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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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## **PRANAB-DA**

Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, “Dada” to most who knew him, passed away on 8th January 2010.

On 16 May 1957, the Mother wrote:

“To thee whom my love selected when the time had come to start my work on the most material level —

I did not see in thee the man, but the human being capable of supramentalisation, the aspiration for physical perfection, the effort towards total transformation, the will to divinise the body and a natural and spontaneous capacity to do so, a physical harmony already partly realised and a growing possibility of expressing materially the psychic consciousness. With the certitude of a final Victory.”

***EVOLUTION'S HUGE ORCHESTRAL DANCE***



*The theme for this issue is the patent fact of an ascending progression in creation and the luminous future that awaits us.*

*There is so much Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said on Evolution — the reader will find here only some of the passages on that vast and complex subject, arranged in three sections:*

- The spiritual theory of Evolution  
and the process of Evolution*
- Man's role in this scheme*
- The next stage*





## EVOLUTION'S HUGE ORCHESTRAL DANCE

There is a purpose in each stumble and fall;  
Nature's most careless lolling is a pose  
Preparing some forward step, some deep result.  
Ingenious notes plugged into a motived score,  
These million discords dot the harmonious theme  
Of the evolution's huge orchestral dance.  
A Truth supreme has forced the world to be;  
It has wrapped itself in Matter as in a shroud,  
A shroud of Death, a shroud of Ignorance.  
It compelled the suns to burn through silent Space,  
Flame-signs of its uncomprehended Thought  
In a wide brooding ether's formless muse:  
It made of Knowledge a veiled and struggling light,  
Of Being a substance nescient, dense and dumb,  
Of Bliss the beauty of an insentient world.  
In finite things the conscious Infinite dwells:  
Involved it sleeps in Matter's helpless trance,  
It rules the world from its sleeping senseless Void;  
Dreaming it throws out mind and heart and soul  
To labour crippled, bound, on the hard earth;  
A broken whole it works through scattered points;  
Its gleaming shards are Wisdom's diamond thoughts,  
Its shadowy reflex our ignorance.  
It starts from the mute mass in countless jets,  
It fashions a being out of brain and nerve,  
A sentient creature from its pleasures and pangs.  
A pack of feelings obscure, a dot of sense  
Survives awhile answering the shocks of life,  
Then, crushed or its force spent, leaves the dead form,  
Leaves the huge universe in which it lived  
An insignificant unconsidered guest.  
But the soul grows concealed within its house;  
It gives to the body its strength and magnificence;  
It follows aims in an ignorant aimless world,  
It lends significance to earth's meaningless life.  
A demigod animal, came thinking man;  
He wallows in mud, yet heavenward soars in thought;

He plays and ponders, laughs and weeps and dreams,  
Satisfies his little longings like the beast;  
He pores upon life's book with student eyes.  
Out of this tangle of intellect and sense,  
Out of the narrow scope of finite thought  
At last he wakes into spiritual mind;  
A high liberty begins and luminous room:  
He glimpses eternity, touches the infinite,  
He meets the gods in great and sudden hours,  
He feels the universe as his larger self,  
Makes Space and Time his opportunity  
To join the heights and depths of being in light,  
In the heart's cave speaks secretly with God.  
But these are touches and high moments lived;  
Fragments of Truth supreme have lit his soul,  
Reflections of the sun in waters still.  
A few have dared the last supreme ascent  
And break through borders of blinding light above,  
And feel a breath around of mightier air,  
Receive a vaster being's messages  
And bathe in its immense intuitive Ray.

— *SECTION 1* —

*A SLOW ASCENSION TOWARDS 'THAT'*

The whole universe is in a slow ascending evolution towards That which it must manifest.

*CWM 10: 266*

## 1

**IS EVOLUTION EVIDENT?**

*It is self-evident that evolution has a goal and therefore cannot stop short now.*

You know this because you have read Sri Aurobindo's books! But take any man in the street and ask him what the intention of the universe and the evolution is; you will see what reply he gives you! That he knows nothing about it. Naturally, those who have read and studied Sri Aurobindo's books at least think they know something about it. When Sri Aurobindo wrote this,<sup>1</sup> he wrote it quite obviously for people who were not interested in yoga and had not read his books. He wrote it for people who were concerned with physical education, so he put himself in their place, expressed their ideas and tried to lead them a little farther. He took the standpoint of those who had never read his books.

But you said "it is self-evident." There are many people here — several hundred — if you ask them individually, not to repeat to you what they have read, but what they themselves feel and think about the intention of universal evolution and whether there is any intention in the universal evolution. . . I don't think there would be many who could tell you in all sincerity: "It is like this, it is like that, it is this. . . . It is obviously that." Some of them could quote passages from Sri Aurobindo, but otherwise. . .

If you yourself stop thinking, if you stop thinking with the help of what you have read, and try to express your personal experience, have you any certainty?

I am not speaking, you see, of the result of what you have read or learnt or all that; I am speaking of the result of your personal experience, your own, something that's evident to you because it is your own life, it is your own experience — are you capable of describing it?

CWM 9: 183

1. A new humanity would then be a race of mental beings on the earth and in the earthly body, but delivered from its present conditions in the reign of the cosmic Ignorance so far as to be possessed of a perfected mind, a mind of light which could even be a subordinate action of the supermind or Truth-consciousness, and in any case capable of the full possibilities of mind acting as a recipient of that truth and at least a secondary action of it in thought and life. It could even be a part of what could be described as a divine life upon earth and at least the beginnings of an evolution in the Knowledge and no longer entirely or predominantly in the Ignorance. How far this would go, whether it would eventually embrace the whole of humanity or only an advanced portion of it, would depend upon the intention in the evolution itself, on the intention in whatever cosmic or transcendent Will is guiding the movements of the universe.

## 2

**THE CENTRAL SIGNIFICANT MOTIVE OF TERRESTRIAL EXISTENCE**

A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence. This significance is concealed at the outset by the involution of the Spirit, the Divine Reality, in a dense material Inconscience; a veil of Inconscience, a veil of insensibility of Matter hides the universal Consciousness-Force which works within it, so that the Energy, which is the first form the Force of creation assumes in the physical universe, appears to be itself inconscient and yet does the works of a vast occult Intelligence.

CWSA 22: 856-57

## 3

**TO AWAKEN, TO DEVELOP, TO REVEAL THE SPIRIT**

In fact, according to very old traditions, the Earth, from the deeper spiritual point of view, has been created as a symbolic concentration of universal life so that the work of transformation may be done more easily, in a limited, concentrated "space" — so to say — where all the elements of the problem are gathered together so that, in the concentration, the action may be more total and effective. So here he speaks only of terrestrial existence, but we can understand that it is a symbolic existence, that is, that it *represents* a universal action. It is a symbolic, concentrated representation. And he says that "the central motive", that is, the purpose of terrestrial existence is to awaken, to develop and finally to reveal in a total manifestation the Spirit which is hidden at the centre of Matter and impels this Matter *from within* outwards towards a progressive development which will liberate the Spirit working from within.

CWM 9: 210

## 4

**THE HOW AND WHY OF CREATION**

The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so

that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.

And she takes up this creation, which appears to be totally inconscient but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and sole Reality and she works so that all this can develop, become self-aware and realise itself fully. But she does not show it from the very beginning. It develops gradually, and that is why at the start it is a secret which will be unveiled as it nears the end. And man has reached a point in the evolution high enough for this secret to be unveiled and for what was done in an apparent inconscience to be done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.

*CWM 9: 321-22*

## 5

### **EVOLUTION — KEY-NOTE OF 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY THOUGHT**

The theory of evolution has been the key-note of the thought of the nineteenth century. It has not only affected all its science and its thought-attitude, but powerfully influenced its moral temperament, its politics and its society. Without it there could not have been that entire victory of the materialistic notion of life and the universe which has been the general characteristic of the age that is now passing, — a victory which for a time even claimed to be definitive, — nor such important corollary effects of this great change as the failure of the religious spirit and the breaking-up of religious beliefs. In society and politics it has led to the substitution of the evolutionary for the moral idea of progress and the consequent materialisation of social ideas and social progress, the victory of the economic man over the idealist. The scientific dogma of heredity, the theory of the quite recent emergence of the civilised thinking human animal, the popular notion of the all-pervading struggle for life and the aid it has given to an exaggerated development of the competitive instinct, the idea of the social organism and the aid it has given to the contrary development of economic socialism and the increasing victory of the organised State or community over the free individual, — all these are outflowings from the same source.

*CWSA 13: 169*

## 6

**COLLAPSE OF THE MATERIALISTIC VIEW**

The materialistic view of the world is now rapidly collapsing and with it the materialistic statement of the evolution theory must disappear. Modern European thought progresses with a vertiginous rapidity. If it is Teutonic in its fidelity of observation and its tendency to laborious systematisation, it has also another side, Celtic-Hellenic, a side of suppleness, mobility, readiness for rapid change, insatiable curiosity. It does not allow the same thought, the same system to exercise for very long a secure empire; it is in haste to question, to challenge, to reject, to remould, to discover new and opposite truths, to venture upon other experiments. At present this spirit of questioning has not attacked the evolution theory at its centre, but it is visibly preparing to give it a new form and meaning.

CWSA 13: 169-70

## 7

**GENERAL IDEA OF EVOLUTION**

The general idea of evolution was the filiation of each successive form or state of things to that which preceded it, its appearance by a process of outbringing or deploying of some possibility prepared and even necessitated by previous states and previous tendencies. Not only does a form contain the seed of the form that reproduces it, but also the seed of the possible new form that varies from it. By successive progression a world-system evolves out of the nebula, a habitable planet appears in an uninhabitable system, protoplasmic life emerges by some yet unknown process out of Matter, the more developed grows out of the less developed organism. The fish and the creeping thing are the descendants of the plasm, the biped and quadruped trace back to the fish and reptile, man is a quadruped of the genus Ape who has learned to walk erect on two legs and has divested himself of characteristics unsuited to his new mode of life and progression. Force in Matter is the unconscious Goddess who has worked these miracles by her inherent principle of natural adaptation and in the organism by the additional machinery of heredity; by natural selection those species which reproduce new characteristics developed by adaptation to the environment and favourable to survival, tend to propagate themselves and remain; others fall back in the race of life and disappear.

Such were once the salient ideas; but some of them and not the least important are now questioned. The idea of the struggle for life tends to be modified and even denied; it is asserted that, at least as popularly understood, it formed no real part of



Darwinism. This modification is a concession to reviving moralistic and idealistic tendencies which seek for a principle of love as well as a principle of egoism in the roots of life. Equally important are the conclusion arrived at by some investigators into the phenomena of heredity that acquired characteristics are not handed down to the posterity and the theory that it is chiefly predispositions that are inherited; for by these modifications the process of evolution begins to wear a less material and mechanical aspect; its source and the seat of its motive power are shifted to that which is least material, most psychical in Matter. Finally, the first idea of a slow and gradual evolution is being challenged by a new theory of evolution through sudden and rapid outbursts; and again we pass from the sense of an obvious superficial machinery and all-sufficient material necessity to profundities whose mystery is yet to be fathomed.

In themselves, indeed, these modifications would not be radical. Their importance lies in their synchronism with a great resurgence, in new forms, of old ideas that had been submerged by the materialistic wave. Theories of vitalism, idealistic tendencies of thought, which were supposed to have been slain by the march of physical Science, now arise, dispute the field and find their account in every change of scientific generalisation which at all opens the way to their own expansion and reassertion. In what respects then is it likely that the evolution theory will be found deficient by the wider and more complex thought of the future and compelled to undergo essential changes?

In the first place, the materialistic theory of evolution starts from the Sankhya position that all world is a development out of indeterminate Matter by Nature-Force, but it excludes the Silent Cause of the Sankhyas, the Purusha or observant and reflective Soul. Hence it conceives the world as a sort of automatic machine which has somehow happened. No intelligent cause, no aim, no *raison d'être*, but simply an automatic deployment, combination, chance self-adaptation of means to end without any knowledge or intention in the adaptation. This is the first paradox of the theory and its justification must be crushing and conclusive if it is to be finally accepted by the human mind.

Again, Force in indeterminate Matter without any Conscious-Soul being all the beginning and all the material of things, Mind, Life and Consciousness can only be developments out of Matter and even only operations of Matter. They cannot be at all things in themselves, different from Matter or in the last degree independent of it. This is the second paradox and the point at which the theory has eventually failed to establish itself. More and more the march of knowledge leads towards the view that the three are different forms of Force, each with its own characteristics and proper method of action, each reacting upon the other and enriching its forms by the contact.

## 8

**THE TRIPLE CREATION**

An idea has even begun to dawn that there is not a single creation but a triple, material, vital and mental; it may be regarded as a composite of three worlds, as it were, interpenetrating each other. We are led back to the old Vedic idea of the triple world in which we live. And we may reasonably forecast that when its operations are examined from this new standpoint, the old Vedic knowledge will be justified that it is one Law and Truth acting in all, but very differently formulated according to the medium in which the work proceeds and its dominant principle. The same gods exist on all the planes and maintain the same essential laws, but with a different aspect and mode of working and to ever wider results.

If this be the truth, then the action of evolution must be other than has been supposed. For example the evolution of Life in Matter must have been produced and governed not by a material principle, but by a Life-Principle working in and upon the conditions of Matter and applying to it its own laws, impulses, necessities. This idea of a mighty Life, other than the material Principle, working in it and upon it has begun to dominate the advanced thought of Europe. The other idea of a still mightier Mind working in Life and upon it has not yet made sufficient way because the investigation of the laws of Mind is still in its groping infancy.

Again, the materialist theory supposes a rigid chain of material necessity; each previous condition is a coordination of so many manifest forces and conditions; each resulting condition is its manifest result. All mystery, all element of the incalculable disappears. If we can completely analyse the previous conditions and discover their general law, we can be sure of the subsequent result, as in the case of an eclipse or an earthquake. For all is manifestation which is the logical result of a previous manifestation.

Once more the conclusion is too simple and trenchant; the world is more complex. Besides the manifest causes there are those that are unmanifest or latent and not subject to our analysis or come from behind or above and cannot be calculated and forecast though by a higher revelatory Knowledge they may be foreseen. This element increases as we climb the ladder of existence; its scope is greater in Life than in Matter, freer in Mind than in Life. European thought already tends to posit behind all manifest activity an Unmanifest called according to intellectual predilection either the Inconscient or the Subconscient which contains more and in a way unseizable to us knows more and can more than the surface existence. Out of this Unmanifest the manifest constantly emerges.

Again we return towards an ancient truth already known to the Vedic sages, — the idea of an inconscient or subconscient ocean of being, the ocean of the heart of things out of which the worlds form themselves. But the Veda posits also a governing

and originating Superconscient which accounts for the appearance of a hidden consciousness and knowledge pervading the operations of Evolution and which constitutes the self-acting Law and Truth behind them.

CWSA 13: 172-73

## 9

### **SLOW PROGRESSION OR RAPID OUTBURSTS**

The theory of materialistic evolution led naturally to the idea of a slow and gradual progression in a straight line. It admits reversions, atavisms, loops and zigzags of reaction deflecting the straight line, but these must necessarily be subordinate, hardly visible if we calculate by ages rather than by shorter periods of time. Here too, fuller knowledge disturbs the received notions. In the history of man everything seems now to point to alternations of a serious character, ages of progression, ages of recoil, the whole constituting an evolution that is cyclic rather than in one straight line. A theory of cycles of human civilisation has been advanced, we may yet arrive at the theory of cycles of human evolution, the Kalpa and Manwantaras of the Hindu theory. If its affirmation of cycles of world-existence is farther off from affirmation, it is because they must be so vast in their periods as to escape not only all our means of observation, but all our means of deduction or definite inference.

Instead of slow, steady, minute gradations it is now suggested that new steps in evolution are rather effected by rapid and sudden outbursts, outbreaks, as it were, of manifestation from the unmanifest. Shall we say that Nature preparing slowly behind the veil, working a little backwards, working a little forwards, one day arrives at the combination of outward things which makes it possible for her to throw her new idea into a realised formation, suddenly, with violence, with a glorious dawning, with a grandiose stride? And that would explain the economy of her relapses and her reappearances of things long dead. She aims at a certain immediate result and to arrive at it more quickly and entirely she sacrifices many of her manifestations and throws them back into the latent, the unmanifest, the subconscious. But she has not finished with them; she will need them at another stage for a farther result. Therefore she brings them forward again and they reappear in new forms and other combinations and act towards new ends. So evolution advances.

And her material means? Not the struggle for life only. The real law, it is now suggested, is rather mutual help or at least mutual accommodation. Struggle exists, mutual destruction exists, but as a subordinate movement, a red minor chord, and only becomes acute when the movement of mutual accommodation fails and elbow-room has to be made for a fresh attempt, a new combination.

The propagation of acquired characteristics by heredity was too hastily and

completely asserted; it is now perhaps in danger of being too summarily denied. Not Matter alone, but Life and Mind working upon Matter help to determine evolution. Heredity is only a material shadow of soul-reproduction, of the rebirth of Life and Mind into new forms. Ordinarily, as a constant factor or basis, there is the reproduction of that which was already evolved; for new characteristics to be propagated in the species they must have been accepted, received, sanctioned in the vital and mental worlds; then only can they be automatically self-reproduced from the material seed. Otherwise they are private and personal acquisitions and are returned into the State exchequer, the treasury of the subconscious, and do not go to the family estate. When the mind-world and life-world are ready, they are poured out freely on fit recipients. This is the reason why it is predisposition that is chiefly inherited. The psychical and vital force in the material principle is first impressed; when that has been done on a sufficient scale, it is ready for a general new departure and an altered heredity appears.

Thus the whole view of Evolution begins to change. Instead of a mechanical, gradual, rigid evolution out of indeterminate Matter by Nature-Force we move towards the perception of a conscious, supple, flexible, intensely surprising and constantly dramatic evolution by a superconscient Knowledge which reveals things in Matter, Life and Mind out of the unfathomable Inconscient from which they rise.

CWSA 13: 173-75

## 10

### **SPIRITUAL SECRET AID IN TARDY EVOLUTION**

Alive to the truth that dwells in God's extremes,  
 Awake to a motion of all-seeing Force,  
 The slow outcome of the long ambiguous years  
 And the unexpected good from woeful deeds,  
 The immortal sees not as we vainly see.  
 He looks on hidden aspects and screened powers,  
 He knows the law and natural line of things.  
 Undriven by a brief life's will to act,  
 Unharassed by the spur of pity and fear,  
 He makes no haste to untie the cosmic knot  
 Or the world's torn jarring heart to reconcile.  
 In Time he waits for the Eternal's hour.  
 Yet a spiritual secret aid is there;  
 While a tardy Evolution's coils wind on. . .

CWSA 33: 58

## 11

**THE EVOLUTIONARY PROGRESSION**

So, in the outer appearances as you see them, at first you find the mineral kingdom with stones, earth, minerals which to us, in our outer consciousness, appear absolutely unconscious. Yet, behind this unconsciousness there is the life of the Spirit, the consciousness of the Spirit, which is completely hidden, which is as if asleep — though that is only an appearance — and which works from within in order gradually to transform this Matter that is completely inert in appearance, so that its organisation may lend itself more and more to the manifestation of consciousness. And he says here that at first this veil of inert Matter is so total that, to a superficial glance, it is something that has neither life nor consciousness. When you pick up a stone and look at it with your ordinary eyes and consciousness, you say, “It has no life, no consciousness.” For one who knows how to see behind appearances, there is, hidden at the centre of this Matter — at the centre of *each atom* of this Matter — there is, hidden, the Supreme Divine Reality working from within, gradually, through the millennia, to change this inert Matter into something that is expressive enough to be able to reveal the Spirit within. Then you have the progression of the history of Life: how, from the stone there suddenly appeared a rudimentary life and through successive species a sort of organisation, that is, an organic substance capable of revealing life. But between the mineral and vegetable kingdoms there are transitional elements; one doesn’t know whether they belong to the mineral or already to the vegetable kingdom — when one studies this in detail one sees some strange species which belong neither here nor there, which are not quite this and yet not quite that. Then comes the development of the vegetable kingdom where naturally life appears, for there is growth, transformation — a plant sprouts up, develops, grows — and with the first phenomenon of life comes also the phenomenon of decomposition and disintegration which is relatively much more rapid than in the stone: a stone, if protected from the impact of other forces, can last apparently indefinitely, whereas the plant already follows a curve of growth, ascent and decline and decomposition — but this with an extremely restricted consciousness. Those who have studied the vegetable kingdom in detail are well aware that there is a consciousness there. For instance, plants need sunlight to live — the sun represents the active energy which makes them grow — so, if you put a plant in a place where there is no sunlight, you see it always growing up and up and up, trying, making an *effort* to reach the sunlight. In a virgin forest, for instance, where man does not interfere, there is this kind of struggle among all the plants which are always growing straight upwards in one way or another in their *effort* to catch the sunlight. It is very interesting. But even if you put a flower-pot in a fairly small courtyard surrounded by walls, where the sun doesn’t come, a plant which normally is as high as this (*gesture*), becomes

as tall as that: it stretches up and makes an *effort* to find the light. Therefore there is a consciousness, a will to live which is already manifesting. And little by little, with species that are more and more developed, you again reach another transitional passage between what is no longer entirely a plant and still not yet an animal. There are several species like that, which are very interesting. There are those plants which are carnivorous, plants like an open mouth: you throw a fly inside, snap! they swallow it. It is no longer quite a plant, it is not yet an animal. There are many plants of this kind.

