

THE TRIPLE TRANSFORMATION

by

KIREET JOSHI

I

Each one of us is given three instruments, the body, life and mind. And each one of these three instruments has its natural activities. For example the body has instincts, which are untaught, they are there. I get hungry whether I am taught to feel hungry or not. It is a natural instinct, untaught. And it is because of that instinct that I am preserved. I feel hungry, I eat and I maintain myself physically. These are ordinary activities of maintaining ourselves physically. Then there are instincts of which you are not even aware, for example instincts by which you can digest your food. We simply eat and digestion which is a long process takes place automatically. And now modern science has found out hundreds of activities of this kind going on in our body which are automatic activities of which we are not aware at all, but they are constantly taking place.

Similarly there are other activities of life in us, which are called the vital activities. Now the vital part in us provides the basic force of breathing. The breath of life we call life. The real life in us is that which causes the breathing. Now that also takes place automatically, it is unlearned, we are not taught how to breathe. It is going on automatically. But apart from this basic activity of breath of life there are numerous desires which constantly arise in us automatically, the spontaneous likes and dislikes. Even a small child right from the beginning begins to like and dislike certain things automatically. At a certain other stage there are attractions and repulsions, now these also happen automatically. At a still higher level there are longings which arise, long-standing longings. We feel that there is a longing for somebody, longing for some kind of a victory, some kind of an ambition to be first or to rise to the highest position. There are various kinds of longings which arise automatically, and they are very powerful. Human beings are as it were, swayed by them.

Now, mind also has its own automatic activities. The basic activity of the mind is sensation. Smell, touch, sight, hearing are automatic functions of the mental activity in our body. Then there are perceptions and image-formation. When I see an object, then even if I am withdrawn from that object I can recall that object, by means of an image of that object. Then I am able to connect a word with an image and I am able to think with the words. Now all these activities are quite normal activities of our mind. At a higher level I begin to conceive in the mind. Conception is a higher activity of the mind, and this also at a certain stage is automatic. The higher development of concepts takes a lot of effort but certain concepts are quite easy and they take place automatically.

These three elements are in us, but behind these three elements, there is something else in us of which we are hardly aware but which is the real instrument of experience, it is that which is permanent in us and that is what is normally called soul. There is a soul in us.

Question: What is the meaning of experience?

Now of this we shall talk a little more later on, but for the moment in answer to this question I would only say that the soul in us is in interaction with the body, life and mind. It is this interaction which really is the meaning of experience. At one stage, in one of my talks I have spoken of the soul to be equivalent to, analogically, an architect. The soul is like an architect. Just as an architect designs a beautiful building, even so the soul has a capacity of designing the interconnection of body, life and mind. The soul is also like a mason, not only an architect but also like a mason because after designing, the engineer or the mason comes in and he really designs, actually concretises it. Now the soul has been given a kind of a mission. As an architect is given the mission to design a house, a mason is given a kind of a mission to concretise the design, similarly the soul has been given the mission that it has to design a beautiful structure of the body, life and mind and their interrelationship. Each one has a special kind of a design to create and that is the specific task for each one. You and I are different in

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

this sense that although both of us are designers, the way in which we shall design and the kind of design that we shall make in regard to the body, life and mind will be different in each case. You will design body, life and mind according to one perception, I will design my body, life and mind according to another perception. So each one of us is required to have a specific kind of design, you might say. And then having made the design or while making the design, it goes on also building it, building according to that design. Now while doing this the body, life and mind react to the soul and very often the reactions are of resistance. The body, life and mind do not normally abide by the design that is being conceived by the soul. Each one goes its own way, as it were. He doesn't care for the design. It is the soul which is constantly striving to see that the body, life and mind react in such a manner that the real design is effected and the real concretisation of the design is effected, this being the task of the soul.

Now, how much resistance is there? How much is the collaboration? And the manner by which this collaboration can be brought about so that ultimately body, life and mind do exactly as the soul decides, this task is the task of the soul. Whatever is involved in this is the real experience, all else is secondary. All else may be an aid but that is not essential. In order that body, life and mind can ultimately fall in line with the design that is being designed by the soul, it is not necessary that you should be a very learned person. It is not necessary to be a very powerful person, in the sense of acquiring a lot of properties and becoming a captain or becoming a major chief or something of the kind. That may be necessary but it is not indispensable. In each case it may be different, but the value of all this even if one becomes very learned, the value of that learning is only as to how far it aids the soul in convincing the mind, life and body to fall in the design of the soul, that is the important thing. So whether I memorise ten books or twenty books, or I do not memorise at all, provided that I can effectuate the consent of the body, life and mind to fall in line with the soul's design, that alone matters. And when I speak of experience, it is this experience by which the soul shall be able to convince the body, life and mind so as to obtain their collaboration. Then they will do according to the decisions of the soul. Now in the case of rebirth of which we were talking, what I have said was this, that what is important in the growth of the soul from body to body is not the carrying of the memory of the past birth but to carry forward the experience of the past birth and to utilise that experience in the next birth. And since the experience is not definitely connected with the memory of all the events, but really this quintessence of how far somebody has consented or not, so those experiences, those events in life, which have been central to the attainment of the consent of the body, life and mind to the design of the soul are carried by the soul into the next birth, that is all that is important and that the soul carries always. Other memories may be there, may not be there, it is not so important. So that is what I meant when I spoke of memory and experience.

Question: And do we drop off other experiences also which are not helpful in evolution?

Yes. There are so many experiences which are going on. But the essential experience is only this, the art and science by which you are able to effect the consent of the body, life and mind to fall in line with the design of the soul, that is the real experience. It is by that that you grow really. The growth of the individual lies in this. That is why we said that what is important is self control and self-knowledge, these two things are regarded to be very important in the growth. To achieve self control means how far the body, life and mind can be controlled so that they do not go haywire according to their own desires and the soul is able to effectuate its own will upon the body, life and mind. If you can learn this art, if this is done, then that is the most important thing.

Question: That means that the unconscious is that level of which we are not aware?

Unconscious has two meanings here. Unconscious may be subconscious or may be even superconscious, about both of which you are unconscious.

Question: Does the unconscious have past, present and future?

Yes, therefore I spoke of two levels. It consists of the subconscious and the superconscious. Memories of the past are all thrown down into the subconscious but there is another knowledge of which you speak just now which inwardly knows what exactly is to be drawn out.

Question: When we take to any austerity or self-control, does it mean that inherently something in us knows that the purpose of our life is evolution?

Yes, you might say there is an inherent knowledge within us of which we are not aware therefore we call it unconscious. There is an inherent knowledge in us that the most important thing for us is the experience of self-control, self-mastery and as a result of which you know what is the self itself. So that is why what is important is not the memory of so many details of things but this experience of how you control the body, how you control the life, how you control the mind. In the example of *Valmiki*, it is this experience that he got by means of which he could liberate himself from all the anxiety about the family and about the kind of activities he was engaged in. There was a realisation which enabled him to overcome the attachments in which he was engrossed and he became free from them and he began to pursue what he felt was the right thing to do.

Question: What is self-knowledge?

Now self knowledge is a threefold knowledge: the knowledge of the soul which is growing all the time through birth after birth, second is the knowledge of that of which this soul is the delegate of and which is called in Indian terminology *Jivatman*, and third is the Supreme Self which is at once universal and transcendental. The knowledge of the transcendental and universal self is self-knowledge. The knowledge of the *Jivatman*, which is a portion of this transcendent universal self, is the second self-knowledge. And third is the delegate of this *Jivatman* which is in our body and which grows. This is the soul of which I spoke just now. The knowledge of the soul and its nature is also self-knowledge. So self-knowledge is triple knowledge: the knowledge of the soul, the knowledge of the individual self or the *Jivatman*, and the knowledge of the supreme self, what is called *Brahman* or *Atman* in our Indian psychology. So, *Atman*, *Jivatman*, and *Chaitya Purusha*, are the three aspects of the self of which we speak of, when we speak of self-knowledge.

Actually, your questions are very directly relevant to what we are going to discuss now because in fact I was going to start my talk with this description of — what Sri Aurobindo calls — the psychological ignorance and the constitutional ignorance. These are the two ignorances out of the sevenfold ignorance according to Sri Aurobindo. If you count our ignorance completely, the total picture of our ignorance is a sevenfold ignorance. That we shall take up later on but the two of these elements which are directly relevant to our present purpose is what is called psychological ignorance and constitutional ignorance.

Psychological ignorance is the ignorance of the total psychology of our being. We are ignorant of the subconscious which is in us. There is a huge ocean of the subconscious in us of which we are ignorant. We are ignorant of our body excepting a little of which we know, but we are largely unaware of our entire body. We are unaware of our vital. We are unaware of our mind. We are unaware of the soul in us. And we are unaware of the superconscious that which is above the soul. Now this unawareness constitutes our psychological ignorance.

The constitutional ignorance consists of our ignorance of the interrelationship of these. We do not know the relationship between body and life, the relationship between life and mind, between mind and body, between mind and life, between soul and mind, between soul and body, between soul and life, the entire constitutional hierarchy. Some people believe that what is most important is the body. If you provide for the bodily needs then everything is done. This is because we feel that the body is the most important; so constitutionally we think the body is the sovereign. Some people believe that life is the sovereign and that the body should be capable of fulfilling the desires that man has got and so they use the body as an instrument, as a horse and life as the rider of the horse, as it were, and the horse must act according to the needs of the rider. They believe that the life force is the leader. Some people believe that the mind is the leader. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* there is a description of the mind, *manomaya purusha prana sharirah neta*, *prana sharirah neta*, this is the term which is used in the *taittiriya upanishad*, that mind, *manomaya purusha*, is the leader of the *prana* of the life, of the vital and *sharirah*, of the body. And those who live in the mind, the thinkers, scientists, inventors, designers, planners, always believe that the mind is the sovereign, and that body and life must subserve the mind. But very few or hardly anybody really knows that there is behind the mind something else, the soul, of which the body, life and mind are the instruments. Some people, even when they come to become aware of the soul, they do not know that the soul is the master, is the sovereign and body, life and mind are its instruments. The constitutional ignorance is not knowing the real relationship, the real leader among the body, life and mind and the soul. So the ignorance of the interrelationship of body, life, mind and soul is our constitutional ignorance. And then above the

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

soul is the *Jivatman*, and above that is the real master, the sovereign Lord himself, *isha vasyam*. The supreme Lord himself is the master of the whole thing. This entire relationship we are unaware of.

Because of our psychological ignorance and because of our constitutional ignorance we are helpless in this whole battle of life. We are just moved basically by instinctive movements, by the impulses of life, by the compulsion of circumstances, by various kinds of events which occur and we react to them. Certain influences we gather and some guidance we receive from one corner or the other "pell-mell". In a disorderly fashion we create somehow some order out of this disorder and this we call our normal life.

So the basic thing that has to be done first and foremost is to develop our body, life and mind of which we are normally aware, in such a way that we begin to become aware of the soul of which we are not normally aware. The first step is to become aware of that which we are not normally aware. So to some extent, the development of body, life and mind is absolutely essential before you can enter into the awareness of the soul. Actually the soul itself allows the body, life and mind to develop to some extent and voluntarily remains hidden, does not even show its presence. It is a very wise designer or architect you might say. So it does not even show its presence until body, life and mind are developed to some extent, but when they are developed to some extent, then one begins to feel the presence of something that is different from body, life and mind. Now very often we may have some experiences of the soul's presence but we may not recognise it as something distinct from body, life and mind. To become aware of the distinct experiences of the soul one has to have repeated experiences of the soul, and one must know how to recognise the difference between the mental idea and the soul experience. Actually we thought of doing this subject because of the question which was raised last time: how do we know that we are progressing? Now the real thing in us which really recognises, is the soul. It is the soul which recognises whether we are progressing or not. And that was the reason why I took up this subject as a whole which is a much larger subject, but I thought it was a good link because unless we uncover the soul, we do not get the right guidance as to whether we are progressing at all and if we are progressing in the right direction or not. He is the architect who knows whether the construction is going on according to the design or not.

Question: How do you distinguish this and the soul?

Now this is a very interesting issue actually. Let us concentrate on this question. There is a difference between life and mind. That there is a difference between body and life is more easily known. The body is what we see very physically, and vital of the life is that which consists of desires, impulses, ambitions, various kinds of longings, attractions, repulsions. So there is a marked difference between the body and the life, which is very easily discernible. But the difference between life and mind is not so easily discernible because we do not use a terminology sufficiently clear to understand this difference. For example when I desire something it may be equated with mental desire, attractions may be called mental attractions. So there is an intermixture between life and mind and we do not very much distinguish between the two. So to make a clear distinction between the two we must say that the power of conception is distinctly mental. The vital cannot conceive, the vital can desire, can feel, can sympathise, can be moved by longings, but it does not conceive does not have the power of conception.

Now what is the power of conception? How do we know that this is called conception? Conceptions are of three levels. A conception of things is the lowest level of conception. The second level of conception is conception of conception. What you are now doing, the activity in which you are now involved is really of the second level because we are trying to ask what is conception. So conception of conception is the middle level. And the third is the highest level of conception where we reach a point where we say "this is beyond conception". We strain to conceive something and when we say "it is beyond that effort", however much we try to conceive, we cannot conceive at all.

Now, conceptions of things are very easy. A table, a chair, a museum, a building, various kinds of physical objects are seen by us and we have concepts of them. We have images of them, images of words attached to them and these words and images help us in conceiving these things although the conception is not equal to word, it is not equal to image, it is still subtler than that but we build up concepts by the help of images and words.

In the second level, we have several cluster of ideas of which we become aware, and I will now mention some of those ideas and as soon as they are mentioned you will recognise them. The idea of the Universal; none of us have seen the Universal physically. When we speak of universal actually there is nothing corresponding to it and no images there. At the most you have an image of the sky touching the horizon at the earth point, some kind of image of that kind in which everything is included, but surely that is not universal because we know that as you go near the horizon, again the horizon expands. So the Universal is something still greater than that, it is not something which is enclosed, it is something much vaster. Now the concept of Universal is the second degree of concept, second level of conceiving. When I try to conceive the Universal and think about Universal, I am engaged in the second level of activity of the concept. Then the concept of Essence. This is a word we use very often but you will see that you have never physically seen Essence. When you say "what is the Essence of the matter or what is essentially true" you have a general idea of Essence in the sense that as soon as you grasp the essence, everything becomes clear with regard to that object. This much we know but essence as such, we have no physical experience of it and yet we understand it. So the understanding of an idea without any base in the physical is the real concept, is the real mental idea. That is how the mind is different from anything else. Mind is truly mind when it can conceive concepts without any physical base; that is the essentiality of the mind. Infinity is another concept. Once again like Universal, Infinity also, nobody has seen. Eternity is another idea, another concept like the concept of All. All is a concept in which you can say that there is a physical image to some extent, in the sense that if I have seen the totality of these objects which are before me I can say "all these pieces", so there is some physical image of it, but if I say "all the objects of the universe", it is only a concept because I have never seen all the objects of the universe put together at one stroke or one stretch. Take for example the concept: all cats. You all understand the meaning of all cats, it is not as if you do not understand but you have never seen all the cats, there is no physical experience of all cats and yet you understand the meaning of all cats. Now how do you understand the meaning of all cats? It is by the power of mental conception. The mental concept of All is understood directly by the mind without real physical experience. This is the second level of the mind or of mental activity.

The third is that which goes beyond conception, which is also mental activity but it is that activity in which the mind confesses that "I have reached my ultimate vigour and my ultimate strength, I am at my wit's end when I come to that realm". For example the concept of the transcendent; the concept of All is still conceivable but that which transcends All. There is a faint concept of it but really, it is announced by our mind to be ineffable. Ineffable means inexpressible, what I cannot express at all. Total silence is a concept that my mind to some extent can conceive, but it admits also that what really total silence means I cannot express. That is why the Upanishads say, "Mind and words return from that silence". The mind has reached its ultimate height beyond which it cannot grasp.

I can distinguish between desire and concept of which we spoke just now and by this distinction we can say that this is mental and this is vital. I can distinguish because of these experiences of my desires on the one hand and my concepts on the other and I can say "all that belongs to desires is vital, all that belongs to concept is mental". But now by what means shall I find out how all this is distinguishable from the psychic or the soul?

The first indication of the soul is the experience of the inner flame. That is why the *Veda* speaks of *agni*, this inner flame. Now most of us do not experience it at all, therefore we do not distinguish between mental, vital and anything called the soul or the psychic, but there are moments when we do experience an inner flame burning. Now there are two kinds of flames in us and they should be distinguished from each other because the one flame belongs to the vital and the other flame belongs to the soul. At the vital level many of us have experienced the flame. Overpowering desire is also a flame. Overpowering desire to get the object of love is also a flame. One burns as it were in love, vital love, and so we might say it is a red flame. When it does not get it, it gets angry, frustrated. The mark of this flame is that it is constantly seeking to possess from outside, the object is outside and it wants to devour that object and possess it. This flame, many people experience, if not all. Many people who live purely on a physical plane, who are domestic in character want to preserve their ordinary routine of life. They do not experience this deep flame of the heart. But this is quite common actually, at a certain stage of life people do experience this kind of a flame. Some people have not a flame for love but the flame for power, they are consumed by the desire for power or desire for wealth but these are

all vital flames. And many people call this, psychic flame by mistake. This is not the correct thing. The flame of the vital is like a volcano whereas the psychic flame is very quiet in its nature, it burns steadily. It is a flame that is burdened with wisdom, as I said. He is like an architect who knows what is to be done, what is to be designed. And the object of the psychic flame is primarily to nourish truth, beauty and goodness. Truth, beauty and goodness are its primary movements. Whenever there is a true situation where truth, beauty and goodness manifest, there is an inner joy, and all of us experience it one way or the other. You see a remarkably beautiful picture and the response that you give is of pure admiration without the desire to possess for yourselves. You just admire. In the vital admiration there is a desire to possess, but in the soul admiration, you admire for the sake of admiration, you just enjoy it.

Question: Totally unselfish?

Yes, unselfish. You really feel "how wonderful". When you see a sunset and admire it, you do not say "I must have a sunset in my body", you just admire it: "It is so beautiful". Not that everybody admires a sunset because everybody is not so sensitive, the soul is not so much in the forefront. Somebody has done a heroic action for example and you feel extremely happy and admire that heroism, that also is a soul reaction. What you call hero-worship, if it is a true hero-worship, it is psychic in character, it is not vital in character. If you have read some of the stories of *Sharad Chandra Chattopadhyay* for example, you will find in many of the female characters particularly, a great deal of soul experience; the self-giving, just for the sake of self giving. Somebody serves somebody else not because one expects that it will be returned in one way or the other but just out of admiration one goes on serving whatever the result, does not care at all. It is a pure psychic movement, there is no calculation. The impulse to protect somebody who needs protection which requires a lot of courage and one puts oneself in the midst of fire for protecting somebody else, that also is a sign that there is a soul which is active. It is quite different from the vital, physical and mental, all these elements are quite poor as compared to this capacity of the soul.

These are the preliminary experiences of the soul, which are only on the surface. Then there are the deeper experiences of the soul. Search of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is a deeper soul movement. Now it is true that even the mind has this tendency to seek knowledge for its own sake, but behind the mind's movement of knowledge for its own sake is always the soul element. Normally the mind seeks utility knowledge, practical knowledge, pragmatic knowledge and only at very high levels it begins to seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge. And this is very logical due to the fact that the soul is behind this mind and the time comes when the mind gets fatigued in its search and still there is a movement of that pursuit of knowledge and then you can really distinguish between the mental knowledge and the psychic knowledge, the search of the psychic for the knowledge.

When can you distinguish really between the two kinds of knowledge? For example when you come to that borderline of the knowledge of silence, the mind cannot pursue that knowledge; even if it wants to pursue, the mind cannot experience Silence, mind cannot experience Infinity, mind cannot experience Eternity. So pursuit of the knowledge of Eternity, pursuit of the knowledge of Infinity, pursuit of the knowledge of All, of Universality, pursuit of the experience of these, is a pure movement of the soul.

Then, there is a deeper question of the aim of life. This question basically arises at a certain deeper level of our soul. The question that *Narada* asked of the robber: "What are you doing all this for?", was a question put to him at a given time when he was deeply stirred. Now what is it that was stirred which led him to enquire really? He went to his house and asked everybody and when he got the answer he got disappointed and then felt that "all that I was doing was wrong". So this question "what is all this for?" is really a question that strikes the real soul when it arises or when it is put and it is the inner soul, which is really stirred, the psychic that is stirred. It is the mark that the soul is now active. And then the pursuit of the discovery of the aim of life is also a soul activity. It is a long activity but the whole inspiration comes not from the vital or the body or from the mind but from the soul. At a deeper level of this search comes the question, "what is the aim of *my* life?" Not only aim of life in general but the aim of my life. And that stirs our entire inner being to the deepest level: What am I? *Koham kastvam?* These questions which arise — and one is gripped by these questions — are really the experiences of the soul. It is not merely mental because mind is not merely capable of being stirred by them. Even if somebody puts this question, many people just skirt them, they do not grip the individuals. How many people in

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

India particularly have heard this question: *koham? kastvam?* Shankaracharya said these are the basic two questions that should be put to everybody and our culture is basically that culture.

Question: I may be going out of track but I see people who while in this search are also so engrossed in selfish activities also. What is the state of such beings?

You are not going off the track, actually it's a very important question. You cannot superficially evaluate this. There are people who ask this question very deeply and while the search is going on, in the meantime they may be engrossed in selfish activities. Now there are people who do not ask that question but are already doing very nice activities. Now both are of equal value if they just remain where they are; both are limited. The real goal should be that when you inquire, ultimately you should come back to practice. And those who are practising now, they should also expound their knowledge and you have to integrate it so that you really become conscious of what you are doing. Unconsciously many people in the world are extremely psychic. Children for example are extremely psychic. Most children's activities bubble out of the soul. It is not wrong to say, "Children are angels". In certain activities they are angels, there is no doubt about it, not in all their activities but in many of their activities they are angels but they are not conscious that they are angels. Even some animals are psychic some times, extremely sympathetic, selfless and sacrificing. Some dogs for example can sacrifice themselves quite selflessly; the psychic element in them is present, manifest and is an aspiration but they are not conscious of this. To be conscious and to be master of these movements is the goal of our purpose in fact. Until you are conscious of it, all this may be good as help but it is not the terminal point of our effort. So both should be amalgamated actually.

The discovery of the psychic being or of the soul is perhaps one of the deepest experiences of the soul itself; conscious experience of the soul. What are those experiences? Spontaneous cheerfulness, a spontaneous experience that everything is alive. The same trees, the same sky, the same people whom we are meeting day after day and one fine morning you find them all alive. You feel as if the season has changed, it is spring. The stones quicken, the trees begin to whisper, and everything seems to have a message and you find yourself so harmonious with everything in the world, everything is so vibrant, palpitating, you feel a concrete experience everywhere. At a deeper level, you experience tremendous calm, a tremendous mastery in which your body, life and mind do not resist at all, they do not create any problem at all for you. You reach a stage where there is a mastery over your body, life and mind. At least for that moment, when you have that experience. A quiet mastery of body, life and mind is a deeper experience of the soul. You begin to hear the voice of the soul, either physically — sometimes even physically you can hear — or you have an imprint of the message of the soul, so powerful that you know exactly what you have to do. You may be for days and days in question whether you should do or not do, and then suddenly if you are really developing your soul experience, then after that experience you are sure as to what you want to do and you cannot even doubt it and even if you want to doubt the doubt does not arise. Or it is felt to be an external movement and your feet are sure of being on the right path, they go straight towards their goal. You know what you really are, what is your specific function, what is your role, what is your true individuality. These are deeper experiences of the soul. Now if you permit me, I should read out to you a few paragraphs from the chapter that I have given you. If you open page 891 of *The Life Divine*: I shall read very slowly:

"At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable; but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

that is inherent in its own substance. It is aware also of all that contradicts these things, of all that deviates from its own native character, of falsehood and evil and the ugly and the unseemly; but it does not become these things nor is it touched or changed by these opposites of itself which so powerfully affect its outer instrumentation of mind, life and body. For the soul, the permanent being in us, puts forth and uses mind, life and body as its instruments, undergoes the envelopment of their conditions, but it is other and greater than its members".

So this is the description of the basic character of the soul in us. Now the knowledge of this soul is you might say the first step in the process of triple transformation on which this whole chapter is written. It is entitled *The triple transformation*.

If you remember we have been discussing for a long time, right from the time that we started the *Isha Upanishad*, the question as to what is the purpose of life and we have said, "the manifestation in the embodied individual of the totality of divinity", that is how we have defined the goal. The manifestation of the totality of divinity in the embodied individuality, and we have said that since this task cannot be accomplished in one single life, there is a need of succession of birth and therefore rebirth becomes a necessary instrument. And when we came to the discussion of rebirth we emphasised the role that *karma* plays in the process of rebirth.

And then we came to the concept of immortality and spoke of essential immortality and triple immortality which is a part of manifestation. With regard to essential immortality we said the realisation of the self which is transcendental and universal, which by its very nature is self-existent, imperishable and therefore immortal, the realisation of that is what we define as essential immortality. When we realise it, then you might say the primary goal of our birth, rebirth is achieved. The primary goal is not the entire goal. The second is the manifestation of that self in the embodied individual. That is the second aspect of our endeavour. And then we have spoken of the awareness of that which moves from birth to birth as a permanent entity. And then we spoke of the soul or psychic entity as a permanent element in us which is inextinguishable, which is the permanent within ourselves, which moves from birth to birth. That is also immortal but immortal in the sense that it survives after every movement, even survives after the death of the body, gathers the experience and is the leader of our movement of evolution.

And then there is a triple immortality. Immortality of the mind, life and body so that these three instruments which are constantly mutable, constantly changing, attain individuality and the individual formation of each becomes inextinguishable. So although there is mutability, the individual formation remains immutable like a river which is constantly moving but its course always remains identifiable as distinguishable from all other rivers. Similarly the mind is constantly mobile but attains an individuality and always remains within the confines of the individuality, without the need of dissolving itself, that is immortality of the mind. Similarly immortality of the life and immortality of the body.

Now this goal of realisation of the essential immortality, realisation of the psychic immortality and the realisation of the mental, vital and physical immortality is achieved by a threefold process. And that process Sri Aurobindo describes in this chapter, the chapter called "The triple transformation", a threefold process. If the goal were only to realise the essential immortality then you might say that that goal has been achieved already by a number of people in the world already. The paths have been worked out, methods have been worked out, realisations have been achieved by a number of people, who have realised essential immortality. Even psychic immortality is recognised and realised by many people. But the triple immortality and particularly and finally the physical immortality, has not yet been realised on the earth. Or at least, even if it is realised it is not sufficiently known. There are some verses in the *Veda* which give indication as if the vedic *rishis* had reached the point of even physical immortality. But still it is an aim which has not been established, the path is not clearly laid down, methods have not been fully worked out and that is the task which has to be still done, and that task involves triple transformation.

Having said this, I will now refer to the first paragraph of this chapter which you have with you (page 889):

"If it is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in

*which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit, then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But we have supposed that there is a farther intention, — not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, *bhuri aspashta kartvam*; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the Spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature."*

This confusion arises because there are two traditions which are intermixed; very often the words used are the same but what is being said is quite different. There is one tradition which began with the *Veda*, which is present in some of the *Upanishads* and which is present in the *Gita*. There is another tradition which is also present in the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita* in the sense that it is acknowledged but which was not very much preferred. But that which was greatly preferred among some people and many people in the tradition of the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita* too followed that tradition. That other goal, but which in due course became much more prominent in our history of India and this was taken up very largely by Buddhism and Jainism and this was again taken up later on by the Hindu tradition. And at that time, much of the original tradition of the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, stood neglected, ignored, or not fully understood. And therefore, over the last 2000 years this tradition of the understanding of *mukti* as understood in Buddhism, Jainism and also in the Hindu tradition — later Hindu tradition — became very similar and it came to be realised that actually, whatever differences there may be among all these principles of thought, the ultimate goal is *moksha* which everybody accepted. Now this later tradition speaks of *moksha* in terms of what can be described as *salokya-mukti* and *sayujya-mukti* — these are the two words that *mukti* considers. *Salokya-mukti* is a state of liberation that one attains by realising oneness with the Supreme. One lives in the same consciousness as the Supreme. *Sayujya-mukti* is a state in which one realises one's dependence upon the Supreme, one's union with the Supreme but not identity with the Supreme. In *sayujya* you have a kind of relationship with the Supreme. These two words describe whatever differences there are in the later Hindu tradition, of varieties of concepts of *mukti*.

Two traditions have become very powerful in the later Hinduism, the tradition of *jnanayoga* and the tradition of *bhaktiyoga*.

The tradition of *jnanayoga* aimed at *salokya-mukti*: one becomes one with the Supreme. Statements like: *tat tvam asi*, Thou art That, *aham brahmasmi*, I am *brahman* are the statements which are relevant to this kind of realisation. The *bhaktiyoga* actually claimed that complete identity with the Supreme is impossible, is in fact a wrong notion. The individual is an eternal child of the Divine, he can become a *bhakta* of the Divine but he cannot become one with Him. So the realisation of the individual as an eternal child of the Divine is *sayujya-mukti*, you become liberated. When an individual realises that he is a child of God and remains in this condition for ever, he becomes liberated.

Now in the tradition of Buddhism, which is a variation of *jnanayoga* in which the attainment is also a kind of *salokya-mukti* because in that state the individual no more remains; as in *jnanayoga*, the individuality is lost. There is in *jnanayoga* only oneness with the Supreme, only Supreme remains and nothing else remains. In the case of *bhaktiyoga*, the individual remains as a child of God, so there is a difference between the individual and the Supreme. In Buddhism also it is like *salokya* because there also, there is no individuality left at the end of the road in the state of liberation.

Question: But there is no God in Buddhism?

In Buddhism the ultimate state is not substance, is not *sat* but it is *asat*, it is non being, it is *shunya*. What is *shunya*, what is that *asat*, is a difficult question and there is a lot of controversy into which we need not go. But this is the main difference, you might say, between the *jnanayoga* of the Hindu tradition and the *jnanayoga* of Buddhism. You might also remember that *Upanishads* also speak of *asat*. So it is not as if the *Upanishads* were not aware of the experience of *asat*. So in that sense you might say that Buddhism is not entirely different or completely alien to something that was in the *Upanishads*. *Upanishads* also spoke in one of the statements: *sat* came from *asat*. That is one of the statements of the *Upanishads*.

In the *Veda* also there is a recognition of *asat*. In any case it is recognised by spiritual practitioners that there is a state which is beyond the state of substance. By whatever name we may call, *shunya* or *asat* or nihil, whatever you might call, but there is a state beyond the state of substance. But the ultimate effect is that individuality does not remain and there is *salokya-mukti*.

Jainism has a different tradition. It is also a kind of a variation of *jnanayoga*. The only point is that *salokya* is not one with the Supreme substance but the realisation is of the individual as a true individual, but the content of the experience is similar to the experience that is described in *jnanayoga*, of the experience of the *brahman*. It is silent, it is pure, full of knowledge, luminosity, but it says that that nature belongs to every individual. It is not as if there is one substance. There are multiplicities of individuals and each individual can rise up to that level and he becomes liberated when he realises that he is inactive, luminous and supreme, omniscient.

So you might say that *salokya-mukti* is basically having these threefold variations. In *sayujya-mukti* there are many variations of one basic thing, namely that individual remains but the kind of relationship that individual may have with the Supreme may be different. You may recognise yourself as a child of God or a friend of God, beloved of God, servant of God, or you might even say that God is your child, not that you are his child but even God is looked upon as your child; *Balgopal* realisation in which *Gopal* is your child and you have a relationship with him. All these are variations of *sayujya mukti*.

But in the tradition of the *Veda*, *Upanishad* and the *Gita*, there is a further movement which is called *sadharmya-mukti*. The *Bhagavad Gita* clearly speaks of the word *sadharmya* towards the end of the *Bhagavad Gita* itself. In the *Veda* and the *Upanishads* the descriptions are given where *sadharmya-mukti* can be discerned. *Sadharmya-mukti* is to become Godlike, which you can become only when *salokya* and *sayujya*, both are combined and you go forward, still further. *Salokya* and *sayujya* are the conditions for attaining to the *sadharmya*. Now to become godlike, *dharma* is the law of action. When your law of action becomes one with the law of action of the Divine Himself, then you attain to *sadharmya-mukti*. To attain to the same status of being where God is one, to attain to some kind of relationship with the Divine is another, but to attain to the same law of action as the Divine has, requires a further development of *yoga*, a further spiritual discipline. If you read the last six chapters of the *Gita*, you'll find that the purpose of those last six chapters is precisely this, to indicate that mere *karmayoga* and *jnanayoga* and *bhaktiyoga* described in the first twelve chapters is not enough. There is a further thing to be done which is expounded in the last six chapters where the law of action is described. The last six chapters are devoted to the law of action. If you read closely the last six chapters you will find *Sri Krishna* describing various kinds of *dharma*s, *sattva dharma*, *rajasa dharma*, *tamaso dharma*, with regard to everything. The sense of worship has three *dharma*s, *sattvadharma*, *rajodharma*, *tamodharma*; the kind of actions have but three *dharma*s; the support of action has three *dharma*s; *shabda* is of three kinds, *tamoguni shabda*, *rajoguni shabda*, *sattviki shabda*. All law of action of all parts of our being are described and then it is told that so long as you remain within the confines of the law of *karma*, or law of *dharma* as described here, you

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

have not reached the highest level. The highest level is reached when *sarvadharmā parityajya*, when you give up all *dharma*s, reach a point where you are able to give up all *dharma*s — which are limited to our own law of action — and when you become one with the law of action of the Divine Himself, and that is why it is said that this can be done only when you completely surrender to the Divine in everything. Not only in your status of being, not only in your relationship with the Divine but in everything, when you are breathing, when you are eating, when you are drinking, in every action; in every movement. Then there is a great result which comes out by this surrender: the Divine nature, the divine law of action takes possession of you and a transformation takes place. That is the law of action. And it is that which is the last note of the *Bhagavad Gita: sadharmya-mukti*.

Now this tradition of *sadharmya-mukti* has been greatly relegated into the background in the history of India. As a result of that, even the emphasis on action has become relegated. It is said that so long as you are in *samsara* you remain active but the ultimate goal is to give up action and when you are *salokya* you are absolutely liberated. Then no action remains, you are free from all action. Even *sayujya-mukti* people believe that you give up all action and the only action that remains is relationship with the Divine, *bhajan*, *kirtan*, adoration, admiration of the Divine and dance for the Divine; this is all that remains, no other action. But then you can act as the Divine acts in the world so that the active parts of our being are also divinised. Now this *yoga* which was developed in the *Veda*, *Upanishads*, and the *Gita* has remained undeveloped afterwards. It is for that reason Sri Aurobindo says: a further intention is there and this is not yet accomplished, and this is yet to be accomplished. In *sadharmya mukti*, our whole being becomes entirely divinised. This complete divinisation is called by Sri Aurobindo: transformation: complete divinisation. And this complete divinisation requires three processes: psychic transformation, spiritual transformation, and supramental transformation. These are three processes.

