

Life Divine Chapter I: The Human Aspiration

Webex talk on Nov 24, 2010

Outline of Life Divine

- A. Book 1 Omnipresent and the Universe
 - 1. God who is Omnipresent Reality became the Universe
- B. Book 2 The Knowledge & the Ignorance – The Spiritual evolution
 - 1. Part 1 -- The Infinite Consciousness & The Ignorance
 - Spirit became Ignorance
 - Infinite Consciousness became the Ignorance
 - 2. Part II -- Knowledge & Spiritual Evolution
 - By Evolution Ignorance becomes Knowledge
 - Knowledge by Spiritual Evolution becomes Spirit
- C. The overall view of The Life Divine is God became the world
 - 1. the Omnipresent Reality became the universe of Ignorance so that the Spirit
 - 2. the Origin of things will evolve out of Ignorance first as knowledge and finally as Spirit which He calls Spiritual Evolution.
 - 3. Man's origin is God
 - 4. Man aspires to become God – this is evolution
 - 5. He must follow the method of Nature
 - 6. Only in this context any chapter will fully reveal to us.
- D. The Book must be read in the light of the Lila that is Marvel.
 - 1. It is intended to lift the reader to the edge of joy all the time – Man who is sad is given the chance of eternal joy that is adventure.
 - 2. He delivers that Marvel through one aspect in this chapter.
 - the power of the emerging infinite from the finite.

1. Human Aspiration

- A. Fairy tale or love story of the universe
 - 1. If you wanted to tell a child the most wonderful romantic story imaginable about Life, the future, the meaning of existence, you could never match the wonder and joy of what he says LD
 - 2. If you were the author of LD, what would you say in the first sentence, para, chapter?
 - 3. I would start off with finite & build up to the final conclusion.
 - 4. Sri Aurobindo does the opposite – he tells us the end of the story in the beginning
 - He starts with the Infinite.

- He starts by asserting the ultimate unimaginable dream is an inevitable reality.
- What is that message in a single sentence?
 - **Divine life in an animal body is inevitable.**
- He says humanity's most ancient aspirations will inevitably be realized because they are intention of Nature and God.
- That purpose is to manifest God in life on earth – to make life Divine
- Our highest aspirations are bound to be fulfilled because it is God who aspires in us and sanctions are most marvelous dreams
- Life is not a dream. The world is not an illusion. They are real and intended to manifest a divine purpose.
- The universe is the form and body of God because God has become the universe
- God is not a jealous being demanded our worship. God is Infinity. Infinite Being, Consciousness, Bliss.
- Man need not aspire worship God. His destiny is to become God
- The individual is the transcendent. We are That.

B. He also tells us the Divine Plan

1. There is a divine plan – everything happens according to the will of the divine for a greater purpose
 - Everything is as it should be – everything works for our progress
 - Nothing is wasted or meaningless
 - Even our ignorance, stumbling, errors are part of the divine plan – error is the handmaiden of Truth.
 - There is no evil – only the appearance of evil
2. LD explains all the elements of creation – ascending series of substance -- world stair
3. Life Divine is the horoscope of the universe

C. He tells us the Process

1. Life Divine explains all the stages of the process
 - How the Divine became the universe – Involution
 - How the universe is manifesting the Divine – Evolution
2. Nature's profoundest method
3. Lock and key
4. The supreme mystery

D. Our own highest aspirations are destined to be fulfilled.

1. Human aspiration is Divine Will – Agni
2. The higher our aspiration, the more certain it is of fulfillment
3. Skepticism can never defeat it – like Churchill, it will never surrender – there is no such thing as failure

- E. In P&P – everyone’s highest aspirations are fulfilled
1. Mrs. Bennet’s aspiration creates the circumstances for its own fulfillment – bringing Darcy, Bingley, Wickham to Meryton
 2. Collins & Charlotte
 3. Jane & Bingley
 4. Wickham becomes Darcy’s brother-in-law
 5. Mr. Bennet gets three daughters married without any expense
 6. Eliza aspires for romance – unimagined accomplishment
 7. Darcy – against impossible odds and opposition

- F. What is that highest aspiration of humanity?

Earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation – it survives the longest period of skepticism and returns after every banishment – is the highest which his thought can envisage.

1. Divination of Godhead
2. Impulse toward perfection
3. Search for pure Truth and unmixed Bliss

- G. Humanity is satiated by analysis of externalities of Nature but not satisfied.

1. They yield comforts and conveniences but do not satisfy the human aspiration.
2. Man perpetually returns to his primeval longings

Earliest formula for Wisdom promises to be its last – God, Light Freedom, Immortality

- Light is the infinity of Mind
- Freedom is the infinity of the Soul
- Immortality is the infinity of the Body

2. Contradictions are Complements

- A. These are our persistent ideals
- B. They are contradicted by our normal experience, but affirmed by abnormal experience – by a revolutionary individual effort.
- C. Here he tells us Nature’s method
1. He tells us the secret of how aspirations fulfill themselves
 2. He calls it Nature’s profoundest method
- D. Nature fulfills them by creating conditions which appear to be the very opposite of what it is that we aspire to achieve
- E. Contradictions
1. God and Nature

2. Finite & Infinite
3. Time & Eternity
4. Transcendent & Individual
5. Superconscient & Subconscient
6. Spirit & Matter

F. God & Man

1. Man says God created man in his own image as a separate being
2. Sri Aurobindo says man created God in his own image as a separate being
3. Truth is God became man and man is destined to become God
4. Man is divided into four parts which must become one by evolution
5. Man is God born on Earth. His origin is God.
6. God is Infinite. Man is finite.
7. The finite is the frontal appearance of the Infinite – they are inseparable like fire and light – wherever there is the finite, the infinite is there too
8. Man is the finite-appearing Infinite – he is aware of the finite, therefore he is unconscious. The infinite in him is always conscious.
9. To be conscious of the infinite in himself is to be conscious.
10. Nature is awakening that consciousness in us.
11. It is an irresistible movement.

G. Man's aspiration generates contradiction

1. Man longs for his infinite origin. It is his obsession and preoccupation since the earliest of times.
2. His longing is a yearning.
3. Its intensity produces its opposite – that is the law of dualities
4. Ego creates the dualities. Mind divides things to create dualities
5. Aspiration creates skepticism. Skepticism is doubt, disbelief. Skepticism banishes aspiration.
6. Aspiration is the higher side of skepticism – skepticism can vanish, not aspiration. It survives the longest banishment.
7. Aspiration is the highest ideal man has envisaged.

H. When we confront a contradiction we say it is an impossibility

1. What's what Eliza says when she hears that Charlotte is engaged to Collins
2. Lady Catherine says it when she hears Eliza is engaged to Darcy
3. When Bingley falls in love with Jane, Darcy and Caroline tell him it is impossible
4. When Darcy proposes to Eliza, she says you are the last man on earth I can marry

5. When Eliza reads of Lydia's elopement, she knows all is lost and Wickham can never be persuaded to marry her. She knows she will never see Darcy again.

I. He tells us contradictions are not signs of impossibility – they are signs of God's intention

1. Darcy & Eliza are opposites – their contradictions release intense energy
 - He values his wealth and respectable social position
 - She is lively, intelligent and individualistic. She admires Wickham's good manners and charm
 - He represents higher status compared with her mixed origins
 - She represents higher inner values compared with his clumsy, arrogant selfish boorishness
 - He is morose (never smiles or laughs), she is bright, lively, cheerful
 - He needs her strength and vitality. She longs for the beauty and grace of Pemberley
 - She wants a man who will love her, not just a respectable position
 - He wants a woman he can love and discovers light in her eyes
 - He is proud of his position. She frowns on him and rejects him, becoming more valuable in his eyes.
 - The distance between them becomes a powerful attraction
 - Wickham's lies intensify the natural differences between them
 - His interference with Bingley and Jane makes it worse
 - It leads Darcy to personal revolution as an expression of social evolution