Then you come to the animal. The first animals, yes, it is difficult to distinguish them from plants, there is almost no consciousness. But there you see all the animal species, you know them, don't you, right up to the higher animals which, indeed, are *very* conscious. They have their own completely independent will. They are very conscious and marvellously intelligent, like the elephant, for instance; you know all the stories about elephants and their wonderful intelligence. Therefore, it is already a very perceptible appearance of mind. And through this progressive development, we suddenly pass on to a species which has probably disappeared — traces of which have been found — an intermediate animal like a monkey or of the same line as the monkey — something close to it, similar, if not the monkey as we know it — but already an animal that walks on two legs. And from there we come to man. There is an entire beginning of the evolution of man; we can't say, can we, that he shows a brilliant intelligence, but there is already an action of the mind, a beginning of independence, of independent reaction to the environment and the forces of Nature. And so, in man there is the whole range, right up to the higher being capable of spiritual life.

CWM 9: 210-12

## 12

### THE SPIRAL OF EVOLUTION

*Why does evolution go in spirals instead of being a constant progress?*

It is a constant progress. But if you made it in a straight line, you would cover only a single part — the world is a globe, it is not a line.

*If it were a cylinder!*

Even for a cylinder, if you drew only one line, one part of the cylinder would escape you altogether. This movement in a spiral is precisely to try and make everything enter this phenomenon of evolution — so that not only one thing may advance whilst the others remain behind. And so, according to the centre where the

progress is concentrated, one seems to move away from one thing and enter into another. But in the long run, when one evolves consciously, one does not forget one thing in order to do another. What is bad at present is forgetfulness; it is that when following a certain activity for a realisation, one forgets all the others or they go into the background, they have no longer any intensity. But this is a human shortcoming which can be corrected — it ought to be corrected.

*Do all progress in a spiral, and all together or separately?*

I fear it is not very harmonious, for the world seems to me rather chaotic! If indeed the march were totally organised, it would be a harmonious development, and if one could see where one is going — having the line of what has been done, one could prolong these lines and see what would come. But for the moment this is open only to an élite. And the mass follows the movement, and all the movements are not homogeneous and simultaneous — certain things are slower to put into line and movement than others. So, even a little difference like this suffices for it to create an immense difference in the movement.

There is even a considerable number of spirals intersecting and giving the impression of contradiction. If one could follow in its totality the movement of universal progress, one would see that there is such a great number of spirals which intersect, that finally one does not know at all whether one is advancing or going back. For, at the same moment some things are going up and others falling back into the darkness, and all these are not absolutely independent of one another. There is a kind of coordination, so that instead of imagining a spiral like that, we should have to think of spherical spirals. If this could be described, all these spirals taken together would form an immense globe. And it is at the intersection of these spirals that there are moments of progress. But before the progress is coherent, total, there must be an inner organisation of life, different from that of Nature, arranged in accordance with a plan. For Nature — her plan is only made with an aspiration, a decision and a goal. And the road seems quite fantastic, following the impulses of every minute — trials, set-backs, contradictions, progress and demolition of what has already been done; and it is such a chaos that one can understand nothing there. She has the air of somebody doing things impulsively — giving out certain impulses and destroying them, beginning others again, and going on and on like that. She makes and unmakes, she remakes and again demolishes, she mixes, destroys, constructs and all this at the same time. It is incomprehensible. And yet, she evidently has a plan, and herself goes towards a certain goal which is very clear to her but quite veiled to human consciousness. . . . It is very interesting. If one could construct something like that, it would give an idea: a globe made of intersecting spirals of different colours, and each representing one aspect of Nature's creation. And these aspects are made to complete one another — but so far they are rather in competition



than collaboration, and it seems she is always obliged to destroy something in order to make another, which makes for a terrible wastage, and a still greater disorder. But if all this were seen in its totality, it would be extremely interesting. For it is an extremely complex criss-crossing, in all possible directions, of a spiralling ascent.

CWM 5: 333-35

### 13

#### ONE CAN'T BRING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING

*In the case of man, did the animal man bring down the mind or was it the descent of mind . . .*

Oh! You mean: Is it something in the intermediary being or in the higher ape which by its aspiration called down the mind? But the aspiration itself is the result of a previous descent.

It is quite obvious that nothing can be manifested which is not previously contained in what exists. One can't bring something out of nothing. One can make what is there emerge, manifest, express itself, develop; but if nothing had been there, nothing would ever have come out. All progress, all perfection is the result of an inner effort of "something" that is present and seeks to manifest. That is to say, absolutely, the principle comes first and the expression afterwards. As we go on reading *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo will prove this to you in every possible way. If there were not an eternal principle, if there were not — we give it all the names we like, can't we? — a Supreme Reality, there would never have been a universe, because nothing comes out of nothing.

CWM 9: 221-22

### 14

#### CONSCIOUSNESS PRECEDES FORM

*But, Mother, then the question arises: Does the descent of the consciousness develop the form or is it the development of the form that compels the descent of a higher consciousness?*

There would be no universe without the descent of consciousness. Where would your universe begin, and with what?

CWM 9: 221



## 15

**INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION**

The involution is of the Divine in the Inconscience and it is done by the interposition of intermediate planes (overmind etc., mind, vital — then the plunge into the Inconscient which is the origin of matter). But all that is not a process answering to the evolution in the inverse sense — for there is no need for that, but a gradation of consciousness which is intended to make the evolution upwards possible.

*SABCL 22: 33*

## 16

**PROGRESSIVE MANIFESTATION AND OVERT REALISATION**

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her

evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

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

CWSA 21: 5-6

## 17

### THE STORY OF SUCCESSIVE INVOLUTIONS

When the Supreme decided to exteriorise Himself in order to be able to see Himself, the first thing in Himself which He exteriorised was the Knowledge of the world and the Power to create it. This Knowledge-Consciousness and Force began its work; and in the supreme Will there was a plan, and the first principle of this plan was the expression of both the essential Joy and the essential Freedom, which seemed to be the most interesting feature of this creation.

So intermediaries were needed to express this Joy and Freedom in forms. And at first four Beings were emanated to start this universal development which was to be the progressive objectivisation of all that is potentially contained in the Supreme. These Beings were, in the principle of their existence: Consciousness and Light, Life, Bliss and Love, and Truth.

You can easily imagine that they had a sense of great power, great strength, of something tremendous, for they were essentially the very principle of these things. Besides, they had full freedom of choice, for this creation was to be Freedom itself. . . . As soon as they set to work — they had their own conception of how it had to be done — being totally free, they chose to do it independently. Instead of taking the attitude of servant and instrument of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in what I have just read to you,<sup>1</sup> they naturally took the attitude of the master, and this mistake — as I

1. "The sword has a joy in the battle-play, the arrow has a mirth in its hiss and its leaping, the earth has a rapture in its dizzy whirl through space, the sun has the royal ecstasy of its blazing splendours and its eternal motion. O thou self-conscious instrument, take thou too the delight of thy own appointed workings."

may call it — was the first cause, the essential cause of all the disorder in the universe. As soon as there was separation — for that is the essential cause, separation — as soon as there was separation between the Supreme and what had been emanated, Consciousness changed into inconscience, Light into darkness, Love into hatred, Bliss into suffering, Life into death and Truth into falsehood. And they proceeded with their creations independently, in separation and disorder.

The result is the world as we see it. It was made progressively, stage by stage, and it would truly take a little too long to tell you all that, but finally, the consummation is Matter — obscure, inconscient, miserable. . . . The creative Force which had emanated these four Beings, essentially for the creation of the world, witnessed what was happening, and turning to the Supreme she prayed for the remedy and the cure of the evil that had been done.

Then she was given the command to precipitate her Consciousness into this inconscience, her Love into this suffering, and her Truth into this falsehood. And a greater consciousness, a more total love, a more perfect truth than what had been emanated at first, plunged, so to say, into the horror of Matter in order to awaken in it consciousness, love and truth, and to begin the movement of Redemption which was to bring the material universe back to its supreme origin.

So, there have been what might be called “successive involutions” in Matter, and a history of these involutions. The present result of these involutions is the appearance of the Supermind emerging from the inconscience; but there is nothing to indicate that after this appearance there will be no others . . . for the Supreme is inexhaustible and will always create new worlds.

That is my story.

CWM 9: 206-08

## 18

### WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

We always have, at least in our way of speaking, the idea of a *moment (laughing)* when the Lord decides to objectify Himself. Like this, the explanation becomes easy: He objectifies Himself gradually, progressively, and this results in a progressive evolution. But that is only a manner of speaking; because there is no beginning, there is no end, and yet there is a progression. The sense of succession, the sense of evolution, the sense of progress only exists with the manifestation. It is only when one speaks of the earth that one can give an explanation that is both very rational and in accord with the facts, because the earth has a beginning, not in its soul but in its material reality.

It is also likely that a material universe has a beginning.

(Silence)

If you look at it this way, for a universe a miracle would be the sudden intrusion of something from another universe. And for the earth, this reduces the problem to something very understandable — a miracle is the sudden intrusion of something which did not belong to the earth: it produces a radical and immediate change by introducing a principle which did not belong to this physical world of earth.

But there again, it is said that at the very centre of each element *everything exists* in principle; so even that miracle is not possible.

CWM 10: 161

## 19

### FROM NATURE TO ITS DIVINE ORIGIN

*Sweet Mother, here he says: "This consciousness . . . reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man. . . ."*

Yes, that is what I have just told you: at his highest stage, man begins to be altogether independent of Nature — "altogether" is an exaggeration: he *can* become altogether independent. A man who has realised the spiritual consciousness in himself, who has a direct relation with the divine Origin is literally independent of Nature, of the force of Nature.

. . .

And that is what he calls "exceeding itself", that is, that the Being, the inner divine Consciousness, the supreme spiritual Reality in its effort to develop . . . in its effort to develop a conscious means of manifesting itself has arrived at a being capable of having a direct contact with It without going through the whole process of Nature.

CWM 9: 213

## 20

**FROM BELOW AND FROM ABOVE**

A difficult evolution from below  
 Called a masked intervention from above;  
 Else this great, blind inconscient universe  
 Could never have disclosed its hidden mind,  
 Or even in blinkers worked in beast and man  
 The Intelligence that devised the cosmic scheme.

CWSA 33: 146-47

## 21

**DOUBLE MOVEMENT OF EVOLUTION**

This terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature from Matter to Mind and beyond it has a double process: there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as its machinery, — for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity; there is, at the same time, an invisible process of soul evolution with rebirth into ascending grades of form and consciousness as its machinery. The first by itself would mean only a cosmic evolution; for the individual would be a quickly perishing instrument, and the race, a more abiding collective formulation, would be the real step in the progressive manifestation of the cosmic Inhabitant, the universal Spirit: rebirth is an indispensable condition for any long duration and evolution of the individual being in the earth-existence. Each grade of cosmic manifestation, each type of form that can house the indwelling spirit, is turned by rebirth into a means for the individual soul, the psychic entity, to manifest more and more of its concealed consciousness; each life becomes a step in a victory over Matter by a greater progression of consciousness in it which shall make eventually Matter itself a means for the full manifestation of the Spirit.

CWSA 22: 858

## 22

**PROGRESSING INDEFINITELY**

If you take terrestrial history, all the forms of life have appeared one after another in a general plan, a general programme, with the addition, always, of a new perfection and a greater consciousness. Take just animal forms — for that is easier to understand, they are the last before man — each animal that appeared had an additional perfection in its general nature — I don't mean in all the details — a greater perfection than the preceding ones, and the crowning point of the ascending march was the human form which, for the moment, from the point of view of consciousness, is the form most capable of manifesting consciousness; that is, the human form at its height, at the height of its possibilities, is capable of more consciousness than all preceding animal forms.

This is *one* of Nature's ways of evolution.

Sri Aurobindo told us last week that this Nature was following an ascending progression in order to manifest more and more the divine consciousness contained in all forms. So, with each new form that it produces, Nature makes a form capable of expressing more completely the spirit which this form contains. But if it were like this, a form comes, develops, reaches its highest point and is followed by another form; the others do not disappear, but the individual does not progress. The individual dog or monkey, for instance, belongs to a species which has its own peculiar characteristics; when the monkey or the man arrives at the height of its possibilities, that is, when a human individual becomes the best type of humanity, it will be finished; the individual will not be able to progress any farther. He belongs to the human species, he will continue to belong to it. So, from the point of view of terrestrial history there is a progress, for each species represents a progress compared with the preceding species; but from the point of view of the individual, there is no progress: he is born, he follows his development, dies and disappears. Therefore, to ensure the progress of the individual, it was necessary to find another means; this one was not adequate. But within the individual, contained in each form, there is an organisation of consciousness which is closer to and more directly under the influence of the inner divine Presence, and the form which is under this influence — this kind of inner concentration of energy — has a life independent of the physical form — this is what we generally call the "soul" or the "psychic being" — and since it is organised around the divine centre it partakes of the divine nature which is immortal, eternal. The outer body falls away, and this remains throughout every experience that it has in each life, and there is a progress from life to life, and it is the progress of the *same* individual. And this movement complements the other, in the sense that instead of a species which progresses relative to other species, it is an individual who passes through all the stages of progress of these species and can continue to progress

even when the species have reached the limit of their possibilities and . . . stay there or disappear — it depends on the case — but they cannot go any farther, whereas the individual, having a life independent of the purely material form, can pass from one form to another and continue his progress *indefinitely*. That makes a double movement which completes itself. And that is why each individual has the possibility of reaching the utmost realisation, independent of the form to which he momentarily belongs.

CWM 9: 214-16

## 23

### THE 'IF'S OF PROGRESS

There is no ambiguity that I can see. “En fait” and “attachée” do not convey any sense of inevitability. “En fait” means simply that in fact, actually, as things are at present all life (on earth) has death attached to it as its end; but it does not in the least convey the idea that it can never be otherwise or that this is the unalterable law of all existence. It is at present a fact for certain reasons which are stated, — due to certain mental and physical circumstances — if these are changed, death is not inevitable any longer. Obviously the alteration can only come “if” certain conditions are satisfied, — all progress and change by evolution depends upon an “if” which gets satisfied. If the animal mind had not been pushed to develop speech and reason, mental man would never have come into existence, — but the “if”, — a stupendous and formidable one, was satisfied. So with the “ifs” that condition a farther progress.

CWM 3: 308-09

## 24

### THE COSMIC PLAN

Even in the Inconscient there seems to be at least an urge of inherent necessity producing the evolution of forms and in the forms a developing Consciousness, and it may well be held that this urge is the evolutionary will of a secret Conscious Being and its push of progressive manifestation the evidence of an innate intention in the evolution. This is a teleological element and it is not irrational to admit it: for the conscious or even the inconscient *nisus* arises from a truth of conscious being that has become dynamic and set out to fulfil itself in an automatic process of material Nature; the teleology, the element of purpose in the *nisus* is the translation of self-

operative Truth of Being into terms of self-effective Will-Power of that Being, and, if consciousness is there, such a Will-Power must also be there and the translation is normal and inevitable. Truth of being inevitably fulfilling itself would be the fundamental fact of the evolution, but Will and its purpose must be there as part of the instrumentation, as an element in the operative principle.

CWSA 22: 866

*Sweet Mother, I did not understand the last part of the sentence.*

What don't you understand? He says that evolution is the result of the inevitable fulfilment of the Truth of Being which is the essential reality of the universe. The fulfilment of this Truth, the fulfilment of the Truth of Being, is the fundamental fact of evolution, that is, it is the cause and principle of the evolution; but naturally, if this Truth of Being is inevitably fulfilled, it must be by means of a will and a purpose. There has to be an aim and the will to fulfil that aim.

To fulfil itself this truth must contain a will to fulfilment and an aim, a purpose, a project it wants to fulfil. In order to accomplish something, one must have the will to do it, and to have the will to do it, one must know what one wants to do. If one doesn't know what one wants to do, one can't do it. First one must *know*, have a plan, a purpose, a programme if you like; one must know what one wants to do, and then one must *will* to do it, and then one can do it.

You see, he says: the universe is the evolutionary fulfilment of the truth of the universal Being. The deploying of the universe is the progressive, evolutionary fulfilment of the truth of the universal Being, but for this truth to be fulfilled it must necessarily contain a plan, that is, it must know what it wants to do and must have the will to do it.

When you do something you know what you want to do, don't you? And then you will to do it, otherwise you couldn't. But it is the same thing, this is what he says.

CWM 9: 259-60

## 25

### A PLAN IN THE UNIVERSE AND A WILL TO FULFIL IT

It must necessarily be admitted that there is a plan in the universe, that it is not something that comes about by chance, and that there is a Will to fulfil this plan, otherwise nothing could happen. You see, Sri Aurobindo contradicts those who say that the universe has no plan and no will. But the minute we admit that there is a consciousness — a conscious existence — behind the universe, we admit at the



same time, automatically, that there is a plan in this universe and a will to fulfil this plan. That is all he says. It is simple, isn't it?

You only have to reduce this to the individual scale. When someone is conscious and does something consciously, he necessarily does it knowing what he wants to do, with a plan. For instance, when you prepare a programme for the anniversary of your "boarding", you have a purpose, don't you? — you want to make a programme for the anniversary, and so you have a plan, you choose what you are going to enact and how it is going to be enacted, and at the same time you *want* to do it, otherwise you would not do it — so, Sri Aurobindo says just that. That is, that if the universe is a conscious entity, if there is a Consciousness which expresses itself, it necessarily expresses itself in accordance with a plan and with a will to express itself — it is quite simple.

Have you understood? . . . A little!

Don't you know this, that in order to do something one must know what one wants to do and then one must do it, have the will to do it? Even if you decide to walk from here to there, you must decide that you want to walk from here to there, and afterwards you must have the will to walk, otherwise you would not move. No?

*Yes.*

Ah! it is nothing but that, it is as simple as that.

*CWM 9: 260-61*

## 26

### OUT OF HIS VOID WE ARISE TO A MIGHTY AND SHINING EXISTENCE

Hid in our hearts is his glory; the Spirit works in our members.  
 Silence is he, with our voices he speaks, in our thoughts he remembers.  
 Deep in our being inhabits the voiceless invisible Teacher;  
 Powers of his godhead we live; the Creator dwells in the creature.  
 Out of his Void we arise to a mighty and shining existence,  
 Out of Inconscience, tearing the black Mask's giant resistance;  
 Waves of his consciousness well from him into these bodies in Nature,  
 Forms are put round him; his oneness, divided by mind's nomenclature,  
 High on the summits of being ponders immobile and single,  
 Penetrates atom and cell as the tide drenches sand-grain and shingle.  
 Oneness unknown to us dwells in these millions of figures and faces,  
 Wars with itself in our battles, loves in our clinging embraces,

Inly the self and the substance of things and their cause and their mover  
 Veiled in the depths which the foam of our thoughts and our life's billows  
 cover,  
 Heaves like the sea in its waves; like heaven with its star-fires it gazes  
 Watching the world and its works. Interned in the finite's mazes,  
 Still shall he rise to his vast superconscience, we with him climbing;  
 Truth of man's thought with the truth of God's spirit faultlessly timing,  
 That which was mortal shall enter immortality's golden precincts,  
 Hushed breath of ecstasy, honey of lotus depths where the bee sinks,  
 Timeless expanses too still for the voice of the hours to inveigle,  
 Spaces of spirit too vast for the flight of the God-bearing eagle, —  
 Enter the Splendour that broods now unseen on us, deity invading, . . .

