CHAPTER SIX

THE DESTINY OF HAN

Man is conscious of his finitude and imperfection and because of that awareness he is dissatisfied with himself and struggles to transcend his limitations. The highest destiny of human being does not mean an escape from life, but a fulfilment of it. "To fulfil God in life is man's manhood" The fulfilment is not a mere adjustment with the forces of evil, with darkness and death, but a 'conquest' of them through the process of supramentalisation or divinisation of earthly life. "A divine perfection of the human being is our aim", says Aurobindo in his The Synthesis of Yoga. Aurobindo states that the first duty of man is to "affirm himself in the universe". Then he is to evolve gradually and finally to exceed himself. Man has to extend his partial being and consciousness into a perfect being and integral consciousness. He has to adapt himself with the environment and to achieve world-harmony, he has to enlarge his individual self into a cosmic self, into a universal and spiritual delight of existence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo "The outer apparent man, an ephemeral being subject to the constraints of his material embodiment and imprisoned in a limited mentality, has to become the inner real Man, master of himself and his environment and


universal in his being. In a more vivid and less metaphysical language, the natural man has to evolve himself into the divine Man; the sons of Death have to know themselves as the children of Immortality. 4

The intellectual knowledge of the world, himself and God will not make men the ‘conscious sons of Infinity’. Man’s aim must be the conscious unity of God, Soul and Nature in his own consciousness. Aurobindo writes, “Our aim must be to grow into our true being, our being of Spirit, the being of the supreme and universal Existence, Consciousness, Delight, Sachchidananda”. This is the sure foundation of his perfection and his realisation of all harmonies. The same ideas are found in the Gita. In his Essays on The Gita, Aurobindo says, “Oneness with God, oneness with all beings, the realisation of the eternal divine unity everywhere and the drawing onwards of man towards that oneness are the law of life which arises from the teachings of the Gita... To be made oneself with God above and God in man and God in the world is the sense of liberation and the secret of perfection”. 6

To ‘become ourselves’ by ‘exceeding ourselves’ is the difficult necessity which is imposed on man. This is the riddle of the true nature of man’s being proposed to him by ‘the dark


5 Ibid., p. 685.

Sphinx of the Inconscience' below and from within and by the 'luminous veiled Sphinx' of the infinite Consciousness above. Aurobindo writes, "To exceed (the) ego and be our true self, to be aware of our real being, to possess it, to possess a real delight of being, is therefore the ultimate meaning for our life here; it is the concealed sense of our individual and terrestrial existence" (sic). Aurobindo observes that this ultimate goal can be achieved only by 'change of consciousness'. On the surface man is still an 'ego figuring self', an ignorance turning into knowledge, a will labouring towards true force and a desire seeking the delight of existence. A transformation and correction of all that is obscure, erroneous and ignorant in his mentality and an ultimate arrival at a free and wide harmony and luminousness of knowledge, will, feeling and action, is then the evident intention of human nature. It is by 'self-enlargement', self-fulfilment' and 'self-evolution' from what he 'partially and temporarily' is in his apparent nature to what he 'completely' is in his secret self and spirit, is the object of his creation. This spiritual evolution takes place as an 'awakening' to the inner reality of our being and an 'aspiration' to know, to feel, to be that and to enter into contact with the 'greater Reality beyond'. This can be done by 'transcending' as well as

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transforming his whole being into "a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature". It is only then the spiritual sage can arise. Aurobindo says, "It is only after spiritual experience through the heart and mind began, that we see arise the saint, the prophet, the Rishi, the Yogi, the Seer, the spiritual sage and the mystic". To realise this spiritual being within himself is the real goal of man and to help his fellow being towards the same evolution is the real service of man to his race.

In the previous chapter we have seen that evolution has reached the level of mind and is preparing for its next leap into the realm of the spiritual or the higher hemisphere. Now the question is: how can this leap be brought about? or, how can an evolute belonging to the lower sphere transform itself in such a way that it is able to enter the higher or the spiritual sphere. Aurobindo says that this can be possible only if a principle mediates between the two. That principle must serve as the link between the two spheres. It must, on the one hand, be similar in nature to Saccidananda, and on the other, it must not be the opposite of the mental. And such a linking principle is the Supermind.

8 Ibid., p. 857.

9 Ibid., p. 881.
SUPERMIND

Supermind is an unique conception of Aurobindo's philosophy. Aurobindo conceives the ultimate Reality as a triune principle—Sat-Cit-Ánanda. He conceives Supermind as a Fourth or Creative power of Saccidányanda. It is conceived as the Creator or God of the cosmos. It is a Vast extension of Saccidányanda in Space and Time and so the Creator as well as the Created Consciousness. The Supermind differs from Mind in quality and is a unique form of Knowledge and Power. Above the mind we have several higher grades of consciousness, viz., Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind. The Supermind is above all these and is also above the lower hemisphere of Ignorance and Inconscience. It is the knowledge and Power of Saccidányanda, extended Is Space and Time. As Supermind is above the triple cosmic principles of mind, life and matter and is below the triune principle of sat, cit and Ánanda, it may be called the Fourth Power and the Turīya Sakti. The Supermind may therefore be called the Fourth or Creative power of Saccidányanda in addition to the triune principle and is called the creator or God of the cosmos. It creates the finite and phenomenal universe out of triple forms of Saccidányanda. The Supermind is not a separate self-existent principle in addition to Saccidányanda. It is
conceived as a separate existence by the logic of the finite beings. But for the logic of the infinite it is the same Saccidananda in its creative aspect. The Supermind is Saccidananda in Time and Space while Saccidananda is the absolute concentration and is Spaceless and Timeless. The Supermind is the Energy and creative force of the Conscious-Force manifested in the universe. Aurobindo writes, It is "a power of Conscious-Force expressive of real being, born out of real being and partaking of its nature and neither a child of the Void nor a weaver of fictions. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance".

The Supermind is described as the the Supreme Truth-Consciousness. In the Vedas it is called ṛta-cit, or Truth-Consciousness and in the Upanisads it is called viññāna. Aurobindo calls it the Truth-Consciousness or the Supermind. He writes, "I take the phrase from the Rig Veda, ṛta-cit, which means the consciousness of essential truth of being (satyam), of ordered truth of active being (ṛtam) and the vast self-awareness (bhrat) in which alone this consciousness is possible". Aurobindo calls it the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness, because it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things.


