And then came the synthesis afterwards. I think what is called the *free progress system* is actually a combination of silence and talking. That is why I am allowed to talk to you, otherwise I would be out. So the idea is that you talk, but talk in such a way that silence is not disturbed or is rather encouraged, which is a very difficult synthesis. And there should be rhythms of silence and talking, rhythm of personal reflection and acting — it is a synthesis. It is only an example to show how our system of education evolved dialectically from one extreme to the other and then to a synthesis.

This is because the world, as a whole, follows this rhythm. Superconscience, the very first step, produced inconscience. Because of that movement, when inconscience begins to develop it manifests also sets of phenomena little by little — this is what we call evolution. Evolution is nothing but a gradual unfolding of the inconscience. Little by little out of sleep, when you awake your eyes are not fully open. Little by little they open up and gradually we begin to stir and then we become slightly awake and then more awake and then fully awake. This is what is called the process of evolution. It is because of this process of evolution that there is an answer to the theory of the dialectical movement. And that is why in philosophy it has become one of the major movements of thought and in argumentation this movement is followed, not always but very often. It is one of the good ways of awaking the human mind, so that human mind moves from one set of facts and goes to the other and gradually opens up and then synthesizes and arrives at a conclusion which is really real.

This is the movement of the second line in the second paragraph of *The Life Divine*. You will see in the very first sentence of this paragraph Sri Aurobindo says “*These persistent ideals*” — that is the ideals of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality — “*are at once contradicted and affirmed*”. This is the dialectical movement. “*Are at once contradicted and affirmed*”. Contradicted by ordinary experience, because in ordinary experience we only get matter — you don't see God Light, Freedom, Immortality at all. You only see matter. When you open your eyes from sleep you cannot even bear the light, you want to close your eyes immediately. Similarly, your first movement is to be confined to the ordinary experience. And in that ordinary experience if somebody speaks to you of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality you will simply shake it off. “Oh! Nothing of that kind, I see nothing yet. Where is God, Light, Freedom, Immortality? All is dark, all is matter!”

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

When you move forward, further, then you begin to have another experience. As Sri Aurobindo says: *"It is affirmed..."* these ideals are affirmed by deeper and higher experiences. First there is a negation and then there is an affirmation. Now this affirmation takes a lot of time, it is a gradual movement and Sri Aurobindo uses the words *"in its organized entirety"*, these words are very important *"organized entirety"*. Even if you want to affirm these ideals of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality, since it is a long way from inconscience to That, even if you have glimpses in the beginning, these experiences don't come in their fullness, in their organized manner. You can come to this organized totality of higher experiences only by two methods — either by revolutionary individual effort or the evolutionary, that is gradual movement of general progression of mankind. This is what we had done last time. I only repeat it just to reaffirm what we had done.

We go now to the next step in the argument, the opposition between ordinary experience and totality of experience. Sri Aurobindo formulates these in their stark opposition to each other, as a thesis and an antithesis. This formulation is one of the most powerful and most potent formulations in philosophy. The stark opposition between the two poles of experience — on one side you experience one thing, on the other side you experience something else — and Sri Aurobindo speaks of the synthesis of these two poles. We shall go very slowly, little by little we shall see each one of the opposites that Sri Aurobindo describes here.

"To know, possess and be the Divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness." These are the two polarities. We are at present in an animal and egoistic consciousness. That is our ordinary experience. The other pole of experience is to know, possess and be the Divine being — that is the formula of God. Then, *"To convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination."* On one side at present we have got an obscure physical consciousness, at the most it is twilight — twilight means some light either in the evening or in the early morning. Either darkness is about to come or darkness is about to go. Our consciousness is at present a twilight consciousness we might say. Mostly it is an obscure physical consciousness in which we live. If we count how many hours we spend in our active work — it is eight hours so sixteen hours of the day are either in sleep or preparation to awaken and to start work. Mostly we live in a twilight consciousness. To convert our twilight obscure physical mentality, this is true of our ordinary experience — now you come to the higher experience — into plenary supramental experience. Plenary means that which does not diminish at all, everlasting, there is no alteration between sleep and awaking. We say Light is a part of the formula, Light, God, Freedom, Immortality. When we speak of Light, we don't speak of the aspiration to have some light, it is not an aspiration to have a temporary light; our aspiration is to have no diminution of light at all. So, this is the aspiration, to convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination.

"To build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering." This is the third term of our aspiration for God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality. These are the five terms of our formula. This is the third term. To achieve what kind of Bliss? To build peace and a self-existent bliss. A bliss which does not depend upon any external object — self-existent — a bliss which flows automatically from our being, it doesn't depend upon any external stimulation. Neither sensory nor intellectual nor anything that come from outside it is self-existent. We should bubble with delight from within ourselves, that kind of delight. *"To build peace and a self-existent bliss — This is our goal — where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions."* It is a beautiful expression! What is our present state? Our present state is a state of satisfaction, but this satisfaction has always a stress in it, it is never a stress-less satisfaction. Even when you say: "Oh I am contented now", there is some stress in it. Sri Aurobindo uses the word "stress", stress of transitory satisfaction. There are three things: our satisfactions are only for a time. Even the richest man when he sits back in his armchair after doing a day's work and feels absolutely satisfied, might get suddenly the news that his son has fallen sick and all his satisfaction is wiped out. It is only a transitory satisfaction that we normally have. And even this transitory satisfaction, Sri Aurobindo now qualifies by a beautiful expression is *"besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering"*. Even when you may be contented you may not be able to eat sweets because you have diabetes. When everything is available to you, unfortunately physical pain is knocking at your door. So even that satisfaction you cannot enjoy. There is physical pain and emotional suffering. You will find that all the time in human life, even in the best conditions of your bliss, suddenly you find somebody becomes angry with you, somebody is dissatisfied, somebody revolts, somebody sulks and you do not feel satisfied at all and you begin to move out of yourself to satisfy something or the other.

In the Ramayana, imagine the mood of king Dashrath when he announced that Rama would be crowned the next morning. What a tremendous happiness spread over the whole town. But in a small corner of the big palace one of the queens, began to stir in an opposite manner and soon made a

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

demand — this stark demand — that Rama should be exiled. And when the father who was so happy, his happiness had no bounds, was asked he sank completely into torpor. Our satisfactions are *“besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering.”*

“To establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities.” Our life is a life of necessities, we are obliged to eat, it is a necessity, no? The minimum necessity is that we are obliged to sleep. We cannot be free from sleep, even if you want to keep awake for ever and ever and ever, you cannot, we are necessitated to sleep, we are necessitated to eat, we are necessitated to physical movement, necessitated to breathe. Our whole life is nothing but — if you don't agree with the theory of necessities you can say it is nine-tenth of your life that is a necessity — may be one-tenth is where we have some freedom of movement. I can decide whether I shall move my arm this way or I shall not move my arm. This kind of freedom I certainly have but otherwise our life is full of necessities. And yet human beings aspire for freedom. And what kind of freedom? Sri Aurobindo says: *“to establish an infinite freedom”*. The complete freedom of Shiva's dance. He could decide whether he would dance in one way or the other or other or other, choosing from infinite ways of dancing. Or he will dance all the dances at the same time, even for that he has the freedom. He can at the same time dance in a million ways — such a freedom. And it is that freedom which is available at the other pole of our existence. *“To establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities.”*

Now the last term. We have covered God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, and then the last term is Immortality. *“To discover and realize the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation.”* Our life is subject to death or at least to change all the time. To find immortal life and that too in a body. This is a sharp contrast between the state of immortality and the state of mortality.

The one set of facts, set against another set of facts exactly the opposite of each other. Thesis and antithesis. It is to bring about that light in these conditions. To live that Divine life in a life which is animal; to establish that light in a state of darkness or half awakeness, a twilight consciousness; to establish that bliss where there is only a partial satisfaction besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering. It is this Sri Aurobindo says *“This is offered to us as the manifestation of God in matter and the goal of Nature in a terrestrial evolution.”* Evolution — that is an important word.

All these opposites have come about because of inconscience. Because of the inconscience there is a gradual movement and that gradual movement is what we call evolution. And if we want to see this evolution moving forward towards what is the goal, then this is what Sri Aurobindo says, *“This is offered to us as the manifestation of God in matter and the goal of nature in a terrestrial evolution.”* This is the definition of the Divine life, which is the title of the whole book. The formula of the Divine life is: To know, possess and be the Divine being, ... to convert into a plenary supramental illumination; ... to build peace and a self-existence bliss; ... to establish an infinite freedom; and to realize the immortal life. These are the words to define the Divine life: the Life Divine.

The entire question of the book, in fact the whole book has three steps to its basic argument — I use the word argument because it is a philosophical book. It says first, it asserts that there is a human aspiration. This human aspiration wants the Divine Life. All human beings, whether they like it or not, whether they want it or not, whether they are conscious of it or not, every human being is seeking the Divine Life. This is Sri Aurobindo's affirmation. It is the first argument. If you don't agree with it, there is the argument here. The whole book is an argument. If somebody says no, no, no, the human being doesn't seek Divine Life at all, then this book is meant to answer that question. Is it really true that human beings are seeking the Divine Life? Sri Aurobindo's answer is that this is the real human aspiration. And he has defined it in clear terms. Very often people who do not read this book quite well say, “Oh Sri Aurobindo does not define terms”. It is one of the criticisms made by many people. Because people when they write philosophical books, first of all state words and then define them. People then say that this is called an accurate, polished, exalted philosophical book. My answer is, please be patient. Sri Aurobindo defines every possible term in *The Life Divine*. Whenever you find a term is not defined it is only your impatience. At the right time every word is defined and with a full definition and a perfect definition. I can tell you this because I have been reading this book for the last fifty years. I can say it is verified by me. And I am telling you also — The Life Divine is the title of the book and Sri Aurobindo defines this term in the very second paragraph of the book. We don't have to wait more, because in the very first paragraph Sri Aurobindo only puts a proposition that human beings have aspired for Divine Life. By the time you finish that sentence immediately Sri Aurobindo defines this term. There is no delay at all. As soon as he finishes the first proposition that human beings are full of aspiration for the Divine Life, Sri Aurobindo defines this Divine Life. This is the first step of the argument: what is Divine Life. So he defines Divine Life. And the statement that all human being are in search of the Divine Life is the first step of the argument which can be questioned. Sri Aurobindo allows

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

this questioning and the major part of the book is allowing this questioning and answering it. We shall see how he himself questions and how he answers it.

The second argument, the second step of *The Life Divine* is to tell human beings that this aspiration is fully justified. That is to say, you look at the whole world, you look at all aspects of facts, taking into account the totality — to perceive totality is the basic function of philosophy. You remember in the very beginning we have defined philosophy. Anandamayi will tell us if in her definition the word totality is a part of it. If it is not you have to change the definition.

Philosophy must deal with the totality of facts of all domains. Right. Have you used the word in your definition?

"Philosophy is a quest for knowledge pertaining to all domains, including the quest for perfection both individual and collective, which results in the formulation of an idea/ideas pertaining to the totality which includes all that we see and experience or think of, and beyond that which may, may not exist, in search of the presence or absence of the meaning of all, beyond all and all particulars."

That is right. First all domains, and then totality.

Sri Aurobindo shows the totality of facts. If you consider the totality of facts, then even rationally, even if you use only your reason, because reason is not something to be thrown out entirely, reason has some great glories, and one of the glories of reason is, it always demands from you totality. That is the great glory of reason. It may not be able to grasp all at once but its tendency is first towards totality. Therefore even rationally you go entirely step by step — if you don't see all the facts simultaneously don't worry, Sri Aurobindo will show you domain after domain. The whole book is nothing but showing you the world, domain after domain. That is why this book is a book of knowledge. Open *The Life Divine*, if you want the totality of knowledge in all its domains. In the one sweep as it were, Sri Aurobindo has given all the domains, in one book. It is a very great specialty of this book. I have never seen a book in the world which deals with totality, with all the domains of existence and gives you verifiable knowledge. Verifiable knowledge, not only beliefs. Therefore the Reason can be completely satisfied.

So this is the second argument. If you consider all the facts, then you will find that this aspiration is justified. Sri Aurobindo says, 'Do not fear to aspire for Divine Life.' This is the assurance of the whole book. And finally, the thrust of the argument is, that if this is what we should aspire for how shall we achieve it, how shall we realize it, how shall we fulfill it? What is the process by which you can fulfill it. The last portion of *The Life Divine* is entirely given to this task — how shall we fulfill, by what means the Divine life can be realized? This book combined with *The Synthesis of Yoga* gives a complete answer to the third question — how shall we realize the Divine Life on the earth?

We shall deal with the last portion of the second paragraph tomorrow.

IV.

We are on the second paragraph, the last few lines.

"To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity."

It is a short sentence but a difficult sentence. So let us understand the few words which are used here. First of all, it speaks 'of the ordinary material intellect'. If you read Sri Aurobindo you will find the word *intellect* being prefaced by certain adjectives. Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the material intellect, elsewhere he speaks of the vital intellect and he speaks also in terms of pure intellect. You might say there is intellectual intellect, pure intellect, then psychic intellect or spiritual intellect and there is also supramental intellect. The word intellect is used by Sri Aurobindo in many senses. Whenever the intellect is at the service of this or that then *that* becomes adjective. If my intellect is at the service of my desires it is vital intellect. If my intellect is at the service of the psychic consciousness it is psychic intellect. If my intellect is at the service of the spirit it is spiritual intellect. If it is at the service of the Supermind it is supramental intellect. If it is at the service of matter, material consciousness, it is material intellect. Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the material intellect.

What is material intellect? It is an intellect which subserves, which is at the service of sensations and perceptions which are received through senses. It is at the service of the evidence of the senses. All that I receive from my senses is taken as a standard; anything that does not fall within the evidence of senses is so to say avoided, rejected, in any case not admitted. Sri Aurobindo speaks

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

here only of that intellect. The intellect which is at the service of the senses will be inclined to argue that if there is a contradiction between the facts which are realised, which are there on the ground, and the facts which are not yet realised, which are ideals, which have to be brought down on the physical ground, if there is a contradiction between the two, then the material intellect will accept only what is realised and declare that what is not realised is invalid. It is not accepted as true. This is the tendency of the material intellect. If you look at human psychology you will find this psychology expressing itself very often in remarks such as: "Oh! You are not working on the ground. What do you know? You are dreaming, it is alright you go on dreaming, it has no value for me." This is the usual argument that you find very often in our ordinary life. Sometimes an idealist is told: "You are utopian". Utopian means, dreaming of ideals which can never been realised on the earth. Some people take pride in saying: "You know I am practical. You may be a good thinker, you may be a good teacher... I am a practical man, and for me practicality is the only things that matters".

The first mark of the material intellect is that it takes into account that which is available to us through senses and tends to regard only that to be real. To admit something through the senses is alright but it goes, one step further, it admits the evidence of the senses and then declares that only that which is received from the senses is valid and that all else is invalid. This is the tendency of the material intellect. Further, material intellect is repetitive, it goes on repeating again and again and again... And thirdly it is mechanical. Mechanical is something opposed to organic, it is something that drives on and on and on but in the same groove, it does not change the groove. It is like a record which stops at a given point in its movement and goes on producing the same sound again and again. It is purely mechanical.

There is a great merit in material intellect: whenever you want to repeat something, whenever you want to establish something it is extremely important. Whenever you want to establish something fundamentally it fixes the mind onto something. This is why many people who are clever at advertisement go on repeating the same advertisement again and again, even if you know that people have read it hundred times and somebody might argue: "Why are you now advertising? Everybody knows about it." But you want to fix it in the mind of the people, so that even in unconscious dreams it is repeated in the mind. Very often you wonder: Why does everybody know about Coca Cola? But it is repeated everywhere, you find the same advertisement all over. The advertisers know the power of the material intellect. When you can repeat the same thing, — even when people get tired of it, even if they demand something new, the same thing is repeated — and the effect of this is it is fixed in the mind of the people. Wherever you want something to be fixed go on repeating. At a higher level of consciousness this is also the truth of the *japa*. Go on repeating the *mantra* all the time, all the time, all the time, it gets fixed in the consciousness.

Everything in the world has a meaning and value therefore one should not condemn material intellect, but one must understand its value and also its limitation. The material intellect admits the evidence of the senses, that is its value, its utility, its function. It fixes the consciousness, that is its utility and function. Both are salutary. But then it goes one step farther, it refuses to open to any other evidence, this is a limitation and you must guard against it. So long as you demand a physical proof, the demand is perfectly alright. But therefore to demand it and to say that it is the only proof I accept, there can be no other proof at all — that is arrogance. How do you know there is no other evidence at all?

The materialist very often says: "Show me God", and when he says: "Show me God" he means, show me physically. "I believe God if he is there, physically." So long as he demands there is no problem. Then when you say: "Look my friend God, by its very nature is invisible. If by nature he is invisible there is a problem." Then you say: "My dear friend you have not understood my answer. I would show you physically if he was physical in character, but if by nature he is not visible and then you tell me: show me physically, it only means you don't understand what I mean." Then he says: "I don't accept anything else." That means that he is refusing to admit that there can be invisible but yet real things. Some of the great thinkers fall into this trap because they are so much fixed in physical mentality.

Mother had said for example: People will demand physical transformation in terms of what the physical will look like, but she said that is not the real thing. That will come, but it is the last thing to happen. The physical transformation is the transformation in the subtle physical which is not visible physically, which is real but not physically perceptible. If something happens there; as a consequence something will happen in the pure physical. Now if you refuse to accept it, it means it is because of the tremendous power of the material intellect.

Material intellect should realise. It has to be taught that its demand is accepted, is welcome but it should not be so arrogant as to pronounce that there is no other evidence admissible. There are

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

many evidences in the world, many kind of evidences. I may look grim physically and yet I may be very cheerful in my heart. This is true of every one of us, very often we may seem very grim but in our hearts there is bumping enthusiasm. If this is a fact then it means that physically I may not seem to be very enthusiastic but the fact is that I am really enthusiastic so how is the reality of my enthusiasm to be seen. If you ask that only if I go on laughing aloud that I will agree that you are enthusiastic. If you believe that is the only way of judging whether I am enthusiastic or not it will be wrong because I can be enthusiastic even when my face may seem very grim. This is a fact which everybody knows then the demand that you must be physically manifesting everything that you feel inwardly is a wrong demand. But such is the condition of... in fact I will say of all of us. Because every one of us has got this material intellect and every one has got this arrogance. Even so called theists those who believed in God tremendously, in their life at a given moment, when the material intellect becomes very powerful, even for a short time, may protest: "Where is that God?" They may be lecturing on God and yet in their own life at a given moment this contradiction appears because all of us are subject to that power of material intellect. Some others are psychologically so tuned that the moment you try to bring any evidence which is not physical in character they simply turn away. Do not see at all.

Let me read out to you only two lines from Bertrand Russell. Bertrand Russell is, to my mind, a philosopher highly fixed in material intellect. He is a very good example. He is a very great thinker, not that he does not understand — all that I am talking to you he would understand quite well — and yet the consciousness is so tuned to the material intellect, so overpoweringly that he would refuse to accept anything that it is not materially visible. I am reading the last page of his book because you might say that is the sum total of all that he wants to say and the last page is very useful to illustrate what I am saying now. He says: *"All this is rejected [he means all propositions regarding idealism, divinity, spirituality] by the philosophers ... of my category. They confess frankly that the human intellect is unable to find conclusive answers to many questions of profound importance to mankind. But they refuse to believe that there is some higher way of knowing — it is very clear, there is no pretension about it at all — by which we can discover truths which are hidden from science and the intellect."* By science he means the knowledge that can be gained by physical senses. And intellect means, an intellect which is ready to accept only the evidences of the physical senses. So he has himself defined what is the material intellect. Material intellect rejects, not only rejects but refuses to believe — the word refuses is very important — *that there is some higher way of knowing by which we can discover truths hidden from science and the intellect.*

A man who can write such a wonderful book — in many ways it is a wonderful book, I like it very much, I don't agree with it but I like it very much. There is a great honesty and great nobility in this philosophical writing. It does not pretend, it says very clearly what it wants to say. But here is an example when a philosopher declares: "I refuse". You may say there are many other ways of knowing and he says: "I refuse it". Now, when you refuse what can you do about it? There is no answer to refusal in this world. In one of her statements Mother said: "The problem of today in the world is Refusal — with R capital." Simply there is refusal. And this refusal has many layers. Material intellect is one layer of refusal. Vital intellect is also another layer of refusal. Mental intellect also has its own refusals. Even the pure intellect has refusals. They are in-built as it were. It is only when you rise to psychic intellect, spiritual intellect that these refusals become less and less pronounced and only when you open to supramental intellect that infinite doors of knowledge are opened and there is no refusal at all, it admits everything. The totality is accepted; all doors of knowledge are opened. That is why Sri Aurobindo wants us to move towards the supramental intellect.

The vital intellect also refuses. Supposed for example I have a desire to see a film today. A simple desire. Now there are many arguments which can be put forward to me that I should not see a cinema today. All kinds of arguments can come. The vital intellect makes a very good coating over your desire and says: "Oh! You must see this film because it will educate you." And then somebody says: "But you know reading this book is also very educative. Why don't you read?" This is another evidence put forward, you want to be educated, of course cinema can educate you, but books also can educate you, so why you don't choose them? You will find the vital intellect will find this very inconvenient. It will argue that a book is of a lesser importance because a film is a visual means of knowing, a very direct way of knowing. So it creates a greater impression, something, which you will never forget. Whereas a book can be forgotten, what you see in a film, you will never forget. You will find support for your argument basically because you want to satisfy your desire to see a film. The Vital intellect goes on glossing over, making beautiful golden coating over it, so that it may seem very nice. Or let say I want to visit America, I want to move out to America and only to America. Why? Among all the nations, America is the freest nation therefore I must go to America. It is a good reason. I don't frankly admit that I want to go to America simply by desire,. I go because America is the freest

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

country in the world, I want to experience the freest country in the world, therefore I want to go to America. And then if I put forward any other argument it becomes very inconvenient and I go on defending my argument in one way or the other. I refuse to see other arguments. If I say that if you want to really experience freedom there are many ways of experiencing freedom, it is not only visiting America that gives the experience of freedom — what is called spiritual freedom is one of the easiest and the best ways of experiencing freedom. But if somebody speaks of it one says: "Don't take me to that realm. I refuse to see that." Thus the vital intellect also refuses when basic desire is denied or attacked. And so on... Our important point just now was the material intellect.

The greatest obstruction, the greatest objection to the proposition that we should aim for the divine life comes from the material intellect. We have seen yesterday there are three steps of the argument in *The Life Divine*. The first step is to expound the human aspiration and to expound the content of that human aspiration, which states that every human being basically aspires for divine life, whether he admits it or not, whether he doubts it or not, whether he really ,consciously is in pursuit of it or not, this is the basic, fundamental urge in human beings. Sri Aurobindo begins by saying this is the urge which has manifested throughout the history of mankind and it promises also to be the main theme of the future. Much of the book is devoted to the exposition that human beings aspire for divine life. The second part is that this aspiration is justifiable. This aspiration, if you take into account the totality of facts of the world: all the phenomena from the point of totality, this aspiration is justified. It is rationally justified and justified also on the basis of the highest experience — in both ways. This is the second part of the whole argument. And the third part is that there is a method, there is a way which if you follow, and this aspiration can be fulfilled. As I said the last part of *The Life Divine*, combined with *The Synthesis of Yoga*, answers to this third aspect. There is a way by which our aspiration for divine life can be fulfilled. That aspiration when it is fulfilled doesn't need further proof because it is realised. It is a fact of your life. In the meantime you need a crutch a rational crutch which comes by rational argumentation, which is provided in *The Life Divine* and which also needs evidence of experience. That also is provided in this book. This is the totality of the whole argument. But at the very outset as you make the first statement that there is an aspiration for the divine life and that divine life is realisable, immediately the first objection comes from the material intellect. The material intellect says, what is realised now is the material world and this is true, this is real. The divine life is not here visible at all, physically anywhere. Therefore it contradicts the actual. The ideal is contradicted by the real. And real being real that which contradicts it is invalid, is false. This is a simple argument.

Sri Aurobindo states that for the material intellect the realised fact is contradicted by the ideal that you put forward. This contradiction proves that ideal is unreal, invalid. In stating this argument Sri Aurobindo gives a further qualification which is very important. Material intellect which takes our present organisation of consciousness as a limit of our possibilities — this is a phrase which is very important. "*To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities...*" Material intellect refuses that there can be any other way of knowing than the way of knowing that is possible for the material consciousness. I read out to you the quotation from Russell: he refuses to accept that there is any other way of knowing, that whatever we can know now is the utmost possibility of our capacities. We cannot go beyond this. It refuses to admit that you can develop other faculties, you can go higher, you can go deeper. This possibility itself is rejected. It is this material intellect which is bound to pronounce that the ideal of divine life is invalid. This is the argument: "*To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity.*"

Now comes Sri Aurobindo answer to this argument. In the history of thought this formulation is a very original formulation to this question. So we should study very carefully these two lines because there are very important. "*But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.*" It is a very difficult sentence. So we shall dwell a little on these lines. The last lines of the paragraph are very very important lines.

