

Sri Aurobindo's Individualization of the Soul

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Abstract: The individualization and growth of the soul means a growth and individualization of the mental being, the vital being and also of the physical being. The purpose of intellectual culture is the growth and individualization of the mind. The purpose of moral culture is the growth and individualization of the vital being. The true purpose of physical culture should be a well balanced the varieties and well-developed physical body in a very individualized mode. All the varieties and modes of culture can be truly individualized. This paper attempts to indicate to the reading people that Sri Aurobindo's thought that mind, the vital and physical each has to grow its individuality in the growing individuality of the soul. The soul, otherwise called the psychic being, is man's spiritual being. The growth of the spiritual being means the advent and the establishment of the true personality.

Key words: individualization, soul, psychic, liberation, consciousness, prayer.

According to Sri Aurobindo a spiritual path turns the soul away from its instruments and demands. It should concentrate exclusively upon itself, upon its essential, upon its transcendent existence. The individualization of the mind is vehicle of the true light. The light of the psychic consciousness is comparatively easy for a man. Mind is the first member of the lower sphere taken up and dealt with by the soul because it is the highest and most characteristic element in man. It is dense and less subject to the darkness inherent in human nature. The mental individual persists the longest after the dissolution of the body. It survives very long after the disruption of the vital being. This vital being is next in the rung to be taken up organized and individualized by and around the psychic being. The organization of the vital being in view of a particular object or aim in ordinary life is common enough. The purpose is limited, the scope restricted. Organization is not individualization. If the true sense it is much less personalization. The individualization of the vital being means immortal formulation of an immortal soul as energy consciousness with a specific role for the divine to play. It maintains its identity or its personality independent of the vicissitudes of the physical body. It continues to function as a divine being, a god head, to work for mankind and the world.

Finally, it is the turn of the body to become individualized, when it takes of the temperament character disposition and configuration of the psychic person and individual. The first stage is of a subtle body individualized, a radiant form of etherealized elements consisting of the concentrated light particles of the divine consciousness of the psychic. This is an immortalization of the personal identity. It can be achieved by the gnostic man who will wholly psychicise and divinize his personality. There are two courses opened to the perfected and completely developed soul. In the first stage the soul is contented with its fullness, self-gathered and self sufficient, dwelling in its own domain. In the psychic world it enjoys the equal and disturbed felicity and beatitude union with the divine.

Secondly the psychic is to come down upon earth and take a share in the fulfillment of the divine purpose in the world. "This purpose is the transformation of the physical making the material an embodiment of the divine light and power and bliss and immortality." [The Coming Race and Other Essays, 97,297]

The conscious being in us is truly the psychic being. But it is at present behind. What is normally is conscious then is the mind, apart which has got the light. We are conscious through this portion, and even we identify ourselves with it, know and feel it as our self. Sri Ramana Maharshi says "The Self is known to everybody but not clearly. You always exist. The Being is the Self 'I am' is the name of God. Knowing the Self is God." [Hunting The I, 84]

According to Sri Aurobindo the mind has a central consciousness which may be called the witness mind, the purusha in the mind. It stands apart and observes whatever is happening in the mind and in other parts as well. It is in fact the observer of the whole adhara. The other parts are the vital and the physical. The vital has its own central consciousness, its witness purusha, which observes all the vital movements and also through its own angle the other parts. Likewise, the physical has a purusha and its own consciousness. The mental purusha says, "I see I am thinking, reasoning etc." The physical purusha says, "I see I am acting, walking, running, etc." Now each of these three purushas, in an ordinary person, stands separately, each is conscious in its own way. They are not clearly conscious of each other; they intermix, but not happily. Very rarely they are unified and harmonized or bound together as a team for serving a common purpose, a signal aim. This union and harmonization can be done only through the divine witness who is the true conscious being, the one purusha behind or above all others. Its light first of all centralizes in the psychic being and then through it is canalized into its emanations on the lower levels, the mind, the vital and the physical. Consciousness is the inverse of inconscience. It is the creative essence of the universe. Without consciousness there is no creation. Inconscience means non-existence.

In a poem "Liberation" it is clearly known that the widened consciousness is the soul unmoved, desireless and pure. Purity is the huge foundation. It is the boundless mirror of God's infinitude.

"I have escaped and the small self is dead;
I am immortal, alone, ineffable;
I have gone out from the universe I made,

And have grown nameless and immeasurable.”

The supreme non-manifest becomes conscious of itself. It objectifies itself and sees itself created or reflected in multiple centres. This is the origin of the all creations. By consciousness all is, by unconsciousness nothing is. Consciousness is the light, consciousness is life.