11 Ibid., p.117.
Supermind views all things in a multiple unity whereas mind considers each thing separately in itself. The universe is an expression of Consciousness, which although manifesting itself in the multiplicity, it is all the time conscious of the basic unity. Such a principle will have the consciousness of the monistic reality and yet it will be able to differentiate it in such a way that reality would appear as a triune principle in creation. Aurobindo writes, "It differentiates them, but it does not divide, It establishes a Trinity, not arriving like the Mind from the three to the One, but manifesting the three out of the One, -for it manifests and develops, -and yet maintaining them in the unity, -for it Knows and contains". Creation, then, is through the Consciousness, while essentially seeing things as basically one, which differentiates the one without actually dividing it. Therefore, it is the Truth-Consciousness; "in which Truth is the substance and Truth rises in the Idea and Truth comes out in the form" Superamental Consciousness is called Truth-Consciousness also to distinguish it from mental consciousness. Mind essentially makes divisions and thereby creates appearances contrary to the nature of the real. Supermind does not create divisions and does not give false pictures, it never misses the real unitary nature of the One, and therefore it

12 Ibid., p.131.

13 Ibid., p.128.
has been called Truth-Consciousness. Aurobindo writes, "In Supermind all being is consciousness, all consciousness is of being, and the idea, a pregnant vibration of consciousness, is equally a vibration of being pregnant of itself; it is an initial coming out, in creative self-Knowledge, of that which lay concentrated in uncreative self-awareness. It comes out as Idea that is a reality, and it is that reality of the Idea which evolves itself, always by its own power and consciousness of itself, always self-conscious, always self-developing by the will inherent in the Idea, always self-realising by the Knowledge ingrained in its every impulsion. This is the truth of all creation, of all evolution". The Supermind is the "truth-conscious", the dynamic and creative power, and has the possession of "Seer-will". It has the direct knowledge of the infinite possibilities of Saccidananda. It is a principle which creates and manifest those possibilities. But as all potentialities cannot be actualised simultaneously it actualises only some possibilities of Saccidananda. It is, therefore, a determinative and selective principle which checks the manifestation of some possibilities and gives vent to only a selection of them. The Supermind is also the Divine Law which creates and governs the movement according to its own mystical laws. In Supermind, consciousness and creative force are one and

14 Ibid., p.130.
the same being. "In Supermind knowledge in the Idea is not divorced from will in the Idea, but one with it—just as it is not different from being or substance, but is one with the being, luminous power of the substance. As the power of burning light is not different from the substance of the fire, so the power of the Idea is not different from the substance of the Being which works itself out in the idea and its development". In Supermind there is no division of consciousness and will nor are these divided within themselves. The Supermind has an inalienable unity. There is no clash or conflict in such a unitarian consciousness. There is also no difference between the One and the Many in it. "For the Supermind is the Vast; it starts from unity, not division, it is primarily comprehensive, differentiation is only its secondary act".

Aurobindo holds that the existence of the Supermind is a logical necessity. The Supermind acts as an intermediary principle between Saccidananda and the universe. Aurobindo defines it as follows, "A principle of active Will and Knowledge superior to mind and creatrix of the world is then the intermediary power and state of being between that self-possession of the One and this flux of the Many".


16 Ibid., p.131.

17 Ibid., p.122.
is the creator of the cosmos and so its beginning and end and the controller and Guide of its movements. Aurobindo writes, "This intermediary term is therefore the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and the Omega, the starting point of all differentiation, the instrument of all unification, originative, executive and consummative of all realised or realisable harmonies". Supermind belongs to the higher hemisphere and yet it is the end and the ideal of mind - that which mind is going to be. As belonging to the higher hemisphere it must have a full consciousness of Saccidānanda. It is not Saccidānanda itself and yet it is akin to its nature because it is the consciousness of Saccidānanda. Likewise it is not mind itself and yet it is its culmination and fulfilment.

The Supermind is the perfect state of Knowledge into which man has to develop. It is not the personal God of the theist. It is Divine Will. Its descent alone can transform human existence into divine glory. Man has to stand aside and willingly make room for the descent of the Supermind. The self-emptying must be done before the Divine filling takes place. The Supermind is a divine level of Consciousness. It alone can impose a complete and radical re-integration of human personality. It goes without saying that this attainment is not an easy task. There

18 Ibid., p.126.
are conditions to be fulfilled for this transformation from the human to the divine. It requires intense spiritual sadhana.

The importance of the Supramental change lies in the fact that henceforth evolution enters the realm of knowledge. As a result of this change human beings are transformed into Gnostic Beings who have put off the veil of ignorance and are illumined by the Light of Knowledge. "As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation".

The Gnostic Consciousness can view everything from the standpoint of the Absolute. In fact, Gnostic being is the impetus behind the act of involution which produces the spirit's return to itself. But, before this can take place, the veil between the inner being and the surface being must break down. When this has happened, the process of the divine will be open to all to work towards a transformation of nature. The rules of the inconscience and ignorance will disappear for ever and all will exist in the full

19 With the gnostic change, the evolution crosses a line beyond which there is a 'supreme' and 'radical reversal' of consciousness takes place. In this 'reversal' the standards and forms of mental cognition are no longer sufficient for existence.

light of divinity.

GNOSTIC BEING, ITS NATURE

In the philosophy of Aurobindo the term 'Gnostic being' is used almost in the same sense as 'Superman'. The nature of the Superman's life and capacities cannot be defined because a mental description would be inadequate. Supramental existence by its very nature defies determination in terms of mental categories. At the same time certain deductions can be made from the very fact of this difference of nature which might be valid at least for a general description of the passage from Overmind to Supermind or might vaguely construct for us an idea of the first status of the evolutionary supramental existence. For example, it may consistently be maintained in the light of the nature of the evolutionary process that supramental nature must be a perfect integration and consummation of spiritual nature and experience. This also can be said on the basis of the nature of the process of the ascent that this change would involve a total spiritualisation of mundane nature. Likewise this also can be maintained that souls that would emerge as a result of the supramental transformation would not remain 'mental men' but would become supermen or Supramental men.
Gnostic beings are not ignorant souls caught in the process of evolution but they are men of knowledge (hence the name gnostic). In the words of Sri Aurobindo "The description of gnosic applies to all consciousness that is based upon Truth of being and not upon the Ignorance or Nescience". Gnostic or Supramental being is that being which has crossed the evolutionary horizon into knowledge. The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man. His whole way of being, thinking, living and acting would be governed by the power of a vast universal spirituality. That is so on account of the nature of the supermind itself, which is essentially unitary in character. Its consciousness is integral and therefore it would also harmonise and unify apparent diversities. That is why the Gnostic being will always have this sense of integral unity. "All his existence would be fused into oneness with the transcendent and universal Self and Spirit; all his action would originate from and obey the supreme Self and Spirit's divine governance of Nature". This sense is so keen that the supramental Gnostic being will have not only their integral sense in his own inner or outer life, but would be able to create a harmonic unity even with the still surviving mental being.

The gnostic being is a 'perfect and complete' individual.

21 Ibid., p. 968.
22 Ibid., p. 972.
This perfection results from the highest possible integration both within and without. Sri Aurobindo describes the character of the Gnostic being thus, "A complete self-knowledge in all things and at all moments is the gift of the supramental gnosis and with it a complete self-mastery, not merely in the sense of control of Nature but in the sense of a power of perfect self-expression in Nature". Sri Aurobindo believes that, the 'complete individual' is the 'cosmic individual'. This 'completion' of individuality is possible, only when we have taken, the universe 'into ourselves' and 'transcended' it. To the gnostic being all the ways and powers of consciousness of other individuals would be felt as the ways and powers of his own personality. "He would act in a universal awareness and a harmony of his individual self with the total self, of his individual will with the total will, of his individual action with the total action". This simply means that the gnostic being is a completely divinised spirit. Another implication of this description is that all the activities of the gnostic being are based on knowledge and not on ignorance. A normal man is quite ignorant about his true relationship with the world and others. Thus he suffers due to his imperfections and disharmony with the totality of things. Ignorance is a fragmentary view of reality and not its total

23
Ibid., p. 973.

24
Ibid., p. 974.
view. Therefore, activities performed in ignorance will always lack the universal awareness of thought and action. The Gnostic being knows, and therefore, his actions are not chaotic. Yet another implication of this description is that the Gnostic being will feel no difficulty or hindrance in performing an action. We, in our normal mental life, feel such a difficulty on account of the barriers that our ego-sense creates around itself. We fail to arrive at any commendable solution of the conflict between the self and the world. In order to harmonise ourselves with the universe we have either to enforces ourselves upon it and make it subservient to us or suppresses ourselves and become subservient to it. But this is not the case with the Gnostic being. A Gnostic being is above these difficulties because he has no ego. He transcends all such barriers and therefore, becomes one in realisation with the Infinite. He lives in cosmic consciousness and would very well visualise the right relation at each step. "For the supramental being living in a cosmic consciousness the difficulty would not exist, since he has no ego; his cosmic individuality would know the cosmic forces and their movement and their significance as part of himself, and the Truth-Consciousness in him would see the right relation at each step and find the dynamic right expression of that relation".  