CWSA 2: 483

## 27

**AN INFINITE WISDOM THAT PREPARES, GUIDES, SHAPES . . .**

Even the atheist ought now to be able to see that creation marches towards some infinite & mighty purpose which evolution in its very nature supposes. But infinite purpose & fulfilment presupposes an infinite wisdom that prepares, guides, shapes, protects & justifies. Revere then that Wisdom & worship it with thoughts in thy soul if not with incense in a temple, and even though thou deny it the heart of infinite Love and the mind of infinite self-efulgence. Then though thou know it not it is still Krishna whom thou reverest & worshippest.

CWSA 12: 489

— *SECTION 2* —

*A NEED WITHIN THE SOUL OF MAN*

There is a need within the soul of man  
The splendours of the surface never sate;  
For life and mind and their glory and debate  
Are the slow prelude of a vaster theme,  
A sketch confused of a supernal plan,  
A preface to the epic of the Supreme.

CWSA 2: 606

## 28

**THE EMERGENCE OF MAN**

On the side of consciousness the new manifestation, the human, could be accounted for by an upsurge of concealed Consciousness from the involution in universal Nature. But in that case it must have had some material form already existent for its vehicle of emergence, the vehicle being adapted by the force of the emergence itself to the needs of a new inner creation; or else a rapid divergence from previous physical types or patterns may have brought a new being into existence. But whichever the hypothesis accepted, this means an evolutionary process, — there is only a difference in the method and machinery of the divergence or transition. Or there may have been, on the contrary, not an upsurge but a descent of mentality from a mind plane above us, perhaps the descent of a soul or mental being into terrestrial Nature. The difficulty would then be the appearance of the human body, too complex and difficult an organ to have been suddenly created or manifested; for such a miraculous speed of process, though quite possible on a supraphysical plane of being, does not seem to figure among the normal possibles or potentials of the material Energy. It could only happen there by an intervention of a supraphysical force or law of Nature or by a creator Mind acting with full power and directly on Matter. An action of a supraphysical Force and a creator may be conceded in every new appearance in Matter; each such appearance is at bottom a miracle operated by a secret Consciousness supported by a veiled Mind Energy or Life Energy: but the action is nowhere seen to be direct, overt, self-sufficient; it is always superimposed on an already realised physical basis and acts by an extension of some established process of Nature. It is more conceivable that there was an opening of some existing body to a supraphysical influx so that it was transformed into a new body; but no such event can lightly be assumed to have taken place in the past history of material Nature: in order to happen it would seem to need either the conscious intervention of an invisible mental being to form the body he intended to inhabit or else a previous development of a mental being in Matter itself who would be already able to receive a supraphysical power and impose it on the rigid and narrow formulas of his physical existence. Otherwise we must suppose that there was a pre-existent body already so much evolved as to be fitted for the reception of a vast mental influx or capable of a pliable response to the descent into it of a mental being. But this would suppose a previous evolution of mind in body to the point at which such a receptivity would be possible. It is quite conceivable that such an evolution from below and such a descent from above co-operated in the appearance of humanity in earth-nature. The secret psychical entity already there in the animal might have itself called down the mental being, the mind Purusha, into the realm of living Matter in order to take up the vital-mental energy already at work and lift it into a higher mentality. But this

would still be a process of evolution, the higher plane only intervening to assist the appearance and enlargement of its own principle in terrestrial Nature.

*CWSA 22: 872-73*

## 29

### **THE HUMAN FORM MOST APPROPRIATE TO EXPRESS THE SPIRIT**

. . . under man's influence some animals have learnt movements they did not make spontaneously, but that is still under man's influence. Certainly without men dogs or horses would never have learnt to do what they have learnt through contact with man. So, it is obvious that the human physical form is the most appropriate one for expressing the Spirit. It may seem inadequate to us, but precisely we feel we are capable of drawing out from our bodies more than they would have given spontaneously without an educating will. And with this possibility of expressing intelligence, observation, comprehension, deduction — all the mental qualities — man has gradually learnt to understand the laws of Nature and tried not only to understand them but master them.

*CWM 9: 220-21*

## 30

### **FROM ANIMAL TO MAN**

The difficulty of the problem is that only a mental being could take an interest in this process of transformation and creation, and that the mental consciousness in the animal species was not sufficient for it to take an interest in this process.

Animals had no means of noting what was happening, of taking it into consideration and remembering it. And that is why this part of the earth's history has almost disappeared. A mental capacity like man's must intervene to make it possible to follow the course of this transformation and retain a memory of it. . . . In fact, more is imagined than remembered. It is quite obvious that the psychic being has gone through all that, but it has not kept a mental memory of it. The memory of the psychic being is a psychic memory which is of an altogether different kind; it is not historical like mental memory which can keep a precise record of what takes place.

*CWM 9: 292-93*

## 31

**MAN'S RELATIVE POSITION IN EVOLUTION**

If we compare what he is with the higher being living in the Truth which we want to become, we may obviously speak about man as he is at present in a very derogatory fashion and complain of his imperfection. But if we put ourselves in the place of the animals which immediately precede him in the evolution, we see that he is endowed with possibilities and powers which the others are quite incapable of expressing. The mere fact of having the ambition, the desire, the will to know the laws of Nature and to master them sufficiently to be able to adapt them to his needs and change them to a certain extent, is something impossible, unthinkable for any animal.

You may tell me that I don't usually speak very kindly about man (*laughter*), but that's because he usually thinks too kindly of himself!

If we compare him with the other products of Nature, unquestionably he is at the top of the ladder.

CWM 9: 221

## 32

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIND**

It is only with the progress of evolution, the march of evolution, when the mind began to develop in itself, *for itself*, that all the complications and distortions began. So that the story of Genesis which seems so childish contains some truth. In the old traditions like that of Genesis, each letter stood for a specific knowledge, it was a graphic summary of the traditional knowledge of that time. But apart from that, even the symbolic story had a reality in the sense that there truly was a period of life on earth — the first manifestation of mentalised matter in human forms — which was still in complete harmony with all that preceded it. It was only later. . .

CWM 10: 89

## 33

**SUPERIORITY OF MAN OVER ANIMAL**

A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence.

CWSA 22: 856

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the form that is capable of manifesting the Spirit. The very nature of the manifestation of the Spirit is consciousness, understanding and finally mastery. It is obvious that from the point of view of aesthetics and purely physical appearance, one may find certain animal forms beautiful and perhaps even more beautiful than the human form in its present state of . . . degeneration, I believe. There were periods when the human race seems to have been more beautiful and harmonious; but as a means of expression of the Spirit, its superiority is beyond the shadow of a doubt. For the mere fact that man stands upright is symbolic of the capacity to look at things from above. He dominates what he sees instead of always having his nose to the ground. Of course, it may be said that birds fly, but with wings it is difficult to have a means of intellectual self-expression!

CWM 9: 219

### 34

#### THE UPRIGHT POSTURE

This upright position is very symbolic. If you try to walk on all fours, you will see that this position with the eyes and nose necessarily turned to the ground does not give you the feeling that you are looking at things from another plane or even from above. The whole structure of the human body is made to express a mental life. The proportions of the brain, for instance, the structure of the human head, the structure of the arms and hands, all that, from the point of view of the expression of the Spirit, is unquestionably altogether superior and it seems to have been conceived and built exclusively *for the purpose of* expressing intelligence.

CWM 9: 219-20

### 35

#### THE INDIVIDUAL'S LOVE OF HIS OWN IMPERFECTIONS

The real bar to self-surrender, whether to the Universal or to the Transcendent, is the individual's love of his own limitations. It is a natural love, since in the very formation of the individual being there is a tendency to concentrate on limits. Without that, there would be no sense of separateness — all would be mixed, as happens quite often in the mental and vital movements of consciousness. It is the body especially which preserves separative individuality by not being so fluid. But once this separateness is established, there creeps in the fear of losing it — a healthy

instinct in many respects, but misapplied with regard to the Divine. For, in the Divine you do not really lose your individuality: you only give up your egoism and become the true individual, the divine personality which is not temporary like the construction of the physical consciousness which is usually taken for your *self*. One touch of the divine consciousness and you see immediately that there is no loss in it. On the contrary, you acquire a true individual permanence which can survive a hundred deaths of the body and all the vicissitudes of the vital-mental evolution. Without this transfiguring touch, you always go about in fear; with it, you gradually develop the power to make even your physical being plastic without losing its individuality. Even now, it is not entirely rigid, it is able to feel the conscious movements of others by a sort of sympathy which translates itself into nervous reactions to their joys and sufferings: it is also able to express your inner movements — it is well known that the face is an index and mirror to the mind. But only the divine consciousness can make the body responsive enough to reflect all the movements of the supramental immortality and be an expression of the true soul and, by being divinised, reach the acme of a supreme individuality which can even physically rise superior to the necessity of death and dissolution.

*CWM 3: 169*

### 36

#### **MAN CAN AUGMENT HIS CAPACITIES**

Certainly from the point of view of strength, of suppleness, of agility, man is not the most gifted of animals, but for expressing the Spirit no other animal can be compared with him. Everything is made with this in view. We may wish to add to this possibility other things which seem to have been sacrificed just for the sake of the mental life — but also precisely because of this capacity of expressing a mental life man is able to develop in himself faculties which are only latent. Man has a power to educate: his body can be developed, educated. He can increase certain faculties. You cannot imagine any animal, even among those we most admire, which is capable, for instance, of physical education, purely physical — I am not speaking of going to school or learning things, but purely physical education, a systematic development of the muscles. The animal is born and makes good use of what it has and it grows according to its own law, but it does not educate itself or does it in a very rudimentary way, in an extremely limited field; whereas by a normal and systematic development man can remedy his defects and shortcomings. Man is certainly, in an organised way, the first progressive animal who can augment his capacities, his possibilities, increase his faculties and acquire things that he did not have spontaneously. There is not one animal which can do that.

*CWM 9: 220*



## 37

**THE SPIRAL OF MENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

On earth man is a transitional being. Therefore, in the course of his evolution, he has had several natures in succession, which have followed an ascending curve and will continue to follow it until he reaches the threshold of the supramental nature and is transformed into the superman. This curve is the spiral of mental development.

We tend to call “natural” any spontaneous manifestation which is not the result of a choice or a preconceived decision, that is to say, without the intrusion of any mental activity. This is why when a man has a vital spontaneity which is very little mentalised, he seems more “natural” in his simplicity. But this naturalness is very much like that of the animal and is at the very bottom of the human evolutionary scale. He will only regain this spontaneity free from mental intrusion when he attains to the supramental stage, that is to say, when he transcends mind and emerges into the higher Truth.

Until then all his behaviour is, naturally, natural! But with the mind evolution has become, one cannot say twisted, but distorted, because by its very nature the mind was open to perversion and almost from the beginning it became perverted, or, to be more precise, it was perverted by the Asuric forces. And this state of perversion gives us the impression that it is unnatural.

Why does he question himself? Simply because this is the nature of the mind!

With the mind individualisation began and a very acute feeling of separation, and also a kind of impression, more or less precise, of freedom of choice — all that, all these psychological states are the natural consequences of mental life and they open the door to everything we see now, from aberrations to the most rigorous principles. Mind has the impression that it can choose between one thing and another, but this impression is the distortion of a true principle which would be completely realisable only when the soul or psychic being appears in the consciousness and if the soul were to take up the governance of the being. Then man’s life would truly become the manifestation of the supreme Will expressing itself individually, consciously. But in the normal human state this is something extremely exceptional which to the ordinary human consciousness does not seem at all natural — it seems almost supernatural!

Man questions himself because the mental instrument is intended to see all possibilities. And the immediate consequence of this is the concept of good and evil, or of what is right and what is wrong, and all the miseries that follow from that. One cannot say that it is a bad thing; it is an intermediate stage — not a very pleasant one, but still. . . one which was certainly inevitable for the complete development of the mind.

## 38

**SCIENCE GIVES ONLY TRUTH OF PROCESS**

Science, like most mental and external knowledge, gives you only truth of process. I would add that it cannot give you even the whole truth of process; for you seize some of the ponderables, but miss the all-important imponderables; you get, hardly even the how, but the conditions under which things happen in Nature. After all the triumphs and marvels of Science the explaining principle, the rationale, the significance of the whole is left as dark, as mysterious and even more mysterious than ever. The scheme it has built up of the evolution not only of this rich and vast and variegated material world, but of life and consciousness and mind and their workings out of a brute mass of electrons, identical and varied only in arrangement and number, is an irrational magic more baffling than any the most mystic imagination could conceive. Science in the end lands us in a paradox effectuated, an organised and rigidly determined accident, an impossibility that has somehow happened, — it has shown us a new, a material Maya, *aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭīyasī*, very clever at bringing about the impossible, a miracle that cannot logically be and yet somehow is there actual, irresistibly organised, but still irrational and inexplicable. And this is evidently because Science has missed something essential; it has seen and scrutinised what has happened and in a way how it has happened, but it has shut its eyes to something that made this impossible possible, something it is there to express. There is no fundamental significance in things if you miss the Divine Reality; for you remain embedded in a huge surface crust of manageable and utilisable appearance. It is the magic of the Magician you are trying to analyse, but only when you enter into the consciousness of the Magician himself can you begin to experience the true origination, significance and circles of the Lila. I say “begin” because the Divine Reality is not so simple that at the first touch you can know all of it or put it into a single formula; it is the Infinite and opens before you an infinite knowledge to which all Science put together is a bagatelle. But still you do touch the essential, the eternal behind things and in the light of That all begins to be profoundly luminous, intimately intelligible.

SABCL 22: 196-97

## 39

**THE DARWINIAN APE, MAN AND THE SUPERMAN**

It is not very easy for the customary mind of man, always attached to its past and present associations, to conceive of an existence still human, yet radically changed

in what are now our fixed circumstances. We are in respect to our possible higher evolution much in the position of the original Ape of the Darwinian theory. It would have been impossible for that Ape leading his instinctive arboreal life in primeval forests to conceive that there would be one day an animal on the earth who would use a new faculty called reason upon the materials of his inner and outer existence, who would dominate by that power his instincts and habits, change the circumstances of his physical life, build for himself houses of stone, manipulate Nature's forces, sail the seas, ride the air, develop codes of conduct, evolve conscious methods for his mental and spiritual development. And if such a conception had been possible for the Ape-mind, it would still have been difficult for him to imagine that by any progress of Nature or long effort of Will and tendency he himself could develop into that animal. Man, because he has acquired reason and still more because he has indulged his power of imagination and intuition, is able to conceive an existence higher than his own and even to envisage his personal elevation beyond his present state into that existence. His idea of the supreme state is an absolute of all that is positive to his own concepts and desirable to his own instinctive aspiration, — Knowledge without its negative shadow of error, Bliss without its negation in experience of suffering, Power without its constant denial by incapacity, purity and plenitude of being without the opposing sense of defect and limitation. It is so that he conceives his gods; it is so that he constructs his heavens. But it is not so that his reason conceives of a possible earth and a possible humanity. His dream of God and Heaven is really a dream of his own perfection; but he finds the same difficulty in accepting its practical realisation here for his ultimate aim as would the ancestral Ape if called upon to believe in himself as the future Man. His imagination, his religious aspirations may hold that end before him; but when his reason asserts itself, rejecting imagination and transcendent intuition, he puts it by as a brilliant superstition contrary to the hard facts of the material universe. It becomes then only his inspiring vision of the impossible. All that is possible is a conditioned, limited and precarious knowledge, happiness, power and good.

CWSA 21: 60-61

## 40

### THE TRUTH THAT DARWINISM SOUGHT TO EXPRESS

The first terms of Life are division, a force-driven subconscious will, apparent not as will but as dumb urge of physical energy, and the impotence of an inert subjection to the mechanical forces that govern the interchange between the form and its environment. This inconscience and this blind but potent action of Energy are the type of the material universe as the physical scientist sees it and this his view of

things extends and turns into the whole of basic existence; it is the consciousness of Matter and the accomplished type of material living. But there comes a new equipoise, there intervenes a new set of terms which increase in proportion as Life delivers itself out of this form and begins to evolve towards conscious Mind; for the middle terms of Life are death and mutual devouring, hunger and conscious desire, the sense of a limited room and capacity and the struggle to increase, to expand, to conquer and to possess. These three terms are the basis of that status of evolution which the Darwinian theory first made plain to human knowledge. For the phenomenon of death involves in itself a struggle to survive, since death is only the negative term in which Life hides from itself and tempts its own positive being to seek for immortality. The phenomenon of hunger and desire involves a struggle towards a status of satisfaction and security, since desire is only the stimulus by which Life tempts its own positive being to rise out of the negation of unfulfilled hunger towards the full possession of the delight of existence. The phenomenon of limited capacity involves a struggle towards expansion, mastery and possession, the possession of the self and the conquest of the environment, since limitation and defect are only the negation by which Life tempts its own positive being to seek for the perfection of which it is eternally capable. The struggle for life is not only a struggle to survive, it is also a struggle for possession and perfection, since only by taking hold of the environment whether more or less, whether by self-adaptation to it or by adapting it to oneself either by accepting and conciliating it or by conquering and changing it, can survival be secured, and equally is it true that only a greater and greater perfection can assure a continuous permanence, a lasting survival. It is this truth that Darwinism sought to express in the formula of the survival of the fittest.

CWSA 21: 211-12

## 41

### THE ERROR IN DARWINISM

But as the scientific mind sought to extend to Life the mechanical principle proper to the existence and concealed mechanical consciousness in Matter, not seeing that a new principle has entered whose very reason of being is to subject to itself the mechanical, so the Darwinian formula was used to extend too largely the aggressive principle of Life, the vital selfishness of the individual, the instinct and process of self-preservation, self-assertion and aggressive living. For these two first states of Life contain in themselves the seeds of a new principle and another state which must increase in proportion as Mind evolves out of matter through the vital formula into its own law. And still more must all things change when as Life evolves upward towards Mind, so Mind evolves upward towards Supermind and Spirit. Precisely

because the struggle for survival, the impulse towards permanence is contradicted by the law of death, the individual life is compelled, and used, to secure permanence rather for its species than for itself; but this it cannot do without the co-operation of others; and the principle of co-operation and mutual help, the desire of others, the desire of the wife, the child, the friend and helper, the associated group, the practice of association, of conscious joining and interchange are the seeds out of which flowers the principle of love. Let us grant that at first love may only be an extended selfishness and that this aspect of extended selfishness may persist and dominate, as it does still persist and dominate, in higher stages of the evolution: still as mind evolves and more and more finds itself, it comes by the experience of life and love and mutual help to perceive that the natural individual is a minor term of being and exists by the universal. Once this is discovered, as it is inevitably discovered by man the mental being, his destiny is determined; for he has reached the point at which Mind can begin to open to the truth that there is something beyond itself; from that moment his evolution, however obscure and slow, towards that superior something, towards Spirit, towards supermind, towards supermanhood is inevitably predetermined.

CWSA 21: 212-13

## 42

### ASCENT AND INTEGRATION

For if we look, not at the scientific or physical aspects, but at the psychological side of the question and inquire in what precisely the difference lies, we shall see that it consists in the rise of consciousness to another principle of being. The metal is fixed in the inconscient and inanimate principle of matter; even if we can suppose that it has some reactions suggestive of life in it or at least of rudimentary vibrations that in the plant developed into life, still it is not at all characteristically a form of life; it is characteristically a form of matter. The plant is fixed in a subconscious action of the principle of life, — not that it is not subject to matter or devoid of reactions that find their full meaning only in mind, for it seems to have submental reactions that in us are the foundation of pleasure and pain or of attraction and repulsion; but still it is a form of life, not of mere matter, nor is it, so far as we know, at all a mind-conscious being. Man and the animal are both mentally conscious beings; but the animal is fixed in vital mind and mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations, while man has received into his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the supermind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense-mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source: for it is agnostic like the sense-mind in which and for which it works, not gnostic; it

seeks to lay hold on knowledge, because it does not possess it, it does not like Supermind hold knowledge in itself as its natural prerogative. In other words, in each of these forms of existence the universal being has fixed its action of consciousness in a different principle or, as between man and animal, in the modification of a lower by a higher though still not a highest-grade principle. It is this stride from one principle of being to another quite different principle of being that creates the transitions, the furrows, the sharp lines of distance, and makes, not all the difference, but still a radical characteristic difference between being and being in their nature.