I think we shall read this second paragraph and end today. The last line of the first paragraph is (page 890):

"...the spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that nature.

This is because the principle of spirituality has yet to affirm itself in its own complete right and sovereignty; it has been up till now a power for the mental being to escape from itself or to refine and raise itself to a spiritual poise, it has availed for the release of the Spirit from mind and for the enlargement of the being in a spiritualised mind and heart, but not, — or rather not yet sufficiently, — for the self-affirmation of the Spirit in its own dynamic and sovereign mastery free from the mind's limitations and from the mental instrumentation. The development of another instrumentation has begun, but has yet to become total and effective; it has besides to cease to be a purely individual self-creation in an original Ignorance, something supernormal to earth-life that must always be acquired as an individual achievement by a difficult endeavour. It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as Mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so Supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to Supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between Mind and Supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature."

Sri Krishna speaks of *para prakriti* in the *Bhagavad Gita* as his higher nature which is the other word for supermind. So the key that is given at the end is the key to bring down the supermind

on the earth so that *sadharmya-mukti* can be attained. Now the whole chapter actually is a description of how this can be done, the whole process is given, the entire map is given.

II

I think we have three words which we underlined last time. We spoke of triple transformation: the psychic transformation, spiritual transformation and supramental transformation. So we shall start with the first one, the psychic transformation. There is a difference between change, conversion and transformation. These are three different words which are similar to each other but technically they are having different meanings. Change is only a shift from one point of concentration to another. Conversion is a more durable shift. There is a very interesting book by William James, which is called "Varieties of religious experience" in which he has devoted one full chapter on conversion, and to make the idea of conversion very simple, he has distinguished between two parts of our mind. One part he calls hot place, another part he calls the cold place. So he says every human being has two parts of his mind: the hot place and the cold place. Hot place is the place from where one's own dynamic activities emanate. One is conscious of that part, one feels vibrant with that part, one feels alive with that part, one feels thrilled with that part, excited about that part, one is able to give ready responses when one touches that part: that is the hot place, all the rest is cold place. Our totality of consciousness which is not in the hot part is in the cold part. Now something that is in the cold part today, if it shifts to the hot part, it is change; but if this becomes a more durable shift, then we call it conversion. Suppose for instance today I read a newspaper and I come across an advertisement saying that there is a conference in the United States of America on such and such a date. I simply read it, it is simply a kind of information given in the paper, it makes no meaning to me, no impression on me. So it goes into the cold part. I take notice of it but it is so faint, it goes into the cold part. After a few days, a friend comes to me and says, "I am going to America for this conference" and then he says, "now you must also come with me", and he arranges for my visit, and then I go there and I happen to meet some very important people who affect my life tremendously. That conference which was simply a faint ray in my mind now becomes a very important part of my life and begins to occupy me very much and I am in a hot part as far as that conference is concerned. Now this is called a shift from the cold to the hot part. But then supposing that that conference becomes a permanent conference, a continuing conference, and then I happen to be associated with it full time. Then my whole life shifts from what was before and it becomes centred around that conference. So that means that I am converted, my whole life is converted into the conference. It has not been a change, it is a conversion. Actually my whole being, my thoughts, my feelings, my actions, my programs, my activities, all of them begin to centre around that conference.

Now this is an example of conversion in ordinary life. But at a deeper level, certain ideas which today were simply passing ideas, if they happen to become very central to me — the ideas about God, ideas about soul, about destiny, aim of life — yesterday they were simply matters of passing interest and suddenly now they begin to become more important to me, then a shift has taken place, a change has taken place. I begin to take interest in these matters: whenever somebody talks of God, my ears are pricked and I begin to listen to that much more seriously. But then a point may come when my whole life is centred in search of God, nothing else matters. My relationships, my activities, my thoughts, my feelings, all begin to turn towards God, then that is a state of conversion. In a state of conversion there should be a state of durability. In a mere change it is simply a passing movement from cold to the hot place but I do not get anchored into it. When I become anchored into it, then it is a state of conversion.

Now, psychic being in us today is in the cold place. It is there but our outer being has first of all no knowledge of it, no interest in it, no feeling about it, no perception of it. If somebody talks about it, it makes no impression, it is only a passing phenomenon and for a long time the awareness of the psychic being remains in the cold place. Most of the human beings pass their whole life without ever allowing the psychic being to come to the hot place. What is in the hot

place for most of the human beings is normally the needs of the body and of life relationships; relationships where our life is intertwined: the home relationships, family relationships, social relationships, professional relationships. These relationships and the needs of the body, occupy basically our hot place. For some human beings the interests of the mind gradually begin to become more and more important. The activities of ideation, of conception, elements of ideas, systematic relationship of ideas with ideas, perceptions through these systems of ideas, visions of things, activities of analysis, activities of synthesis of ideas, debates, discussions, subtleties of ideas, complexities of ideas, these things begin to occupy the human mind and they come into the hot place. So a small minority of humanity is interested in these mental objects and they are hot as far as the mind is concerned. So you might say they are converted from normal day to day activities to some more ideative activities. But to sustain these mental activities is normally quite difficult. Even the thinkers whose main food stuff is ideas very largely, fall into the hot place which is rooted in the relationships — life relationships, the vital impulses. It is only by strenuous effort that one can remain sustained in the mental world. But some people do it. Their whole life is nothing but a life of thinking, of reflection. Some great mathematicians, some great scientists, some philosophers, theologians, their whole life is centred on mental ideas.

Correspondingly therefore, there are basically three types of personalities: the physical personality, the vital personality and the mental personality. And most of the human beings have some kind of physical and vital personality developed, a rudimentary mental personality developed and the whole life is a struggle between these three personalities. Even these three personalities are not homogeneous, they are heterogeneous, they quarrel among themselves. What the body demands, the vital does not demand or does not like. What the vital wants, the physical does not want and then vice versa. About the mental personality: what the mind likes, the vital does not like and vice versa.

In the mind also there are three kinds of personalities. There is the personality of the logical mind, the personality of the aesthetic mind, and the personality of the ethical mind. These are the three major personalities of those who live in the mind.

Those who are tuned to logical mind, their main interest is: consistency of thought. They would like their own ideas to be consistent with each other and to arrive at an arrangement of ideas in which no idea contradicts the other. To remove all contradictions, to enlarge ideas and to make them as subtle as possible, as complex as possible is the fundamental need of the logical mind.

The aesthetic mind is turned to the object of art, pursuit of beauty. Just as the logical mind pursues truth, artistic mind pursues beauty, and expression of beauty through various instruments, through line and colour, through rock and plastic material, or through tunes and music, or various other kinds of artistry.

The ethical mind is very much concerned with the pursuit of the good. What is right and what is wrong? What is ideal? What is the standard? It constantly tries to find out if there are norms of action and whether one's actions fit in with those norms or not and strives to arrive at perfection of arriving at those norms.

And these three minds also are in quarrel with each other. Very often what is logical may not be artistic, and what is artistic may not be ethical. What is ethical may not be artistic. In fact, the quarrel between the artistic and the good is very pronounced. Very often artists tend to live a life which is not ethical, and ethical people begin to abhor all that in the name of art is so called licence of life. They do not like licentious life which many artists live. And in the same human being these three tendencies exist, some more developed, some others less developed, but they all exist. And because they coexist there is a quarrel among them, and this quarrel is very often mitigated by preponderance of one or the other; one simply suppresses the warring elements and prefers to allow only one part of the being to predominate. Therefore some thinkers for example have no sense of beauty. You go to a thinker's house and you find things lying all in a pell-mell condition, there is no tidiness, there is no beauty.

Similarly ethical minds are very wary of purely logical minds, they do not like philosophical discussions, debates on various kinds of ideas. They simply want to confine to one thing: what is right and what is wrong.

So there is a quarrel between the physical, the vital, the ethical mind, the logical mind and the aesthetic mind. These are the five quarrelling elements in every human being normally and most of the people do not even try to recognise this quarrel; they are moved by impulses of the moment and they act according to the predominant impulse of the moment. At a little more advanced state people begin to become aware of this internal conflict, and when this awareness comes, then with it also comes the necessity to repair the conflict, and one does not know how to repair it. And many human beings just go on wasting time in search of some kind of a solution to the inner conflicts. It is only some kind of mental beings that succeeds to some extent in finding some kind of a solution to this conflict. The mind has an idea of harmony. The vital and physical do not have normally an idea of harmony, or a feeling for harmony as such, but the mind has a very clear perception of harmony and by the help of this idea of harmony it imposes it upon the vital and the physical and establishes a kind of a harmony.

For education this whole psychological understanding is very important. For mothers, fathers, teachers, this understanding is very important because children have basically physical and vital needs and they have been fed with some kind of mental ideas and every mental idea that is fed into the child's mind is like foreign material to the child's psychology in the beginning. That is why very often children begin to wonder as to who has created studies at all and why should there be so much of study and why so much in detail and why so many pages after pages have to be studied. Because every idea that is thrown into the mind is a foreign material and is not congenial to the normal rhythm of life. So the question is as to how to make the child understand the importance of ideas and to habituate the mind to enjoy the ideas.

To make the mind capable of enjoying ideas and capable of controlling the vital and physical needs by the power of ideas is the first step of culture. There are three states in which human beings live: the state of barbarism, the state of philistinism, and the state of culture. Those who are interested only in food, housing, clothing and nothing else, are living in a state of barbarism. Even a barbarian takes care of these three things, and is very much tied up with these three things. The physical needs — satisfaction of these physical needs — is all that is of importance to the barbarian. The satisfaction of the vital needs is the level of philistinism. It is slightly higher than barbarism and it takes interest into some kind of adventure, life of ambition, life of great desires, attractions, repulsions which are not merely physical. Like Alexander the Great for example, who had a tremendous ambition to conquer the whole world and to master the whole world and he sacrificed everything for the sake of this one single impulse and ambition. But the kind of personality that is formed as a result of this has a philistine character. For him relations do not matter much at all, friendships can be useful only so long as ambitions are fulfilled through those friendships; otherwise they do not matter much at all. The higher ethical ideas do not make any difference. To be the first is the fundamental urge of a philistine. You know there is a story that Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander, and Aristotle wrote something which was very important. He made some new kind of discovery in the field of mind and he explained it to his students and then he wrote about it to Alexander. So Alexander was furious with Aristotle and said: "Such a beautiful thing should have come first to me! How can you allow this to go to somebody else?" This is the special characteristic of a vital man who always wants to excel others by one means or the other.

It is when mind begins to influence the body and the vital, then culture begins to take shape, it is a beginning. You can say that somebody is cultured only when he has begun to influence his vital and physical by the help of the mind. And the greater the influence of his mind over the vital and the physical, the greater is the culture in the man. And then the greater heights of culture are reached when the ethical mind, the artistic mind and the logical mind all begin to develop and they all begin to influence the body and the vital, then you can say: a greater height of culture has been achieved by the man or by the nation where this has happened. Now if you look at the past history of the world, you will find that among all the nations, the one nation that had reached a great deal of mental culture was greek — the Greeks, the Hellenics. They had reached a very high level of ethical thinking, artistic thinking, logical thinking. In fact with regard to art, the Greeks had reached a great perfection. Similarly they had also reached a great perfection with regard to logical thinking, that is how we got great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. Even with regard to ethical thinking, there was a great height reached which was represented by Socrates for example. And the Greeks have tried to harmonise the vital and the physical by the power of these three aspects of the human mind, and that is why the kind of life that they had reached was a highly cultured life, very refined culture. Even today after

thousands of years, many civilisations look back to the Greeks to derive a fresh inspiration from them. In fact you might say that modern Europe and modern America are trying to reach back to the glory of Greek culture which was lost for many, many centuries after the Roman conquest of the Greeks in ancient times. You might say that secretly India too is worshipping the Greek culture, but in a diminished form because we do not know yet fully the great heights to which Greek culture had reached, but some kind of influences which are spreading from the Greeks, which is being absorbed by Europe and America, which is being infiltrated into India; a third remote level is reaching us, though adulterated. So in a sense you might say that today, what is happening in India is a kind of admiration for the Greek culture, although in a very diminished form, in a very corrupted form.

Now India also had developed a similar kind of culture, a very highly developed intellectual culture. Particularly from the time of *Mahabharata* downwards for more than a thousand years, we developed a very highly developed intellectual culture. Some other time we shall discuss this point but I am only making a note now that this is the kind of culture that we also developed in India. And just as Greek culture fell, this intellectual culture of India also had a declining period although we had a longer history of intellectual life than Greek culture and other cultures of the world but still we went into decline. But whereas Greek culture died down completely, this culture did not die out. So we still have some kind of intellectual idealism which still belongs to the ancient times and there is some kind of continuity with the present. Even in the period of decline, something of the glory of their intellectual period remained.

But as long as we remain confined to a physical, vital and mental culture, we have still not entered into the truly spiritual or psychic culture, and it is that to which now we turn. We find that even when the mind is very developed, even when all the three parts of the being of the mind — the logical, the ethical and the artistic — are very developed, even then the full harmony does not come about. Some harmony is achieved but not the true and full harmony, because what is ultimately the meaning of harmony? A true harmony is achieved when every element is placed in its right place. When you enter into this room and you find that everything is in the right place, you feel there is a harmony. Nothing juts out, nothing is excessive, everything is balanced and where a thing has to be that thing is to be found; you find that there is a real harmony. Therefore there must be a governing principle which decides which thing has to be at what place. A governing principle working luminously, effecting the direction and the placement of every element is the condition of harmony. So there must be a governing principle, there must be a hierarchy of things, each one of which obeys the governing principle and therefore everything is in its own proper place. A governing principle, a hierarchy, and obedience of each element to the governing principle, these are the elements which are required for harmony. Since mind is not the governing principle, since vital is not the governing principle, body is not the governing principle, so long as you become aware only of these three elements, we can never arrive at the true harmony. We have to find out the real governing principle. That governing principle is called the soul.

The very meaning of soul is "the governing principle"; that which governs is the soul. The governing principle itself becomes the stuff of everything. "That" which governs and "that" which becomes the stuff of things is the soul. When I breathe with the breath of "that", then that is my soul by whose breath I breathe. "That" under whose command I am guided is my soul. So mind, life and body are truly governed by an entity which is the soul in us of which normally we are not aware. We are not aware of the real stuff of the body, life and mind; we are aware of the body, life and mind in their activities, even by perception, by experience, but we are not aware of whose stuff — they are made. What is the origin, what is the source of all this? What is the stuff of which the mind is the weaving? Mind is a fabric by itself but the stuff of which it is the fabric is the soul, and of that we are not aware; we are aware only of the threads of the fabric of the mind, but we are not aware of that stuff of which these are the fabrics. In other words you have not gone deep enough to find out from where these strings are spreading out in our body, life and mind. Normally what happens is that this particular stuff, the soul, is first experienced only in the form of an influence. It is like the breeze coming from somewhere and we experience that blow of the breeze and we find it is something different from the breeze of the mind, or life, or body: it has a different character in it. We first only distinguish it very indistinctly and we feel it is somewhat different but we like it very much. And when that influence begins to become stronger, and the breeze begins to become a wind and blows very heavily, then we are obliged to take cognisance of it, and we become aware of it much more concretely.

Then we begin to recognise that there is an entity within us which is spontaneous in character, spontaneous towards truth, beauty and goodness. It is as spontaneous as the body is spontaneous, as spontaneous as the vital is spontaneous. But the body and vital are not spontaneous towards truth, beauty and goodness, whereas this stuff moves towards truth, beauty and goodness. In the vital being or in the physical being all our instincts are spontaneous, and most of us live a physical and vital life by instincts and impulses which are spontaneous; you do not need to train them. Hunger for example, physical hunger, appetite is spontaneous and one wants to eat food, one likes to eat food, enjoys food; it is instinctive, spontaneous. Similarly there is spontaneity in the soul but its real food is goodness, its food is beauty, its food is truth. It is a natural spontaneous turning towards truth, beauty and goodness, it is the first mark of the distinct nature of the soul. Now all human beings, since they have got the presence of the soul in them, they sometimes feel the presence of it. At times they do feel this spontaneous turning towards truth, beauty and goodness. You witness a heroic action of somebody and you admire it; it is a psychic response, it is a soul response. You find somebody uttering the truth and you feel greatly uplifted; it is a soul response. You do not even reason why he is good or bad or anything; simply because of the truth force there is a spontaneous reaction to it. You may see a beautiful sunrise and you feel admiration for it, you feel the whole world quickened, everything marvellous and the whole scene turning into a kind of experience of beauty: it is a soul response. And such experiences we all have from time to time, without recognising that the source of it is in the soul.

But when these responses of the soul begin to infiltrate more and more into mind, life and body, they constitute some kind of an influence. That is how we are as it were turned to the soul, but not being aware of it even mentally. Very often it remains for most of us in the whole life a mere influence and nothing more than that, we are not profited by it very much, we turn back immediately to our mental, vital and physical activities. But if the impulse towards truth which comes from the soul becomes very powerful then we become seekers of the truth. Even mentally we become great thinkers and our personality of the mind becomes very powerful. If the impulse towards beauty becomes powerful we begin to become artists. Similarly if our impulse towards good becomes powerful we become heroic, we become ethical, we become good, like a sage, saintly. Such personalities begin to develop in us. And then we remain confined only again to the outer personality of the mind. Although this root is in the soul, we have taken a little advantage of it, we have dug out a little and then given a shape to it through our mind, and to some extent we allow these influences to go in the vital and the body also. If I have become very artistic, my dresses begin to undergo a change. My physical perfection also I begin to seek, my body I try to make as balanced as possible. Even my vital impulses I express them beautifully, I begin to write good poetry, poetry of romance, poetry of adoration, of beauty on various forms, and so on. So this has an effect upon the mind, vital and physical.

It is only when our mind begins to become clear about the presence of the soul which is distinct from itself, that a more fundamental change occurs in us. From influence which was coming to us from the higher realm of the soul, we begin to be attracted towards it and begin to live in it. In this process even the mind's clarity about the soul becomes very helpful. For example the kind of description that is being given here can be a good help; if there is a clarity about it then the mind becomes more aware of it and then begins to look for it and while looking for it, you may touch it and you may begin to dwell in it. In other words you shift from preoccupations of the mind, of the vital, of the body to the preoccupations of the spontaneous aspiration for truth, beauty and goodness. This shift is a very important stage in human development. This is what I called the change. The first psychic change occurs when instead of being preoccupied only with the mind, life and body, we begin to be preoccupied with the spontaneous movement towards truth, beauty and goodness. But even this preoccupation is in the beginning quite feeble, quite weak.

The soul is compared with a king who is screened and exiled by the ministers. Body, life and mind are compared with ministers. It is as if the whole kingdom which really belongs to the soul is used up by the ministers: body, life and mind and these have exiled the soul and screened him very tightly. A veil has been put between the soul and the body, life and mind. And then the ministers are ruling the government on their own according to their own wishes. Now the soul which is behind the screen goes on radiating its light on the screen and if the screen becomes quite transparent then the presence of the soul will be seen by everybody concerned. How to make the screen transparent, is the first question. Now the first way of doing it is that the mind,

life and body in their own development, in their own experience arrive at a point when they find themselves inadequate and they themselves begin to polish the screen, then that is one method. If consciously body, life and mind, try to knock at the veil then this veil may become thin. The other method is that in the surroundings of the body, life and mind if truth, beauty and goodness are presented, then the soul gets a kind of a magnetic pull and if it radiates very powerfully because of this magnetic pull, then the screen becomes thin and a transparency can come about. Now both these methods are admissible and can be tried according to the needs. According to the evolution of each individual, both the methods can be tried.

To have in your surroundings a great deal of truth, beauty and goodness is very important for the education of the children. If in the surroundings of the children you have truth, beauty and goodness spread out, then the child's soul will automatically be pulled out and the screen of the child will become less thick, more transparent and the child will be able to radiate the happiness of the soul. That is why the environment of the child is very important, the kind of stories that are told to the children are very important, the behaviour of the people around is very important. The more this is done the greater is the outflow of the soul.

But even when this outflow begins to take place, in the first place a formation of the soul begins to peep out of the screen. Now this formation is what is called the psychic personality, and this formation looks first of all like a very small little thing in a big ocean of body, life and mind. Therefore *Katha Upanishad* calls it not bigger than a thumb, *angushtha matra*. This personality is so small in the beginning that it looks like a small little cork floating on the ocean thrust by waves of the body, life and mind. This formation gradually becomes stronger. Then this, what is the size of a thumb, becomes bigger and a bigger psychic personality is formed. Now what is the method by which this personality can become much more developed? The first method is the consent of the body, life and mind to allow this element to be their ruler because he is the real king and they are only the ministers. The ministers have to give a consent now and they have to allow the real king to come forward and take charge. But this is a very difficult task because body, life and mind are tuned to their own rule and they do not normally accept to consent; it is like an abdication actually, and abdication is very difficult. But if that happens it will be a tremendous outflowing, immediately the soul can become strongly powerful and a great psychic personality can develop very quickly, rapidly. Therefore in education also if the child is developed in such a way that the body, life and mind are tuned more and more repeatedly to the rule of the soul then you get new types of children altogether. As Sri Aurobindo called "the sun eyed children", so luminous because their personality will flower very quickly and the inner conquest will be very great; the real ruler comes to rule and governs everything and everything is put in harmony. A beautiful harmonious personality begins to grow, and this is quite possible if you know the science of it. But when the science is not known and when the things are allowed to develop pell-mell, then what happens is that this little formation, a small psychic personality not bigger than the thumb is invaded by these three ministers in different proportions depending upon which one of them is more powerful among them. Viziers of Sultan, have a rivalry among them and try to use up even this fragrant presence of the soul and then take advantage and profit from the presence of the soul. They exploit even whatever knowledge, whatever fragrance they get from the soul. They might grant some kind of obedience to the soul but then only to be able to profit from its presence. If a luminous idea has come from the soul, the mind says it is my own idea and it does not admit that the idea has come from the soul. Or if the vital is very powerful, it makes an exclusive possession of that idea and forces it upon everybody as if it is its own kingdom in which mind is not allowed any kind of play. So there is a great tug of war which takes place. It is for this reason that a very sound education is to be proposed, because if that is done consciously then many of these problems can be resolved much more easily. It is only a question of awareness.

Now between this formation and the soul which is behind, of which it is a formation, there is still the screen. Therefore whatever comes from the soul only with a very great difficulty infiltrates into the personality. The wires of communication are cut, obstructed, disturbed. Even the right impulse, when it comes out here becomes twisted by the vital, by the physical, by the mental. The strength and luminosity of what comes from the soul is polluted over here, therefore the need of purification. If the body, life and mind are more and more purified, then these obstructions will be much less obstructive, communication will be much more clear and this implies a process of yoga. By *yoga* we mean basically only three things: the process of

concentration, the process of renunciation and the process of purification. If you can concentrate upon the soul, if you can renounce all that is not emerging from the soul and if you can purify the mixtures of various kinds then that constitutes the process of yoga and then the soul can flower much more easily; the screen becomes more and more transparent and ultimately the screen can be completely removed even; or at least for the time being, it can be removed. And even when it falls again, the memory of that experience is so vivid in the outer mind, life and body that a great attraction remains in the body, life and mind to return back to that experience. A great aspiration — inextinguishable aspiration — begins to burn in our outer being i.e. body, life and mind. And these three processes of concentration, purification and renunciation are aided by three processes: the process of *jnanayoga*, of *bhaktiyoga* and *karmayoga*. All these three processes basically are processes of purification, renunciation and concentration. And if that happens very successfully then the psychic personality becomes very powerful. The body, life and mind consent and invite the soul. That is the meaning of *agnimire*. I worship the soul. When the body, life and mind begin to say *agnimire*, I'm worshipping the soul, when this repeats itself then the soul personality becomes very powerful, and the activities of the soul begin to multiply in the outer being. It may use body, life and mind as instruments, as real ministers but the real king really begins to govern and the real royal activities begin to take place, not only ministerial activities, but the real royal activities begin to operate.

Now what are the royal activities of the soul which are distinguished from the activities of the body, mind and life? These are four activities which are distinctly activities of the royal soul, the real governor of the soul. First is the activity of wisdom; and wisdom consists of seeing the invisible, knowing the unknowable. When this begins to take place then wisdom begins to grow. The ordinary mind only tries to see what is visible, tries to know what is knowable, but the mark of wisdom is that it tries to see the invisible and it knows the unknowable. That is the mark of the soul activity. The second is the activity of heroism. A spontaneous revolt against evil — spontaneous revolt — with a luminous idea of the truth. It is the second activity of the soul. The third is the activity of love which makes no demand from the loved, no merchandise in love. The true soul loves for the sake of love and makes no demand at all of return of any kind. It loves because it wants to love, it pours love for the sake of love, for the sake of joy. So it is distinguished from another kind of love. The other kind of love is what you might call the red love, this is the white love. The red love is what demands, you give a little love and then you demand a lot out of it, but this white love is simply a giver. And the fourth is spontaneous skills, development of spontaneous skills. You just take up a thing, you want to learn something and if the soul is developed then all the skills come automatically to you. You want to learn sitar for example, within a month you begin to learn it because the skill comes automatically to you. It is a special power of the soul, the secret of all skills is in the soul actually. In the outer body, life and mind it is a laborious movement; by tremendous repetition you get a skill. But the same thing if done by the soul personality, the skills becomes so easy, there is an out-flowering of skills. *Saraswathy* begins to play a full role and develops all the skills of personality. A great harmony is spontaneously manifesting when the soul begins to act. These are all activities of the soul.

And what is its distinctive experience? Just as the mind has a distinctive activity mainly of conceiving — to develop concept is a specific activity of the mind, to have a drive and energy, enthusiasm is a vital capacity, is the activity of the vital, a distinctive characteristic. To provide a stable base for anything is the activity of the body. Similarly what is the specific activity, experience of the soul? It is to experience the sweetness of Divine Presence. It is the specific experience of the soul, automatic, it has to make no effort at all to feel the sweetness of the Divine Presence. If the soul is really developed then this experience becomes automatic, ever present. So those four activities of which I spoke: wisdom, heroism, love which demands nothing and skills and this specific experience of the sweetness of the Presence of the Divine — actually in the *Katha Upanishad* there is a word called *madhavadaha*, one who eats the honey — the soul is the eater of honey, that is its specific experience — when these activities flood our being, the mind, life and body are so surcharged, they vibrate with this constantly, then starts the process of transformation. Till this time there is only a question of conversion, first of change and then conversion but now when these activities radiate and they flood the body, life and

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

mind and tune everything in terms of the psychic consciousness and the mind is psychisized, life is psychisized, body is psychisized, in every nook and corner the presence of the soul is felt and experienced, then you have reached the state of psychic transformation.

So this is the first step of transformation. Transformation is threefold: the psychic transformation, the spiritual transformation and the supramental transformation. So what we have described so far is a very, very brief, very inadequate, very poor description of the psychic transformation. Let us read a little now (page 891):

"At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable; but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something that is inherent in its own substance. It is aware also of all that contradicts these things, of all that deviates from its own native character, of falsehood and evil and the ugly and the unseemly; but it does not become these things nor is it touched or changed by these opposites of itself which so powerfully affect its outer instrumentation of mind, life and body. For the soul, the permanent being in us, puts forth and uses mind, life and body as its instruments, undergoes the envelopment of their conditions, but it is other and greater than its members.

If the psychic entity had been from the beginning unveiled and known to its ministers, not a secluded King in a screened chamber, the human evolution would have been a rapid soul-outflowing, not the difficult, chequered and disfigured development it now is; but the veil is thick and we know not the secret Light within us, the light in the hidden crypt of the heart's innermost sanctuary. Intimations rise to our surface from the psyche, but our mind does not detect their source; it takes them for its own activities because, before even they come to the surface, they are clothed in mental substance: thus ignorant of their authority, it follows or does not follow them according to its bent or turn at the moment. If the mind obeys the urge of the vital ego, then there is little chance of the psyche at all controlling the nature or manifesting in us something of its secret spiritual stuff and native movement; or, if the mind is over-confident to act in its own smaller light, attached to its own judgement, will and action of knowledge, then also the soul will remain veiled and quiescent and wait for the mind's farther evolution. For the psychic part within is there to support the natural evolution, and the first natural evolution must be the development of body, life and mind, successively, and these must act each in its own kind or together in their ill-assorted partnership in order to grow and have experience and evolve. The soul gathers the essence of all our mental, vital and bodily experience and assimilates it for the farther evolution of our existence in Nature; but this action is occult and not obtruded on the surface. In the early material and vital stages of the evolution of being there is indeed no consciousness of soul; there are psychic activities, but the instrumentation, the form of these activities are vital and physical, — or mental when the mind is active. For even the mind, so long as it is primitive or is developed but still too external, does not recognise their deeper character. It is easy to regard ourselves as physical beings or beings of life or mental beings using life and body and to ignore the existence of the soul altogether: for the only definite idea that we have of the soul is of something that survives the death of our bodies; but what this is we do not know because even if we are conscious sometimes of its presence, we are not normally conscious of its distinct reality nor do we feel clearly its direct action in our nature.

As the evolution proceeds, Nature begins slowly and tentatively to manifest our occult parts; she leads us to look more and more within ourselves or sets out to initiate more clearly recognisable intimations and formations of them on the surface. The soul in us, the psychic principle, has already begun to take secret form; it puts forward and develops a soul-personality, a distinct psychic being to represent it. This psychic being remains still behind the veil in our subliminal part, like the true mental, the true vital or the true or subtle physical being within us: but, like them, it acts on the surface life by the influences and intimations it throws up upon that surface; these form part of the surface aggregate which is the conglomerate effect of the inner influences and upsurgings, the visible formation and superstructure which we ordinarily experience and think of as ourselves. On this ignorant surface we become dimly aware of something that can be called a soul as distinct from mind, life or body; we feel it not only as our mental idea or vague instinct of ourselves, but as a sensible influence in our life and character and action. A certain sensitive feeling for all that is true and good and beautiful, fine and pure and noble, a response to it, a demand for it, a pressure on mind and life to accept and formulate it in our thought, feelings, conduct, character is the most usually recognised, the most general and characteristic, though not the sole sign of this influence of the psyche. Of the man who has not this element in him or does not respond at all to this urge, we say that he has no soul. For it is this influence that we can most easily recognise as a finer or even a diviner part in us and the most powerful for the slow turning towards some aim at perfection in our nature.

But this psychic influence or action does not come up to the surface quite pure or does not remain distinct in its purity; if it did, we would be able to distinguish clearly the soul element in us and follow consciously and fully its dictates. An occult mental and vital and subtle-physical action intervenes, mixes with it, tries to use it and turn it to its own profit, dwarfs its divinity, distorts or diminishes its self-expression, even causes it to deviate and stumble or stains it with the impurity, smallness and error of mind and life and body. After it reaches the surface, thus alloyed and diminished, it is taken hold of by the surface nature in an obscure reception and ignorant formation, and there is or can be by this cause a still further deviation and mixture. A twist is given, a wrong direction is imparted, a wrong application, a wrong formation, an erroneous result of what is in itself pure stuff and action of our spiritual being; a formation of consciousness is accordingly made which is a mixture of the psychic influence and its intimations jumbled with mental ideas and opinions, vital desires and urges, habitual physical tendencies. These coalesce too with the obscured soul-influence the ignorant though well-intentioned efforts of these external parts towards a higher direction; a mental ideation of a very mixed character, often obscure even in its idealism, sometimes even disastrously mistaken, a fervour and passion of the emotional being throwing up its spray and foam of feelings, sentiments, sentimentalisms, a dynamic enthusiasm of the life-parts, eager responses of the physical, the thrills and excitements of nerve and body, — all these influences coalesce in a composite formation which is frequently taken as the soul and its mixed and confused action for the soul-stir, for a psychic development and action or a realised inner influence. The psychic entity is itself free from stain or mixture, but what comes up from it is not protected by that immunity; therefore this confusion becomes possible. Moreover, the psychic being, the soul-personality in us, does not emerge full-grown and luminous; it evolves, passes through a slow development and formation; its figure of being may be at first indistinct and may afterwards remain for a long time weak and undeveloped, not impure but imperfect: for it rests its formation, its dynamic self-building on the power of soul that has been actually and more or less successfully, against the resistance of the Ignorance and Inconscience, put forth in the evolution upon the surface. Its appearance is the sign of a soul-emergence in Nature, and if that emergence is as yet small and defective, the psychic personality also will be stunted or feeble. It is too, by the obscurity of our consciousness, separated from its inner reality, in imperfect communication with its own source in the depths of the being; for the road is as yet ill-built, easily obstructed, the wires often cut or crowded with communications of another kind and proceeding from another origin:

its power to impress what it receives upon the outer instruments is also imperfect; in its penury it has for most things to rely on these instruments and it forms its push to expression and action on their data and not solely on the unerring perceptions of the psychic entity. In these conditions it cannot prevent the true psychic light from being diminished or distorted in the mind into a mere idea or opinion, the psychic feeling in the heart into a fallible emotion or mere sentiment, the psychic will to action in the life-parts into a blind vital enthusiasm or a fervid excitement: it even accepts these mistranslations for want of something better and tries to fulfil itself through them. For it is part of the work of the soul to influence mind and heart and vital being and turn their ideas, feelings, enthusiasms, dynamisms in the direction of what is divine and luminous; but this has to be done at first imperfectly, slowly and with a mixture. As the psychic personality grows stronger, it begins to increase its communion with the psychic entity behind it and improve its communications with the surface: it can transmit its intimations to the mind and heart and life with a greater purity and force; for it is more able to exercise a strong control and react against false mixtures; now more and more it makes itself distinctly felt as a power in the nature. But even so this evolution would be slow and long if left solely to the difficult automatic action of the evolutionary Energy; it is only when man awakes to the knowledge of the soul and feels a need to bring it to the front and make it the master of his life and action that a quicker conscious method of evolution intervenes and a psychic transformation becomes possible.

This slow development can be aided by the mind's clear perception and insistence on something within that survives the death of the body and an effort to know its nature. But at first this knowledge is impeded by the fact that there are many elements in us, many formations which present themselves as soul-elements and can be mistaken for the psyche. In the early Greek and some other traditions about the after-life, the descriptions given show very clearly that what was then mistaken for the soul was a subconscious formation, a subphysical impression-mould or shadow-form of the being or else a wraith or ghost of the personality. This ghost, which is mistakenly called the spirit, is sometimes a vital formation reproducing the man's characteristics, his surface life-mannerisms, sometimes a subtle-physical prolongation of the surface form of the mind-shell: at best it is a sheath of the life-personality which still remains in the front for some time after the departure from the body. Apart from these confusions born of an after-death contact with discarded phantasms or remnants of the sheaths of the personality, the difficulty is due to our ignorance of the subliminal parts of our nature and the form and powers of the conscious being or purusha which preside over their action; owing to this inexperience we can easily mistake something of the inner mind or vital self for the psychic.