Again, the supramental being performs his activities in the joyous spirit, his only aim is the delight of the manifestation of the spirit. The integrated, gnostic being, who is in harmony with himself and with the rest of the universe seeks the delight of self manifestation of the spirit in himself but equally in the delight of the Divine in all. He has no desires, no wants, nothing to strive for or achieve. Even delight is not his goal, it is his nature. "Delight of the manifestation of the Spirit in its truth of being would be the sense of the gnostic life". He brings the joy of being to others, because their joy will be part of his own joy of existence. It is commonly accepted that the truly liberated and spiritual man is he who makes the joy and shares his experiences with others. But the gnostic being is above this consideration. He is beyond "altruistic self-effacement". There will be no contradiction in his own good and the good of others, and so there is no sense in making others joys or sorrows his own. "His feeling of universality, his action of universality will be always a spontaneous state and natural movement, an automatic expression of the Truth, an act of the joy of the Spirit's self-existence". Knowledge is not his aim, for him there is no new discovery. He knows already and therefore, he brings out only which is already known. A gnostic life is a beautiful harmony of

26 Ibid., p. 975.
27 Ibid., p. 976.
28 Ibid., p. 976.
all the three aspects of our psyche, namely cognitive, conative and affective. A gnostic being does not only have, 'the will of action' but the 'knowledge' of what is to be 'willed' and the 'power to effectuate' its knowledge. Moreover, like the Karmayogin, of the Gita, he works dispassionately without any search for any fruit or result. His joy is in being and doing, in the 'pure state of the Spirit', in the pure 'act of the Spirit', in the pure 'bliss' of the Spirit. There is nothing unknown to him and hence his action won't be guided by the discovery of the unknown. "The gnostic being's knowledge self-realised in action will be not an ideative knowledge, but the Real-Idea of the Supermind, the instrumentation of an essential light of 29 Consciousness". Everything here is the finding, "of the self by the self in the self".

Therefore, Sri Aurobindo says that, "An evolution of gnostic consciousness brings with it a transformation of our world-consciousness and world-action: for it takes up into the new power of awareness not only the inner existence but our outer being and our world-being; there is a remaking of both, an integration of them in the sense and power of the spiritual existence". His experience of the universe is that of one living in the universe, and at the same time that of one who

30 Ibid., p. 982.
31 Ibid., p. 977.
carries the universe with himself. S.K. Maitra describing the characteristic of the Superman writes, "He will have the cosmic consciousness, sense, feeling, by which all objective life will become part of his subjective existence and by which he will realise, perceive, feel, see, hear the Divine in all forms; all forms and movements will be realised, sensed, seen, heard and felt, as if taking place within his own vast self of being ".

Aurobindo writes, "A gnostic being will possess not only a truth-conscious control of the realised Spirit’s power over its physical world, but also the full power of the mental and vital planes and the use of their greater forces for the perfection of the physical existence". The spiritual man discovers his soul and lives in it. He needs nothing external for his completeness of existence. The gnostic being takes up our ignorant becoming and turns it into a luminous becoming of knowledge and a realised power of being. All knowledge he will turn into a manifestation of the ‘self-knowledge of being’ and all power and action into a power and action of the ‘self-force of being’ and all delight into a ‘universal delight’ of self-existence. Thus it is apparent that the supramental transformation carries life, mind and body beyond themselves into greater and a higher being. In the Gnostic individual therefore, the powers, of life, mind and body are "not


suppressed or abolished, but perfected and fulfilled by the self-
34 exceeding". For example the relation of gnostic individual with
his body would be of a totally different kind from the relation
that we have with our bodies.

As a consequence of the 'total change' and 'reversal of
consciousness' there is established a new relation of spirit with
Mind and Life and Matter, and a new significance and perfection
in the relation. There will be a 'reversal', a 'perfecting' new
significance also of the relation between the spirit and the body
it inhabits. In our present set up the instrument of the action
of the soul is the body. But the body with its limited capacities
and laws of action always proves an impediment to the way of
progress in the lower level of consciousness. Moreover, the soul
fails to control fully the laws of action of the body. But in the
gnostic way of being and living the 'will of the spirit' must
directly 'control and determine' the movements and the law of
the body. The body will be turned by spiritual consciousness into
a fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the spirit. All the
activities of the body, in Gnostic being, are controlled and
determined by the will of the spirit. In the gnostic being due to
supramental energies, the subconscient becomes conscient.
Similarly the basis of inconscience is transformed into a

34 Ibid., p. 982.
supporting superconscience. This new relationship between the spirit and the body (or matter), however, does not reject the latter. Rather, it assumes a "free acceptance of the whole of material Nature in the place of a rejection". Sri Aurobindo's conception of spiritual life does not deny the reality of the world. The descent of the spiritual light will invade and take up the body also and, there will be a new 'liberated' and 'sovereign acceptance' of material Nature. It will be possible because of a changed communion of spirit with matter. In the light of a 'larger Knowledge' Matter also can be seen to be the Brahman. In gnostic being, there will be, "a certain respect for physical things, an awareness of the occult consciousness in them, of its dumb will of utility and service, a worship of the Divine, the Brahman in what he uses, a care for a perfect and faultless use of his divine material, for a true rhythm, ordered harmony, beauty in the life of Matter, in the utilisation of Matter".

This changed relationship of the spirit with the body brings about, "the spiritualisation, perfection and fulfilment of the physical being". Health, strength, duration, bodily happiness and ease, liberation from suffering are part of the physical perfection which the gnostic evolution is called upon to

36 Ibid., p. 987.
37 Ibid., p. 987.
realise. During spiritual ascent the power of consciousness increases immensely empowering the spirit and inner mind to control the outer mentality, the nervous being and the body. Still more significant is the power that comes to be possessed by the spiritual minds or overmind to change the vibrations of pain into the vibrations of Ananda. "The gnostic evolution at a certain stage must bring about a completeness of this reversal and of this power of self-protection which will fulfil the claim of the body for immunity and serenity of its being and for deliverance from suffering... A spiritual Ananda can flow into the body and inundate cell and tissue; a luminous materialisation of his higher Ananda could of itself bring about a total transformation of the deficient or adverse sensibilities of physical Nature".

In the gnostic being or gnostic personality, the ordinary human personality is found to be radically changed. The mind is transformed into the fundamental consciousness of unity or identity. To the mind of ordinary man, the world of objects is the not-self as different from the self. But to the gnostic being, there is no not-self as independent of the self. It is only a part of the self as projected by it in Space and Time. As the consciousness of the gnostic being is universal, its

knowledge is immediate and internal and so there is no chance to error. "The gnostic consciousness will at once intimately and exactly know its object by a comprehending and penetrating identification with it. It will overpass what it has to know, but it will include it in itself; it will know the object as part of itself as it might know any part or movement of its own beings, without any narrowing of itself by the identification or snaring of its thought in it so as to be bound or limited in knowledge".