But it must be observed that this ascent, this successive fixing in higher and higher principles, does not carry with it the abandonment of the lower grades, any more than a status of existence in the lower grades means the entire absence of the higher principles. This heals the objection against the evolutionary theory created by these sharp lines of difference; for if the rudiments of the higher are present in the lower creation and the lower characters are taken up into the higher evolved being, that of itself constitutes an indubitable evolutionary process. What is necessary is a working that brings the lower gradation of being to a point at which the higher can manifest in it; at that point a pressure from some superior plane where the new power is dominant may assist towards a more or less rapid and decisive transition by a bound or a series of bounds, — a slow, creeping, imperceptible or even occult action is followed by a run and an evolutionary saltus across the border. It is in some such way that the transition from the lower to higher grades of consciousness seems to have been made in Nature.

In fact, life, mind, supermind are present in the atom, are at work there, but invisible, occult, latent in a subconscious or apparently unconscious action of the Energy; there is an informing Spirit, but the outer force and figure of being, what we might call the formal or form existence as distinguished from the immanent or secretly governing consciousness, is lost in the physical action, is so absorbed into it as to be fixed in a stereotyped self-oblivion unaware of what it is and what it is doing. The electron and atom are in this view eternal somnambulists; each material object contains an outer or form consciousness involved, absorbed in the form, asleep, seeming to be an unconsciousness driven by an unknown and unfelt inner Existence, — he who is awake in the sleeper, the universal Inhabitant of the Upanishads, — an outer absorbed form-consciousness which, unlike that of the human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not always or ever on the point of waking. In the plant this outer form-consciousness is still in the state of sleep, but a sleep full of nervous dreams, always on the point of waking, but never waking. Life has appeared; in other words, force of concealed conscious being has been so much intensified, has raised itself to such a height of power as to develop or become capable of a new principle of action, that which we see as vitality, life-force. It has become vitally responsive to existence, though not mentally aware, and has put forth a new grade

of activities of a higher and subtler value than any purely physical action. At the same time, it is capable of receiving and turning into these new life-values, into motions and phenomena of a vibration of vitality, life-contacts and physical contacts from other forms than its own and from universal Nature. This is a thing which forms of mere matter cannot do; they cannot turn contacts into life-values or any kind of value, partly because their power of reception, — although it exists, if occult evidence is to be trusted, — is not sufficiently awake to do anything but dumbly receive and imperceptibly react, partly because the energies transmitted by the contacts are too subtle to be utilised by the crude inorganic density of formed Matter. Life in the tree is determined by its physical body, but it takes up the physical existence and gives it a new value or system of values, — the life-value.

The transition to the mind and sense that appear in the animal being, that which we call conscious life, is operated in the same manner. The force of being is so much intensified, rises to such a height as to admit or develop a new principle of existence, — apparently new at least in the world of Matter, — mentality. Animal being is mentally aware of existence, its own and others, puts forth a higher and subtler grade of activities, receives a wider range of contacts, mental, vital, physical, from forms other than its own, takes up the physical and vital existence and turns all it can get from them into sense values and vital-mind values. It senses body, it senses life, but it senses also mind; for it has not only blind nervous reactions, but conscious sensations, memories, impulses, volitions, emotions, mental associations, the stuff of feeling and thought and will. It has even a practical intelligence, founded on memory, association, stimulating need, observation, a power of device; it is capable of cunning, strategy, planning; it can invent, adapt to some extent its inventions, meet in this or that detail the demand of new circumstance. All is not in it a half-conscious instinct; the animal prepares human intelligence.

But when we come to man, we see the whole thing becoming conscious; the world, which he epitomises, begins in him to reveal to itself its own nature. The higher animal is not the somnambulist, — as the very lowest animal forms still mainly or almost are, — but it has only a limited waking mind, capable of just what is necessary for its vital existence: in man the conscious mentality enlarges its wakefulness and, though not at first fully self-conscious, though still conscious only on the surface, can open more and more to his inner and integral being. As in the two lower ascents, there is a heightening of the force of conscious existence to a new power and a new range of subtle activities; there is a transition from vital mind to reflecting and thinking mind, there is developed a higher power of observation and invention, taking up and connecting data, conscious of process and result, a force of imagination and aesthetic creation, a higher more plastic sensibility, the co-ordinating and interpreting reason, the values no longer of a reflex or reactive but of a mastering, understanding, self-detaching intelligence. As in the lower ascents, so here there is also a widening of the range of consciousness; man is able to take in



more of the world and of himself as well as to give to this knowledge higher and completer figures of conscious experience. So, too, there is here also the third constant element of the ascension; mind takes up the lower grades and gives to their action and reaction intelligent values. Man has not only like the animal the sense of his body and life, but an intelligent sense and idea of life and a conscious and observant perception of body. He takes up too the mental life of the animal, as well as the material and bodily; although he loses something in the process, he gives to what he retains a higher value; he has the intelligent sense and the idea of his sensations, emotions, volitions, impulses, mental associations; what was crude stuff of thought and feeling and will, capable only of gross determinations, he turns into the finished work and artistry of these things. For the animal too thinks, but in an automatic way based mainly on a mechanical series of memories and mental associations, accepting quickly or slowly the suggestions of Nature and only awakened to a more conscious personal action when there is need of close observation and device; it has some first crude stuff of practical reason, but not the formed ideative and reflective faculty. The awaking consciousness in the animal is the unskilled primitive artisan of mind, in man it is the skilled craftsman and can become, — but this he does not attempt sufficiently, — not only the artist, but master and adept.

CWSA 22: 738-42

## 43

### EVOLUTION AND PERFECTION

*The idea of perfection is something which comes to us from the Divine, it descends from plane to plane; and we climb back from plane to plane.*

This is still an evolutionary idea. It is always said that when a creation reaches its maximum possibility, this is perfection; but it is not that! and it is exactly against this idea that I protest. All this is only a rung in the progress. That is, Nature goes to the extreme limit of what she has, and when she sees that she can go no further, can no longer stir, she destroys everything and begins again. This can't be called a perfection, for perfection cannot be demolished. Perfection will come only when Nature can no longer undo what she has begun. For the moment there is no instance where she has not successively undone what she had begun, believing that it was not enough or it was not that which she wanted to do. Hence it cannot be said that she has attained perfection in her creation. It would be the maximum only if she had no need to undo what she has done.

CWM 4: 15



## 44

**IT IS SPIRIT THAT PERFECTS MATTER**

. . . it is obvious that to make something, you need to have something to make it with.

There is or was a whole period in the development of the human mind in which men tried very seriously to prove that it was the perfecting of Matter which produced the Spirit. But that is nonsense! (*Mother laughs*) The least of your activities, all that you do, is a clear proof that first you conceive and then you do, even on a very small scale. A life which is not the result of a conscious will would be a completely incoherent life. I mean that if Nature were not a conscious force and a conscious will with a conscious aim, nothing could ever have been organised. We have just to observe a little, even in the very small field of observation we have in our individual life, to be completely convinced of it. . . .

(*Silence*)

It could be said that the mastery of fire is the symbolic sign of human superiority. Wherever there is man, a fire is lit.

The two things that are clearly superior to animal activities are the faculty of writing and the possibility of articulate speech. And this is something so clearly superior that all sufficiently developed animals are extremely sensitive to articulate speech; it fascinates them. If you speak in a very clear, very modulated, very well articulated way to a wild animal, it is immediately attracted, truly fascinated — I am not speaking of those which have lived close to man, but precisely of animals which have never met man before. They listen immediately, they feel the superior power that is being expressed.

CWM 9: 222-23

## 45

**MORAL PERFECTION**

*Sweet Mother, what is an ideal of moral perfection?*

There are thousands of moral perfections. Everyone has his own ideal of moral perfection.

What is usually called moral perfection is to have all the qualities that are considered moral: to have no defects, never to make a mistake, never to err, to be

always what one conceives to be the best, to have all the virtues — that is, to realise the highest mental conception: to take all the qualities — there are many, aren't there? — all the virtues, all that man has conceived to be the most beautiful, most noble, most true, and to live that integrally, to let all one's actions be guided by that, all the movements, all the reactions, all the feelings, all. . . That is living a moral ideal of perfection. It is the summit of man's mental evolution.

Not many people do it . . . but still . . . there have been some and there still are. This is what men usually take for the spiritual life. When they meet a man of this type, they say, "Oh! He is a great spiritual being." He may be a great saint, he may be a great sage but he is *not* a spiritual being.

And yet it is already very good and very difficult to realise this. And there comes a time in the inner evolution when it is very necessary to try to realise it. It is obviously infinitely higher than to be still guided by all one's impulses and ignorant outer reactions. It is to be already in a way the master of one's nature. It is even a stage through which one has to pass, for it is the stage when one begins to be the master of one's ego, when one is ready to let it fall away — it is still there but sufficiently weakened to be nearing its end. This is the last stage before crossing over to the other side, and certainly, if anyone imagines that he can go over to the other side without passing through this stage, he would risk making a great mistake, and of taking for perfect freedom a perfect weakness with regard to his lower nature.

It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being — even the most perfect and most remarkable — to the true spiritual life without having realised this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be. Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature; they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realisations, but one must take care that this so-called freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules.

One must go higher, always higher, higher; nothing less than what the highest of humanity has achieved.

One must be capable of being spontaneously all that humanity has conceived to be the highest, the most beautiful, the most perfect, the most disinterested, the most comprehensive, the best, before opening one's spiritual wings and looking at all that from above as something which still belongs to the individual self, in order to enter into true spirituality, that which has no limits, which lives in an integral way Infinity and Eternity.

## 46

**CHRIST AND THE EVOLUTION OF CIVILISATION**

. . . the death of Christ was the starting-point of a new stage in the evolution of human civilisation. This is why Sri Aurobindo tells us that the death of Christ was of greater historical significance, that is to say, it has had greater historical consequences than the death of Caesar. The story of Christ, as it has been told, is the concrete and dramatic enactment of the divine sacrifice: the Supreme Lord, who is All-Light, All-Knowledge, All-Power, All-Beauty, All-Love, All-Bliss, accepting to assume human ignorance and suffering in matter, in order to help men to emerge from the falsehood in which they live and because of which they die.

*CWM 10: 61*

## 47

**THE PRESENT EVOLUTIONARY CRISIS**

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being: but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially

one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life-unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the Spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life.

CWSA 22: 1090-91

## 48

### THE SUPRAMENTAL EVOLUTION

There have been times when the seeking for spiritual attainment was, at least in certain civilisations, more intense and widespread than now or rather than it has been in the world in general during the past few centuries. For now the curve seems to be the beginning of a new turn of seeking which takes its start from what was achieved in the past and projects itself towards a greater future. But always, even in the age of the Vedas or in Egypt, the spiritual achievement or the occult knowledge was confined to a few, it was not spread in the whole mass of humanity. The mass of humanity evolves slowly, containing in itself all stages of the evolution from the material and the vital man to the mental man. A small minority has pushed beyond the barriers, opening the doors to occult and spiritual knowledge and preparing the ascent of the evolution beyond mental man into spiritual and supramental being. Sometimes this minority has exercised an enormous influence as in Vedic India, Egypt or, according to tradition, in Atlantis, and determined the civilisation of the race, giving it a strong stamp of the spiritual or the occult; sometimes they have stood apart in their secret schools or orders, not directly influencing a civilisation

which was sunk in material ignorance or in chaos and darkness or in the hard external enlightenment which rejects spiritual knowledge.

*SABCL 22: 1*

## 49

### INTUITION IN LIFE

The cycles of evolution tend always upward, but they are cycles and do not ascend in a straight line. The process therefore gives the impression of a series of ascents and descents, but what is essential in the gains of the evolution is kept or, even if eclipsed for a time, re-emerges in new forms suitable to the new ages. The creation has descended all the degrees of being from the Supermind to Matter and in each degree it has created a world, reign, plane or order proper to that degree. In the creating of the material world there was a plunge of this descending Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience and an emergence of it out of that Inconscience, degree by degree, until it recovers its highest spiritual and supramental summits and manifests their powers here in Matter. But even in the Inconscience there is a secret Consciousness which works, one may say, by an involved and hidden Intuition proper to itself. In each stage of Matter, in each stage of Life, this Intuition assumes a working proper to that stage and acts from behind the veil, supporting and enforcing the immediate necessities of the creative Force. There is an Intuition in Matter which holds the action of the material world from the electron to the sun and planets and their contents. There is an Intuition in Life which similarly supports and guides the play and development of Life in Matter till it is ready for the mental evolution of which man is the vehicle. In man also the creation follows the same upward process, — the Intuition within develops according to the stage he has reached in his progress. Even the precise intellect of the scientist, who is inclined to deny the separate existence or the superiority of Intuition, yet cannot really move forward unless there is behind him a mental Intuition, which enables him to take a forward step or to divine what has to be done. Intuition therefore is present at the beginning of things and in their middle as well as at their consummation.

*SABCL 22: 1-2*

## 50

**THE REIGN OF INTUITION**

But Intuition takes its proper form only when one goes beyond the mental into the spiritual domain, for there only it comes fully forward from behind the veil and reveals its true and complete nature. Along with the mental evolution of man there has been going forward the early process of another evolution which prepares the spiritual and supramental being. This has had two lines, one the discovery of the occult forces secret in Nature and of the hidden planes and worlds concealed from us by the world of Matter and the other the discovery of man's soul and spiritual self. If the tradition of Atlantis is correct, it is that of a progress which went to the extreme of occult knowledge, but could go no farther. In the India of Vedic times we have the record left of the other line of achievement, that of spiritual self-discovery; occult knowledge was there but kept subordinate. We may say that here in India the reign of Intuition came first, intellectual Mind developing afterwards in the later philosophy and science. But in fact the mass of men at the time, it is quite evident, lived entirely on the material plane, worshipped the Godheads of material Nature, sought from them entirely material objects. The effort of the Vedic mystics revealed to them the things behind through a power of inner sight and hearing and experience which was confined to a limited number of seers and sages and kept carefully secret from the mass of humanity — secrecy was always insisted on by the mystic. We may very well attribute this flowering of Intuition on the spiritual plane to a rapid re-emergence of essential gains brought down from a previous cycle. If we analyse the spiritual history of India we shall find that after reaching this height there was a descent which attempted to take up each lower degree of the already evolved consciousness and link it to the spiritual at the summit. The Vedic age was followed by a great outburst of intellect and philosophy which yet took spiritual truth as its basis and tried to reach it anew, not through a direct Intuition or occult process as did the Vedic seers, but by the power of the mind's reflective, speculative, logical thought; at the same time processes of yoga were developed which used the thinking mind as a means of arriving at spiritual realisation, spiritualising this mind itself at the same time. Then followed an era of the development of philosophies and yoga processes which more and more used the emotional and aesthetic being as the means of spiritual realisation and spiritualised the emotional level in man through the heart and feeling. This was accompanied by Tantric and other processes which took up the mental will, the life-will, the will of sensations and made them at once the instruments and the field of spiritualisation. In the Hathayoga and the various attempts at divinisation of the body there is also a line of endeavour which attempted to arrive at the same achievement with regard to living Matter; but this still awaits the discovery of the true characteristic method and power of Spirit in the

body. We may say therefore that the universal Consciousness after its descent into Matter has conducted the evolution there along two lines, one of ascent to the discovery of the Self and Spirit, the other of descent through the already evolved levels of mind, life and body so as to bring down the spiritual consciousness into these also and to fulfil thereby some secret intention in the creation of the material universe. Our yoga is in its principle a taking up and summarising and completing of this process, an endeavour to rise to the highest possible supramental level and bring down its consciousness and power into mind, life and body.

SABCL 22: 2-4

## 51

### THE PRESENT CIVILISATION — AN EPISODE

The condition of present-day civilisation, materialistic with an externalised intellect and life-endeavour, which you find so painful, is an episode, but one which was perhaps inevitable. For if the spiritualisation of the mind, life and body is the thing to be achieved, the conscious presence of the Spirit even in the physical consciousness and material body, an age which puts Matter and the physical life in the forefront and devotes itself to the effort of the intellect to discover the truth of material existence, had perhaps to come. On one side, by materialising everything up to the intellect itself it has created the extreme difficulty of which you speak for the spiritual seeker, but, on the other hand, it has given the life in Matter an importance which the spirituality of the past was inclined to deny to it. In a way it has made the spiritualisation of it a necessity for spiritual seeking and so aided the descent movement of the evolving spiritual consciousness in the earth-nature. More than that we cannot claim for it; its conscious effect has been rather to stifle and almost extinguish the spiritual element in humanity; it is only by the divine use of the pressure of contraries and an intervention from above that there will be the spiritual outcome.

SABCL 22: 4

## 52

### THE WHOLE AND THE PART IN EVOLUTION

*Is it really the best that happens in all circumstances?*

It is the best, given the state of the world — it is not an absolute best.

There are two things: in a total and absolute way, at each moment, it is the best possible for the divine Goal of the whole; and for one who is consciously connected with the divine Will, it is the most favourable for his own divine realisation.

I believe this is the correct explanation.

For the whole, it is always, at every moment, what is most favourable for the divine evolution. And for the elements consciously linked with the Divine, it is the best for the perfection of their union.

Only you must not forget that it is constantly changing, that it is not a static best; it is a best which if preserved would not be the best a moment later. And it is because the human consciousness always has the tendency to preserve statically what it finds good or considers good, that it realises that it is unseizable. It is this effort to preserve which falsifies things.

CWM 4: 213

## 53

### DISAPPEARANCE OF A SPECIES

*Mother, in Nature we often see the disappearance of an entire species.  
What is that due to?*

Probably Nature thought that it was not a success! . . . You see, she throws herself into action with abundance and a total lack of sense of economy. We can see this. She tries everything she can, in every way she can, with all sorts of inventions which are obviously very remarkable, but at times . . . it's like a blind alley. Pushing forward in that direction, instead of progressing, one would reach things that are absolutely unacceptable. She throws out her creative spirit in an abundance without any calculation, and when the combination is not very successful, well, she just does this (*gesture*) then rejects it; she doesn't mind. For Nature, you see, there is a limitless abundance. I believe she doesn't shrink from any kind of experiment. Only if something has a chance of leading to a successful issue does it continue. Certainly there have been intermediaries or parallel forms between the ape and man; traces of them have been found — perhaps with some wishful thinking! but anyway, traces have been found — well, those species have disappeared. So, if we like to speculate, we may wonder whether the species which is now to come and which is an intermediary between animal man and superman will remain or whether it will be considered uninteresting and rejected. . . .

It is quite simply the activity of a limitless abundance. Nature has enough knowledge and consciousness to act like someone with innumerable and countless elements which can be mixed, separated again, reshaped, taken to pieces once more



and . . . It is a huge cauldron: you stir it, and something comes out; it's no good, you throw it back in and take something else. Imagine the dimension . . . just take the earth: you understand, one or two forms or a hundred, for her this is of no importance at all, there are thousands and thousands and thousands of them; and then a few years, a hundred, a thousand, millions of years, it is of no importance at all, you have eternity before you!

Simply, when we look at things on the human scale, in space and time, oh! it seems enormous, but for Nature it is nothing. It is just a pastime. One may like it or not, this pastime, but still it is a pastime.

It is quite obvious that Nature enjoys it and is in no hurry. If she is told to press on without stopping and to finish one part of her work or another quickly, the reply is always the same: "But what for, why? Doesn't it amuse you?"