For as Being is one yet multiple, so also the same law prevails in ourselves and our members; the Spirit, the purusha is one but it adapts itself to the formations of Nature. Over each grade of our being a power of the Spirit presides; we have within us and discover when we go deep enough inwards a mind-self, a life-self, a physical self; there is a being of mind, a mental purusha, expressing something of itself on our surface in the thoughts, perceptions, activities of our mind-nature, a being of life which expresses something of itself in the impulses, feelings, sensations, desires, external life-activities of our vital nature, a physical being, a being of the body which expresses something of itself in the instincts, habits, formulated activities of our physical nature. These beings or part selves of the self in us are powers of the Spirit and therefore not limited by their temporary expression, for what is thus formulated is only a fragment of its possibilities; but the expression creates a temporary mental, vital or physical personality which grows and develops even as the psychic being or soul-personality grows and develops within us. Each has its own distinct nature, its influence, its action on the whole of us; but on our surface all these influences and all this action, as they come up, mingle and create an aggregate surface being which is a composite, an amalgam of them all, an outer persistent and yet shifting and mobile formation for the purposes of this life and its limited experience.

But this aggregate is, because of its composition, a heterogeneous compound, not a single harmonious and homogeneous whole. This is the reason why there is a constant confusion and even a conflict in our members which our mental reason and will are moved to control and harmonise and have often much difficulty in creating out of their confusion or conflict some kind of order and guidance; even so, ordinarily, we drift too much or are driven by the stream of our nature and act from whatever in it comes uppermost at the time and seizes the instruments of thought and action, — even our seemingly deliberate choice is more of an automatism than we imagine; our co-ordination of our multifarious elements and of our consequent thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions by the reason and will is incomplete and a half-measure. In animal being Nature acts by her own mental and vital intuitions; she works out an order by the compulsion of habit and instinct which the animal implicitly obeys, so that the shifting of its consciousness do not matter. But man cannot altogether act in the same way without forfeiting his prerogative of manhood; he cannot leave his being to be a chaos of instincts and impulses regulated by the automatism of Nature: mind has become conscious in him and is therefore self-compelled to make some attempt, however elementary in many, to see and control and in the end more and more perfectly harmonise the manifold components, the different and conflicting tendencies that seem to make up his surface being. He does succeed in setting up a sort of regulated chaos or ordered confusion in him, or at least succeeds in thinking that he is directing himself by his mind and will, even though in fact that direction is only partial; for not only a disparate consortium of habitual motive-forces but also newly emergent vital and physical tendencies and impulses, not always calculable or controllable, and many incoherent and inharmonious mental elements use his reason and will, enter into and determine his self-building, his nature-development, his life action. Man is in his self a unique Person, but he is also in his manifestation of self a multiperson; he will never succeed in being master of himself until the Person imposes itself on his multipersonality and governs it: but this can only be imperfectly done by the surface mental will and reason; it can be perfectly done only if he goes within and finds whatever central being is by its predominant influence at the head of all his expression and action. In inmost truth it is his soul that is this central being, but in outer fact it is often one or other of the part beings in him that rules, and this representative of the soul, this deputy self he can mistake for the inmost soul-principle."

III

I think we need to revise a little of what we have done. We were studying this chapter *The Triple Transformation* and we were nearing the end of the first part of this chapter where we spoke of the emergence of the psychic being and how the psychic being can transform the outer nature. We have said that the psychic being is like an exiled king, whose kingdom is then being ruled by the ministers who are not even prepared to recognise the king and who do not even refer to the king for any advice or any counsel. So these ministers are three — the body, life and mind — and they go on acting in their own light according to their own propensities, and even among themselves they quarrel and there is a great disharmony among them. And then we have said that one of the best ways by which the psychic being can come into the front is to give an experience of this reality in the outer nature; if the outer nature of the body, life and mind can come in contact with this reality then the psychic being can rush out. And then we were considering the processes by which this can be achieved. Now there is one way which is very often prescribed and to which we have not much referred but to which we now can refer and that is the process by which we make a distinction between the outer nature and the status of the being. It is a very important distinction: the movement of nature and the status of being.

Actually if you see any activity in the world anywhere you will find that in order to make activity more and more powerful, you require a greater and greater stable base. The greater is the base which is stable, the more powerful is the activity. This is the relationship between stability and movement. Now normally in our experience we are very much in the midst of activity of various kinds. The activities may be very powerful, may be very slow; activities which may be very interesting, activities which may not be so interesting, even in dull moments there is some kind of activity going on. So we are normally in the midst of activity and usually we are absorbed in the activity so that we do not have the time to look at the stable base. That is why an important process is being suggested throughout our history of Indian system of yoga and that is to withdraw from activity and to look for the stable base. In technical terms this is called the process of: withdrawing from *prakriti* and entering into *Purusha*. *Purusha* consciousness is the experience of stability, and *prakriti* consciousness is the experience of movement. So we are told that there is a distinction between *prakriti* and *Purusha*. We are told that the minimum thing to be done is to develop a state of witness consciousness. In Sanskrit it is called *sakshibhava*. Become a *sakshin*, be a witness.

This process of developing the sense of witness is in the beginning quite difficult because of our tendency to become engaged in activity. So it is normally suggested that at least there are three moments when it should be easier to be a witness to your activity. First is at the beginning of an activity. Before you start an activity there may be some pause. It is a favourable moment when you can withdraw from activity and realise that you are the witness to the activity which you are going to perform. The second is when you finish an activity because then also it is easy to have this witness consciousness; you can say, well, I was doing this activity, I have done it and now I can take account of it, I can watch it from outside as it were. These two are easier but there is a third moment and that is in the midst of activity, at the middle point of activity. For example, now you are engaged in listening, it is an activity, it is in the midst of activity. Now at this moment to be aware that you are listening is a very good exercise, that you are not only engaged in listening but you are also witnessing that you are witnessing that you are listening. So, this sense of witnessing of witnessing of witnessing of witnessing of witnessing can go on deeper and deeper and deeper, and when this increases, then a point comes when even while doing any activity this witness consciousness is present throughout so that the entirety of our being is not lost in the activity, we are not absorbed in the activity. Now psychologically it is true that sometimes when you are absorbed in the activity, our activity becomes very proficient for e.g. while acting. When an actor forgets that he is acting and becomes completely engaged in the activity of acting, and he forgets to witness that he is acting, his acting is most powerful. He becomes one with his activity and that gives a very powerful proficiency. The moment he becomes aware that he is acting, his acting begins to flounder.

So it is true that this witnessing consciousness may effect the effectivity of action. But that is true only for the time being. As you develop this witnessing consciousness more and more, you can have a double consciousness and by witnessing you can actually modulate your activity even much more powerfully, then what you can do by becoming completely identified with activity. One who is very aware that he is acting, throughout his acting, can be a much better actor than one who forgets that he is acting. So that is another state, another capacity that one develops. Although in the beginning there is a kind of deficiency which one experiences, that is, when you begin to try to be a witness-self. Gradually you find that the greater the continuity of witness consciousness, the greater is your force of activity, so that you are not swallowed up by your activity and whenever you need something more you can always draw from your witness consciousness that what you need in your activity. So one should not be worried if in the beginning the effectivity of action is slightly reduced. It is by continuing to do it and gathering more and more power of witnessing that this capacity is generated and actually increased.

Now this experience of witnessing can be done at three normal levels. The easiest is at the level of the mind because our normal experience is that of our mental activity. There the mind is constantly bubbling and the mind is occupied with various kinds of thoughts, sensations, perceptions. Rush of action is felt most by the mind. We do things basically in the mind; whenever mind is absent we do not do anything, so to say. Therefore it is easier to begin at the level of the mind and try to develop a witnessing consciousness behind the mind, that is to say, to become aware of the thinker. Thinking is an activity, to become aware of the thinker is the first development of this witnessing consciousness, and when you begin to become aware of the thinker, an experience of great quietude also begins to come when you think very quietly,

because there are many kinds of thoughts. The highest thought is one in which you try to think very impartially and without any bias and without any great impatience. When you have time to consider pros and cons and then try to arrive at a conclusion based upon all the facts which are given before you and try to make a judgement without any bias, then your witnessing consciousness also becomes more powerful and you can also be more quiet. This is the experience of what is called *manomaya purusha*, the mental *purusha*, the mind *purusha*, the mind being, which is aware of all the activities of the mind. Now similarly there can be an awareness of the *pranamaya purusha* which is aware of the vital activities. The activities of desire, the activities of joy, of emotions, activities of suffering, activities of struggle, activities of acquisition, of possession, of relationship, of mastery, of influence, all these are vital activities. And when you begin to witness them — this is more difficult but it can be also done — that in every activity of vital being you witness that you are now possessed of a desire, you are possessed of an emotion and even while you are suffering you know that you are suffering, that you are different from suffering, you are witnessing that you are suffering. Even when you are absolutely happy, you are not excited so much that you are overtaken by happiness, but there is a self in you which stands behind and is withdrawn from the happiness; one witnesses that one is happy. So this is the experience of *pranamaya purusha*. Similarly with regard to bodily activities also one can become aware, then one can have the experience of *annamaya purusha*. All our physical activities are similarly witnessed. One becomes aware of all the activities of the body and one is not identified with the body. Normally we are so much identified with the body that we think that we are the body. So in the *annamaya purusha* we become the witness of the body and we are separated from the body.

Now when you are aware of all the three successively or together then there is a possibility of becoming aware of the *purusha* which is apart from *manomaya*, *pranamaya* and the *annamaya*, and then can come about a possibility of withdrawing from all activity altogether. In some of the paths of *jnanayoga* this is what is proposed: first by witnessing all your activities at different levels you arrive at a point when the *purusha* is felt to be quiet and then the gulf between the activity and your *purusha* becomes so great that you can easily withdraw from all activity, and when you enter into that state, you are near the immobile *purusha*, *akshara purusha*. And sometimes we are told that if you are in that consciousness and sufficiently if you remain in that consciousness you become liberated and you may not even come back to the activity at all. This is very often described as *moksha*. You become completely free from activity, of the pull of activity, so there is no *bandhan*. The pull of activity is lost, you do not feel any obligation at all, there is no necessity of entering into activity.

Now this kind of liberation is certainly something which is very precious for the individual but then it may not be so very useful to the others or for the world, because the world continues to remain in activity and others continue to be in the activity and therefore in all kind of sufferings. So if you want to return back to the activity of the world, then you have to have a very stable equilibrium whereby you can be all the time above the activity and yet engaged in activity.

But this becomes easier when apart from the *manomaya*, *pranamaya*, *annamaya* *purusha* — witness consciousness — you also have an experience of *Chaitya Purusha*, the psychic being. This is the part of yoga which is not often found except in the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and to some extent in the *Gita* — to become aware of the *Chaitya Purusha*, of the psychic being. Now psychic being is even deeper than the mind and actually it is that which contains the possibilities of the development of the life, mind and body. The secret of the life, mind and body and their formations, their developments, their rhythms, the way in which they are shaping out, even without our knowing are contained in the psychic being — just as a river always flows in a particular direction — similarly the river of our mind, life and body has a tendency to move in one direction. Now if you inquire as to why it moves in one direction, the rationale of it is to be found in the psychic being. The psychic being is there in which the latency, the potentiality of the movements of the body, life and mind are contained. It is you might say the reservoir of potentialities in which all the possibilities of body, life and mind movement are contained and also the direction of it, i.e. in what direction they will flow. Therefore psychic entity is called the soul, the soul is the source. Whenever you use the word soul, it has two meanings — it is the source and it is the stuff of which things are made. The very material of which I am constituted springs from it.

Question: Is the psychic being different from it?

Yes, the psychic entity or the soul is greater than the psychic being, it is greater than that. The source is always greater. So there is in us a soul which is the source of our body, life and mind and which contains the potentialities of further development of the body, life and mind, and also the direction in which the body, life and mind are to move. In other words the soul may also be regarded as the law of the development of being. Law is always something that gives you direction — whenever you use the word law it has the sense of a direction in which we are always guarded. Law is the guard, it keeps you within limits. The law is that which corrects the flow. There is a flow of movement. That flow is kept in guard, in limits by the soul. That flow is kept in a direction. So, that which keeps you in the right direction is the soul.

Now this soul, this psychic entity, is the true individual of our individuality. Our normal understanding of individuality is what we think of as our ego, but beyond the ego there is an individuality — the true individual — and that is the soul. We had at one time the opportunity to discuss this question in detail but just to refresh ourselves we may say that this soul is itself directed by the *Jivatman*. *Jivatman* is what may be defined as the transcendental Lord Himself who can be unique. Transcendental that is unique. This uniqueness is individuality. Each one of us is the unique transcendental but he is himself the Lord, *tat tvam asi*, that is the great truth of the *Upanishad*, thou art That. You are that. So, as far as That is concerned there is only one. We are different from each other only in the uniqueness of the expression of That. That expresses itself in innumerable ways and each one of the innumerable ways is one individuality. But because He is transcendental in nature — He is Himself the Lord — the uniqueness has the potentiality of universalising fully, limitlessly, so the individual has the capacity of universalising. That is why we all can be as vast as the universe. We can continuously become vast even though we are limited now. The reason why we can always grow into vastness is because fundamentally our uniqueness is not a limitation, our uniqueness is simply a point of action you might say, a specificity behind which stands the whole of the Supreme Lord Himself, who is himself the creator of the universe. So this individual is what is called in the *Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, the *Jiva*. In *Katha Upanishad* there is a special mention of *Jiva* who is described as *madhvadaha*, he is the eater of honey. This is the description given in the *Upanishad* by *yama* that this *Jiva* is the eater of honey. He is the unique centration of the transcendental who is *Satchidananda*, and full of *Ananda*, therefore the very nature of it is honey. He constantly eats the honey; that is the special character of this individual. Now this individual, the *Jivatman*, is actually behind or above you might say, above the psychic entity or the soul. So the psychic entity is only a kind of a delegate of the individual; delegate for whom? A delegate that guides the body, life and mind in evolution. Therefore this psychic entity contains the potentialities derived from the uniqueness of the individual. All the potentialities, all that you are supposed to do is as it were contained there, and our body, life and mind are actually flowing from there. Although body, life and mind are not aware of it, but actually they are flowing from there, and they are flowing according to the law which is an expression of the uniqueness of the individuality.

That is why we have a concept not only of *dharma* but also *swadharma*. Each one has a *swadharma*, has a law of his own growth and this *swadharma* is actually expressed by the *Jivatman*. The potentialities of the *jivatman* are all contained in the psychic entity — and when this psychic entity flows it allows the body, life and mind to move from itself, it controls the movements of all this secretly. Actually the psychic entity becomes psychic being to the extent to which it begins to shape itself more and more. Now this shaping of the psychic entity into psychic being is called the formed psychic entity. The formation of the psychic entity is called the psychic being. When the psychic entity which is full of potentialities, becomes expressed, and when its formation takes place, that formation is called the psychic being. Now that formation depends upon two factors. The extent to which the original nature of the psychic entity is able to express itself more and more in the body, life and mind, we can say that the psychic being has now developed more and more. Secondly the more and more it can control the body, life and mind, we can say it has grown, it has shaped better and better.

Question: Can you explain this control more clearly?

The control? Now let us dwell upon this point a little more closely. The psychic entity which is the source of body, life and mind is divided from the body, life and mind by a veil, because of a specific purpose. There is a veil between the psychic entity and the body, life and mind, a veil which is deliberately created not because of any mistake or error or any kind of incapacity.

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

There is a purpose why that veil has been created. The kind of formation of the body, life and mind which is supposed to be created can best be created if first a veil is created and if it is gradually withdrawn. Then only the kind of shape that is required to be made of the body, life and mind can be created. The purpose is to create the right shape of body, life and mind, that is to say body, life and mind are the expressions, they are the rivers flowing from the soul. The purpose is to create the right type of shape of these rivers. Now these rivers will flow in a particular way when in the first place a veil is created between the soul and the body, life and mind, and then that veil is gradually lifted up, and then there is a full flow of the psychic entity, then the right shape will be created.

You might imagine for example that, supposing you are told to build a temple of a certain type, certain shape and there are masons who are going to work out the building of the temple and you are the architect. Now if the masons are first told fully — as to what kind of temple is to be built, they will not be able to grasp it. So, being an architect, a good architect you allow the masons to work out ordinary things although you are behind everybody but the masons go on working in their ordinary way with their limited capacities, without the vision of what kind of temple is to be built. If they are told, they will become so perplexed and so very incapable that they will never be able to carry it out. So you keep yourself away and allow them to work out. As they develop more and more and the things are being shaped better and better, the architect comes more and more into the forefront and gives more and more knowledge to the masons of the real plan that is to be worked out, and then they become conscious of it and then the real thing is built. Now, similar is the relationship between the psychic entity and the body, life and mind. The psychic entity is like an architect and body, life and mind are like the masons, and what is to be built is the Divine temple on the earth, each one of us is to be the Divine temple — each one of us — that is the purpose. So ultimately our whole aim is that every human body is to be the temple of God. This is the aim. Now that aim can be fulfilled if first there is a veiling, and then that veil is gradually lifted. Now the psychic being becomes more and more shaped, more and more capable if the body, life and mind begin to develop more and more in the flow which comes from the psychic entity itself. If gradually the veil is thinned and as you thin down this veil, the control of the psychic entity over the body, life and mind becomes greater and greater. The body, life and mind more and more happily obey the orders of the psychic entity. Instead of being ministers who are arrogant and self-willed, they become ministers who are keen to turn to their king for advice and for guidance. They admit, they acknowledge, the soul as their soul.

So the basic problem in life is first to become aware of the veil, secondly to be aware of what lies behind the veil, thirdly to thin down the veil so that the psychic entity's power flows more and more powerfully, more and more clearly in the body, life and mind, and then to become aware that the psychic being has the power to control and to guide. And when the body, life and mind become aware of the will of the psychic entity — not only the power of manifestation but the will of the psychic entity — you not only see the psychic entity as a witness, not only as a *sakshi*, but also as *anumanta*, one who gives the consent, and then you realise further that he is not only *anumanta* but he is also the *karta*, he is the real doer. And if the will of the psychic entity begins to formulate itself more and more, then the psychic being develops much more clearly, much more sharply. The one in whom the psychic being rules, you find a certain mark of personality, you find the psychic personality where the body, life and mind are the slaves of the soul and they are very keen to obey the orders of the psychic being. When this is not present then the body, life and mind are the masters, and they regard the soul as exiled and they are not prepared to listen to the soul at all. So there is a difference between the two basic types of personalities, personalities in which the soul has become aware and whose will is therefore able to manifest in the body, life and mind, and personalities which are not at all aware and therefore they are acting in their egoism and they believe themselves to be the masters and deciders of their destiny. The egoistic man and the vitalistic man or the man of opinions and self will, are the two basic types of personalities and then there are, of course, many other combinations. When the physical is predominant you get the physical man, when the vital is dominant you get the vital man, when the mind is dominant you get the mental man, and then there are many kind of mixtures of these aspects of personality, so you get various varieties of personalities in the world.

So in our process of development it is not enough to become aware of *manomaya purusha*, *pranamaya purusha*, *annamaya purusha* and of the *purusha* that can withdraw from the world,

but you have to become aware of the *Chaitya Purusha*. This awareness is very important if you really want to have both silence and activity simultaneously, and because without it you cannot really help in this world which is a world of action. This is all the necessity of this development. When this psychic entity becomes more and more powerful, and the psychic being is formed then all our parts of nature, body, life and mind, as it were, get x-rayed by the psychic being. The veil becomes thinner and thinner, so under the light of the psychic being the motives of our body, life and mind become x-rayed and they are seen very clearly. The purity and the knowledge of the psychic being radiates very clearly on the body, life and mind. The psychic entity is always pure, that is its very nature. It is the delegate of the *Jivatman*, which is the eater of honey for ever, eternally. That *Jiva* is ever free. The experience of this building of the temple of the Divine is made by the *Jivatman* which is free, through the activity of the soul which is its delegate. Therefore basically this soul manifests only what is given to it by the *Jivatman*, and *Jivatman* manifests only what is given by God Himself. So you might say that God alone is the real doer; the real architect is God who is reflected through the *Jivatman* and through the psychic being. And even body, life and mind actually move from the soul but because of the veil, this is not known, so the real doer is actually God but we do not know it. The body, life and mind believe that they are the doers. That is why the *Bhagavad Gita* says that people believe that they are the doers, and actually the doer is God Himself. Although activity flows from God, because of the veil that activity flows in a distorted fashion. But this distortion becomes corrected when this veil is thinned little by little and ultimately lifted out. When this flow of the psychic entity becomes very powerful and body, life and mind are suffused with the light of the psychic being, then we say a psychic transformation has taken place. This in brief is the first step of the psychic transformation, when the psychic being begins to infiltrate more and more powerfully, when every nook and corner of the being is exposed to the light of the psychic being and everything is put in tune with the psychic being.

Now, let me read out two passages from here: (Page 906)

"...there is even a self of body of which, by standing back from the body and its demands and activities and entering into a silence of the physical consciousness watching the action of its energy, it is possible to become aware, a true and pure physical being, the Purusha. So too, by standing back from all these activities of nature successively or together, it becomes possible to realise one's inner being as the silent impersonal self, the witness Purusha. This will lead to a spiritual realisation and liberation, but will not necessarily bring about a transformation; for the Purusha, satisfied to be free and himself, may leave the nature, the Prakriti, to exhaust its accumulated impetus by an unsupported action, a mechanical continuance not renewed and reinforced or vivified and prolonged by his consent, and use this rejection as a means of withdrawing from all nature. The Purusha has to become not only the witness but the knower and source, the master of all the thought and action, and this can only be partially done so long as one remains on the mental level or has still to use the ordinary instrumentation of mind, life and body. A certain mastery can indeed be achieved, but mastery is not transformation; the change made by it cannot be sufficient to be integral: for that it is essential to get back, beyond mind-being, life-being, body-being, still more deeply inward to the psychic entity inmost and profoundest within us, — or else to open to the superconscious highest domains. For this penetration into the luminous crypt of the soul one has to get through all the intervening vital stuff to the psychic centre within us, however long, tedious or difficult may be the process. The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulses, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and rejection of the old mind-movements and life-movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara. A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers.

As the crust of the outer nature cracks, as the walls of inner separation break down, the inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity,

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

and the deeper psychic experiences, those which are not solely of an inner mental or inner vital character, become possible in this subtler, purer, finer substance; the soul begins to unveil itself, the psychic personality reaches its full stature.

The soul, the psychic entity, then manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the other powers and functions of the Spirit; it takes up its greater function as the guide and ruler of the nature. A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of the conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their tangles disentangled, their obscurities, deceptions, self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order. This process may be rapid or tardy according to the amount of obscurity and resistance still left in the nature, but it goes on unfalteringly so long as it is not complete. As a final result the whole conscious being is made perfectly apt for spiritual experience of every kind, turned towards spiritual truth of thought, feeling, sense, action, tuned to the right responses, delivered from the darkness and stubbornness of the tamasic inertia, the turbidities and turbulences and impurities of the rajasic passion and restless unharmonised kinetism, the enlightened rigidities and sattwic limitations or poised balancements of constructed equilibrium which are the character of the Ignorance".

So this is what happens when the psychic being is able to move forward and become the ruler of our nature. Now the next step is the step towards what Sri Aurobindo calls the spiritual transformation.

What is the distinction between psychic and spiritual first of all? In a sense, all that is beyond mind is called spiritual, so even what is psychic can be called spiritual. That is in a very rough and general way. But when we use the word spiritual as distinguished from psychic, then the distinction rests upon the fact that the psychic is connected with the individual. Psychic is connected with the formation of the individual. Psychic is connected with the delegate of the *Jivatman* and the experiences of this delegate in the relationship that this psychic entity has with the perfection of its formation, by its own specific activity: its unique activity. Unending self-surrender to the Divine is the specific activity of the psychic entity. Even the body can surrender to the Divine, life can surrender to the Divine, mind also can surrender to the Divine but the emotion, the love and the *Ananda* which is spontaneous in the psychic being for the surrender to the Divine is something which is unique to the psychic entity. So experiences of this kind which are centred in this field and the effect of these experiences in the formation and perfection of the individuality, and the influence of this on the body, life and mind and perfection of the body, life and mind by this influence is all called psychic. But there are other experiences for which also psychic being prepares us but the domains of which are not centred on the individual, they are centred on the universal and the transcendental.

The experience of the immobile *Brahman*, *Akshara Purusha*, experience of the self in all, the experience of the cosmic action of *Ishwara*, the universal and transcendental peace of the Divine, the action of the transcendent on the earth, the downpour of light, love, knowledge, peace coming down from the Supreme, the experience of the spirit that is spaceless and timeless; this domain is specifically called the domain of spirituality as distinguished from the domain of the psychic. In a simpler way you can say that spiritual is designated by experiences which take you away from space and time i.e. when you transcend space and time. And when you experience continuity of space and time and your individuality as a continuous immortal, that is psychic.

Question: As immortal?

Immortal is that which is constantly in space and time, all the time, but undying. One of the marks of the psychic experience is that you realise that you are not only in this body but you have incarnated many bodies in the past and you can incarnate many bodies in the future and

you are immortal, that which is the same, that you are the one who cast off the old clothes when they are worn-out and you take new bodies and new clothes. It is an experience of being in space and time — you are not out of space and time. In space and time when you are immortal individually, all experiences that are connected with this, are psychic. When you experience the Supreme Divine as spaceless and timeless and the One who stands above space and time — even though you may be in space and time but who stands above space and time — these experiences are spiritual. Secondly in the psychic experiences, you are limited to the fields of body, life and mind. Dealing with body, life and mind, converting body, life and mind, transforming body, life and mind, using these instruments of body, life and mind is something which is peculiar to the psychic level.

But when you go beyond the mind and develop other experiences of other instruments higher than the mind, then they are spiritual experiences. In the *Bhagavad Gita* there is a distinction made between *Para Prakriti* and *Apara Prakriti*. *Apara Prakriti* consists of body, life and mind but there is also a *Para Prakriti*. *Apara Prakriti* is a lower instrument but *Para Prakriti* is an instrument of God Himself. So the utilisation of *Para Prakriti* as an instrument is a part of spiritual development. Sri Aurobindo distinguishes several instrumentations beyond the mind. There is above the mind a higher mind; above the higher mind is the illumined mind; above the illumined mind is the intuitive mind; above the intuitive mind is the overmind; and above the overmind is the supermind. These are the layers of instrumentations. We are aware only of body, life and mind but when you can begin to ascend into these higher planes, then you become more and more vast, not only individualised in this small field of action but your scope of action becomes very vast.

In the higher mind you begin to live in thousands of thought-systems at the same time. At present we are hardly able to keep two or three systems of thought in the mind, that too with great difficulty. You can compare one thought system with another and that too with great difficulty. But in the higher mind, thousands of systems of thought can stay together harmoniously in your mind.

In the illumined mind, not only do you have a capacity of thinking of this kind when you can have thousands of thoughts together, but you have a power similar to thousand eyes so that not only can you think in thousand ways or with thousand systems of thought but you can see at once thousand systems of reality. That is why *Indra* is called *Sahasrakshaha*. *Indra* is the Lord of the illumined mind. When thousand eyes open up on the universe at the same time, that is the consciousness in which we live when we are elevated to the illumined consciousness, illumined mind.

The intuitive mind is when you can experience thousands of experiences simultaneously, you can touch, you can smell, thousands of systems. You intimately experience them by identity, not only do you see because when you see there is still a distance between you and the sight, but in the interactive mind you feel yourself penetrating into all things simultaneously. Actually *Ramakrishna* was supposed to be living constantly in the intuitive mind. He could see and feel and touch thousands of things at the same time, and correctly — intuition is always a truth perception, there is no mistake in it.

And when you can go above it, into the overmind; millions of aspects open out and you can see each one to its logical extreme.

And supermind is one in which these millions of things are united together in one vision, like *Vishnu's* eye. In the *Veda*, *Vishnu's* eye has been described as if one eye is occupying the whole sky. Such is the supramental vision in which there is unity of all things, the supreme universal consciousness, enlightened, illumined.

All this movement from higher mind to supermind is called spiritual consciousness. The descent of all this into the mind, life and body and transformation of body, life and mind by all these powers is called spiritual transformation.

And this is followed by the third notion — I'm speaking rapidly like this so you can have the full picture like a geographical map. When you can, not only ascend into the supermind but can fix yourself in the supermind, and then if that consciousness being fixed can descend into overmind and intuitive mind and illumined mind and higher mind and mind and life and body and even below the body into the subconscious and the unconscious, if it can go down and down and

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

down, and then if it can transform them, not only the coming down but even the transformation right down to the inconscient, that process is called supramental transformation.

So these are the three basic steps to triple transformation: the psychic transformation, the spiritual transformation and the supramental transformation.

Question: The Divine's will can be known in which stage of mind?

Even psychic being can know because it is directly connected. Psychic being is a delegate of the *Jivatman* and *Jivatman* is the transcendental himself, specific.

Question: Even in the psychic transformation?

That is why our psychic transformation is so important. The easiest way of finding out God's will is to contact the psychic being. Without doing anything else, if you are in the psychic being, it is the easiest way of doing it. So that is why we are told that the easiest thing is: surrender to the Divine, offer yourself to the Divine, let the Divine take charge of you, that will create the psychic consciousness, and the moment you take that stand the Divine's will will flow through you.

In a sense we have finished the chapter last time.

Question: Supramental Transformation?

That we will discuss later on.

IV

The whole chapter was finished last time but we might say that was the first reading of ours. We may have to revise the chapter now. So you might say that we are now beginning the chapter again. You might say that this chapter is an answer to a very important question which is asked very often: can human nature be changed? Now there are people who believe that human nature can never be changed. Discussing this question *Swami Vivekananda* once said that human nature is like a dog's tail, however much you straighten it, the moment you leave it, it goes back to its original curve. Now if this is true then all hope of a new humanity, of a new world order, of a new consciousness descending upon the world, all that would be set aside. If human nature cannot be changed at all, then to talk of a new world is out of question, the world will always remain as it is.

There are some psychologists who really believe that human nature is fixed. Within the boundaries of those fixtures it can travel from point to point, it may even seem that it has changed from one level to the other, but those fundamentals, those pillars between which it is fixed, they remain completely unalterable and therefore we can never hope to change man as such. You can have ameliorations, platitudes and some kind of patented medicines for immediate relief from certain difficulties, but fundamentally you cannot change it.

There is for example the psychology of Freud. You know Freud is a great name in the field of psychology in modern times and he made remarkable discoveries. Of course these discoveries were known already in the Vedic times. If you read the *Vedas* you find all the knowledge which is given by Freud present in the Vedic verses, and even much more rich and much more penetrating than what you find in Freud. But still, in the modern times it has been regarded as a new discovery. This new discovery is the discovery of the unconscious. According to Freud, man's psychology is nine tenth unconscious, only one tenth is conscious. The unconscious plays a great role in determining the conscious. All that man is thinking consciously, feeling consciously, behaving consciously is determined by his unconscious drives. From where this unconscious is born he does not answer, because Freud is not a philosopher, he is only a psychologist.

The difference between a philosopher and a psychologist is that the psychologist only observes the phenomena within a certain limited domain, whereas the philosopher asks the question, "Why does this phenomena occur at all?" The ultimate origin of things is the search of a philosopher. A psychologist is a scientist, who does not ask the ultimate origin of things. He limits himself to a domain and says "I start with the assumption that this domain exists". What is the origin of that domain? He does not raise this question. Like a physicist for example assumes that matter exists. The question, "What is the ultimate origin of matter?", does not exist in his field. He starts with the assumption that matter exists. Whether it really exists or not, from where it has come into existence, these questions fall outside the province of physics. A biologist for example is also a scientist, he assumes that life exists. But what the origin of life is, the ultimate origin of life? Why should there be life at all? These questions are not raised by the biologist. Similarly a psychologist will say: "I am concerned with the psychological phenomena and I can go as deep as possible in that domain. I can discover the origins of things provided you do not go beyond that domain. I do not go into physics, I do not go into biology to find the origin of psychology". It is for philosophers to raise this question of the ultimate origin.

So the question from where the unconscious has arisen? Freud does not raise. He starts by saying, "There is the unconscious in human beings". This unconscious he calls "libido". It is a name given by him just to indicate that it is a kind of a cluster of urges, impulses, irresistible in character. It is a cluster of drives by which man is really pushed to do all kinds of things. And at a certain point, these drives meet the world. Libido is within our inner world and this libido in its drive meets sometimes the outer world, knocks into the world, blindly. Now the external world does not permit the manifestation of this libido in all its fullness, so the external world as it were knocks it back, "not allowed, not permitted here". Much of the consciousness of man is a result of this knocking. The drives of man trying to manifest into the external world, being knocked by the external world, awakens the man and that constitutes his consciousness. That consciousness itself is a belt in our being which is very narrow. He compares it with an iceberg. Just as an iceberg floats on the ocean's waters, one tenth of it is seen on the surface and nine tenth of it is below the waters, similarly our conscious being is only one tenth on the surface, the rest is behind the surface and is all unconscious. Now this consciousness is not aware of the unconscious. This consciousness is aware only of the external world and is not aware of the source of the drives which rush into his conscious being and for some time the conscious being allows this rush to come out and then when they are knocked backwards, this conscious being begins to learn that there is something like a danger zone and some principle begins to develop in us which he calls the "ego principle", a kind of a watchman who looks below and who looks outward and keeps a watch and does not allow the unwanted elements to come out and manifest. A child for example is like an animal according to him, who wants all kinds of things to be manifested. The drive of the unconscious is very much in him and then the outer world prohibits him and says: "do not do this, do not do that". Prescriptions go on coming upon the child and the child resists as much as possible, but ultimately the external world is very strong and the child ultimately begins to understand that this world is not allowing it and he will not be able to put forth all that he wants in the external world. All that goes on unconsciously, he doesn't even think consciously. All this is an unconscious process. Even suppression of what is not wanted, is done unconsciously. So according to Freud, much of the development of the child takes place by means of suppression. And all human beings today are, according to him, basically suppressed instruments. They all want to do many things, they want to manifest so many things which are in the libido but they are all suppressed. Only a little bit is allowed which by education, by training, we keep in order. In the libido things are so chaotic, so wild. So there is first the unconscious, secondly the consciousness pushing certain things backwards, that also is unconscious. But when the "ego principle" goes to sleep, then the libido has a greater sway. There is no watchman now, so it can come out in a greater field. That is why there is what he calls the "dream consciousness". The dream consciousness is a state in which the unconscious begins to manifest without the control of the ego. And whatever is suppressed is experienced.