What we mean by philosophical argument is illustrated in these particular lines. What is the nature of philosophical argument? You remember we spoke of logical argument, of epistemological argument; we spoke of historical argument, of dialectical argument and now we have another form of argument. We might say the most essential philosophical argument. The argument which is the heart of all philosophy. You remember that while defining philosophy we had underlined one very important word: philosophy is a quest ...

"Philosophy is a quest for knowledge pertaining to all domains, including the quest for perfection both individual and collective, which results in the formulation of an idea/ideas pertaining to the totality

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

which includes all that we see and experience or think of, and beyond that which may, may not exist, in search of the presence or absence of the meaning of all, beyond all and all particulars."

In the last phrase there is a very important word: the *meaning*. There are all kind of quests in the world. If there is one quest which distinguishes itself from all others it is the quest for meaning. No other domain looks for meaning as much as philosophy. It is the heart of philosophy. Philosophy starts with the quest which would embrace all domains of knowledge, all facts can be put together. But even if you have all the facts before you it will still not be philosophy if you miss out the question: what is the meaning of all this. You may know all the facts but if you have not enquired into what is the meaning it is not philosophy. Science can give you all the facts, each science may give you knowledge of a given domain but if you put all the sciences together you may still not get the meaning of all the facts. This requires a very special quest.

Philosophy points out that the human being is not satisfied merely with the quest of knowledge of facts; there is something in human beings which looks for something else. And that is the quest of meaning. Of course philosophy even questions this: there may be meaning, there may not be meaning. But you can announce there is no meaning only after making an enquiry into meaning. You cannot at the outset say there is no meaning and there is no question of discovering the meaning. It is only when you enquire whether there is a meaning, that you may come to the conclusion there is no meaning. You may say that every thing is idiotic in the world but only after enquiring whether it is really idiotic? Therefore the most essential philosophical argument is connected with what we may call a decision to enquire with the assumption that there is a meaning. Just grant that there is a meaning, afterward you may come to the conclusion there is no meaning. So real philosophical argument starts by stating that there may be a meaning in all that you are seeing. Sri Aurobindo uses the words: "*But if we take a more deliberate view...*" the word deliberate is very important ... '*but if we take a more deliberate view of [nature's] world's workings*' you are enquiring as to whether there is any meaning. You take a deliberate view, is there any meaning why nature is producing contradictions. We saw last time that the highest dialectical arguments present to you thesis, antithesis and a synthesis which again produces thesis, antithesis and so on.

Having stated it you should ask the question why does it happen? Is there a meaning in this kind of movement? Why is there an opposition at all between the actual and the ideal? Why is the ideal not the actual? Is there any sense in it? Is there any meaning in it? Sri Aurobindo says *that if you take a deliberate view of the world's workings* then you will find "*that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.*" This opposition that you find is a part of Nature's method, and its profoundest method. Nature is so omnipotent, it has such a tremendous capacity that it can hide its Truth completely, not abolish it because that is impossible — Nature can never abolish the Truth but it can hide it and hide it completely. Nature has many methods of manifesting but one of the profoundest way by which Nature can manifest is to hide itself completely. Whatever Truth, whatever Light is there in the world in the Life and the Supreme, that Light it can hide completely and it can manifest after all kinds of oppositions. Therefore the world is full of a manifestation that appears to have a lot of contraries, oppositions and contradictions. So whenever you see contradiction do not withdraw. Mere presence of contradiction — if you declare therefore invalid, mark of an invalidity you are making a mistake. If you know how Nature is working in the world where you find an opposition be aware that there is something, some message to be taken out of it. If you really look for a meaning, it has a meaning.

And if somebody opposes you very much do not be worried, do not be afraid. There is something ringing there all the time which wants to awaken you, there is some light in it which is hidden and it is an invitation to uncover it. Sri Aurobindo says that if you win a debate you have actually lost a chance, because in a debate you can win only when your point of view succeeds and the opponent's point of view is defeated. This can happen only when the opposition's point of view is thrown out. You have not learnt out of it. If you learn out of it nobody is defeated, everybody succeeds. If you win a debate it means that the opposition's point of view is not grasped, you have not undertaken a sufficient enquiry to see where the Truth lies in the opposition. And once you bring it out even the opposition is your friend. It is no more the opposition. Sri Aurobindo says in the same vein: "Who is your enemy? The one who takes you to the embrace of the beloved." If you want a complete embrace with the beloved remember that there is an enemy who will take you to him. Sri Aurobindo was taken to the prison by the British, as their enemy, but when he went to the jail, even though Sri Aurobindo initially asked: "Hast thou forsaken me? What is it? You had promise me that you will protect me, and yet you take me to the jail?" But it was in the jail that Sri Aurobindo had one of his greatest realisations. He embraced the Supreme Lord in the jail.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

This is the method of Nature. And Sri Aurobindo says merely because the real and the ideal are in contradiction with each other, don't pronounce that the ideal is unreal. It is the method of Nature. Once you know Nature's method this argument will have no basis. This way of arguing against materialism is a novel way of argument. In the history of the world, I tell you, I have not come across a method by which materialism is rejected or is thrown out of the court. This is a new forum, that if you understand Nature's method, there is a meaning in it. And that meaning is to work by opposition. To hide every thing and to manifest only a little, so that what is hidden and what is manifested look very opposite to each other. Completely opposed to each other. But that is a sign that you have to look deeper. It is the profoundest method of Nature and her completest seal of sanction. It is certain. When you want something very deeply... (You make an experiment.) What you need the most and you make a demand to Nature; you will find there is no answer at first. In the present system of Nature, as we are now — when Supermind will manifest fully it will not be so —, but at present, as long as there is this: Nature hiding the Truth, you go to the topmost of your aspiration and you will find that in its present method, Nature's first answer is NO.

In Savitri, Aswhapati moved upwards and even when he reached the Supreme Mother and asked for the boon The Mother said: "Why do you want it? Everything will be transformed in its own time." So there was a refusal, even there, there was a refusal. It is only when he insisted: "But I want it." The insistence was there and there was a boon, there was a response. Therefore if somebody says: No do not take it for granted, Nature does not want, God does not want, don't accept that at all. Everything has to be examine very profoundly, make yourself sure that what you are demanding is really your sincere demand. Make sure of that. And if the answer is no, persist still. The method of Nature, is that it always says no at first and then gradually by the pressure of your demand, your sincerity, what is hidden is broken and what is unrealised is realised. So this last line is one of the most important arguments in the history of philosophy. And I have not found this kind of an argument formulated so far except in *The Life Divine*.

"But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings..." as I told you it is a purely philosophical argument which looks for meaning. If you take meaning as a criterion of philosophical thinking then this is that kind of statement which embodies that movement of argument. *"But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction."*

In the next paragraph Sri Aurobindo gives examples of this and the series of examples that Sri Aurobindo gives is prefaced by a most wonderful sentence, one of the most memorable sentences in *The Life Divine* where Sri Aurobindo says: *"For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony."*

We all admit that there are problems in the world and Sri Aurobindo says if there are problems there must be a meaning as to why there are problems. Again it is a philosophical argument. Any argument which looks for meaning is a quintessential philosophical argument. If there are problems — which nobody refuses, everybody admits the existence of problems — you ask why problems exist at all? Sri Aurobindo says, they exist because there is a search for harmony and a real possibility of harmony and inevitability of harmony. It is only for this reason that problems exist. That is why Sri Aurobindo does not ask anyone to run away from the problem. If problems exist, the problems are meant to be resolved. Because it is in the problems that the secret of harmony is contained. So, if there is a contradiction between the realised facts and the unrealised facts it is a problem; and we must treat it as a problem, not run away from it. Try to ask why there is this contradiction.

Sri Aurobindo answers this question by giving examples. *"They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity."* Again it is a very short sentence but which deserves half an hour to contemplate. *"They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity."* Read again. *"They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity."* First of all you perceive. Whenever there is a problem you perceive that things do not fit into each other. There is a problem if in the field of our perception or thinking or experience there are at least two elements. Whenever there is a problem you can be sure that there is at least two elements which are in the field. As long as I perceive only one object and don't compare it with any other there is no problem. What I see I see and that is the end of the matter. Whether what I see is a dream or not arises only because there is a dreamless perception and there is a dream perception, thus I can ask the question whether what I see now is in my waking consciousness, am I seeing it in my dream consciousness or really seeing it. It is only because very often, even in my dream, I feel I am seeing really. Therefore it can be asked, whether when I feel now that I am seeing really, is it really a fact that

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

I am seeing. It is only when there are two experiences which are to be compared that there is a problem. So first of all always see that every problem has in it at least two elements.

Now you see that these two elements do not fit with each other that is the presence of the problem. A problem arises only when there is a perception of two things not fitting with each other easily. Then there is a puzzle. Sri Aurobindo says: It is a perception of an unsolved discord. There are two things which are not fitting with each other. It is an unsolved discord. But that is not enough; by itself it does not create a problem. The perception of an unsolved discord should be accompanied with an instinct in you. Why do you feel unhappy when there is a discord? It could be quite possible for human beings to say: "Problems are problems. Don't worry. Discord will remain." But when do you feel unhappy about a problem? Only when you feel inwardly that there must be a possibility of an agreement. There is an instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. You feel inwardly that this problem is a painful problem and you are not satisfied. Otherwise you could say problems are problems, in the world there are so many problems, and you go ahead. It is what many people are doing. For them it is not a problem. Problem is a problem only when it hurts you and it hurts you because there is in your being a possibility or a perception that there is something which has to be found out. Students of mathematics when they have some problem to be resolved, once it is on their mind cannot even sleep because it goes on and on and they feel there must be something which they are missing. It is a constant search. It is because you feel there must be some element you have not touched.

Sri Aurobindo's definition of problems is: "*They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity.*" It is a perfect definition of problems. Then Sri Aurobindo says: "*To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man...*" All those who brush aside problems can do so because they are practical. The tendency is to say: "I am practical" don't bother me about problems. "I only look into this: is it possible or not. If it is not I throw it away." Or to an animal part. An animal part means that which wants to go to sleep as soon as possible, which does not want to exercise intelligence. If there is a discord you can forget about it only if you are practical or you are an animal man, a beastly man. "*But impossible for its fully awakened mind...*" If you are fully awakened you can never rest contented with any problem hanging over you, you constantly strive to resolve this problem. Something should be done. It is imperative psychologically for you to go on. This is why humanity has been constantly driving itself. If you look at the history of the world... There is one very nice sentence in one of the books of Economics: "All the world is at work." And if you ask the question why should people be at work? There is a driving force in mankind which is not satisfied with what it is now. It wants something still further, it wants to go on and on and on. It is impossible to rest until the problems are resolved. And even then, when the problems are resolved it will be the question of manifestation of happiness and further happiness and further happiness. That is why the whole world is moving onwards. And even its practical parts will not be allowed to be satisfied. Its practical parts only "*escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough utilitarian and unilluminated compromise.*"

You see here the psychology which works very often when you go to a manager with a problem or also to an apprentice teacher who wants to answer the question as soon as possible. He solves the problem but by some kind of a device, some kind of a compromise. You can either shut out the problem saying: "I don't want to hear problem. It is enough!" Very practical men when you go to them with a problem simply answer: "It is too much for me I don't want to hear the problem." Or you find some kind of a compromise: "You are happy? All right, now don't ask for more." This is how many people try to solve the problems. But it is not a solution. Either you shut out the problem or you try to make a compromise. It is only by these ways that you try to forget the discord. But if really you want to solve the problem you cannot be satisfied with that. Why? Because, "*essentially all Nature seeks a harmony. Life and Matter in their own sphere as much as Mind in the arrangement of its perceptions.*"

You know each one of the sentences is basically so difficult that we should never try to go fast. We should rest with every sentence. The desire to finish the chapter as soon as possible should be restrained. There is no hurry actually; we can spend five days in finishing this chapter. But let every line be understood as much as possible.

"...all Nature seeks a harmony." By Nature we mean first of all three terms: Matter, Life and Mind. In all Nature, whether it is Material Nature or Vital Nature or Mental Nature is a constant seeking for harmony. As far as mind is concerned it is very easy for us to see because we just have to look at our minds. The mind can never remain content when it perceives two contradictory ideas sitting in it at the same time. When two statements which are contradictory of each other are settled in your mind

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

you won't get sleep. It will constantly work until the contradiction is resolved. This is a psychological fact, a natural fact. It is why Sri Aurobindo says, "...all Nature seeks a harmony."

Even in perceptions: you go to an exhibition and see so many things and supposing somebody asks you what you saw in the exhibition? Immediately your mind will start arranging all your observations, all your impressions. If you simply say, "I saw this and I saw that" you will not feel satisfied — you will feel that I am just giving an idiotic description of what I have seen. If I really want to give a description of what I have seen I should organise my perceptions, put them in some kind of categories, that I perceived pictures of beauty, pictures of meaning, I saw pictures of puzzles. You will categorize them and put them in one basket, all of them harmonious with each other.

There are many ways of organizing. There is a school of psychology which is called *Gestalt* psychology. It is a psychological method which tells you how you observe things, how you act. If I want to go out now in my movements from here to there, a lot of organisation will take place. I will not go in that direction, I will go in this direction. There is already organisation. If I go out and my car is not in this direction I will not go in this direction. Even in ordinary movements my movements will be harmonious. My movements harmonious with the end which I have in view. To harmonise my movements with a purpose, with an end is automatic. We are able to see a film even when we know that each image in the film is divided by small intervals. But we are able to see it because our tendency is to harmonise. Because our perceptual faculty is such that one image is harmonised by our own faculty of perception with the next image. Because of this psychological fact we are able to see a film. If we were unable to do this exercise we should see only slides. Slides we see them as one divided from the other because the distance between one and the other is so great our perceptual faculty is not able to join them together. The natural tendency of the eye is to try as much as possible to bridge the gap, automatically whenever there is a gap. If you show one curve which is half here and another curve which is half on that side you will try to bring these two together. Automatically. This is called *gestalt*. *Gestalt* means that which constitutes a form, a harmonious form. This is true of all psychological operations basically. As I told you if there is a contradiction in your mind you will not rest until the contradiction is resolved. When five thoughts are given and they look separate from each other you try to combine them and see what are the differences between the five, what is the harmony between them.

So, all Nature is a movement towards harmony whether it is in Matter or in Life or in Mind. What we spoke of Mind, which is easier for us to observe, is also true of Matter. We now see that in Matter evidently as we go into the quantum a tremendous organisation. Small nucleus and something revolving round and round and round. What a tremendous organisation! And if you break this organisation as in the atomic bomb — immense energy comes out, as it were, in revolt. But again, even in that energy movement the same rotation is manifested. In every organic movement you will find the same kind of organisation, the same movement towards harmony. The tree — the whole law of the tree: the trunk and the roots and the branchings and the flowering and the fruition. There is a tremendous harmony in the whole movement and there is a rhythm. If you break it the whole organisation is lost. And you try somewhere else and again the same rhythm begins to manifest itself.

Now comes Sri Aurobindo's very important sentence: *"The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour."* The greater the discord presented to you the greater is the spur to arrive at a harmony. Whatever elements are offered it is worth you and if there is a great disorder you will find while to go about the whole task of putting everything in order. A slight disorder you can even ignore. You enter into a room and everything is at sixes and sevens your spur to put everything in order will be greater than if the thing were not in disorder. The greater the discord that you perceive, the greater is the impulse in you to put thing into order. And you will find that when natural disorder is presented to you there are so many elements in the discord that when you try to bring them out into order, the ultimate result would be something unimaginable. The kind of harmony, the kind of design that you will see will be tremendously different from what you have even conceived earlier.

This argument is very important. The greater the contradiction between Matter and Spirit, the greater the contradiction between the realised facts and the unrealised ideal, the greater the opposition between the two, the greater is the spur. Therefore greater is the certainty that there is a very great design which is being worked out. Some unimaginable perfection is being worked out. This is to answer to the question with which we started. Material intellect says that because there is a contradiction between the realised facts and the unrealised ideal therefore the unrealised ideal is invalid. Sri Aurobindo answers, that if there is a contradiction, and the contradiction is very sharp, then

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

instead of saying it is invalid there is a greater harmony which is in view and it invites you to work very hard to find it out. If you find that an invisible reality is presented to you which contradicts what is visible to you don't refuse to go forward, find out how to reconcile the visible and the invisible. Don't refuse as Bertrand Russell. As I told you he says: "We refuse to accept that there is any other way of knowing than the way of science and intellect." There could be many other ways.

This is only the elucidation of that sentence. If you look into the methods of Nature deliberately then you find that this opposition is the very method of Nature. Sri Aurobindo now gives examples.

V.

The theme of this paragraph is that when you see opposition between one thing and the other, there is a contradiction between the two, it is not to be inferred that one is valid and the other invalid. This is the basic point, if there are two contradictory things it does not follow that if one is valid another is invalid, which is the normal assumption of in the world. Sri Aurobindo gives a new argument that if there is an opposition between the actual and the unrealized, then the unrealized may be valid, even though it is contradictory of the actual. Sri Aurobindo gives the example of the opposition between matter and life. Supposing one of you were present in the world, on the earth, at the time when evolution had just started. Today we are here after millions of years of evolution, but supposing we were on the earth, at least one of us, were present. Supposing there were, as Sri Aurobindo says, a witness, but uninstructed. That is to say one who did not know what it was all about. He was not told. Just out of curiosity he was on earth, and looking around. And only matter existed, nothing else.

You examine the characteristics of matter. Matter is inert; matter is mechanical; matter is unconscious. Even if you argue that matter is still dynamic — this knowledge came to us in the Twentieth Century — that matter even though inert, is dynamic. It is revolving; every atom is a revolution around the nucleus. Even if you argue that matter is not inert, it is dynamic, there is still one great limitation of matter. The dynamism of matter does not grow, it moves in its own orbit, on and on and on and on. What is the difference between matter and a tree? Both are dynamic. The tree is dynamic, the atom is also dynamic. But an atom does not grow like a tree. There is something like an organism which has a different quality to it.

If somebody were to argue with you: Look, on this matter there will grow a beautiful tree, a beautiful flower will come out of it, fruits will grow. You would have argued, like the modern materialists, that the actual fact is just matter — this growth this development, flowering, fruition all this is unrealized, this is utopia. It will never happen because matter and life are opposed to each other — matter is real, what you talk of: life, growth, is a dream. And you vainly dream — it will never happen. It is completely impossible. But if we have Sri Aurobindo's argument with us we could argue that this opposition between matter and life is a proof that nature is striving to effect a great harmony between that matter and this life.

Listen to what Sri Aurobindo says: *"The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities..."*

Let us analyse every word of this sentence. Basically, it answers our question whether matter can give rise to life which seem to be opposites of each other. But see Sri Aurobindo's description of life and see the description of matter. Sri Aurobindo says that the accordance of life in matter — this to say that the tree grows in matter, it does not grow outside matter — is also a very important thing. Accordance of life *in* matter, that is to say the very nature of matter is changed with the entrance of life in it. The two are joined together. There is no life on earth which can exist without matter — on the earth at least. All that is organic has to have its grounding in matter, which seems to be completely opposite to life. And yet the whole earth is such that if anybody has to live it has to be in matter. This accordance of life in matter is one of the stories of opposites which nature has accomplished already.

Now the description of matter is also very important. What is matter? Even if you grant that matter is not inert — even if you argue that matter is full of dynamism — Sri Aurobindo says that the activity itself seems to be inertia... You know the law of inertia? The scientific law of inertia is not that something is not moving. If something moves but cannot stop by itself it is called inertia. If you move

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

once you are pushed once you go on moving on and on and on, and if you cannot stop yourself it is called inertia in physics. The definition of inertia is that you have no capacity to change the state of motion. When you are unable to change either the state of staticity or the state of motion it is called inertia. And that is the nature of matter. At one time it was thought that matter could move only if it was moved from outside. That was the law given by Newton. Newton did not know that matter already has motion within itself. This we have discovered only now in the Twentieth Century. When Newton, the great physicist, gave the laws, the first law was called the Law of Inertia. And he said that matter cannot move by itself. That is the meaning of inertia. He believed in God so he said: "God moved the first matter." And once it is in motion it moves on and on and on. And the fact that matter cannot stop by itself, it required external force to stop it or to change its direction was called the law of inertia. Matter has two kinds of inertia. First of all, it cannot move by itself, you require an outside agency to move it. And secondly, once it is in motion matter cannot stop by itself. You require an outside force. Either you do not move by yourself or once in motion you cannot stop your motion by yourself. This incapacity is called inertia.

So, Sri Aurobindo says that matter is such a thing that the very condition of its activity is inertia. Even if you do not accept Newton's idea that first motion is given by God, even if you maintain that matter is always in motion, then Sri Aurobindo says, that the very motion is of such a nature that it is always inert. By itself it cannot stop, by itself it cannot change its direction. Atomic energy constantly revolves on and on for million of years without stop — that is called the law of inertia.

It is in that matter whose very activity is a condition of inertia, that life, whose very nature is self-propelling force, self-directing force, is planted. The tree moves automatically towards the sunlight from within. It cannot change its direction. That is a specialty of all organic life. There is a self-propelling force to determine that direction. So Sri Aurobindo uses the word, the adjective is very important, he says the accordance of *active* life, this word active is very important. The accordance of active life, that is to say life whose very nature is activity, not inertia but activity. "*The accordance of active life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia...*" The opposition is between the activity of life and the inertia of matter. These two opposites Nature has already put before you. The contradiction is resolved. The argument: if one is true the other must be false is no more true, the argument is gone by the very fact that you see this. Sri Aurobindo says this is one of the contradictions, one of the problems that nature has already resolved with harmony. This is an example of the very first sentence: "*All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.*" How to bring inactivity and activity into harmony is a problem, that problem Nature has already resolved. Sri Aurobindo says: It has resolved considerably. Not yet fully, because Sri Aurobindo goes on in the next sentence to say: "If we are to look for a complete solution, a complete harmony then a greater result has still to come". The work which has been done so far is not yet complete. We are still in the incomplete scenario of a film. The film is still to unfold further.

What is that complete solution? His perfect solution would be "*The material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body*". Now you see how many elements are put forward. The present limitation of organic life is that although activity of Life is reconciled with inertia of Matter it is but temporarily. Everything that is organic in the world dies. Therefore the problem is not fully resolved yet. Can you permanently plant Life into Matter? That problem Nature has not yet solved. Every human being dies. There is a law of death as it were, as if it is a permanent law. Nature has not yet evolved such a body which can go on living on and on and on.

Of course there are many trees which live for thousand years or even more. But even they ultimately decay; even they become hollow after some time. Even after a thousand years. So the other question is: Is it possible to create a body which is organic, which is not only organic like this but which also has a further capacity of locomotion? The tree cannot move with its roots from here to another place, whereas you and I can move from one place to the other. So we are animal bodies which have a further capacity of locomotion. You can move from one locus to the other. From one locality to the other you can walk. This is a specialty of the animal body. Both are organic: plant is organic, animal also is organic. But the difference between the two is that plant cannot have locomotion, the animal has locomotion.

Sri Aurobindo says that first of all you should have a body which is capable not only of organism but also have the capacity of locomotion. Then it should be able to support Mind. This is a very important condition. Mind coming into the body and sustaining the body for a long time is a very big problem. If you examine the history of mankind, this is called anthropological study. Anthropology means study of man, basically ancient man — *logy* means study, *anthropo* means man. If you study man you find that the original man had greater capacities than you and I possess today. Even if you go to primitive people their physical strength is very great. There are many animals such as the

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

elephant and lion that have tremendous capacities compared to the human body. When Mind comes into the picture some of the physical capacities diminish. An ape can jump, you and I cannot jump so easily, we have to be trained, and even then it takes a long time to be a champion in jumping and that too for a short time of your life. You cannot be a champion all your life. The moment Mind comes into the body some of its capacities are diminished. You will find that sometimes when you think of a problem and your mind is exercised tremendously, it affects your health, physical health. In any case if people worry a lot, not only thinking, but if they worry a lot the body is affected. And very often the human mind has a tendency to worry, for many reasons. Mind is a worrying mind normally, as soon as it starts working it begins to worry. And worry has a great effect, an adverse effect, upon the health of the body.

Sri Aurobindo says that the complete victory would be that you should be first of all an animal body, a body which has locomotion, also a body which has a mind, which normally disables the body in many ways. A Mind supporting animal body. And that kind of body is to be immortal, in which Life remains planted all the time in the body, in the physical... If you can achieve this then you can say: Now Nature has created an instrument in which all the problems of contradictions are resolved. Till that time contradictions are not yet resolved. As long as the body dies, the accordance of Life in Matter is not complete — it is only a temporary accord. There is no secret yet by which Life and Matter can be completely reconciled. Sri Aurobindo says: Nature is still striving. Do not worry that it will not happen. First step is taken already; this is only a proof that something can be done. Don't say that this thing is impossible. The moment we know there is a bigger problem, we always put down our hands saying: impossible, this cannot be done.