CWM 9: 217-18

## 54

### CULTURE, CIVILISATION AND THE SPIRAL OF EVOLUTION

*Why are great artists born at the same time in the same country?*

From the point of view of evolution, I think Sri Aurobindo has explained this very clearly in *The Human Cycle*. Evolution, that is to say, culture and civilisation, describes a more or less regular spiral movement around the earth, and the results of one civilisation, it may be said, slowly go to form another; then, when the total development is harmonious, this creates simultaneously the field of action and the actors, in the sense that at the time of the great artistic periods all the conditions were favourable to the development of art, and naturally, the fact that all the circumstances were favourable, attracted the men who could use them. There have been concrete movements like that, great ages like that of the Italian Renaissance or the similar period in France, almost at the same time, when artists from all countries were gathered at the same place because the conditions were favourable to the development of their art. This is one of the reasons — a so-to-say external reason — for the formation of civilisations.

There is another, this is that from an occult point of view it is almost always the same forces and same beings which incarnate during all the ages of artistic beauty upon earth and that, according to occultists, there are cycles of rebirth: beings return, group themselves through affinity at the time of birth; so it happens that regularly, almost all come together for a similar action. Some occultists have studied this question and given very precise numbers based upon the actual facts of the develop-

ment of the earth: they have said that once in a hundred years, once in a thousand years, once in five thousand years, etc., certain cycles were repeated; that certain great civilisations appeared every five thousand years, and that it was (according to their special knowledge) the same people who came back. This is not quite exact, that is why I am not going into details, but in a sense this is true: it is the same forces which are at work. It is the same forces and they are grouped according to their affinities and, for a reason which may be quite material or for a mental or cyclic reason, they reunite at a certain place, and in this place there is a new civilisation or a special progress in a civilisation or a kind of effervescence, blossoming, flowering of beauty, as in the great ages in Greece, Egypt, India, Italy, Spain. . . . Everywhere, in all the countries of the world, there have been more or less beautiful periods.

If you put the question to astrologers, they will explain this to you by the position of the stars; they will say that certain positions of the stars have a certain effect on the earth. But, as I have told you, all these things are “languages”, a way of expression, of making oneself understood; the truth is deeper, it is more complex, more complete.

CWM 4: 309-11

## 55

### WARS AND EVOLUTION

One called Napoleon a tyrant and imperial cut-throat; but I saw God armed striding through Europe.

CWSA 12: 426

*Are all these wars necessary for the evolution of the earth?*

At a certain stage of human development, wars are inevitable. In prehistoric times the whole of life was a war; and to the present day human history has been one long history of wars. Wars are the natural result of a state of consciousness dominated by the struggle for life and egoistic aggressiveness. And at the present time, in spite of some human efforts towards peace, there is, as yet, nothing to assure us that war is no longer an inevitable calamity. Indeed, does not a state of war, open or otherwise, exist at this moment in many parts of the world?

Besides, everything that happens on earth necessarily leads to its progress. Thus wars are schools of courage, endurance, fearlessness; they may serve to destroy a past which refuses to disappear although its time is over, and they make room for new things. Wars can, like Kurukshetra, be a way to rid the earth of a domineering or destructive race so that justice and right may reign. They can, through the presence

of danger, shake the apathy of a too tamasic consciousness and awaken dormant energies. Finally they can, by contrast, and because of the horrors that accompany and follow them, drive men to seek an effective way to make such a barbarous and violent form of transformation unnecessary.

For everything that is unnecessary to the evolution of the earth automatically ceases to exist.

CWM 10: 52-53

## 56

### EVOLUTION AND THE GREAT ASURAS

*When Hitler died, did the Lord of Falsehood pass into Stalin?*

It is not altogether like that that things happen, but it is something similar. This being did not wait for Hitler's death, it is there you make a mistake. These beings are not at all tied to a single physical presence. The being in question could very well possess Hitler and at the same time influence many others. Hitler was got rid of because he had behind him a whole nation and a physical power, and if he had succeeded it would have been a disaster for humanity, but there was no deluding oneself about it; it was not sufficient to get rid of him in order to get rid of the force that was behind him — that is not so easy. I must tell you that the origin of these beings is prior to that of the gods; they are the first emanations, the first individual beings of the universe; so they cannot be got rid of so easily, by winning one war.

As long as they are necessary for the universal evolution they will exist. The day they lose their utility, they will be converted or will disappear.

Besides, they know that they are nearing their last hour and that is why they are doing as much damage as they can.

There were four of them. The first one has been converted, another is dissolved into its origin. Two are still living and these two are more ferocious than the others. One is known in occultism as the "Lord of Falsehood"(I have told you this) the other is the "Lord of Death". And as long as these two beings exist, there will be difficulties.

CWM 4: 188

## 57

**INDIVIDUAL AND COSMIC PROGRESS**

*One dies and is born . . .*

What you say — dying and being born again, dying and being reborn — that is the process of individual evolution, provided that something of the individual persists through life and death, for if he died entirely and disintegrated entirely, what could be reborn? Necessarily something must persist — persist through the rebirths — otherwise it is no longer the same person. If nothing persists, it is not the individual who progresses, it is Nature. Nature makes use of matter; with this matter she produces forms — I am telling you this in an oversimplified way, but still — she has at her disposal a mass of matter and she makes combinations; she makes a form, then this form develops, but it disintegrates, it does not persist as an individual element. Why doesn't it persist? Because Nature needs matter, substance to make other forms. So she unmakes what she has made, then out of this she makes something else, and she continues in this way, and this could go on indefinitely without the individual progressing: the *whole* progresses.

CWM 9: 227

## 58

**PLACE OF SORROW IN EVOLUTION**

Human ignorance and egoism are the cause of sorrow. But this sorrow has also played its part in the evolution of humanity.

*What part has sorrow played in the evolution of humanity?*

Sorrow, desire, suffering, ambition and every other similar reaction in the feelings and sensations have all contributed to make consciousness emerge from the inconscience and to awaken this consciousness to the will for progress.

CWM 10: 294-95

## 59

**INTERSECTING AND COMPLEMENTING DOUBLE MOVEMENT**

There are people — there used to be and there still are, I believe — who say they remember their past lives and recount what happened when they were dogs or elephants or monkeys, and tell you stories in great detail about what happened to them. I am not going to argue with them, but anyway this illustrates the fact that before being a man, one could have been a monkey — perhaps one doesn't have the power to remember it, that's another matter — but certainly, this inner divine spark has passed through successive forms in order to become more and more conscious of itself. And if it is proved that one can remember the form one had before becoming a psychic being as it is found in the human form, well, one might very well recollect climbing trees and eating coconuts and even playing all sorts of tricks on the traveller passing beneath!

In any case, the fact is there. Perhaps later we shall see that a certain state of inner organisation is necessary for this psychic being to be able to have memories in the way the mental being has them — we shall speak about it later, when we come to it in the book — but in any case the fact is established: it is this double movement of evolution intersecting and complementing itself which gives the utmost possibilities of realisation to the divine light within each being. This is what Sri Aurobindo has explained. (*Turning to the child*) This means that in your outer body you belong to the animal species in the course of becoming a supramental species — you are not that yet! but within you there's a psychic being which has already lived in many, many, countless species before and carries an experience of thousands of years within you, and which will continue while your human body remains human and finally decomposes.

We shall see later whether this psychic being has the possibility of transforming its body and itself creating an intermediate species between the animal man and superman — we shall study this later — but still, for the moment, it is an immortal soul which becomes more and more conscious of itself in the body of man. There. Now have you understood?

CWM 9: 216-17

## 60

**THE PLASTICINE ANALOGY**

Supposing you have some plasticine — you know plasticine for modelling, don't you? Good. You make a form, then when you have finished, you don't like it, so

you break it up and make it into a paste again and try another form. You have made some progress, you try, you arrange; you say, "That didn't work, I am going to try this", and your form is a little better but it is still not what you want; so once again you break it, put some water, make a paste and then begin another form. And you can go on indefinitely. It is always the same substance but not the same being, for each one of your forms has its own particular existence as a form, and the moment you break it, nothing is left.

You may try to perfect the same form or try other forms; you may try, for instance, to make a dog or a horse, and then if you have not succeeded, you may begin again and make another horse or dog, but you may also begin something else. If you build a house and don't like your house, you demolish it and build another on another model, but nothing is left of the first house except the memory, if you want to keep it. In the same way, Nature begins with completely unconscious and amorphous matter, then tries one form and another; only, instead of doing as we would, one thing at a time, she makes millions of them all at once. But it is simply a matter of scale, it is because Nature has more means at her disposal, that is all. But that does not necessarily imply that there is something permanent — like a principle of life or a principle of consciousness — which enters into a form and persists when this form is broken to enter into another. It could simply be as you with your plasticine: you make something, unmake it, make it again, unmake it again, indefinitely, and there is nothing left — as I said — except the memory of what was made before. But if we admit individual evolution, there is something permanent which passes from one form to another and, with each new form, makes a new progress and becomes capable of entering into a higher form, more and more, until this "something" becomes a perfectly conscious being at the end of the evolution. Then this being would have a personal evolution which would duplicate — it won't be independent but simultaneous — and complement the evolution of Nature or rather *make use of* the evolution of Nature as a field for its own individual evolution. . . .

CWM 9: 227-28

## 61

### THE DIAMOND IN THE PLASTICINE

What Sri Aurobindo has presented here is the explanation of a world which would function quite logically and comprehensibly without any need of an individual being passing from one form into another, without anything permanent which would be free from all destruction, all death, which would persist through all its forms and would itself have a personal, individual progression *parallel* to the evolution of

Nature. . . . It is as though in the form you have made, at the centre there were a little precious stone which you had placed there and wanted to cover with successive forms. You transfer your little precious stone from one form to another — and the comparison is still incomplete, for the precious stone becomes more and more precious as it passes from one object to another — and it would be as though, by passing from one form to another, it became more and more luminous and pure, and more and more clear-cut in form.

*CWM 9: 228-29*

## 62

### THE PSYCHIC BEING — A RESULT OF EVOLUTION

The psychic being is the result of evolution, that is to say, evolution of the divine Consciousness which spread into Matter and slowly lifted up Matter, made it develop to return to the Divine. The psychic being was formed by this divine centre progressively through all the births. There comes a time when it reaches a kind of perfection, perfection in its growth and formation. Then, most often, as it has an aspiration for realisation, for a greater perfection to manifest yet better the Divine, it generally draws towards itself a being from the involution, that is to say, one of those entities belonging to what Sri Aurobindo calls Overmind, who comes then to incarnate in this psychic being. It can be one of those entities men generally call gods, some kind of deities. And when this fusion occurs the psychic being naturally is magnified and shares in the nature of the being incarnated in it. And then it has the power to produce emanations. These beings have the power to produce emanations, that is to say, they project out of themselves a part of themselves which becomes independent and goes into others to incarnate itself. So there can be not only two, but three, four or five emanations. That depends upon cases, it can happen thus. That is to say, one can have the same origin, psycho-divine, we might say. And generally when there are a number of emanations, the different persons feel themselves to be that being, and rightly so, for they carry in themselves something of that godhead: it is as though a part of the godhead has cast itself out of itself and become independent in another being. It is not a self-duplication but a kind of self-projection. . . . Duplication gives the idea that what has been duplicated has lost a part of its capability: if you cut your body in two, only half of it will remain for you; but if you have the power to emanate something out of you, you remain quite whole, as you are, and at the same time, there is another. . . .

*CWM 5: 263-64*

## 63

**PROGRESS FROM LIFE TO LIFE**

*Mother, since in each new life the mind and vital as well as the body are new, how can the experiences of past lives be useful for them? Do we have to go through all the experiences once again?*

That depends on people!

It is not the mind and vital which develop and progress from life to life — except in altogether exceptional cases and at a very advanced stage of evolution — it is the psychic. So, this is what happens: the psychic has alternate periods of activity and rest; it has a life of progress resulting from experiences of the physical life, of active life in a physical body, with all the experiences of the body, the vital and the mind; then, normally, the psychic goes into a kind of rest for assimilation where the result of the progress accomplished during its active existence is worked out, and when this assimilation is finished, when it has absorbed the progress it had prepared in its active life on earth, it comes down again in a new body bringing with it the result of all its progress and, at an advanced stage, it even chooses the environment and the kind of body and the kind of life in which it will live to complete its experience concerning one point or another. In some very advanced cases the psychic can, before leaving the body, decide what kind of life it will have in its next incarnation.

CWM 9: 268

## 64

**TIME NEEDED FOR ASSIMILATION**

In the ordinary life of man a progressive dislocation is the rule. The mental and the vital beings of man follow as best they can the movement of the universal forces, and the stream of the world's inner transformation and evolution carries them a certain way; but the body bound to the law of the most material nature, moves very slowly. After some years, seventy or eighty, a hundred or two hundred, — and that is perhaps the maximum, — the dislocation is so serious that the outer being falls to pieces. The divergence between the demand and the answer, the increasing inability and irresponsiveness of the body, brings about the phenomenon of death. By Yoga the inner transformation that is in slow constant process in the creation is rendered more intense and rapid, but the pace of the outer transformation remains almost the same as in ordinary life. As a result, the disharmony between the inner and the outer



being in one who is doing Yoga tends to be all the greater, unless precautions are taken and a protection secured that will help the body to follow the inner march as closely as possible. Even then it is the very nature of the body to hold you back. It is for this reason that to many we are obliged to say, "Do not pull, do not hurry; you must give your body time to follow." Some have to be kept back even for years and not allowed to do much or progress far. Sometimes, to avoid the disequilibrium becomes impossible; and then you have a disturbance which varies according to the nature of the resistance and the measure of the care you have taken or your negligence. This too is the reason why each time that there is a strong movement of progress, it is almost invariably followed by a period of immobility, which seems to those who are not warned a spell of dullness and stagnation and discouragement in which all progress is stopped, and they think anxiously, "What is the matter? Am I losing time? Nothing is being done." But the truth is that it is the time needed for assimilation; a pause is made for the body to open itself more and become receptive and approach nearer to the level attained by the inner consciousness. The parents have been walking too far ahead; they must halt so that the child left behind may run up and catch them by the hand; only then can they start again on the journey together.

*CWM 3: 87-88*

## 65

### **CENTRAL BEING, PSYCHIC BEING AND EVOLUTION**

The central being is that which is not born, does not evolve, but presides over all the individual manifestation. The psychic is its projection here — for the psychic being is in the evolution and from within supports our whole evolution; it receives the essence of all experience and by that develops the personality Godward.

The Self is at once one in all and many — one in its essence, it manifests also as the individual self which may be described as in Nature an eternal portion of the Divine; in spirit a centre of the manifestation, individual but extending its universality and rising into transcendence.

*SABCL 22: 267*

## 66

**GODS, EVOLUTION AND THE PSYCHIC BEING**

*So, to see the soul, one must know one's own soul?*

Yes, to be in relation with the soul, that is, the psychic being, one must have a psychic being oneself, and only men — men who belong to the evolution, who are sons of the terrestrial creation — possess a psychic being.

None of these gods has a psychic being. It is only by coming down and uniting with the psychic being of a man that they can have one, but they have none themselves.

CWM 10: 203

## 67

**AVATARHOOD AND EVOLUTION**

Avatarhood would have little meaning if it were not connected with the evolution. The Hindu procession of the ten Avatars is itself, as it were, a parable of evolution. First the Fish Avatar, then the amphibious animal between land and water, then the land animal, then the Man-Lion Avatar, bridging man and animal, then man as dwarf, small and undeveloped and physical but containing in himself the godhead and taking possession of existence, then the rajasic, sattwic, nirguna Avatars, leading the human development from the vital rajasic to the sattwic mental man and again the overmental superman. Krishna, Buddha and Kalki depict the last three stages, the stages of the spiritual development — Krishna opens the possibility of overmind, Buddha tries to shoot beyond to the supreme liberation but that liberation is still negative, not returning upon earth to complete positively the evolution; Kalki is to correct this by bringing the Kingdom of the Divine upon earth, destroying the opposing Asura forces. The progression is striking and unmistakable.

As for the lives in between the Avatar lives, it must be remembered that Krishna speaks of many lives in the past, not only a few supreme ones, and secondly that while he speaks of himself as the Divine, in one passage he describes himself as a Vibhuti, *vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevaḥ*. We may therefore fairly assume that in many lives he manifested as the Vibhuti veiling the fuller Divine Consciousness. If we admit that the object of Avatarhood is to lead the evolution, this is quite reasonable, the Divine appearing as Avatar in the great transitional stages and as Vibhutis to aid the lesser transitions.

SABCL 22: 401-02

## 68

**THE PARABLE OF EVOLUTION**

It [the overmind liberation] can't be supreme if there is something beyond it — but there is a liberation even in higher Mind. But in speaking of supreme liberation I was simply taking the Buddhist-Adwaita view for granted and correcting it by saying that this Nirvana view is too negative. Krishna opened the possibility of overmind with its two sides of realisation, static and dynamic. Buddha tried to shoot from mind to Nirvana in the Supreme, just as Shankara did in another way after him. Both agree in overleaping the other stages and trying to get at a nameless and featureless Absolute. Krishna on the other hand was leading by the normal course of evolution. The next normal step is not a featureless Absolute, but the supermind. I consider that in trying to overshoot, Buddha like Shankara made a mistake, calling away the dynamic side of the liberation. Therefore there has to be a correction by Kalki.

I was of course dealing with the ten Avatars as a “parable of the evolution”, and only explaining the interpretation we can put on it from that point of view. It was not my own view of the thing that I was giving.

*SABCL 22: 402-03*

## 69

**IDEA OF EVOLUTION IMPLICIT BEHIND THEORY OF AVATARHOOD**

I only took the Puranic list of Avatars and interpreted it as a parable of evolution, so as to show that the idea of evolution is implicit behind the theory of Avatarhood.

*SABCL 22: 403*

## 70

**EVOLUTION AND DEATH**

It was the conditions of matter upon earth that made death indispensable. The whole sense of the evolution of matter has been a growth from a first state of unconsciousness to an increasing consciousness. And in this process of growth dissolution of forms became an inevitable necessity, as things actually took place. For a fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a

stable support. And yet it is the fixity of the form that made death inevitable. Matter had to assume forms; individualisation and the concrete embodiment of life-forces or consciousness-forces were impossible without it and without these there would have been lacking the first conditions of organised existence on the plane of matter. But a definite and concrete formation contracts the tendency to become at once rigid and hard and petrified. The individual form persisted as a too binding mould; it cannot follow the movements of the forces; it cannot change in harmony with the progressive change in the universal dynamism; it cannot meet continually Nature's demand or keep pace with her; it gets out of the current. At a certain point of this growing disparity and disharmony between the form and the force that presses upon it, a complete dissolution of the form is unavoidable. A new form must be created; a new harmony and parity made possible. This is the true significance of death and this is its use in Nature. But if the form can become more quick and pliant and the cells of the body can be awakened to change with the changing consciousness, there would be no need of a drastic dissolution, death would be no longer inevitable.

*CWM 3: 37*

## 71

### **WHEN THE PSYCHIC IS NOT FULLY DEVELOPED**

. . . in ordinary people in whom the psychic form is not fully developed and organised, when the psychic leaves the body, the mental and vital forms may persist for a certain time if the death has been particularly peaceful and concentrated, but if a man dies suddenly and in a state of passion, with numerous attachments, well, the different parts of the being are dispersed and live for a shorter or longer time their own life in their own domain, then disappear.

*CWM 9: 269*

## 72

### **WHEN MIND AND LIFE ARE ORGANISED BY THE PSYCHIC**

When it [*the psychic*] has become an almost completely formed and already very conscious being, it presides over the formation of the new body, and usually through an inner influence it chooses the elements and the substance which will form its body in such a way that the body is adapted to the needs of its new experience. But this is at a rather advanced stage. And later, when it is fully formed and returns to

earth with the idea of service, of collective help and participation in the divine Work, then it is able to bring to the body in formation certain elements of the mind and vital from previous lives which, having been organised and impregnated with psychic forces in previous lives, could be preserved and, consequently, can participate in the general progress. But this is at a very, very advanced stage.

When the psychic is fully developed and very conscious, when it becomes a conscious instrument of the divine Will, it organises the vital and the mind in such a way that they too participate in the general harmony and can be preserved.