The Gnostic Being is a fully integrated being—his body, life and mind having been thoroughly transformed and made automatically responsive to the demands of his spirit. As against the normal human being who is cooped within the four walls of egoistic ignorance, the Gnostic Being is constantly self aware of all the trinities of the Spirit and lives in a consciousness, not of narrow individuality but in one of a vast universal spirituality. Because of the ignorance of the limited mind, man assumes life as subject to the triple principle of death, desire and incapacity. But when mind becomes free from its limitations and is transformed into the integral consciousness of the Gnostic being, life also gets rid of its bondage, death, desire and incapacity. The mind is transformed and elevated to a status

39 Ibid., p. 983.
where it can achieve its long-cherished ambition of getting at the knowledge of essential truth of self and things—the truth basis. Similarly, life too is transformed so that it may attain growth, power, conquest, possession, satisfaction, not of the mental or vital ego, but of an individual in the fullness of his being. Life is filled with the light and power of the spirit. All its ideals and aspirations are fulfilled to the highest extent in the gnostic personality. In the Gnostic being even the body becomes an instrument of spiritual activities and presents no problems or creates no hindrance for the Gnostic individual. The Gnostic personality acts only for the Divine Presence in man as well as in the world. "The gnostic life will exist and act for the Divine in itself and in the world, for the Divine in all; the increasing possession of the individual being and the world by the Divine Presence, Light, Power, Love, Delight, Beauty will be the sense of life to the gnostic being". The Gnostic Being feels the presence of the Lord in every centre of his consciousness. He realises all beings as his own selves and all that has become as the manifestation of the Power of the World-Mother. His own life and the world-life would be to him like a 'perfect work of art'. It would be as if the creation of a cosmic and spontaneous genius, infallible in its working out of a multitudinous order. In his consciousness, individuality, and its

40 Ibid., p. 984.
universality does not interfere with its transcendence. "The gnostic individual would be in the world and of the world, but would also exceed it in his consciousness and live in his Self of transcendence above it; he would be universal but free in the universe, individual but not limited by a separative individuality". A gnostic individual may cultivate and utilise occult powers which come to all who practise Yoga and which are considered not possible for ordinary man. For, at the Supramental stage, these powers would be quite natural and not abnormal. The gnostic being aims at the establishment of Divine Kingdom on earth, and for this he seeks to create a community of perfected individuals like himself.

**TYPES OF GNOSTIC BEINGS**

Now the question is, will the race of Gnostic Beings be all of one type? Sri Aurobindo answers in the negative. He does not, however, visualise a state of uniformity following upon supramental transformation. The law of the supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity, but unity never implies uniformity. It is not proper, therefore to say that all the Gnostic Beings would be cast in a single mould, according to a single type of individuality. Although in its broad pattern, the life of all

41 Ibid., p. 972.
gnostic beings, will be strikingly similar, variety will by no means, be wiped out. He says, "A supramental or gnostic race of beings would not be a race made according to a single type, moulded in a single fixed pattern; for the law of the Supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity, and therefore there would be an infinite diversity in the manifestation of the gnostic consciousness although that consciousness would still be one in its basis, in its constitution, in its all revealing and all-uniting order". Therefore, although the basic consciousness invariably remains the same consciousness, there will be infinite diversity in the manifestation of gnostic consciousness. So also he says, "In the supramental race itself, in the variation of its degrees, the individuals would not be cast according to a single type of individuality; each would be different from the other, a unique formation of the Being, although one with all the rest in (the) foundation of (the) self and (the) sense of oneness and in the principle of his being" (sic).

In fact the question of 'types' or 'kinds' of Gnostic beings has relevance in two different contexts. The Gnostic being is the man of knowledge, the man who has risen above the realm of ignorance. But, it is quite possible that the knowledge of one is intuitional, and that of another even higher or overmental. That


43 Ibid., p. 971.
is to say, knowledge is not something that is attained as soon as one starts rising above the realm of ignorance. The moment ignorance is cancelled, the diversity and discord seem as nothing else but the manifestation of unity. "So man, according to Sri Aurobindo, realises his highest destiny not by sacrificing his individuality and personality at the altar of a bare and abstract unity but by raising them to their highest status of development by the realisation of his universal and transcendent nature". There will also emerge in human life a free play of intuition. Sri Aurobindo observes, "A free play of intuition and sympathy and understanding would enter into human life, a clearer sense of the truth of self and things and a more enlightened dealing with the opportunities and difficulties of existence". There may be different levels of knowledge which different individuals may attain. There may, therefore, be an overmental Gnostic being or an intuitional Gnostic being.

But the second aspect of this question is more relevant, because the real man of knowledge is the supramental Gnostic being. The question is, 'are there types of supramental Gnostic being also? Sri Aurobindo says that even there the individuals cannot be cast strictly according to a single type of


individuality. Even the Supermind has three poises or phases, and therefore it would not be correct to maintain that the level of knowledge reached by every supramental Gnostic being would be exactly the same. At least a difference of degree has to be there. Therefore, even in this stage, it has to be believed that every being would be a unique expression of the same supramental light, different from every other, not necessarily in quality, but at least in degree.

Although it is very difficult for us to forecast a detailed account of the Gnostic Being Sri Aurobindo seems to have made a division of Gnostic Beings into lower and upper grades. While the lower grades of Gnostic Being would be limited in self-expression, perfection and power, the upper grades would enjoy this diversity in the power and hue of their Supernature. "In the lower grades of Gnostic being". Sri Aurobindo claims, "there would be a limitation of self-expression according to the variety of the nature, a limited perfection in order to formulate some side, element or combined harmony of elements of some Divine Totality, a restricted selection of powers from the cosmic figure of the infinitely manifold One. But in the supramental being this need of limitation for perfection would disappear".

46 Ibid., p. 973.
PERSONALITY OF THE GNOSTIC BEING

Now a very pertinent question can be raised: what is the place of personality in the gnostic being? Is the gnostic being similar to other human beings in the form and appearance or quite different from them? If there is a personality and it is responsible for its actions, then arises the question of the place of the ethical element and its perfection and fulfilment in the gnostic nature. In the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, there is no place for individuality and personality after the attainment of liberation. The individuality and personality are supposed to be constituted by the limited and separative ego. When the consciousness of the Transcendent dawns, the ego is cancelled. Ramanuja holds that the notion of individuality is not incompatible to that of salvation. The individual suffers from bondage due to the ego and not due to his spiritual self or individuality. According to Ramanuja egoity is incompatible with salvation and not individuality. Aurobindo agrees with Ramanuja that liberation means only the annihilation of the ego and not that of individuality itself. According to Aurobindo, the liberation is attained by the individual in the present life and on this earth. According to Ramanuja, though the individuality remains even after liberation, yet there no more remains any
personality. Now the question arises: Is the gnostic being as viewed by Sri Aurobindo possessed of individuality like the liberated soul in Ramanuja or of personality also? The gnostic being in Sri Aurobindo's view, is not devoid of body. It is possessed of personality. But the personality of the gnostic being will not be limited and restricted like that of an ordinary individual. The ordinary restricted personality can be grasped by an observation of the behaviour of the individual and by a description of the workings of his inner mental processes. But such a description would be inadequate to express the character and personality of the gnostic being who has attained oneness in consciousness and power with the universal and the transcendent.

