

## Significance of Sri Aurobindo's Gnostic Being and Divine Life for Mankind

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**Abstract:** *Sri Aurobindo's philosophy gives equal importance to matter and spirit. He claims that spirit can rise to matter and matter to spirit. Based on this claim, he has described evolution and involution. Humans or living beings or material things of the world can attain Sachchidananda by breaking the veil of ignorance. The path he has created for Jivakula from ordinary to extraordinary is truly novel. This is why he talks about Psychic Transformation, Spiritual Transformation and Supramental Transformation. At the higher level of evolution, the special characteristics of human desire, avoidance and surrender are added, and at this stage, human beings live in the world unconditionally. Such people are known in Aurobindo's philosophy as Gnostic Beings. The life of a Gnostic Being is not like the life of an ordinary person. This life is divine life. Divine life is the discovery of an integral life in this world. This life is full of infinite consciousness and immense joy. This life will bring great joy to the soul and will lead to great Sachchidananda. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, the concept of Gnostic Being and Divine Life is needed at every level in our society, because all these people teach the society to live a pure and normal life from among the people in order to prevent social degradation, extinction of morality.*

**Keywords:** Divine Life, Evolution, Gnostic Being, Involution, Psychic Transformation, Spiritual Transformation, Supramental Transformation, Superman

### Introduction

Sri Aurobindo is one of the pioneers of contemporary Indian philosophy. His transformation from a freedom fighter revolutionary to a saintly life is the feeling or experience that defines his life style. Although he was called a philosopher, he refused to accept himself as a philosopher. His famous books are: The Life Divine, The Secret of the Veda, Selected Hymns, Hymns of the Aris, The Synthesis of Yoga etc. "The progress of human society concerned Sri Aurobindo as it concerned seers and thinkers across ages, including Socrates and Plato, Kautilya, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. To use the language of political science, Sri Aurobindo was concerned with the question—can the human individual rise above Hobbesian human nature? How can he rise? What are the challenges and prospects? His endeavor, as reflected in his writings, was directed to address these questions. With a fervent hope and eternal optimism, Sri Aurobindo argued that such a transformation of human society is possible. However, this will only come to fruition through inner engineering, not purely by external mechanisms. His is a call to look out from within, rather than to look in from without."<sup>1</sup>

A significant aspect of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is to link evolution with involution. "There are not a few who rank Aurobindo among the outstanding figures of the modern world. He has been compared with Bergson, with Hegel, and with Bradley. Among his fellow countrymen, he is consistently classed with Radhakrishnan as a philosopher, with Tagore and Gandhi as a leader of modern India, and with Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana Maharshi as a yogi and a saint."<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo gave equal importance to both matter and spirit. Materialists consider matter to be the ultimate while existentialists consider being or spirit to be the ultimate. But none of these are extreme in Aurobindo's philosophy, because he believes that spirit is just as important as matter in this world. In his philosophy, ascent without descent and evolution without involution are beyond thought. So, he explained how the transition of everything in the world takes place, that is – matter → life → psyche → mind → supermind → bliss → consciousness force → existence. Similarly, the stages of involution are reverse existence → consciousness force-bliss → supermind → mind → psyche → life → matter. Evolution means the entire worldly existence, namely; Transformation of material, mental and animal existence. Three phases of this transformation are: 1. Psychic Transformation, 2. Spiritual Transformation, 3. Supramental Transformation.

**1. Psychic Transformation:** The first phase of transformation is psychic transformation. In Lights of Yoga, Aurobindo says that there are two parts to the human being - a higher one which can be called Jivatman. He is the Supreme Being who governs the personal life even above the personal life. The lower being is Chaitya

Purusha. He is the inner being of the living being. Employed by this Purusha Jivatma gives power and strength to the manifested or manifested individual life. In the book Life Divine, Aurobindo describes this Chaitya Purusha as the hidden witness, niyanta, antaryami, impervious to death, decay or disorder even in the flow of birth and death. That is, Chaitya Purusha is the imperishable being who leads life by accepting mind, soul and body as Sadhana. But He himself is not changed by the action of these three theories. Sri Aurobindo admits that such a process of transformation usually takes place very slowly. Its early manifestations are weak and indistinct. Therefore, a discipline is needed to facilitate its manifestation so that the Chaiti entity can be transmitted to the body, mind and soul with greater purity, power and clarity. Sri Aurobindo spoke of this transformation in his Yoga. By this transformation he means self-awakening and the connection of body, soul and mind with that awakened soul.

**2. Spiritual Transformation:** Psychic transformation is not enough to bring about a change in the way the soul functions. In psychic transformation, the body, soul and mind are purified, the soul advances on the path of spirituality. So, it can be said that Chaiti entity is higher world oriented. This is spiritual transformation. Sri Aurobindo believed that the soul, when awakened, can control the mind and soul and must try to bring about a spiritual change in conscious life. Such spiritual consciousness transcends all dualities which lead to the realization of the One.