A high degree of development allows at least some parts of the mental and vital beings to be preserved in spite of the dissolution of the body. If, for instance, some parts — mental or vital — of the human activity have been particularly developed, these elements of the mind and vital are maintained even “in their form” — in the form of the activity which has been fully organised — as, for example, in highly intellectual people who have particularly developed their brains, the mental part of their being keeps this structure and is preserved in the form of an organised brain which has its own life and can be kept unchanged until a future life so as to participate in it with all its gains.

In artists, as for instance in certain musicians who have used their hands in a particularly conscious way, the vital and mental substance is preserved in the form of hands, and these hands remain fully conscious, they can even use the body of living people if there is a special affinity — and so on.

*CWM 9: 268-69*

## 73

### **PRESERVING CONTINUITY AFTER DEATH**

The condition of your being after death depends very much on whether the vital has been converted here or not. If you are only a medley of unorganised impulses, then at death, when the consciousness withdraws into the background, the different personalities in you fall apart, rushing hither and thither to seek their own suitable environments. One part may enter into another person who has an affinity for it, another may even enter an animal, while that which has been alive to the divine Presence may remain attached to the central psychic being. But if you are fully organised and converted into a single individual, bent on reaching the goal of evolution, then you will be conscious after death and preserve a continuity.

*CWM 3: 144-45*

## 74

**PSYCHIC PRESENCE AND THE PSYCHIC BEING**

With regard to the evolution upwards, it is more correct to speak of the psychic presence than the psychic being. For it is the psychic presence which little by little becomes the psychic being. In each evolving form there is this presence, but it is not individualised. It is something which is capable of growth and follows the movement of the evolution. It is not a descent of the involution from above. It is formed progressively round the spark of Divine Consciousness which is meant to be the centre of a growing being which becomes the psychic being when it is at last individualised. It is this spark that is permanent and gathers round itself all sorts of elements for the formation of that individuality; the true psychic being is formed only when the psychic personality is fully grown, fully built up, round the eternal divine spark; it attains its culmination, its total fulfilment if and when it unites with a being or personality from above.

Below the human level there is, ordinarily, hardly any individual formation — there is only this presence, more or less. But when, by the growth of the body round the spark of Divine Consciousness, humanity began upon the earth, certain human organisms became in the course of this progressive growth sufficiently perfected, and by their opening and receptivity allowed a junction with certain beings descending from above. This gave rise to a kind of divine humanity, what may be called a race of the élite. If only they had remained by themselves, these people would have continued as a race unique and superhuman. . . . But at present it cannot be said that there is any portion of mankind which is purely animal: all the races have been touched by the descent from above, and owing to the extensive intermixture the result of the Involution was more widely spread.

Of course one cannot say that every man has got a psychic being, just as one cannot refuse to grant it to every animal. Many animals that have lived near man have some beginnings of it, while so often one comes across people who do not seem to be anything else than brutes. Here, too, there has been a good deal of levelling. But on the whole, the psychic in the true sense starts at the human stage: that is also why the Catholic religion declares that only man has a soul. In man alone there is the possibility of the psychic being growing to its full stature even so far as to be able in the end to join and unite with a descending being, a godhead from above.

## 75

**EVOLUTION AND REBIRTH**

If evolution is a truth and is not only a physical evolution of species, but an evolution of consciousness, it must be a spiritual and not only a physical fact. In that case, it is the individual who evolves and grows into a more and more developed and perfect consciousness and obviously that cannot be done in the course of a brief single human life. If there is the evolution of a conscious individual, then there must be rebirth. Rebirth is a logical necessity and a spiritual fact of which we can have the experience. Proofs of rebirth, sometimes of an overwhelmingly convincing nature, are not lacking, but as yet they have not been carefully registered and brought together.

*SABCL 22: 47*

## 76

**PASSAGE FROM UNCONSCIOUS TO CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION**

It must be observed that the appearance of human mind and body on the earth marks a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of the evolution; it is not merely a continuation of the old lines. Up till this advent of a developed thinking mind in Matter evolution had been effected, not by the self-aware aspiration, intention, will or seeking of the living being, but subconsciously or subliminally by the automatic operation of Nature. This was so because the evolution began from the Inconscience and the secret Consciousness had not emerged sufficiently from it to operate through the self-aware participating individual will of its living creature. But in man the necessary change has been made, — the being has become awake and aware of himself; there has been made manifest in Mind its will to develop, to grow in knowledge, to deepen the inner and widen the outer existence, to increase the capacities of the nature. Man has seen that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the evolutionary oestrus is there in his parts of mind and life, the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him: he has become conscious of a soul, discovered the self and spirit. In him, then, the substitution of a conscious for a subconscious evolution has become conceivable and practicable, and it may well be concluded that the aspiration, the urge, the persistent endeavour in him is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way of fulfilment, the emergence of a greater status.

*CWSA 22: 875-76*

## 77

**UNCONSCIOUS PURITY TO LUMINOUS PURITY**

. . . it should be added that because man is a mental being, he must necessarily in the course of his evolution leave behind this unconscious and spontaneous purity, which is very similar to the purity of the animal, and after passing through an unavoidable period of mental perversion and impurity, rise beyond the mind into the higher and luminous purity of the divine consciousness.

*CWM 10: 55*

## 78

**INTIMATION OF THE FOLLOWING STEP**

Already, in what seems to be inconscient in Life, the signs of sensation coming towards the surface are visible; in moving and breathing life the emergence of sensitive mind is apparent and the preparation of thinking mind is not entirely hidden, while in thinking mind, when it develops, there appear at an early stage the rudimentary strivings and afterwards the more developed seekings of a spiritual consciousness. As plant life contains in itself the obscure possibility of the conscious animal, as the animal mind is astir with the movements of feeling and perception and the rudiments of conception that are the first ground for man the thinker, so man the mental being is sublimated by the endeavour of the evolutionary Energy to develop out of him the spiritual man, the fully conscious being, man exceeding his first material self and discoverer of his true self and highest nature.

*CWSA 22: 883-84*

## 79

**MAN CAN COLLABORATE WITH THE SUPREME**

In man one can already see that the spiritual reality is being developed and that it is going to express itself totally and freely. Formerly, in the animal and the plant, it was. . . it was necessary to be very clear-sighted to see it, but man is himself conscious of this spiritual reality, at least in the higher part of his human existence. Man is beginning to know what the Supreme Origin wants of him and is collaborating in carrying it out.



Nature wants the creation to become conscious of being the Creator himself in an objectivisation, that is to say, there is no difference between the Creator and the Creation, and the goal is a conscious and realised union. That is the secret of Nature.

*CWM 9: 322*

**80**

**THE TRUTH IS CLOSE**

If in the meaningless Void creation rose,  
 If from a bodiless Force Matter was born,  
 If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,  
 Its green delight break into emerald leaves  
 And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,  
 If sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell  
 And Thought seize the grey matter of the brain,  
 And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,  
 How shall the nameless Light not leap on men,  
 And unknown powers emerge from Nature's sleep?  
 Even now hints of a luminous Truth like stars  
 Arise in the mind-mooned splendour of Ignorance;  
 Even now the deathless Lover's touch we feel:  
 If the chamber's door is even a little ajar,  
 What then can hinder God from stealing in  
 Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?  
 Already God is near, the Truth is close:  
 Because the dark atheist body knows him not,  
 Must the sage deny the Light, the seer his soul?

*CWSA 34: 648-49*

**81**

**LET US STRIVE . . .**

Beyond words, beyond thoughts, the Supreme Presence makes itself felt and compels our wonder.

Let us beware of all mental constructions that limit and distort. Let us strive to keep the contact pure.

*CWM 10: 343*

— SECTION 3 —

*THE SILVER CALL*

**THE SILVER CALL**

There is a godhead of unrealised things  
    To which Time's splendid gains are hoarded dross;  
A cry seems near, a rustle of silver wings  
    Calling to heavenly joy by earthly loss.

All eye has seen and all the ear has heard  
    Is a pale illusion by some greater voice  
And mightier vision; no sweet sound or word,  
    No passion of hues that make the heart rejoice

Can equal those diviner ecstasies.  
    A Mind beyond our mind has sole the ken  
Of those yet unimagined harmonies,  
    The fate and privilege of unborn men.

As rain-thrashed mire the marvel of the rose,  
Earth waits that distant marvel to disclose.

## 82

**EVOLUTION**

I passed into a lucent still abode  
 And saw as in a mirror crystalline  
 An ancient Force ascending serpentine  
 The unhasting spirals of the aeonic road.  
 Earth was a cradle for the arriving god  
 And man but a half-dark half-luminous sign  
 Of the transition of the veiled Divine  
 From Matter's sleep and the tormented load

Of ignorant life and death to the Spirit's light.  
 Mind liberated swam Light's ocean vast,  
 And life escaped from its grey tortured line;  
 I saw Matter illumining its parent Night.  
 The soul could feel into infinity cast  
 Timeless God-bliss the heart incarnadine.

CWSA 2: 594

## 83

**CARDINAL FACT OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

In my explanation of the universe I have put forward this cardinal fact of a spiritual evolution as the meaning of our existence here. It is a series of ascents from the physical being and consciousness to the vital, the being dominated by the life-self, thence to the mental being realised in the fully developed man and thence into the perfect consciousness which is beyond the mental, into the supramental Consciousness and the supramental being, the Truth-Consciousness which is the integral consciousness of the spiritual being. Mind cannot be our last conscious expression because mind is fundamentally an ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is only the supramental Truth-Consciousness that can bring us the true and whole Self-Knowledge and world-Knowledge; it is through that only that we can get to our true being and the fulfilment of our spiritual evolution.

SABCL 22: 47

## 84

**A RADICAL AND INTEGRAL TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE**

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

CWSA 22: 922-23

## 85

**A SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS EMERGING**

All that you say only amounts, on the general issue, to the fact that this is a world of slow evolution in which man has emerged out of the beast and is still not out of it, light out of darkness, and a higher consciousness out of first a dead and then a

struggling and troubled unconsciousness. A spiritual consciousness is emerging and it is through this spiritual consciousness that one can meet the Divine. Religions, full of vital and mental, mixed, troubled and ignorant stuff, can only get glimpses of the Divine; positivist reason with its questioning based upon things as they are and refusing to believe in anything that may or will be cannot get any vision at all. The spiritual is a new consciousness that has to evolve and has been evolving. It is quite natural that at first and for a long time only a few should get the full light, while a greater number but still only a few compared with the mass of humanity, should get it partially. But what has been gained by the few can at a stage of the evolution be completed and more generalised and that is the attempt which we are making. But if this greater consciousness of light, peace and joy is to be gained, it cannot be by questioning and scepticism which can only fall back on what is and say: "It is impossible, what has not been in the past cannot be in the future, what is so imperfectly realised as yet cannot be better realised in the future." A faith, a will, or at least a persistent demand and aspiration are needed — a feeling that with this and this alone I can be satisfied and a push towards it that will not cease till it is done. That is why a spirit of scepticism and denial stands in the way, because they stand against the creation of the conditions under which spiritual experience can unroll itself.

*SABCL 22: 7-8*

## 86

### **THE SPIRITUAL URGE — AN UNMISTAKABLE SIGN**

If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the spirit, mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.

*CWSA 22: 879*

## 87

**THE SECRET INTENTION OF NATURE**

*I did not understand this sentence, Sweet Mother: "In the earliest stages of evolutionary Nature we are met by the dumb secrecy of her inconscience." What is this secrecy, Sweet Mother?*

The intention of Nature? . . . It is what Sri Aurobindo has said from the beginning, that, hidden in the depths, at the core of matter, there is the Divine Presence and that the whole terrestrial evolution is made to prepare the return of the creation to its origin, to this Divine Presence which is at the centre of everything — that is the intention of Nature.

CWM 9: 321

## 88

**EARTH IS THE PLACE OF EVOLUTION**

Yes. The earth is the place of evolution in which all these forces meet and try to manifest and out of their working something has to develop. On the other planes (the mental, vital etc.) there is not the evolution — there each acts separately according to its own law.

SABCL 22: 17

## 89

**PSYCHIC CARRIES FORWARD THE PROGRESS**

The centre of organisation and transformation is always the presence of the psychic in the body. Therefore, it is a very big mistake to believe that the progress continues or even, as some believe, that it is more complete and rapid in the periods of transition between two physical lives; in general, there is no progress at all, for the psychic enters into a state of rest and the other parts, after a more or less ephemeral life in their own domain, are dissolved.

Earthly life is the place for progress. It is here, on earth, that progress is possible, during the period of earthly existence. And it is the psychic which carries the progress over from one life to another, by organising its own evolution and development itself.

CWM 9: 269-70

## 90

**TO RELIVE THE EVOLUTIONARY STEPS**

Indeed, in every being, the whole process of evolution is reproduced, as if at a dizzy speed one were reviewing all that has been done, and as if it were necessary to relive all that in a flash before taking the next step.

*CWM 9: 323*

## 91

**EVOLUTION NEED NOT BE PAINFUL**

An evolution from the Inconscient need not be a painful one if there is no resistance; it can be a deliberately slow and beautiful efflorescence of the Divine. One ought to be able to see how beautiful outward Nature can be and usually is, although it is itself apparently “inconscient”. Why should the growth of consciousness in inward Nature be attended by so much ugliness and evil spoiling the beauty of the outward creation? Because of a perversity born from the Ignorance, which came in with Life and increased in Mind — that is the Falsehood, the Evil that was born because of the starkness of the Inconscient’s sleep separating its action from the luminosity of the secret Conscient that is all the time within it. But it need not have been so except for the overriding Will of the Supreme which meant that the possibilities of perversion by inconscience and ignorance should be manifested in order to be eliminated through being given their chance, since all possibility has to manifest somewhere: once it is eliminated, the Divine Manifestation in Matter will be greater than it otherwise could be, because it will combine all the possibilities involved in this difficult creation and not some of them as in an easier and less strenuous creation might naturally happen.

“From beauty to greater beauty, from joy to intenser joy, by an especial adjustment of the senses” — yes, that would be the normal course of a divine manifestation, however gradual, in Matter. “Discordant sound and offensive odour” are creations of a disharmony between consciousness and Nature and do not exist in themselves; they would not be present to a liberated and harmonised consciousness, for they would be foreign to its being, nor would they afflict a rightly developing harmonised soul and Nature. Even the “belching volcano, crashing thunderstorm and whirling typhoon” are in themselves grandiose and beautiful things and only harmful or terrible to a consciousness unable to meet or deal with them or make a pact with the spirits of Wind and Fire. You are assuming that the manifestation from the Inconscient must be what it is now and here and that no other kind of world of

Matter was possible, but the harmony of material Nature in itself shows that it need not necessarily be a discordant, evil, furiously perturbed and painful creation — the psychic being, if allowed to manifest from the first in Life and Mind and lead the evolution instead of being relegated behind the veil, would have been the principle of a harmony ever outflowing: everyone who has felt the psychic at work within him, free of the vital intervention, can at once see that this would be its effect because of its unerring perception, true choice, harmonic action. If it has not been so, it is because the Dark Powers have made Life a claimant instead of an instrument. The reality of the Hostiles and the nature of their role and trend of their endeavour cannot be doubted by anyone who has had his inner vision unsealed and made their unpleasant acquaintance.

*SABCL 22: 23-24*

## 92

### THE REAL VALUE OF THE THINGS THAT ARE

The spiritual path needs a certain amount of realism — one has to see the real value of the things that are, which is very little except as steps in evolution. Then one can either follow the spiritual static path of rest and release or the spiritual dynamic path of a greater truth to be brought down into life.

*SABCL 22: 152*

## 93

### MAN, NATURE, YOGA

In the Katha Upanishad there occurs one of those powerful and pregnant phrases, containing a world of meaning in a point of verbal space, with which the Upanishads are thickly sown. *Yogo hi prabhavapyayau*. For Yoga is the beginning & ending of things. In the Puranas the meaning of the phrase is underlined & developed. By Yoga God made the world, by Yoga He will draw it into Himself in the end. But not only the original creation & final dissolution of the universe, all great changes of things, creations, evolutions, destructions are effected by the essential process of Yoga, *tapasya*. In this ancient view Yoga presents itself as the effective, perhaps the essential & real executive movement of Nature herself in all her processes. If this is so in the general workings of Nature, if that is to say, a divine Knowledge and a divine Will in things by putting itself into relation with objects is the true cause of all force & effectuality, the same rule should hold good in human activities. It should



hold good especially of all conscious & willed processes of psychological discipline, — Yogic systems, as we call them; Yoga can really be nothing but a consummate & self-conscious natural process intended to effect rapidly objects which the ordinary natural movement works out slowly, in the tardy pace of a secular or even millennial evolution.

CWSA 12: 108

## 94

### THE AIM OF YOGA

The aim put before us in Yoga is God; the aim of Nature is to effect supernature; but these two aims are of one piece & intention. God & supernature are only one the real & the other the formal aspect of the one unattainable fulfilment towards which our human march is in its ascent directed. Yoga for man is the upward working of Nature liberated from slow evolution and long relapses and self-conscious in divine or human knowledge.

CWSA 12: 108

## 95

### ALL IS A SYMBOL

God is That which is the All and yet exceeds and transcends the All; there is nothing in existence which is not God, but God is neither the sum of existence nor anything in that sum, except symbolically, in image to His own consciousness. In other words, everything that exists, separately, is a particular symbol and the whole sum of existence is a general symbol which tries to translate the untranslatable existence, God, into the terms of world-consciousness. It is intended to try, it is not intended to succeed; for the moment it succeeds, it ceases to be itself and becomes that untranslatable something from which it started, God. No symbol is intended to express God perfectly, not even the highest; but it is the privilege of the highest symbols to lose in Him their separate definiteness, cease to be symbols and become in consciousness that which is symbolised. Humanity is such a symbol or eidolon of God; we are made, to use the Biblical phrase, in His image; and by that is meant not a formal image, but the image of His being and personality; we are of the essence of His divinity and of the quality of His divinity; we are formed in the mould and bear the stamp of a divine being and a divine knowledge.

In everything that exists phenomenally, or, as I shall prefer to say, going deeper

into the nature of things, symbolically, there are two parts of being, thing in itself and symbol, Self and Nature, *res* (thing that is) and *factum* (thing that is done or made), immutable being and mutable becoming, that which is supernatural to it and that which is natural. Every state of existence has some force in it which drives it to transcend itself. Matter moves towards becoming life, Life travails towards becoming Mind, Mind aspires towards becoming ideal Truth, Truth rises towards becoming divine and infinite Spirit. The reason is that every symbol, being a partial expression of God, reaches out to and seeks to become its own entire reality; it aspires to become its real self by transcending its apparent self. Thing that is made, is attracted towards thing that is, becoming towards being, the natural towards the supernatural, symbol towards thing-in-itself, Nature towards God.

CWSA 12: 108-09

## 96

### THE MASTER MOVEMENT OF NATURE

The upward movement is, then, the means towards self-fulfilment in this world; but it is not imperative on all objects. For there are three conditions for all changeable existences, the upward ascension, the arrested status and the downward lapse. Nature in its lower states moves upward indeed in the mass, but seeks the final salvation for only a limited number of its individuals. It is not every form of matter that organises life although every form of matter teems with the spirit of life and is full of its urgent demand for release & self-manifestation. Not every form of life organises mind, although in all forms of life mind is there, insistent, seeking for its escape and self-expression. Nor is every mental being fitted to organise the life of ideal truth, although in every mental being, in dog & ape & worm no less than in man, the imprisoned spirit of truth & knowledge seeks for its escape and self-expression. Nature in each realised state of her building seeks first to assure the natural existence of her creatures in that state; only after this primary aim is accomplished does she seek through the best fitted of them to escape from her works, to break down what she has built and arrive at something beyond. It is not till she reaches man that she arrives at a type of being of which every individual is essentially capable of realising not only the natural but the supernatural within it; and even this is true with modifications, with qualifications. But of this it will be better to speak at greater length in another connection.