J. Revolution vs. Evolution

1. Contradictions represent high achievements beyond the current attainments of humanity or society that can only be achieved either by
Revolutionary individual effort or an Evolutionary general progression
2. In P&P the French Revolution is raging across the English Channel. Aristocrats who resist social evolution are losing their heads by the thousands so that the commoners can rise in society. English society is looking for a more peaceful way to evolve.
3. Revolution is necessary for the ego
 - Darcy makes a revolutionary individual effort to win Eliza – his effort is psychological. He is a yogi who transforms himself and paves the way for social evolution.
 - If we widen ourselves, Nature will carry us forward along the evolutionary path
 - **Jane and Wickham rise as a result of Darcy's effort as its beneficiaries because the society accepts the direction Darcy has set for it.**

K. Material Intellect

1. The ordinary material intellect takes the present reality as the limit to possibilities
 - Eliza is attracted to false external appearances
 - Her identification is with matter – her mother
 - She is blind to the opportunity – viewing through the senses
 - Darcy clings to the illusory viewpoint of the senses

- His egoistic pride and selfishness
2. What do we mean by Impossibility?
 - When our ideals contradict the present, the intellect says it is impossible.
 3. Material Intellect is the principle obstacle to LD and to comprehending what he says.
 4. What is the material intellect? It is that which believes ONLY in the present organization of things, meaning what he can see with the five senses.
 - Tom Watson on computers
 - End of Cold War
 - Bill Gates on Internet
 5. How often is the material intellect correct about the future? Almost never
 6. Review your own life. Did you foresee all that would happen to you?
 7. No matter how many times it is proven wrong, it always retains faith in itself the next time.

L. Deliberate Reason

1. The solution is not to try to convince the material intellect – it can never be convinced.
2. Mother says physical mind must be rejected.
 - Give up faith in the mind's externalized way of viewing things
3. He repeatedly calls for deliberate reason freed from the physical senses and superstition.
4. Key is to shift
 - From inside the problem to outside
 - From looking at reality from the finite perspective of the material intellect to viewing it from the logic of the infinite which sees that everything is infinite always
 - Discover the Infinite behind the finite – finite is only a frontal appearance
5. It is the mind that formulates the infinite in terms of finite, limited definable appearances.
 - Mind formulates the Unknowable as finite fact.
 - Reject the limits of mind, and you escape the prison and see truly for the first time.

M. Take a more deliberate view

1. Our viewpoint matters
2. First we must see the problem, then see there is a solution at a higher level
3. Awareness of a problem enables us to convert it into an opportunity
 - Collins refuses to understand Eliza's refusal
 - Darcy becomes aware of Eliza's attitude – gains knowledge and decides to change

N. The real goal of Nature is Divine Life

Direct opposition is part of Nature's profoundest method and seal of her completest sanction.

1. Man aspires for God, Light, Freedom and Immortality
 2. Life is the very opposite – we human beings live in ignorance, bound to the sufferings of the physical body and the law of death
 3. Our aspirations are the very contradiction of what we know of life on earth.
 4. Therefore we dream of paradise in some heavenly life beyond earth or in an escape from life (moksha)
 5. Now Sri Aurobindo tells us we need to run away from life or abandon earth to fulfill our highest aspiration.
 6. The goal Nature is striving for is the ultimate contradiction in terms – a Divine Life in an animal and egoistic consciousness.
- O. Human Aspiration is a sign of the Divine Intention – so he starts the book with The Human Aspiration and ends it with The Divine Life.
- P. What does he mean by Divine Life?
1. To know, possess and BE the divine being in an animal body
 2. Convert our obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination
 3. To replace our transitory satisfactions, pain & suffering with peace & self-existent bliss
 4. To establish Infinite Freedom in a world of mechanical necessities
 5. To transform the mortal body subjected to death into an immortal life in the body
- Q. The Goal of Nature's evolution is nothing less than the manifestation of God in Matter
- R. How does this evolution express in Society today?
1. Political freedom for India
 2. Social equality for all castes
 3. Education for all children
 4. Prosperity for all individuals

3. Harmony & Unity

- A. In the next para he tells us the method of transforming the contradictions
1. It is to realize that contradictions are actually complements
 2. They are two opposite sides of reality at one level.
 3. At a higher level they are complements
 4. The key is to accept the truth in both sides – to harmonize them – to reconcile them
 5. Harmony is supramental consciousness
- B. The first step is to understand the problem

All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony

Problems arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity

1. P&P
 - Darcy is attracted to Eliza in spite of the huge distance between them socially – an instinct of unity
 - Eliza dislikes Darcy, but later comes to realize he is a good man. Then Lydia's elopement presents an obstacle, a discord, that seems impossible to overcome.
2. To accept unresolved discord is possible for the practical or animal part of man
 - Most people shut out the problem or accept a rough utilitarian compromise – compromise is of the Ignorance
 - Mr. Bennet's attitude to Mrs. Bennet – he hides in the library and tries to ignore her
 - Charlotte decides to be practical and marries Collins. She never asks whether she too can marry for love.