**3. Supramental Transformation:** Spiritual transformation leads the soul to the realization of spiritual unity."A spiritual consciousness becomes unconscious and the soul collapses completely, the wants and needs of the body are silenced, the soul itself is plunged into spiritual silence."But this transformation does not give us complete transformation; in place of Chaitya transformation comes a higher spiritual transformation, but not full divine power."Hence Supramental transformation is necessary. Sri Aurobindo said that psychic transformation and spiritual transformation lift man to a higher consciousness. But if we confine the soul to these two transformations only, unity will remain to us only as an aspiration, unity will not be realized, and like all other aspirations it will become dim and obscure. This is also the case with all intuitive experiences. So understanding of the objective is necessary. This realization requires the descent of higher consciousness. Prakriti is looking forward to evolution by noticing that Sachaitanya i.e. Supramental Prakriti descends into Prakriti and enables the Supramental Tattva inherent in Prakriti to be liberated. According to Sri Aurobindo, Supramental transformation is possible only through this descent. According to Sri Aurobindo, Supramental transformation is possible only through this descent. Just as psychic transformation is accomplished through spiritual transformation and so spiritual transformation is accomplished through Supramental transformation. Only through such intervention of the Supramental Consciousness can ultimate transformation take place. This transformation will bring within us an awareness of spirituality and infinity, and will radically transform our entire earthly being. The superman existing in the body, soul and mind will bring about a complete change in the earthly, organic and mental form. People will no longer be guided by ignorance; they will be guided by knowledge. They will become Gnostic beings and attain divine life.

### Nature of the Gnostic Being

When Superman descends, the physical, mental, and animal entities undergo a radical transformation. But the process of evolution does not necessarily stop at the discovery of the superman. Above the supermind are Ananda, Chit Shakti, Shuddsattva - these Tattvas. But when the superman is discovered, there is an important change in the character of evolution, as already stated. The next evolution is Vidya instead of Avidya. As a result, man becomes Gnostic Being. Such a man is he who has shed all the veils of ignorance and shines in the light of knowledge. It must be remembered, first of all: Not all people will become Gnostic Beings after the discovery of Super Man. Only those who have love, abstinence and surrender will have the possibility of this transition. Second: The nature of Gnostic Being is inexpressible in language, because the gap between mind and supermind is wide. And what is mind, only that is worthy of language.

Aurobindo says that this descent of the supermind will affect every phase of evolution. That is, the lower levels of evolution, latent in the truth, will be awakened and strengthened by the descent of the Supermind. As a result, conflict and harmony will become the main theory of life obsessed with ignorance. The question will be whether the Superman or the Gnostic Being will be the same? Sri Aurobindo says that not every Superman and Gnostic Being will be the same, because Superman's rule is unity accomplished in diversity.

As a result, scientific consciousness will be manifested in various forms. Aurobindo also said, this man of science can be said to be the best expression of Chitpurusha. This man's entire being will be governed by universal spiritual consciousness. "The Gnostic Individual lives through effectuating the Highest Divine Law of nature—in Absolute freedom determined by its imperative commands. There is freedom from all lower dharmas, all constructed truths of mind as in the command of the Gita 'Abandon all dharmas, all standards of rules of being and action, and take refuge in Me alone'" (Sri Aurobindo 2005, p. 1038). The Gnostic being is a free and blissful instrument of the Lord through whom He does his wondrous works in the world. In the Gnostic Being, the play of Purusha and Prakriti is not no longer in conflict or unbalanced—the soul and nature are ever intertwined in mutual play in the deepest Delight."<sup>3</sup>

Superman has the power to transform sorrow into joy at the supermind level, so it is not impossible for all their sorrows to be transformed into expressions of joy. "The Gnostic being has the will of action but also the knowledge of what is to be willed and the power to effectuate its knowledge; it will not be led from ignorance to do what is not be done. Moreover, its action is not the seeking for a fruit or result; its joys are in being and doing, in pure state of spirit, in pure act of spirit, in the pure bliss of spirit."<sup>4</sup> He will regard all beings in the world as His own and all manifestations of consciousness as manifestations of His consciousness. He will remain in the world but his consciousness will transcend the world. In this context Sri Aurobindo has shown how a superman engages in action? Superman would have no purpose but status, consciousness would have no goal but to be consciousness, joy would have no goal but to be joy. So, Superman will have no desire or desire to get anything.

### The Concept of Divine Life

It is not the goal of man to remain forever bound in the present life. His goal is to transcend the present life and reach a better life and that life is the Divine Life. Here Aurobindo seeks spiritual divine life from the closed state of Jiva or man. In this part, we will show how important the divine life is in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and how we can go from ordinary life to extraordinary life.