The original consciousness is indivisible at its highest potency. When it gets individualized, it gets at the same time diffracted and minimized like the reflections in rough mirror. We normally understand by consciousness the diminished degree of the individual. But although diminished and diffracted in many form and modes, the basic consciousness is still the divine consciousness. It is there behind and at the origin of all the partial formulations. It is core of divine presence. It is nothing else than the psychin. The individual maintains and develops with the divine. It grows into the fullness of divine consciousness even as an individual and earthly embodiment.

It is apparent that consciousness is not merely consciousness, simple awareness, it is also power or energy. The Vedic word *cit-tapas* conscious energy. It is one indivisible entity. Consciousness is energy. It does not mean consciousness has power or gives power, but consciousness is power. It is also a vibration of energy. It is the self impulsion of consciousness. It is also delight. The soul of consciousness is absolute where love is in its supreme mode. Indeed, in the final account, we come back to the supreme mantra formulating the mystery of ultimate reality given by the ancients that we all repeat so often-satchidananda. N.K.Gupta says:

“Such is the ultimate Reality. There is the being or pure existence with its norms or modes or functions or self formulations as consciousness-force and as delight. This triune entity is absolutely one and the same. Vadic rishi declares: it is called variously as light and infinite and harmony and delight.” [The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo,259]

Prayers also speak always of the identification of consciousness with the superem. There is also the other identification of the consciousness, on the other side, namely with things and beings, with the world outside. In reality, however, there is only one consciousness. It is everywhere, in all subjects, in the universe and beyond. When a limit is put around it somewhere it becomes an individual consciousness. It is man’s ego cutting and shutting itself off from the global consciousness. This separative consciousness is asked to break the limits and regain its natural unity with the one consciousness. When the consciousness has been separated and individualized in different centres, even then it exists and acts in hiding in all the multiple varieties of forms, from the tiniest to the biggest. The same consciousness is alive in the atom, the stone, the plant, the animal, in the earth and the sun and the stars, in the universe as a whole. Each object big or small, living or non-living, conscious or unconscious contains that consciousness at its centre and expresses it in various ways.

Prayer is a cry from inside addressed to we know not whom for the fulfillment of a need within. To maintain uninterrupted spiritual consciousness prayer is a vehicle that goes deeply into the levels of consciousness to find the self.

In a poem “The Vedantin’s Prayer” Sri Aurobindo’s prayer aspires for something. This aspiration is not for a person, but for a state of knowledge and realization.

“Spirit supreme Who muses in the silence of the heart Eternal”

Part of Abraham’s prayer when he commenced the construction of The Kabah in Makkah went like this:

“Lord, make this town one of the peace. Preserve me and my descendants from serving idols. Lord, they have led many men astray. He that follows me shall surely belong to me, but if anyone turns against me, you are surely Forgiving, merciful. Lord, I have settled sum of my offspring in a barren valley near Your Sacred House, so that they may observe the prayer.” [Muhammad a Prophet for all Humanity, 87]

In a poem “*Surrender*” Sri Aurobindo reveals his surrender to infinite.

“Thou of whom I am the instrument,
O secret Spirit and Nature housed in me,
Let all my mortal being now be blent,”

Consider, for example, our country, India. When we say ‘India’ what do we mean to convey? Is it the geographical boundary that goes by the name or the expanse of soil contained within that boundary or its hills and rivers, forests and fields or the beasts that range in it its human inhabitants or all of these together? No, it is something else. It is a centre of consciousness. It has as its bodily frame the particular geographical boundary. It dwells in its mountains and meadows, vibrates in its vegetation, lives and moves in its animal kingdom. It is behind the mind and aspiration of its people, animating its culture and civilization and moving it towards higher and higher illuminations and achievements. It is not India alone, but every country upon earth has its consciousness, which is the central core of its life and culture. Not only so, even the earth itself, the earth as a whole, has a consciousness at its centre and is the embodiment of that consciousness. The earth’s evolution means the growth and expression of that consciousness. Likewise, the sun too has a solar consciousness, a solar being presiding over its density. Further, the universe too has a cosmic consciousness, one and indivisible, moving and guiding it. “And still beyond there lies the transcendental consciousness, outside creation and manifestation.”

It is Kabir’s prayer in which he imagines himself as a child:

“O God, I am your child and you are my Mother.
Won’t you pardon me my errors?
The child may commit numberless blunders;
would the Mother ever mind them?
If the baby pulls the Mother’s braids,
wouldn’t the Mother remain unruffled?”

Kabir is convinced that the child’s sorrow is also the mother’s nay, the mother’s is still more!” [Saints and Mystics Mylapore, Chennai, 123]

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