Sri Aurobindo says, if there were a witness, but uninstructed, who were to watch the world at the very beginning, he would have questioned the appearance of even a small little bubble, a little germ in water. If you were told there will be some stir in the water and germs will move about. If you had to predict as a witness you would have said: "Oh it is impossible! How can there come by itself a bubble like this with germs constantly moving, self-propelled, impossible!" Even if you saw this you would say: "Oh alright, may be something happened". You might grant that this has happened so we can't now refuse it. But then if you were told that this little germ will have one day locomotion in a very big way: an elephant will come or a lion will come, you would say: "Oh it is impossible! How can a little thing ever grow to an elephant or a lion? Impossible!" And then if you were told that there would come about a human being who will think, who will observe, you would laugh it off. If you are told that he will be able to measure the world, not only think, he will be able to speculate, he will discuss the law of contradictions in a class one day. He will even write poetry, and a complex kind of poetry such as *Savitri*. He will philosophise, he will become a mystic, he will see the invisible, hear the inaudible, if you were to be told this you would have to simply laugh it off, not only that you would say: "Please stop this dream, it is impossible!" Today if we are told that really there will be a human being which is the superman, all people around say it is impossible. Even today, I read out to you, an acute mind such as Russell refuses to believe that they are higher ways of knowing. It is the same argument: the contrast between the realised fact and the unrealized ideal — the contradiction between the two shows that the unrealized ideal is invalid. This argument is now brought to its own ridiculous conclusion by rendering this fact before us. So the first condition is the "*accordance of active life with a material form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body*". That would be the complete solution of the problem.

There is another problem which Nature has already solved. This is what Sri Aurobindo now describes. The second problem of opposites that Nature has solved: "*The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or sub-conscious will is another problem of opposites in which it has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels;...*" Now you see the opposites: accordance of Mind in Life. We are all mental beings, so for us it is a very easy thing to understand. What is the opposition between Life and Mind? Mind is conscious, there is a conscious perception, conscious thought and a conscious will. These are the things that even a small child possesses. Even a child perceives and decides to react favorably or unfavorably. If a child is given the kind of food that he expects he will accept it, if he finds that it is only a trick and you are not giving the food that he wants, he decides to refuse you. Even at the most elementary level there is a conscious will and a conscious thought. But Life by its nature — the life that you find in plants, even the life that we possess in our body — is not self-conscious. At least not overtly self-conscious.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

There is a difference between sub-conscious or unconscious will and conscious will. You know that most of the activities of the human body which are organic occur without any consciousness and yet they appear to be conscious in some ways. It is a kind of a miracle. If you are wounded, as soon as there is a wound the white corpuscles rush up automatically. The body wants to protect the wound and the healing process start immediately. It is automatic. Most of the operations of the body are automatic, therefore life basically is unconscious. In that life movement there is a conscious mind. Planting of conscious mind in an unconscious life force is a problem of opposites. How to plant conscious mind in an unconscious life force: this is a big problem of human beings. We are constantly in a war between the unconscious life force and the conscious mind. Sometimes a good doctor may tell you to allow your body to heal itself, not interfere with your mind. When you are not well the doctor says: allow your body the real quietude don't allow your mind to work — your conscious mind — allow the life force to work itself out. Sometimes you are also injected with some kind of medicine which makes you sleep, so the mind is at rest and then unconscious mind, unconscious will force works itself out. Very often our main problem is unconscious life and conscious mind and the war between the two. Now this war is, to a great extent healed, resolved by Nature, so that even when we are conscious, our body goes on functioning quite well. In all normal healthy human beings there is a constant harmony between the unconscious life force and the conscious mind. This is one problem of opposites that Nature has already accomplished. How to put together unconscious life force and conscious mind working together — and both working harmoniously.

This is a marvel. Sri Aurobindo says that many marvels have been manifested when these two things happen together. A small child beginning to learn a language and uttering the first clear word is a matter of delight to everybody, not only to mothers. It is a great marvel. A language is a manifestation of consciousness, of some degree of consciousness, not the highest degree, but some degree of consciousness, even self-consciousness. This accordance of the capacity to speak a language — in the present day there are many great thinkers who are specializing in the study of languages. The whole study of linguistics, as it is called, has become very prominent because people are marveling: What is language? How do we understand a language? When a child identifies the word *ma* with the woman beside the child — connecting the word *ma* and the woman, is a kind of identification, the law of identity begins to operate — how does it happen? The child applies the law of identity: the word, the sound and that object. How do the two get correlated in the mind? And it becomes automatic so fast. After some months the child speaks so many sentences, it is a great marvel. This is only the smallest marvel, many more marvels take place as the child begins to grow. Even this is not the complete story.

Sri Aurobindo says, even greater complexities and greater achievements are still in the view. He says: *"for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge."* Each word is very important, you see the description of a capacity that is demanded. Let us look at each one of them. Our animal consciousness, even human consciousness even the highest consciousness of the mind, has one great limitation: it has to make an effort to seek knowledge. Of course there are certain things regarding which you don't need to seek, you open your eyes and what is presented to you is known immediately, you don't seek, you just need to open your eyes. But still opening eyes is an effort. Even there, there is a seeking. You are listening to music which is coming from far, it is automatic you don't need to seek to hear it. But you ask a deaf man if he can do it or not. It is very difficult for him to hear, so there is an effort to be made. In any case it is true that all human beings are required to make a great effort to understand ideas — you don't understand ideas automatically, you have to make a great effort to understand ideas — there is a seeking. As you go higher and higher, greater and greater effort is needed. The modern subjects of studies have become so complex you require fifty, sixty years to get elementary notions of things in that subject. Today the subjects are so vast that if you want to enter in any subjects you have to be ready to work for fifty to sixty years. So don't be tired at all because our seeking has become so difficult, so wide, so complex. When Mother had said, to understand *The Life Divine* you take first, to begin with ten years training, it is absolutely true. And ten years is quite a limited time actually, it is quite fast. As we are doing now in galloping. If you do as in Super School and study *The Life Divine*, it takes ten years. But therefore don't close the book; the gain is that you will live in knowledge.

And then, whatever knowledge you gain, with great effort you have to retain it. How easy it is to forget! You remember certain things but as you grow more and more you find how difficult it is to retain knowledge. So first of all you seek the knowledge, then you gain the knowledge and afterwards you have to make a great effort to retain it. In the mean time new knowledge has come in the picture, so you have to rush towards the new knowledge and again integrate that knowledge with the old

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

knowledge and there are many problems of integration. To unlearn what you have learnt earlier and to learn new things is another problem. These are the difficulties that our human consciousness faces today.

Sri Aurobindo says that these limitations Nature wants to break, break in such a way that you don't need to seek knowledge, you already possess knowledge automatically. As easily as when you open your eyes and you see things, automatically. Similarly, a time must come when you say: "I want to learn *The Life Divine*" you just open the book and all the knowledge is in your mind. Today, people will simply laugh and say this is impossible. But this is what Sri Aurobindo says we have to develop in this very body, in this animal consciousness; a knowledge which is not sought after, a consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light. Again this word Truth is a very important one. Our present seeking of knowledge is a process of what is called trial and error. You try, then error is committed, you learn from the error, try to eliminate it and gradually build up a knowledge which is without error. And that too with many questionings when you ask: Is it really verified, hundred times verified, are we absolutely sure. Even then there are many questions. Whereas here, Sri Aurobindo speaks of a capacity of knowledge in which truth is automatic, there will be no error at all possible. A state of consciousness in which error can't enter. Human mind simply refuses to accept such a possibility. Is it ever possible to have a state of consciousness in which you just say, "I want to know" and knowledge comes to you, on the spot.

Once Mother was asked, when she has gone to see the sports ground of the Ashram — and they were complaining "We want to make a swimming pool but we don't know where the water is", and suddenly someone felt, let us ask the Mother. So the question was asked "Where to find the water?" and immediately the Mother said "Here where I am standing." And they dug and there was water. There was no seeking of knowledge. It is one of the good examples where you can have physical proof. When the question was asked it was not as if she looked and sat down and said, now let me think — nothing of that kind — on the spot, she said "Here where I am standing there is water here."

For example, how has *The Life Divine* been written? It is not through thinking, sitting down on the armchair for hours and hours and saying what will the first sentence be and the second sentence, is there harmony or not, is it a contradiction or not. Sri Aurobindo said that he uses to sit before the typewriter and with the complete silence of the mind he used just to type directly. It was not seeking and finding and all that sort of thing at all, the whole book is a direct knowledge. And not only one book, he wrote seven books in this manner, simultaneously. It is a marvel of consciousness. Seven books written at the same time, simultaneously. And books such as *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Future Poetry*. Imagine each book, and these books written from such quietude. The sea of knowledge pouring itself down, not seeking knowledge, but knowledge itself pouring down as it were. And you can see how difficult it is to write two sentences. I don't think even if you try for fifty years to write two sentences of this kind you will be able to write like this.

This is our present human consciousness. But it is in this consciousness that Sri Aurobindo says, such a consciousness can be born. And that will be the real marvel, the highest marvel of consciousness. So he says: "...there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light...", and then a farther capacity which is even more amazing "...with the practical omnipotence" — it is a very great word, practical omnipotence. Wherever there is knowledge there is power. All knowledge is power. If you have a knowledge which does not seek, but which possesses already Truth and Light, the power is automatic. It will flow automatically. So, "with the practical omnipotence", practical means that all practical men will be satisfied. All those who say: we are practical, will be satisfied with this capacity. It is not only knowledge of theories and of the heavens but a practical knowledge of everything in the world, every detail. One of the things that struck all of us who used to go to the Mother was the practical omnipotence of the Mother. It is a fact seen in daily life. It was not as if you had to tell the Mother what Deepti had written to her. She may allow you to read out the letter of Deepti, but you can be sure that she knew already what was in Deepti's letter. So that sometimes when you said: "Mother I want to read out to you" and she had no time she said "Allright, you give this answer to her." Already the answer was given to her. That means she was allowing you to read a letter only as a kind of courtesy, just to give you a chance to speak to her, to tell her, to put a problem to her. But for her it was omnipotence, it was not only a question of answering a question but doing it immediately.

Once I had a tremendous pain over here (abdomen), excruciating pain. I was taken to Jipmer. I was 32 years old at that time. And the doctors could not at all find what was the reason of this pain. Ultimately they decided to make surgery over this portion of the body just to find out what is wrong. This is called diagnostic surgery. They knew nothing as to what was wrong, just to find out what was

wrong they said we should have surgery. Before they did it I sent word to the Mother. I had a big problem at that time, so I sent this proposal to the Mother and also the problem. The problem was: this was 12 of August 1971, and there was going to be a very big assembly of people in Delhi and I was asked to speak to that assembly on 15 of August. And I was here in the bed with an excruciating pain. There was a tremendous pressure, a telegram had already come that I must immediately go to Delhi to address this assembly, my name was printed on the programme. This pain had come so suddenly I had not answered immediately. So I sent a word to the Mother: "I have excruciating pain. Doctors want to do diagnostic surgery and I have to attend a program in Delhi. Tell me what answer I should give." Mother said: "If you have faith come out of the hospital at once — this was her answer to me — and prepare to go to Delhi." It was amazing. When I told the doctors that I wanted to go out of the hospital they said: "Look we will not allow you to go out. You will die at once." So I said: "I want to die but let me come out of the hospital." Mother had said: "You come out of the hospital", it was finished, over. I came out of the hospital. They took my signature over a document that "...on his own will he has decided to come out of the hospital when we have advised him not to go out." And then they said alright you may go out but don't fly, because if you fly you will die in the airplane. I went from the hospital straight to the Mother and she asked "where is the pain". So I said "Here Mother, it is an excruciating pain". She put her hand here (abdomen region) and it was like cotton, absolutely smooth, no pain at all. It was gone. The next day I flew to Delhi, I gave the lecture; I stayed for a few days and came back. This is a fact.

This is called practical omnipotence. This was a practical fact, there was a pain, you cannot think that there was no pain. It was excruciating pain and doctors were not able to see where the pain came from. But this incident is one of the important facts in my life. I am still standing before you. Doctors told me that if I flew I would die. And it did not happen, I just went there and I gave a very good lecture at that time and I came back after sometime. So here, this is one example of practical omnipotence.

"...with the practical omnipotence which should result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge." This word direct is very important. Our present way of knowing is indirect. Our basic knowledge comes from our senses. And as you know senses only give images you cannot really touch the object, actually what touches is only the skin. You will find that there is no direct contact with anything. It is through senses that we touch the object. Senses are intermediaries. We don't know things directly excepting our emotions for example which we know directly. Most of the knowledge which we have is through the senses. All senses are like glasses. All our knowledge is indirect. Sri Aurobindo calls it "separative indirect knowledge". It is first of all separated from the object and then you use an indirect method to get that separative knowledge to possess the object in some way or the other. So it is a separative indirect knowledge. That is our sense knowledge.

There is then separative direct knowledge. Separative direct knowledge is the knowledge of your thoughts. When you are thinking dispassionately, you can examine thoughts. You are separate from the thoughts but you don't use your senses to find out your thoughts, you know your thoughts directly.

Then you have separative direct intimate knowledge. Like your knowledge of emotions. There is a difference between knowledge of thoughts and knowledge of emotions. With regard to thoughts you can separate yourself from them, but you are intimately tied up with the emotions. Emotions are known by separative direct intimate knowledge.

And there is finally knowledge by identity. Every one knows himself by direct identity. Knowledge of oneself: I am. That knowledge is not only through intimate contact, you are yourself that. You are one with it. The knowledge of which Sri Aurobindo speaks is a direct knowledge by identity, perfected knowledge. That is why he uses the words perfected knowledge. It is a knowledge in which there is no error. You might call it even perfect perfection — that kind of knowledge. It is only from such knowledge that omnipotence and practical omnipotence can come about. This is the miracle that Sri Aurobindo speaks of. When Sri Aurobindo speaks of Divine life on the Earth which is in contradiction with the Material life at present, it is this vision that Sri Aurobindo puts forward.

Sri Aurobindo says therefore, in the conclusion of this whole argument. *"Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seems to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings."* Therefore Sri Aurobindo had spoken of four things earlier in the second paragraph. These four things Sri Aurobindo has spoken of, are the highest achievements possible which have been striven after. Sri Aurobindo says, that the striving for these things is a proposition which is rational and it is the only logical conclusion. If you examine, deliberately you find that this is the method of Nature. Of play with the opposites — first hiding and then recovering and

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

revealing, and revealing to the fullest, a plenary revelation, with full omnipotence — this possibility is a rational possibility. Therefore don't say it is impossible. Because of this argument, you can see the logicity of it, the rationality of it. Many people believe that all that Sri Aurobindo has said is to be accepted on faith (which is good), but Sri Aurobindo says here it is not only to be accepted on faith, it is rational. All that has been said by Sri Aurobindo is logical, is rational. This is a rational, logical argument put forward here. And he has given so many examples: here are the opposites, here there is accordance; here are opposites they have been accorded; here are the possibilities and these are the possibilities which can be inevitably realised.

Now I shall revise the four possibilities that Sri Aurobindo has spoken of. It is a revision of the second paragraph but it is good to revise it. It is a kind of revision of the first chapter.

Sri Aurobindo has said first of all that there is a preoccupation of man from the earliest times. Preoccupation means an aspiration. There is a difference between an occupation and a preoccupation. When you occupy yourself fully in any work it is occupation. When you go on thinking of something all the time and yet are not doing it or doing it partially, it is preoccupation. A mother is preoccupied with her child even if the child is not with her. It is a preoccupation. All her programmes are decided by her preoccupation with the child. The child is in the center. Whether she should go at this time or that time to her particular work or another work is decided by the preoccupation with the child. Whether you can leave the child at home or not, that is the first consideration before leaving the house. What is the preoccupation: my child should be safe, should be protected, should received nourishment when the child needs it — this is the aspiration of the mother. All preoccupations are results of aspiration. The first chapter is entitled *The Human Aspiration* and it begins with the statement of preoccupation. What is the preoccupation of man? It is that preoccupation which will give the key to the meaning. In philosophy what is important is the discovery of the meaning and the meaning can be detected from aspiration. That is why the first chapter of *The Life Divine* is called *The Human Aspiration* because all philosophy deals with meaning and if that meaning is to be expounded you must begin with aspiration because the meaning is involved with the aspiration. Therefore the very first chapter is logically devoted to human aspiration. Sri Aurobindo's is the best philosophical beginning of philosophical book.

Now this preoccupation of man manifests itself in so many activities which Sri Aurobindo describes in the first paragraph and I deliberately did not read them so that I can read them now. That preoccupation "*manifests itself in the divination of godhead*" — the world divination is very often mistaken by many people as if it is divinisation, it is not that. Divination, to divine is to guess. Divination means this preoccupation results in the conjecturing of man that there is something like Divine. People may not realise the Divine but there is at least the minimum thing, a suspicion; man suspects the presence of God. To divine is like those who divine water — they can find out where the water is. Divination is an intuitive feeling, an intuitive knowledge of the presence of a reality. So the first thing is that there is *a divination of Godhead*, second *impulse towards perfection*, third *search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss* and *the sense of a secret immortality*. The four manifestations of the preoccupation of man throughout the history of mankind. These are the four things which are expounded in the second paragraph by Sri Aurobindo in terms of thesis and antithesis of which we have spoken. Where today there is the exact opposite of those four things, it is exactly in those four opposite conditions that these four great ideals have to be realised. Let us now repeat those four things: "*To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness*". It is the first thing to be realised. Second: "*to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination*", is the second, "*to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering*", and then "*to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, finally, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation...*" These are the five great miracles that Sri Aurobindo puts forward. His argument is that these five miracles are actually aspired after by man. In spite of all the things that are contrary here, man has been seeking constantly after these things. These things seems to be absolutely impossible and now Sri Aurobindo argues and shows they are not impossible, they are perfectly rational, it only means a logical conclusion of a rule of the method of Nature. So if you know the method of Nature these consequences are only inevitable.

Philosophical writing has a special characteristics. Just as there is a form of poetry — rhythmical words, style, a vision of Truth — all these create the forms of poetry. Similarly there is something like a philosophical statement. If I say you write a philosophical statement on a certain subject, how does it differ from a personal essay for example? A personal essay is a form of writing. Then there is the critical essay; another form of essay. Now if I ask you to write a philosophical essay — what is the characteristic of a philosophical essay? You take for example the first paragraph of *The Life Divine*.

The first paragraph is a statement which consists of a philosophical argument, and I have said that there are many forms of philosophical arguments, and while discussing it I had said the first paragraph has two philosophical arguments. Now try to recollect.

If you remember I told you that there are two important words in this paragraph. One is *is* — there is one word which is simply *is* —, another word which is important is *seems*, and another word which is equivalent almost to seems is *promises*. So there are two words which are the key to the answer to my question. Whenever an argument deals with the nature of thought, (anything that is derived from the nature of thought, is called a philosophical argument — but it is a special type of philosophical argument), it is called either a logical argument or an epistemological argument. That is because logic is a part of epistemology. A logical argument or epistemological argument is the same thing, because it concerns the nature of thought. There is another argument: *seems*, *promises*, which is a historical argument. So there are already two forms of philosophical arguments. These can be logical argument, or can be historical argument.

I had then spoken of a third form of an argument, a dialectical argument. What is a dialectical argument? A dialectical argument is logical with a special characteristic. Here is a statement; “All planets move around the sun, therefore all that move around the sun are planets”. This is not a correct argument, it cannot be *vice versa*. It is also a logical argument but it is a logical argument which is a fallacy in conversion. There is a special name for it. It is a conversion but a fallacious conversion. When you do *vice versa* you get a fallacy in conversion. Dialectical argument has a special nature: dialectical argument is one in which you first state one set of facts from which another set of facts is derived, or you state another set of facts which is opposite to the first set of facts, leading up to a necessity to find a conclusion which gives you a synthesis. That is a dialectical argument.

Now illustrate this argument from the second paragraph. There is a set of facts namely the ideals of God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. Now this is set against another set of facts. This first set of facts is contradicted, is in opposition to another set of facts which are the results of ordinary experience. You have got two sets of facts. Now how are you going to arrive at a synthesis? This is the basic structure of the second paragraph. How are you going to harmonise these two?

Answer: “By discussing and try to find a solution and if you cannot find a solution you make a synthesis of both arguments.” Quite right!

Now tell me what is the solution which has been found by Sri Aurobindo? One solution says Sri Aurobindo is proposed by the material intellect, which assumes that these ideals are invalid. That is the solution. Material intellect trying to see these two opposite says that the opposite of this is invalid. That is a solution.

The argument that material intellect takes for granted is that our present state of consciousness is the highest possibility of consciousness. Therefore anything that proposes to go beyond those possibilities is impossible, therefore invalid. The solution is found by cutting out the second premise. It is not a real synthesis. But it is a kind of solution. This is valid, this is invalid. It is not a real synthesis. But in a process of argumentation you can say: now that it is the end of the argument. Unless you bring in another argument it is the end of the argument. Sri Aurobindo continues the argument and proposes a synthesis. What is Sri Aurobindo's argument? “*But if we take a deliberate view...*”, underline the word *deliberate*, so Sri Aurobindo starts an argument by proposing the use of a deliberate view. That is a very important word. I have given a special name for that argument also. When you use the words “deliberate view” — I had underlined that word, deliberate, and said that it is a special kind of argument, a new argument that Sri Aurobindo puts forward now. I had said that it is a quintessential metaphysical argument. And I had explained why it is a quintessential metaphysical argument. “If you take a deliberate view of the workings of Nature”. Only consider these words: “If you take a deliberate view”. I told you that philosophy is a quest of knowledge, of totality and then I had come to the word at which I had stopped, do you remember that word? *Meaning*. Philosophy is basically a search of meaning of facts; therefore any question that

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

raises the question of meaning is a quintessential philosophical argument. It is a fundamental philosophical argument. When you ask the question: What is the real meaning of it?

Sri Aurobindo says, "Take a deliberate view". A deliberate view means what? To take a deliberate view is to ask the question of its meaning. So if you ask the question what is the meaning of this opposition — the argument now turns upon meaning. According to the material intellect the very fact is that there is opposition, means one is right, the other is wrong. That is the material argument. So Sri Aurobindo says: No! You are not taking a deliberate view of things. Why opposition at all? Consider before you say that this is right and so therefore this is wrong, because you are not taking the quintessential metaphysical position. You should ask the question why there is opposition at all between the two. Sri Aurobindo says, if you examine this opposition between the realised facts and the unrealized ideals, you should ask the question why is there opposition between the actualized facts and the unrealized ideals. You take a meaningful position if you raise the question. Sri Aurobindo says your conclusion will then be: "... *that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.*" That is the real conclusion. If you ask what is the meaning of this opposition, if you examine this way then Sri Aurobindo say, you will find that this opposition is Nature's method. It is Nature's method of bringing them together, not a denial of the one or the other. The ultimate aim of this opposition is to arrive at a synthesis. That is the aim you find, if you examine deeply.

Question: Could you explain what means by "the seal of her completest sanction"?

Seal means an authority, something certified. Completest sanction means that this opposition has come about by the sanction of Nature. There is a method in Nature, Nature has deliberated produced opposition, with her own sanction. That is to say Nature is not blind, it seems to be blind, but Nature is very intelligent. If you examine the movement of Nature you find that this opposition is created by Nature deliberately.

Yesterday we were discussing a political question of India with a few friends and the question was raised: at present in India there is a discussion on autonomy of states, there is a big controversy in the country on the issue of autonomy of states. A resolution has been passed by the assembly in Jammu Kashmir demanding autonomy of the state. Nature has allowed this you might say because the resolution has been passed, so Nature has allowed it, but if you take a deliberate view you will ask the question what is the meaning of this? Why has Nature allowed this resolution to be passed? We can say that if you examine why Nature has deliberately raised this question, we may conclude that it is so people become aware of a larger issue and try to arrive to a new Constitution of India. Nature wants a new Constitution of India. In order to create that condition this resolution has come up. Therefore everybody is now alert and thinking about it. Whatever Nature does you should always try to hear the message. That is ultimately what Sri Aurobindo wants to say: a deliberate view of things means you try to see what is the message. Whatever happens there is in it a message, it does not mean that that message is necessarily what he says, there is an inner message of everything.

In fact one of the important things in Sri Aurobindo's yoga is to enable us to constantly try to understand the meaning of events. I am now sitting before you there is a meaning: why am I sitting before you? There is a meaning in it. The extent to which I understand it I will be able to move forward and be benefited by everything that is happening. So every event has a meaning and we have to understand the inner rhythm of its movement and try to find out what it means. Sri Aurobindo says if you examine this you will find that this opposition has behind it a profound method of Nature and there is in it a sanction of Nature.

Now, what is that sanction of Nature? What is the method of Nature? That Sri Aurobindo explains in the third paragraph. The whole third paragraph is an elucidation of the last two lines of the second paragraph. It is a continuation of that elucidation. So now let us revised all that we have said so far.

There are two arguments in the first paragraph. Both are philosophical arguments, but I have given specific names to these arguments. What are these two arguments? Logical or epistemological and historical arguments. The second paragraph consists of two arguments. Dialectical and quintessential philosophical argument which is the search for meaning.

You know this equipment gives you a great command over the realm of philosophy. To know there are different kinds of arguments is a great step. There are logical arguments, historical arguments, dialectical arguments, quintessential philosophical arguments, there are some more also to which we will come later on. This itself is a very good step with which you can move towards a command of philosophy. When you want to write a philosophical essay considering what you have before you, what you want to say, you will know how to frame the argument, which way you will expound your argument. This is a very good model; Sri Aurobindo has given.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

Let me present a deeper question. You will find in this exposition: argument, but argument is always to prove something. When you argue, you want to prove something, and this is called the basic proposition. In any philosophical writing you must say what you want to propose first of all. Philosophy is not only a statement of arguments. Philosophy is basically a statement of a proposition which has to be proved, either true or false, either probable or necessary. So apart from argument there must be a proposition. In any philosophical writing there must be a proposition.