According to Freud if you can find out the dreams of a person, you will be able to know what is suppressed in the individual and very often the causes of sickness, both mental and physical can be cured if one becomes conscious of what is suppressed. Merely becoming conscious is enough, or after having become conscious, if what was suppressed is allowed to be manifested, then one becomes cured. That was his prescription.

Question: That is — becoming aware of your suppressions?

That is right, and then to manifest what is suppressed. Now in this great movement of libido, there are its expressions, the movements of suppressions, the formation of the ego and there is what he calls the formation of a super ego. According to him, apart from the ego there is also a formation of a super ego which is, as it were, a representative of the external world within ourselves. The do's and don'ts of the external world are transplanted into ourselves and we ourselves become the external principle within ourselves. What we call normally the conscience is the super ego according to Freud. So a human being is basically bound in this gamut of things: the libido, ego, suppressions, super-ego, the frustrations, and occasional repercussions of the suppressions and manifestations without suppressions and man's struggle against suppressions. This is all the human life and human story according to him. Accordingly to Freud, therefore, the question of the change of human nature hardly arises. He felt that the human being is destined to remain like this, is like this, and the human being will continue to be like this.

You can at the most give advice as to how not to suppress and how to allow the manifestations of the libido, and the many forms in which this libido can express itself. Sometimes the external principle may not allow a certain manifestation in one form, but it may allow it in another form.

We just now spoke of poetry and painting and so on. It is basically an expression of the libido in the form in which the external world allows it. It is a form which is very beautiful, it is what is called sublimated. It is a sublimation which takes place. You sublimate the form in which your drives are manifested, and that way you satisfy your expressions and therefore you are more healthy because there is no suppression. But those individuals who cannot sublimate and who cannot express themselves in this form and who do not have the chance of manifesting because of the external world, are, according to Freud, doomed to suppressions and therefore they are suffering from various kinds of complexes.

The idea of complex is another Freudian concept. If you want to translate exactly in our Indian terminology, it is called *granthi*. *Granthi* is a kind of a complex, a knot in our consciousness. In the childhood a certain child went near the staircase and he fell down from the staircase. He was almost killed but survived. He was too young to remember this event but the experience was horrible, so the child suppresses this experience and it goes into the subconscious. And now even when he has grown up, whenever he sees a staircase, he withdraws from it, he does not want to climb down and he feels horrible even looking at the staircase and he always feels he is about to fall without knowing why he so feels. Now sometimes he even tries to overcome this and in his adventures he tries to climb up and down heroically. So the action which proceeds from this heroism and the fear which is underlying, the two things meeting together constitute a complex. Some child is always told that he is good for nothing and the child feels very resentful of this remark, does not want to hear it, does not like it, does not want to remember it even. So he suppresses it and outwardly he goes on doing so many things which will bring a kind of an appreciation that he is good. But he overdoes it because he actually tries to overcome an unconscious feeling that he is good for nothing. So there is an unnatural movement in the child to overdo, to do certain things which are heroic for him, which are not natural for him and it creates a kind of a complex. Wherever he goes, he wants to show off that he can do so many things. There is no natural development because there has been so much of snubbing and there is a complex in him. The other way round is also true. If a child is told that he is wonderful, he is very good and actually he is not so good and he knows that he is not so good, yet every time he is put up on the skies. This creates an opposite kind of suppression which also is not healthy. So these examples can be multiplied in many ways.

Now what is peculiar in Freud is that according to him the libido consists only of two basic drives. If you analyse all human actions, ultimately you will find that they are reducible to two basic things, Eros and Thanatos, the desire to love and the desire to kill. These are the two things which are exclusive in all human beings. Every human being is in search of love, in search of killing. Freud's discovery is that if you analyse a human being, totally, ultimately you will find only these two basic drives which are constantly trying to manifest through him.

Question: Is this not also an animal drive?

Quite true. Your statement that when you go down below the human rung and go to the animal world you will find the same instincts over there. In human beings, however, there is a further element that they can become conscious of this to some extent.

Question: And because of that they can change their nature to some extent?

According to Freud, sublimation of some kind so as to come into contact with the outer world is possible. But change to some extent as I said does not mean that you can change the basic libido. According to Freud, the basic libido remains the same, the very form of expression, the polish of the expression, the manner of expression, the finesse of it you can change, but basically what is to be expressed is this and that is where the problem lies. So the question is: "Is man really nothing but a packet of Eros and Thanatos?" If man is only this and there is nothing else in man, then naturally all talk of change of human nature is out of the question, it is an irrelevance. You can slightly modify man, you can slightly make him happier than what he is; you can make more poets and more painters in this world, more refined human beings, but that is all. Therefore Freud said that ultimately mankind is doomed, whatever you may do, he said, whatever civilisation should build up now, ultimately there is a doom awaiting mankind. So this is a pessimistic note that Freud ended with, he didn't see in humanity any possibility of a great new world to come over. Actually he saw what was happening in the western world. He said "This is exactly what is happening, desire to kill, this tremendous desire. There is violence all over the world because of this basic libido".

Now this was Freud's theory, but his disciples disagreed with him. There is for example a famous disciple of his called Jung, and he disputed with the analysis of Freud and he said that in the unconscious these are not the only elements, there are much greater elements. And in our being there is not only the ego principle, but there is also an intimating centre, which is much wiser, much more intimate, intuitive. And that is why he said that the eastern psychology is much profound and he wanted that the eastern wisdom should be studied by the west to understand man. He also felt that astrology, for example, is a very important science and mankind can learn a great deal if one were to turn to astrology. There is an attraction of human beings to learn mythological stories or to revel in mythological stories because of the unconscious which consists not only of Eros and Thanatos but certain archetypal images. According to Jung, all human beings have unconscious in-built figures which drive and shape their personalities. In many mythological stories you have a young prince in search of a young princess attacked by old women or witches, and then advised ultimately by a wise old man, by whose help the secret of the young princess and her abode is known. The young prince is able to rescue her and then they live for ever in happiness. Now this is a kind of story that you find recurring in mythological stories, and although people may know or not the story in advance, they always like the stories and in their own imagination these things play their role. Everybody is in a search of an old wise man and everybody is attacked by the old witches and everybody is a youthful human being and everybody wants to have company of another youthful person. It is a constant search of youth for the youth and all attack of the old and the rescue comes from wisdom. Now this kind of an in-built psychological make up of the human being is a deeper truth of the unconscious than what Freud explained.

There is another disciple of Freud called Adler who maintains that it is not the desire to love and the desire to kill that is so important in man. What is important is that every human being is in search of the way by which he can dominate. The desire to dominate is the most fundamental drive. The way by which he can be superior to the others, the way by which he can have his own style of life, something distinctive, something which will make him different from the others and make his mark on the world.

This is what man is seeking fundamentally. And now of course there are many theories as to what exactly man is and there is still a lot of search. In fact one of the famous sentences of the modern psychologists is that modern man is sick and is in search of his soul. That is one of the famous statements of the modern psychologists today.

In other words the psychology that is being studied and explored all over the world is still what we may call the ABC of psychology. In fact Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters says we should never confuse Freud's psychology with yoga because many people who read yoga and read Freud, they immediately feel a great consonance between the two because both deal with some kind of unconscious. Even yoga deals with the unconscious and superconscious about which you are unconscious therefore it is all labelled as unconscious. So many people believe that yoga is the same thing as Freud — Freud's psychology is called psychoanalysis — so they believe that yoga and psychoanalysis are very similar or they come very close together. Therefore Sri Aurobindo has given a great warning saying that one should never confuse yoga with psychoanalysis. And then he says that modern psychology is only in its infancy. It is only

learning the ABC of psychology and is like a child who, when he is able to write A, declares that he has now conquered the whole world. So such is the enthusiasm of the modern psychology, it has hardly discovered a little bit and wants to claim that it has discovered everything.

Now this concept can be compared to the concept of the unconscious in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Gita*, which is so profound. In the *Veda* there is the concept of the three oceans, *samudraha*, *ritsamudraha*, *sindhu*. These are three terms which occur quite often in the *Veda*. Normally *samudra* means the unconscious; *ritsamudra* means the human consciousness, that which is very alive in the heart of man; and *sindhu* is the superconscious of which we are not aware now but which is itself a vast ocean, an ocean of light not of unconscious. Now if you read the *Veda* from this point of view you will find that the *Veda* is not only a discovery of these three oceans but also the method of a successful travel in these three oceans and how you can successfully travel in these three oceans; how you can understand better the ocean of unconscious, how you can become very conscious and how you can transcend the limitations of your consciousness and enter into the superconscious.

Question: Superconscious is intuition?

There are many levels. Intuition is one of the powers of superconscious. There are supposed to be seven rivers according to the *Veda* which flow from the *sindhu*, and the several names are to be found in the *Veda* which refer to these rivers. The one name that is given is *Saraswathy*. This is one of the very famous goddesses in the *Veda*. It is one of the rivers that flows from *sindhu*. The others are *Ila*, *Mahati*, *Sarama* and *Daksha*. At least we can identify these five out of the seven rivers mentioned. They speak of seven rivers but it is five names which we can, if we study the *Veda*, distinctly discern from this vast literature. Each one is described precisely in detail in the *Vedas* *Mahati* is the river of vastness.

Question: Vastness?

The very name *Mahati* is vastness, *Ila* is the power of revelation, *Saraswathy* is the power of inspiration, *Sarama* is the power of intuition and *Daksha* is the power of discrimination. Each one has a special function and if you read the *Vedas* you will find that whenever it speaks of *Ila* it speaks of revelation, whenever it speaks of *Saraswathy* it speaks of inspiration, whenever it speaks of *Sarama* it speaks of intuition, whenever it speaks of *Daksha* it speaks of discrimination. It's a very conscious knowledge. If you enter into the superconscious you will have these five very important experiences of the superconscious. The whole ocean is even vaster than these five streams you might say — these are five rivers — and there is still a huge ocean. The whole huge ocean is described as *Savitri* — the Supreme light which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind — *Savitri* is described by many terms, *Surya* for example. And this discovery of *Savitri* was preceded by some other discoveries which are also described in the *Veda* and they found that before you get admission into *Savitri* you have to go through four important guardians. They are called the guardians of light — *Varuna*, *Mitra*, *Aryaman*, and *Bhaga*.

Varuna gives you vastness. Just as *Mahati* gives you vastness and it is a feminine energy; *Varuna* is the masculine energy. *Mitra* is the Lord of harmony, the real friend; the secret of friendship is contained in *Mitra*. *Aryaman* is the Lord of austerity and *tapasya*; all effort, the hard right way of making an effort is in *Aryaman*. And *Bhaga*, is the right way of enjoyment, the true delight, the mastery of delight and the capacity to contain the delight. With most of us, even a small delight can make us excited and we cannot hold it and as you rise higher and higher, greater delights come. Therefore we require greater capacities to keep the enjoyment intact and you learn to rightly enjoy. So if you want the Supreme to be experienced and enjoyed, then you require a tremendous capacity because the real delight which is also described as *Soma* in the *Veda*, is an elixir of delight.

Actually there is one full chapter in the *Veda*, i.e. *Rig Veda* the nine chapter, which is entirely given to *Soma* and which actually gives you conditions by which *Soma* can be approached and the purity that is required to approach *Soma*. It says that only when you are heated perfectly well and you become like a baked jar — a body is like a jar — baked jar, very well baked jar, only then, when the *Soma* is poured into you, you can sustain it. Otherwise like an unbaked jar it would break, *Soma* cannot be held in you. So if you really want the highest delight then you have to purify yourself of all the dirt, all the impurity that is in our being, and to be so pure, so transparent, that when that delight manifests in us you remain intact and there is no

disbalancement. The ecstasy of the delight is so great, it is like an ocean of delight — not only a stream, not only a small cup of delight, but the ocean of delight and if it descends into you normally we would be broken, unless we have been trained in a great *tapasya*. *Aryaman* has to be fulfilled completely before *Bhaga* can come into play.

So the entire Vedic process you might say is aware of the unconscious. Freud is aware only of a bit of the conscious and of one part of the unconscious and he is not aware as to how the unconscious itself comes out, what is the origin of unconscious. He does not raise these questions at all — whereas in the *Veda* there is the knowledge of origin of the unconscious. The *Veda* says *satyam charitam chabhiddat tapasodhyajayata, tatoratrijayata, tataha samudro arnavaha*. This is one of the famous verses of what is called the *Agharmashana mantra*. *Agha* means sin, *marshana* means destruction. A mantra which can destroy the sin. If you know this secret as to from where darkness has come, then you can really cure it. The cure can be effected only when you know the origin of a certain disease. So darkness is the unconscious — *samudro arnavaha* is the darkness — darkness came out from *ratri*, *ratri* is a half darkness.

Question: Twilight?

Not only twilight, even night. Because there are stars in the night, so night is not a complete darkness.

Question: But in order to be aware of this light you have to know the dark also.

Yes, that is why it says that there is complete darkness and complete darkness comes out of the night which is partly luminous and partly dark because there are stars in the night which are all luminous. So before the complete darkness, was the night. But before the night were the principle of *ritamchasatyam* — the truth and the right — and this truth came out of the *tapas*, and *tapas* is always a principle of *chit* — *chit* consciousness, *chit tapas*. *Chit* consciousness — from the highest consciousness of the light, from the *Sindhu* you might say, the *tapas* manifests and when *tapas* manifests, the first manifestation is truth and the right, not darkness. Then comes the dark, the night, and then comes complete darkness. So the origin of complete darkness is the light, according to the Vedic knowledge, and because the origin of darkness is the light therefore darkness can be cured. According to Freud the unconscious cannot be cured, it is there. At the most you can sublimate a little in expression but the basic things remain as they are, so according to Freud, the fate of civilisation is doomed. But if this is the knowledge, that behind darkness is the light — it has come out of the light — then light can again illuminate it and it can be cured.

So the whole of the *Veda* is a description as to how you can ascend from the lower levels and go upwards. Now in this ascension one has to be very careful. You should first do a good geographical analysis of the entire domain and make tremendous efforts of finding out where to go, how to go, build paths into this darkness. If you read the *Veda* properly you find that such was really the effort done by these people. Because it tells you that first do not attend to the darkness, it is there and do not bother about it first.

There is one instrument in every human being on which you should concentrate first and that is *dhi* or *buddhi*, you concentrate only on that. That is why we have the famous *Gayatri* mantra : *bhur bhuvaha svah, tat savitur varenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo naha prachodayat*, which says that we should concentrate upon *Savitri*, upon the Supreme light. *Varenyam bhargaha*; *varenyam* means the Supreme, *bhargaha* means the light, Supreme light of *Savitri*. *Tat savitur varenyam bhargaha devasya dhimahi*; *dhimahi* means we are contemplating. We are contemplating on the Supreme light of *Savitri*, of the Supermind you might say. Why? So that, *dhiyo yo naha prachodayat*, so that *dhi*, our intelligence, *dhi* may be directed, *prachodayat*, may be directed by *Savitri*. So this is the simple formula it has given that if human beings are to be rescued from where they are, it is perfectly possible. It is possible to change the human nature. Human nature is not doomed to remain what it is. I mean that is the real message of the *Veda* and the first instrument to be taken up is *dhi*, the intellect.

But that is not enough, this is only the first step. When the intellect is somewhat refined then much greater value is to be attached to *Agni*. There is an element in all of us, the element of *Agni*, the fire. That fire is what may be called aspiration, all upward aspiration. A speciality of fire is that it always moves upwards. So whatever is upward, whatever moves upward, you attend to that. Kindle in you all upward aspiration, always uplift. That is why in the *Veda* you find so many

mantras addressed to *Agni*. This *Agni*, according to the *Veda*, is both within you and also outside you, so it is helpful from both the ways. To this *Agni*, is addressed the very first mantra of the *Rig Veda* : *Om agnimore, purohitam yajnasya, devamritvijam, hotaram ratnadhatamam*. It says: I worship *Agni*, *Agni ire, ire* means I worship *Agni*, I worship *Agni*, the fire. *Purohitam* is the priest, priest is a normal translation but actually etimologically it means *puraha ita*, *puraha* means that which is in the front, *ita* means held, that which is held in the front, the leader. Oh *Agni* I worship you because you are the leader, you are put in front. Leader of *yajnasya* or sacrifice. *Devamritvijam* you are a God and you are *ritvijam*, *ritvija* means: you are the knower of the seasons of my being. Every human being has certain seasons of development.

This idea of seasons is very important in the *Veda*. In recent psychological books also now people have begun to recognise the importance of seasons, seasons of psychological development. There is a beautiful book written by Whitehead called *Ideals of education* and there, his important advice is that every child has seasons of development. He speaks of romantic periods of study. There are periods in the child's life when he falls in love with studies, becomes a passionate lover of studies. Now this is the season which is very important and good parents and good teachers must take advantage of that season. Nurture the child at that time when he is in love with his books, with his studies, with explorations, various imaginations. He begins to develop a new interest in poetry, in art, imagination, literature, science, inventions of various kinds, discoveries of various kinds. He wants to read, he wants to question, he wants to go around in the world, he wants to conquer the world. These are the very important periods and good parents and good teachers must give all the encouragement to the child at this time. At that time to bind the child within the fixed syllabus, fixed time-tables, rigour of what we call outer discipline is quite irrelevant. The child is in love, at that time allow him the freedom and passion of his love and do not bind him into the ordinary discipline of ordinary school work, home work and ordinary kind of work that is being done with children. But you must know when is this season, and once a good teacher actually knows that there are seasons she can even create such seasons. That is another knowledge which is given in the *Veda*, i.e. how to create seasons and that is why it is said *Agni* knows the seasons, *ritvijam*. You should know the seasons and you can create the seasons, and just as we can have mangoes all the seasons because of certain horticultural practices, similarly you can create seasons all the time in your being, so that all the time you are in fruition, all the time you are flowering. This is the secret also of our being.

Agni is *hotaram*, he is the one who is capable of calling. Now this also is an important psychological concept in the *Veda* which says that the secret of development is in calling, simply calling. When we read a mythological story of "open sesame", there is a great truth in it. You just say "open sesame" and the door opens. As Christ said: "ask and you will be given, knock and the door will be opened". And it is quite true, the whole secret of development lies in calling, you just call. The nature is so constituted that corresponding to every call there is an answer, it is only waiting for the call. So if you know the secret of the call, then you can make use of the call. In a certain sense you might say that the whole of the *Veda* is nothing but formulas of the call.

And then it is also addressed as *ratnadhataman*. *Ratnadha, dha* means the holder, *ratna* means delight, it is that which is the holder of the delight. You see if *Agni* is sufficiently kindled then the jar is baked properly because of *Agni*. The fire purifies the jar, i.e. our entire being, thoroughly. As a result of that we become ready to receive the greatest delight. So this is the second principle which is in the *Veda*. The first is *dhi*, the second is *Agni*.

Now, when you begin to develop with *Agni* and with your intelligence, then a certain movement arises by which you are allowed entry into the superconscious and this entry is heralded by *Ushas*, by the dawn. A new consciousness begins to dawn upon you. A multicoloured manifestation of the coming light begins to dawn on you. It is a delightful experience of the *Maruts*. *Maruts* are the winds which are forces of thought. When your intelligence has already tried to concentrate upon *Savitri*, then various forces of thought also begin to mount and there is lightning and thunder and the rains which are brought by *Maruts*, as a result of which you feel a new atmosphere growing in you which prepares you for a higher development. Now this itself takes a lot of time. Although we can speak of it rapidly but it takes a lot of time to develop all this. That is why a lot of space is given to *Agni* and a lot of space is given to the various kinds of calls to various forces. *Vayu* also is invited. But then at a certain time of development a major

experience bursts upon you. Just as you start moving upwards there is also the experience of the light of *Savitri* descending in you. It is always there but because of the layers of darkness around you, you are not experiencing the coming of the light, but now because of thunder and the lightning and rains of various kinds, the *Ushas* coming in, you begin to have a clarity between you and the superconscious. As a result, a new light begins to dawn and come out. This luminous movement is the movement of *Indra*. If you read *Indra* in the *Veda* you will find that wherever *Indra* comes there is this announcement of the coming of light, coming from above. Wherever *Agni* is written about, it is a call from below but *Indra* is the light coming from above. In answer to *Agni*, *Indra* comes down. Now there is a great wealth of information and knowledge about *Indra*. In fact a large number of mantras are attributed and addressed to *Indra* in the *Rig Veda*.

But we are not on that subject now, so I am just rapidly passing on to a very important legend of the *Veda* which is called the legend of the *Angirasa*. Through this legend the *Veda* wants to give us a description as to how we, ordinary human beings can change our nature, can be transformed and can attain to the Supreme light. The legend is very simple. There are seven great *rishis* called *Angirasa rishis*.

Question: Does seven has some connotation, like the seven rivers, now the seven rishis?

The word seven has a very special meaning in the *Veda* because according to the *Veda* the Supreme reality manifests sevenfold. It manifests as *Sat*, as *Chit*, as *Ananda*, as truth, as mind, as life, as matter; these are the seven. So there is a sevenfold principle of being according to the *Veda*. Being is one but it manifests in a sevenfold manner. That is why the word seven is very important in the Vedic numerology. It is even said that seven is the number of realisation because when you cover all the seven points then really you come to a realisation.

So there are seven *rishis*; you might say each one represents one of the sevenfold being. These *rishis* are in search of the cows which they have lost. That is a legend. They have cows which are lost and they are in search of these cows. They do not know where they have gone, where they have disappeared and they are very precious, so they are in search and they do *tapasya* in search of these cows. *Tapasya* consists of sacrifice, and sacrifice is a very important instrument in the search which is given in the *Veda*. All *tapasya* according to *Veda* should take the form of sacrifice. When you give up all that you think is yours then that is the sacrifice. Offer all that you are, all that you have in the intensity of your search. There is a rhythm of the sacrifice. Again *ritvija*, there is a season. There are nine periods of sacrifice and there is a tenth period of sacrifice. If you do nine periods of sacrifice then you almost reach the point where you can discover but you do not discover, you only reach the point of discovery. But when the sacrifice reaches its acme, you come to the tenth, then you transform yourself from *navagwas* to *dashagwas*. Then an important event takes place: *Indra* descends. You find *Indra* coming down and *Indra*, as I told you, is a part of the superconscious coming down. He is a Lord of the world of light, not of *Savitri* but the world of light which is descending from the Supreme *Savitri*. The world of light is called in the *Veda*: *Swaha*. That is why in the *Gayatri mantra* we said: *bhuvahhaswaha*. That *swaha* is the kingdom of *Indra*.

Question: Without Agni it is not possible?

No. That is a very important condition of the Vedic search. *Agni* is very important, *Agni* or aspiration is the first condition, descent is therefore the answer. There is a beautiful sentence in Sri Aurobindo's book called *The Mother* where he says: "aspiration from below and grace from above", the junction of these two is the point of realisation. When you aspire from below and the grace comes from above and when the two meet together that is the point of realisation.

So *Agni* is the Vedic principle. Then comes from above the movement of *Indra*. *Indra* comes to help you to find your lost cows. The seven *rishis* are now being helped by *Indra* himself. He comes down. Now in this search, *Sarama* is a figure — a kind of a dog goes forward. In the story a dog goes forward ahead of *Indra*, runs faster and finds out where the lost cows have been captured and kept. *Sarama* goes to that place and has a parley, has a kind of a discussion with those who had taken the cows and captured them in the dark. Then she discovers that these are *Panis*. They are called *Panis* in the *Veda*. They are traffickers, they are the dwellers of darkness. We were told: "do not go to darkness first". You can enter into the field of the unconscious, when you have got all this preparation because then you can safely enter into the field of darkness. So *Sarama* goes first and then has a discussion with *Panis*. Now *Panis* first of

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

all tempt *Sarama* and say: "You become our ambassador. You have come as their ambassador but you become our ambassador and do not reveal our secret. We shall give you all that you want here, you remain here with us". And then *Sarama* says: "No, I won't remain with you, I'll go back and report to *Indra*". So *Sarama* goes back to *Indra* and then of course *Indra* comes forward, then breaks all the dark hills under which the cows have been all kept hidden and when the hill is broken all darkness is shattered and the cows are recovered and the *rishis* become again the possessors of the cows.

This is a legend, but it describes in a legendary form the entire process of the way by which our nature can be changed. The cows stand for light. All of us are original possessors of light because all of us are, according to the *Veda*, *Amritasyaputrah*, ie. we are children of immortality. Therefore we are all born in light, our original home is light. So we have so many luminous forms and luminous possessions. Each luminous form is a cow according to the *Veda*. The word cow in Sanskrit is *go*, and *go* has a double meaning in Sanskrit itself: *go* means cow and *go* also means light. Therefore you may say that seven cows are lost or seven lights have been lost, it is the same thing. So when it is said the cows have been lost, it means light has been lost — *satyamcharitam*. You are living in *satya*, truth and the right, but suddenly something happened. *Tato ratryajayata* and then the night happened. Night occurred, the darkness came about and then as if it was not enough, *tataha samudroarnavaha*, and then came a complete darkness. So that is why all your cows were lost into the darkness. They were captured by *Panis* and kept hidden in a dark cave. Now, we are in search of those lost cows. We are all human beings, whether we like it or not, we are all in search. You may not know what you are looking for but we are all in search, everybody is in search. Gradually we come to realise that we are all in search of something that will really give us an inner satisfaction. First we try outer satisfactions but the point comes when you really feel that we want inner satisfaction. And then we ask ourselves by what shall we be satisfied inwardly, and then you find that we can be satisfied only when we discover ourselves, our own light, our own cows. We have lost our cows and we want to recover our own cows. Therefore we then began to search for it.

Question: But every human being who was born out of light, is it necessary to lose these cows?

No, this loss does not happen only when you are born. You were born not only in this birth. Your origin has taken place long long ago at a certain time and then you might say that we lost our connection with the light, so our loss has been long long ago and we have been moving in a cycle of births and rebirths and all the time we are actually in search, so it is not only now that we are born and so that we are losing. In the *Vedas*, *ritamchasatyam* came first, and then came *ratri* and then came *samudra* — that happened a long long while back. But now we find ourselves in this present condition, where we are. So already we are in search and we do not know what we are looking for, what we are searching for. We are really searching for the light which is originally ours. And therefore it says that if you are in search, then that search has to be done by sacrifice. And we go on sacrificing, which is a long process and these sacrifices when done by the help of *Agni*, kindle the light of aspiration. We aspire and aspire and aspire all the time and offer all that we are, all that we have and by that we are lifted up and we will have first the experiences of *Ushas*, then of thunder and lightning and waters and rivers flowing in us or rains falling on us and so on. These are all good signs which will mean the heralding of the coming of *Indra* some time, and then *Indra* may come down. This is the real entry. When *Indra* comes then it means that we have uplifted ourself into the superconscient.

It is only when we go into the superconscient that we can rightly enter into the inconscient. We should not try to enter into the subconscious or unconscious prematurely. Why psychoanalysis of Freud is dangerous is because it teaches us to enter into the subconscious and unconscious, even in our unprepared condition. If we enter into the subconscious or unconscious now as we are, there will be nothing found because we do not have the capacity of light. Only when we have grown into the light, then we can safely enter into the subconscious and we can deal with it.

Question: This light is going to be permanent or does it just come in flashes and sometimes?

First flashes, ultimately it becomes established. So that is a long process, but even in flashes, it is a great thing, and first it comes in flashes. There are seasons of these flashes and these seasons can be further cultivated until they become everlasting. That is when *Savitri* becomes manifest forever.

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

When you have discovered light, or you have the help of the light, then you can enter into these dark regions, and there you discover so many things. You discover that this darkness is not really darkness. Every darkness has a kind of a hidden sun behind it, because darkness is not original, origin is the light. So behind darkness there is always a light and if you uncover it, there is a luminous light.

There is a legend in the *Veda* that there are eight suns. Seven suns remained above and the eighth was exiled, *Martanda*, and that went into darkness and it became the black sun. So if you go into this darkness ultimately you recover *Martanda*, the eighth sun, and then you discover that that sun is really the same sun as above. That which is above is also below and you find a real harmony and when you do this again and again, then there is a great role played by *Aditi* in this yoga of the *Veda*. Even *Indra* is a child of *Aditi*. *Aditi* is the Supreme Mother, the Divine Mother. In India we have so many concepts of the Divine Mother — *Kali* and *Lakshmi* and so on. So basically all these notions have come from the original concept which you find in the *Veda*, of *Aditi*. All the Gods are supposed to be the children of *Aditi*, *Adityahaputra*. So, if you really go closer to *Aditi* more and more then you come into a closer contact with the Supreme reality and *Aditi* can bring all the cosmic powers, all the Gods. Gods are actually cosmic powers and all the cosmic powers then come to help you. And when that happens then your physical becomes powerful, sufficiently baked and in that condition of rightness you arrive at this vision where one Vedic *rishi* says: "Darkness is shattered, day has broken, there is a flood of light. I am immortal."

So this is the description of the realisation that it is attained, in the physical, i.e. while you are in the body; not when you have gone out of the body but, while in the body you can attain to this. So the Vedic realisation is the realisation of immortality while you are in the body itself. And one of the *Upanishads* says very clearly that while you are in the body you must realise, not after leaving the body. This is very important. If you do not do it, again you have to come back into the body until you reach this point of realisation in the body.

So according to this whole thing, human nature can be changed and totally changed. Even the unconscious can be totally illuminated, and this is the process. So the *Veda* itself is, as you might say, a gospel of transformation that says that the human being who is here in the field of mistruth and error, in the field of mortality, in the field of limitations can be completely rescued and he can be completely transformed.

Now this chapter on Triple Transformation is actually a description of the great development by which this transformation can be effected. Sri Aurobindo speaks of total transformation consisting of three transformations, therefore the chapter is entitled Triple Transformation. The first transformation is called psychic transformation, and psychic is the name for *Agni*. So the first transformation takes place by the recovery of *Agni* within us, the aspiration within us. Psychic transformation is not the transformation of the psychic. Psychic does not require a transformation, it is always pure in its nature. But our body, life and mind which are impure become transformed by the power of this psychic being. That is the psychic transformation. So the first part of the chapter describes what is the psychic being, how the psychic being can be awakened, what is its relationship with body, life and mind and how the psychic being can be brought out from its cave behind the body, life and mind so that the body, life and mind can be transformed, and they can be psychicised. That is the first part.

The second part is that when the psychicised body, life and mind begin to operate, then various experiences take place which are easier for the psychic being because psychic being is very near to the divine, by its very nature. Because there is also a Vedic legend that *Agni* was originally with the Supreme, like all the Gods are with the Supreme originally and when the Supreme darkness was created, *tatoratrijayata tatah samudro arnavaha*, then these Gods were told to go down and bring light there. But the darkness was so dense that the Gods said that it is not in their capacity to go down and bring light there, so they went in search of something else which could do this task. Then in a legendary form it is given that in the waters of the Divine being they found *Agni*, therefore *Agni* is also called the child of waters. *Agni* was found and then the Gods went to *Agni* and asked it to kindly go down and deal with that darkness.

Question: Is there a contradiction in this Agni and Water?

There is. There, water is not water, it is symbolizing the energies of the Divine because waters are the symbol of energies. In these energies of the Divine this *Agni* was found as a special

element, and this *Agni* was then planted into the darkness. So this *Agni* is very near to the Divine and therefore it is said in the Vedas that the Divine is the own home of *Agni*. So *Agni* was as it were, exiled and put down into the unconscious. Now this *Agni*, when it came into the unconscious, it radiated so many sparks and each one of us is a spark of that *Agni*. What we call ourselves, myself, is nothing but basically that spark. So when you realise that spark you feel the real 'yourself'. Till that time you are in search of yourself but you do not know what you are, yourself. We think we are this body or this life or this mind but until we come to feel and experience that *Agni*, that spark in us, we do not have the satisfaction of having known ourselves. This is a basic point in our self knowledge. You are one of the sparks of that *Agni* which has gone down into darkness and you are also drawing out of the darkness, matter and life and mind and you have reached this particular point of your journey now. So if our body, life and mind become aware of that spark, then that spark can come forward much more easily and then by that light our body, life and mind can be illumined, our body, life and mind can be transformed by the light of *Agni*. That is the meaning of psychic transformation. When body, life and mind are really psychicised by the virtue of the power of *Agni* falling upon them like rains, so that they are completely drenched in the light of *Agni*, then we can say body, life and mind are now completely transformed.

Now, because *Agni* is very near to God originally therefore when you really experience *Agni* then the experience of God becomes very easy. So, immediately after this you begin to have numerous experiences of the self, of the Divine, of the Divine Mother, Divine *Shakti*. These experiences begin to multiply. As a result of this you are enabled to rise upwards. This upper movement is what is called specifically spiritual movement. Till then it was a psychic movement. Psychic movement is called the inward movement and the spiritual movement is called an upward movement. You move upwards where cosmic consciousness, consciousness of the infinity, consciousness of the transcendence, consciousness of the spaceless and timeless, these experiences begin to become common. And these experiences bring their own light, the light of *Indra* the light of *Ila*, the light of *Saraswati*, the light of *Daksha*, of *Sarama*, various kinds of lights. We develop new kinds of mentalities as a result of these influxes of lights. This is why Sri Aurobindo speaks of the development of Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Over Mind, until you come to Super Mind. So these are the levels of consciousness in which you rise and the descent of these lights and the transformation of body, life and mind in the light of these lights is the process of spiritual transformation, as distinguished from psychic transformation. And then when you can station yourselves forever in the supermind and when having stood there you bring light from supermind and transform overmind, and intuitive mind, and illumined mind, and higher mind, and mind, and life, and body, and subconscious and unconscious and when all that is completed, it is called the supramental transformation.

So that is the description given in this chapter of the three transformations. This was a very rapid description. The important point is that first it says that human nature can be transformed, that there is a process of this transformation, and that this process can be followed in a very flexible, not in a rigid manner, so that each individual becomes adapted to his own specific method of development, so that each individual has his own method. This yoga is not a yoga which is fixed for everybody. Its forms are infinite. For every individual it is a different process of yoga, appropriate to each individual. There are no general prescriptions for each individual. For each individual as he moves forward that path will be made out which is appropriate to him. As *Swami Vivekananda* said that a great condition comes when each individual has his own religion. Now what is true of religious consciousness is much more true of yogic consciousness. In the field of *yoga* which is much beyond religion every individual has such a plasticity of the process and methods that each individual has multifarious methods of arriving at the goal. All right, so this is all that is given in this chapter.

I do not know if you have the time to read this chapter at home now. Usually, I do not ask anybody to read at home, but if you can now, does everyone have this chapter? No?

This is one of the most difficult chapters, but I think now with this background it will be easier to understand and next time therefore I will only read with you. I will not talk but I will only read with you this chapter, because there are many things which can be understood only by a long process of experience. So many things will be only words to us at present, but it is good to hear these words because by hearing we become familiar and then by calling, the things can open.