Nevertheless, it remains true that the upward movement is the master movement of Nature; arrested status is a lower fulfilment, & if perfect, a transient perfection. It is a perfection in the realms of struggle and in the style of passing forms, a fulfilment in the kingdoms of Ashanaya Mrityu, Hunger who is death, Hunger that creates &

feeds upon its creations; the upward movement is that which leads up through death to immortality & realises in this earth of the body the blissful and luminous kingdom of heaven; the downward lapse is destruction, Hell, a great perdition, mahati vinashtih. These are the three gatis or final states of becoming indicated in the Gita, uttama, madhyama & adhama, highest, middle and lowest, offered to the choice of humanity. It is for each individual of us to choose. For as we choose, God shall fulfil Himself in us, towards a transient human satisfaction, a divine perfection or a decomposition of our humanity into the fruitful waste-matter of Nature.

CWSA 12: 109-110

## 97

### TOWARDS SUPER-NATURE

Every nature, then, is a step towards some super-nature, — towards something natural to itself, but supernatural to that which is below. Life is supernatural to Matter, Mind supernatural to Life, Ideal Being supernatural to Mind, the Infinite Spirit supernatural to ideal being. We must, therefore, accept the supernatural as our goal; for the tendency of our nature to the super-nature just above it is a command of the World Power to be obeyed and not rebelled against & distrusted. It is here that Faith has its importance & Religion, when uncorrupted, its incalculable utility; for our natural mind seeks to dwell in its nature & is sceptical of supernature. Faith & religion were provisions of the All Wise Energy to accustom the natural & merely mental man to the promptings of the ideal soul in him which seeks even now to escape out of twilight into light, out of groping into truth, out of the senses & reasoning into vision & direct experience. The upward tendency is imposed on us & we cannot permanently resist it; at some time or another God will lay his hands on us and force us up that steep incline so difficult to our unregenerate treading. For as surely as the animal develops towards humanity & in its most flexible types attains a kind of humanity, as surely as the ape and the ant having once appeared, man was bound to follow, so surely man develops towards godhead & in his more capable types approaches nearer & nearer towards godhead, attains a kind of deity, & so surely the genius & the saint having appeared man is bound to develop in himself & out of himself the superman, the siddha purusha. For this conclusion no prophetic power or revelation is needed; it is the inevitable corollary from the previous demonstrations worked out for us in the vast laboratory of Nature.

CWSA 12: 111

## 98

**NEED TO TRANSCEND NATURE**

We have to transcend Nature, to become super-Nature, but it follows from what I have said that it is by taking advantage of something still imprisoned in Nature itself, by following some line which Nature is trying to open to us that we ought to proceed. By yielding to our ordinary nature we fall away both from Nature itself and from God; by transcending Nature we at once satisfy her strongest impulse, fulfil all her possibilities and rise towards God. The human first touches the divine and then becomes the divine. But there are those who seek to kill Nature in order to become the Self. Shall we follow them? No, however great & lofty be their path, however awful & dazzling their aspiration, because it is not God's intention in humanity & therefore not our proper dharma. Let any say, if he will, that we have made the lower choice. We answer in the language of the Gita, Sreyan swadharmo viguno, Better is the law of our own being though inferior, too perilous the superior law of another's being. To obey God's will in us, is certainly more blissful, perhaps even more divine than to rise to the austere heights of the Adwaitin & the ineffable self-extinction in an indefinable Existence. For us the embrace of Krishna is enough and the glory of the all-puissant bosom of Kali. We have to transcend & possess Nature, not to kill her.

In any case, whatever may be the choice for exceptional individuals, it is a general path of supreme attainment for humanity that we are seeking, — for I am not proposing to you in Yoga an individual path unconcerned with the rest of mankind, — and here there can be no doubt or hesitation. Neither the exaggerations of spirituality nor the exaggerations of materialism are our true path. Every general movement of our humanity which seeks to deny Nature, however religious, lofty or austere, of whatever dazzling purity or ethereality, has been & will always be doomed to failure, sick disappointment, disillusionment or perversion, because it is in its nature for the mass of humanity a transient impulse of exaggeration, because it contradicts God's condition for us who set Nature there as an indispensable term for His self-fulfilment in the universe and ourselves as the supreme instruments & helpers on this earth of that divine self-fulfilment. Every movement of humanity which bids us be satisfied with our ordinary Nature, dwell upon the earth, cease to aspire to the empyrean within us and choose rather to live like the animals looking to our mortal future before us & downwards at the earth we till, not upwards to God & our ungrasped perfection, has been & will always be doomed to weariness, petrification & cessation or to a quick & violent supernaturalistic reaction, because this also is for the mass of men a transient impulse of exaggeration & because it contradicts God's intention in us who has entered in and dwells secret in our Nature compelling us towards Him by an obscure, instinctive & overmastering attraction. Materialistic

movements are more unnatural and abnormal than ascetic and negative religions & philosophies; for these lead us upward at least, though they go too furiously fast & far for our humanity, but the materialist under the pretence of bringing us back to Nature, takes us away from her entirely. He forgets or does not see that Nature is only phenomenally Nature, but in reality she is God. The divine element in her is that which she most purely & really is; the rest is only term and condition, process and stage in her whole progressively developed revelation of the secret divinity. He forgets too that Nature is evolving not evolved & what we are now can never be the term of what we shall be hereafter. The supernatural must be by the very logic of things the end & goal of her movement.

Therefore, not to be ensnared, emmeshed and bound by Nature, and not, on the other hand, to be furious with her & destroy her, is the first thing we must learn if we are to be complete Yogins and proceed surely towards our divine perfection. All beings, even the sages, follow after their nature and what shall coercion and torture of it, avail them? *Prakritim yanti bhutani, nigraha kim karishyati?* And it is all so useless! Do you feel yourself bound by her and pant for release? In her hand alone is the key which shall unlock your fetters. Does she stand between you & the Lord? She is Sita; pray to her, she will stand aside & show Him to you; but presume not to separate Sita & Rama, to cast her out into some distant Lanca under the guard of giant self-tortures so that you may have Rama to yourself in Ayodhya. Wrestle with Kali, if you will, she loves a good wrestler; but wrestle not with her unlovingly, or in mere disgust & hate; for her displeasure is terrible and though she loves the Asuras, she destroys them. Rather go through her & under her protection, go with a right understanding of her and with a true & unfaltering Will; she will lead you on with whatever circlings, yet surely & in the wisest way, to the All-Blissful Personality & the Ineffable Presence. Nature is the Power of God Himself, leading these multitudes of beings, through the night & the desert & the tracts of the foeman to their secret & promised heritage.

CWSA 12: 111-14

## 99

### OUR AIM IN YOGA — SUPERNATURE IN EVERY WAY

Supernature, then, is in every way our aim in Yoga; being still natural to the world, to transcend Nature internally so that both internally and externally we may possess and enjoy her as free & lord, *swarat* and *samrat*; being still the symbol in a world of symbol-beings, to reach through it to that which is symbolised, to realise the symbol; being still a figure of humanity, a man among men, a living body among living bodies, *manus*, mental beings housed in that living matter among other embodied

mental beings; being & remaining in our outward parts all this that we are apparently, yet to exceed it and become in the body what we are really in the secret self, — God, spirit, supreme & infinite being, pure Bliss of divine joy, pure Force of divine action, pure Light of divine knowledge. Our whole apparent life has only a symbolic value & is good & necessary as a becoming; but all becoming has being for its goal & fulfilment & God is the only being. To become divine in the nature of the world and in the symbol of humanity is the perfection for which we were created.

CWSA 12: 114

## 100

### THE PURPOSE OF EARTHLY EXISTENCE

There is no conclusive validity in the reasoning that because this is a world of Ignorance, such a transformation can only be achieved by a passage to a heaven beyond or cannot be achieved at all and the demand of the psychic entity is itself ignorant and must be replaced by a merger of the soul in the Absolute. This conclusion could only be solely valid if Ignorance were the whole meaning, substance and power of the world-manifestation or if there were no element in World-Nature itself through which there could be an exceeding of the ignorant mentality that still burdens our present status of being. But the Ignorance is only a portion of this World-Nature; it is not the whole of it, not the original power or creator: it is in its higher origin a self-limiting Knowledge and even in its lower origin, its emergence out of the sheer material Inconscience, it is a suppressed Consciousness labouring to find, to recover itself, to manifest Knowledge, which is its true character, as the foundation of existence. In universal Mind itself there are ranges above our mentality which are instruments of the cosmic truth-cognition, and into these the mental being can surely rise; for already it rises towards them in supernormal conditions or receives from them without yet knowing or possessing them intuitions, spiritual intimations, large influxes of illumination or spiritual capacity. All these ranges are conscious of what is beyond them, and the highest of them is directly open to the Supermind, aware of the Truth-consciousness which exceeds it. Moreover, in the evolving being itself, those greater powers of consciousness are here, supporting mind-truth, underlying its action which screens them; this Supermind and those Truth-powers uphold Nature by their secret presence: even, truth of mind is their result, a diminished operation, a representation in partial figures. It is, therefore, not only natural but seems inevitable that these higher powers of Existence should manifest here in Mind as Mind itself has manifested in Life and Matter.

CWSA 22: 878

## 101

**THE NEXT EVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION**

In the previous stages of the evolution Nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organisation, for only so could there be a change of consciousness; this was a necessity imposed by the insufficiency of the force of consciousness already in formation to effect a change in the body. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be effected. In the inner reality of things a change of consciousness was always the major fact, the evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental; but this relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external Inconscience outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance has been righted, it is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body. It has to be noted that the human mind has already shown a capacity to aid Nature in the evolution of new types of plant and animal; it has created new forms of its environment, developed by knowledge and discipline considerable changes in its own mentality. It is not an impossibility that man should aid Nature consciously also in his own spiritual and physical evolution and transformation. The urge to it is already there and partly effective, though still incompletely understood and accepted by the surface mentality; but one day it may understand, go deeper within itself and discover the means, the secret energy, the intended operation of the Consciousness-Force within which is the hidden reality of what we call Nature.

All these are conclusions that can be arrived at even from the observation of the outward phenomena of Nature's progression, her surface evolution of being and of consciousness in the physical birth and the body. But there is the other, the invisible factor; there is rebirth, the progress of the soul by ascent from grade to grade of the evolving existence, and in the grades to higher and higher types of bodily and mental instrumentation. In this progression the psychic entity is still veiled, even in man the conscious mental being, by its instruments, by mind and life and body; it is unable to manifest fully, held back from coming to the front where it can stand out as the master of its nature, obliged to submit to a certain determination by the instruments, to a domination of Purusha by Prakriti. But in man the psychic part of the personality is able to develop with a much greater rapidity than in the inferior creation, and a time can arrive when the soul entity is close to the point at which it will emerge from behind the veil into the open and become the master of its



instrumentation in Nature. But this will mean that the secret indwelling spirit, the Daemon, the Godhead within is on the point of emergence; and, when it emerges, it can hardly be doubted that its demand will be, as indeed it already is in the mind itself when it undergoes the inner psychic influence, for a diviner, a more spiritual existence. In the nature of the earth life where the mind is an instrument of the Ignorance, this can only be effected by a change of consciousness, a transition from a foundation in Ignorance to a foundation in Knowledge, from the mental to a supramental consciousness, a supramental instrumentation of Nature.

CWSA 22: 876-77

## 102

### EVOLUTION OF MATTER

This new relation of the spirit and the body assumes — and makes possible — a free acceptance of the whole of material Nature in place of a rejection; the drawing back from her, the refusal of all identification or acceptance, which is the first normal necessity of the spiritual consciousness for its liberation, is no longer imperative. To cease to be identified with the body, to separate oneself from the body-consciousness, is a recognised and necessary step whether towards spiritual liberation or towards spiritual perfection and mastery over Nature. But, this redemption once effected, the descent of the spiritual light and force can invade and take up the body also and there can be a new liberated and sovereign acceptance of material Nature. That is possible, indeed, only if there is a changed communion of the Spirit with Matter, a control, a reversal of the present balance of interaction which allows physical Nature to veil the Spirit and affirm her own dominance. In the light of a larger knowledge Matter also can be seen to be the Brahman, a self-energy put forth by the Brahman, a form and substance of Brahman; aware of the secret consciousness within material substance, secure in this larger knowledge, the gnostic light and power can unite itself with Matter, so seen, and accept it as an instrument of a spiritual manifestation. A certain reverence, even, for Matter and a sacramental attitude in all dealings with it is possible. As in the Gita the act of the taking of food is spoken of as a material sacrament, a sacrifice, an offering of Brahman to Brahman by Brahman, so also the gnostic consciousness and sense can view all the operations of Spirit with Matter. The Spirit has made itself Matter in order to place itself there as an instrument for the well-being and joy, *yogakṣema*, of created beings, for a self-offering of universal physical utility and service. The gnostic being, using Matter but using it without material or vital attachment or desire, will feel that he is using the Spirit in this form of itself with its consent and sanction for its own purpose. There will be in him 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.

*CWSA 22: 1022-23*

## 103

### **SUPRAMENTAL INTRUSION**

If, instead of a slow evolution, something belonging to the supramental world appeared suddenly, man, the mental being, could call that a miracle, because it would be the intervention of something which he does not consciously carry within himself and which intervenes in his conscious life. And in fact, if you consider this taste for miracles, which is very strong — much stronger in children and in hearts that have remained childlike than in highly mentalised individuals — it is a faith in the realisation of the aspiration for the marvellous, of something higher than anything one can expect from normal life.

*CWM 10: 162*

## 104

### **THE SUPRAMENTAL WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY A DESCENT**

What is meant here is the Divine in its essential manifestation which reveals itself to us as Light and Consciousness, Power, Love and Beauty. But in its actual cosmic manifestation the Supreme, being the Infinite and not bound by any limitation, can manifest in Itself, in its consciousness of innumerable possibilities, something that seems to be the opposite of itself, something in which there can be Darkness, Inconscience, Inertia, Insensibility, Disharmony and Disintegration. It is this that we see at the basis of the material world and speak of nowadays as the Inconscient — the Inconscient Ocean of the Rigveda in which the One was hidden and arose in the form of this universe — or, as it is sometimes called, the non-being, Asat. The Ignorance which is the characteristic of our mind and life is the result of this origin in the Inconscience. Moreover, in the evolution out of inconscient existence there rise up naturally powers and beings which are interested in the maintenance of all negations of the Divine, error and unconsciousness, pain, suffering, obscurity, death, weakness, illness, disharmony, evil. Hence the perversion of the manifestation here,

its inability to reveal the true essence of the Divine. Yet in this very base of this evolution all that is divine is there involved and pressing to evolve, Light, Consciousness, Power, Perfection, Beauty, Love. For in the Inconscient itself and behind the perversions of the Ignorance the Divine Consciousness lies concealed and works and must more and more appear, throwing off in the end its disguises. That is why it is said that the world is called to express the Divine.

Your statement about the supramental evolution is correct except that it does not follow that humanity as a whole will become supramental. What is more likely to happen is that the supramental principle will be established in the evolution by the descent just as the mental principle was established by the appearance of thinking Mind and Man in earthly life. There will be a race of supramental beings on the earth just as now there is a race of mental beings. Man himself will find a greater possibility of rising to the planes intermediary between his mind and supermind and making their powers effective in his life, which will mean a great change in humanity on earth, but it is not likely that the mental stage will disappear from the ascending ladder and, if so, the continued existence of a mental race will be necessary so as to form a stage between the vital and the supramental in the evolutionary movement of the Spirit.

Such a descent of higher beings as you suggest may be envisaged as a part of the process of the change. But the main part of the change will be the appearance of the supramental being and the organisation of a supramental nature here, as a mental being has appeared and a mental nature organised itself during the last stage of the evolution. I prefer nowadays not to speak of the descent of the higher beings because my experience is that it leads to a vain and often egoistic romanticism which distracts the attention from the real work, that of the realisation of the Divine and the transformation of the nature.

*SABCL 22: 9-10*

## 105

### THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SPECIES

The question might be asked: Will the human species be like some species which have disappeared from the earth? . . . Certain species have disappeared from the earth — but not species which have lasted as long as the human species. I don't think so; and certainly not the species which had in them the seed of progress, this possibility of progress. Rather one has the impression that evolution will follow a curve which will draw closer and closer to a higher species and, maybe, everything that is still too close to the lower species will fall away, just as those species have.

We always forget that not only is everything possible — everything, even the

most contradictory things — but all the possibilities have at least one moment of existence.

*CWM 9: 235*

## 106

### THE SUPRAMENTAL EMERGENCE

But now that we are on the threshold of the new transformation, the new emergence as it is called here, and now that we are going to witness the process of transformation between the human mental being and the supramental being, we shall profit by this historical ability of the mind which will follow what happens and take note of it. So, from that point of view also, the phenomenon which is taking place now is absolutely unique in the history of the earth, and probably — almost certainly — when we have followed the process of this transformation to the very end, we shall have the key to all the former transformations; that is, everything that we are trying to understand at present, we shall know for certain when the process is repeated, this time between the mental and the supramental being.

You are therefore invited to a very special development of the capacity for observation, so that all this may not take place in a half-dream and you awaken to a new life without even knowing how things have happened.

One must be very vigilant, wide awake, and instead of being interested in little inner psychological phenomena which are . . . quite antiquated — they belong to an entire period of human history which anyway has lost all its novelty — it would be better to be more attentive to things of greater general import, things more subtle, more impersonal which would put you in the midst of new discoveries of a very special interest.

Open the eyes of the subtle intelligence, and without prejudice or preference, without egoism and without attachment, look at what is happening day by day.

*CWM 9: 293-94*

## 107

### EVOLUTION IS NOT FINISHED

Evolution is not finished; reason is not the last word nor the reasoning animal the supreme figure of Nature. As man emerged out of the animal, so out of man the superman emerges.

*CWSA 12: 443*

I would like to see the English to know which tense Sri Aurobindo used for the verb *émerge* — whether it is present or future?

If it is in the future, it is a promise we all know and for whose realisation we are working. If it is in the present . . . I have nothing to add.

CWM 10: 255

## 108

### EVOLUTION OF THE GNOSTIC LIFE

As mind seeks for light, for the discovery of knowledge and for mastery by knowledge, so life seeks for the development of its own force and for mastery by force: its quest is for growth, power, conquest, possession, satisfaction, creation, joy, love, beauty; its joy of existence is in a constant self-expression, development, diverse manifoldness of action, creation, enjoyment, an abundant and strong intensity of itself and its power. The gnostic evolution will lift that to its highest and fullest expression, but it will not act for the power, satisfaction, enjoyment of the mental or vital ego, for its narrow possession of itself and its eager ambitious grasp on others and on things or for its greater self-affirmation and magnified embodiment; for in that way no spiritual fullness and perfection can come. 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. In the more and more perfect satisfaction of that growing manifestation will be the individual's satisfaction: his power will be the instrumentation of the power of Supernature for bringing in and extending that greater life and nature; whatever conquest and adventure will be there, will be for that only and not for the reign of any individual or collective ego. Love will be for him the contact, meeting, union of self with self, of spirit with spirit, a unification of being, a power and joy and intimacy and closeness of soul to soul, of the One to the One, a joy of identity and the consequences of a diverse identity. It is this joy of an intimate self-revealing diversity of the One, the multitudinous union of the One and a happy interaction in the identity, that will be for him the full revealed sense of life. Creation aesthetic or dynamic, mental creation, life creation, material creation will have for him the same sense. It will be the creation of significant forms of the Eternal Force, Light, Beauty, Reality, — the beauty and truth of its forms and bodies, the beauty and truth of its powers and qualities, the beauty and truth of its spirit, its formless beauty of self and essence.

As a consequence of the total change and reversal of consciousness establishing 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 relations between the spirit and the body it inhabits.

CWSA 22: 1019-20

## 109

### THE SUPERMIND IS A TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS

The essential character of Supermind is a Truth-consciousness which knows by its own inherent right of nature, by its own light: it has not to arrive at knowledge but possesses it. It may indeed, especially in its evolutionary action, keep knowledge behind its apparent consciousness and bring it forward as if from behind the veil; but even then this veil is only an appearance and does not really exist: the knowledge was always there, the consciousness its possessor and present revealer. This too is only in the evolutionary play and on the supramental plane itself the consciousness lives always in an immediacy of knowledge and acts by a direct immediacy of knowledge. In Mind as we see it here the action is very different; it starts from an apparent absence of knowledge, a seeming ignorance or nescience, even, in material Nature, from an inconscience in which any kind of knowing does not seem at all to exist. It reaches knowledge or the action of knowledge by steps which are not at all immediate but rather knowledge at first seems utterly impossible and foreign to the very substance of this Matter. Yet, in the blindness of Matter itself there are signs of a concealed consciousness which in its hidden fundamental being sees and has the power to act according to its vision and even by an infallible immediacy which is inherent in its nature. This is the same Truth that is apparent in Supermind but is here involved and seems not to be. The Mind of Light is a subordinate action of Supermind, dependent upon it even when not apparently springing direct from it, in which the secret of this connection becomes evident and palpable.