Divine life is the revelation of a full life to mortals. This life is not one of isolation but a life of unity and harmony. This life is not controlled by any mental or natural forces but by super-consciousness. In this way nature is transformed into divine nature and the individual human being through Supramental consciousness in three ways. And life becomes supremely conscious and joyful. He describes this life thus; the life of the Gnostic Being which carries the evolution to the higher Supramental level can be called the divine life, because this life is the heavenly life. "In the Gnostic being or divine being in the Gnostic life, there will be a close and complete consciousness of the self of others, a consciousness of their mind, life, physical being which are felt as if they were one's own. The Gnostic being will act, not out of a surface sentiment of love and sympathy or any similar feeling, but out of this close mutual consciousness, this intimate oneness...he lives in and for the Divine on himself, in and for the Divine in the collectivity, in and for the Divine in all beings."<sup>5</sup> It is in this life that material nature begins to manifest in spiritual light, power and joy. As this life transcends the mental level of man it can be described as spiritual and Supermanhood. God-humanity develops in the new consciousness and in this new consciousness humanity attains self-realization.

Divine life is full of infinite consciousness and bliss. This life will enliven the soul and give it immense Sachchidananda which we as mental beings cannot even imagine. According to Sri Aurobindo this fullness of life will be the goal of our development. This divine life is our ultimate destiny. But the question is how we can bring it to death? In reply Sri Aurobindo said that the descent into the divine life can be hastened by spiritual activities. And the only way to speed it up is yoga. He says yoga does not lead us to supernatural beings. Yoga brings about a complete change in our physical, biological and mental processes. Yoga is the dual journey of transition and descent. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is called Integral Yoga, because Yoga is the union with the Divine Being, whether this union is transcendental or cosmic or personal or a combination of these three. He also defined yoga as internal yoga. Yoga does not mean discrimination; the goal of yoga is to spiritualize even the immaterial. "His yoga is key to unraveling the secret of his philosophy. Unlike the Mayavadins of Vedanta, who would prefer to term the world and worldly experiences 'illusion'; Sri Aurobindo would affirm the reality of this world and argue that in this world a spiritual life must flourish. In this sense, Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy is a practical philosophy that does not escape the world or worldly problems. Sri Aurobindo affirmed the reality of this world and entitled one of his major works, The

Life Divine (CWSA 2005, vols. 21 and 22). In his scheme of Integral Yoga, which encompasses all aspects of life, the goal is to divinize life in this very world. His famous aphorism "All Life Is Yoga" alludes to his integral perspective on life."<sup>6</sup>

### The necessity of Gnostic Being and Divine Life

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a milestone in contemporary Indian philosophy. A good understanding of his philosophy shows that he wanted to develop the ancient traditions of Indian philosophy in his own way. Here he wants to evolve from ordinary people to extraordinary people and avoid human suffering. From this world to that world where "Sarvam Dukham Dukham" is echoed, he has beautifully illustrated how people can avoid suffering eternally without knowledge. It is distinguished his philosophy from others by giving equal importance to matter and consciousness. He claimed that his philosophy was not imperfect, but that he disliked partial things. Hence his philosophy is called Purnadvaita. This is probably why we hear him say it somewhere in Akhanda or Purnayoga. The most important thing that emerges from his philosophy is the outline and thorough explanation of Gnostic Being and Divine Life. Sri Aurobindo in the Divine Life has shown that there is a complete life within the mortal man, this life is not limited consciousness, this life is not based on external conditions like our ordinary life, and this life is the fulfillment of the human heart.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that all superman or Gnostic beings can be considered as Jivanmukta but not all Jivanmukta can be considered as Gnostic beings. The concept of Jivanmukta belongs to the concept of Gnostic Being and the concept of Gnostic Being is greater than the concept of Jivanmukta. This Gnostic Being makes himself the creative driving force and works to discover the divine life in this world by transforming others into Gnostic Beings. The life that the Gnostic Being leads is the Divine Life and this Gnostic Being through his divine life guides the ordinary man to the path of liberation and the path to divine life.

### Conclusion

Sri Aurobindo explains Gnostic Being and Divine Life nicely but he does not give examples. But if we read carefully philosophy of Aurobindo then we can understand that what he was exactly talks about Gnostic Being and Divine Life. Many examples of Great or Gnostic Being from ancient times are, namely; Adi Shankaracharya, Gautama Buddha, Mahavira Jain, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva, Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother Sarada Devi, Trikaladarshi Baba Loknath, Sai Baba, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Sri Bamadeva etc. lived their divine lives in this world as Gnostic Beings. They helped to smooth the path of liberation of the ordinary non liberated being. The life that the Gnostic Being leads is the Divine Life and this Gnostic Being directs the ordinary human being to the path of liberation and divine life through his divine life. Finally, it must be said that only he can express of the Gnostic Being and the Divine Life who is integrated with such a life, therefore, there is no hesitation in saying that Sri Aurobindo's sage life is the life of the Divine Life and he himself lived this divine life as a Gnostic Being, presenting a new way of life to people.

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