Aurobindo holds that, there are two popular answers to the place of personality in the Gnostic Being. First it is said that "the separative ego is our self and, if ego has to disappear in a transcendental or universal Consciousness personal life and action must cease". If the individual is altogether extinguished, no question of personality or responsibility or ethical perfection can arise. On the other hand, there is also the view that, "The spiritual person remains, but liberated, purified, perfected in nature in a celestial existence". But here, on the earth the gnostic being is a self without


48 Ibid., p. 992.
personality an 'impersonal purusa. But even this supposition would create further difficulties. We shall have to suppose then that all the gnostic individuals are similar in being and nature. Moreover, in that case the supramental acts will have to be conceived as resulting from the void, which again is illogical. Sri Aurobindo takes a madhyama marga here, and feels that all these difficulties appear as difficulties only to mental consciousness. This would be a mental rather than a supramental solution of the problem of a spiritual individuality surviving ego and persisting in experience. There would remain no difficulty if the problem is viewed in the light of the supramental consciousness. In the supramental consciousness, "personality and impersonality are not opposite principles; they are inseparable aspects of one and the same reality". "This reality is not the ego but the being, who is impersonal and universal in his stuff of nature, but forms out of it an expressive personality which is his form of self in the changes of Nature". Thus in Aurobindo's view there is no incompatibility between the Impersonal and the personal. They are each other, 'live in one another', melt into each other, and yet in a way can appear 'as if different' ends, sides, obverse and reverse of the same Reality. A supramental Gnostic Being, therefore, can be described as a spiritual person but he is not a


50 Ibid., pp. 982-93.
personality in the sense of a pattern of being marked out by a settled combination of fixed qualities and characters. He is not also a completely impersonal being, 'throwing up' at random waves of various forms, waves of personality as it pours through Time. But this is not like the act of a sort of confused multipersonality of men, who have no strong centralising Person in their depths. Instead the gnostic consciousness, is a consciousness, of 'harmony' and 'self-knowledge' and self-mastery and would not present such a disorder. The Gnostic individual in reality is the inner person unveiled. He is not "a surface personality partly expressive of a larger secret being, he would be not the wave but the ocean". He is the Purusa the inner conscious Existence self-revealed. He has no need of a 'carved expressive mask' or 'persona'. He is thus above the distinction of Personality, Impersonality. He is an infinite and universal being, necessarily revealing in nature, expressing and revealing itself in various forms.

The gnostic personality is beyond all ethical considerations because ethics is a construction of good in a Nature which has been smitten with evil by the powers of darkness born of the Ignorance. But the gnostic person is, "self

51 Ibid., p. 995.
determined by truth of consciousness and truth of being", and hence, "there can be no standard, no struggle to observe it, no virtue or merit, no sin or demerit of the nature". Aurobindo observes that all the character of the life and action of the gnostic being would arise self-determined out of this nature of his gnostic individuality. There could be in it no separate problem of an ethical or any similar content, any conflict of good and evil. With the gnostic evolution the need for the standards of virtue and dharma disappears. There can be no 'imposed' or 'constructed' law of conduct, dharma. All becomes a self-flow of spiritual self-nature 'Svadharma of Svabhāya'. The gnostic life is an inner life in which there can be no contradiction between one individual's good and another's good. In fact, ethics would no longer exist because the individual supramental being would act in conjunction with eternal truth rather than with systems imposed upon him from the outside. The gnostic individual exists in unity with his fellow-being because he has gone beyond the ego and completely understood his placement in the divine. The Gnostic life will reconcile freedom and order. There will be an entire accord between the free expression of the individual and his obedience to the inherent law of the supreme and universal Truth of things. "The two principles of freedom and order, which in mind and life are

52 Ibid., p. 997.
constantly representing themselves as contraries or incompatibles, though they have no need to be that if freedom is guarded by knowledge and order based upon truth of being, are in the supermind consciousness native to each other and even fundamentally one". In the gnostic consciousness difference would not lead to discord but to a spontaneous natural adaptations. All mental standards would disappear because their necessity would ceases. The authentic law of identity with the Divine Self would have replaced them.

The gnostic supramental being is the summit of evolution, the consummation of the spirit's return to itself. He is above death and is completely fulfilled. As Maitra states, "An earthly immortality! Here we have, in fact, one of the most startling features of Sri Aurobindo's conception of Evolution". Even in immortality evolution in knowledge will continue. Aurobindo states, "there would be also at the summit, as the evolution in Knowledge proceeded, individual beings who would ascend beyond a Supermind formulation and reach from the highest height of Supermind to the summits of unitarian self-realization in the body which must be the last and supreme state of the epiphany of the Creation". This state will be different from any conception

53 Ibid., p. 1003.


that has yet been actualised. In fact, it is beyond the West with its conception of superman and beyond the East with its conception of *Avatar* and *Jivanmukta*.

**SUPERMAN**

Superman is for Aurobindo another name for the divine man. He states "The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation, she wills to work out the superman, the god".

The superman can be equated to supramental and gnostic beings and he represents the culmination of Aurobindo's evolutionary doctrine. Aurobindo maintains that the conception of Superman must not be confused with the past and the present ideas of supermanhood. Aurobindo gives the honour of first casting the name 'superman' to Friedrich Nietzsche. But the Nietzschean superman is quite different from Sri Aurobindo's gnostic being. To quote Nietzsche's, own words, "I teach you the superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed... What is the ape to man? A laughing stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing stock, a thing of shame." Again he writes, "Man is a rope stretched between animal and the superman - a rope over an abyss... What is great in man is that

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he is a bridge and not a goal". Nietzsche emphasizes that the superman will be different from other human individuals not in kind but in degree of the same kind. Thus according to him, the superman will overtop the normal human level by an enlarged personality, a magnified and exaggerated ego, an increased power of mind and of vital force, and also by an exaggerated force of human ignorance. In other words, the superman will be a colossal individual, an exaggerated and magnified form of the existing nature of human beings with all its force, vitality, intellect and consequently ignorance also. But this type of superman will be no better than an Asura or Rakshasa. Sri Aurobindo views Nietzsche's superman as the Titan or "the blonde beast". whose arrival would not be an evolution but a reversion to an old strenuous barbarism. Aurobindo writes, "Nietzsche hymned the Olympian, but presented him with the aspect of the Asura". He presents to us a superman who fiercely and arrogantly repels the burden of sorrow and service, not one who arises victorious over mortality and suffering. His superman is the antithesis of the Christian conception of the crucified God and is one who is beyond good and evil. In fact, Nietzsche's conception is reserved for an elite group of men who will rule by brute force. As contrasted with this Asuric conception of the Superman,

58
Ibid., p.8.

59

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Sri Aurobindo's superman or Gnostic being, "is a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul and the deliverance and sovereignty of its light and power and beauty,- not an egoistic supermanhood seizing on a mental and vital domination over humanity, but the sovereignty of the Spirit over its own instruments, its possession of itself and its possession of life in the power of the spirit, a new consciousness in which humanity itself shall find its own self-exceeding and self-fulfilment by the revelation of the divinity that is striving for birth within it". Aurobindo's superman is man turned into a perfect image of the Divine thoroughly transformed in every member of his being. In his essay on the 'Superman' Sri Aurobindo says again, "The gospel of true supermanhood gives us a generous ideal for the progressive human race and should not be turned into an arrogant claim for a class or individuals. It is a call to man to do what no species has yet done or aspired to do in terrestrial history, evolve itself consciously into the next superior type already half foreseen by the continual cyclic development of the world-idea in Nature's fruitful musings". This is the sole true supermanhood and the one real possibility of a step forward in evolutionary nature.