The Truth-consciousness is not only a power of knowledge; it is a being of consciousness and knowledge, a luminous many-sided dynamis and play of the omniscient Spirit; in it there can be a spiritual feeling, a spiritual sensation, a spiritual essentiality of substance that knows and reveals, that acts and manifests in an omniscience which is one with omnipotence. In Mind this Truth-consciousness and these workings of the Truth-consciousness can be there and even though it limits itself in Mind and has a subordinate or an indirect working, its action can be essentially the same. There can even be a hidden immediacy which hints at the presence of something absolute and is evidence of the same omnipotence and omniscience. In the Mind of Light when it becomes full-orbed this character of the Truth reveals itself, though in a garb that is transparent even when it seems to cover: for this too is a truth-consciousness and a self-power of knowledge. This too proceeds from the

Supermind and depends upon it even though it is limited and subordinate. What we have called specifically the Mind of Light is indeed the last of a series of descending planes of consciousness in which the Supermind veils itself by a self-chosen limitation or modification of its self-manifesting activities, but its essential character remains the same: there is in it an action of light, of truth, of knowledge in which inconscience, ignorance and error claim no place. It proceeds from knowledge to knowledge; we have not yet crossed over the borders of the truth-conscious into ignorance. The methods also are those of a self-luminous knowing and seeing and feeling and a self-fulfilling action within its own borders; there is no need to seek for something missing, no fumbling, no hesitation: all is still a gnostic action of a gnostic power and principle. There has been a descent from full Supermind into Mind, but this Mind though a self-limited is not yet an agnostic consciousness unsure of itself or unsure of its workings; there is still a comprehending or an apprehending consciousness which goes straight to its object and does not miss its mark or have to hunt for it in the dark or in insufficient light: it sees, knows, puts its hand immediately on things of self and things of Nature. We have passed into Mind but Mind has still not broken its inherent connection with the supramental principle.

CWSA 13: 588-89

## 110

### THE CHARACTER OF OVERMIND

Still there is an increasing self-limitation which begins even with Overmind: Overmind is separated by only a luminous border from the full light and power of the supramental Truth and it still commands direct access to all that Supermind can give it. There is a further limitation or change of characteristic action at each step downwards from Overmind to Intuition, from Intuition to Illumined Mind, from Illumined Mind to what I have called the Higher Mind: the Mind of Light is a transitional passage by which we can pass from supermind and superhumanity to an illumined humanity. For the new humanity will be capable of at least a partly divinised way of seeing and living because it will live in the light and in knowledge and not in the obscuration of the Ignorance.

Still, again there will be a difference between the superhuman and the human, a difference in nature and power but a difference especially in the access and way of admission to the Truth-consciousness and its activities: there may indeed be two orders of its truth, direct and half-direct, immediate and near or even only a reception at a distance. But this we must consider afterwards; at present it is sufficient to mark certain differences in the descending order of gnostic mind which culminates here.

We may say that there is a higher hemisphere of our being in which Mind, luminous and aware of its workings, still lives in the Light and can be seen as a subordinate power of the Supermind; it is still an agent of the Truth-consciousness, a gnostic power that has not descended into the mental ignorance; it is capable of a mental gnosis that preserves its connection with the superior light and acts by its power. This is the character of Overmind in its own plane and of all the powers that are dependent on the Overmind: the Supermind works there but at one remove as if in something that it has put forth from itself but which is no longer entirely itself but is still a delegate of the Truth and invested with its authority. We are moving towards a transitional border beyond which lies the possibility of the Ignorance, but the Ignorance is not yet here. In the order of the evolutionary descent we stand in the Mind of Light on that border and a step downward can carry us beyond it into the beginnings of an ignorance which still bears on its face something of the luminosity that it is leaving behind it. On the other hand, in the ascending order of the evolution we reach a transition in which we see the light, are turned towards it, reflect it in our consciousness and one further step carries us into the domain of the Light. The Truth becomes visible and audible to us and we are in immediate communication with its messages and illuminations and can grow into it and be made one with its substance. Thus there is a succession of ranges of consciousness which we can speak of as Mind but which belongs practically to the higher hemisphere, although in their ontological station they are within the domain of the lower hemisphere. For the whole of being is a connected totality and there is in it no abrupt passage from the principle of Truth and Light into their opposite. The creative truth of things works and can work infallibly even in the Inconscient: the Spirit is there in Matter and it has made a series of steps by which it can travel from it to its own heights in an uninterrupted line of gradations; the depths are linked to the heights and the Law of the one Truth creates and works everywhere.

CWSA 13: 589-91

## 111

### **THE SUPREME TRUTH IS AT WORK**

Even in the material world which seems to us a world of ignorance, a world of the workings of a blind and inconscient Force starting from inconscience and proceeding through ignorance and reaching with difficulty towards an imperfect Light and Knowledge, there is still a secret Truth in things which arranges all, guides towards the Self many contrary powers of being and rises towards its own heights where it can manifest its own highest truth and fulfil the secret purpose of the universe. Even this material world of existence is built upon a pattern of the truth in things which



we call Law of Nature, a truth from which we climb to a greater truth until we emerge in the Light of the Supreme. This world is not really created by a blind force of Nature: even in the Inconscient the presence of the supreme Truth is at work; there is a seeing Power behind it which acts infallibly and the steps of the Ignorance itself are guided even when they seem to stumble; for what we call the Ignorance is a cloaked Knowledge, a Knowledge at work in a body not its own but moving towards its own supreme self-discovery. This Knowledge is the covert Supermind which is the support of the creation and is leading all towards itself and guides behind this multitude of minds and creatures and objects which seem each to be following its own law of nature; in this vast and apparently confused mass of existence there is a law, a one truth of being, a guiding and fulfilling purpose of the world-existence. The Supermind is veiled here and does not work according to its characteristic law of being and self-knowledge, but without it nothing could reach its aim. A world governed by an ignorant mind would soon drift into a chaos; it could not in fact come into existence or remain in existence unless supported by the secret Omniscience of which it is the cover; a world governed by a blind inconscient force might repeat constantly the same mechanical workings but it would mean nothing and arrive nowhere. This could not be the cause of an evolution that creates life out of Matter, out of life mind, and a gradation of planes of Matter, Life and Mind culminating in the emergence of Supermind. The secret truth that emerges in Supermind has been there all the time, but now it manifests itself and the truth in things and the meaning of our existence.

It is in this series of the order of existence and as the last word of the lower hemisphere of being, the first word of the higher hemisphere that we have to look at the Mind of Light and see what is its nature and the powers which characterise it and which it uses for its self-manifestation and workings, its connection with Supermind and its consequences and possibilities for the life of a new humanity.

CWSA 13: 591-92

## 112

### THE MIND OF LIGHT

A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of



Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature. Even, the highest manifestations of a mind of Light would be an instrumentality of the supermind, a part of it or a projection from it, a stepping beyond humanity into the superhumanity of the supramental principle. Above all, its possession would enable the human being to rise beyond the normalities of his present thinking, feeling and being into those highest powers of the mind in its self-exceedings which intervene between our mentality and supermind and can be regarded as steps leading towards the greater and more luminous principle. This advance like others in the evolution might not be reached and would naturally not be reached at one bound, but from the very beginning it would be inevitable: the pressure of the supermind creating from above out of itself the mind of Light would compel this certainty of the eventual outcome. The first gleamings of the new Light would carry in themselves the seed of its highest flamings; even in the first beginnings, the certainty of their topmost powers would be there; for this is the constant story of each evolutionary emergence: the principle of its highest perfection lies concealed in the involution which precedes and necessitates the evolution of the secret principle.

CWSA 13: 585-86

## 113

### TWO ASPECTS

. . . throughout the story of evolution there are two complementary aspects which constitute its action and are necessary to its totality; there is hidden in the involution of Nature the secret power and principle of being which lies concealed under the veil cast on it by material Nature and there is carried in that Nature itself the inevitable force of the principle compelling the process of emergence of its inherent powers and characters, the essential features which constitute its reality. . . .

CWSA 13: 586

## 114

**TWO FEATURES**

As the evolutionary principle emerges, there are also two constant features of the process of the emergence: there are the gradations by which it climbs out of the involution and manifests more and more of its power, its possibilities, the force of the Godhead within it, and there is a constant manifestation of all types and forms of its being which are the visible, indicative and efficient embodiments of its essential nature. There appear in the evolutionary process organised forms and activities of Matter, the types of life and the living beings, the types of mind and the thinking beings, the luminosities and greatnesses of the spiritual principle and the spiritual beings whose nature, character, personality, mark the stages of the ascent towards the highest heights of the evolution and the ultimate largest manifestation of what it is in itself and must become by the force of time and the all-revealing Spirit. This is the real sense and drive of what we see as evolution: the multiplication and variation of forms is only the means of its process. Each gradation contains the possibility and the certainty of the grades beyond it: the emergence of more and more developed forms and powers points to more perfected forms and greater powers beyond them, and each emergence of consciousness and the conscious beings proper to it enables the rise to a greater consciousness beyond and the greater order of beings up to the ultimate godheads of which Nature is striving and is destined to show herself capable. Matter developed its organised forms until it became capable of embodying living organisms; then life rose from the subconsciousness of the plant into conscious animal formations and through them to the thinking life of man. Mind founded in life developed intellect, developed its types of knowledge and ignorance, truth and error till it reached the spiritual perception and illumination and now can see as in a glass dimly the possibility of supermind and a truth-conscious existence. In this inevitable ascent the mind of Light is a gradation, an inevitable stage. As an evolving principle it will mark a stage in the human ascent and evolve a new type of human being; this development must carry in it an ascending gradation of its own powers and types of an ascending humanity which will embody more and more the turn towards spirituality, capacity for Light, a climb towards a divinised manhood and the divine life.

CWSA 13: 586-87

## 115

**TWO STAGES**

In the birth of the mind of Light and its ascension into its own recognisable self and its true status and right province there must be, in the very nature of things as they are and very nature of the evolutionary process as it is at present, two stages. In the first, we can see the mind of Light gathering itself out of the Ignorance, assembling its constituent elements, building up its shapes and types, however imperfect at first, and pushing them towards perfection till it can cross the border of the Ignorance and appear in the Light, in its own Light. In the second stage we can see it developing itself in that greater natural light, taking its higher shapes and forms till it joins the supermind and lives as its subordinate portion or its delegate. In each of these stages it will define its own grades and manifest the order of its beings who will embody it and give to it a realised life. Thus there will be built up, first, even in the Ignorance itself, the possibility of a human ascent towards a divine living; then there will be, by the illumination of this mind of Light in the greater realisation of what may be called a gnostic mentality, in a transformation of the human being, even before the supermind is reached, even in the earth-consciousness and in a humanity transformed, an illumined divine life.

CWSA 13: 587

## 116

**THE FUTURE BODY**

For the law of the body arises from the subconscious or inconscient: but in the gnostic being the subconscious will have become conscious and subject to the supramental control, penetrated with its light and action; the basis of inconscience with its obscurity and ambiguity, its obstruction or tardy responses will have been transformed into a lower or supporting superconscience by the supramental emergence. Already even in the realised higher-mind being and in the intuitive and overmind being the body will have become sufficiently conscious to respond to the influence of the Idea and the Will-Force so that the action of mind on the physical parts, which is rudimentary, chaotic and mostly involuntary in us, will have developed a considerable potency: but in the supramental being it is the consciousness with the Real-Idea in it which will govern everything. This real-idea is a truth-perception which is self-effective; for it is the idea and will of the Spirit in direct action and originates a movement of the substance of being which must inevitably effectuate itself in state and act of being. It is this dynamic irresistible spiritual realism

of the Truth-consciousness in the highest degree of itself that will have here grown conscient and consciously competent in the evolved gnostic being: it will not act as now, veiled in an apparent inconscience and self-limited by law of mechanism, but as the sovereign Reality in self-effectuating action. It is this that will rule the existence with an entire knowledge and power and include in its rule the functioning and action of the body. The body will be turned by the power of the spiritual consciousness into a true and fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit.

CWSA 22: 1021-22

## 117

### THE Gnostic EVOLUTION OF FORM

As a result of this new relation between the Spirit and the body, the gnostic evolution will effectuate the spiritualisation, perfection and fulfilment of the physical being; it will do for the body as for the mind and life. Apart from the obscurity, frailties and limitations, which this change will overcome, the body-consciousness is a patient servant and can be in its large reserve of possibilities a potent instrument of the individual life, and it asks for little on its own account: what it craves for is duration, health, strength, physical perfection, bodily happiness, liberation from suffering, ease. These demands are not in themselves unacceptable, mean or illegitimate, for they render into the terms of Matter the perfection of form and substance, the power and delight which should be the natural outflowing, the expressive manifestation of the Spirit. When the gnostic Force can act in the body, these things can be established; for their opposites come from a pressure of external forces on the physical mind, on the nervous and material life, on the body-organism, from an ignorance that does not know how to meet these forces or is not able to meet them rightly or with power, and from some obscurity, pervading the stuff of the physical consciousness and distorting its responses, that reacts to them in a wrong way. . . .

It is the incompleteness and weakness of the Consciousness-Force manifested in the mental, vital and physical being, its inability to receive or refuse at will, or, receiving, to assimilate or harmonise the contacts of the universal Energy cast upon it, that is the cause of pain and suffering. In the material realm Nature starts with an entire insensibility, and it is a notable fact that either a comparative insensibility or a deficient sensibility or, more often, a greater endurance and hardness to suffering is found in the beginnings of life, in the animal, in primitive or less developed man; as the human being grows in evolution, he grows in sensibility and suffers more keenly in mind and life and body. For the growth in consciousness is not sufficiently supported by a growth in force; the body becomes more subtle, more finely capable,

but less solidly efficient in its external energy: man has to call in his will, his mental power to dynamise, correct and control his nervous being, force it to the strenuous tasks he demands from his instruments, steel it against suffering and disaster. In the spiritual ascent this power of the consciousness and its will over the instruments, the control of spirit and inner mind over the outer mentality and the nervous being and the body, increases immensely; a tranquil and wide equality of the spirit to all shocks and contacts comes in and becomes the habitual poise, and this can pass from the mind to the vital parts and establish there too an immense and enduring largeness of strength and peace; even in the body this state may form itself and meet inwardly the shocks of grief and pain and all kinds of suffering. Even, a power of willed physical insensibility can intervene or a power of mental separation from all shock and injury can be acquired which shows that the ordinary reactions and the debile submission of the bodily self to the normal habits of response of material Nature are not obligatory or unalterable. Still more significant is the power that comes on the level of spiritual mind or overmind to change the vibrations of pain into vibrations of Ananda: even if this were to go only up to a certain point, it indicates the possibility of an entire reversal of the ordinary rule of the reacting consciousness; it can be associated too with a power of self-protection that turns away the shocks that are more difficult to transmute or to endure. 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 and build in it a power for the total delight of existence. A spiritual Ananda can flow into the body and inundate cell and tissue; a luminous materialisation of this higher Ananda could of itself bring about a total transformation of the deficient or adverse sensibilities of physical Nature.

CWSA 22: 1023-25

## 118

### MAN IS A TRANSITIONAL BEING

Man is a transitional being, he is not final; for in him and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees which climb to a divine supermanhood.

The step from man towards superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring, but troubled and limited human existence — inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature's process.

The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of a coming divine Light, — the first far-off intimation of a godhead to be

born out of Matter. The appearance of the superman in the human world will be the fulfilment of that distant shining promise.

The difference between man and superman will be the difference between mind and a consciousness as far beyond it as thinking mind is beyond the consciousness of plant and animal; the differentiating essence of man is mind, the differentiating essence of superman will be supermind or a divine gnosis.

Man is a mind imprisoned, obscured and circumscribed in a precarious and imperfect living but imperfectly conscious body. The superman will be a supramental spirit which will envelop and freely use a conscious body, plastic to spiritual forces. His physical frame will be a firm support and an adequate radiant instrument for the spirit's divine play and work in Matter.

Mind, even free and in its own unmixed and unhampered element, is not the highest possibility of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only a minor vessel or an instrument and here an ignorant seeker plucking eagerly at a mass of falsehoods and half-truths for the unsatisfying pabulum of its hunger. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth; all its motion and feeling and sense and outcome are instinct and luminous with the inmost reality of things and express nothing else.

Supermind or gnosis is in its original nature at once and in the same movement an infinite wisdom and an infinite will. At its source it is the dynamic consciousness of the divine Knower and Creator.

When in the process of unfolding of an always greater force of the one Existence, some delegation of this power shall descend into our limited human nature, then and then only can man exceed himself and know divinely and divinely act and create; he will have become at last a conscious portion of the Eternal. The superman will be born, not a magnified mental being, but a supramental power descended here into a new life of the transformed terrestrial body. A gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant victory to be won by the spirit descended into earthly nature.

The disk of a secret sun of Power and Joy and Knowledge is emerging out of the material consciousness in which our mind works as a chained slave or a baffled and impotent demiurge; supermind will be the formed body of that radiant effulgence.

Superman is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will, character, genius, dynamic force, saintliness, love, purity or perfection. Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits, a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature.

Man is a being from the mental worlds whose mentality works here involved, obscure and degraded in a physical brain, shut off from its own divinest powers and impotent to change life beyond certain narrow and precarious limits. Even in the

highest of his kind it is balked of its luminous possibilities of supreme force and freedom by this dependence. Most often and in most men it is only a servitor, a purveyor of amusements, a caterer of needs and interests to the life and the body. But the superman will be a gnostic king of Nature; supermind in him even in its evolutionary beginnings will appear as a ray of the eternal omniscience and omnipotence. Sovereign and irresistible it will lay hands on the mental and physical instruments, and, standing above and yet penetrating and possessing our lower already manifested parts, it will transform mind, life and body into its own divine and luminous nature.

Man in himself is hardly better than an ambitious nothing. He is a narrowness that reaches towards ungrasped widenesses, a littleness straining towards grandeurs which are beyond him, a dwarf enamoured of the heights. His mind is a darkened ray in the splendours of the universal Mind. His life is a striving exulting and suffering wave, an eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken or a blindly and dully toiling petty moment of the universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe. An immortal soul is somewhere hidden within him and gives out from time to time some sparks of its presence, and an eternal spirit is above and overshadows with its wings and upholds with its power this soul continuity in his nature. But that greater spirit is obstructed from descent by the hard lid of his constructed personality and this inner radiant soul is wrapped, stifled and oppressed in dense outer coatings. In all but a few it is seldom active, in many hardly perceptible. The soul and spirit in man seem rather to exist above and behind his formed nature than to be a part of its visible reality; subliminal in his inner being or superconscious above in some unreached status, they are in his outer consciousness possibilities rather than things realised and present. The spirit is in course of birth rather than born in Matter.

This imperfect being with his hampered, confused, ill-ordered and mostly ineffective consciousness cannot be the end and highest height of the mysterious upward surge of Nature. There is something more that has yet to be brought down from above and is now seen only by broken glimpses through sudden rifts in the giant wall of our limitations. Or else there is something yet to be evolved from below, sleeping under the veil of man's mental consciousness or half visible by flashes, as life once slept in the stone and metal, mind in the plant and reason in the cave of animal memory underlying its imperfect apparatus of emotion and sense-device and instinct. Something there is in us yet unexpressed that has to be delivered by an enveloping illumination from above. A godhead is imprisoned in our depths, one in its being with a greater godhead ready to descend from superhuman summits. In that descent and awakened joining is the secret of our future.

**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 made ready by a divine Craftsman.**

**But he is admitted to a yet greater greatness and it is this that, unlike the lower creation, he is allowed to be partly the conscious artisan of his divine change. His free assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace him. His aspiration is earth's call to the supramental Creator.**

**If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation.**

CWSA 12: 157-60  
*(Emphasis added)*