V

(Page 889) *"If it is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit, then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence.*

But we have supposed that there is a farther intention, — not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, bhuri aspasta kartvam; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the Spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature".

There is so much packed in this paragraph that we need to differentiate many strengths in this statement. To state very briefly it can be said that in the history of the world, man has been seeking and as a result of this search he has discovered something and what he has discovered is satisfying but only to some extent. There is still much more to be done and in Sri Aurobindo's words "the spiritual man has come but not the supramental being". That is to say the human being who is a mental man, thinks with the mind, acts with the mind, decides with the mind, executes with the mind and from that point of view, some people have reached to a level of spiritual existence and they have been able to find out the ways and means by which one can rise from the mental level to the spiritual. If the intention was only this much then that work has been done, the ways have been found out and it is now for the rest to follow them out, to work this out in their being. But this is not so. The spiritual man has come but not the Supramental being, so there is a distinction made between spiritual and the Supramental. So there are three words to be distinguished: the mental, the spiritual and the Supramental. If you understand these three words separately, then we shall be able to grasp exactly what is meant here because it is said, the mental being has become the spiritual, at least in some cases, but the supramental being has not yet come into being.

So let us see now what he means by a mental being becoming the spiritual being and then we shall see what he means by a spiritual being becoming a supramental being — a task which is still to be done. What is it that you define as mental? Mental has three layers. First is the layer of sensation. Every mental being is capable of sensing with the senses. These sensations give rise to images. This is a very special power of the mind: formation of images. First the images are only sensational images: you see a bright object, you close your eyes and some kind of image still goes on; it is a purely sensational image. But, afterwards you have a mental image: I close my eyes and I can visualise this table, its form, its character, its comparison with other tables and so on; now that is a mental image I make. So the capacity of making images is a very special capacity of the mind. How are we able to make and why we are able to make these

images? This is a distinctive quality of the mind. But then we go further and we find that apart from images, we are able to form concepts. So first we have sensations, second was the formation of images and third is a concept. Now a concept is similar to image and yet different from image. If I have a concept of the table it will not be exactly the image of this table. The image of this table will be similar to this table but the concept of the table will be something which is applicable to all the tables. In other words whenever we come to the concept of concepts there is this idea of universality. It is something that is applicable to all but which belongs to that particular object. It is a category by itself. What is a human being, for example? There is an image of a human being, of a particular human being, but then at a higher level there is a concept of the human being which is not the image of this human being or that human being, it is something that is applicable to all human beings. We find out those characteristics which are common to all human beings. So that which is common to all the human beings is the concept of a human being. Now mind proper, where it begins to have this concept is also called intellect. This is another word we use but actually speaking the word intellect should be used not for the capacity of sensations or for image making, but for making concepts. So the concept making capacity is properly speaking, intellectual capacity. Now having made concepts there is a further development of the intellect and that is, to compare the concepts. Even when a small child says "this table is blue", actually speaking, without knowing he has already compared two concepts: the tableness and the blueness. Somehow he has understood that there is something like blueness and there is something like tableness. So in a short sentence, "the table is blue", the intellectual capacity has already come into operation, a capacity which is not available to animals. In other words you find that a human being has an intellectual capacity of conceiving even at a very low level of development. Even a small child can conceive, it is automatic in the child. That is why we say that there is a remarkable difference between an animal and man and that difference is the capacity to conceive. What you call rational is basically nothing but the capacity to conceive. When you conceive, when you compare concepts, contrast concepts, relate concepts and synthesise concepts, the more rapidly you can do this, the more evolved you are as an intellectual being.

Basically you might say that the intellect is constantly concerned with relating concepts with each other and these relationships ordinarily are what we encounter in elementary arithmetic — additions, subtractions, multiplications, divisions. These are the ordinary operations of arithmetic. They are the rudimentary intellectual operations. And even at the higher level of intellectual development, if you want to find out their real analysis, ultimately you will find that all of them are nothing but additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions. You may do them more rapidly; some may do it less rapidly. Even the greatest thinkers (as far as thinking is concerned) are limited to these four operations basically, but they are more rapid; they are relating many more data. It is a question of how many data you collect together. That is why a very developed intellectual personality today is compared to a computer. A computer is basically an instrument of adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, but on a huge scale which even the human brain is not able to do today. And yet we know that computers cannot do what a human brain can do and that brings us to the point of knowing what true intellectuality is? The true intellectuality is not only to add, subtract, multiply and divide but to understand. A computer can do all kinds of operations but the question is, does the computer understand? Now it is argued that modern computers are so powerful that they can play chess with you. And unless there is a comprehension of what is being played by the other party one won't be able to make another move, therefore it means that the computer is able to understand. But it is able to understand only in a mechanical sense. So many things have been fed into the computer and each one of the moves that is made is one of the possibilities. Can even things which are not fed be understood by the computer?

In any case, the experience of understanding is something peculiar to human mentality. When two persons are talking to each other they feel that they communicate and they understand, sometimes even without communicating through words, they feel they understand, something happens and they feel it is understood and they do not even talk about it, yet there is an understanding. So you might say that the deepest capacity of the human mind is understanding and this understanding can be at many levels but the minimum level of understanding is the feeling that one is confronted with a situation. This is the minimum that the mental being understands. Every human being observes a situation and tries to understand the situation and every human being finds himself in a situation. So there is a distinction that he makes between

himself and the situation. This is the famous distinction which is made in the *Bhagavad Gita* : *Kshetra Kshetragna*, the field and the knower of the field. This is the minimum understanding that every human being confronts when he sees a situation. Now normally whenever we confront a situation you will find there is a further detail in it. Every human being wants to deal with the situation, even a small child wants to deal with the situation. A toy is kept in his field of observation and either he wants to take it, possess it, manipulate it, feel the possession of it, enjoy it, wants to throw it away, tries to grapple with it, tries to get another of the same kind or one of a different kind. The situation is given to him and he wants to deal with it. He feels that he can deal with the situation. This is the underlying feeling — that he is somehow capable of dealing with the situation.

In philosophical terms, this is called the distinction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. The observer is the *Purusha* consciousness and the situation is *Prakriti*. You may not use these very difficult words if you like and simply call them the observer and the field of observation. As you go deeper and deeper into the understanding of what man is, what the mental being is, it is found that mind is capable of standing behind the movement. It is a very special capacity of the mind. The mind is capable of standing behind the movement. I will be watching the waves of the sea and I am absorbed in the watching of the sea and the waves of the sea, my observation is rolled up with the waves. A friend comes and gives a slap on my back and asks: "What are you doing?" I withdraw a little and I can see that I was seeing the waves of the sea. I have now differentiated myself from my act of observation. So this capacity of withdrawing from what you are doing is one special quality of the mind. Now as a result of drawing back, a further development takes place and that is self consciousness. I become aware that I am aware — a self awareness. So this is another characteristic of the mental being. All mental beings normally are aware that they are aware but the degrees of awareness may be different. The more you go backward, the more you become aware of yourself; it is like having two mirrors opposite to each other and there you see endless images of yourself, so you become aware that you are aware, you become aware of that you are aware and become aware of that awareness, you become aware of that awareness, you become aware of that awareness and so on and this is a capacity which goes on indefinitely.

Now this is something which is common to everybody and very simple you might say. But now comes a very profound statement of Indian thought that the situation in which you are placed is the result of the will of the observer.

Question: The will maybe unconscious?

Maybe unconscious. It is the result of the will of the observer. In other words, in philosophical language it is said that *Prakriti* executes what *Purusha* decides. Now if this proposition is to be tested; in our ordinary consciousness we do not find it to be true because normally we find that the situation we are in is rather unfavourable. Usually, apart from a few situations which may be very favourable, many situations of our life are quite unfavourable, so how can we prove that the situations which are unfavourable could be the results of my will?

Question: Does that mean that whatever we keep feeding into our subconscious, is actually what happens?

That is also one of the propositions, I will come to that. Not only do you put it in the subconscious but you also put it in the higher levels of consciousness, of which you are not aware now. Supposing you sit very quietly and aspire that this situation should change and repeat it again and again, then it is claimed by this philosophy that the situation will change according to what you have fed into your consciousness, because it is said that each situation is a result of your will. *Prakriti* executes what *Purusha* has decided.

Question: But in many cases, the will may not be all that strong.

Quite true. Then it will not happen. But if the will is strong, it will happen. This is the truth of what is called the *Sankhya* philosophy. According to *Sankhya* philosophy, *Prakriti* executes what *Purusha* demands and it says that what you are now is a result of what your *Purusha* had decided and demanded from *Prakriti*. This is the *Sankhya* thought. It may be right, it may be wrong, we are just exploring. Now normally human beings may be materialistic, idealistic, spiritualist — whatever their predilection, one thing remains very true, that everybody is called upon to deal with situations and every one wants to be master of the situations. This is the

fundamental urge in every human being. Their mastery may come in the form of harmony with nature or the situation, it may come in the form of control of the situation, it may come under the form of mastery over the situation. In either of the three forms it may come, either with harmonising or by controlling or by mastering.

Actually speaking if we ask ourself what the aim of our life is; the usual answer is that it is to enjoy. I mean this is a very common answer. I ask the next question "What is it that really gives you enjoyment?", normally people answer that they really enjoy when they can have a situation which is full of sensations which are pleasant. Then they feel they are enjoying. But we will find gradually that an individual truly enjoys when he can stand back from a situation, when the situation is under his control and he can change the situation according to his will, and he has even mastery over the situation such that whether that situation remains or does not remain, he is not affected at all. When he can arrive at this condition then he really enjoys. So the first is called the *Sakshi bhava*, when you can witness the situation, the second is called the state of *anumanta*, when you give the sanction, and the third is called the condition of *bhokta*, the real enjoyer. You can really enjoy an object when whether that situation remains or does not remain, it has no effect on you. That is why *Isha Upanishad* said, "*tena tyaktena bhunjithaha, tena tyaktena bhunjithaha*", i.e. you enjoy by renouncing. When you arrive at that condition in which you are in delight whether the situation is there or not, then only can you really enjoy.

Question: But in order to renounce you do have to first experience it?

Quite true. That is why the first stage is witnessing. You first of all become the *Sakshi*, then you become an *Anumanta*, and then you become a *Bhokta*. Now these developments of becoming a *Sakshi*, of becoming an *Anumanta* or becoming the *Bhokta* are the beginnings of what we call spiritual experiences. This is not a mental experience. This is not a method merely of conceiving, you are not merely relating concepts, this is the field of experience. Spirituality is a field of experience, an experience which is not merely physical but something that brings you nearer to your true self consciousness.

This is said very briefly but actually to be able to witness, to be able to give the consent and to be really the enjoyer. It takes a long long period of experience. It takes a very very long period of experience. A series of experiences and masteries of various kinds are needed to arrive at that point. But all these exercises are what may be called spiritual exercises. As a result of these exercises, you gain two basic experiences. One is that if you so like or so decide, you can escape from any situation that is given to you. You just withdraw from the situation and then withdraw completely away and you can be absorbed in self consciousness to such an extent that even if the situation remains there before you, it has no effect on you at all. The other capacity you get is that you bring a will on the situation and change it and the circumstance itself is changed. Now both these experiments have been done for thousands of years in India and both have been found to be valid. By making repeated experiments, it can be shown that both these possibilities exist.

Question: Is escaping from a situation such a good idea? Is not it better to face it, not escape from it and then rise above it?

From my point of view, controlling and changing the situation is much more valuable than escaping, but psychologically I am only presenting all the possibilities, which include the possibility for you to escape.

Question: And be aware that you escaped.

Yes. It is possible psychologically to be aware that you can escape and then you really feel that that situation has no effect on you at all. The situation remains the same, but it now has no effect on you. You have not changed the situation. The situation remains the same, what you have done is that you have withdrawn from it to such an extent that you arrive at a point that it has no effect on you at all.

So that is one positive use of escaping that you can afterwards come back to the situation and change it. The other possibility is that you can withdraw from it forever. Now this is a very important statement I am making. You do not come back to improve it. Here also many experiments have been made. Now these experiments have shown to some of the people that even when they come back to the situation and try to change them, they do not change. They

change to some extent but not to the degree to which they ought to change. So they have come to the conclusion that the situations are bound to remain more or less like this.

Question: That means the change has come in the person himself?

Their conclusion is that the world is such, it is like a dog's curly tail, however much you try to straighten it, it comes back to its curve, so you can never change it. This is the conclusion some people have arrived at that however much you try to change, it does not change. It is argued that Christ has come and gone, the world has remained as it is; Buddha has come and gone, the world has remained as it is.

If you examine the history of the world, the greatest experiments in this field have been done in India. They have been done elsewhere also. But this is an objective fact, it is not that we are speaking about India because we are Indians, this is a fact of Indian history that some of the profoundest experiments and repeated experiments have occurred in India, and the earliest were found in the *Veda*, and having made experiments they have laid down the road. The roads have been built so that others can follow that road very easily. They have found through their experiment that first by withdrawing from the situation and by gaining a lot of experience of self consciousness you can come back on the situation and you can greatly change the situation. But this experiment has to be done in many levels. The speciality of the Vedic *rishis* was that this withdrawing from a situation and again coming back to the situation to change it occurs on several levels. The first is the level of the physical, where you confront only a physical situation, withdraw from the physical situation, become larger than the field, come back to the physical situation and change it. Then you come to the situation of life, not the physical but the life of emotions, sentiments, desires, attractions, repulsions; withdraw from this life situation, come back again to the life situation, change it, and they said this also can be greatly changed. Then they made experience with the mind and similarly that showed that even mind can be greatly changed. Mental situations can be greatly changed. Therefore the Vedic experience is called the experience of victory. There is a battle and there is a victory. And you ascend from plane to plane and they said that even beyond the mind there is the truth plane, the plane of *satyam ritam brihat*. And when you reach that plane then you find that even mental, vital, physical planes can be changed by the help of your going into the truth plane. And they have found that some of the individuals reached such a point that they could change completely their entire being. Human nature they have found can be entirely changed. They not only experienced immortality at the highest plane, they built immortality in the situation itself. This was repeated also in the *Upanishads* and they gave so much importance to remaining in the situation, not escaping from it but changing the situation. They said that if you do not do it while in the body then you have to come back again in the body until you really realise it while in the body itself. Merely by withdrawing do not think that you will escape it. Even if you try to escape you will have to come back again.

But this process was a long process — to withdraw and again to change. But this treasure of experience of the *Veda* got lost after the *Upanishads* particularly. This wealth of knowledge and experience was not fully transmitted, so when fresh experiments were made, there was a real question which was raised once again: can the situation really be changed? And they found that the situation cannot be changed. You can withdraw from it, you can escape from the situation but you cannot change the situation. Having come to this conclusion they found quicker methods of escape. So they found out that if you just develop the mind and induce in the mind a sense of *vairagya*, which in a certain sense means a sense of vanity — meaninglessness — then the mind is induced to withdraw from the situation much more quickly. Secondly you develop the mind in the field of concentration, because when you withdraw you have to withdraw truly and with a sustenance for a long period and this can happen only if the mind is sufficiently trained to be concentrated for a long time, so this is the second prescription. First is *vairagya*, second the method of sustaining for a long period a sense of concentration or a capacity of concentration to be away from the situation, in self-consciousness, and if you can remain long periods then you can very quickly come out of the snares of the situation. And ultimately you reach a point where you still find that even having withdrawn, when you come back again from there — because you cannot remain withdrawn for all the time, because the bodily calls will be there, the appetites of the body will be there, other physical discomforts will be there, so you will be called back from your withdrawal — so a point must come when you should even try to come out of the body. So they have prescribed that by long sessions of

vairagya and concentration, you are able to come out ultimately from the body itself and then you can remain absorbed in the self consciousness. Now this method became prominent in India, particularly in Buddhistic tendency, in Jain tendency and also in the Hindu tendency to some extent, if not fully. So there is a long history of India where you can see very clearly that the richness of the Vedic experience was as it were put behind, it remained only a memory, but was not practised. In practice only this kind of a method was developed and each one came out with quicker methods by which one can escape from the situation.

There were of course movements where there was a kind of an opposition to this kind of an escape such as we find in the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Arjuna* was bewildered. He was asking why he should not escape from there, because it was quite prominent by that time itself that you can escape from the situation and particularly a horrible situation like this. He wondered why he should not withdraw and attain to *samadhi* and remain completely quiet, blameless, sinless. So, *Sri Krishna* repeats the Vedic experience and he says that although it is possible for anybody to withdraw, but he does not prescribe it, it is not preferable. There are both the methods. One of escaping and the other of dealing with the situation and changing the situation and the latter is the preferred path. *Sri Krishna* says that this path was declared by him long ago. In the fourth chapter he says to *Arjuna* that he gave this knowledge to *Vivasvan* and then to *Manu* and *Ikshvaku* and then it was lost and now he is giving this knowledge back again to *Arjuna*. But even after the *Bhagavad Gita's* great message, the general tendency that prevailed was the quick short cut of escaping from life. Escaping from the situation became a very prevalent idea.

Now this is the history of what has been done so far. In the modern times, once again there is a tendency which prescribes that you should not escape but you should face the situation. This is a modern tendency and it has not come from a spiritual tradition. The modern progressivism says that you may do anything in the world, you may achieve anything for yourself but until you achieve something for the whole community, your achievements cannot be considered valuable. In the light of this new trend the question is being put: is it really possible to change the situation?

Therefore there is a need to study the Vedic experience again. When they said that the situation can be changed, had they really changed the situation? If they had changed the situation why is this present situation still continuing? That means that they were not able to change the situation entirely. So in the process of evaluation of the past we can say something was still missing even in the Vedic experience. They made many experiments and they proposed that we can change the situation and we can change the human nature. *Sri Aurobindo* says here: "there is still much to be done", and this is also the statements of the *Veda* itself. The Vedic *rishis* were great scientists, they never claimed more than what they really did. They themselves said that as we rise higher and higher newer peaks reveal themselves before us which are still to be attained, there is still much to be accomplished. So it means the *Veda* itself recognised that the victory was not a complete victory. There was a great victory but that victory which you can call complete victory, by which you can really change the situation, the world order can be changed still needs to be accomplished: *Bhuri aspashtam kartvam* — *bhuri* means a lot, *spashta* means clarify, *kartvam* means needed to be done, a lot of clarification still needs to be made. This statement is from the *Veda* itself.

Now what is it that is to be done, by which the real situation can be changed? As I have said, *Veda* itself said that if you really want to change you have to enter into the truth plane — *satyam ritam brihat* — you have to cross the physical plane, the vital plane, the mental plane and enter into the truth plane. And they tried to bring the truth plane on the lower planes. In this respect much was done but something more was still to be done. It is to that that *Sri Aurobindo* addresses himself. That which has still to be done, is to bring the truth plane, not only in the individual life but on the collective plane, in the world order. Not only to reach the supermind which was already reached by the Vedic *rishis* — the truth plane is the supermind — but to bring that supermind on the lower planes until the physical plane itself is changed. Now this was the real experiment that *Sri Aurobindo* did and accomplished, and he said, "this can be done". *Sri Aurobindo* says: the spiritual man has come but not the supramental being — to reach the supermind is one thing but to bring the supramental being here is another. That is why the process that *Sri Aurobindo* has proposed is a process of ascent and descent. You rise up to the higher levels of consciousness and bring their light into the lower planes of consciousness until you reach right up to the supermind and then bring down the supermind on the physical plane

and transform that too. Now this process includes the positive sides of other experiences also. The escape from a situation as a temporary phase can be prescribed. You can come out for the present moment to escape from the situation if that is very necessary. Only for a temporary phase, but not with the idea of completely escaping altogether and forever. In any case to be able to witness a situation, to control the situation, to master the situation these processes which are a part of escape are also parts of this process ; this capacity in any case you must achieve. But then you have to supplement it by the capacity to come back on the situations, rise above the mind into the supermind and then constantly work on the situation to bring supramental knowledge on the physical. Now, if we read the first paragraph again, we shall understand what Sri Aurobindo says. He says that if the aim was only to return from ignorance and from situations of ignorance and to realise the inner self, then that work has been done already, the path has been found out. If it is only to change the world to some extent, that work also has been done, but if the task that is to be done is to completely change the situation of the world then that work has still not been done. That is still to be done. We shall read again this first paragraph (page 889).

"If it is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit, then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But we have supposed that there is a farther intention, — not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, bhuri aspashtha kartvam ; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the Spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature".

VI

I think we finished the first paragraph, of this chapter last time with a long long introduction.

The last sentence of the first paragraph was: "The spiritual man has evolved but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that nature". So a distinction is made between the spiritual man and the supramental being and we are told that while in the history of the world, spiritual men have evolved and come into existence and the world has benefitted by them, but a greater being which Sri Aurobindo calls the supramental being is yet to come. Now Sri Aurobindo explains this (page 890):

"This is because the principle of spirituality has yet to affirm itself in its own complete right and sovereignty; it has been up till now a power for the mental being to escape from itself or to refine and raise itself to a spiritual poise, it has availed for the release of the Spirit from mind and for the enlargement of the being in a spiritualised mind and heart, but not, — or rather not yet sufficiently, — for the self-affirmation of the Spirit in its own dynamic and sovereign mastery free from the mind's limitations and from the mental instrumentation. The development of another instrumentation has begun, but has yet to become total and effective; it has besides to cease to be a purely individual self-creation in an original Ignorance, something supernormal to earth-life that must always be acquired as an individual achievement by a difficult endeavour. It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as Mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so Supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to Supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between Mind and Supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature."

I think there are three things which are emphasised here. In the first place we are told that if you look at the history of the past there have come about certain people, individuals, who have been able to liberate themselves from the mind, life and body. Now this word is not used here but the important point is that there have been galaxies of individuals in the past who have achieved *moksha*. *Mukti* i.e. liberation, means that state of the spirit where it is liberated from the mind, life and body. So this has been achieved.

But what has not yet been achieved is the capacity of the spirit to use an instrument of action other than mind, life and body. The spirit separating itself from and withdrawing from mind, life and body is *moksha*; but if it has to act on the earth, it can act only through these instruments. But these instruments are not the proper instruments for the liberated spirit, it requires another instrument. The second point that Sri Aurobindo makes is that that instrumentation has not yet been produced, or even if it is produced, it is not yet complete and this incomplete instrumentation is available so far only to a few individuals and not to the collectivity. For example the mind is available to the collectivity of human beings, as an instrument. It is not as if only a few individuals can use the mind. Potentially every individual who is born as a human being is capable of using the instrumentality of the mind. But similarly, if there are some individuals who have been liberated from mind, life and body and have been able to produce another instrumentation, first it is incomplete and even that incomplete instrumentation has not

been made available to collectivity. This is the record of the human history so far. This is the second point that is made.

The third point that is made is that that instrument, that new instrument is what Sri Aurobindo calls the supermind, above the mind. That instrument is developed in the past to some extent, though inadequately but what Sri Aurobindo wants is that that supermind must be made a permanent and full development here and it should be so developed that at least a larger number of human beings are capable of using it as an instrument. So the third point is that therefore there must be a permanent ascension to the supermind, you should be able to rise from mind to supermind; not only liberated from the mind but a further program, you rise from mind to the supermind and develop it fully, then bring it down so that the mind, life and body are completely transmuted by the power of the supermind. This last process consists of three processes: the psychic transformation, the spiritual transformation, and the supramental transformation. When these three transformations take place, then only we can say that supermind will be now used permanently as an instrumentation of the spirit for action on the earth.

This is the programme that Sri Aurobindo said has not yet been effected, but which has to be effected. So these are the three points made in this paragraph. In fact this is the elaboration of the first paragraph which we read last time where Sri Aurobindo has said that if it was the sole intention of nature to liberate men from the ignorance then that task has been done; roads have been built, ways have been cleared out, and now it is available for anybody to pursue and attain. But that is not the only intention, this is the important point. This world is created not only to liberate man from body, life and mind — *moksha* is not the only aim — but a greater aim is proposed, i.e. the return of the spirit after liberation, development of a new instrumentation, perfection of it, and the establishment of it in the same way in which mind is established on this earth. Just as in the process of evolution first there was only matter, then small organisms began to develop, life organisms, amoeba and others at that point of time there was body and life but no mind at all. In the process of evolution came mind.

How the human mind developed and enlarged its sweep in a large human population is a long story. Similarly there has to be developed a new instrumentation and a new power which has to perfect itself and establish itself; as an instrument of the race, not only for one individual or two individuals. So Sri Aurobindo had said that, this is the thing that has to be done; the spiritual man has come but not the supramental being. That was the end of the first chapter, first paragraph, and this is elucidated in the next paragraph. Now we shall dwell upon this second paragraph in a little detail.

What is the difference between *moksha* and this aim of the supramental transformation? Now this is very important because it is normally believed that *moksha* is the end of all our endeavour and we are all here on this earth only to attain to *moksha*. This has become such a wide spread belief all over that if you want to say that there is a still higher aim, then we must first know what exactly is *moksha* and what is this higher aim which is being proposed. First of all you have to ask two questions. In this process of liberation, or *moksha*, one acute experience that one has is of one's bondage, *bandhan*. An acute experience of bondage is the starting point of looking for *moksha*. As it is said in all our great books, *mokshatva* or the desire for liberation is the starting point of all your spiritual endeavour and this desire for liberation is acutely felt when you feel yourself really bound. Many human beings do not feel themselves bound at all. The sense of bondage is not present for them. They feel quite normal and go on doing their work in the world. It is only at a certain point of life that one really begins to feel a sense of bondage. In fact this is what we have spoken of last time when we said that every human being at a certain stage of life is confronted with a situation and begins to feel that he and the situation are at two poles, and at a given time he feels that he should deal with the situation. Either he should expand the field of the situation, make it more rich, more luxurious, or he should alter the situation, he should change the circumstances, he should modify the situation, or totally give up the situation and take another situation altogether and at a rare point, one feels that one should come out of all situations whatsoever. Now the situation in which we find ourselves at any time is in technical terms called the product of *Prakriti*. It is only a technical term. Any situation in which we find ourselves can be termed as a product of *Prakriti*. — *Kri* means to work, to act, *pra* means forth. So, *Prakriti* means to act forth — that which has the tendency to act forth and produces so many products. There is one universal energy, which is constantly at work and produces all the

products that you find in the world. So the general term that is given for the whole universal movement is *Prakriti*, and the situation in which each individual finds himself is the product of this vast universal action that is going on.

Now the question is whether this particular energy is working on it's own or is been impelled by somebody else. If there is a horse carriage in which the horse is being driven and if you do not see the driver for a long time you might feel that the horse is driving itself; but later on you may discover that there must be somebody to guide, there must be a charioteer. Now in the spiritual search it was found that behind *Prakriti* there is somebody who drives *Prakriti*, that is *Prakriti* is not self impelled, the motion of *Prakriti* is not self impelled; there is behind it another power which is capable of standing behind, guiding and controlling. That power is called *Purusha*. It experiences as a being, and the minimum capacity of which is to witness. The *Purusha* is capable of witnessing the situation. Of this we have talked last time already and we have said that if this is the relationship then it is further argued that the kind of situation in which you find yourself is actually a result of what *Purusha* wills and *Purusha* is yourself. But this *Purusha* which is yourself, is not what you think is yourself and that is where the problem lies. If it was very easy and this *Purusha* was the same thing as we think is ourselves, then studying the situation would be very easy. You could manipulate the situation very easily. But what you think to be yourself is only a part of your situation, it is not yourself. Normally you think that your thoughts are yourself, your mind is yourself, your ego is yourself, but later on you discover that that is a part of *Prakriti*. They are all products of your situation, they are not yourself. There is still something beyond. When you discover that and if that *Purusha* wills that the situation should be changed, it will change. The secret of the situation is in that *Purusha*. You are in a given situation because for one reason or the other there was a will in *Purusha* which has led you to the present situation. So from this, one very important conclusion follows: never blame anybody else for your situation, your situation is a result of your will, not immediate will of which you are not immediately aware, but which has a long story and a long history as a result of which your present situation is what it is. So if you can go back to that original *Purusha*, then you can have the power to change your situation.

Now the question is: how can you go back to the discovery of that will of the *Purusha*? How has *Purusha* come into this situation? Now on this question there is a bewildering confusion in the entire history of Indian thought. How has *Purusha* come into this situation? There are answers that have generally been given to this. Some people say, that you should not ask this question because it is unanswerable and others say that you should not press for the answer. Your pressing question is something else. Your pressing question is not how I have come into it but how I should come out of it. So they say that they have the answer to this pressing question. The other question i.e. how I came into it, perhaps has no answer to it or they cannot answer it or perhaps when you come out of it you will be able to answer it but at present, do not raise this question. There is a famous sentence that if you have been inflicted by a thorn in your foot which is paining you unbearably and when you go to a doctor and he begins to ask you the question how this happened, you will say, "Please ask me this question later on! My pressing need is to remove the thorn first. So that is why it is said that your present situation is so pressing that you just come out of it and they can tell you how to come out of it. The third answer is, that it is by the mistake of the *Purusha* that it has entered into this undesired situation. It should not have entered into it, but by mistake it has entered or it is by an accident that this has happened. A fourth answer that is given is that it is for the sake of play that some have entered into it. These are the different answers which have been given to this question. But let us return to the one which says that do not ask other questions. Only ask the pressing question because there is great merit in it. Now this second answer that is given which says that we should not ask the question of the origin of it but ask the pressing question, "how to come out of it?", is actually an answer of almost everybody, but prominently of the Buddhists. The Buddhists maintain that we may not realise but we are sitting on a volcano. Any time it can burst. They know how to take you out of this situation is the claim of Buddhists. Their answer is that your situation is a construction made of constructions which are going on indefinitely. One construction produces another construction that produces another construction and so on. It is a constant web. The whole life goes on constructing and this construction is basically painful. You may experience happiness now and then, just as people having a picnic on a volcano may enjoy for some time but basically all human beings are in a web which is painful, and sooner or later one comes to experience the pain. So this world is a *duhkhamaya samsara* full of misery

and suffering and this suffering is because of constructions. These constructions are made by the thread of desire and this desire becomes more complicated when there is a further construction of ego. Desire and ego are the two threads by which the constructions made become very powerful. No construction can be broken as long as these basic threads of desire and ego are maintained. This is the analysis of the Buddhists. Then what is the process of coming out? Buddhism only says that constructions are being built and in these constructions the threads of desire and ego are most prominent. If you want to come out of it, then you should destroy desire and ego. But how to destroy desire and ego? The answer is: a process of right thinking, right judgement, right action and benevolent action. The answer is that you should do certain specific actions which are activated by compassion and you go on doing them repeatedly and do not begin any new desire. You start from whatever you have now and no new desire is to be added to your program. You start demolishing all constructions and for that you do only benevolent actions of compassion. Miraculously it is found that these compassionate actions have a dissolving power. They go on dissolving your constructions. The more you do compassionate actions, the more the constructions are gone. Now this may take a long time. It may not be done in one life. If you have started in this life, maybe you are born again because of the constructions. And when you really arrive at a point where you are mature, you achieve a state of *buddhisatwa*, not of buddhahood but of *buddhisatwa*. Then you are so compassionate, so kind that the action that proceeds from you creates no construction. Ultimately even compassionate action also ceases because that is a construct but a construct which has the capacity of dissolving constructions and ultimately it dissolves its own construct. Now that stage when reached where all constructs are gone, is *moksha* according to Buddhism. Since there is no construct in it at all, there is no misery left. You are delivered out of it forever and there is no birth because there is no ego and desire left, no construct left. All birth is a construct. It is all dissolved so there is no rebirth and you have come out of the whole wheel of constructs. Now this is the Buddhist answer by which the thorn is taken out of your flesh and you are free.

Now something not very different from this in pragmatic terms although quite different in fundamental terms, is the answer of *Advaita* philosophy which is a variant of *Vedanta*. *Vedanta* has many variations, *Advaita*, *Vishishtadwaita*, *Dvaita*, *Purnadvaita*, *Achintya bheda bheda Vada* and so on. But prominent among them is *Advaita*. People normally think *Advaita* to be *Vedanta* itself. Although others also are there and they are also quite important but they are not so very well known. Now *Advaita Vedanta* does not say that you should not ask the question as to how you have entered into this situation where you are. It says first of all that basically you are neither ego nor desire nor anyone of the constructs in the same way as Buddhism tells you. But Buddhism does not tell you who you are. Buddhist answer is that corresponding to you, really there is nothing; it is called *shunya*, nihil. That is why Buddhism is also called nihilism; you do not exist, there is nothing like you existing; your sense of you was only a construct and when that construct is dissolved nothing remains. This dissolution is called the state of *nirvana* when everything is annulled. But in *Advaita*, you are *Brahman*. When all the constructs get dissolved, you discover that you are not ego. Then there begins to arise in your consciousness an experience of a stupendous reality — not zero, not nothing, not nihil but a stupendous reality which in our present state you cannot imagine at all. It is more stupendous than any stupendity that you can imagine. That stupendous substance you will experience as substance. Solidity, durability and resistance to my touch are the normal experiences of a substance that we have. Now this stupendous reality is experienced even more substantially than this. And that universal and transcendental is indescribable, ineffable — that is your self actually. That ego-construct is lost when you loose all ego-constructions. You experience behind it a stupendous reality, ineffably which you can express only as *Sat*. That is why one of the famous mantras that is given is: *hari om tat sat*, *tat* means "That". That is *tat*, but it is *Sat*, it is that which is real. And then you reach that reality, that experience. It is completely immobile, *Akshara Brahman*. *Akshara* means "that which does not move", *kshara* is "that which moves". It is *akshara*, that which does not move, and it is called *Brahman*. This is the word which is used to describe that, you can use the word *aks* even, any word, or you may not even describe it by any word at all, that is why sometimes it is described as "*neti, neti*". They say any word and you say, "No, it is not that, it is not that". And when you reach that point you find, "It was always immobile". But then what was all this? How did this construction come about? What is the origin of all this construction in which we were and which was troubling us? *Advaita* says that not only was it never there, it could never have been there. According to *Advaita* the reality is *akshar* and all construction is a movement. One cannot construct without a movement but *akshara* is without

movement. So if there is no movement, no construction could have been done. Construction was not there, it could not have been there and actually you are asking this question only because you are still in the construction. There was no construction ever made at all, so in that state of consciousness the question as to how the construction came about may not arise at all. So the question: "How did the construction arise?" has the following answer in *Advaita*, i.e. "There is no answer and there is no need to answer. Now this answer may be satisfying or may not be satisfying. If you press very hard, they will say: "Look, you can go on pressing, I can only tell you the method by which you can come out of it". This is something similar to the Buddhist answer. Buddhists also say, "Do not ask this question, I can tell you only the method of coming out". And how will you come out of the knocking? The method is the following. Buddhists have one answer i.e., if you do compassionate actions you will come out of these constructions. According to *Advaita* you first of all see that these constructions are all filled with goodness and evil, both of which are relative. There is evil in this world. There is good also in the world but even good, so-called good is not really good, it is all mixed with evil. Now intensify this feeling that this world is full of the mixture of good and evil. Secondly revolve in your mind the truth that really speaking it does not exist, really speaking it does not exist.