The first paragraph gives you the basic proposition. What does it propose? What does Sri Aurobindo want to prove by arguments? I have already answered this question earlier but we can once again enter into it so that your mind becomes firm on this. If philosophy is a search for meaning, Sri Aurobindo makes a statement regarding meaning; he makes a proposition regarding meaning. In the first paragraph he says that human beings are in search of the meaning. When Sri Aurobindo says that there is a preoccupation of human thought, right from the beginning, this preoccupation is a search for meaning. If anybody asks the question: What is the proposition that Sri Aurobindo wants to propose? What is our answer? Sri Aurobindo says that right from the beginning humankind is in search of a meaning and it manifests itself in four things: "*It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead...*", secondly: *Truth*, thirdly: *Immortality*, fourth: *Bliss*. This is the proposal that Sri Aurobindo has made. Sri Aurobindo says that mankind has been searching for a meaning and that is the very title of the chapter. The title of the chapter is "*The Human Aspiration*". Human aspiration means mankind's search for meaning. I am aspiring for something, I am aspiring to find the meaning and that meaning manifest itself in the divination of Godhead, in the search after the Truth, search after Immortality, search after Bliss.

If anybody asks what is the proposition, philosophical argument comes afterwards, but first is the statement of what you want to say, what you wish to propose, what you want to prove. Mankind has been pursuing the ideals of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality and Bliss. It is the first statement that Sri Aurobindo wants to make. But in making the statement Sri Aurobindo uses argument at every step. That statement is complex because Sri Aurobindo makes a proposition and along with the proposition he argues at the same time. It is a very complex statement. When you analyze you find how many trends of thought are involved in the very first statement. It is a very fortunate to come across such a statement in one sentence which gives you complete exercise of philosophy to your mind.

The proposition of *The Life Divine*, of the whole book or of this chapter at least is that human beings are looking for meaning which manifests itself in the search for God, Truth, Light, Freedom, Immortality, Bliss. This is the proposition. And this proposition is made through two arguments, a logical argument and a historical argument. This is the first proposition.

The second proposition of Sri Aurobindo in the second paragraph is whether this aspiration is justified or not. Are human being misled or is it good for them to aspire for it? If it is good what is the reason for it? Is it rational or is it a madness? And should we continue or not? That is the second question. The second proposition of Sri Aurobindo is: is it justified to aspire for God, Light, Freedom, Immortality? And it is here that Sri Aurobindo gives us an argument in the form of a dialectical argument. Sri Aurobindo expounds this proposition by dialectical argument in which he set one set of facts contrasted with another set of facts and shows the contradiction between the two. Having set forth this contradiction the human mind now moves forward and says: therefore what follows? If one is contradicted by another then on what ground, what kind of consequences you will arrive at? It is a continuation of the dialectical argument. Here, there are two arguments which are put before us by Sri Aurobindo. The argument from the point of view of the material intellect and another argument which is a quintessential philosophical argument.

If you take the argument of the material intellect, the conclusion is — Sri Aurobindo says: "*to the material intellect which takes its present organization of consciousness to be the limit of its possibilities this contradiction is an argument against their validity.*" Their invalidity means, invalidity of what? Of the ideals! That is one solution. If there is a contradiction between this and that the conclusion is that this contradiction is resolved by saying the ideals are invalid. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The synthesis is a denial of these ideals.

But, Sri Aurobindo says that this argument is not conclusive. There is a deeper quintessential philosophical argument in the light of which, you may arrive at a different conclusion. This contradiction can be met by another synthesis. "*If we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings the direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.*" This is the conclusion we should arrive at. That this contradiction is actually an opposition which is intended by Nature, there is a sanction of Nature, there is a meaning in it.

What is the meaning? We come now to the next paragraph; the very meaning is said in the very first sentence. "*For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.*" That is the

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

meaning. When you find such opposition in the Nature's workings there is a meaning which tells you that there is to be a harmony. It is a problem; all problems of existence are problems of harmony. Therefore look for harmony, don't merely say that this is opposed to that therefore it is invalid. It is a kind of idle man's answer, one does not take the trouble. Sri Aurobindo says, be more intelligent, be more meaningful and enter into a meaningful enquiry, and if you enter into a meaningful enquiry you will find that there is secret harmony. Find that harmony.

"The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body."

In other words there is an opposition between Matter and Life and this opposition has been resolved by Nature by planting Life into Matter. Although Matter and Life are opposed to each other when Life is planting into Matter, Life is not denied, it is not rejected. Matter has absorbed the planting of Life into it. The two opposites have met together in a plant. Every plant is an example of a contradiction which has been resolved, of an opposition which has been resolved. Matter and Life have been opposite of each other and they have met together. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says, it is the first example of how Nature has harmonized or synthesized Matter and Life. Sri Aurobindo has explained how Matter and Life are opposed to each other. What is the character of Matter and what is the character of Life? Matter is inert and Life is active. The accordance of active Life with Matter which is inert, or even if there is activity in Matter the very nature of that activity is inert.

There is a second example of opposition that Sri Aurobindo gives. There is an opposition between Life and Mind. Why? Because Life in its present nature has something which is not present in the Mind or Mind has something which is not in the Life. Which is that characteristic? Just as we found in Matter there is inertia, in Life there is activity, dynamism, therefore they were opposite, here what is the opposition? There is opposition between consciousness and unconsciousness or sub-consciousness. Life is only unconscious or sub-conscious; in any case it is not self-conscious, whereas Mind is self-conscious. Not only conscious but also self-conscious. Therefore there is an opposition.

You find that wherever there is Mind there is Life. This is also a very important statement. In our present composition you cannot think if you are not breathing. Life manifests itself with breath. Breathing is the first sign of Life according to us at present. You try now; if you don't breathe, it will affect your thinking. The minimum condition of thinking is Life, is breathing. That is why those who want to make their mind very quiet do *pranayama*. They want to stop breathing, at least for a short time. It helps a great deal in quieting the mind. But normally, where there is no breathing, thinking does not occur. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says, there is an opposition between Life which is unconscious or sub-conscious and Mind which is conscious, but Nature has solved the problem of according them together in such a way that in that sub-conscious or in that unconscious movement of Life, conscious activity has been planted. The opposition between consciousness and the unconscious has been resolved by Nature by planting consciousness in a field where there is vibration but there is no consciousness or only sub-consciousness. This is the opposition and Nature has already resolved this problem. So these are two examples Sri Aurobindo gives. One is the example of accordance of active Life in Matter which is inert. That is the first opposition which nature has resolved — not fully — but has resolved physically and it still working to resolve better and better in the future. Then the second, is accordance of conscious Mind in a form of Life which is not self-conscious. That is another opposition which Nature has resolved. We now have two examples in which two oppositions have been resolved by Nature, at least in principal, if not fully.

There is now a third proposition. *"...for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge."* The third opposition is that the present Mind, is a Mind which labors to find out the Truth, which seeks to find out the Truth. This is the present condition of the Mind. In that consciousness, Nature wants to plant another kind of consciousness which does not seek the Truth but which is possessed of the Truth and Light automatically, possesses it within itself. So, if Nature has resolved already two oppositions it looks rational that this third will also be accomplished. Sri Aurobindo uses the word rational, isn't it? Logical and rational. This also gives an example of what is rational and what is logical.

The whole argument is described by Sri Aurobindo as logical and rational. Here now, is another form of argument — the earlier one's seen are the logical argument, historical argument, dialectical argument, quintessential metaphysical argument — now we have here, a whole paragraph which presents a logical and rational argument. What is the form of this argument? If you find in some cases a certain kind of a pattern, then you can also imagine, it will be rational to argue that here also

there is the same kind of pattern. It is like Sherlock Holmes who finds a pattern in the way in which somebody has stealthily entered into the room. He has discovered that pattern, he can then say this is the pattern which has been followed. In the next step also the one who has entered into the room stealthily has followed a similar pattern. This kind of argument is a rational argument. You cannot say it is irrational, it is a rational argument. If one pattern has been followed up to a certain point and if you say therefore in the next step also the same pattern has been followed, it will be a rational argument. But it is as yet not a conclusive argument. Because it may be argued that: Alright as far these two patterns are concerned, I agree. This also may be, it is rational it is not irrational to suppose, but there may equally be another pattern. It is not conclusive, it is not inevitable. All rational arguments are not conclusive. They are rational; they only propose that what you are saying is not irrational. That is all. All rational arguments are not necessarily true. Therefore having shown this is rational, in the next paragraph Sri Aurobindo takes us to another realm of argument.

We shall read this next paragraph and see what is the argument by which this rational argument is further supported so that our conclusion will be much more inevitable than so far.

The rational argument is based upon a set of facts. Sri Aurobindo now brings in another set of facts. All argumentation proceeds from a first proposition, followed by a set of facts, compared with another set of facts, deriving consequences out of them, then arriving at a final conclusion. If the argument is to proceed further still, you have to say that so far what you argued is rational, then you bring another set of facts and proceed further. This other set of facts concerns the phenomenon of evolution. You will see that the next paragraph starts with the fact of evolution. Sri Aurobindo says the set of facts on the basis of which we speak of evolution has to be examined. And if you examine them the conclusion that we are trying to arrive at will be further confirmed. Let us read now.

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

It is a very major argument in *The Life Divine*. First of all, Sri Aurobindo puts forward the phenomenon of evolution. This idea of evolution states that if you examine the history of the world, there is something like a common ancestry. If you go backwards, there is a pattern in the many forms we see in the world. You will find that Mind has evolved in Matter, that Life has evolved in Matter. Matter is the base; it is the ancestor of all of us. The first ancestor is Matter, then Life has evolved in it. What is the difference between this statement and the previous statement that we have already seen? In the previous paragraph no idea of evolution is as yet introduced. Sri Aurobindo now speaks of the word evolution. In other words, it is an attempt to explain the pattern of the development of Mind and Life starting from the ancestry of Matter. Theory of evolution is presented to the world today as an explanation. Sri Aurobindo says it is a word but it is not an explanation. Sri Aurobindo challenges that idea that evolution is an explanation.

If you read the theory of evolution today, those who maintain that there is evolution, are presenting the idea of evolution as a theory of explanation of what is happening in the world. And Sri Aurobindo says that it is not an explanation, it is a word which states the phenomenon, but does not explain it. If you want to explain it, you have to ask a question, you have to ask a philosophical question — and I have told you what is a quintessential philosophical question. It is a search for meaning. What is the meaning of the evolution of Mind in Matter and of Life in Matter? Is there a purpose in this? Is there a necessary force so that this necessarily follows? If something comes out of something or something is found in something the questions are: How could it come out of this or how does it find its place in it? What is the necessity of it? The word explanation — when you say, you explain it, what does it mean? You analyze, that is one aspect, but mere analysis is not explanation, it is only a statement of facts. When you analyze you state the facts in more detail.

You have to find the meaning; you have to find the necessity of it or at least the probability of it if not the necessity. How can Life be found in Matter? How can Life manifest itself in Matter? Why should it manifest at all? What is it in Matter which makes Life probable or necessary? Asking questions of this kind are questions relating to explanation. Merely stating that: Look Life has come in Matter, Mind has come in Matter, is only statement of facts. Where is the explanation? Why should it happen? What is the meaning in it? What is the necessity of it?

Sri Aurobindo says, nearly that Life has evolved in Matter or Mind has evolved in Matter, is merely a statement of facts, it is a statement of phenomenon, it does not explain. Explanation will come only if you say why it is so, what is the necessity of it, what is the probability of it. If a cloud gives rise to rain, then you ask the question: Explain the source of the rain. You can say that there is a cloud, there is a probability of rain coming out, and therefore it has come out. Why? Because rain is already contained in the cloud which is formed by pregnancy of water in it. Only then you have given an explanation of it.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

There is what it is called a causal explanation and what is called teleological explanation. There are two difficult words I am giving you now. A causal connection is to show a necessary connection or at least a probable connection between the first term and the next term which comes after. A causal connection is a connection either of a probability or of necessity between the antecedent and the consequent, between that which is before and that which is after. Causality is when you can show a relationship of probability or of necessity between that which is before and that which is after. For instance, sun rises on the horizon and there is light everywhere. So antecedent is the rising of the sun, and spreading of light on the earth is a consequence. If somebody asks the question: Why is there light on the earth now? One says: Because the sun has just arisen. This is the connection, a causal connection, whenever the sun rises, necessarily it follows that there must be light. Why? Because the sun contains light, so it manifests the light. If the sun was not the heap of light, then light would not spread on the earth. That is a causal explanation.

If you plant a seed of mango then the mango tree comes out of it. When you see the mango tree coming out if you ask the question: Why is it so? What is the explanation of this mango tree coming out? You answer by saying that there was a planting of the seed of mango therefore this comes out. It is a very easy thing, we do it every time. When the grandfather sows the mango seed and knows it will now take twelve years before the mango tree comes out and by that time he may not be alive at all and you ask him the question: Why are you sowing the seed? He will say it is not for myself; my grandchildren will eat these mango. It is the purpose for which he is now sowing; he is doing an activity. For what he is doing that activity? There is a purpose behind it. That is a teleological explanation. When you do an activity or something happens, and if you can find the purpose of it then you have given a teleological explanation.

When Sri Aurobindo says that we use the word evolution and we have not yet explained it, there are both the meanings applied in it, both causal and theological. If you read the books on evolution you will find that they state the fact of evolution but they don't say why evolution must come about at all in the way in which it is coming out. What is the necessity? First Matter comes, then Life comes and Mind comes. What is the sequence? Why this kind of sequence? And what is purpose for which it is happening. Why? Neither of the two questions is answered by the statement of evolution. There Sri Aurobindo says, that evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it.

Sri Aurobindo will now elucidate this statement, which we shall do tomorrow. He will now explain evolution.

VII.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is already a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness."

This is a very important sentence. We should read it twice, so the words begin to vibrate more concretely.

You remember the question Sri Aurobindo raised in the previous sentence — this is an answer. Sri Aurobindo says: "*evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it.*" I spoke yesterday of explanation and I said that it usually takes two forms. In terms of causality or in terms of teleology. It comes from the Greek word '*telios*' which means '*purpose*', ultimate goal, ultimate end, ultimate aim.

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher said that to explain any event you should look for four things. I am now going to expound the whole theory in some detail. If you make a chair, the chair is a product. It is an effect, produced out of many antecedent things, many things that happened before. So the chair is a product or an effect. For any effect, according to Aristotle, there should be four causes. By a combination of four causes an effect is produced.

There must be, first of all, the material of the chair. If the chair is wooden, without wood you could not make a chair. So wood is the cause but the *Material Cause* of the chair. Then there must be

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

an *Efficient Cause*. There must be a carpenter who makes efficient use of his labour, a skillful use of his labour. Unless he works on wood the chair would not be produced. So the labour that is used to make an effect is called *Efficient Cause*. There is a *Formal Cause*. Unless the carpenter has an idea of the kind of form the chair must have in his mind, he cannot shape the wood according to the chair's shape. Isn't it? It is called the formal cause. Every effect has a form and that form must be in the mind of the shaper, of the maker, that is called the formal cause. And then there is a *Final Cause*. The *Final Cause* is the purpose for which the chair is made. That is the *telos*. If you are making a chair there must be a purpose for which the chair is made. So that is the *Final Cause*. All the labour is taken for what purpose ultimately? To enable a person to sit comfortably. It is that which is the driving force of everything. If a carpenter brings wood, he gives a shape, he puts in his labour, for what: for the purpose of creating something which will be useful to individuals or to the users.

It is when you explain anything in terms of these four together, only then, he said, have you explained. If there is evolution you should ask these four questions. If anything emerges, Life in Matter or Mind in Life, you must ask these questions: what is the *Material Cause*, what is the *Efficient Cause*, then what is the *Formal Cause* and what is the *Final Cause*? Only when you give all the four answers can you say you have explained evolution?

If you can find out these four causes then you can say you have answered the question: what is evolution?

Now we go further is this particular line, Sri Aurobindo says:

"For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness."

There are many new words and we need to investigate them to understand the argument fully. First of all there is the word *Vedantic solution*, which is a new word — *Vedanta*. What is *Vedanta*? And what is the *Vedantic solution*?

You have already heard from me a few talks on *Veda*. I have not yet taken you to *Vedanta* as I had intended at one time — I will fulfill this one day because I want to take you from *Veda* to *Vedanta* but I am waiting for a good moment. You know, when you are making an excursion if you go on only on one line, the journey becomes tedious, but if you have reached a certain point and say — let us now move in another way and take a winding path and see the beautiful forest on the left side, a beautiful lake on the right side, and later you come back on the main line of your development and you go further. I am doing something of that kind, because then your total understanding will be much vaster and you will appreciate things much better.

So after talking to you about the *Veda* I stopped a little and I branched out into so many things, a survey of the whole world, a world of knowledge, defining philosophy, science and art and so many things. And then we started this chapter on *The Life Divine* and now I come upon a very important word: *Vedanta* from which I can return to the earlier line of development from *Veda* to *Vedanta*. Still I won't take you to *Vedanta* just now; I will only give you an indication. There will be a time when I will give you six talks on the *Vedanta* because it is a very important subject, not only in India but in the whole world. *Vedanta* is one of the very powerful currents of thought. This entire book, *The Life Divine* is also called *Vedanta*, and I will tell you why. This subject is so important that at present I will only give a little introduction but I will prepare you for a time when we go into the details of *Vedanta*.

In India, after the *Vedas* — I told you that there are four *Vedas*: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Atharva Veda* — after these four compositions were ready several developments took place in India where this knowledge which was contained in the *Veda* got veiled, obscured, even misunderstood. Over years and centuries the knowledge of the *Veda* got obscured. Then there came about a period when a number of investigators arose. Just as in the Vedic period there were hundreds of seekers, similarly in this period also, hundreds of years after the *Veda*, a large number of seekers again arose in India. And they tried to recover what was in the *Veda*. Not only did they recover, but in respect of the knowledge which was contained in the *Veda*, they brought that knowledge into a final form. The form in which they expressed their findings and the sharpness which came out as the result of it, was so great that those who read the compositions now, say it is a culmination of the *Veda*.

Culmination is a word which, in Sanskrit, is called *anta*. When you reach the end, it is called *anta*. (The word end is similar to the word *anta*, because there may be a connection between Sanskrit and English.)

As it was supposed to be the end, the culmination, of the *Veda* therefore, they called it *Veda anta*, and combined together: *Vedanta*. *Vedanta* is nothing but the end of the *Veda*. This *Vedanta* consists of a number of small compositions which are called *Upanishads*. There are about two

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

hundred of them, but at least twelve are regarded as the principal ones. In the course of our studies we shall study at least one or two of them, so that you have a first hand knowledge of it. They are short so it won't take too long.

They are called Upanishads because... the word Upanishad is constituted by three words: *upa*, *ni*, *sad*. *Sad* means to sit. (There is also a connection between the word sit and *sad*. Even the word *assied* in French, is very much connected with the word *sad*. Because if you see the spelling of the word *assied* you will see that at the end there is *d*, although silent in the pronunciation.) So *sad* is to sit, *ni* is close — to sit close — and *upa* means near. When you sit near and close, and you hear from the teacher, by sitting very near to him, it is called Upanishad. All that was told by the teacher to the students when he sat close and very near, whatever was composed in that content, is therefore called Upanishad. That which has been communicated to the student, when the student sat very close and near the teacher. The word also has a very inner meaning. It is when you sit very close and near the teacher that you can communicate best what is secret knowledge. Whenever you want to say something very deep, very subtle — you will see that you may read hundred books, but if you visit a teacher and sit with him, what he can give you in five or ten minutes of talking, will be incomparable. There are certain things that you cannot communicate by writing, by giving discourses from a high platform. You can explain certain things only when you almost whisper them into the ears of the pupil. When you sit very near and you explain. That is why in India a great value was given to this tradition or situation where students can sit near the teacher — they may sit even in silence. It is said that the teacher communicates best when he speaks least, when he hardly speaks and yet a few words uttered are sufficient.

Ekam eva addvitiyam is a Sanskrit word. The teacher simply tell you *ekam eva addvitiyam*: "One without the second". He does not explain what it is. Mother said: Super School, Last School, After School, No School. These are like Upanishadic words. You have to find out what they mean afterwards, you may contemplate on and on and on and try to understand. Similarly, this is one of the famous sentences of the Upanishads: "*Ekam eva addvitiyam*", "One without the second". There is only one reality. All this is One, there is no second reality. This is what it means. This is one of the greatest sentences of the Upanishads. There is only One without a second.

We shall come back to this sentence again, but now I introduce two other words. These two other words are *Nyaya* and *Sankhya*. These are two Sanskrit words, but in fact Vedanta is a Sanskrit word, Upanishad is a Sanskrit word, *Nyaya* is a Sanskrit word, *Sankhya* is a Sanskrit word; you cannot escape Sanskrit at all when you come to philosophy. So we should be ready to receive Sanskrit words and try to understand them.

Actually, there is a rule in Greek philosophy: anybody who wants to study Greek philosophy has to study Greek. If you want to study German philosophy you should learn German. Even today these rules apply in all outside universities. Similarly, there is no rule, but there ought to be a rule, if you want to study Indian thought, Indian philosophy, then you should learn Sanskrit, because for five thousand years this philosophy has been written in Sanskrit. As against only a thousand years, during which this philosophy has been written partly in Sanskrit and partly in so many different languages. Consider the value of five thousand years and one thousand years. So, if a philosophy has been written in Sanskrit for so many years and if you want to really go into the heart of it, Sanskrit is inevitable.

So one day we should study Sanskrit also, but in the mean time we can learn at least few words in Sanskrit. We have a big programme of ten years for which you are already booked. In ten years we will do quite a lot. We begin with these small words, *Nyaya*, *Sankhya*, Upanishad, Vedanta, but they are very important words.

Nyaya actually means justice. The word justice is very much connected with the word judgment. Justice is contained in judgment. When you make a judgment there must be justice in it. That is to say whatever you say must be true. Judgment by its very nature must be true. It is because sometime people misuse judgment that there may be a wrong judgment. This flower is red — is a judgment. This flower and this redness, both are attributed to each other. It is a judgment.

How to make a true judgment is a long study. We had said at one time that logic is a study of the conditions in which thought is true, thought is valid. Logic is a study of those judgments which express true thoughts, valid thoughts. We have spoken of the law of identity, the law of contradiction, the law of excluded middle, and law of sufficient reason.

Nyaya basically means justice. Justice concerns itself with judgment. Judgment is concerned with logic, and logic itself is a wide subject in which you study the conditions in which thought is valid and the conditions in which the judgment which contains thought is expressed. The study of this,

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

which is a very vast study, is called in India *Nyaya*. It is a very big school of thought. There is a long, long history of this tradition, of *Nyaya*.

Just as *Nyaya* is one of the systems of Indian philosophy; similarly there are five other systems. Apart from *Nyaya*, there are five other systems in the same category. And one of the other five is called *Sankhya*. And the third among these three is Vedanta. Now at least you know three schools of Indian philosophy which are all derived from the Veda. *Nyaya*, *Sankhya* and *Vedanta*. There are three others, but I will not burden you with their names because all these names become difficult when you don't know Sanskrit. At present I will deal only with these three names, because they are connected with the sentence we have to understand.

Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the Vedantic solution. This Vedantic solution is best understood when you understand something of *Nyaya* and something of *Sankhya*.

Both these theories of *Nyaya* and *Sankhya* pertain to the idea of the Cause. You remember, we are concerning ourselves with the question of explanation and Cause is a concept which is directly connected with explanation. You remember Sri Aurobindo says '*evolution is merely a word, it only state the phenomenon without explaining it.*' So we are trying to understand the word explain. Therefore we went into the question of causal explanation and teleological explanation. And today, we went into a greater depth by referring to Aristotle who spoke of Material cause, Formal cause, Efficient cause and the Final cause. *Nyaya* speaks of the same subject, *Sankhya* speaks also of the same subject and Vedanta also speaks of the same subject. Unless we have a comprehensive idea, this sentence will not be properly understood. That is the reason why I am taking you on an excursion into Indian philosophy.

The question is: when anything is produced how do you explain why it is produced, how it is produced? According to *Sankhya* the effect is produced from the cause because effect was already present in the cause. It is a very simple statement. Nothing can be produced out of nothing. This is the negative way of stating it. If something is produced, it can't have been produced out of nothing. If Life is produced out of Matter then Life must be present in Matter. The effect must be present in the cause. This is the theory of *Sankhya*. If anybody asks a question: what is the cause, why has it come about, what is the effect? Then you must give such an answer, if it is to be satisfying, it will show that the effect was present in the cause. Why is it that you cannot produce oil out of stone but you can produce oil out of groundnut, out of the peanuts? Why, because oil is present in the peanut, if it was not there it could not have come out. It must be present, effect must be present in the cause. So if Life comes out of Matter then Life must be present in Matter. If it was not there how could you have brought it out? If Mind has come out of Life, Mind must be present in Life otherwise how could it come out? This is the theory of *Sankhya*.

There is an opposite theory of *Nyaya* which says that the effect is not present in the cause. It is just the opposite of the *Sankhya* theory. If it was present already, it would be manifested. It would be there already. If it is already there it must be visible. If the threads of cotton are a cause of the cloth then why don't we wear only the threads, because the cloth is already present. If *Sankhya* theory was right, then we would all be wearing threads not clothes because the cloth would be already present. This is the argument of *Nyaya*.