Turning from the superman concept in the West to the East

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there are two types of beings with which Aurobindo’s concept of the superman would be confused with, the *Avatār* and the *Jīvanmukta*. The superman will not be the same as an Avatara. An Avatara is *saccidananda* in the human form. As the Gita says “Whenever righteousness wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, Creates himself”. That is, whenever the decline of dharma takes place and sin, cruelty and injustice are rampant, Saccidananda takes descent in the human form. When the obstacles in the path of the progress of the universe are beyond the power of man to remove, a direct intervention of the Lord Himself in human form is necessary. The Avatāra serves the purpose of giving man an ocular demonstration that he can also be Divine. The Avatāra is, therefore, a temporary descent of Saccidananda for the limited purpose of the removal of the crisis and he leaves the world after the fulfilment of that purpose. Thus the Avatār is he who has come to prepare the way for the next evolutionary step. Aurobindo comments, “The divine manifestation of a Christ, Krishna, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within our own inner humanity”. In other words, the Avatār is he who works to usher in evolutionary change. He is a special manifestation, a divine birth from above, the Godhead


descending into the form of an individual in the mystery of divine incarnation. He is different from the superman who is man integrally transformed into divinity. The permanent spiritualisation and Divinisation of man and the cosmos are only possible through the descent of the supermind. The Gnostic being will effect a permanent improvement and transformation of the universe. The superman will not emerge as an isolated *Avatar*, but as a race of superconscient beings when the supermind will descend, there will not merely be one individual with supramental consciousness, but there will emerge a whole race of beings with supramental consciousness, called Superman or Gnostic being. His descent into Earth consciousness will transform and divinise it. A superman is the divine man and not the divine as man. The *Avatar* and superman both represent the meeting of the human and the divine but the *Avatar* comes to lead evolution whereas the superman is the summit of evolution. Haridas Chaudhuri, commenting on the difference between them notes "The principal function of the *Avatar* is to help evolution forward in its major crises, by bringing about a definite lift in the already attained level of consciousness. Ramachandra was the Incarnation of Righteousness; he succeeded in establishing sattvic (ethical) consciousness on earth. Krishna was the Incarnation who constantly worked from the Overmental plane, and he succeeded in
fixing the possibility of the Overmental consciousness on earth. The next **Avatar** would be the Incarnation of the Supermind. His primary function would be to bring down the Supermind, and make it a permanent ingredient of the earth-consciousness. He would come to carry forward evolution to a higher level, the level of Superman". Thus, the superman is that to which the **Avatar** is working and with the advent of the superman divine man will exist in a community of beings.

The second concept we have mentioned is the type of being who is called the **Jivanmukta**. An account of Sri Aurobindo’s conception of the Gnostic being would remain incomplete if it is not compared with the concept of **Jivanmukta**, because to a casual reader the two might appear to be the same. The general description of the **Jivanmukta** shows that it bears a very close resemblance to the Gnostic being. In broad lines, the **Jivanmukta** is he who attains liberation, in the bodily state itself and has gained insight whereby no new karma may accumulate on his being. The **Jivanmukta** is a citizen of two worlds. Still as an embodied living being he is very much in the phenomenal world, but as a liberated being he belongs very much to the transcendental world. Even the Gnostic being, in certain respects, can be said to be a being of this description. He also represents the consummation of

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this worldly nature and attains this state under the condition of this very life.

But, the two notions are not exactly identical Sri Aurobindo has tried to make the concept of Gnostic being by far richer than that of Jīvanmukta. One of the basic reasons for making this claim is that the gnostic being even after attaining supramental status, attempts to bring down the higher light and consciousness into the evolutionary process. The Jīvanmukta as the liberated individual continues in existence in the body so long as the forces of karma make the body continue. Once he is out of it, that is, once he attains the status of videhamukti, his task is done. He now becomes fully emancipated and completely free from the cycle of births and rebirths. The supramental Gnostic being, on the other hand, makes himself one with the creative impetus and therefore, works for the emergence of Divine life on earth by transforming others also into gnostic beings.

But the most important point of difference is that, according to Sri Aurobindo, the Gnostic being is not an entirely new existence. He asserts that in such a being all parts of the embodied existence including even the physical are transformed
and divinised as a result of the supramental transformation. It is not entering into a new life or world, it is the perfecting and divinising of the earthly existence itself.

In the light of these points Haridas Chaudhuri suggests that, "all Superman or Supramental Gnostic beings can be thought of as Jivanmukta, but all Jivanmukta are not superman". The concept of superman comprehends the concept of Jivanmukta and is something more. A Jivanmukta is one who succeeds in his life-time in exceeding the trammels of the physical, the vital and the mental, and in attaining the transcendental consciousness. But having attained the transcendental consciousness, he make no further attempt to assist the descent of the light and power of the supreme consciousness into the flux of evolution. Emancipated from the drive of desire, he stands outside the urge of evolution itself. Freed from the shackles of the body he stops at the supreme effort to turn the body into a perfect image of the Divine or into a medium of the spirit's manifestation in Matter. Enraptured by the ascending movement of the soul towards God, he fails to notice the descending movement of God towards self-objectification, and as a consequence misses the significance of the cosmic process. The Jivanmukta is not the one who exceeds himself in evolution, he is not the superman because the superman

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is liberated in nature, not from it. With the supramental
descent, the coming of the new age will be ushered in.

THE DIVINE LIFE

The distinction between the superman and the *Jivanmukta*
itself shows that the attainment of the supramental status is not
the ultimate destiny of man. The superman are also required to
work for the transformation of others, and therefore the ultimate
goal of evolution lies still ahead. "The divine life of a
perfected consciousness in a supramental or gnostic power of
spiritual being that must be the secret burden and intention of
*evolutionary Nature*. It is a life in which all individuals
would be Gnostic beings, in which there would emerge a race of
beings endowed with supramental powers. In Aurobindo's own words,
"from the point of view of a spiritual evolution, this
(attainment of the gnostic state) would be only an individual
liberation and perfection in an unchanged environmental
existence: for a greater dynamic change in earth-nature itself, a
spiritual change of the whole principle and instrumentation of
life and action, the appearance of a new order of beings and a
new earth-life must be envisaged in our idea of the total
consummation, the divine issue". Because what is wanted is the

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68 Ibid., p. 1019.
emergence of a divine life on earth, not the isolated realisation by a few individuals of their true inner life.