Question: Good and evil do not exist?

Even the whole world, the whole structure really does not exist. It seems to be existing to your mind, when you are knocking the door. But *Advaita* says that it is giving you a formula because it is seated in the field of reality; from there it can tell you what to do so that you can come out of it. So from the point of view of that reality this does not exist and so revolve in your mind the idea that it does not really exist. Similarly you also do not exist and you should realise that you also do not exist. "You" means your mind, your stuff of consciousness, your ego sense — *manah chitta ahankara*.

Question: Even chit?

Chit is different from *chitta*. *Chitta* is the ordinary stuff of consciousness in which you are living, mind is the one sense which is concurring all the senses, *buddhi* is intelligence and *ahankara* is ego sense. So this is what you call yourself and all this also really does not exist. Revolve this idea in your mind, realise that all this does not exist and withdraw from it as much as possible. All the time realise that ultimately there is nothing. Even the good things are not really good. So the intensification of the sense of meaninglessness of all that is here, the realization that this world does not exist, that you do not exist, this is the negative method. The positive method is the realisation that there is only one that exists and that is *sat, tat sat*. Constantly think that "That" only exists. So then you must intensify this negative practice and the positive practice and do not bother about anything. Of course for the purpose of living your life and for maintaining your body, which does not really exist (but you experience it to be there in your present condition) you will be obliged to do so many actions — even to breathe for example is an action — so do minimum actions. In Buddhism there is a prescription of compassionate actions. In *Advaita* even this is not obligatory. Minimise actions as much as possible. To become inactive, which is not easy, you have to train yourself to reach a point where you really have no inclination to work, no motivation to work. If you do have motivation make those motivations as disinterested as possible.

Question: Does not the Gita say to keep on doing actions?

Therefore the *Gita's* teaching is different from this teaching. I will come to that teaching. This is *advaitic* teaching I am giving at present. The *Gita's* teaching is much larger. I am giving the different answers which have been given to this question and *Advaita* is one of the answers, like Buddhism is another answer. So according to *Advaita* you should minimise your actions and even if you want to do action you should do it as disinterestedly as possible and ultimately reach that state of mind where *vairagya* is perfect. *Vairagya* is a state of mind in which we know that all this world is flimsy, meaningless, that even the so-called good is not really good. There is nothing here to be attached to You are allowed all kinds of things which may ultimately lead you to this. You may go to a temple, do a lot of worship of God, although according to *Advaita* God also does not exist but for the time being, He's a kind of a crutch. So worship God, spend as much time as possible in *puja*, the longer you can do the better because at least it will take you out from a lot of actions, *karma*, and you will make no constructs. And of course you can give this teaching according to the capacity of each individual. You should not give all this teaching

to everybody, everybody is not deserving to be given all these doses of the highest knowledge. To some people you should say that they must do only action and nothing else, because they are not capable of coming out of it yet and if you tell them, they will be worse than before, so *Advaita* does not believe in deluding them unnecessarily. So this kind of teaching should not be given to everybody. Those who are very ignorant, for them we should say that you should go on working, *kurvann eva iha karmani shatam samah jiji vishet*, you go on doing action all the time, a hundred years you should go on living and doing actions only. To the most ignorant people you should give the message of action but action that is done disinterestedly. To others who are turned to devotion, *Advaita* advises them to do a lot of *puja*. Ultimately you reach a point when you feel *vairagya*. You really feel that everything is really meaningless. That will be a glorious day when you really have this *vairagya*. Then you concentrate on this negative idea and the positive idea — negative idea that this world is meaningless, that you are not the body, life and mind and the whole world is a construct, which does not exist.

And when you enter into a consciousness where the stupendous reality will be seen, will be experienced, where you will not even be the experiencer because even "you", will be lost completely, there will remain only *tat sat*, nothing else, that is the state of liberation. So here in the Advaitic *sadhana* the mind is the instrument, meditation is the instrument, *samadhi* is the instrument. So the training of your mind to a point where you can reach this stage is the utility of your mind. So as far as instrumentality is concerned the mind is an important instrument and the mind has to be used, it has to be subtilised, it is to be trained and refined so that it can reach this point and then you can make a jump out of it. This is the *Advaitic* method.

Now there are other methods which are called the methods of *dharma*, where the emphasis falls upon the instrument of action. Here again you are not told as to how you have come into this trouble. You are told that if you want to come out of this trouble, then you take recourse to *dharma*. What is *dharma*? We are told that it is a very difficult subject but if you want to know in a minimum way, all is explained in the *Veda*. What is *dharma*, what is not *dharma* being a very difficult subject, the easiest answer is to open the *Veda* and whatever is prescribed there is *dharma* and you follow it and when you do it you will attain to liberation, *moksha*. Now this process is a very intricate process, a much longer process than the other processes which I have described so far. First it says that your mind should be so developed as to have the desire to avoid evil and to do good. This should be the least preparation. A human being should be so developed, his body, life and mind should be so developed that he arises at a point where he feels "I must avoid evil and I must do the good". Now whatever thing may help you to arrive at this point is good for you, that is the first minimum condition. Training of the child right from childhood is good if you can succeed in doing so. Or else you reason with the child and tell him the consequences of doing good actions rather than evil actions. Or you may experience in your life sometimes after having done many evil actions that you really come into an abyss and then you realise, "My Lord, I will now never go into it, I will never do it again". Take for example what Othello did to Desdemona. Othello and Desdemona were deeply in love with each other and they married each other escaping from their own house and then somehow at a certain time Iago began to arouse jealousy in the mind of Othello saying that his wife is unfaithful to him. Othello would not believe it but ultimately he showed a handkerchief as a proof; the handkerchief given by Othello to Desdemona. He said that she gave it to somebody from where he obtained it. Now this proof was so clinching for Othello that he could not for a moment doubt it and he was filled with jealousy. He went straight home and asked for that handkerchief which she could not produce. When she began to give some kind of an answer about the presence of that handkerchief of which she was not aware because it was stolen by her maid servant for creating this kind of a trick, then his suspicion became so great that he became mad and in his rage he simply smothered and killed her. And after this, the maid servant came and told him the truth and in that situation he realised that he had done something really evil. This was a real realisation — and he felt that he should have never done it. For him at least, the only solution was to kill himself after that. But a person can reach a situation in which one finds really the experience of evil and feels that such a thing should never, never happen. The real nature of evil is that when it is realised you feel like blotting it out, that is the meaning of evil. Evil is a situation or an action or an instrument or a thing which seen in a particular light is felt to be so inconsistent with your highest. That which you would like to blot out, is evil. If from the beginning you were not trained in goodness perhaps in your experience you will reach the point where you will really ask yourself, "What is good? How can I avoid in my life in future so that I will not be

trapped again in that situation where I will do evil and have these consequences?" So according to this teaching it is best that you are told what *dharma* is and then you follow very rigorously that *dharma*. You are told to read the *Veda* and to find out what *dharma* is from the *Veda* but *Veda* itself is so difficult. So it is said that the first *dharma* is to study *Veda*, because *akhilo vedo dharmasya moolam*, i.e. the entire *Veda* is the origin of the *dharma*. So study of the *Veda* is itself prescribed as *dharma*. But then when people have read the *Veda*, they have found so many interpretations of it that they get confused. In due course of time therefore in India we had a system of *Smriti* — *Veda* is called *Shruti* but then came a system of *Smriti* — and we are told that *Veda* being a very difficult thing, you just see what is written in the *Smriti*. Therefore you have *Manu Smriti*, *Narada Smriti*, *Mahayajnavalka Smriti* and other *Smritis* in which *dharma* is given. But again if you read the *Smriti* today you will find that there are so many things which are unacceptable, so it is said in India that *Smritis* have to be refreshed from age to age. Unfortunately today there is no new *Smriti* being written and that is one of the big difficulties. That is why, in India today, whenever anybody goes in search he gets perplexed because some people tell him that all that is in the *Veda* is in the *Ramayana*. Some say that the *Mahabharata* tells you everything that is in the *Veda* and yet he does not get any satisfactory answers because *Rama* and *Krishna* themselves are quite different personalities. So who should be followed? Or he is told to read the *Puranas* because all the *Puranas* are expositions of the *Vedas*, or he is told to read the *Smritis*, but there are many *Smritis* and you do not know which *Smriti* to follow and then even the *Smritis* are out of date. Others advise him to follow the *Bhagavad Gita*, it being the smallest, textwise, but again the *Bhagavad Gita* is interpreted by so many different people that there is again a perplexity: whose *Bhagavad Gita* should be read? Whose teaching should be followed? Whose interpretation? That is another problem. So, for those who want to follow the path of *dharma* there is a tremendous difficulty today, and then added to the present anarchy we are told now that we have new values, a new *dharma*. Secularism, liberty, equality and fraternity are new *dharmas* of the present day and we are told to follow them and unless we have thought out quite vividly, deeply and subtly, we are all in a mess in fact, we do not know where to turn!

In any case the sum-total of the movement of *dharma* is only one thing: you clarify your nature by means of goodwill. Basically you might say the essence of all *dharma* is goodwill. Develop your goodwill to the utmost and anything that is opposed to goodwill is impurity, so clarify your impurities, throw them out. Your mind should be drenched as it were, in goodwill. When the question of acting out of goodwill is concerned there will be many many difficulties. Some even prescribe that you should do works of charity. Among professions you are told that to be a doctor or to be a teacher and educate the children are called dharmic actions in the sense of goodwill. This does not satisfy the modern mind because it is more dynamic and more active. Why should a lawyer's work not be regarded as *dharma*? He is helping the society as much as anybody else. Why should a captain of industry not be regarded as a man who can do a lot of good to the whole society? So the questions of the modern mind are much more complex. But even there, the general answer that should be given is that if anyone of them is doing work with goodwill then it is a good instrument. Now according to this *dharma* once you have reached that point where the mind is drenched with goodwill then comes the point of liberation, then you begin to perceive the Supreme good which is not here in this world. You begin to perceive the Supreme good and then you are enabled to come out of the clutches of all that is here and you are liberated from the world merely by a perception of the good. By developing goodwill to the highest point you are enabled to perceive the good, the Supreme good and when you perceive the Supreme good there is a kind of a liberation that will be felt which will make you come out of this mess in which you are and you will be liberated. This is the third method.

The fourth method is the method of *bhakti* in which it is said that you have entered into this as a sport. You as a soul, child of God, have entered into this mess as you may enter into a game, but while playing the game you forgot that you are playing the game. The game is so interesting that after having entered into the game you forget that it is a game. It is like an actor who starts playing a drama. When he enters the stage he remembers that he is himself and that he is only acting, but while acting he comes to a point of identification to such an extent that he forgets for some time that he is really acting, he becomes the role he is playing directly himself. So similarly what has happened to us is that while entering we knew that it was a sport, but having entered we forgot that it is a sport and we are taking everything so seriously now. So we are now taught that you just understand that this is only a game which is being played for the sake

of the Divine's sport, it is a larger game. Your game is a small game which is a part of a larger game because the Supreme reality is always in a state of play. There is a perennial *rasa lila* going on, *Sri Krishna* is present everywhere, Lord is present everywhere and each one is a *gopi* in this world and that experience is a constant experience of play, that is the real play. All that you are playing here is only by mistake, you are taking it too seriously. Even here you must realise that what you are doing is nothing but that play. For this what is most important is *smarana*. You remember, *namasmarana*, you remember God, by name. Then *kirtana*, *bhajana* and then *prapatti*, you offer yourself to God, *sharanagati*, completely submit yourself to God. And when that will reach a climax you will be lifted out of this. Then you will no longer be so serious about this game and you will really realise that you are playing with the Supreme: that is *moksha*.

The other method is the method of *karma*. I spoke of *dharma* which is also a kind of *karma* but *Karma Yoga* has a larger field. In the *marga* of *dharma* you are told that there are certain things which are prescribed in the *Veda* or in *Smritis* which you have to follow out. In *Karma Yoga* in the beginning you may be told the same thing but a greater freedom is given in which you are told to do any action. First of all you are told to distinguish between action and the result. Having made a distinction, you free yourself from the desire to enjoy the fruits of action. Then a point will come when you will say to yourself that even the action that I am doing has its thread elsewhere, so you begin to search for the original thread of your action. The fruit is the future thread of your action and that you have to cut first and then you can go backward and find out the original thread from where your present action is proceeding. Then you will find that that thread covers the whole universe. The whole cosmos is at the back of the thread of your action. This is the stupendous realisation that even the little action that you are doing is actually part and parcel of the action of a stupendous machine of the whole universe and you find yourself mounted on a wheel which is mounted on a bigger wheel. So imagine your condition! You feel that you are doing action, but "you" means what? It is a speck of dust which is doing action as a result of mounting on a wheel which itself is mounted on another wheel, so your perception that "you are doing" will go away. The first perception that "you are the doer of action" will begin to disappear, then you will find that *Prakriti* is the doer of all actions. And when you go behind it still further, you find that behind *Prakriti* there is the stupendous *Purushottama*, a huge reality who is the real originator of action, the Supreme Lord Himself and then you realise that even this universe is not at the back of your action.

Then a more intricate search starts: for the relationship of that *Purushottama*, of the Supreme reality with the universe. And a search for the relationship of that Supreme with yourself. Then you realise that you are only a portion, a centration of the Supreme. This is actually described in detail in the *Bhagavad Gita* which says that you are simply a portion, a direct portion from the Supreme. He is everywhere. Each one of us is a centration of the Supreme Lord. Therefore if you want to know the Supreme's will anywhere anytime, you can directly connect yourself with Him and you will find out. So the answer of the *Gita* is that if you want to be free from this mess in which you are, then a lot of training is to be given to your mind to perceive the difference between action and the results, to find out that the actions are actually results of the whole stupendous *Prakriti*. Then you discover that you and this universe are both products of the Supreme and that you have a special facility of going to the Supreme because you are a centration of the Supreme yourself and then you will be able to discover the Divine's will at all times. Knowing and manifesting the Divine's will in every action will lead you to a condition where you will be all the time free, *mukta*, even while you are acting. You will not have to go out of the universe. That is why one of you was saying that the *Bhagavad Gita* says that we should be in the world and active and the answer is that even while you are in the world, and doing all actions in the world, you can be *mukta*. It is not obligatory upon you to leave the world but you will have the special capacity of being able to manifest the Divine's will, of knowing the Divine's will, of making your instrument capable of manifesting the divine will. That is also a state of *moksha*.

Now this last method is, you will find, much more richer than all others and it is in direct line with the teaching of the *Veda* which has been greatly lost. If you go to the original *Veda*, which is not understood today but if you really make a great effort to find out what the Vedic teaching is, then you will find that the Vedic method was to be able to arrive at a point where the instrument of the mind itself is transcended and a new instrument is discovered. A new instrument, a truth consciousness — which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind, had been discovered by the Vedic

rishis — so they said that when you discover the Divine's will and when you become its instrument you no more are obliged to act only through the mind. You will be able to act through the Supermind and this was the Vedic discovery. And when you are able to act through the Supermind then that was regarded as perfection, because whatever manifests from there is perfect, the Divine consciousness is perfect and all actions that proceed from there are perfect actions. Now the same thing was taught in the *Bhagavad Gita* because *Bhagavad Gita* says that beyond the mind — which is the highest point of *Aparaprakriti* — there is a higher *Prakriti*: *Paraprakriti*. It is a very clear enunciation given in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the Supreme acts at present through the lower *Prakriti* but it is also capable of acting through a higher *Prakriti*. Now this higher *Prakriti* is a higher instrumentation which is higher than the mind. So this possibility was again made available to us in the *Bhagavad Gita*. So in the Vedic teaching, you might say you reach the highest level that was possible in the history of Indian thought. *Sri Krishna* says : "I have taught this teaching, first to *Vivasvan* , then to *Manu*. It was lost and I am now repeating it again to you", that is why the *Gita*'s importance is so great. Now Sri Aurobindo says that the highest point that was reached was that when the instrument was proposed to be perfected, even transcended so that a new instrumentation could come about, but there the work has remained. It has not yet proceeded farther. Having reached the Supermind, to make a permanent possibility of residing in the Supermind, to bring it down on the earth not only for one individual or a few individuals but to make it available to the race, that work remains to be done and that work can be done by the triple transformation: the psychic transformation, spiritual transformation and Supramental transformation.

VII

If you recollect what I said last time, we had considered different ways by which the bondage of the soul was conceived. I spoke of the Buddhistic explanation, the Advaitic explanation, and several others but the main point that was made was that none of them explains how the bondage takes place. They had a solution as to how to come out of the bondage, how to be liberated, how to become *mukta*, but how one really came into bondage was not explained and I thought that before we proceed further we shall dwell a little on this question because that is very much connected with what follows in the text. Now when I said that none of them explains how the bondage takes place, it is not entirely true. There is an answer which says that this is inexplicable, that is one answer that is given. How the soul comes to be in bondage, that question, it is declared, is inexplicable. Or else it is said that it happens by some kind of mistake on the part of the soul. Or else it is said that while playing with bondage, it forgets it is playing and then it enters into bondage as if it is real and then all the misery comes about. So you might say there are three answers to this question as to how the soul enters into bondage. But basically none of these answers is very satisfying. To say that it is inexplicable is to admit that there is no answer to this question. To say that it has come about by mistake seems to be inconsistent with the nature of the soul. If the soul is luminous in character it would not commit a mistake, so it does not satisfy. Thirdly if it is said that in the beginning the soul was playing with bondage and then suddenly forgets that it is playing and then it becomes serious about the bondage and then the misery is resulted; now this answer also is similar to the second answer but somehow it is suggested that there is a forgetfulness and there is some kind of accident and a mishap takes place. So you might say that these three answers are really not satisfying answers. Is there at all a satisfying answer anywhere? That is the question that we should ask. Now this is also connected with a question, a deeper question: who is bound, who becomes ignorant, who is feeling the bondage and who wants to become free, who is it that wants to become free?

Now according to the Advaitic answer to this question, there is none bound, none to be freed. That which is bound and that which is to be freed is a pure illusion. But how did this illusion

come about? The Advaitic answer is that this is not explicable. In the Buddhistic answer that which is bound is the sense of ego. Everyone of us has a sense of ego and this ego feels bound in a situation from which it wants to come out. So according to this answer ego is in bondage and when the ego comes out of the bondage, ego no more remains ego, it is dissolved. So you might say ego is bound, ego is freed but when ego is freed there is nothing remaining which enjoys the freedom. As against that, there is a great Upanishadic statement which says: *avidyaya mrityum tirtva vidyaya amritam ashnute*. This is a statement from *Isha Upanishad* that says that by *avidya*, by ignorance, one crosses over death and by knowledge, by *vidya* one enjoys immortality. So here you have a clear statement that there is something which at one stage was in a state of suffering and there is a further stage where he really comes out of suffering and there is an enjoyment of immortality. So this differs from both the answers that you are given so far. According to Advaitic answer none suffers, none is bound, none is freed, none needs to be freed, because *Brahman* is always free and what is bound is always an illusory sense and when that is dissolved, then one finds it was never there, it was like an illusion, and an illusion never exists. So if you ask the question, "Who enjoys that freedom after coming out of the bondage?" then the answer is that there is none. But the *Upanishad* says that one enjoys immortality, that there is one who was in bondage, when he comes out of bondage, one enjoys immortality. So that means that there is some kind of bondage.

So the question is who is it that gets bound, who is it that is suffering the bondage and who is it that enjoys immortality? Now the *Veda*, the *Upanishad*, the *Gita*, these three great works of India do seem to have an answer to this question, but if you read them the answer is not sufficiently visible, the answer is given but you might say there are hints here and there but we cannot discover them very easily.

Question: Does the Advaitic theory come from the Veda?

All these Advaitic theories are certainly from the *Veda* but you might say it is one of the interpretations of the *Vedas*. In the historical process the distance between the Advaitic theory and the *Vedas* is about 4000 years. The *Vedas* were written let us say 4000 years ago and the Advaitic theory came into real prominence only in about 700 A D. So this is their difference historically. So if you go to the *Veda* directly you will read statements of the kind, that I made just now, that by *vidya* you enjoy immortality — this is from the *Veda* and the *Upanishads* — and this statement is interpreted in many ways in later times. *Advaita* is one such interpretation. So although you might say that *Advaita* is in the *Veda*, a distinction has been made that there is *Veda* itself as a text, and then there are many interpretations of that text of which *Advaita* is one and there are many others who dispute that *Advaita* is the real explanation of the *Veda*. There is for example the theory of *Vishishtadvaita* which says that *Advaita* is not a correct interpretation of the *Veda*, then there is *Dvaitavada* which also says that both *Advaitavada* and *Vishishtadvaitavada* do not represent the real *Veda*, so there are controversies of this kind. So leaving aside these controversies if you go straight to the *Veda* you find over there an answer to this question but this answer is not so easily visible.

Now one of the special features of *The Life Divine* which we are now reading is that a good deal of this book is devoted to this very question, "How does one get bound, and how does one get really free from it?" And without understanding this to some extent, the rest of the chapter that we are reading will not be so very easy to grasp, that is why I thought I should first dwell a little on this question. The answer that Sri Aurobindo gives is that it is the individual who gets bound, it is the individual who suffers, it is the individual who seeks liberation, it is the individual who gets liberation. Now the word "individual" is used by Sri Aurobindo to distinguish it from several other terms with which very often people confuse it. The word individual is to be distinguished from ego. Sri Aurobindo's answer is that it is not the ego that gets bound. He says that the individual gets bound, the individual feels the bondage and the individual gets liberated. Sri Aurobindo makes a distinction between the individual and the ego.

Question: Is bondage a necessary factor? Do we have to come to get bound?

It is not necessary, but for a certain purpose the individual gets bound. It is not necessary that the individual must get into bondage but if a certain purpose is to be fulfilled, then this becomes a necessary instrument and that purpose being set forth, the individual enters into the bondage. In other words the individual enters into bondage not by a mistake as many people believe it to be. But it is not necessary that individual should get bound.

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

Question: So in order to seek liberation the individual has got to be bound...

No, according to this theory the individual originally is free already — originally — but then for a certain specific purpose it deliberately enters into the state of bondage, and then having entered into the state of bondage, having worked out a few things that had to be done, then it seeks liberation and then it enters into the state of liberation.

Now the individual is to be distinguished from the ego on the one side, and the individual is to be distinguished from the Universal on the other. So the answer is: Universal does not get bound, it is the individual that gets bound. Individual is also distinguished from the Transcendental, so there are two other terms: the Transcendental and the Universal. So the individual is to be distinguished on one side from the ego and from the other side from the Transcendental and from the Universal. So if you want to put the whole answer in a comprehensive manner, it may be said that the Transcendental does not get bound, the Universal does not get bound, it is the individual that gets bound and the ego is only a consequence of the bondage. When the individual gets bound, the resultant is a production of ego.

Now let us wait a minute and see what is the meaning of Transcendental and Universal, and how are the two different from the word individual. One of the best ways of understanding the Transcendental is to understand the concept of essence. One of the examples given to understand the word essence is: gold is the same in this ornament or that ornament; the two ornaments differ from each other not in the goldness but in the form of the ornaments. So there is a distinction between the essence of the ornament and the form of the ornament. Even if in the ornament the forms are broken the gold remains, just as when a pot may be broken, the form may be broken but the clay remains. So the Transcendental is that which is the essence, which always remains what it is, which may take many forms but which is not depending upon the forms. Now if you examine the question of forms, you will find that forms are spread out, all forms have some kind of special extension, they are spread out. The pot has a certain size, certain shape, it is spread out and the highest spacing out is the entire space.

The whole of space, the whole of time, the totality of space and time is what is called Universal. So the Transcendental is the essence and the Universal is the totality of space and time. Any particular form in space and time is called a particular. Any particular formation, for e.g. my golden ornaments, all of them are particulars. But apart from these particulars there is a special kind of formation — which you call individual. Now the speciality of the individual formation is that it is of the nature of a centration. There is a difference between particularisation and centration. You take any particular form, each particular form excludes the other form, every particular form has a certain limit, a boundary. But a centration is a centre whose circumference is everywhere, in other words whose circumference can shift, it is not specially exclusive. It is a centre of a very special nature, it is a centre in which the Transcendental is fully present and whose boundaries are so flexible that they can go on expanding and they can fill the whole of the universe. So every individual has this great capacity to become Universal. In fact one of the great messages of the highest wisdom is: "be wide, be Universal". Now you can be Universal only if you are capable of universality and this would mean that whatever limitations you have are flexible. This is not true of the particulars. Of each particular object there is a limitation; the moment you expand it, that form breaks down, it no more remains. In the case of the individual this breaking down does not happen, you can expand, become as wide as the whole universe and yet you remain a centre. So in the individual there is a centration and there is a circumference which is so flexible that it can become as wide as the universe. So this individual is a very special kind of formation of the Transcendent himself, you might say the special power of the Supreme, of the Transcendental in which the whole of the Supreme is present in a centre and because of that reason, while it is a centre it is also as Supreme as the Supreme and can become as wide as the Universal, and yet can remain the centre. It is a very special kind of a centration. Such is the true nature of the individual.

Now you will see from the nature of these three terms that I have used — the Transcendental, the Universal and the individual — that the Transcendental by its nature can never become bound, all bondage arises out of ignorance. When I say: "I am bound", that means that I am centred round a small form, small particular — that is the meaning of bondage. When I say: "I am bound", that means I feel that I am circumscribed in a particular boundary and I cannot break it and this happens only because of the basic ignorance. As I told you the individual is

actually capable of expanding the boundary so as to become Universal. It is only because it is ignorant that it feels that it is bound and circumscribed by a particular form. So all bondage is basically the result of ignorance. But that which is by its very nature Transcendental, which is never in the clutches of any limitations whatsoever, that is the very nature of the Transcendental. Transcendent is that which transcends, whose very nature is always that which transcends every limitation. Transcendental is also Transcendent of the Universal — not only of the particular individual. Transcendental is also that which is above the Universal, it is more than the Universal. The totality of space and time is a mere expression of that essence which cannot be seen as space and time at all. That essence is not an object of space and time. So that which is essence, Transcendental, is incapable of ignorance and therefore incapable of bondage. Universal is always wide and spread out. Now in that which is wide and spread out, limitation cannot come in, its very nature is Universal. If therefore some limitation has to come about, if there is to be a movement of ignorance in it, — not necessarily — but if it has to come about it can come about only in this peculiar phenomenon of the centration: the centration whose circumference is nowhere, or everywhere. It is only in respect of this that the phenomenon of ignorance can arise, and that can happen only in a certain state or in a certain condition. As long as the centre is aware of the Transcendental and aware of the Universal, this ignorance cannot operate, so there has to be some development in which a distance is to be sought from the Transcendental and the Universal. If there is no distance between the centration and the Transcendental and the Universal, then this phenomenon of ignorance cannot come about. Having laid out this particular background, we can see more clearly with a focus as to how the individual really gets into a state of bondage. We shall now trace out little by little this process.

In the beginning the centration is aware that it is the centre of the Transcendental. There is no ignorance, it is already as wide as the Universal. So in the original state, the individual is not bound. But the Universal is manifesting so many particulars, particulars are only formations, temporary formations and the individual or the individuals — each one of us is one centre. So you might say multiplicity of centres in the beginning observe the Transcendental on the one hand, observe the Universal on the other and observe multiplicity of currents of particulars which are formed in the Universal. This is called the enjoyment of the individual in the condition of freedom. It enjoys the Universal, it enjoys the Transcendental, it enjoys the multiplicity of all the centres, it enjoys the play with so many particulars of the Universal. So in the highest condition the individual is free, the individual is one with the Supreme, he is aware of his oneness with the Supreme, he is aware of his universality and he is capable of playing numerous games with the particulars of the universe freely without prohibition of any kind, you might say infinite kinds of plays. This is the original condition of each one of us. This is called the Supramental status of the free individual in the beginning. Supramental means the highest Universal. The highest Universal consciousness is the Supramental consciousness. Now the moment we say that there is a play, then there is a very special kind of play of which we should become aware. There is a play of the individual with the Universal, there is a play of the individual with the Transcendental, there is a play of the individual with the particulars. This is the complexity of the play, this is the vision that we have of the eternal dance of *Sri Krishna* called the Rasalila. *Sri Krishna* is the Transcendental, all the *gopis* are the individual centration, and the field in which the dance takes place is the Universal, and all the rhythms of the dance are the particulars. This is the state of our original condition: each one of us actually is a member of that kingdom. You might say that each one of us was at one time in this particular state. Today we have come over a long distance from that state, but this was our original condition.

Now this game being very complex, at a certain stage a decision was taken that a very specific kind of delight had to be experienced. Actually speaking you see that in this world delights are always of many kinds, we enjoy colours of different kinds and each colour has a special kind of delight, and there are numerous kinds of tastes we enjoy. Similarly there are many kinds of things in the world, each one has a specific delight. It is one of the wonders of the world that although delight is the same but the forms and the intensities and the kinds which are available are so varied. The joy of the mango is different from the joy of the apple, both are joyous experiences but, each one of them is very specific. So in the infinite consciousness of the Supreme there are various kinds of enjoyments possible, but there is one specific kind of delight

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

which is not available in that huge dance which is taking place. Now what is that specific delight? It is not that because of the absence of that delight anything is incomplete, one does not feel that one must have specific kind of delight. When there are hundreds of delights available there is no need of any specific delight, particularly when you can have any delight whenever you want. Even the specific delight of which we are going to speak is also available but available under certain conditions, that is the only point. In condition it is not immediately available. If you want that kind of delight, certain conditions are to be fulfilled, and you are capable of fulfilling those conditions also. Now what is that specific delight which is not immediately available there but which you are capable of getting if you want it or if you can create certain conditions? It is the delight of discovering something which gets hidden. It is a specific kind of delight i.e. the recovery of something which gets hidden. In other words, there must come about a process of hiding and then there must be a gradual recovery and when that which is hiding becomes completely uncovered then the kind of delight that emerges out of it is a very specific, a very intense kind of delight.

Question: What exactly is that something that gets hidden?

The Entirety, Transcendental, Universal, individual, everything.

Question: Becoming aware of delight in all this?

Everything of totality. The hiding of the totality.

Question: And realizing that it is the totality?

That's right, that is that specific kind of delight. Now that kind of delight can arise only if there is a hiding process first. Now this hiding process is a gradual process. Gradual process because hiding always implies a veil; a veil has to be created. If you are a weaver then you know that it takes time to weave out a piece of cloth. Similarly if once you decide that you want to have that specific delight and you are capable of creating conditions, then what happens is that gradually you begin to weave a veil, you begin to fabricate a veil. Now the creation of this veil is, in the first place quite difficult because the nature of the Divine is originally of the nature of light — luminosity — and wherever there is light you cannot easily make a veil. Even if you make a veil it will be transparent in the beginning, because of light. So the first step of making a veil is to make a transparent veil. Now what is the process of making a veil at all? What is the mechanics of it? How do you make it? How do you fabricate it?

Question: There has to be a pattern.

There should be a pattern so what is the process of it? How do you weave it out? There are three processes. The first is the original process which I have described already: the eternal manifestation of light and the dance of *Krishna*. This is the first status. This is called the comprehending consciousness. There has to be an intense movement, a universal movement of dance. If that is not there already, then the next step of veiling does not arise. So first of all there must be an intensive process of the universal dance. The relationship between the individual, Supreme, Transcendental and Universal and the rhythms of particulars, all this great play should be already on. While that play is going on, now the next step of veiling starts here, where each individual gives a stress more upon himself than upon the play, a greater attention is paid to oneself rather than to the play. That is, while dancing you might say, the rhythms of the dance are allowed to be worked out by themselves while you yourself remain away from the actual movement of rhythms. This stress itself is the first veiling, it is transparent at that time. You are aware that you are doing this deliberately for a specific kind of joy in the movement. You allow the play to be left to itself as it were and you are only witnessing. Now this creates a very special kind of rhythm of the movement. In technical terms this is called the movement of apprehending consciousness. In the comprehending consciousness everything is equable, yourself and the play, you are equally spread out, equally rhythmical and there is a complete distribution of energy, but in this apprehending consciousness there is stress upon the individual and less stress upon the play itself, but it is hardly visible. This distinction between the first and the second is hardly visible. But then, the third movement out of that becomes possible. Once you are withdrawn to some extent, then another kind of play begins in which you can on the one hand remain withdrawn and yet you can project yourself into the play. This is called the projecting consciousness. The second was the apprehending, the third is called the projecting

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

consciousness. Now when the individual projects himself into the play, then he can experience at the same time, three statuses of himself, simultaneously. On the one hand he knows that he is spread out all over equally, secondly he is aware that he is withdrawn from the whole play, and thirdly that he now projects himself into the play.

Question: This is the case when the ego arises?

No. Not yet, it will come later on, not yet.

Question: Can you repeat the names of these stages?

The comprehending stage, apprehending, and the projecting.

Question: While projecting he is being himself spread out?

So all the three are simultaneous. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls the triple status of the Supermind. So that in the Supramental plane, where we all belong really — at one stage we are all members of this particular *ananda* — where all the three statuses were together simultaneously. But you can see that now a gradation has come into the movement.

As a result of that, the play becomes very intense. Now if you use the word *Purusha* for the individual, and if you use the word, *Prakriti*, for the play then you can say that the play of *Purusha* and *Prakriti* becomes intense and multifarious and in the play so many steps are taken, so many intricacies begin to emerge, multiplicity of forms, particulars; you might say innumerable particulars become manifest and the individual gets projected in all of them very intensely. Now it is at that stage, if there is an intention of the soul, of the *Purusha*, to create the veil — (if there is no intention then the veil will not be there) it may remain a transparent movement — but if there is an intention to create the veil, then it is here that the soul can allow the play to play itself out; you might say the soul can remain in a state of sleep.

Question: Independent?