There are Sanskrit words used for these two theories. The theory of *Sankhya* is called *satkaryavada*. In Sanskrit *vada* means theory, *karya* means effect and *sat* means existence. *Satkaryavada* means a theory according to which effect exists in the cause. Therefore the theory of *Sankhya* is called the theory of *satkaryavada*.

The *Nyaya* theory is called *asatkaryavada*. According to which the effect does not exist in the cause. Vedantic theory examines both these theories and prefers *satkaryavada*. After examining the two, it shows its agreement with *Sankhya*. But it also goes one step further. It says effect is not only in the cause but effect is basically, essentially, identical with the cause, and the difference between cause and effect is only in the form. This is the Vedantic theory.

We were asking the question: What is the explanation of Evolution? If Life evolve out of Matter and if Mind evolve out of Life and if you ask the question of explanation, not only stating but explaining: why should Life evolve out of Matter and why should Mind evolve out of Life? Then Sri Aurobindo makes two statements. This explanation can be there only in terms of the Vedanta which says two things, namely that not only is the effect in the cause but also that effect itself *IS* the cause the difference being only of a form.

We read now the sentence of Sri Aurobindo:

"For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness."

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

You can see how lucid and straightforward this statement is.

We shall now repeat from the beginning of the paragraph:

"We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness."

That is to say basically all this here is consciousness, there is nothing in the world excepting One: *Eka eva advitiyam*. There is only One. Reality is only One and that reality is Consciousness. And this Consciousness when it is veiled we call Life. This Life when it is veiled we call Matter. It is for this reason that when the veil is taken out, what was there is manifested. When you say that Matter gives rise to Life it means that when the veil of Matter is removed, it manifests itself as Life and when the veil of Life is removed, it manifest itself as Consciousness.

But now, we can ask this question: May be our Mind which is Consciousness is also a veil? If you remove that veil then there will be manifestation of — if Consciousness is the reality — it will be full Consciousness. Our present Mind is a veiled Consciousness, partly veiled, not fully conscious. We need to sleep, we need to go to unconsciousness from time to time, we forget things, we acquire knowledge with a great labour. Therefore, although we are conscious, we don't have that Consciousness. It is still veiled. Therefore it can be argued that out of the Mind a Supermind can be evolved. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo says: *"And then there seems to be little objection to a further step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind."* Therefore, we can predict, that out of Mind will evolve highest states of Consciousness which are beyond Mind. This is the full argument.

We have now, in a brief compass, the statement of the theory of evolution, which simply says, Life evolves out of matter and Mind evolves out of life. Then there is a question of explanation of that fact. And Sri Aurobindo says, that explanation can come about only if we admit that Life is in Matter and that Mind is in Life, and go further, that Life is itself a veiled Consciousness. And as Life is veiled Matter; therefore Matter is a doubly veiled consciousness, you might say. Matter is nothing but what we ourselves become in our sleep. When we go to sleep, then we become almost like Matter — except that Matter does not breathe and we breathe at least during our sleep, but as far Consciousness is concerned we are like a log, therefore we say "I slept like a log", when all Consciousness is withdrawn completely. It is doubly veiled — you don't even remember that you are breathing. And then Sri Aurobindo says, if this is so, then Mind itself may be a veil, a veil of higher level of consciousness. Therefore we can predict that out of Mind will evolve higher levels of consciousness. If this is so, we can now ask, why is it that man is constantly seeking for God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. The answer is that this Mind is a veiled Consciousness and there is an effort to break that veil. Mind is an obstruction and there is inwardly a big Consciousness working behind and that big consciousness wants to break this veil.

It is for this reason that we are aspiring. Aspiration is nothing but an urge to break the veil and to uncover what is inside. Therefore it comes out whenever there is the thinning down of our veil. Whenever! The urge to manifest what is inside moves out, manifests, particularly when you are in a great difficulty, when you don't find any means of solution this urge manifests very powerfully. You want to break down the obstruction.

Sri Aurobindo says: *"In that case the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind and this impulse appears to be as natural true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life."*

According to the theory of evolution everything in the world is striving. This is the discovery of the theory of evolution: everything in the world is striving. The theory of evolution is not entirely new, in the Veda the theory of evolution is underlined, in the Upanishads the theory of evolution is underlined, in the *Sankhya*, in the Vedanta, the theory of evolution is underlined. In the West also, the theory of evolution was known and Anaximander, before Socrates, spoke of evolution. But it is only in recent times in the Nineteenth Century, Darwin worked very heavily, studiously, in detail and he put forward the theory that the whole world is a gradual movement of evolutionary force, there is a striving in everything — he has even given the name *struggle for existence* — everything in the world is struggling.

Take for example a small little worm, with very few senses excepting touch, it moves and crawls and only when touching an obstruction it finds there is something here and turns away.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

According to the theory of evolution the worm feels as it were an urge to develop a capacity by which it can add to the sense of touch. There is a feeling that: "why should I be able to find out there is an obstruction only when I come near it and touch it? Is it not possible to have communication from the obstruction from far, even if I do not touch it as yet?" This is an urge as it were. Not that the worm knows this question and puts this question, it is a blind feeling, an urge, and then gradually it goes on making an effort, tremendous effort until by sharpening, sharpening the organs, the Eye is born. What we call eyes. If you look at the evolutionary movement, eye is not the first to be found. Among many many creatures, worms and insects and so on, there is no eye. Gradually a remarkable thing such as an eye is produced; it is not an ordinary thing. If you examine how an eye is formed, it is a miracle you cannot ordinarily explain.

If you go to any medical man, for instance there is Alexis Carel who wrote a book, *Man the Unknown*, a very interesting book. The man who is not known. Although we think we know man very well because we also are human beings, he points out how much we are ignorant of ourselves, and one of the things he remarks is, you do not know what the eye is. What a miracle the eye is, how the eye is formed. Out of the physical sense, physicality, the lens is formed — imagine —, that it is purely material, pure matter, the coarse matter is rubbed to such an extent the lens is produced and connected with the retina. Now connection of the retina and the lens and the capacity of the lens to capture light and images and the comprehension of the image, all is a miracle. Unless there is a consciousness behind you cannot imagine this birth of an eye. Similarly, of all the senses, actually every sense is a miracle.

This struggle is a struggle for what? It is the striving. According to Darwin the struggle is to survive. You may agree or not agree with this theory as a whole but it is a fact that there is struggle, of that there is no question. And one of the aspects of the struggle is certainly a struggle to survive. It is as if the whole world is a kind of obstruction. How often children feel they are not free? Parents are constantly saying, do this, don't do that, the whole world comes as a kind of opposition. Every child strives to oppose it, so that the control goes away and one feels free. It is also a striving, striving to be free of control, from obstructions. And you want to be free because you want to be what you are. There is a struggle, struggle to survive, to be. So that you remain what you are or you become more and more. This is the discovery of Darwin.

But he does not explain why. Why should there be this striving? Who is striving? Darwin that question does not answer. Simply there is a striving. That is why Sri Aurobindo, who accepts the theory of evolution, goes into the depth of the whole process of evolution and then discovers that behind all the striving there is consciousness. And this Consciousness which has become veiled is sought to be broken. The consciousness which is veiled is constantly to be striven against, so that the veils can break and the full consciousness becomes manifest. But there are stages, it is not as it were in one go. The consciousness which is in us is so deep, so deep. Sri Aurobindo says it is not one inch deep. If it were one inch deep you could cross the one inch very easily. The Consciousness, even in the human being is very very deeply involved, veiled. It is a huge veil behind which our consciousness is resting in sleep. We need to make a tremendous effort to rend the veil and the bring it out.

Now the argument begins to be very easy and simple.

VIII.

Has anybody written down the questions that I gave yesterday? Yes! Could you read them out? What is the theory of evolution today? Why does Sri Aurobindo say that the theory of evolution is only a statement of a phenomenon and not an explanation?

The theory of evolution only states what evolves but does not tell us why it evolves? How it evolves? Therefore it is only a statement of the phenomenon and not an explanation.

What is an explanation? This question has not been asked but let me ask it now. When can we say we have explained? Only when we speak of the meaning, the necessity or the probability of a phenomenon. Only then we can say that it is explained.

How does this unconquerable impulse towards God, Light, Freedom and Immortality fit into the chain by which we can suppose the Supermind will manifest?

Aspiration. This aspiration is a sign that mind is still struggling to manifest something further. So, it is a part of the chain. It is that which causes us to evolve.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

“As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever ascending series in the power of its will to be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties.”

“As there, so here...” There is a form of argument which is manifest towards the end of the previous paragraph and which is very much present in this paragraph. I shall give it a name so that you can recognize that form of argument. It is called an analogical argument.

This is also one of the forms of philosophical argument.

We have already seen the: epistemological argument, historical argument, dialectical argument and quintessential philosophical argument and now we have here an analogical argument.

What is an analogical argument? Let us first see what is the meaning of the word analogy. Analogy is comparison between two sets of phenomena. For every analogical argument there should be two sets of phenomena — one set of phenomena compared with another set of phenomena. You then analyse this set as also the other set of phenomena. In literature you often find analogy.

A beautiful face is compared with the moon. Very often you will find such a comparison. Moon is one set of phenomena; a beautiful face is another set of phenomena. Now it is sometimes argued that the beauty of the moon is enhanced by the spot that we see in the moon. We see the spot in the moon, no? If you analyse the moon, one of the prominent features of the moon is that we see a spot. And poets feel that this spot enhances the beauty of the moon. If you now have a face and you evaluate the beauty of that face, then you say: as there so here In any argument where there is “as there so here” you can see that this is an analogical argument. “As there the beauty of the moon is enhanced by the spot, the mole on the lip of the face enhances the beauty of the face. There it is the spot, here it is a mole on the lip of the beautiful face. So you say as there it is a spot that enhances the beauty of the moon, *so here* it is the mole on the lip of the face that enhances the beauty of the face. The analogy now is perfect. Most good writers perceive their perceptions; compare one with the other, and the comparison seems to be so great that long poems can be written only in comparing the two sets of phenomena.

It is argued that earth is a planet, it is inhabited by people. Mars also is a planet. Can we say that as here so there, if people inhabit this planet there must be inhabitants on Mars. Simply because this is a planet, that also is a planet, you compare. This planet is inhabited by people, therefore, we may argue that Mars must also have been inhabited by people. So when we go to Mars we expect to meet people on Mars. This is an argument which is very often made.

Now let us argue. In order that your argument attains maturity, merely one feature is not enough. When you compare one with the other, you should not rely on only one feature comparable to another feature elsewhere. You should find many features. The greater the number of features in which there is identity or similarity, the greater is the probability of your argument's validity. On the earth, we say, although it is a planet, it is a special kind of planet. Is Mars also that kind of planet? That is the question. What is the specialty of this planet Earth? We have, for example, water on this planet. And water is very conducive to the development of organic life. Without organic life human bodies cannot exist. We are all organisms. So we have to show, if your argument is to be valid, that just as Earth is a planet, Mars is a planet. Just as Earth has water, can we say Mars also has water? If we find that Mars does not have water, then the third characteristic, namely inhabitation by people, will not apply. Merely one or two features agreeing are not sufficient for a proof. You should have many features and then you can say: as there so here.

In this paragraph, such as argument is presented to us. Just as in the development of Life in Matter and of Mind in Life — this is one chain — similarly, Supermind in Mind is another chain. The comparison is between these two sets of phenomena. Development of life in matter and mind in life is one set of phenomena. Our argument is that just as Life has evolved in Matter and Mind in Life, similarly Supermind will manifest in Mind. This is the argument.

Sri Aurobindo wants to show how this argument is a strong argument. We have to show the characteristics of this set of events and characteristics in the other set of events. This is the exercise I shall do with you. You write down on one side of your paper: “Evolution of Life in matter and evolution of Mind in Life” this is one line of argument, one chain of events. Now on the other side you write down: “Evolution of Supermind in Mind” Now you read and let us write down *“As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever ascending series in the power of its will to be...”* This is a long sentence and a difficult sentence but we shall divide it into two or three parts so that it becomes easier to understand. “As there so here” that is to say *as there* this side of your paper, *so here* on the other side. What exists commonly? In both cases, *“...the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever ascending series in the power of its will to be...”* The difficult words are “different vessels”.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

The word *vessel* means receptacle. A glass is a vessel, a pot is a vessel, a utensil is a vessel, and various kinds of forms are all vessels. In that sense we may say — an ocean is a vessel, a pebble is a vessel, a mountain is a vessel, a diamond is a vessel, a tree is a vessel, a worm is a vessel, a fish is a vessel, mammals of various kind are vessels, human beings are also vessels. We are all vessels.

The word *vessel* refers to all kinds of forms. Sri Aurobindo says that in all these forms, whether you look in this series or the other series — in both cases examine the vessels of different forms — you will find that all these forms can be arranged in an ascending series.

Matter, Life and Mind is one series. On the other side is a series of Mind to Supermind. These are the two columns. All these forms can be arranged in such a way that you see an ascending series. That is to say, as we move higher and higher, you find more complex forms, greater and greater consciousness manifesting greater and greater external impulses to move forward.

If you go to purely material forms like a mountain, or a stone, or an ocean, you don't find a very evident impulse to move forward. Everything seems to be dull, inert, and mechanical. But even there, examine more and more deeply. I don't know if you have seen crystals? Crystals are formed with such beautiful forms, such transparent forms. If you have to make a comparison between a simple stone and a crystal, and I ask you the question: Is the stone more manifest or is the crystal more manifest? Your answer will be: the crystal is more manifest. It has a purity of form, a beauty of form; the formation has its own harmony. An ordinary piece of clod or a piece of earth does not have this kind of harmony. Therefore, you can say that if you are given so many materials to put in an ascending series, you will put the crystal higher than the stone.

Sri Aurobindo says, just see Matter, Life and Mind and you will see so many forms, you will be able to arrange them in such a way that the one higher has in it a greater will-to-be. What is "will-to-be"? You know, if you have twenty students in a class, and you want to arrange them in an ascending series. How will you arrange them in an ascending series? You only have to ask the question: Who has the highest will-to-be? Those who do would be on the top. Then lesser and lesser, those who want to be quite nice. Finally you come to: "Oh! I don't want bother, who wants to make an effort, it is very difficult, I give up." They will be the lowest rank of will-to-be.

You know, I was very pleased when I interviewed you before I left last month. What I found was, each one of you had a will-to-be, and I examined each one from this point of view. You wanted to move forward. And that was a very pleasant experience. I said to Deepti: "All passed". You all had reached a point where you had will-to-be. Somebody wanted to be a musician, and I was extremely pleased. Already clear in his mind. Somebody else wanted to be a good artist and specialise in art. Some of you want to read *The Life Divine*. Now at this young age to be able to feel that I must read this great book requires a great will-to-be.

If I am asked to examine the students of India and put them in an ascending series, I think you will come on a very high level of will-to-be in such an ascending series.

Wherever you find an impulse of will-to-be, which manifests strongly it is the higher of the ascending series. Sri Aurobindo used a very nice word in the very second paragraph: "*To know, possess and be the divine being...*" These words are very important. To the extent to which we want to know, to possess, to be, these are three stages. First you want to know, then you want to possess and then you want to be. Very often people want to know small things, little things: What happened in my house, what happened to my friend? But if you want to know what happens in the universe, it is a tremendous subject — to know the Universe.

One day we should have some special classes in astronomy, because we have to know the whole vast universe and then you must ask: "How do we possess the Universe? It is possible to possess the Universe?" The moment you know you want to possess. As soon as you bring something in the presence of the child and the child sees it he wants to catch it, to possess it. So the secret of possession is knowledge. First you know and then you want to possess and then you want to be. As you move forward, you go higher and higher. There is a will-to-be. What distinguishes all distinguished people in the world? If you study the biographies of the greatest people in the world, they all want to be. They want to embody. One of the students wrote to me: "I want to have a great noble Character" You know this sentence pleased my heart so deeply. It is a tremendous proposition. The more you have this kind of will, the more is the potential that you possess. You want to be and you will be.

Only yesterday General was telling me of his brother-in-law who was one of the greatest soldiers that India produced. One day we will ask him the story. But he told me that when he was a young boy he used to say two things. Either, he said, I will get the Paramvir Chakra, the highest honor of the Army of India or I will be Commander-in-Chief. This was his will from his childhood. He gave his body in battle. His body was torn to pieces, he gave his life, but he received the highest honor. So he

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

did rise to that position in India. If anybody writes the history of contemporary India, his name will shine out very brightly. Because he had a will-to-be.

Sri Aurobindo says, that if you examine the whole of nature, there is an ascending series. And the higher you go, the greater is the impulse, the greater is the will-to-be. The greater the impulse to know, the greater the impulse to possess, and the greater the will-to-be. When you say will-to-be, it is the will to know, the will to possess and the culmination of which is the will-to-be.

Sri Aurobindo says, in Matter, Life and Mind, you put all the vessels in an ascending series and you will find that as you rise higher and higher there is a greater and greater will-to-be. Among human beings you see, there is series. You can divide human beings on the basis of will-to-be. As there is in Nature an ascending series of will-to-be, so here also from Mind to Supermind there is an ascending series of will-to-be. This is all is said here.

"As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever ascending series in the power of its will-to-be..." Therefore the analogy seems to be very correct. *"As there, so here"* Now, further *"As there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties."* As in the first column of the ascending series, new faculties have grown — I told you yesterday how the eye develops — there must have been a tremendous urge in the form of the worm. Gradually there was a push, as a result of which this marvel of the eye developed. A new faculty developed in a worm in which there was no eye at all in the beginning.

At one time one of the students here had asked me how to develop the will-power. And I was very pleased with that question. How to develop will-power? It showed that there was first a will-to-be. There was a question how to develop the will-power. And my answer was, you just will it. Continue to will. When you continue to will the necessary organ will develop, the necessary faculty will develop. It is said that our brain is undeveloped basically. Not even one-hundredth part of the brain, has been developed so far, even in the highest genius. Once Mother said that whenever understanding increases, a convolution takes place in the brain. This is a physical phenomenon. You understand psychologically, but there is a physical result out of it. The more you understand, the more will there be convolutions in the brain. And there are so many cells in the brain, if all of them are activated, you cannot imagine what the power will be. More than sunlight!

Mother had also said in one of her prior conversations, "Examine my skull. You will find mountains and valleys." Physiologically, there is a whole science in India of telling the character of a person by reading his face, seeing the outer convolutions of his face, of his head, of his eyes, of his eyebrows, the sharpness of his look and so on. You can just look at the face and say whether this person is sincere or insincere. You can immediately say that this is a sincere face. When I see her there is so much of sincerity manifesting in her face. I can immediately say that: Oh! Here is sincerity. This is a characteristic I find so common here among all of you. The very faces can indicate their inner vibrations. Whether we know it or not, our outer physical translates more and more what we are inwardly.

Sri Aurobindo says that just as there is an inner impulse to grow there that is manifested in the development of organs and faculties; even so here between Mind and Supermind as we move forward, the more the impulse to will-to-be, the greater are the faculties developed.

What is a mark of the development of a faculty? When can you say that a faculty is developed? A faculty is supposed to be developed when the activity of that faculty becomes automatic. It's a mark. When that faculty is not developed you have to make a big effort. Supposing you want to develop the faculty of memory. When it is not developed, you have to remind yourself again and again and again and yet again.

Mother had once told me that children need to be told repeatedly. Adults do not understand this. Adults think that I have told this child once, so it is understood. But no! Children need to be told again and again. And don't be tired. Tell again and again. Only when the faculty develops it becomes automatic. Some people even have a photographic memory. They just read a page of this book and they remember exactly where that particular word is located, in what form it is written, at the bottom of the page or the front of the page or whatever. That is a real developed faculty.

So, you can see amongst human beings there is an ascending series of will-to-be and also an ascending series of acquired capacities. When faculties develop, when they function automatically, there is no effort in them. To arrive at an effortless result of its operation is the mark of a developed faculty.

Somebody can ride a horse without any difficulty. You just mount on the horse and the horse begins to gallop at the first stroke. If you have a great control — it is a faculty. By repeated exercise you can attain to this faculty. Some people can drive a car very smoothly. Their reflexes are so developed. Some people don't have these reflexes developed, they cannot drive. Similarly, at higher

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

and higher levels when somebody has told you read this book within ten days, if your faculties are not developed this is a tremendous burden. How can you read this book in ten days time? But if your faculties are developed you can read it in four days, maybe. It is quite possible. So it depends on the exercise you have been given. When Supermind will develop, there will be other faculties which you cannot even imagine.

We cannot imagine, for example, at our present level, as to how Shakespeare could have written plays, dramatic poetry of which Deepti was speaking yesterday. We had a seminar yesterday and she had read out the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare. We are also human beings; Shakespeare is also a human being. But he wrote dramatic poetry easily. Comfortably. Effortless. If we are to write even five sentences of that type, perhaps we may require ten to fifteen years of practice. But we can do it. It is only a question of development, our will-to-be. You aspire to develop a faculty and the power will flow.

So the argument is very simple now. *"As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties."* From both the points of view, the analogy is perfect.

Now we can conclude. *"As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plants 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."* This is Sri Aurobindo's example of there and here. Just as in Matter, in Life too there is an impulse towards Mind; *"as the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plants up to its full organization in man"*, this has been achieved already.

How do you distinguish between an animal and man? How do you distinguish between an animal and a plant? How do you distinguish between a plant and metal? The more organisation you find in sensitivity of the reactions, the greater is the ascending movement.

What is the difference between an idiot and an intelligent man? In Sanskrit there is a verse which says: "The sun's rays fall equally upon a piece of clod and upon the diamond" the same sun ray falls upon both. The reaction that comes from a piece of clod is nil. But the reaction that comes from a diamond is dazzling! So, the difference of reaction that comes indicates whether something is at a lower level or at a higher level.

You will find that in an intelligent man, if he is sensitive, one word will vibrate so powerfully, that in one second he becomes transformed. A word coming from somebody whom you love very deeply and who says: "You did this? How could you do it!" and the next moment your character is changed. You are so sensitive, you want appreciation of someone you love and, if in the eyes of someone you love, you fall, you cannot bear it. You are so sensitive, you want to rise immediately to the top, you will be transformed in one second. That is a mark of your ascending series, of your will-to-be. Other people might require ten or twenty times punishment, etc, and nothing will happen or very little will happen. There is no sensitivity.

Sri Aurobindo says that as you move from metal to plant the sensitivity to reactions begin to become greater and greater. The metal reacts mildly. Almost very mechanically, but in the plant, the reactions are much more bright. We are told by the scientists that plants feel shyness, plants feel happy, feel sorrowful, plants feel tired, plants feel great energy. There was a great scientist called Jagdish Chandra Bose, an Indian scientist. He proved in a very big conference of scientists, that plants react in the form of joy, sorrow, energy, sleep. He invented a machine by which he could measure the sorrow or the pleasure of plants. Even now for example, experiments are going on — if you play good music around plants, they are very happy and they bloom very quickly, flower very quickly, give fruits also very quickly. I am sure this tree, because of your presence here is feeling very happy. And it gives its shade and it will grow and continue to grow because of all your good-will and vibrations of your being here.

So there is a kind of reactivity and the degree to which the reactivity manifests, your distinction becomes greater and greater. Just as there is an ascending series of reactions, even so between human beings and the higher ranges, this reactivity increases as we go higher and higher.

"As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plants 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."

What comes now is one of the most famous sentences of *The Life Divine*. *"The animal is the living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man."*

This is a beautiful analogy. The animal itself is a living laboratory. Just as if you go to the laboratory of Physics and Chemistry, you can make experiments and produce results. Similarly,

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

Nature produced an animal and that animal itself was a living laboratory. That body itself was used by Nature as a laboratory in which man was worked out. Gradually animal was so developed little by little, little by little, that out of various forms or various vessels of animals, ultimately, this human vessel has been framed and fashioned.

If so, Sri Aurobindo now says, *'Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god.'* We shall now look upon each of our bodies as a living and thinking laboratory. Not just living. Animal was only a living laboratory in which man was worked out. But now man is both a living and thinking laboratory. So we can look upon ourself, our body itself, as a laboratory, in which and with our conscious cooperation, Nature can work out miracles of the superman. Superman will not come out here suddenly, one day. It is in this body, in this laboratory. Each one of us has a possibility of this development. We are all growing towards that. And if you cooperate with it, that's what Sri Aurobindo says: *"in whom and with whose conscious co-operation"* If you cooperate with this, it will come very fast, the body will become very conscious that it is a laboratory. That is why Mother says one must take care of one's body. This body is a very precious instrument. We normally try to belittle the importance of the body. But that is a mistake. As I told you, even the formation of the eye takes so many millions of years, how much labour it involves. Now what to talk about all the organs of the body! To form every organ of the body, every cell of the body, every tissues of the body, it has taken millions and millions of years to make this body. Therefore this body is a living laboratory. How much Nature must have striven to make this body a thinking laboratory. It is a huge labour. So man may well be a living laboratory *"in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God?"* Each one of us has a capacity to manifest divine consciousness — God.

Now you see that the analogical argument has become perfect. As there, so here: the will-to-be. As there: the ascending series, so here the ascending series. As there the development of faculties and organs, so here the development of faculties and organs. The analogy is perfect.