Thus we find that the transformation of man into superman is only one although essential aspect of evolution. But the process does not come to a stop with the emergence of one or a few superman, it has to move ahead to bring on earth a divine life. "The gnostic change assumes a primary importance; all that precedes can be considered as an upbuilding and a preparation for this transmuting reversal of the whole nature". The divine life then primarily consists in a life, in which there will be a race of supramental Gnostic individuals. Divine life means a perfected life on earth- a life not of limited consciousness, a life of an inner completeness and perfection of being. "In the growth into a divine life the Spirit must be our first preoccupation; until we have revealed and evolved it in our self out of its mental, vital, physical wrappings and disguises,... until we have built up in ourselves an inner life of the spirit, it is obvious that no outer divine living can become possible". So, the first description of the Divine life is that it consists of a race of Supermen. "A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect". Sri Aurobindo is aware that, it is difficult to 'fix

69  Ibid., p. 1019.
70  Ibid., p. 1021.
71  Ibid., p. 1022.
frontier' where the mental ceases and the divine life begins. But, with the advent of Divine life, a spiritual transformation becomes apparent not only in the life of this or that individual, but in the 'collective life' of gnostic beings established as the highest power and form of the becoming of the spirit in the earth nature.

Describing the nature of divine life Sri Aurobindo says, "To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us". An explanation of the implications of this expression will throw some light on the Nature of Divine life. To be fully firstly, is to be 'wholly conscious' of one's being. Ordinary existence, that is life in terms of the mental is ignorant living or unconscious existence. Existence in Divine life is self-aware existence-existence with the knowledge of existence. This means secondly that to be fully, is to 'have the intrinsic and integral force' of one's being. This implies that in the self-aware existence of the Divine life the beings will be in complete possession of the forces and capacities that they have been able to cultivate. This force of our spiritual being must be 'intrinsic', 'automatic' in action, 'self-existent' and 'self-fulfilling'. Self-aware existence means complete self-possession. Thirdly to be fully must also mean, 'to

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72 Ibid., p. 1023.
have the full delight' of being. This 'delight' too, must be 'intrinsic', 'self-existent', and 'automatic'. It cannot be dependent on things outside itself. Pain and suffering are signs of imperfections, and therefore, they cannot have any place in Divine life. "To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integrated completeness is the divine living". Fourthly to be fully is 'to be universally'. Ordinary existence is existence in the limitation of a small restricted ego and therefore, is an imperfect existence. Describing this characteristic of Divine life Sri Aurobindo says, "All being is one and to be fully is to be all that is. To be in the being of all and to include all in one's being, to be conscious of the consciousness of all, to be integrated in force with the universal force, to carry all action and experience in oneself and feel it as one's own action an experience, to feel all selves as one's own self, to feel all delight of being as one's own delight of being is a necessary condition of the integral divine living". Lastly this implies that to be fully is also to be 'transcendentally'. This means that Supermen, existing in Divine life, somehow transcend and are above, not only the 'individual formula' but the 'formula of the universe'. It is quite probable that this notion of transcendental existence in Divine life is merely an extension of

73 Ibid., p. 1025.
74 Ibid., p. 1025.
Sri Aurobindo’s idea of the gnostic beings. We have, so to say, a transcendental attitude towards everything happening around them. “He must enter into the supreme divine Reality, feel his oneness with it, live in it, be its self-creation: all his mind, life, physicality must be converted into terms of its Supernature; all his thoughts, feelings, actions must be determined by it and be it, its self-formation”.

These things according to Sri Aurobindo are impossible without an inward living. The divinity in man dwells veiled within him, and so, an outward expression of that inner aspect, does not represent his real nature. It is only by an inner growth, movement and action that the individual can ‘freely’ and ‘effectively’ ‘universalise’ and ‘transcendentalise’ his being. The individual has to find himself, his true existence. He can do this by living in inwardness. This task of ‘going inward’ and ‘living inward’ is a difficult task to lay upon the normal consciousness of the human being, but in Divine life such an existence becomes normal and natural. This inner life is not an imprisonment or confinement, it is not being restricted to the personal self rather it is the first step towards a true universality. This inner living can extend itself and embrace the

universal life. Our ordinary being does not embrace the being of others as ourselves. The spiritual consciousness, bases its action in the 'collective life' upon an 'inner experience' and inclusion of others in our own being, an 'inner sense' and 'reality of oneness'. In Divine life there will be a vivid and intimate consciousness of others, "a consciousness of their mind, life, physical being which are felt as if they were one's own". The gnostic being in Divine life will act not out of surface sentiment of love and sympathy or any other similar feeling, but out of this close mental consciousness—this intimate oneness. All his action in the world will be enlightened by a truth of vision. He finds himself "not only in his own fulfilment, which is the fulfilment of the Divine Being and Will in him, but in the fulfilment of others; his universal individuality effectuates itself in the movement of the All in all beings toward its greater becoming". He sees divine working everywhere, and his actions are performed in clear awareness of this. "He lives in and for the Divine in himself, in and for the Divine in the collectivity, in and for the Divine in all being. This universality in action... is the law of his divine living".

Divine life, then, is the emergence of a perfect life on earth. 'Individual perfection' and an 'inner completeness' of

76 Ibid., p. 1030.
77 Ibid., p. 1030.
78 Ibid., pp. 1030-31.
being is the first condition of a perfected life on earth. And the perfection of the 'spiritual and pragmatic relation' of the individual with all around him is our second preoccupation. But the third desideratum is the most important and the highest goal. It is "a new world, a change in the total life of humanity or at least, a new perfected collective life in the earth-nature".  

In the gnostic divine way of collective living there would be a 'common consciousness' consolidating a 'common life'. All will be united by the evolution of the Truth-Consciousness in them. As different from the mental method, there would be a considerable 'free diversity' between different gnostic communities. There is a free diversity in the self-expression of the individuals of a single community. But this free diversity would not be a chaos or create any discord because a diversity of one Truth of knowledge and one Truth of life would be a correlation and not an opposition. A spiritual or gnostic being would feel his harmony with the whole gnostic life around him, whatever his position in the whole. A self-arrangement of Truth exists in a common life of different degrees and stages of the evolving gnostic being. "Unity is the basis of the gnostic consciousness, mutuality the natural result of its direct awareness of oneness in diversity, harmony the inevitable power of the working of its force. Unity,

mutuality and harmony must therefore be the inescapable law of a common or collective gnostic life". In the total terrestrial existence of which the gnostic life would be a part, there would be still continuing within it a life belonging to a less evolved order. The gnostic life would have to fit into this total existence and carry into it as much of its own law of unity and harmony as may be possible. Here the law of spontaneous harmony and mutuality might seem to be inapplicable since, it would be a relation of 'action of knowledge' to 'action of ignorance'. But this difficulty is not so great for the gnostic beings as it seems to us. Because the gnostic knowledge would carry in it a perfect understanding of the consciousness of the Ignorance. And it would not be impossible, therefore, for an assured gnostic life to harmonise its existence with that of all the less developed life co-existent with it in the earth nature. This is our evolutionary destiny. "A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past".

Divine life, thus, is the emergence of a perfect life on earth, a life not of separation or isolation, but one of unity and harmony, a life not regulated by the mental and .natural

80
Ibid., p. 1033.

81
Ibid., p. 1055.
forces but a life regulated by super-consciousness. Nature thus, changes into supernature, individuals are transformed in the triple way (mentioned earlier) by supramental consciousness and life becomes a life of supreme consciousness and joy. Much that is normal to human life would disappear. In the gnostic light many mental idols, constructed principles and systems and conflicting ideals which man has created in all domains of his mind and life, could command no acceptance or reverence. Aurobindo describes this life in the following manner, "A life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status might fitly be characterised as a divine life; for it would be a life in the Divine, a life of the beginnings of a spiritual divine light and power and joy manifested in material Nature. That might be described, since it surpasses the mental human level, as a life of spiritual and supramental supermanhood". Supermanhood consists in a new consciousness in which humanity itself finds its self-fulfilment. He writes in Savitri,

"Thus shall the earth open to divinity
And common natures feel the wide uplift,
Illumine common acts with the spirit's ray
And meet the deity in common things.