Independent but in a state in which it does not intervene in the play. This is what going to sleep means: it does not intervene in the play, the play goes on on its own, as it were, although the play started because he was intensely involved — he was projecting — but once it has started it can go on, on its own and the soul does not intervene in the play, and yet it goes on. And that play also which was aware of the presence of the soul becomes so much intensely aware only of the play, it has no time to look back because of the intensity of the play itself. This is what happens to all of us when we become engrossed in a thing. We become very actively engrossed in an action and by engrossment the action becomes very powerful. But then the rest of the things are not abolished, they are ignored, they are not in our frontal consciousness. Now this condition in which the play becomes acute by concentration is called the condition of veiling. The soul has decided not to intervene. If it does not decide to intervene then because of the rays of light going from there, this ignoring would not be possible on the part of the play because this light would always enlighten it and would bring it back — but if it decides not to throw its light upon the play, if *Purusha* decides not to throw its light upon *Prakriti* and *Prakriti* goes on playing its game very intensely and becomes so absorbed in the game that it ignores the rest, this absorption is what is called the veil, and if this absorption becomes more and more intense then it becomes more and more opaque in character because of the intensity. This is the origin of ignorance you might say, this is the beginning of the bondage. It is not by mistake, the soul has chosen because of the specific delight which has to be discovered by hiding. Therefore it goes to sleep, does not intervene, allows *Prakriti* to play intensely and to ignore the whole. This process of ignoring is ignorance. Ignorance does not abolish the totality, it remains there; because of the totality the play goes on. Only where the play is going on, that particular spot becomes ignorant of the rest. Now if the individual is joined up with this, is associated with this — because it is associated actually right from the beginning — the individual who has gone to sleep deliberately now gets associated with the play of *Prakriti* which is absorbed in itself, this is the original state of bondage of the soul.

There are many further stages. This is the first stage in which ignorance arises. But this particular absorption in the play can become so intense that there is only play and no consciousness at all — at a certain stage one is aware only of the play and nothing else. The absorption in the work, in the play is so intense that consciousness gets rolled up in the action itself. This happens to all of us when we are absolutely engaged in a very intense work, like a

doctor when he is operating. He is absolutely engaged in the task, he even forgets that he is operating, the operation is the only thing that is there; as *Arjuna* saw nothing else other than the eye which he had to pierce. So a stage is reached where there is not even time to look back for any consciousness to be conscious of the play, there is a pure play and nothing else. So pure activity in which there is no ray of light, no ray of consciousness manifesting is called the stage of inconscience, not only of ignorance but the stage of inconscience when there is a complete darkness but a huge activity, a tremendous activity. This is the stage of inconscience. A complete hiding has taken place, which was one of the intentions.

Question: Stage of inconscience?

Inconscience. Not unconscious but inconscience.

Question: Different from subconscious?

It is below subconscious. Subconscious is a little higher than the inconscient. Inconscience is a complete darkness. As the *Veda* speaks, *tato ratri jayataha, tataha samudro arnavaha*. The description of this is given in a very symbolic form — it says *satyam charitam chabhidhat tapasodhya jayataha*, in the beginning there was only truth and light, that was the original state. Then it says: *tato ratri jayataha*, then arose the night, night means ignorance because in the night there are stars and moon; so there is partial light still. *Tataha samudro arnavaha* means: then arose the ocean which is an image of complete inconscience, complete darkness. Out of ignorance arose complete inconscience. So this is the process by which the Vedic seers knew how this ignorance came about and then how the complete inconscience came about. But as I said if you read the *Veda* by itself it is so symbolic that you may not be able to discover what I explained just now. You may not know the meaning of *ratri*, the meaning of *samudra* but if you read the *Veda* in totality you will find out that *ratri* stands for ignorance and *Samudra* for inconscience and *sindhu* stands for the superconscience. Now these are very technical terms which only when read repeatedly can the keywords and their meanings be found. If you do not know, then for your simply *sindhu* may mean a river and *samudra* may mean any ocean. But these are the symbolic words in the *Veda* which are not understood and therefore we are not able to understand the Vedic message. If you understand this, then it describes how gradually ignorance arose and then how inconscience arose.

So once that condition was fulfilled, now the reverse process has to start because our aim was to uncover, to discover something that is hidden. So the totality which is now hidden completely, has to be uncovered. In reversing this process, this individual self who had gone to sleep as a result of which all this has happened now decides to awaken. There is a double movement: there is a an individual self deciding to go to sleep and the play being left to itself and then that play ignoring all the rest, this double process produces all these consequences. In the reverse process therefore this individual self or centration of the divine now decides to awaken. This sleeping was deliberate and now it decides to awaken. Now this awakening can be very quick, sudden, and as soon as it becomes awake completely this darkness can disappear, that is one possibility. But then that kind of delight which has to be sought which comes by gradual uncovering, that kind of delight would not come. So the law of development here is a slow growth. This is the law you might say because of the decision taken by the individual self or by the Divine himself that this is a special kind of development which has to take place. It has to be a slow growth. So for the slow growth only a small ray of light has to be thrown by the individual self into the inconscience. If all the light is thrown on the inconscience immediately then there will be immediate light, there will be no problem at all, but then this play will not be played. Therefore first a small light is thrown.

Now this small light is called *Samvatsara*, in the *Veda*. It says that from *samudra* came the *Samvatsara*. Now *Samvatsara* normally means the year, therefore this is also a technical term and we do not understand what it means really, but the word *Samvatsara* had a kind of association in the Vedic terminology with fire, *Agni*. So this individual self which had gone to sleep sends a ray of light in the form of *Agni*. *Agni* has a special kind of quality: it can be luminous even in the darkness as distinguished from the sun. When the sun manifests, darkness vanishes altogether but when *Agni* manifests, all around there can still be darkness and only a little thing is lighted up and therefore it is a very fit instrument for bringing about a slow development, slow growth of light. Therefore this special kind of energy was sent by the individual self. So this *Samvatsara*, this light, this fire begins to burn in the inconscience and this

fire is multiple. There are so many multiple centres because each individual has sent, as it were, a spark into the unconscious. Each spark takes charge of a small portion of unconscious and works on it and gradually tries to awaken it. That which was absorbed in the play, which was ignoring all the rest, now this fire slowly puts pressure upon it and makes it aware of all the rest which is there all around. It is a huge affair because to make the unconscious completely aware is a long process and a deliberately long process.

So a special kind of relationship is built up between the soul and the unconscious. The fire, *Agni* is also called the soul or the psychic entity or *Samvatsara*. That individual of which we spoke in the beginning is called in Sanskrit, *Jivatman*, or the individual self. This individual soul or the individual fire which has emerged out of the *Jivatman* is in technical terms called the psychic entity. A certain law is established that while the soul will go on pressuring the unconscious, it will wait for its full emergence, i.e. when the unconscious has risen to such a point that it wants to open up fully, on its own, only when there is a kind of an urge that this is a play and having played it fully it wants to return from the play and become aware of all the rest. So on the one hand the soul awakens the unconscious and the unconscious also wants to become awakened. When the two things will meet fully in a junction, then only the real manifestation will really be achieved.

But this is a long process. Here I spoke only in a few words but it takes a long process of development. It takes millions and millions of years of development. Out of the unconscious first matter is produced, then life is produced, and then mind is produced and each one of us are at this point. Each one of us has a body which consists of matter, each one has a life — our vital, and each one of us has got mental capacity, so you might say that this psychic entity has been able to lead the whole process to such a point as we are now.

Now having reached this point three important experiences occur. Each one of us feels a pressure to grow from unconsciousness towards knowledge, whether we like it or not. A pressure to grow from unconsciousness to greater knowledge is inherent in each one of us. Secondly, we all have the three elements of body, life and mind and we have to experience the pressure of the conflict between them and we do not know how to really reconcile all the three elements. And third is a pressure that there is still something else because of the psychic entity which is constantly pressurising our body, mind and life. Our body, life and mind are feeling the pressure of something but from where it comes they are not aware. But actually it is the pressure of the psychic entity which wants to give the light, which wants to pressurise, to awaken, but does not pressurise to such an extent that the game would be up within a short time and the gradual development would not take place. The law of development being a gradual development, the psychic entity allows the body, life and mind to grow gradually. It does not impose itself, it remains screened very much behind body, life and mind. But this pressure that there is something else is a pressure of bondage, we feel we are bound, bound to the body, life and mind and the circumstances in which we are and there is a feeling that "I should be something different" because really we are different. We have already experienced that Supramental consciousness, we are as it is said, *amritasyaputraha*. We are all children of immortality already. Because of the memory which is still there, we want to go back to it and that is why we feel the bondage. We are not comfortable with where we are, there is a pressure that there is something else. What that is, we do not know.

Question: But does not everybody feel this bondage?

Not immediately, not in the same way, but differently at different stages of development. I am speaking very summarily. But in some individual cases it may take many, many births to feel this bondage. In the first place, in the beginning one is so much absorbed that life goes on in only one absorption, another life may go on with another absorption and so on. It is only when one develops, that one even comes to hear of bondage and liberation, that is why *shruti* is given so much of importance in our tradition that even to be able to hear that you have a soul behind you, that there is God behind you is itself a great occasion. Once you even hear of it, even if you do not believe in it, afterwards you cannot be the same as before because once you have heard that there is something of this kind, it always helps your inner feeling. This feeling that there is something else, is inherent in our being because it is really there, something else is always there. Because it is there it is always pressing upon us, so you feel there is something else. Now this body, life and mind growing upwards in search of higher knowledge creates three instrumentalities of its development.

Question: Is the psychic entity the consciousness?

Consciousness is a word which includes also the Transcendental, Universal and all that. The word consciousness is a very big term but of that consciousness, Individual is one portion and this psychic entity is a kind of a delegate of that individual self so it is also consciousness but not this Supreme Consciousness. It is a psychic consciousness you might say, the psychic being is a psychic consciousness. What it is exactly in detail we shall examine; actually the 1st part of this chapter is devoted to this particular thing, this psychic consciousness.

Now this body, life and mind in its process of moving from unconsciousness to knowledge produces three things. It produces first an elementary process of memory. You will see that memory plays a great role in the process from unconsciousness to knowledge. An animal has a very short memory; at a certain higher level memory becomes very powerful and in the human being memory plays a very great role. It is even so much so that some people say memory is the man, that if you lose your memory then you are no more what you are. This is not entirely true but I mean it is such an important element that people are led to believe that memory is the whole of man, man is nothing but his memory. In any case memory is certainly one of the important instruments that is created by the body, life and mind movement.

The second is the ego consciousness. The ego consciousness very often seems to be created by the memory but it is not really so. It is because there is the memory of the Self that you feel that memory creates the Self. So there is an independent creation, formation — like memory itself is a formation, a special kind of faculty, ego is a special kind of formation which takes place. Now this ego is not an entity, it is simply a formation and not even a formation, it is a sense. That is why you use the word ego-sense, *ahambhava*, not *aham* but *ahambhava*, there is an ego-sense. It is a sense which identifies itself now with this formation, now with that formation. It is like a jumping monkey you might say, it wears this cap now, wears that cap now, wears another cap later on. Egoistic consciousness is really a kind of an imitating consciousness. Because behind it there is a psychic entity which is the delegate of the individual self, the true individual, therefore in this body, life and mind an imitation of that psychic entity is created, a formation is created. So ego-sense is actually a kind of a figure to imitate the real psychic entity which is behind, which is not seen. But because of the pressure of the psychic entity, a figure of it is created here in our body, life and mind which says: "I am this body, I am this life, I am this mind". It identifies sometimes with this body, then this particular desire, this particular thought, then discards it. If somebody falls ill then he says: "I am not this body" but if somebody is very handsome he feels that he is this body. One does not own the body which one does not like but one wants to own the body if one likes it. It depends upon the choice of the egoistic consciousness to bind itself with this or with that. So ego-consciousness is an ego-sense which regards itself as independent of all the rest, although it is not independent of all the rest but regards itself as independent of all the rest, that is why it is called the false sense. If the ego regarded itself to be finite and regarded itself to be completely dependent upon all the rest, then ego-sense as we understand it, would not be operating. Ego-sense operates as ego-sense because although it is finite and although in reality depends upon a whole universe, it regards itself to be completely independent of the universe. Because of the presence of the veil, it is not aware of the universe, it is ignoring the universe and therefore it sees only itself and thinks it is really independent of all the rest.

The third thing that is created in this consciousness is self consciousness, which is different from ego-consciousness; the ego-consciousness also pretends to be self-consciousness, but apart from this ego-consciousness there is also a self-consciousness in us.

So memory, ego and self-consciousness, are the three characteristics of our present; our entire psychology can be described in these three terms. We are a bundle of memory, ego and self-consciousness, this is all that we are. It expresses itself through a movement of body, life and mind. Now the psychic entity which is behind would like to awaken all these instruments gradually and would to put pressure and would wish that all of them also would agree to be awakened. But since there is resistance in this unconsciousness — memory is short, egoistic consciousness is false, self consciousness is only faint — because of these limitations in the body, life and mind the action of the psychic entity is not very powerful. It feels, as it were, hindered by the movement — slow movement — of body, life and mind, memory, ego and self experience. This is called the bondage which is experienced by the psychic entity. That the psychic entity is not able to express itself fully in the body, life and mind, that it has to depend

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

upon the awakening of the body, life and mind, it has to wait for its acceptance, consent, this is what is called really the bondage. When we say: "I feel bondage", this is the real bondage. There is a sense of bondage which is vague in the beginning of which I spoke earlier but when you go to the psychic entity then it can tell you of its real bondage. It will say, "Well, I am luminous about myself, I have come from the Supreme individual Self and I know what is the Supreme Divine but I am given the task to awaken this body, life and mind and I am waiting for the time when they will consent to grow, they will consent to open up to this light". This state where the psychic entity is not able to manifest fully in body, life and mind is the experience of bondage and this bondage is a real bondage, it is not an illusory bondage, it is a real experience of bondage.

Question: So it waits till the right time?

It waits exactly. Now this is the point where if body, life and mind are gradually developed and they awaken or open up to the psychic entity; psychic entity is able to throw its light. Then the whole process begins to move upwards and when the body, life and mind are so developed that they become willing servitors of the psychic entity and they also allow the floodlight of the individual Self and the Universal Consciousness and the Transcendental, that is a state of liberation, *mukti*, *moksha*. But this is where we are today in the state of bondage. Now I will only read the third paragraph for today which will give a graphic picture of where we are today (page 891):

"At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable; but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and deprivations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something that is inherent in its own substance. It is aware also of all that contradicts these things, of all that deviates from its own native character, of falsehood and evil and the ugly and the unseemly; but it does not become these things nor is it touched or changed by these opposites of itself which so powerfully affect its outer instrumentation of mind, life and body. For the soul, the permanent being in us, puts forth and uses mind, life and body as its instruments, undergoes the envelopment of their conditions, but it is other and greater than its members".

If you allow me five minutes more I will read the next paragraph also because it is directly connected with it.

"If the psychic entity had been from the beginning unveiled and known to its ministers, not a secluded King in a screened chamber, the human evolution would have been a rapid soul-outflowing, not the difficult, chequered and disfigured development it now is; but the veil is thick and we know not the secret Light within us, the light in the hidden crypt of the heart's innermost sanctuary. Intimations rise to our surface from the psyche, but our mind does not detect their source; it takes them for its own activities because, before even they come to the surface, they are clothed in mental substance: thus ignorant of their authority, it follows or does not follow them according to its bent or turn at the moment. If the mind obeys the urge of the vital ego, then there is little chance of the psyche at all controlling the nature or manifesting in us something of its secret spiritual stuff and native movement; or, if the mind is over-confident to act in its own smaller light, attached to its own judgement, will and action of knowledge, then also the soul will remain veiled and quiescent and wait for the mind's farther evolution. For

the psychic part within is there to support the natural evolution, and the first natural evolution must be the development of body, life and mind, successively, and these must act each in its own kind or together in their ill-assorted partnership in order to grow and have experience and evolve. The soul gathers the essence of all our mental, vital and bodily experience and assimilates it for the farther evolution of our existence in Nature; but this action is occult and not obtruded on the surface. In the early material and vital stages of the evolution of being there is indeed no consciousness of soul; there are psychic activities, but the instrumentation, the form of these activities are vital and physical, or mental when the mind is active. For even the mind, so long as it is primitive or is developed but still too external, does not recognise their deeper character. It is easy to regard ourselves as physical beings or beings of life or mental beings using life and body and to ignore the existence of the soul altogether: for the only definite idea that we have of the soul is of something that survives the death of our bodies; but what this is we do not know because even if we are conscious sometimes of its presence, we are not normally conscious of its distinct reality nor do we feel clearly its direct action in our nature."

VIII

There are four words in this chapter which are very important: inner, inmost, higher, highest, and these four words have special meanings. When the word inner is used, there is a reference to what is called technically subliminal; and the subliminal has three strata: the inner physical, inner vital, inner mental. These three constitute the inner being and behind these three, there is the inmost and that is the psychic being. When we use the word higher we mean something that is above the mind. Now above the mind there is a realm of spiritual experience as distinguished from subliminal and psychic; as you go higher you have the realm of spiritual experience. And then you go to the highest, then you have the Supramental experience.

Normally when we begin to go inward, it is the inner being that we come across — i.e. the inner physical, inner vital, inner mental. These three together are called the subliminal being. Subliminal means that which is behind the threshold, as distinguished from the surface consciousness. Surface consciousness is the consciousness of which we are ordinarily aware — whatever we are aware of by means of senses, eyes and ears and tongue and touch. All that we are aware of by means of senses is the surface consciousness. And when we go behind this surface, when we draw inwards then we become aware of a larger physical being — not that narrow physical being of which we are aware but there is a larger physical being — and we become aware of a larger vital being, and a larger mental being. The matter of which we are aware on the surface is the gross matter but as we go inward we begin to become aware of the subtle matter. And behind it, is the realm of feelings, emotions, attractions, longings, desires, ambitions but as distinguished from the surface desires and surface ambitions, these are larger. Similarly as distinguished from the surface mind in which we are aware of immediate ideas, ordinary ideas, day to day ideas, in the inner mind we are aware of larger ideas, aware of more systematic ideas, more organised ideas. It is the realm of pure ideas.

But these three though larger, they are still subordinate to the inmost. The inmost is the psychic entity. If you try to go deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper, you will get the real feeling of inmost which is that of inherent sweetness, the warmth of sweetness. The very characteristic of the psychic entity is that of inherent sweetness, it does not depend upon any outer circumstances. Whether we are praised or insulted, honoured or dishonoured, whether things are comfortable or uncomfortable, in the psychic consciousness everything is sweet, inherently. It is inherently pure, even if impure ideas or desires touch it, this is not polluted, it is like the lotus leaf on which however much water you may sprinkle, it remains absolutely dry. Similarly with this psychic entity; whatever impurities you may drop on it, it remains extremely pure.

Therefore it is also called the fire. The fire is always pure, it purifies other things but you cannot pollute the fire. In fact, the outer fire is only the symbol of the inner fire, of the psychic fire. That is the real fire, the outer fire is only a reflection of it. The psychic entity is even more alive than our life. It is by breathing that we live and breath is called the life — force and we call ourselves living by virtue of breathing, but the psychic entity is even more alive than breathing, it does not even need breathing for its life. Even through the death of the physical body it remains alive. It is that which is immortal, it is inextinguishable, it is constantly in touch with the Divine. The psychic being is always in touch with the Divine; it does not need to make an effort to get in touch with the Divine. It is always in touch with the Divine, it does not require the proof of the existence of God. It is the mind which requires the proof but the psychic entity, since it is constantly in touch with the Divine, is a seat of certainty. And finally it has an inherent knowledge of God's will in it. What God has willed, that knowledge, the soul, the psychic entity has inherently in it. Not only has it the knowledge, it has also the power to manifest it. This therefore is the inmost being in us. In each one of us it is present and because of its presence we can safely speak to anybody of the deeper things, nobler things, and even if the mind does not understand, of God, Divine, noble things and so on. The psychic entity understands it and responds to it in spite of our mind.

Now let us come to the higher. We distinguished between inner and inmost as distinguished from the surface consciousness as inner consciousness and inmost consciousness. Now let us come to the higher consciousness. The higher consciousness, as I said, is above the mind. Above the mind is the Spirit; now the word Spirit indicates three basic experiences of which at one time we have spoken: the experience of *Brahman*, *Purusha* and *Ishwara*. All these three words can be subsumed under the word Spirit; whenever the word Spirit is used, basically we mean any one of these three or all the three together.

The minimum experience of the Spirit is that of *Purusha*. This experience is characterised by the sense of witnessing. When we are able to withdraw from the rush of activity even when the activity is proceeding in us and we are able to watch it, not carried away in the movement, then that watching consciousness, that which watches is *Purusha* consciousness, is the witness-self and each one of us has this experience of witnessing and this witnessing can be at many levels. At the level at which we are talking, beyond the mind, the witnessing is of the totality of the mind, life, body and everything, i.e. the complete conglomeration of activities put together is on one side and the *Purusha* consciousness is on the other. When you can witness the totality of your being, totality of your activities, that is the central experience of *Purusha*. But at lower levels also when you can witness only your body, then that which witnesses body is called the Physical *Purusha*. When you can watch your vital energies — desires, ambitions, attractions, that it is called the Vital *Purusha*. When you can watch the mental being — ideas, perceptions, thoughts — then it is called the Mental *Purusha*. When you can watch your own sweetness, it is the Psychic *Purusha*. When you can watch all this together, it is the central experience of *Purusha*. So you have *Annamaya Purusha*: the physical *Purusha*, the *Pranamaya Purusha*: the vital *Purusha*, the *Manomaya Purusha*: the mental *Purusha*, *Chaitya Purusha*: Psychic *Purusha*; and *Purusha*, that which is the witness of all this. It is only when you have risen very high in your witnessing consciousness, when you can see that your body is not yours, your life-movement is not yours, your mind is not yours, then this *Purusha* is recognised as an impersonal perceiver not identified with anyone of them and therefore quite free from all this. That is why *Purusha* consciousness is supposed to be a consciousness of freedom. It is also called the state of *moksha*, when you can really be in that state that anything that happens in the body, life and mind fails to make any effect upon your being and you find yourself independent of all the rest. That is the minimum of what we call the spiritual experience.

At a higher level you have the *Brahman* experience. It is also called the *Atman* experience. The words *Brahman* and *Atman* are interchangeable, although many people make a distinction between *Atman* and *Brahman* to indicate that *Atman* is individual and *Brahman* is universal, or above universal, but this is a confusion. The individual is called the *Jivatman*, not *Atman*. When only the word *Atman* or *Brahman* is used, the characteristic of this experience is that not only you are above all the movement — which is the case in the *Purusha* consciousness — but you also find that all movement proceeds from you. In the *Purusha* experience you find yourself separated from the movement. This experience of separation continues in *Brahman* experience but there is an added realisation that whatever is moving out, whatever is the activity, all that, moves from the *Brahman*. This movement is a movement of *Brahman*. In the case of *Purusha* experience, the movement is separated from *Purusha* and the link between the two is not

known, that is the deficiency of that experience. In the *Brahman* experience you realise that all movement proceeds from the *Brahman* or from the *Atman*. In English the word *Brahman* or *Atman* is translated as the Self. Not Individual Self but as the Self, meaning thereby that it is the Self of everything, Self of all. It is the Self of all because all proceeds from the Self. Therefore it is called *Atman*. This Self is realised to be only one, there are no two selves or three selves in the world or anywhere, there is only one Self, one without the second, *ekamevadvitiyam*, one without the second. In the *Purusha* experience you find yourself separated from *Prakriti*, from movement and you do not find yourself spread out in *Prakriti*. In *Brahman* experience you find everywhere the same Self. Self in all, all in Self, and beyond all. Self in all, all in Self and Self above all. These are the three formulae of this experience. That is *Brahman* experience.

At a still higher level you have the experience of *Ishwara* in which you find that all activities not only proceed from you, from the *Brahman* but they can be controlled, they can be regulated, they can be mastered, they can be manipulated, they can be perfected, so that the substance which was earlier experienced as *Purusha*, which was later experienced as the *Brahman* is now experienced as the controller, as the creator and you find everything completely under the control of that substance.

These three experiences are basically the experiences of the Spirit, therefore they are called spiritual experiences as distinguished from the psychic experience of which I spoke earlier. These experiences are all obtained when you go above the mind. Along with these three experiences you have corresponding three experiences. Corresponding to *Purusha* experience you have the experience of *Prakriti*, that is to say you experience *Prakriti* as different from *Purusha*. This experience of the distinction between *Purusha* and *Prakriti* is a part of the *Purusha* experience. Corresponding to the experience of *Atman* or *Brahman* from where all movement proceeds, is the experience of *maya*. The movement that proceeds from *Brahman* or *Atman* is called in technical terms *Maya*. So the experience of *Brahman* and *Maya*, the experience of *Atman* and *Maya* is the second level of spiritual experience. At the third level of experience where all that moves out is experienced to be under the control, under the mastery of the substance which you call the experience of *Ishwara*, is conjoined with the experience of *Shakti*; *Ishwara* and *Shakti*. So you have three experiences: *Purusha-Prakriti*, *Brahman-Maya*, *Ishwara-Shakti*. So to make the word "spiritual" more complete, we may say that spiritual experience consists of the experience of *Purusha-Prakriti*, *Brahman-Maya* and *Ishwara-Shakti*.

All kinds of experiences that you can get in this realm are all called spiritual experiences and there are many experiences of this kind. There are in these experiences, those of universality in which you become very wide; experiences of infinity, experience of eternity, experience of covering the entire space, entire time and even experience of the spaceless and timeless, of going beyond space and time. You have then the experience of great peace, particularly in the *Purusha* consciousness and *Brahman* consciousness. You have the experience of a great clarity and light; experience of a great power, particularly in the experience of *Ishwara-Shakti* you find a huge current of energy flowing out from you under the complete control of your being; experience of what is called in the *Vedanta*, in the *Upanishads*, the experience of *Satchidananda*. *Purusha* is normally experienced only as *Sat*, only as being, but *Brahman* is experienced as *Sachchidananda*. But still in *Brahman*, there is a greater emphasis upon *Sat*, upon peace and silence. *Chit* and *Ananda* also are experienced but they are, as it were, involved in the experience of peace. When you come to *Ishwara* then all the three, *Sachchidananda*, are experienced in their fullness. When you experience all the three together, then that is called the experience of *Purushottama*. These three are higher experiences; the experience of *Purushottama* is the highest experience. The highest *Purushottama* has the highest *Shakti* manifest in it. That highest *Shakti* manifest is called Supermind; so the word Supermind is also a word which indicates the highest.

When we use the word normal being, then we mean our ordinary surface consciousness of body, life and mind, or something that is behind the surface of which we are aware. As compared to the inner and inmost, and higher and highest, our normal being may also be called the lower being. That which is normal to us from the point of view of these realms, is the lower being but there are still lower and lower realms, the subconscious & the unconscious or inconscient. There is a being in us of which we are hardly conscious, we were conscious of it yesterday but today we have forgotten. It is subconscious to us today. If pressure is given, you can recall it but at the moment, it is not in your surface consciousness. There are certain things

which are going on in our body which require some kind of conscious triggering but of which we are not aware. A wound is inflicted on my skin and there is a triggering of the consciousness to my brain which somehow tells the brain that a wound has occurred — I am not aware of it as this triggering takes place — as a result of which the nervous system comes into operation and the white blood corpuscles begin to flow in a greater quantity towards the place where there is a wound, which will try to heal the wound as soon as possible. Unless there is a triggering of the brain this won't happen and triggering of the brain won't take place unless there is some kind of a conscious signal to it. All this takes place but we are not aware of it, it is subconscious. And below subconscious there is complete unconsciousness. Subconscious is compared to a somnambulist, one who wakes up in sleep, prepares a cup of tea, drinks the cup of tea and next morning when he awakens he does not remember anything of the kind at all. Even while he is preparing the tea he is not aware that he is preparing tea and he drinks tea, but he is not aware that he is drinking tea but he does everything very carefully, then goes to sleep and next morning he has no trace of it at all in his consciousness. These are the phenomena of somnambulism which have been noted and recorded and some people have the habits of this kind. The subconscious is like a somnambulist; this somnambulist is on the verge of waking but does not wake, that is the special kind of description of a somnambulist. If you suddenly touch and wake up this somnambulist, he will himself be surprised to find himself near the stove preparing the tea, he was not aware of it. But unconscious is not even on the verge of waking, it is really in deep slumber and there is no sign of any stir of waking and yet it does many activities of consciousness. It is a state of deep sleep of consciousness and the lowest we might say is this unconscious or inconscient. Now this is the geography of our entire being you might say.

The in most being that is the psychic being; then the spiritual the higher; that is *Purusha-Prakriti*, *Brahman-Maya*, *Ishwara-Shakti*, the highest *Purushottama*: Supermind. Now in this geography of the spirit there are three more details to be filled up. When we have experience of *Purusha-Prakriti*, *Prakriti* is experienced as separate from *Purusha*, and *Prakriti* is seen to be characterised by three *Gunas*: *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, or it is characterised by three instruments: body, life and mind. When *Brahman-Maya* experience is obtained then *Maya* and all the movement is found to be proceeding from the *Brahman*, and that which proceeds is largely experienced as consisting of *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*, body, life and mind. But not merely that. There is found to be in this *Maya* the origin of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, something more than *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, something divine in character, not merely *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, not merely body, life and mind but something more than that. It may also be called the divine *Maya*. When we come to *Ishwara-Shakti*, then this *Shakti* is experienced not only as *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, body, life and mind, not only as something divine but much more clearly as consisting of higher degrees of mental consciousness, something which is not confined merely to *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Certain greater domains of *Shakti* become manifest. We begin to approach what may be called *Para Prakriti*. Sri Krishna says, in the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I have two natures, *Apara Prakriti* and *Para Prakriti*, I have lower nature which consists of the three *Gunas* but I have also the higher nature" This higher nature begins to become more and more manifest. In the realm of *Shaktis* there are innumerable powers which are not confined to the narrowness of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* or of body, life and mind. There are higher degrees of powers, energies, effectivities which are to be found. Sri Aurobindo distinguishes four of these levels of powers: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive mind and Overmind. Each one has a specific kind of capacity and power not confined to the limits of mind, of the ordinary mind of which we are aware. And when we come to experience *Purushottama* — Supermind, then this *Shakti* reveals its topmost power of the Supermind, which is above the Overmind. Supermind is *Shakti* but not overmental, it is supramental *Shakti*. There is a distinction between the Overmind and Supermind, we shall have some chance of looking at this later on, at the moment we only see that there is a distinction between Overmind and Supermind. This is one important element which I wanted to fill in, in this picture of the totality of our existence.

There is another detail. This is a detail which becomes more manifest when we experience *Ishwara-Shakti*. This does not become manifest when we have the mere experience of *Purusha* or *Brahman*, it becomes manifest when we have

Ishwara-Shakti experience. This is the experience of *Jivatman*. In *Purusha* consciousness you are not aware of *Jivatman* as a child of God, even when in *Purusha* consciousness you know yourself as individual, you recognise yourself only as an individual witness of *Prakriti* but not as

a child or portion of the Divine, Supreme Divine, *Ishwara* or *Shakti*. In *Brahman-Maya*, there is only the experience of the Self which is All and All that is Self and the Self that is above All. There is no experience of the *Jivatman*, of the individual self. But when you experience the *Ishwara-Shakti* you have this deeper perception, you discover that what you call yourself is actually something quite different from the body, life and mind, something quite different from what you call yourself as ego. You find yourself to be a finite but not egoistic. There is a difference between the *Jivatman* which is finite and individual, and the ego which is also finite and individual. The ego is a finite which regards itself to be independent of everything. It regards itself to be self-existent, although it is not so. Because it is not so and yet it regards itself, we call it a false ego consciousness. All ego consciousness is a false consciousness because although it believes it is independent of everything, it is not independent of everything. In the case of *Jivatman*, it is a finite which knows itself to be completely dependent upon *Ishwara* and *Shakti*, not independent but completely dependent. That is why when you realise the *Jivatman*, the egoistic consciousness which was false is destroyed, it cannot survive. Every mistake when it is recognised as a mistake is cancelled out. This is the nature of every mistake. The moment you recognise a mistake as a mistake, it is annulled, it cannot remain there. So the moment the individual recognises that it is not independent, it is not self-existent, but it is entirely dependent upon *Ishwara-Shakti* and it knows itself, it realises itself to be the child of the Divine father and the Divine mother, when this recognition comes then egoism is destroyed. A continuous dependence upon *Ishwara-Shakti* is a constant experience of *Jivatman*.

When you recognise this you may also recognise that the psychic entity which we call the inmost being was always a delegate of *Jivatman*. It is a further new revelation that you get that this psychic entity is a delegate of the *Jivatman* who was constantly accompanying the body, life and mind and working on the body, life and mind. This psychic entity is only working on behalf of the *Jivatman*.

You also discover that it was this psychic entity which was caught in *Prakriti*, in body life and mind, *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and now it is released from this captivity. This experience of release from captivity is called a spiritual experience. In the *Veda* there is a description of it as a bird which was caught in a big cage and then the cage is broken, and the bird flies out of it, spreading out its wings. A falcon, a huge falcon, springs out of the cage breaking all the bars of the prison of the cage and soars above. This experience is also a spiritual experience, one of the most important experiences that we as individuals can have, not only the experience of *Ishwara* and *Shakti* but the experience of ourselves as now liberated from the prison of body, life and mind. That which was caught in mortality — body, life and mind is mortal — that is now liberated and realises it is immortal, and ever immortal. It was always immortal, not that it has now become immortal, it was always immortal but it was not recognised by itself to be immortal because it was caught in captivity. This is the second detail of this geography of our existence.

There is a third detail, the last of this series, and this is the detail regarding what we call the process of transformation. So far in my whole description I have not used the word transformation deliberately because I wanted to speak of it at the end. In this entire field of existence a certain process is at work, a certain process in which *Purushottama* and Supermind are at work and they are at work on what is all below: *Ishwara-Shakti*, *Brahman-Maya*, *Purusha-Prakriti*, inmost being, inner being, surface being, normal being, lower being, lowest being, inconscient. A certain process is going on. You might say, all the time as it were, from the Supermind, from the *Purushottama* there is a constant outpouring of rains on all that is below. It's a huge energy which is flowing all the time downwards. But we are so far from all these highest levels that we hardly experience this outpouring which is going on all the time, just as in the night we know that there are so many stars which are bigger than our suns, our own sun is only one star and we know that there are many many such suns even bigger than this sun, but they are hardly visible at night, many are visible but many are not visible at all because they are so far off, their light does not reach here at all. Similarly from the topmost level of *Purushottama* and Supermind there is a constant bombardment as it were, constant pouring of the rain but which is not visible to us, not experienced by us at all. That raining is going on all the time, whether we are aware of it or not. Now that is not experienced by us because of a very important element in us, of which we have spoken earlier, and that is because we are exclusively concentrated upon our small little being, exclusively concentrated. Now this exclusive concentration of ourselves upon our own being, our little being is so exclusive and so dense, it is called the thick veil, it is a very thick veil, a huge thick veil and that is why we are not

aware of what is happening, what is pouring from above and because of that reason in our small little field we go on rotating round and round and round and what we call problems of our life are nothing but the result of this going round and round and round. You resolve one problem, another problem arises, you resolve that, a third one arises, it is a constant round of problems. In the first place we do not even know that there are problems. A child does not recognise the existence of problems, he suffers problems but he is not self-aware that they are problems. In many ways we are children so we are also not aware of our real problems. It is only when there is some very intense problem that we recognise it to be a problem, otherwise we take our humdrum life as a part of nature and quite normal. At a certain stage of life we begin to become aware of problems and then we immediately start making ways of solution without even raising the question whether we can really solve the problems or not. So what solutions we find are always half solutions because we are not at all searching out a real solution. Whatever is easily available we manipulate and use and we feel it is resolved for the time being until another problem again comes up. Only in a certain state of crisis or in a state of great self awareness, we begin to feel that something radical has to be done, a real solution has to be found. It is then that we try some major operations of breaking this veil.