Sri Aurobindo simply concludes this whole argument: *"For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her involved, it is also the overt realization of that which she secretly is."* You remember the two words which we have found earlier, we have said that Matter is a veiled Life and Life is a veiled Mind. Veiled means sleeping. Not overt. Overt means that which is expressed outwardly. You may be inwardly a seer, a visionary, a painter. But in childhood it is only so inwardly. You may not be able to paint a beautiful picture outwardly. But inwardly that capacity to paint is sleeping. Therefore many good parents and good teachers allow the sleeping capacities to mature. They don't disturb, the latent faculties are nourished, in many different ways. A good parent or a good teacher does not force. Because by forcing, nurturing becomes difficult. A child should be gradually nurtured. If you find that your child has great visions parents should not disturb the capacity of visions. Don't force the child to have more and more visions now. Gradually let them mature and develop. They are sleeping at present and gradually they are developing.

Then what happens is, that which was involved, which was already there sleeping, gradually manifests outwardly. After ten years, fifteen years you suddenly find a beautiful artist. Like Lila. She can paint beautiful things. In fact all of you are good painters. Very nice paintings you have done. That is because in your being you had very good capacities and your teachers have been very wise in nourishing them. They are flowered. It is a beautiful crop you might say. From a human point of view if you regard every human being as a plant, and then we see the capacities you have developed, you can say there has been a very beautiful crop. A very rich crop of your faculties.

So all manifestation in Nature is nothing but that which was sleeping which manifests gradually. The entire purpose of evolution is to bring out that which was veiled, which is sleeping, that which is involved, that which is inward, to put it out externally and manifest it fully if evolution is a progressive evolution of that which was sleeping was involved in Nature. It is what she secretly is!

"We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond." This is one of the most difficult lines of this chapter. Every words of this sentence is important.

"We cannot, then, bid her pause..." i.e., if Nature is striving to manifest, it has already manifested so much, and we know now it has the potential to manifest fully. If so, then we cannot tell Nature stop here now, don't move forward, we cannot bid her to pause — bid means command. We cannot tell Nature now don't do it. We cannot bid her to pause at this given stage of evolution. Nor we have the right to condemn any evolutionary impulse that we may have. Why is Sri Aurobindo writing this sentence?

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

It has a historical background. There are two groups of people in the world today. There are many groups but amongst them are two powerful groups. One group is called the *religionist* group and the other one is called the *rationalist* group. Both of them are very honorable, they are greatly honored in the world. They have great power in the world. Both of them however are standing at the edge of the evolutionary movement. And both of them say: "No, no, don't go further". The religionist says: "Finished! Man is what he is to be and nothing more. He cannot evolve further and he should not!" The rationalist also says: "Should not! Enough! What man is, man is!" This may look surprising to you but if you go out in the world, you will find these two groups. I have myself lived with both the groups quite long in my life and I have had long conversations and dialogues with religionists and rationalists and both of them tried their best to discourage any evolutionary intention that we have of surpassing mind.

Therefore Sri Aurobindo has written — in fact the whole book is written to satisfy religionists and rationalists, so that young students of tomorrow, which we all are, are not discouraged. We need to be very careful. Whenever we want to have this aspiration, you will be told, by many people, in fact this is a universal experience, the moment you try to surpass the borders of manhood, all kinds of forces will come to suppress you. There is a big battle to be fought.

There is a story. When Buddha reached a very high level of *tapasya*, and he had reached almost the top, not the top but almost the top, at that time there was a great battle that was waged by Mara. Mara is a force of evil. And Buddha had to fight a relentless battle with Mara. And Mara has many methods of preventing you from going beyond a certain point. It bids you "Now stop! Don't move forward!"

It is said of Christ when he was at a certain stage of his development that Satan came, and one of the challenges he threw was "If God is real, he is bound to protect you, because you say yourself God always protects. So throw yourself from this mountain top and see how God protects you." That was the challenge. Normally this kind of challenge is a very powerful challenge because one does not know whether the protection of God would come in the form in which it is demanded. And Christ said: "I don't want to test God" that was his very brave, very great answer. "I don't want to test God, I know God will protect. Why should I prove to you? Who are you? What are your credentials?"

It is like — you know there was one person who wrote to Sri Aurobindo and said: "Can I see God?" And Sri Aurobindo said: "The question is whether God wants to see you or not!"

So such formidable questions are put to you when you want to rise from one level to another. There is always this demand of no, no, no. You can't! You shall not! And formidable arguments are given. Sri Aurobindo has said in two lines the summary of the argument of the religionists and of the rationalists. Read all the literature of the religions. Read all the literature of the rationalists. In two lines Sri Aurobindo summarizes and says, the religionists will tell you that your urge to evolve beyond mind is perverse and presumptuous. Your demand, your desire, your aspiration to move beyond mind is presumptuous and perverse. You are a human being, you want to be as great as God? Presumptuous! What are you? A little crawling creature on earth, and you want to be God! It is presumptuous on your part! You want to compete with God! You are perverse! This is the argument of the religionist. God and you — what a gulf there is between you and God! And you want to be like God? You want to sit on the throne of God? This is the argument of the religionist.

Sri Aurobindo says do not worry about these arguments. You have seen how evolution moves upwards. As there, so here. As there the will-to-be, so here the will-to-be. If Matter has become man, if that dull, insensitive, inert matter has today become a living and thinking laboratory, do not come under the impulse of this influence. When, somebody says, "Oh! You want to be like God or God himself. Man can never be God". This is the conclusion of religionists. And this is told by such vehement personalities of the earth, who uphold religions, that we become quite frightened. At least I was. Very eminent people, before whom we become overshadowed, subdued as it were. You become even more submissive than before. These people declare that you are presumptuous, you are perverse. So Sri Aurobindo says, do not come under the influence of these wrong arguments.

Now, if you go to rationalists, who are of course opposed to religion. But in discouraging you, both of them join. Both religion and rationalism join together in discouraging you. The religionist will say you are presumptuous and perverse, the rationalist what will he say? Sri Aurobindo says that he will say this urge in you is a disease. You have a diseased mind, can you ever think of those heavens of the Mind and Supermind! The rationalist will say that you are disturbed by false visions and dreams. When you are sick, very often you hear voices, you see visions, when you wake up there is nothing. It is a hallucination. Hallucination is an illusion which you think to be true, but when you really awake, it is no longer there. So they say that your idea that there will be divine manifestation, that there will be a capacity in you to possess Truth and Light, not have seeking mind, seeking Truth and Light, but a

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

consciousness automatically possessed by Truth and Light — is pure dream. It is an hallucination. Don't go under these false images and dreams. Be very practical. See what is real. Don't dream. You remain all the time in dream, and then begin to see. They are all false visions. So if you go to the rationalist's ground, he will tell you that your aspirations are nothing but a disease.

Both these, although the religionist is the opponent of rationalist, the rationalist is the opponent of religionist; both of them are equal enemies of yours. As soon as you want to go beyond your mind level and want to rise higher, both will come and say: "Stop!" Therefore Sri Aurobindo says: *'We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous and with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond.'*

He says: *"If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realization of God within and without are the highest and the most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth."*

This is the conclusion. There is aspiration toward God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. It is the first statement in the beginning. Sri Aurobindo has then given arguments against harbouring this aspiration. And he has said that this aspiration is justified. Do not come under the influence of the religionist and the rationalist who want to prevent you. He now concludes giving the final argument: *"If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God..."* If this proposition is true and as we have seen it is true, *"then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realization of God within and without are the highest and the most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth."* Do not, do not, do not hesitate to aspire for this.

We shall stop here now. I had given you the 8th chapter as homework at one time. Continue with that. Read it again, even if you don't understand, don't worry. We shall do that chapter word by word as we have done the first chapter. Go slowly, it is a very important chapter.

But still, if you read, the mind will be accustomed to some of the terms which are there, and use the dictionary sometimes if you don't follow a word, you can find out the meaning.

IX.

The first chapter of *The Life Divine* that we are studying is like a stethoscope. You know what a stethoscope is? Every doctor carries a stethoscope. It examines the rate of respiration. Sri Aurobindo is like a doctor and he wants to examine the rate of respiration of humanity. And the first chapter is like a stethoscope. So it is called *The Human Aspiration*. Aspiration is the breath, is breathing. Sri Aurobindo asks what kind of breathing humanity is having? When he examines its breath he finds there is constant breathing but from time to time humanity falls sick and the breathing is no longer very sound, it is not very regular. If on the whole you want to see what is the breathing, this aspiration of mankind, it simply breathes God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. When it falls sick it becomes sceptical. Scepticism is the malady. From time to time it wonders and wanders, wanders away from its normal breathing.

Scepticism is the sign of sickness. The mood to doubt is called scepticism. To be sceptical means to have the mood to doubt. When mankind is sound in health there is no doubt in the mind. Humanity breathes quite well and breathes with God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. If you leave mankind in its normal condition when it is really breathing quite nicely, the only breath that you have is God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

If you see human history it is very interesting. The whole human history is like the breathing of humanity. What is mankind doing all the time, what is its breathing? If you took a telescope and put your telescope on humanity's history, thousands of years, the only breath you find is God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. You take your telescope to Ancient Egypt, and you find the Pyramids coming up — it is also a breath, the breathing of Egypt —, it is a huge structure reaching out to God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. If you go to the Sumerian Civilization, the Assyrian Civilization it is the same thing. If you go to the early times of Abraham, Moses you find the same things: God's commandments, the Ten Commandments of God. It is also breathing with God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. You go to Greece, the same thing. You hear Socrates, you hear Plato, what are they doing, what are they calling out? Again God, Light, Freedom and Immortality.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

In due course we shall study Socrates and Plato particularly, and we shall hear them also on God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. Socrates, when he was taking the poison hemlock which he was given by the Athenians because he was misunderstood and he was told that he was corrupting the youth. Young people are always beloved and all want to protect youth so people said: "You are corrupting the youth therefore you take poison and die." That was the punishment given to him. But even at the death, what had he to say? "I am immortal." That is his message. "May be I am more fortunate than you are!" He said: "I am going to live with immortal people." And if you read Plato what does he say? He says: "We are all bound in a small cave. Supposing that there is a cave in which there are a lot of pillars and each one of us is tied to a pillar. Imagine that mankind is nothing but prisoners tied to small pillar, who can look only in one direction and who cannot look back. And there is sunlight behind, and in between you and the sunlight, a big crowd of people. And what do you see on the wall: only shadows." Plato says: "We are all seeing only shadows here, imprisoned in a cave, not able to turn this way or that way, looking only in one direction." But we are aspiring for what? One of the prisoners gets out of his imprisonment, turns backward and sees "My Lord — the glory of the sun" on the other side. He goes out of the cave and discovers the beautiful origin of all light and he calls out and says to everybody: "Listen, listen, here is the origin of everything. Turn backward and see Light." It is finally the same message God, Light, Freedom and Immortality.

You got to Rome you will find the same story again and again. Go to India. My Lord! India is a cathedral, a huge cathedral. And the only thing that counts is: God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. All the time there is one mantra in India.

Sri Aurobindo says, if you look at the breath of mankind with a stethoscope, the only breath you find is God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. But sometimes humanity falls sick. It is overcome by scepticism. It doubts. Is there really God; is there really Light; is there really Freedom; is there really Immortality? This is doubt. And Sri Aurobindo says that if you examine the longest period of scepticism, the longest period of doubt, at the end, once again the sickness goes away, mankind becomes healthy and again there pulsates God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is the constant refrain of human history.

This is the first paragraph of *The Life Divine*. One summary. Look at the whole history of mankind, summarize the whole history of mankind and these are the only four words that come out: God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. I think this is the new thing that we learnt the summarizing of the whole history of mankind in one paragraph.

Now the second thing we learned was the basis of the illness of mankind: the scepticism. From where does the scepticism come? It comes from contradiction. There is a sense of contradiction in this world. It is this contradiction which comes like a challenge. In the presence of contradiction you cannot rest. As long as a contradiction remains you remain dissatisfied, restless. You want to overcome the contradiction. But you must know what is this contradiction. So Sri Aurobindo defines for us what is this contradiction. The contradiction is the existence of Matter. This existence of Matter which seems to be insensible, unconscious, insentient, which does not feel anything, which has no light in it, no intelligence in it. This is the basic fact of life. Wherever we turn there is insensitivity. And yet we talk of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is the contradiction.

In the world of Matter, wherever you face Matter you face this kind of contradiction. And yet you are breathing for God. This contradiction is the main study of philosophy. If anybody asks you "What is philosophy?" In a word philosophy is dealing with the contradiction. If this contradiction did not exist there would be no need for philosophy at all. There are many contradictions in the world but this is the one big contradiction; the biggest contradiction is existence of Matter and the breathing for Light, God, Freedom and Immortality. Because of this contradiction mankind is moving from one pole towards the other pole. He swings. Is this right or is that right? Towards which shall we move? What shall we embrace so that we feel completely fulfilled? We want to be fulfilled — this is the basic fact. We want harmony. That is why Sri Aurobindo says: "*All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.*" Because of the contradiction we feel that there should be harmonization. And thus we begin to understand the details of the world better. The whole world is nothing but a song of harmony. It is a music of harmony. Matter and Life are opposed to each other and yet it is in Matter that Life is to manifest. There is nothing in the world which is alive, which is not in the casing of Matter. All life in the world is in a capsule which consists of Matter and yet both are opposed to each other. And both are harmonized, not fully but sufficiently. Life and Mind are opposed to each other and they are also trying to live together. There is no human thought which is not vibrating in Life. All mental thinking presupposes breathing. One who does not breathe cannot think. Such is the condition in this world. If you don't breathe you cannot think. All thinking implies breathing. Some kind of breathing should be before you can think. So there is a harmonization of Life and the Mind. Therefore we can

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

look for a greater harmony. The imperfections of Matter and Life, imperfections of Life and Mind, can be completely bridged; and that is Supramental existence. The Supermind in Matter is the ideal towards which we are moving. There will be a total, complete harmony. Then the promise will be fulfilled; there will be no problem because harmony will be achieved.

So we learnt first of all, the real breath of human history. Secondly we learnt what is the contradiction in this world which gives rise to philosophy. Then we found out where exactly is this contradiction and how the contradiction is constantly striving to arrive at harmony. And then we found out the fourth thing; that there is a deeper law in this world of evolution. The whole world is in a process of evolution. It is a new fact which we discovered. The entire fourth paragraph of the first chapter of *The Life Divine* is devoted to evolution. And Sri Aurobindo, very briefly, gives us — Life in Matter, Mind in Life and Supermind in Mind — the four terms of evolution. This is what we have done so far. All right?

Every statement is a new statement for us. We did not know the whole history of mankind, and in one little paragraph Sri Aurobindo gave us the whole history of mankind. He gave a stethoscope by which we could measure the respiration of mankind. Thus we discovered the contradiction, we then found the urge for harmonization, next we learned of evolution. So we learned four words. Aspiration for God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. The big contradiction, the big movement of harmony and the big movement of evolution. Four terms we learned. But we learned something much more also, we learned the art of philosophy.

As I told you, the first art of philosophizing arises from the fact of contradiction. There is no philosophizing if there is not a fact of contradiction. If you are not confronted with contradiction there is no movement of philosophizing. A contradiction is a challenge which asks you to harmonize. All philosophy is nothing but an attempt to harmonize a contradiction. That is philosophy. Open any book of philosophy, it is nothing but a presentation of some contradictions and philosophers trying to harmonize. So you now know what philosophy is basically. It is the presentation of contradiction and the attempt to harmonize by which contradiction can be resolved.

You did something more. You learned different forms of philosophical argument. First you learned the epistemological argument, then you learned the dialectical argument, the historical argument, the quintessential metaphysical argument, finally the causal argument.

What is the epistemological argument? All argument in philosophy starts with facts. Where there are no facts there are no philosophical arguments. All the arguments start with certain facts. Epistemological arguments start with a fact of the nature of thought. From the nature of thought you derive a conclusion; that is an epistemological argument. You make a statement that all thought is of this nature. That is the first statement. In any epistemological argument the first statement would be that the nature of thought is such and such and because of that reason the conclusion is this. That is the nature of epistemological argument. All argumentation is derivation, you imply, you bring out what is inside the fact. You fathom the depth of the nature of thought and you derive a conclusion — you bring the jewel out of the ocean of thought and put it forward. That is the epistemological argument.

"The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage." This sentence is an epistemological argument. It tells you what is the highest that thought can envisage. It gives you the argument of the nature of thought. And the argument is conclusive: *is*, there is no *it seems*, *probable*, no such words at all. It is a complete argument; it is a complete conclusion. *The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts ... is also the highest which his thought can envisage.*" This argument is an epistemological argument. If you examine the nature of thought then you find it is equivalent to *"the earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts"*. There is no escape from it. If you really go to the highest thought only one thing will come: God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. It is the earliest preoccupation of men and also the highest and it returns again and again in mankind. You climb the highest level of thought and having reached, you look up, inevitably you will see God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. This statement is an epistemological statement.

What is the historical argument?

"The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality." Sri Aurobindo says that if you look at history you go first to the earliest records of mankind. Then you look at today. You see the earliest past and you see today. From there you now derive conclusions for the future. Historical argument tells you what was in the

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

past, what is the present and then you derive a conclusion for the future. That is the historical argument. Very simple!

There is a difference between epistemological arguments and historical arguments. Historical arguments are never conclusive. Whenever you make a historical argument, the future may seem to be probable, may show a big probability. Historical argument gives you a sense of the highest possible probability. It never gives you complete conclusiveness. You may say that it is the weakness of the historical argument but it is also its strength because it can never be dogmatic. It always keeps you open; open to the future.

"*The earliest formula of Wisdom*". He does not say *is* also the formula of the future. See the language that Sri Aurobindo uses. "*The earliest formula of Wisdom*" what is the word that Sri Aurobindo uses? *Promises*! The word *promises* is not conclusive. He does not say *will be* or *shall be*. But it is only *promises*, which gives you the highest probability. It promises that the future will be the same formula.

Whereas in epistemological argument he does not say *promises*. Such an argument always gives you a categorical statement, it affirms without doubt. It is doubtless. It *is*. "*The earliest preoccupation of man ... is also ...*" He does not say *seems*. The epistemological argument is based upon the nature of thought. Whenever there is something based upon nature of thought the conclusion is always categorical. If you are really a good historian, you may forecast, which is good, but you cannot say *shall* or *will* or *is*, you will say it *seems*, *probably*, *promises*, *most likely* to happen. That is the nature of historical argument.

What is a dialectical argument? The second paragraph contains a dialectical argument. We have defined the epistemological argument as an argument which states the nature of thought and derive a conclusion from it. The historical argument states the past, the present and derives a conclusion about the future. Similarly dialectical argument states a fact but a fact of contradiction. And having stated a contradiction it derives a conclusion. A contradiction means there is a thesis and there is an antithesis. And having seen the thesis and the antithesis, and the contradiction between the two you derive a conclusion, which is a synthesis. So the nature of dialectical argument is presentation of thesis, antithesis and derivation of synthesis.

If you read the second paragraph what does it say? "*These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression.*" So Sri Aurobindo states a contradiction. These persistent ideals are contradicted — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality — by normal experience of mankind. It is a contradiction between the ideals and normal experience. Thesis and antithesis. The entire second paragraph is an attempt to resolve this contradiction. Thus the entire second paragraph presents a dialectical argument.

Then we have the quintessential metaphysical argument. This is a fourth kind of argument: quintessential metaphysical argument. What is metaphysics? Metaphysics is a study of the highest reality and also of the meaning of the highest reality. Not only what is ultimately real but also what is ultimately meaningful. This word meaning is very important. You have no metaphysics unless you raise the question of meaning. What is the significance? Meaning. What is the meaning of this class for example? That question is a metaphysical question. Toward the end of the second paragraph you will find an example of a quintessential metaphysical argument. "*But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.*" Deliberate view. Deliberate: this word is important. Deliberate means you try to find out the meaning. When you speak deliberately, it means meaningfully. So all sense of meaning is contained in deliberate thinking. Sri Aurobindo says if you take a deliberate view then the same facts will present themselves in a quite new way.

A bird is crying now and you may say it is simply a cry. But if you take a deliberate view — there is a view that all birds have a language and if you understand the crying of the birds you can find out the meaning. It is said, they can tell you all the things that are going to happen tomorrow. In India there is a science to learn the language of the birds. Even in the villages in India they will say that if a crow goes on crying the whole day, it means a guest is coming tomorrow. You may call it a superstition but in any case this is a quintessential metaphysical argument. Because the bird is crying therefore what does it mean? What is the message in it? It means a guest is coming tomorrow. Such a conclusion is a quintessential metaphysical argument. If you know how to read the language you can be sure about it, there is no question. It is like an announcer. When an announcer says that now the drama will start in five minutes time you get ready to watch the drama. It is a quintessential meaning because when an announcer announces there is a meaning in it. It will be fulfilled. So when you see

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

the facts of the world and you ask if there is meaning in these facts, when you try to derive meaning out of the facts it is a quintessential metaphysical argument.

Now the last argument. It is the causal argument. Aristotle said that a cause is always related to an effect. That is a first definition of a cause. Cause always produces an effect. It is very simple. Aristotle made no great announcement by saying that every cause is that it causes effect. But what was good, what was wise in his analysis was — he said that in every cause there are four aspects. It is these four aspects which are very important. As a result there are four names which are given to a cause. A cause may be a material cause, may be an efficient cause, a formal cause and a final cause.

If you are a carpenter and you make a chair, the wood is the material cause because the material of the chair is wood. In what sense is the carpenter the cause of the chair. He is the efficient cause. What is the formal cause? The idea or the form of the chair is the formal cause. And now what is the final cause? The purpose for what you make the chair. It is the final cause. Similarly, for any thing that happens in the world, for any effect you should look for these four things. If you take a seed and analyse the four causes in order that a tree may come out. What is the material cause, what is the formal cause, what is the efficient cause, what is the final cause? The seed is the material cause; it is the seed which become the tree. The farmer is the efficient cause. The form of the tree is the formal cause. The fruit of the tree is the final cause.

Now you give me an example which analyses these four causes. You take any effect and you tell me, take up any effect in the world, they are so many effects in the world... Let us take French Revolution. You know French Revolution? Every human being of modern times should learn of French Revolution. You cannot understand what is happening today without understanding what happened in French Revolution. Such is the importance of French Revolution. What we are doing today is causally connected with French Revolution. One of the greatest events in world history is the French Revolution. Once you know the French Revolution you can answer my question.

You take any event, take up anything that you know and then we shall try to analyse the four causes. Let us say Auroville. Auroville is an event, no? It is a consequence. Now, what is the efficient cause of Auroville? The Mother. She pushed the idea of Auroville, she has given the shape. She is the efficient cause of Auroville. What is the formal cause of Auroville? The Charter of Auroville is the formal cause of Auroville. Then, what is the material cause? The place, the soil, the children of Auroville, the parents of Auroville, administration of Auroville, we are all the materials causes. We are the matter of Auroville. And what is the final cause of Auroville? Human unity is the final cause of Auroville. Now you have almost mastered, almost, Aristotle would be very happy to know that in the Twentieth Century, in one corner of the earth, there are some enthusiastic children who have mastered his theory of causation.

I have also told you about the Indian theory of causation. I gave you two Sanskrit words. I should repeat them: *asatkaryavada* and *satkaryavada*. *Karya* means effect, the event. *Sat* means that which exists. *Vada* means theory. A theory of the effect which presents that which exists. *Satkaryavada* is a theory which says that effect already existed before it came out. The effect already existed in the form of the cause. *Asatkaryavada* says that effect did not exist in the cause. So there are two theories in India. According to one theory for every effect there must be a cause. Both the theories agree on this: effect presupposes a cause. There must be a cause from which effect derives. But according to one theory effect already existed in the cause, according to another theory effect did not exist in the cause. According to *satkaryavada* the tree already existed in the seed but according to *asatkaryavada* tree did not exist in the seed. And there are arguments for both. Both are very interesting arguments which we shall study later.

Sri Aurobindo argues in favour of *Satkaryavada*: “*For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness.*”

There is no reason why Life should come out of Matter? It must be only because Life is already in Matter. There is no reason why Mind should come out of Life, unless Mind is already in Life. Not only that but also more than that: Life is nothing but Matter and Matter is nothing but Life. Identical actually. Matter is a veiled form of Life and Life is a veiled form of Mind. It is like a seed in the tree. The seed is nothing but the veiled tree. The tree is already in the seed but it is veiled, you cannot see it. Similarly, Life is already in Matter — not only already in Matter, but Matter itself is veiled Life and Mind is not only already in Life but Life itself is a veiled Mind.

Now we have revised all the four paragraphs that we have covered so far. I shall summarize in two sentences. I said first that Sri Aurobindo's argument has been the study of human history, past, presents and future. And his argument is that if you look at the past there is only one breath: God,

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

Light, Freedom, Immortality. If you see the present you find that there is today satiation but not satisfaction and there is already a preparation in humanity for returning to the primeval longing of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is the first argument of this chapter. It summarizes the whole human history leaping beyond the present and showing the future. The second aspect of the first four paragraphs is various forms of philosophical arguments: epistemological argument, dialectical argument, historical argument, quintessential metaphysical argument and causal argument.

X.

You reminded me yesterday that I had forgotten one argument. We had counted five arguments: epistemological, dialectical, historical, quintessential metaphysical philosophical and causal. One argument was missing: analogical argument. This argument can be found in the fourth paragraph: “As there so here...” The phrase appears twice and each time presents the analogy — as there so here.