82
Ibid., p. 1067.
Nature shall live to manifests secret God,
The spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine".

Comparing Divine life with our ordinary mental life of ignorance Sri Aurobindo says that the new life would, in a sense be a 'reversal' of the present law of human consciousness and life. We, in our ordinary existence, believe that joy and grief peril and passion, pleasure and pain, success and frustration, uncertainties of fate, the struggles and strife of life, the worries and anxieties of existence are all inevitable and necessary aspects of the universe. We cannot conceive of life to be anything different. Any picture of life that does not take into account these is considered to be as, "something featureless and empty or cast in the figure of an immutable sameness; the human mind's picture of heaven is the incessant repetition of an eternal monotone". But the entire outlook will become different in the gnostic existence or Divine life. Consciousness and joy would be infinite in this life. This would open to our view more vistas, greater delight of the spirit, and would bring to our reach, such immensity of existence, consciousness and bliss that we, as mental beings cannot even imagine. Such a Divine life, according to Sri Aurobindo, is going to be our


ultimate destiny. The gnostic being or superman is aware of his individuality, universality and transcendence at the same time. He is aware not of his peripheral differences but also of his basic underlying unity. Thus Aurobindo never regards that man's destiny is to conquer the basic abstract unity by complexity, rejecting his individuality. Here also lies the difference between Aurobindo and Sankara. The destiny of man is his identity or oneness with the absolute or saccidananda in both status and dynamics. He is to remove ignorance and to divinise the entire living beings of the world. Sri Aurobindo says, this "fullness of life must be the goal of development towards which we are tending and which will manifest (itself) at an early or later state of our destiny".

THE FUTURE OF MAN

Man as he exists today is the driving force behind his own future evolution. Aurobindo writes in his The Synthesis of Yoga, "Man is precisely that term and symbol of a higher Existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the terms of the lower". Man is the greatest among living beings. His ideal is not the animal's ideal repeated on a higher level of

85 Ibid., p. 1089.
existence. Animals are satisfied with the minimum requisites. But man is ever discontented and pines for higher and higher achievements in the realms of life and spirit. "The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal". Man always has an insatiable desire for freedom, the supreme freedom of the human spirit from the limitations of nature. He can satisfy that desire only when he directs his mind whole-heartedly towards the divine. Aurobindo observes that "Man, the mental being in Nature, is especially distinguished from her less developed creatures by a greater power of individuality, by the liberation of the mental consciousness which enables him finally to understand more and more (of) himself and his law of being and his development, by the liberation of the mental will which enables him under the secret control of the universal Will to manage more and more the materials and lines of his development and by the capacity in the end to go beyond himself, beyond his mentality and open his consciousness into that from which mind, life and body proceed" (sic).


Man is faced in this world with many problems that seem to be insurmountable. Man is estranged in his existence, he is out of harmony with his world and his nature. He is out of harmony because he is different from all that has proceeded him on the evolutionary ladder. He is in disharmony with his nature because he has within his being the push of Saccidananda to exceed himself. Man is pushed forward because man, "not only turns his gaze downward and around him, when he has reached a higher level, but upward towards what is above him and inward towards what is occult within him. In him not only the downward gaze of the universal Being in the evolution has become conscious, but its conscious upward and inward gaze also develops".

However the philosophy of man is not limited to his few qualities, his past customs and traditions, his present associations and relations but it is mainly linked up with his future evolution and destiny. Man is the seat of a new faith and hope. He is endless becoming. He is conscious manifestation. He is no more a continuity of nature. He has in fact broken his links with nature, established his own independent existence in

the realm of consciousness. Man is out to organise and reorganise nature. In this organisation he is not one with it. There is a wide gulf between him and nature. He has tamed nature and now he is trying to improve upon it. Man is not only capable of integrating the past and present experiences on the basis of his reflective analysis but is singularly capable of projecting his future possibilities. In Aurobindo's conception Man is not only what he is but also the past of all he was and the potentiality of all that he is not. He writes "Man's greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is being made ready by a divine Craftsman".

Man is an endless aspiring medium of consciousness. It is rather difficult to explain or convey his meaning purpose and destiny. Man, however, is in Aurobindo's system, not the last and final stage of evolution. He writes, "man is the now apparent culmination but not the real ultimate summit; for he is himself a transitional being and stands at the turning-point of the whole movement". Again he writes, "The imperfection of Man is not the last word of Nature, but his perfection too is not last peak of the Spirit". Before man, evolution was confined to the material


92 Ibid., p. 763.
and outer world, the turning point comes with the advent of man when evolution can become an inner or 'consciousness' evolution. The process of this inner evolution is slow and painstaking in its own view, but from the point of previous evolution, it is rapid and less difficult. Further more, man today has his existence in a world of bondage and to be fully free and follow his destiny, he must undergo a radical transformation. He must be transformed in his whole personality. For this transformation to take place, man must begin to bring about a change in himself. Aurobindo writes, "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". He can begin by trying to bridge the disharmony in his own being and by this action, bring himself closer to the Absolute. When man ascends from psychic to spiritual to the supramental the breach between his being and the Absolute will no longer exist. "There will be a luminous and enjoyed perfection of unity with all instead of a blind and suffered subjection of the individual to the universal, and at every moment the action of the universal in the individual and the individual in the universal will be enlightened and

93 The three transformations are discussed in the chapter Man and Evolution, p. 221.

governed by the rule of the transcendent Supernature”.

Thus the future of man is more hopeful than his present. His happiness in the future will be much more than his present sense of achievement. It is not that he owns a tremendous intellect. Intellect or reason is an insufficient medium for any such higher work. On the other hand, he is in possession of a crowning and dawning consciousness. As the solar energy and its powers are going to replace all other powers and energies, so also the evolving consciousness of man is bound to replace all other media, mechanisms and instrumentation of knowledge. We can well visualise that in future there will not be any acquisition of knowledge on the part of man. All knowledge is revealed to him and even all truths will be at his disposal. This is the vision of the future of man. Man has a brighter future. He is bound to undergo psychic and spiritual transformation. There is new hope which awaits him. He may not stress his memory nor strain his reason in future. He may depend more and more on his luminous consciousness. Consciousness may be his source, medium and ideal. He may be independent of all conflicts and limitations. His knowledge may be self-revealing. On this basis he may be nearer to the divine. Aurobindo writes, "If (the body of the future

Ibid., p.928.
race) is a luminous body Spoken of in the Veda as possessed by the beings of the higher planes. It is supposed by certain school of yoga in the East and the West that in the final transformation on earth man will develop a body having these qualities. It was called the "Corps Glorieux"- "body of glory" - by the Mother's first spiritual instructor". Thus that man, can become one with the Divine. Evolution implies a progression. This progression, is from higher to a still higher consciousness. Man, as he is, is endowed with an emergent consciousness. On this basis, he is bound to undergo several transmutations at various levels. This is a continuous process. For this reason he is a new category by himself. Taking all these qualities into consideration we can say that man will attain the status of god in future when he becomes a superior man or superman. When he attains the Divine-Consciousness he will become the Divine.