Now the entire operation of breaking the veil is called the process of yoga. The veil is not only thick but multiple. It is not as if there is only one veil which we just cut asunder and you are out of it. It is multiple; it has many layers of this thickness. It is multisided and that is the reason why you have to have a multisided process of yoga. This multisided process of yoga consists first of three processes: purification, concentration and enrichment. Wherever we find impurity we have to purify ourselves. All impurities are mixtures, obscurities, overlapping of one principle over the other in a confusion. These are the basic impurities. So these impurities are to be purified.

Then there is a process of concentration in which we concentrate on wherever we find a thick veil and the veil is torn. This is the secret process of tearing the veil. Wherever you experience a veil, you concentrate upon it and by the force of concentration the veil tears. This was the great discovery made by the Vedic *rishis*. If you want to tear the veil, how do you tear it? By the method of concentration.

And thirdly there is a process of enrichment. Our capacities today are limited, small, so these capacities are to be sharpened, chiselled, augmented, brightened, perfected. So with every capacity that we have, this is the process to be done. These are the three processes, — details of course are many — but these are the three basic processes.

In every system of *yoga* if you analyse ultimately, whether it is *Hatha yoga* or *Raja yoga*, or *Bhakti yoga* or *Karma yoga* or *Jnana yoga*, the three basic processes you will find in all of them are these three: purification, concentration, enrichment. Ultimately what happens by these three processes is an experience of liberation. We feel liberated from limitations, liberated from this veil. The first experience of every process of yoga, is the experience of some kind of a liberation. The highest of this liberation comes up when you have a liberation from the sense of egoism. And then one of the major experiences of liberation is the experience of the bird swinging out of the cage, soaring into the vast sky of freedom. But at all other levels there are some kind of small liberations. Secondly you find an experience of some kind of ascension, you feel as if you are ascending from a lower level to the higher level, or you find yourself going from the surface to the inner level, and to the inmost level. You also find a process of descent, you may rise up to a certain level and the powers of the level you have reached are brought down in to the lower levels.

I have learnt mentally that goodwill is the most important thing in our life. When somebody tells you that goodwill is the most important thing, it is a mental idea you have gained — then you try to apply goodwill in every activity of your life. This is an action of descent, you have attained a certain knowledge that goodwill is important and then you translate it in every activity. You translate it in the first place in your activities of friendship, goodwill towards friends is much easier. Goodwill towards neighbours whom you know or even you do not know is a more difficult task. So you descend into those activities and then you translate goodwill towards enemies, a much more difficult task. You translate it at lower and lower levels and transform yourself. Now this is only one example but for every higher idea or a higher consciousness there is this process of descending. You bring it down lower and lower, so there is a constant process of ascent and descent. Or you also bring out from within, when you go inward, it is not exactly the process of descent but a process of bringing out from within, when you go inward. Then the

powers which are within are brought out. When you go higher then the powers which are above are brought down. So bringing out and bringing down, these are the two other processes. When you go inwards into the psychic being you can experience the powers of the psychic being, the sweetness of the psychic being, the fire of the psychic being, the purity of the psychic being, and allow your mind, life and body to be drenched by this purity, by this light by this sweetness. You can let body, life and mind be drenched to such an extent that each and every corner of the body, life and mind is full of the psychic waters. Everywhere there is sweetness in nature, every vibration is sweetness, every vibration is luminous, every vibration is of goodwill, everything is turned to the truth, everything is turned to beauty. When this is done it is first a process of change and then a process of conversion and then a process of transformation.

Change is simply, as I told you earlier at one stage, when something which is in the cold place in the mind comes to the hot place. Yesterday the idea of God was dormant in my mind, today the idea of God becomes very prominent, so that is called the process of change. It was only peripheral yesterday, now it becomes central, this is a process of change. It is not a conversion. In a process of conversion that which was cold, that cold area is animated altogether, you are fully converted, the new idea assumes a tremendous place in your being when all which you are conscious of, is drenched by this new idea, it is conversion. But transformation is a much greater thing. In a psychic change you begin to become aware of the psychic being and try to bring the psychic being into the front. When it remains very much into the front, most of the time you can say that the now, psychic conversion has taken place. But when the psychic light suffuses all your being, body, life, mind, everything, you might even find difficult to make a distinction between the mind and the psychic being, between life and the psychic being, between body and psychic being, that is called psychic transformation. Everywhere wherever you look whether it is body, life and mind, you find nothing but the psychic being, psychic consciousness spread out, and nothing that is contrary to the psychic being is present; that is called psychic transformation.

Now similarly when you rise up and have the experiences of *Purusha*, *Brahman*, *Ishwara* and bring down the light and power and joy and bliss and presence and peace of these levels into the lower levels, some kind of spiritualisation starts. When body, life and the mind become very much aware of the *Purusha*, or of *Brahman* or of *Ishwara*, some kind of spiritualisation starts. A point comes when you are settled into *Purusha* experience all the time, all the time you are in the *Brahman* consciousness, all the time you are in the *Ishwara* consciousness. A major step has been taken then. If you cut off yourself from *Prakriti*, from all actions, then any question of further transformation does not arise, you just cut off and you can remain in your ivory tower doing nothing at all. Then you are never wrong and everything is fine, everything is peaceful. But if you start acting, then normally action starts with our normal being, with some experience which is behind in which you are liberated. And many human beings who are doing yoga, are seated in this disequilibrium, inwardly peaceful, outwardly turbulent. In *rishis* like *Durvasa* for example who may have been in a great state of a higher level of realisation but were still capable of great anger, this kind of disequilibrium existed. That means that the nature of body, life and mind have not had the infusion of the light and power and peace of the higher being into their lower parts.

So gradually to bring down is a process of descent. It is a long process, a very difficult process which can be aided by *Jnana yoga*, *Bhakti yoga*, *Karma yoga*, *Raja yoga*, *Hatha yoga*, by the process of purification, concentration, enrichment. You make use of these processes, but the ultimate result should be that this light and power and peace should really come down into the body, life and mind. But this becomes more and more effective if you enter into not only *Purusha*, *Brahman* and *Ishwara* but if you also enter into the higher *Maya*, divine *Maya*, into *Shakti*, into Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive mind, Overmind, and if you bring down the powers of these elements into your being, into your body, life and mind. Then the transformation becomes much more powerful. Then the overmental powers suffuse themselves into the body, mind, life, and that is called the climax of spiritual transformation. Just as suffusion of the psychic sweetness and light and purity into each and every part of body, life and mind was called psychic transformation, similarly the great event of the suffusion of the light and power and peace of *Purusha*, *Brahman*, *Ishwara*, through the instrumentality of Overmind — not of mind but of Overmind — into mind, life and body is called the climax of spiritual transformation. It is by itself such a tremendous achievement that one may be justified in saying that now there is nothing more to be done. Yet this unconscious and the inconscient are still not covered. The

body may be transformed but the unconscious is still not transformed, and this can be done only if you can rise into the Supermind and if Overmind is supramentalised, Intuitive mind is supramentalised, Illumined Mind is supramentalised, Higher Mind is supramentalised, mind is supramentalised, life is supramentalised, body is supramentalised, unconscious is supramentalised. When this process is completed, that is called the Supramental transformation. Now this chapter which we call triple transformation speaks of these three transformations: the Psychic transformation, Spiritual transformation and Supramental transformation.

IX

Question: How do we silence those thoughts which we know are detrimental to our spiritual progress? The responsibilities of a family are very demanding and time consuming. For true spiritual growth there has to be single mindedness. How do I go about it?

You know there are three things to be done simultaneously. First of all you spoke of the responsibilities. Now each responsibility has a meaning and has a connection with your soul. So if you undertake any responsibility as a part of the discovery of the soul, as a discovery of God's will then every activity that you do in discharge of responsibilities will give you an inner quietude. So from action you go to quietude. The other is, from quietude you go to action. You must find some time everyday, when you are really by yourself after the discharge of all your responsibilities, when you can really go within yourself. Now when you go within yourself, as you say many ideas come, many emotions come and then is the whole scenario of life before you, which becomes more visible, even more active, exactly when you are trying to withdraw yourself from it. Then you discover which is the most dominant at that given moment, out of all the scenarios that are presented. In that dominant domain you will find one of the three problems or all the three of them.

One is the need of clarity of thought with regard to some problem or the other. The second problem that you will find is a certain weakness of emotion which needs to be corrected. The third problem you will find is some kind of imperfection in the discharge of some responsibilities. These are the three deficiencies that you will discover in regard to a dominant domain that is uppermost at that given moment.

Now if it is a question of clarity of thought, whatever thought is present in your mind at present which is guiding you in action, you can present it to a higher light in you and allow the higher light to radiate itself without your bringing up any thought. Either the thought becomes clearer at that time or in due course of time that deficiency of thought, unclarity of thought will become clearer. This is the method of throwing light from above. If there is a deficiency of emotion, then in intensifying the inner sense of sympathy with everybody, look at the whole world with sympathetic eyes. This is one of the Vedic methods, to develop the eyes of a friend and look at the whole world with friendly eyes and when you look at the world with friendly eyes our deficiencies of emotions begin to become strengthened and we come out much more purified. If there is a deficiency in activities, then you need to have a programme of chiselling. We know that when a diamond is cut and chiselled it becomes very bright. Now chiselling is often done by will, but before doing, there must be a will to do it. So when you are alone in a state of looking at yourself you take a resolution that this is the point which requires chiselling and you will do it while performing the action.

So this is the threefold method: to place your obscurity of thought under a light, to look at the whole world with friendly eyes, and the resolution to chisel your activities or capacities of action. Normally these processes in regard to each one requires at least several repetitions. So one is to be patient, but you will see that as you begin to grow and develop, an inner mastery will begin to awaken. In fact these three processes are the processes of three yogas. The first is *Jnana yoga*, the second is *Bhakti yoga* and the third is *Karma yoga*. But these three processes are the basic processes : to put an obscurity in the search light of a higher luminosity, to put every emotion under the x-ray of the friendly eyes and put every deficiency of action under the hammer of chiselling action — these three processes — and you repeat them again and again

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

and again and again and again. In fact these three processes are the best methods of entering into the process of triple transformation. All right? You have another question?

Question: What is to be done to bring about the purification of a psychic change? There are so many forces acting upon it that it does not come out so pure by the time it reaches the surface?

I think what you need to do is to take off one or two days, but exclusively. I do not know whether you have the chance of doing it or not but take off one or two days, walk in a beautiful garden, very slowly and leisurely, on and on, and on and on, and on, without any anxiety of what is to be done, what is not to be done; or if you have still anxiety, first finish whatever you are anxious about and then go for this walk so that nothing is calling you back, you are really in a state of complete leisure and then imagine that you are walking into a cave where there is nothing to be afraid about, it is a safe cave but it is a cave. Continue this until you are tired and you want to rest, sit on a bench or wherever, if you are hungry take your food if you have got it with you. If you feel like lying down, do so; when you are rested, again repeat the same exercise. After some time you will really feel extremely light, then you sit down very quietly and in that state, concentrate upon the heart, on the solar plexus and imagine that you are walking into a cave, there you were actually walking, now here you are entering into a cave, and on, and on, and on remembering that your psychic being is not merely one inch deep but fathoms deep, it is very very far in the depths and as you will go on moving towards these depths you will feel the touch, a vibration of sweetness or a vibration of happiness if not sweetness; or you will hear something very deep coming from within you, it may not be a sound but you will have something prompting you, sometimes it comes in the form of a command which opens up the path of the next stage of your development; or else you will feel a presence, a great presence, effortlessly without imagining and in that presence you seem to be a small little figure in the background of a huge presence, a sense of devotion, or surrender will automatically surge up in that situation; and thirdly you will feel as if the knots of the mind are loosened. Various emotions are purified. Even the body feels some thrill or also purified. This is the condition in which the purity of the soul comes straight on the surface without obstruction. If you repeat this even over a month you will see how much exalted you will be, all right?

Question: When we are all the time protecting ourself from others — how do we feel goodwill towards friends, neighbours, enemies?

Goodwill is one of the most difficult things in the world, and true harmony is established when there is goodwill from your side and also goodwill from outside and while you can have goodwill from your side because you are yourself trying to do it, to get it from outside is very difficult. This is where you find the need to protect yourself because when there is not sufficient goodwill from outside and there is an attack from outside, then you need to protect yourself against the attack. So there is nothing wrong in trying to protect yourself, but in the process of protecting yourself there is a need to learn how to truly protect ourselves. We normally protect ourselves by the means with which we are familiar normally. We normally protect ourselves by three methods; one is by withdrawing and entering into our shell, so our shell becomes a protective shield. The second way by which we protect ourselves is to strengthen our capacity against the attack; and the third method by which we protect ourselves is by fighting against the attack. Now all of the three methods are legitimate, to fight against the attack is legitimate, to strengthen yourself to be able to protect yourself is legitimate, to withdraw into your own shell and to create a shield around you is also legitimate. You can follow anyone of them, any two of them or all the three of them, depending upon circumstances, but these are ordinary methods, and we can make use of them in our process of ascent but we have to remember that these processes are provisional until we get higher methods of doing this. Now what are the higher methods?

The higher methods again are three. The one is to concentrate upon your basic aim of life and to meet the difficulties of the moment by remembering your basic aim of life and asking yourself whether the given problem before you is worth attending to, in the context of your aim of life, or if it is, in what way it is going to promote your aim of life; or to make that incident or whatever is to be done as a part of the discovery of the aim of life or manifestation of the aim of life. This is one method.

The second method is to understand the Divine's will in the situation in which you are placed. In every situation there is an embedded part, and in every situation God wants to convey a message to all of us, every one of us. God is a constant teacher and He constantly wants us to

understand the language of the situation. And therefore we have to be very careful to understand. It is like you know, trying to listen to a whisper, how attentive you need to be. So think that God is whispering and you have to strain very hard and to be absolutely quiet to listen to the whisper of God. He wants to tell you something through the situation in which you are but be very quiet, do not imagine that this is what God wants to tell you because very often we become self-critical and we begin to feel that I must be at fault and therefore I am to be blamed. This is the normal way in which very good people try to understand or listen to the voice of God. But do not do that kind of exercise, be very quiet neither justifying nor opposing, treat yourself as a very small child and a child should not normally be rebuked, should not normally be scolded. So think that you are a very small child and you are exactly before God who is trying to whisper into you, to tell you something. Repeat this kind of state, frequently, whenever you have a problem. Even if you do not understand the whisper of God, in due course you will be able to understand the hand of God. In fact to understand the hand of God in the events around you is one of the disciplines of yoga because in every movement God is evolving, He is moving, He is living, He is projecting Himself in His manifestation, and in this movement of God, He wants you to be accompanying him. So think that you as a small child are holding the finger of God and He is taking you forward and while He is taking you forward, He is whispering into your ears and in that state, you walk. So before you even understand the whisper, walking you have got to do. So walk as you are walking, neither justifying yourself nor criticising yourself. Walk simply. A moment will come when this message will reach you, this is the second method.

The third method is that in spite of anything or everything, you spread the wings of goodwill without criticising anybody or yourself, without finding fault with anybody or with yourself. Just say that whatever is happening, from my side it is the highest goodwill, irrespective of anything that is happening. If you employ all the three methods together, each one will contribute to the right situation because each method has certain difficulties. But if you combine these three methods then over a certain time you will find yourself automatically in a state of goodwill, which is not merely a goodwill that is defensive, not a goodwill which is passive in receiving the blows, but it will be a goodwill in which there is a sweetness which cannot be extinguished and yet which gives you the real strength to fight when necessary, to love when necessary and to spread more and more, the will of God in the world. These three things will happen. All right?

Question: But fighting brings disharmony. One would rather remain passive than fight.

Fighting is not necessarily opposed to goodwill. A child is in your hand whom you want to protect. A huge bird falls upon you, it wants to take away the child from you. What do you do? You have the highest goodwill for the child, you have the highest goodwill for the bird also. You have to explain to the bird that it is a wrong thing to attack the child. How will you explain to the bird? The bird does not understand, he understands only one language, the blow. So you give a blow to the bird, this is goodwill. You are making it understand because that is the language it understands. When *Sri Krishna* asked *Arjuna* to fight in the battle, it was very clear that the battle was for destruction, and destruction not merely of ordinary objects of the world but destruction of people who were preceptors, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, men for whom *Arjuna* would like to give up his life. But they were all bent on destroying the future. The future was like a small child in the hands of *Arjuna* and all these were like the bird who were trying to attack the child and to destroy the child. Therefore with utmost goodwill for the child, for the future, this is what *Sri Krishna* did in his *Vishvarup Darshan*, when *Sri Krishna* showed in the time vision how the huge flood of time was carrying all kinds of forces. When *Arjuna* was shown that future then he realised the significance of the battle. So fighting is not necessarily a sign of ill will and *Sri Krishna* told *Arjuna*, "fight and kill them but without any anger, without any rancour and with a complete sense of equanimity". But fight was necessary because the people who wanted to destroy the future were not open to any other method. Therefore that method was employed and had to be employed. So fight is not necessarily a sign of ill-will. The utmost goodwill would prompt you to fight and fighting therefore is an important part of the expression of goodwill, provided we do it in the right consciousness, but by employing all the three methods that I have explained. All right?

Question: Can I ask you a question?

Yes, of course.

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

Question: The foundation for a good life is fame and fortune and wealth. Is this contradictory to spiritual realisation? Would it impede or hinder spiritual progress?

Fundamentally life should be prosperous. Fundamentally, all life should be prosperous. The sign of poverty whether in one's inner life or outer life is an indication that what is to be manifested has yet not manifested. This world is a garden of God. This world is therefore a garden of plenty and if things are done in the right way, then all that is needed at the right moment will automatically flow. This is the ideal condition. But to reach that ideal condition you have to have the right attitude. In the right attitude, two things are to be developed. You need the capacity to bear any kind of condition of life in which you are put now. If it is poverty; you are able to bear it. Not that it should be continued. Bearing does not mean that you are sanctioning continuance of poverty. But you should have the capacity to bear it. You should not be grudging, complaining, feeling helpless. Poverty can be suffered bravely, rightly, heroically, this is the first condition. The second condition is that you have to work very hard to remove poverty and you have to find out the right means of removing poverty. There are many wrong means also of removing poverty, but there are also right means of removing poverty. What are the right means? The first mean is: utilisation of your present resources by circulating them. This circulation is a very important method. When resources are circulated, then there is a movement of increase. Circulation is the secret of increase of wealth. Now circulation is sometimes done with a greed, to receive returns in a big manner and this is a fault. Circulate your resources in such a way that the increase is normally at the rate of 10 %. This will curb all the unnecessary greeds. Your legitimate portion in any increase of wealth is 10 %, so circulate with this particular attitude.

The third thing is the expenditure. While you turn your resources and increase your resources the expenditure has to combine two principles: of generosity and of economy. These are two normally contradictory movements but both of them have truths. Economy tends to conserve, generosity tends to expand and both are good things. Be generous in every thing that you do but at the same time be extremely economical. This requires right judgement. How to spend? With what attitude to spend? The criterion is that at no stage should you feel poverty of spirit. The moment you begin to feel a poverty of spirit then even if you have lakhs to give, you are poor. So you have to measure everything with this inner criterion: in my economising or in my spending, am I afflicted with a sense of poverty? The more you feel a sense of poverty the more you are in the wrong. This means that you are not able to know how to spend, you have not learned the art of it. Somewhere you are giving too much where you should not be and somewhere you are too greedy where you ought not to be. When the two things are really reconciled then you will not have the sense of poverty. God likes every child in this world — all of us are children — to live as princes and princesses. This is God's intention and therefore we must live with that spirit. As Sri Aurobindo says: "Even in rags I am God, fallen I am Divine". This is the sense in which we must live all the time. All right? Do you have another question?

Question: There are people who are illiterate. How do they progress spiritually? Is it through Bhakti or pilgrimages?

Of course there is some connection between literacy and knowledge, some connection, not an entire connection. Literacy is a great help and for higher realms of knowledge, literacy is very important. If a child refuses to learn the alphabet, you have no right to enforce upon the child; but you have a duty to explain that he is free to remain illiterate if he wants to but he should not imagine that he will become a genius, of a Supramental kind. If you really want true perfection then learning, studying, even through literacy is very important. But to believe that only through literacy you can do it or that because you become literate you will also become a Supramental genius, that also is not true. There are people who are illiterate and yet become great masters in regard to many things. *Sri Ramakrishna* for example without knowing much of reading and writing, could become one of the greatest teachers of the world. *Akbar* without too much knowledge of reading or writing was one of the greatest emperors in the history of the world. And you know in India for example, millions of illiterates are closer to God than many learned people on the other hand. This also is a fact. *Bhakti* is not the Years ago I was meditating in a field in Nilokheri in Punjab. When I opened my eyes after my meditation I saw a farmer sitting near me and he smiled and said, "I was sitting near you because I have a problem". As I was in a hurry to go back to my work I said: "If you do not mind can you walk with me?" So he walked with me. And I said, "What is your problem?" He said, "I have been trying for years and years to

avoid jealousy but I am still not free from it, so please tell me how to master jealousy". Now this was the question of this illiterate farmer and I was so touched by him. Of course I talked a lot to him. But this is only to illustrate that an illiterate man was so educated, perhaps he was more educated than many of us who do not regard this as a problem at all. We take jealousy as a part of our human nature, we do not try to deal with it but this man said "I was trying for years and years." and the problem must have been so acute that he sat down there, waited for I do not know how long, and when he and I got up he simply put this question to me. These are the peasants of India, and there are many examples of this kind that one comes across in India.

Question: And what was your answer? We all need it! All of us.

Later on, this was the question, I'll come to it later. But illiterates can approach by *shruti*, so knowledge is open to them, they can approach through *Karmayoga*, action, like *Akbar*, they can approach through *Bhakti* also; all the three can be combined even for the illiterates and anybody who is prepared to do these three can also be induced to be literate in due course and open the other paths of knowledge which are available, that also can happen. Our approach has to be integral, therefore all methods have to be employed. Another question?

Question: What was your answer to the farmer regarding the cure of jealousy in our being?

It is one of the most difficult things in the world because the root of jealousy is the sense of being imprisoned in a very small circle. You may have a huge palace to live in physically, but mentally we normally live in small prisons, very small prisons, so small that we feel as if we are in a big crowd in a very narrow street, something like Bhuleshwar in Bombay, a small area and such a huge crowd of people and you do not know how to put one step forward. You are all the time elbowing out everybody else. This elbowing out forces you to be jealous. It is an experience that you are in a very very narrow place and you have to move forward and for moving forward you have to elbow out other people. Now if you remember this, then jealousy can be loosened. First we have to remember that we are not obliged to be in this narrow street. We may find ourselves in a narrow street but first remember that you are not obliged to be in that narrow street. Secondly even if you are in the narrow street, elbowing out others is not the only method of finding your way for moving forward. As Mother once said: "The world is very vast and everyone has a place in it", and everyone has a wide space in this world, because the world is really very vast. So we have to remember that the world is really vast in which everyone has a place and this effort of elbowing out others is not necessary at all.

Question: But of course suppose it is the other way round, somebody else wants to elbow you out, how do you protect yourself?

Same way, you feel that you are being elbowed out because you are living in a small world. If you know there is a vast world and you have a vast place in it, you will try to find your real place. Why have you been elbowed out? You are not at the right place where you are. If you are really at the right place you won't find somebody elbowing you out. So the important point is that wherever we are, even though at the time when you are being elbowed out, and you are trying to do something in self defence it, you can go to those three methods which I spoke about, but only provisionally. Gradually you must enter into the vast world. Remember that you are a member of a vast world and you have a place in that vast world and your present problems are because you have chosen to live in a narrow world. Your choice is not correct. So try to become a member of that vast world, then you will not need either to be elbowed out by others or to elbow out others.

Question: Whatever we feel, right or wrong in others, is it only a reflection of our own feelings?

No, your feeling of right or wrong is provisional, both are right and both are wrong. In being elbowed out both are right and both are wrong. In elbowing others out both are right and both are wrong, because all of us are citizens of this narrow world which is itself wrong, but having been in the narrow world you are trying to find out something. So as long as you have not found out the right means, people are elbowing out each other. So it is a situation of compression. People will always try to find some means of elbowing each other out and as long as they are doing it you cannot judge it as wrong or right because the situation is wrong. So the only method is that while you do all that provisionally, whatever you do, at the same time, correct yourself and try to be in a vaster world. That is the real method of coming out of jealousy. Jealousy is always a result of living in a narrower world than you are legitimately entitled to. You

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

have chosen a narrow world somehow, even without knowing, but you are entitled to a wider world.

Question: Never thought of the world as such. It really feels so nice, now.

Yes! You are entitled to a wider world, so discover that wider world of which you are a member and occupy that place and then there is no need of jealousy. As Vivekananda said he was born without jealousy. He had no jealousy throughout his life at all. By birth he was free from jealousy, he was born in a wide world. So we should have that kind of life, like Vivekananda, living in a wide world all the time.

Question: Uncle, we are human and very sensitive about small things and expectations arise in our mind. We know it is wrong to expect, but how do we protect ourselves from these things? We live in an environment where there is a constant give and take. How do we rise above all things?

Your question is a most difficult question because it relates to an assumption that even when you know that you want to go out, you are where you are and you want to face the problem as it is, and that is the difficulty. As long as you want to remain what you are and yet you want to solve the problem, that is difficult. Expect everything from God. You have a legitimate right to expect everything from God.

Question: I hear all these things and decide to change myself. But when the situation arises, I expect and when the expectations are not met, I get irritated. Afterwards, I realize, I really did not want to do it that way.

You know, of all small things of which you are speaking, there is one very strong remedy: just kick them. This is what Sri Aurobindo wrote in one of his letters, just kick them because to justify, not to justify that itself is useless, meaningless. These small things should have no place at all, just kick them when they come or if they have occurred then just kick them, even in thought, saying that "this should not happen at all" and I am not going to justify it nor defend it nor in anyway support it. It is just to be kicked away. And once you have done it twice, thrice, four times, they won't repeat. But they require a real kick, just kick them away.

Question: When you try to go within yourself, first all the problems come in the mind. Then a stage comes when you are really peaceful. Then suddenly why do you become very conscious of yourself again, fidgety etc?

Yes, because it means there is a resistance in your system or there is a certain limit of your ability to receive. If not resistance, it is a limitation to receive. That can be overcome only by repeated exercises of this kind. But always be very charitable to yourself.

Question: This exercise of walking in a garden, imagining that you are walking in a cave. Is this a kind of an escape or by repeatedly doing it, does it become a part of you?

It is not an escape. That is why I said that whatever you want to do please first do everything so that you are not anxious about anything. Find at least a day or so in a month when you have really done everything that you ought to have done. Organise your life in such a way that you really find that everything that is demanded of you, you have done, so you are not escaping from anything. You should not be haunted by this idea that you are escaping from something. It is to find time to be with yourself and with God which is the most important meeting in our life. All other meetings, all other activities are of lesser importance. This is the most important meeting. So for that you must organise your life in such a way that you find time for it. So finish everything that you want to do, just as when you have to go for a dinner-party you finish everything so that you can really have a good party. Similarly you organise your life in such a way that you are just going to be with yourself and with God. Then there is no sense of escape and if you repeat it, then you will find the deeper experiences of this leisureliness. Actually garden I spoke of because all the trees, plants, flowers. Mother said are constantly in a state of prayer.

You may not know, they may not know. Plants are not conscious but they are constantly in a state of prayer. This is a natural grace on them. Actually you might say that the plants, flowers, trees are constantly in a state of prayer. It is like a small child, you know if you tell a small child "Pray to God" and he takes it very seriously; more seriously than you or anybody else and he

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

really goes on praying, similarly these plants have been told to pray and they have taken this kind of a command and they are constantly doing it and there is no respite from it. It is not as if one day they will stop, this is the only natural breathing of the plants. So if you are in company of plants and trees and flowers then you have the best company of constant prayers and sincere prayers, unartificial prayers which are constantly rising upwards to the Divine, therefore I spoke of walking in the garden.

Question: When we are in God's company, we do not want to come back to the everyday world. But I have so many responsibilities that I feel they are holding me back.

It is a very sweet situation. It is a very sweet situation because to be with God is the greatest delight. Ideally speaking when you go to responsibilities the same delight should accompany you, ideally speaking. But at the present moment we are not in that situation, there is a bifurcation. I go quietly to God and I meet him sweetly and I enjoy his company, but then the responsibilities do not allow me the same sweetness of the company of God. During that period, return to responsibilities even if you do not like to return, because that is also a part of the totality of perfection. But this is only a provisional answer, an ordinary answer.

There are intensities and intensities. There are some intensities like when *Mirabai* entered into the company of *Sri Krishna* and to tell *Mirabai* that she should be discharging the responsibilities of the queen of the kingdom had no relevance to her. She had reached an intensity of such a nature that this kind of attitude that I have just now advocated would not be relevant. In the stage that you are in now, these two activities can be combined only in this fashion; that is break with that sweetness and come back to responsibilities and then continue like that. But if you have reached a certain state of intensity at a given time then my proposition may not hold good. There are certain intensities which need to be intensified further even at the cost of responsibilities, so called responsibilities. But whether it is right or wrong you will know in that state of intensity, so I will not make a rule saying that that alone is the right attitude or this alone is the right attitude. In any case one thing is very clear that in a true state of intensity, if you pray to God, "Please keep me always with you and put me always at the right place," then he will take the responsibilities, if it is necessary for you. If it is necessary He will carry out for you all your responsibilities, like the example of the saint *Sakhu Bai*. You know *Sakhu Bai* was a great saint in Maharashtra. She used to be in a state of prayer to *Sri Krishna* so much and she was a house wife. She had to do all the work of cooking, sweeping, everything and she had a very severe mother-in-law watching over her all the time and she used to go out for fetching water and there she used to fall into ecstasy, but *Sri Krishna* Himself used to take the form of *Sakhu Bai* and sweep and do everything for her so that she was not put into any trouble at all. So in that state of intensity God takes the responsibilities of your life and He does everything for you. So that also is a part of the truth of the totality but for that you have to reach that intensity. So what I said is not true of a stage where you have reached that state of intensity. A stage is reached where you do not decide at all whether you should do this or you should not do this. He will decide for you so that no responsibility falls upon you whether you decided rightly or wrongly. You will do what He wants you to do. But until you reach that point, cutting off from one state to the other is quite healthy and salutary. All right?

Question: That means that that state of intensity can be maintained and you do not have to go back to the lower stage of responsibilities?

It is not a lower state. It can be even better.

Question: But can it be maintained?

It can be, it can be. Your intensity of devotion to God can remain exactly the same even while doing all kinds of activities. That is the perfection that we are looking for where knowledge and action and devotion are so synthesised that there are no artificial divisions at all.

Question: You have this feeling for God or Truth or Beauty or Goodness — but afterwards it goes away and then you have your ordinary activities. But then it is as if it is not constant.

So allow this kind of a thing and without feeling any disappointment about it, because the deeper states cannot last long at our stage of development. So alternating between sunshine and shadow is quite all right for our development. In any case do not artificially remain, even when that intensity has gone, in the hope that it will come again, immediately, therefore

THE LIFE DIVINE — The Triple Transformation

continuing in that. Sometimes it can be done but very often do not try that way. If the intensity has gone away, allow it to pass away, do your ordinary activities. Then in your inner life you develop intensity in such a way that at will whenever you want, that intensity will come, not by pulling it, not by artificially creating it, but whenever you want a certain state of consciousness it will come by will. So allow that kind of thing to happen instead of feeling that now you are going up and going down and so on. These divisions will remain until we arrive at a great harmony.

Question: But this makes you more sensitive, more emotional and more prompt to get hurt. If you have to vacillate between...

No. Why do you get hurt? That is the important question, I do not understand. You have become sensitive because of intensity and now you come back from that state of intensity in a situation.

Question: But you get more subtle vibrations, you are able to take them in.

Yes you have become more tender you might say as a result of your intensity and therefore anything that happens in the outside world affects you very intensely.

Question: So how do you cope with that? Do you not carry the power and strength that that intensity has provided you with?

You can but if you have not, then this question does arise and we have to find a remedy for it. Do not allow tenderness to be lost, that is the first thing. It is very precious but there should be developed simultaneously a strength without losing tenderness. Actually ideally speaking, one has to become softer than the petals of the flower and harder than steel, the two things when combined together gives you the right condition of your consciousness. There are people who work very hard, they fight a big battle for the truth, courageously; for them to come in a state of tenderness is very difficult; they are fighting a hard fight, courageous fight accepting all kinds of difficulties, surmounting difficulties and in that state to enter into intensity of sensitivity, tenderness, sweetness, is very difficult. That is deficiency from the other side. But both the things have to be developed. In fact in our process of integral yoga we have to burn the candles on both the ends, the development of intensity of emotions and to divinise it and the intensity of hardest work requiring greatest courage, and strength, hardyhood, both have to be developed. If you can keep a balance between the two, very good. But very often you are not able to do so, so what is predominant in you, allow it to happen; suffer the other deficiencies. Whatever deficiencies you find, endure them for the time being provisionally. Gradually by the movement of the two wheels of the chariot you will arrive at a good balance ultimately. This is the problem of transition. In the transition you cannot have a satisfactory solution, you have got to accept a kind of a provisional situation and provisional solutions are always unsatisfactory one way or the other. So accept the position that this is a provisional situation and gradually you will grow. So for the moment you suffer whatever deficiency exists. All right?

Question: What shall be the topic of your talk from next time?

First of all I might say that I am so happy today with all the questions which are so important and the sincerity behind the questions and the purity. It's so good, I feel very happy. There is much still to be studied. If you like we can go to the next chapter: The Ascent to the Supermind. This chapter you have done quite well and even when we go to the next chapter we shall have the chance of referring back again to this chapter. But it will be good to ascend now to the next one. If you like next time we can study that chapter. All right?

Question: Can we be greedy and ask Him to be with us all the time?

Why not? Why not? To be greedy of God is the greatest benefit. We should be very greedy of God because that is gateway of greatest liberation. If that happens it will be wonderful, it will be very nice. Then that is the problem that she was speaking of, you feel great intensities within, she also spoke of it and how to come out of it, that is a very sweet problem. So facing sweet problems is always sweet, that is very good indeed. Then He will do it, He will find a solution for that problem. But let us come to the point where you do not really feel like coming out of that situation. That is a good sign when you really have progressed, you will really find that you do not want to come out of that stage. It is a criterion that you have made a good progress. All right?