We come now to the last paragraph. I am taking so much time with the first chapter because if you are well grounded in it you become well grounded in the whole book. Because this chapter is a kind of summary of the whole book. If you know the first chapter very well you can say to yourself that you know the basic arguments of the whole book.

“Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind.”

It is a long sentence and we have to find its main verb. The main verb of this whole sentence is: *justify*. Sri Aurobindo has made the full argument and he now concludes. Having employed all arguments the conclusion is that something is justified. Namely: mankind's aspiration for God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This aspiration is justified rationally, intellectually. It is not merely a matter of faith; it is a matter which you can intellectually justify and prove to yourself that it would be irrational not to accept this aspiration. The aspiration is rational and the main point is: *the lower term* and the *higher term* — in fact the argument starts with a contradiction. What is low contradicts what is high. This is the basic contradiction.

Sri Aurobindo has proved that instead of remaining in a state of contradiction the lower is going to embody the higher. So there is basically no contradiction. If the lower can receive the higher it can be only if in the lower there is a possibility of absorbing the higher. And for absorbing you should have corresponding terms.

In the lower there is normally the experience of pain. In all lower life that we live there is pain. In the higher there is bliss. Now if pain and bliss are really contradictory to each other, then, the lower can never absorb the higher. But if pain itself is a limited *ananda*, a limited bliss, if pain is itself a form of bliss, not opposed to bliss, then you can convert this pain into bliss. This is the argument.

Pleasure for example is in a sense opposed to bliss. Just as pain is opposed to bliss, similarly, pleasure also is opposed to bliss. Because the pleasure that we have is a kind of an ephemeral, flimsy kind of sensation which lasts for a little while and goes away, and that pleasure has nothing comparable to bliss. Therefore pleasure is opposed to that bliss. But if pleasure also is only a limited bliss then that limited thing, when it expands, can become bliss. Thus what was seen to be contradictory is not really contradictory; it is simply a limited form of the higher. Therefore it is an eternal paradox — paradox because how can bliss become pain, how can bliss become pleasure, how can bliss become indifference? These are the only three experiences that we have: indifference, pleasure and pain.

How can these three which are seemingly the opposite of bliss, be turned into bliss? If they can be turned into bliss it is only because they are limited forms of it — when you limit *ananda* that limitation takes these three forms: pleasure, pain, indifference. There is a full chapter, chapter 12 in this book, where Sri Aurobindo will explain how *ananda*, the bliss, has become pleasure, pain and indifference by limitation. They are not contradictory of each other; they are only paradoxical of each other.

You see there is a difference between opposition and paradox. A paradox is where two opposites seem to be apparently opposed but not really. “I am hastening slowly”, if I speak this

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

sentence, it is a paradox. “Charming by ugly”, there are experiences of ugliness but very charming. It is a paradox, but not really a paradox, because in ugliness also there is a charm. “I am tragically happy”, it is a paradox, a tragedy occurs and you feel happy. Tragedy normally creates a lot of sorrow but there are experiences where you become tragically happy.

If you see the drama called *Hamlet*... The story as it unfolds before you begins on a dreadful night. Already the very first scene of Hamlet gives you a kind of atmosphere of dread. Everything is hushed. Not a mouse stirring, as he says in the very beginning. And then there appears the ghost of the father of Hamlet, who has just died, so the whole atmosphere is full of suspense. Something weird, something strange, dreadful. In the dark a ghost appears and calls Hamlet alone, he wants to communicate a message. Hamlet is drawn towards the ghost and then the ghost reveals to Hamlet that he has been murdered — it is not an ordinary death —, and the murder has been committed by his own brother and his wife. A dreadful story. This is the starting point of the tragedy. Something horrible has happened and now there is the unfoldment of horrible events one after the other. And if you examine the play, it is a series of deaths which occur one after the other. Polonius is murdered, Ophelia dies, and then several others, and towards the end, the king is killed, Leates the brother of Ophelia is murdered, the queen dies, and finally Hamlet goes. It is full of tragedy. When you see the end you feel comforted, the whole horrible thing has ended. You are tragically happy. There is a release as it were for Hamlet who was so tortured. There is an end in which you feel relief at the release of Hamlet from all kind of tortures. It is an experience of tragic happiness.

So whenever there is a real tragedy, from another point of view, there is an angle of looking where you find a release. It gives its own unique experience. So there is no exact opposition between tragedy and happiness. It is a paradox.

Similarly, of the experience of pain; experience of pleasure and experience of indifference through which we pass all the time. If you examine your life you will find that in three fourths of your life you are indifferent. We are basically insensitive. Examine the hours of sleep that we have. Those hours of sleep are actually hours of indifference basically, except when you have nightmares. But that is another matter. A little of the time that you have is of pleasure and the rest of the time you find of suffering. These are the three experiences that we have. But the real bliss which is constantly present, of which we are not aware, is not abolished anytime, it is there always, it is not as if this pain or pleasure or indifference are able to abolish that bliss. We are not aware of it. But there is a constant stream of bliss. It is constantly flowing, only we don't experience it because of our limitations. If pleasure, pain and indifference were able to abolish bliss they would be opposite, but they are not real opposites. The pain does not abolish the inner bliss. This is the theme of the chapters 11 and 12 of *The Life Divine*.

Sri Aurobindo quotes 4 lines from the Upanishads at the beginning of the Chapter 11. “*For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?*” [Taittiriya Upanishad] If we are existing, even in the most deplorable conditions, it is because there is a breath all the time hanging over us: the breath of delight. “*From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.*” [Taittiriya Upanishad] This is one the most memorable statements in world history. It tells you, in whatever conditions you are, you should remember in the depth of your being there is a delight always accessible to you, always available to you. Never feel that your present condition of indifference or pleasure or pain is going to last. You just make an effort; go deep in you and you will find bliss.

Where today there is pain, suffering, indifference and pleasure, there can take place the breathing of delight. Because of this reason, the lower does not cancel the higher. The lower is able to manifest the higher. Therefore it is a paradox but not a contradiction. This is the real solution that Sri Aurobindo presents. What is contradictory is not really contradictory. It is only a paradox and a paradox can always be resolved into harmony. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says, the eternal truth and the eternal paradox. It is a paradox forever because even when you attain to delight you can always turn it into pain if you want to. It is not impossible. You limit yourself and it becomes pain. You limit yourself in another way and it becomes pleasure. You limit yourself in a third way and it becomes indifference.

“*Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement...* — our body is mortal, but in mortal body there is an undying aspiration, an immortal aspiration and also that in that mortal body the immortal reality exists — *a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos*. It is also a paradox: a universal and transcendent consciousness on the one hand and divided egos in our present consciousness. The two exist side-by-side as it were, not canceling, but capable of existing side by side. There is no contradiction only paradox. “*... a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being ...* — on one side — *... who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible,*

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason ... — mark the words *deliberate reason*. We have come across the word *deliberate* earlier also. As I told you, *deliberate reason* or a *deliberate way of thinking* is quintessentially metaphysical, the real metaphysical reasoning is a *deliberate view*, not only *reason* but *deliberate reason*. The reason which seeks for meaning and ultimately finds it — the finding is the satisfaction of *deliberate reason*, it is the fulfilment of *deliberate reason*. But the seeking is the driving force. And ultimately the driving force is fulfilled when the meaning is found. Sri Aurobindo asks the question in the beginning that the contradiction, which is found between material existence and the ideals of God, Light, Freedom and Immortality — this contradiction, if you examine it by *deliberate reason* you should not jump to the conclusion that it is a contradiction. Ask yourself: Is it really a contradiction? Is there a meaning in this contradiction? If you ask this question then you find an answer which is expounded in the third and fourth paragraph. In the fifth paragraph you find the answer and therefore we can say that this contradiction is really a paradox. And this paradox justifies itself to our *deliberate reason*, to the reason which has sought for meaning.

Now Sri Aurobindo adds two more words: “...*justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind.*” There are now three words which are important from philosophical point of view: *deliberate reason*, *instinct* and *intuition*.

Deliberate reason is something we have experienced quite thoroughly during the last ten lectures or more. *Deliberate reason* is driven by the search for meaning and that reason utilises various kinds of arguments — this entire exercise is the exercise of *deliberate reason*. Having used all these arguments our reason is now satisfied. We have found the meaning, we have found that they are not opposites, there is no contradiction, it is only a paradox and therefore it is justified.

Now Sri Aurobindo says, what is justified from the rational point of view is also justified by the instinct. What is instinct? What is the difference between the instinct and reason? In instinct there is immediacy. In reason there is a process. You have facts; you derive from the facts a conclusion. It is almost as if blindly. Blindly you touch this and touch that then compare to arrive at a picture in your mind. In instinct, you just touch and know. No more than that. All experience of pain is instinctive. Not only that but experience of pain is immediately accompanied by rejection. Automatic! There is no process; you do not say: “Now let me see, the pain has come let me receive it.” As soon as there is pain there is rejection, automatically. So this instinctive rejection of pain indicates something. Why do we instinctively reject pain? Because the being has already known what happiness is and this pain is found to be opposite to it. If you did not know what happiness is, you would never reject pain. There is an ether of happiness in your being, all the time. You may not be conscious of it, but it is there already. So when something contrary happens, it is immediately rejected. “Oh no, this is not me! It can’t belong to me. I don’t want it. It cannot be.”

Question: Kireetbhai why do we not instinctively reject pleasure?

You instinctively receive it. Both are instinctive.

No, in the sense that instead of happiness, there is the ether which is opposed to pain, it is also opposed to pleasure too, so why don’t we instinctively reject pleasure?

Rejection is not the only way in which you instinctively act. The question is of instinctiveness, the immediacy. As soon as you feel pleasure you instinctively receive it. Immediately, there is no process. Now the deeper question that you ask is the main theme of these two chapters: “*Delight of Existence: The Problem*”; “*Delight of Existence: The Solution*” So we shall deal with it at length. My immediate answer is only this because at present we are simply considering what is instinctive. In both the cases there is no process, there is an instinctive, immediate reaction. You eat something bitter and immediately you want to throw it away. Instinctively. You eat anything that is sweet and immediately you like it. Instinctively.

You know there are other states of consciousness where — you asked the question of pleasure — in certain states of consciousness what we call pleasure is immediately rejected. There is the very interesting case of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was a good student, he loved his teacher very well but he never took for granted whatever he said. He was a good student. So once he wanted to test his teacher. He wanted to examine his teacher. One day he put some money under the cover of the seat where Ramakrishna used to sit. And Ramakrishna came to the seat and as he touched it, immediately he threw it away. Normally people like to have the presence of coins of money, in his case as soon as he touched them he immediately stood up as if there was a snake there. It depends upon your state. Both are instinctive.

Take pleasure, at a certain stage of your development — Mother has said that if you succeed very quickly be doubtful. If you go on succeeding very quickly then be wary, think there is a trap for

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

you. Don't feel so happy or take pleasure in it. One who is very wise, as soon as he succeeds he feels "My Lord something is wrong. How could I succeed?"

Indifference, for example, we are automatically in the stage of indifference. But once you have enjoyed that bliss you can never tolerate indifference. You cannot remain in the state of indifference, you reject it. It is a question of what your balance is in the totality of your being. Our present rejection of pain or our present acceptance of pleasure instinctively is due to the present balance of our consciousness. There are states of consciousness in which bitter medicines are enjoyed. It is a fact, you enjoy bitterness and you don't like pleasure, the sweetness. There are states of consciousness in which what is pleasant to you is not liked. Its all depends as Sri Aurobindo says; it is a question of habits. Our present balance of consciousness is such that habitually we reject pain and habitually we receive pleasure. But you can change that. The thing regarding which you are afraid — when you look back you feel it was so good that the frightful thing happened to you. Somebody knocks at your door. You are sleeping at that time and you feel this a bother, somebody coming and knocking and waking you up, you don't like this at all and you open the door and behold that which you were looking for for the last ten years is standing before you. That dreadful experience, the experience of pain, is immediately turned into tremendous delight. It is only a question of your consciousness, of your state of consciousness. So if you know that in every experience it is only God who knocks on your door then you will never be frightened about any thing. Normally we are frightened because we feel that some strange things are happening for which we are not ready and this disturbs you, disturbs your present condition of consciousness. But when you look backward you find that it was a tremendously good thing that happened to you. If you know that every time, in every circumstance, it is God who is around you, then even the one who is opposing you all the time is felt to be a great friend.

This is why Sri Aurobindo says: "Who is my enemy? The one who took me to the embrace of my Lord?" One you think is your enemy is actually the very one who takes you to the embrace of the Lord. So who is your enemy? That is how our pain is transformed into delight. Therefore pain is not opposed to the delight, it is only the present state of consciousness which is limited. You break down the limitation then the delight, which is automatic everywhere, will be experienced in all the circumstances. This is called the real art of life. The real art of life arises from a philosophy which concludes that the Divine is everywhere. Now you apply that proposition in real terms and you find in every circumstance it is the Divine, therefore delight will all the time be your accompaniment. We have only to discover where is the Divine. In this horrible face you see the beauty. The dreadful thing is the most delightful thing. The dread is only a mask. The mask is to be uncovered.

Eternal paradox and eternal truth. They justified themselves when you realise that the lower term is capable of embodying the higher term. Sri Aurobindo says that this proposition is accepted even by instinct. Instinctively we love the light. The eyes can flourish only in light. If you remain all the time in darkness your eyes will become blind in due course. There is instinctive movement towards light. God, Light, Freedom, Immortality are justified not only by deliberate reason but also by instinct. Instinctively you want delight, therefore you reject pain. Instinctively you accept pleasure because you do not feel pleasure is a great blockage to the delight. Only we don't know now, but actually speaking all pleasures are a blockage to the delight. They imprison you in a small pleasure for a little while. Therefore if you learn, you automatically reject pleasure because you have an instinctive movement towards real happiness, towards delight — inalienable delight, inexhaustible delight, imperishable delight.

There was an experience of Sri Aurobindo where he was placed in a jail, by the British in 1908. If you look at the jail and Sri Aurobindo himself has described the cell in which he was living. You imagine the hot summer because he was taken to the jail in the month of May. That cell was a very small cell, only a little room where he could sleep. There was one bowl given to him and one blanket. This is all that he was gifted by the British. He lived in that cell for one year. Sri Aurobindo has humouristically described the bowl. What kind of bowl it was. He said it was like a bureaucrat. A bureaucrat can be used for all kind of functions. In India a bureaucrat can be in charge of law and order, he can be in charge of railways, he can be in charge of accounts, he can be in charge of justice, he can be in charge of postage, wherever you put him a bureaucrat is able to do the activity you assign to him. Sri Aurobindo said that this bowl was used for drinking water, it was also used for eating food, it was also used for evacuation, and this particular bowl was used for everything. Then he said that his particular room had no flooring at all, it was simply a kind of soil, and under the intense heat, red ants used to come out of the ground. How do you avoid red ants? You have a room which you cannot leave, there is tremendous heat, the only cloth piece that you have is a blanket which is also hot and red ants are coming out. The only result would be that you would be bitten by the red ants. And so red ants were biting Sri Aurobindo.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

This was the time when he realised Sri Krishna all around him. He himself has written that all around I saw only Sri Krishna smiling. A tremendous delight. Not only delight to the eyes, but even the ants he said which were biting were felt as experiences of joy. He transformed these terrible bites into delight.

In 1938 when Sri Aurobindo fell in his room in the Ashram in Pondicherry and broke the thigh bone, normally it produces tremendous pain, but that pain was turned by Sri Aurobindo to great delight.

These are facts, not merely thinking that pain becoming pleasure or happiness, not that, you can really turn it into that. This possibility Sri Aurobindo has seen, has experienced, therefore Sri Aurobindo has written all this. These are not speculations; they are based upon direct experiences. What is pleasant can become painful, what is painful can become pleasant, what is temporarily pleasant can become a delight forever. These are the possibilities of our consciousness. Therefore it is a paradox not a contradiction. You can turn them into their opposites.

This whole argument that we have studied is from the point of view of deliberate reason. Sri Aurobindo says that instinctively also it is the same conclusion. Intuitively also. Now he comes to intuition. What is intuition?

Instinct and intuition are both similar to each other excepting in one characteristic. Instinct is immediate, intuition also is immediate but while instinct is predominantly active — all instincts manifest themselves into action; intuition is predominantly self-conscious, luminous. All intuitions are self-aware. Instincts are not self-aware, they are not aware of themselves. There is some awareness but very slight. Mostly it is action. When I am hungry there is an instinct to eat. When there is a hunger your instinct takes you immediately food. Very often you are not even aware that you are hungry and yet when you get the food immediately you want to eat it. Babies don't know that they are hungry, they cry but they don't know that it is by appetite or hunger. They simply are looking for food. Therefore as soon as the food is given immediately there is silence. It is instinctive. Instinct is primarily active, only secondarily luminous. Intuition is primarily luminous, secondarily active. That is the only difference between instinct in intuition.

If you open Chapter 8, page 65. The instinct is subconscious, intuition is superconscious. *"The master-word of the subconscious is Life, the master-word of the superconscious is Light. In the subconscious knowledge or consciousness is involved in action, for action is the essence of Life. [Action is predominant.] In the superconscious action re-enters into Light and no longer contains involved knowledge but is itself contained in a supreme consciousness. Intuitional knowledge is that which is common between them and the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. But in the subconscious the intuition manifests itself in the action, in effectivity, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the superconscious, on the contrary, Light being the law and the principle, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the accompaniment or necessary consequent and no longer masks as the primary fact."*

Sri Aurobindo distinguishes between instinct and intuition. Both are actually the same. When intuition manifests itself in life it is instinct. When intuition manifests itself in something higher in you it is intuition, it is luminous it is light principle.

In the lower, it manifests mainly as activity, as action — awareness is very subordinate. In the intuition proper knowledge or light is predominant — action is subordinate. Basically it is the same force. If you put it below your carpet it is instinct, if you put it above your carpet it is intuition. The carpet is only reason. Above the carpet is intuitive light. Below the carpet is instinctive light. In between is the carpet that is what we call reason.

Sri Aurobindo wants to prove now the theme at all the three levels: instinctively proved, rationally proved, intuitively proved. For all the three accounts you have complete proofs. Sri Aurobindo says, this *eternal paradox and eternal truth* is justified on the level of deliberate reason, on the level of instinct and also on the level of intuition. So which ever way you try to find out the truth — this is the truth that you find.

This is one of the important elements of *The Life Divine*. Throughout the whole book Sri Aurobindo will prove whatever he wants to prove on three levels: on the level of deliberate reason, on the level of instinct, on the level of intuition. It is a triple proof all the time. Therefore *The Life Divine* gives you complete satisfaction. All the three elements are satisfied: it is rational satisfaction, instinctive satisfaction, intuitive satisfaction. That is the mark of the truth. When the truth is really true on all the three planes it is justified. With this argument Sri Aurobindo has completely proved on all

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

these levels the human aspiration for a Divine Life. Now the rest of the chapter is only further comments.

XI.

Now we have a very important statement in the form of a comment. As I said Sri Aurobindo has proved that the aspiration for God, Light, Freedom and Immortality is justified on three grounds. On the ground of reason, on the ground of instincts and on the ground of intuition. On all the three grounds this aspiration is justified. It is already proved.

Now what comes is only a comment: *“Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect.”* We shall dwell upon this very important statement.

You remember I had read out to you many days ago a statement from a book of Bertrand Russell. I had with me a book called *The History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell. I had read out to you a sentence. I paraphrase that sentence because I don't have the exact quotation. While declaring his own philosophy and the philosophy of his own friends, he said: “We acknowledge that there are many problems which we cannot answer but we refuse to believe that there is any other higher method of knowledge by which you can answer these questions.” In other words it is a paraphrase of what Sri Aurobindo has written here. Attempts are being made to stop all questionings, to do away finally with all questionings. What Russell ultimately says is: “We know there are many problems, but they cannot be solved.” So his conclusion is: “Therefore remain bound to the insolubility of problems — and deal with all that you can deal with, with your limitations. We refuse to believe that there are other means of knowing by which you can solve the problems.” His gospel is: deal with the problems of the immediate world as they come to you, never have the ambition that you can ever solve these problems ? some practical problems here and there you can solve, they don't require higher means of knowledge ? but some questions they only remain as questions — we cannot answer them. Bertrand Russell says in effect: “Do not go beyond a certain level of questioning. Some questions will be found never to have an answer. They are logically insoluble. And there is no other method”. If something is logically insoluble and if at the same time there is another method of knowing then you may find a solution. But he says: “No, we refuse to believe”. You see the dogmatism, how strongly it comes about. “We refuse to believe that there is another method of knowledge.”

They appear to be opposed to all obscurantism. What is obscurantism? It comes from the word obscure. Obscure means unclear. That which is unclear is obscure. Obscure is opposite to clarity. So those who believe in clarity always criticize and say: “Oh! This is obscure.” Whenever there is something which is presented to them which is not very clear they say: “It is obscure”. And if you believe in obscure things then they say: “You are obscurantist. You believe that which is obscure. You never try to clarify to yourself.” So people such as Russell and others believe that they are devotees of clarity. And people who believe in such things as Spirit, God, which is all obscure, are obscurantist. But when they say: “We refuse to believe” what does it mean? “We refuse to believe means you take shelter in the view that it is obscure. So while they condemn others as obscurantist, they themselves are obscurantist. They advocate inquiry but they refuse to inquire completely themselves.

Sri Aurobindo refers to this particular tendency in the modern times. Whenever you speak of God, Light, Freedom, Immortality these people will come to you and say: “Oh you are obscure! What is God? Unclear, What is Life? Unclear. What is Freedom? Unclear. What is Immortality? Unclear. And yet you believe in it, therefore you are obscurantist.” But what about you? They will admit we also find that it is not easily understandable. But we refuse to believe that there is another way of making it clear. How do you refuse, on what ground do you refuse? Have you tried? Without trying to find other means of knowledge they declare in advance: “We refuse to believe that there is another method of knowing.” It is this attitude which is very prevalent in the world today. You come across this attitude as soon as you will move out of this classroom ? immediately. They will condemn you as obscurantist

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

without realizing that in doing so they are themselves obscurantist, because they refuse even to enquire.

Sri Aurobindo says: *'Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe'*. They ask you not to rise into questions of which there is no answer possible. They say you ask questions on which you have an answer. *"...But such evasions are never permanent in their effect."* If you try to remain in this refusal you will find that gradually you will be bound to cross the limits of this. Sri Aurobindo says: *'Mankind returns from them...'* As you move forward humanity returns from this kind of denial with a more vehement impulse of inquiry.

We now begin to question Bertrand Russell and others: "My dear friends you have simply refused to enquire. Let us enquire." So there is a fresh impulse to enquire and with a fresh impulse to enquire this attempt of denial is crushed. And then there is a more violent hunger for immediate solution. When you deny to enquire for sometime it may work because it is a very soothing thing for sometime when some people say "Don't bother, don't ask many questions." You can go to sleep which is very nice for sometime." But it is only for a short time. A time will come when the questions will bombard you in fact with a tremendous vehemence. Not only vehemence but they demand immediate answers. They come with an immediate necessity for an answer. Take for example a question of a father and a mother and a child. The child is told sometimes do this, don't do that, etcetera, etcetera... This is the normal case, all parents have the habit of telling children do this, don't do that. Then the child goes into revolt and says: "Now don't tell me anything!" At night the father has told the child: "Be moderate in eating don't be a glutton, don't eat too much" But the child has done it. The father has been told by the child: "Don't tell me anything, I want to eat, I will eat." At night he wakes up with a tremendous pain in the stomach and then what does he do? He wants an immediate solution. He had stopped the questioning, he had done very well what he wanted to do, he has gone to sleep nicely and in the middle of night there is a tremendous pain and he wants an immediate solution. He cannot wait because pain is so great, he wants an immediate solution. Such is the condition of humanity today.

For a long time we have evaded the questions about God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. Ultimately humanity has produced a nuclear bomb. By denying God, Light, Freedom, Immortality in the free time humanity has produce a bomb. And now you find not only one bomb but hundreds and thousands of bombs already in stock. And we know that sometime some foolish men can come in control of these bombs and can trigger them off. The whole humanity can be destroyed. And today's question before humanity is: Can we prevent such a man coming to power? The power to open this stock-pile and throw the bombs on humanity. What is the guarantee? How could you prevent it? It is a very immediate question. Without knowing, we are sitting on a volcano. Supposing there is a volcano. You don't know there is a volcano. You are sitting nicely having a good excursion. You have a dance party, you have an eating party, you have all fun and joy without realizing there is a volcano burning and can erupt suddenly and your whole party may be destroyed. We are in that condition today. We are sitting today on a volcano, because the bombs are already there, not that we are going to manufacture them tomorrow. They are already manufactured. They are only stocked. Is there any solution? We are now in search of an immediate solution. Is there any solution by which we can prevent some mad men coming to power? It is not difficult to come to power these days. If you have a lot of money, and today you can get a lot of money also, it is not very difficult. All those who are in power today know how easy it is to get money. And they are amassing money. If you have a sufficient amount of money you can come to the top of power, it is not difficult, it is not impossible. Now that being the case if one of these people who come to power becomes mad and he has got the key to open the stock of bombs the whole of humanity can be destroyed tomorrow, instantaneously.

Therefore humanity is today asking for immediate solution. The only solution could be in wisdom. Madness can be cured only by wisdom. Is it possible to inject wisdom into humanity? This is the question. So that such mad people will not come to power. Or even that the madman can be cured of his madness if wisdom can be given. But if you say, you refuse to believe that there is another method, then you remain where you are, the crisis remains constantly, you will not be able to cure the problem. Therefore Sri Aurobindo says that even though attempts have been made to stop your questionings, even if they have said: "don't make further enquiries, there is no such a possibility at all". Such evasions are never permanent in their effects. Mankind returns knocking the doors of questioning to find out other means of knowledge and in search of immediate solutions. They want these now; there is no waiting for it, they want a solution now.

That is what Sri Aurobindo says: *'Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution.'* Immediate solution. *'By that hunger*

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

mysticism profits..." Let us define the word mysticism. Mysticism means search or enquiry beyond what is now known, into that which is mysterious, that which is secret, that which is unknown, into the depths, so as to bring out that which is mysterious, that which is spiritual, that which is secret. That is the meaning of mysticism. When you return with hunger, as a result of it, mysticism profits. The search into the secret, into the unknown, into the mystic reality, the spiritual reality, that search, profits. Large numbers of people then begins to search for God, once again. And new religions flower. There is so much revolt against the old religions, because they are found to be insufficient and new religions begin to flower. That is the condition of today. You will find today how many new religions are arising in the world. Old religions are reviving, new religions are springing forth because mankind has found something terrible and it wants immediate solution.

"By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism..." The old religions have been doubted, but doubt, scepticism which itself could not satisfy. Even the state of doubt is not satisfying; therefore scepticism is also thrown out. Why scepticism could not satisfy? Because although its business is enquiry it was unwilling sufficiently to enquire. Bertrand Russell whose business was enquiry refuses to enquire. Very literally, openly, "we refuse to believe." So although his business was to enquire, he should ask: "Allright! We cannot find the solution to the present problems then let us enquire further". But no! His business is to enquire but he is not prepared to enquire. Therefore even that kind of scepticism will be thrown away, old religions will be thrown away; even doubt will be thrown away. And then the real mysticism will prosper.

"The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother."

XII.

I have received a question. The question assumes that all that we have been talking about so far is fine.

Question: Let us say that the Divine life on the earth is rationally justified. Fine. That is what we have been trying to do. But now the question is how to go about it? What are the practical means of doing it? Granted that we are convinced rationally that God exists, how to realise Him practically? How to touch Him, how to unite oneself with Him?

I am very happy with the question because it is a logical question that should arise once we arrive at the conclusion of the first chapter of *The Life Divine*. How to do it? — By doing it! That is the first answer: By doing it. And if you agree we shall take up this question next. I want to read with you the first chapter of *The Synthesis of Yoga* because that is an answer to the question "How to do it? How to arrive at the union with the Divine?" So this is the program I put forward before you. In fact these two books should be read simultaneously like the two wings of a bird. We fly with the help of these two wings, on the one *The Life Divine* and on the other *The Synthesis of Yoga*. This would be our method throughout. Throughout these ten years that you have set apart, we shall fly in this way. We shall sometimes refer to this book and sometimes to that book.

In my personal case this question came to me after finishing the whole of *The Life Divine*. Because my mind was greatly trained by Bertrand Russell, I was in a state of scepticism. What Sri Aurobindo says here at the end of this chapter was really the state of my mind. I made a great attempt to close the questions which I found to be insoluble. I made a great effort to see that these questions did not arise, by saying that: "We acknowledge these questions exist but since they cannot be answered, let us close the chapter. They cannot be answered. Let us now turn to immediate questions." And one of the immediate questions that was in my mind at that time was the poverty of India. In fact many people in India, if you ask them the question "What is the most important question of India?" They will say poverty of India. And what is the best work we can do? It is to remove the poverty of India. Many young people in India have this program for their life. They love their country

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

very much, they want to do something very important for the country and they want to devote themselves to the removal of poverty.

If I had not read *The Life Divine* I would now be engaged in that task but without success. Because I now know that you cannot eradicate the poverty of India or of the world for that matter ? because poverty is not only a phenomenon in India, it is an universal phenomenon. Even in America there are people who are very poor. Russians are very poor. In every country there are pockets of poverty.

I refer very often to a very fine sentence of U Thant. It is a Burmese name, he was a Burmese. In 1967, when he made this statement he was the Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation (UNO). That is to say one of the top men of UNO. And he made a very important statement. And when this statement was shown to the Mother she was very pleased with it. She wrote a letter to him in answer to this statement. It is a very important statement.

"That a fraction of the amounts that are going to be spent in 1967 on arms could finance economic, social, national and world programmes to an extent so far unimaginable is a notion within the grasp of the man in the street. Men, if they unite are now capable of foreseeing and, of a certain point, determining the future of human development. This, however, is possible if we stop fearing and harassing one another and if together we accept, welcome and prepare the changes that must inevitably take place. If this means a change in human nature, well, it is high time we worked for it; what must surely change is certain political attitudes and habits man has."

So if the question is only of feeding people, which is of course a very important problem, then the one solution is to stop armaments. You decide that you are not going to use armaments at all. Then all that money is available and you feed the people. No poverty. It is an easy solution. Why is it not such an easy thing to do? It means that poverty is not the basic problem. Poverty can be resolved if something else is done, namely to prevent people from manufacturing armaments. And how do you do it? By what alchemy, what medicine can you prevent people from producing armaments? So he himself says: *"If this means a change in human nature, well, it is high time we worked for it"* That is why Mother wrote an answer to that letter and said: "Appreciating what you have said. The real problem is not poverty; the real problem is a change of consciousness. If you turn the minds of people away from armaments then a lot of money is already available. The world is producing enough food today to feed the whole population of the world very easily. So the question is: "How to change the consciousness?" This is the problem. And this is the problem Sri Aurobindo answers in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

But this question arose in my own life after reading the whole of *The Life Divine*. You are very fortunate that this question is arising after reading the very first chapter of *The Life Divine*. So that means, from an evolutionary point of view you are far ahead. Just after reading the first chapter this question comes up. We shall take up this question next time.

At the end of the chapter we were talking of the attempts on the part of many not to raise certain questions which are insoluble. Let us take only one question which has been declared insoluble. What is the place of man in the universe? This is one question which has been raised, but which has been declared to be insoluble logically, by logical thought. A number of rationalists, those who believe in logical thought and reason, have worked on this question. What is the place of man in the universe? What does it signify? What does it mean? Is he a worm like many worms in the world crawling upon the earth? Or is he something else? As I told you, while quoting Bertrand Russell ? I consider Bertrand Russell as one of the summits of human thought. There are many summits of human thought and Bertrand Russell represents one of them. If you want to climb a peak on a certain line and you reach the top, then on that line of thought he is the climax. There is another whose name is Bradley who is another climax, if you start from another point of view. There are many others such as climaxes. In Indian philosophy we have Shankaracharya as one of the climaxes. On one line of development of thought he reached the climax. In fact there are two denials which are very powerful, two ways by which you can deny, and quite forcefully deny, the possibility of climbing to the Divine life.

I don't know if you have read a short play by The Mother which is called *The Ascent to the Truth*? A few aspirants, those who want to climb, meet and decide to climb. And then all, excepting the last two, stop at different stages. They feel they reach a climax, then they stop. Each of them represents a denial. "Oh! Now we have reached the climax, nothing further! No more!" Like the philanthropist who is one of the first to drop out. You know a philanthropist is one who wants to give, who wants to help, who wants to give money, who wants to give charity. He is the first one to drop out from the climbing. His aim is to remove poverty but he finds that if poverty is removed, what then will be his business afterwards. Because his own life is nothing but giving, giving for removing poverty,

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

his life depends upon the perpetuity of poverty. Only if poverty remains, has he a business in the world. He can give only so long as people need him, need his help, but if they don't need his help he has no business, there is no work left. Mother has very humorously drawn his character, a philanthropist who drops out in the very first stage of climbing. And there are several others, an artist and lovers and aspirants of various kind. It is a very interesting drama. It explains what Sri Aurobindo says here, attempts have been made to close the questions, not to raise those questions because they have been found to be insoluble, and to limit our efforts to the immediate problems. There is a very nice article by Jawaharhal Nehru *Philosophy of Life* is the title. In his article he says: "Is the world real? Is the world an illusion? Has it any purpose? What is the significance of man in the universe? These questions are very interesting but I don't have the time to deal with them." Why? Because immediate problems are very pressing. So he says: "I will not deal with those questions it will take too long a time. I want to attend only to immediate problems." This is also one attitude. One way of closing those questions, is not to raise those questions.

So there are many ways by which people have tried to close down those questions. But as Sri Aurobindo points out, such evasions are never permanent. Mankind returns to those questions again and again and with a greater force to find immediate solutions. As a result mysticism profits, and new religions arise, the old religions are replaced by new religions.

Why have these questions been declared insoluble? They have been declared insoluble because we rely only upon our present instruments of thought. And we refuse to believe that there are other means of knowledge. We think that reason is the only means by which knowledge can be attained.

At one time I had told you to read Chapter 8 of *The Life Divine* ? *Methods of Vedantic Knowledge*. We shall come to it too, but in that chapter Sri Aurobindo describes other means of knowledge. Means of knowledge which go beyond rational thought. These means of knowledge are all present in us. Every one of us has some kind of an element of these other means of knowledge. We use them from time to time without knowing we are using them. But we use them in a very poor fashion, in a very unorganised manner, in a sporadic manner. We use them, then we give them up, find other means, give them up too, go to other means. In a very sporadic manner we take up these new instruments of knowledge. And that is why rationalists do not get attracted to these means of knowledge. If you were able to use these means of knowledge in a systematic manner, in their fullness, then of course those who really want to enquire, those who are really seeking for knowledge they would accept it. But those who claim to have new means of knowledge, higher means of knowledge, are themselves crude, they are rough, they have not developed all these powers in their completeness. Unlike Sri Aurobindo who had developed all the powers in their perfection, like the flower of Supramental action. You have seen this flower. It is a round flower with various kind of needles, needles of action coming out from all over, all-comprehensive. If there are some who have organised these powers in their fullness then of course it would be a different thing. But at present, this is not sufficiently known and those who are claiming on loud speakers have themselves not developed these powers. So they become suspect, they are doubted, and quite legitimately. Sri Aurobindo says: "Do not get discouraged merely by the claims of those who have not develop these powers of knowledge. The powers are like northern lights."

You know — northern lights, is an analogical argument Sri Aurobindo gives. If you go to the North Pole you find radiations of light sometimes suddenly coming. From time to time. You don't even know why they are coming out or from where they are coming. It takes time for us to see that behind these lights is a huge store of light ? the sun itself. It is from the sun-spots that there are radiations and sudden flashings of light. Similarly, when you go to the north of your own brain, north of your own regions of thought, to the highest tops, suddenly you find flashings of light coming out. This is an experience of many of us, even ordinarily. We are touched sometimes by those flashes of light, but we have not gone deeper to find out from where these flashes are coming. If we can do so we shall find the source of that light, the Supramental Knowledge, the Sun of Supramental Light where everything is *Chidgana*. The consciousness is solid, perfect. So just as in the physical world, as you rise towards the northern skies you find flashes of light indicative that beyond these flashes is the real source of light, perfect source of light, similarly, when you rise in your consciousness and find there are flashes of light you should go inwards and see, at the highest levels, the Supramental Light.

You will observe that to read *The Life Divine* is an interdisciplinary adventure. You need to study so many subjects at the same time. You will not be able to understand this word used in the analogical argument referring to northern lights without a knowledge of astronomy.

In every analogical argument we have to find two words: as there so here. Northern lights are compared with the higher light of illuminated intuition which is obstructed and therefore which

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

manifests only from time to time. The northern lights are the sunlight which is obstructed, and therefore gets manifested only from time to time. Sri Aurobindo's argument is that even as it is a fact that we are able to display light from time to time, like flashes, it is a proof that there is a higher light which can burst out unobstructed at sometime. Therefore we need not fear to aspire. It is a very interesting analogy.

On one side you have the sun, on the other there is the Supramental Light. There it is the physical sun, here it is the Supramental consciousness, psychological light. So there, physical light here psychological light. This psychological light bursts out from time to time as flashes, occasional flashes, it is similar to the occasional lights which are seen on the North Pole or South Pole. Occasional displays. So our flashes, our temporary or sporadic flashes are compared to the northern lights and just as northern lights prove that they are sources of that light in the sun itself where there is plenary movement of light, constant movement of light, not sporadic. Our sporadic lights point to a source of light which is plenary, which is constant. Similarly the flashes of light, which we get from time to time, proves or point to a light, the Supramental Light, which is plenary, constant.

Sri Aurobindo wants to show that there is a Supreme Light which is constant, which is plenary. This is what he wants to prove by this analogical argument. How does he prove it? He points out that this light is not visible to us normally. What is visible to us is only sporadic bursts of light, but these sporadic bursts of light point to a source of light which is plenary. These sporadic lights which are called Northern lights prove the existence of the source of light which is plenary: the sunlight. So sunlight is compared to Supramental Light, just as sunlight is full light and plenary light, Supramental Light is also plenary light, constant light. These northern lights are compared to sporadic lights which happen to our consciousness, flashes of intuitions, expression of inspirations, revelations. But they are sporadic not constant. That which is constant is the sunlight on one side and the Supramental Light on the other side. The two are comparable. On lower level northern lights are comparable to our sporadic intuitions, revelations, and inspirations. So just as northern lights prove the existence of the sunlight, similarly our temporary, sporadic manifestations of intuitions prove that there are sources of these intuitions, revelations, inspirations in a superior source: the Supramental Light.

Question: Could you give examples of what can qualify as an experience of intuition, inspiration and revelation? How do we differentiate between them?

What she is pointing out is that we have experiences of intuitions, inspirations and revelations. These three words are difficult words. They are distinguishable from what we call expression of reason. You remember we had once made a diagram to show different levels of consciousness. Last time I compared reason with a carpet. Below the carpet and above the carpet. I said intuition is above the carpet, instinct is below the carpet. And the carpet itself is like the reason.

Beyond the reason, above the reason we have sometimes experiences which are sporadic, not constant. They come from time to time suddenly, they appear and then they close down. After sometime again they appear and then they close down. These are experiences which come in three forms: intuitions, revelations, inspirations.

I had explained to you these three words, once upon a time, when we were doing *The Secret of the Veda*. We had spoken of *Ila*, *Saraswati* and *Sarama*. This was when I had explained these three words in the *Veda*. *Ila* is the power of revelation. *Saraswati* is the power of inspiration. And *Sarama* is the power of intuition.

When you open your eyes all is revealed without effort. Similarly, there is an eye behind our eye, when you open it, everything is revealed.

Inspiration is very often experienced by us, not commonly, but sometimes in a brief intense state. A powerful word, as it were, comes out. It moves the people, illumines the people. Very often you take examples from poetry for inspiration. Often prophets make prophecies in a state of inspiration. They perceive the future as it were and make a prophecy, suddenly. Sometimes, as with Socrates, just before he was sentenced to death, he made a prophetic statement. In a certain state of intensity, the pressure of light manifesting itself in inspired words. Danton for example in one of his great speeches said: "Dare and dare again and still dare." Three words! *De l'audace encore de l'audace et toujours de l'audace.* These three words that he spoke stirred the people. These are words of inspiration.

When you enter into the object and become the object, no more remain away from the object, become one with the object, identified, a spark takes place and the object is possessed. You become the object yourself and the object is known. This is intuitive knowledge.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

So there are three powers, higher powers of consciousness, different from the powers of the reason. These three powers often manifest in our consciousness. They are like northern lights, they flicker from time to time, they do not remain plenary, not all the time. You don't remain in the state of plenary consciousness. You don't live in the sunlight all the time, you only get some flickering manifestations like sun-spots, radiating light from time to time. Similarly, intuition, inspiration, revelation are lights which come to us from time to time. Sporadic lights like northern lights. But they point to a higher light, they are a promise as it were, that if you can have from time to time intuitions, inspirations and revelations then you can be sure that you can reach sometime ? you need not fear to aspire to something higher in which you can remain forever in that state of consciousness. It is that stationing of yourself in that higher light, that is the aim of Divine life. When Sri Aurobindo says that human life aspires for God, Light, Freedom and Immortality what he means is that you can permanently live in Supramental Light. Permanently. This possibility of permanent living in Supramental Light, this promise comes to us by the fact that sometimes you do get sporadic intuitions, revelations and inspirations. If it happens sometimes you can be sure, you can also have it, you can at least aspire to live in that Supreme Light forever.

Question: Kireetbhai, it seems you related revelation to seeing, inspiration to hearing, intuition is related to what?

Discovering. Suddenly. In the Veda we have said that *Sarama* discovers, goes ahead of *Indra* and discovers the stolen cows.

XIII.

Question: Is it really true that humanity has aspired for Truth, Light, Freedom, Immortality only a few individuals here and there have aspired, how can you say that humanity has aspired?

Is it really true, historically, that only few individuals here and there have aspired? You assume when you ask this question you feel as if you are saying a truth. But that itself can be questioned. Is it really true that only few individuals here and there have aspired?

If you take a walk in the evening around the temples here, may be you are not going there, a few extraordinary individuals are not going there, but a large humanity is going there. So how can we say only a few individuals are aspiring? Historically is it a fact that only a few individuals are aspiring? Historically it is not true. Historically crowds of people, multitude of people...

Question: I put this question because even the ordinary humanity which goes to the temple and all this, they go to pray for what? The necessities, they are tied down to the needs and necessities, they are not aspiring for Truth and Light and Immortality. What they are aspiring is for a little money for his son career, it is things of that kind.

Why do they want a career for the children? They want them to live. It is an aspiration to live. What is living? And the moment they are begging to live they want something more. What is that more? As you cross one barrier after the other you begin to uncover what exactly was behind it. It may take one form or the other.

As I said last time, somebody hurts you, pains you and immediately you want to reject it. You may not say I am desirous of desires or of bliss. But why do you reject pain at all? Basically all life is seeking for bliss, all life. If you really examine anything that happens, you are actually looking for bliss.

But it is the first answer to the question.

Who is asking the question? It is your feet, your mouth or your hands? You tell me who is asking the question?

— *It is my mind through my mouth.*

That is right. Your mouth is occupying what portion of the whole body? Only a small portion. Isn't it? Your hands are not troubled at all by your question; your feet are not troubled by your question. That is what you think actually. Actually the whole body is asking the question. Where does your mouth end and where another part of the body start? All ends and beginnings are artificial. Where does this palm end and the arm begin? It is for our practical purpose we divide. Where is my

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

palm if there is no arm? So even if a few individuals have aspired. They are a kind of flowering of humanity. This is the second answer to your question.

There is a third answer to the question. Whenever you refer to the highest that you are capable of, then you can say that is actually what all human beings have been seeking unconsciously — the Highest. The very first sentence of *The Life Divine* is: It is the highest that thought can envisage. You can therefore conclude, that if you actually take an account of the whole of history from any point of view, the one breath is God, Light, Freedom, Immortality. This is the human aspiration.

Question: What is scepticism?

Scepticism is a state of mind which is inclined to doubt, and doubt as much as possible, — for ever if possible. A state of mind which wants to doubt, and doubt again and again, and for ever if possible.

Question: What is evolution and what is the explanation of evolution?

What is evolution? Evolution is a gradual development from one stage to the next which prepares for a further development by transmitting to the next what is already acquired and at the same time developing still something new. That is evolution.

The essential point is that there is a gradual development. This word gradual is very important. A gradual development from one stage to the next, and it still wants to develop further. And in developing further there is a transmission of what is already acquired to the next. There is something like an accumulation, a gradual accumulation and then transmission.

The explanation of evolution is that the next stage of evolution is already hidden in the present one. If Life has evolved in Matter the explanation is that Life is already hidden in Matter. Not only that, Matter is already Life in another form. If a tree evolves out of a seed, it is because the tree is already hidden in the seed, and the tree in a sense is already the seed, the seed is already the tree. Basically it is already the tree. This is the explanation of evolution.

Question: Why do the religions regard the manifestation of Supermind as perverse?

All religions may not, or all religious people may not. But there is a religionist perception. In all religions there is a religionist perception. There is a difference between religion and religionism. Religion may be an open gate to spirituality, in which case it is not religionism. But those who believe that religion is the highest and you cannot go beyond it; that religion is the top, then that is called religionism. Religionism maintains that there is a vast gulf between man and God. A gulf, God is somewhere there and man is so low. It is a gulf between the two. As a result the highest that man can do is always to keep that gulf, — because there is always a gulf —, so you should reconcile with that gulf. And if you say I want to be God, I want to be one with God, if you say that — you are perverse. Something has gone wrong with your mind. You have become too presumptuous, too proud. You want to be like God? You want to be one with God? That is impossible! The gulf between man and God will always remain. And keep that gulf, don't try to jump. And all your desire to jump is presumptuous, perverse.

There is a very interesting sentence in the Bible — it is a sentence which I have discussed with many many Christians — “Be Thou as perfect as thy father in heaven is perfect.” It is a saying of Christ. And I have spoken with many Christians, what about this sentence? You should understand, they answer me: “It is in a certain context. It only means, be as far as possible like God. Don't say be as perfect. They want to minimize. You can never be like Him. Try as much as possible.” But I tell them: “Look, Christ has not said be as far as possible, his statement is very clear, categorical.”

Question: I have put to the Christians the following question: It is said in the Bible “And God created man in His own image”. And this is exactly what you are saying.

But still this sentence can be: Image is not the same as the original. It is still an image. So you can say there is a gulf. But this sentence of Christ is categorical. “Be Thou as perfect as thy father in heaven is perfect.” It is very clear, there is no compromise in it.

Question: What is perfection in this context?

There are three concepts of perfection.

One is the maximum possible. When you reach the maximum — it is now perfect.

The second is a state of equilibrium.

And the third is when all are perfectly mutual.

You can take any one of these three meanings, as you like.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

Question: What is causality?

Very good question. This is the one question which I have not answered throughout my lectures. I answered indirectly but never defined.

Causality is not only a connection between cause and effect, but a necessary connection between cause and effect. This word "necessary" is the heart of causality.

This necessity implies that when cause exists, effect must necessarily come about. You cannot escape it. That is causality. Merely connection between antecedent and consequent — this is first and then another comes afterward — is not enough to say it is causality. The connection must be such that if this happens that must happen. Necessary connection.

So causality is not only a connection between cause and effect, but a necessary connection between cause and effect.

Question: What are the four aspects of causality?

Material cause, efficient cause, formal cause and final cause. Four aspects of causality, of causation.

The material cause, if you take the example of the seed and the tree, then seed is the material cause of the tree. The formal cause is the form of the tree. Efficient cause is the farmer who goes on pouring water on the seed and supplying all the fertilizers and the final cause is the purpose for which the tree is grown.

Question: What is the condition of today's humanity for you?

There is one sentence Sri Aurobindo has written in the very first paragraph of *The Life Divine*: "... today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings." That is the condition of humanity.

So there are three things. Today's humanity has been analyzing the externalities of Nature that is the first point. Nature has many aspects: outer and inner. And today's humanity is not very much concerned with the inside of Nature. It is concerned mainly with the outside of Nature. That is the first condition. It means that today science is nothing but analysis of externalities of Nature. So today, humanity is busy looking at Nature, analyzing the outside of Nature. All that we called science is this. Now it has been done so much, so much, that humanity has become satiated. I told you what is satiation is at one time. When are you satiated? When somebody goes on giving you sweets and another sweet, and another sweet, and another sweet what happens to your mouth? You don't want anymore, you are satiated. But it does not mean that you are satisfied. You may still be hungry. If something else is given, a savory is given to you, you can still have it. But as far the sweet is concerned, finished! No more! Please don't give me anymore. That is called satiation.

Today's humanity has analysed Nature so much, so much that it is satiated, but not satisfied. Therefore the third thing that it is happening is: it is preparing to return to its primeval longings. It remembers now the long forgotten taste of God and wants to return to the original breath: God, Light, Freedom and Immortality. That is today's humanity.

Question: Regarding the definition of evolution you said "gradual developments". I have a problem with this word gradual, because sometimes if you observe Nature, minerals and all which is Matter, and then you go to Life, a quantum jump takes place. So can we call it gradual development?

That is to say, even if it comes as a jump, it is preceded by very gradual movement. It may take a little jump somewhere but this is prepared by gradual developments. It is not all the time happening like jumps. Graduality is necessary. You know there are children who develop, conscious children, and they jump, but even then they gradually develop. For two days, three days they remain at the same stage and then they make a further progression. This dwelling is very important. At any given stage you dwell for sometimes. Then you move forward.

Question: What is Satkaryavada and Asatkaryavada?

When the effect is present in the cause that theory is called *Satkaryavada*. When that effect is not present in the cause it is called *Asatkaryavada*.

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

THE LIFE DIVINE by Sri Aurobindo
Chapter I
The Human Aspiration

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming, — Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead.... What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

Kutsa Angirasa — Rig Veda. I. 113. 8,10.

Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and fulfilling... That which is immortal in mortals and possessed of the truth, is a god and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers... Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.

Vamadeva — Rig Veda. IV. 1. 7; IV. 2. 1; IV. 4. 5.

The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unilluminated compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or sub-conscious will is another problem of opposites

THE LIFE DIVINE — *The Human Aspiration*

in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.