C. Contradiction generates energy for reconciliation

Greater the apparent discord – even to irreconcilable opposition– stronger is the spur toward reconciliation

1. Revolution of rising expectations
 - Freedom and equality only for the aristocracy in 18th century
 - Education only for the elite in 19th century
 - Car and phone only for the very rich in India before 1980
2. The supramental harmony brings with it the supramental power that increases with the difficulty of the problem, the widening gap of the opposition.
3. No wonder that power at the next stage creates the Marvel.
4. The opposition of contradictions becomes the evolutionary vertical pressure between two parts of the being.

D. We reconcile contradictions by rising to a higher level of Truth

1. Darcy and Eliza are opposed to one another
 - What could be greater than the discord between Darcy & Eliza?
 - He loves her but finds her inferior connections objectionable
 - She dislikes his pride and arrogance
 - He has spoiled Jane's relationship with Bingley
 - How can they ever be reconciled?
2. They reconcile these contradictions by rising to a higher level
 - Darcy
 - **Darcy does it by transforming his pride and self-importance into magnanimity and soft politeness**
 - **He recognizes the truth in Eliza's accusations against him**
 - **He shifts from his outer social personality based on money and status to his inner psychic personality capable of real love and self-giving**

- He saves Lydia and the whole family from disaster
- He reverses his opposition to Bingley's marriage with Jane
- Eliza
 - She does it by rising from vital to mental
 - By accepting the truth about Wickham – that it is only an appearance of goodness -- one has all the goodness, the other the appearance of goodness
 - By realizing the depth of Darcy's love and feeling intense gratitude
- 3. A more deliberate view can penetrate the surface, see the intention of Nature, look for her methods and ask for her sanction.
- 4. It discovers the profoundest of methods – contradictions are complements – and, on seeing it secures the completest sanction of Nature.
 - Sustainable development is a contradiction in terms
 - It can be achieved by a higher aspiration & a deliberate view that rises to a higher level of Truth
- 5. What this deliberate view sees is the original intention of contradiction that created Ignorance.

E. All Nature seeks a harmony

1. Problems arise to one who misses harmony.
2. The instinct of agreement in unity sees the possibility of accord.
3. It is seen by the awakened Mind of Man, not the animal part of the Mind
4. The practical Mind can rest content with a rough compromise.
5. The unilluminated mind acts for utilitarian purposes.

F. Unity

1. Evolution issues out of the primeval longing to return to the origin.
2. The longing issues out of the Original Unity, an incoercible unity.
3. It cannot be coerced as the density of unity is at its peak.
4. The spur for unity is strong while the opposites are far more apart, the unity is the normal existence.

G. Contradictions between Matter, Life & Mind

1. Separations exist between Mind, Life & Matter – they have lost the sense of unity
2. Harmonization of active Life with a material form in which inertia is the primary condition of activity
 - a problem of opposites that Nature has overcome & always seeks better solutions

perfect solution would be material immortality of a fully organized mind-supporting animal body
3. Harmonization of conscious mind and will with a not overtly conscious life is another problem

- Eliza is conscious of Darcy's attention, subconsciously attracted to Wickham. She has her mother in her subconscious. That brings the elopement. She has to make a conscious Human Choice.
- Self-consciousness is that which can create infinitely.
- Hence the surprise and adventure of ignorance, which produces astonishing results.
- Nature has produced astonishing results & aims always higher

Ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness possessed of Truth and Light with the practical omnipotence resulting from perfect knowledge

- H. The upward impulse of man toward higher opposites is rational
1. it is the only logical completion of a rule which is Nature's method
 2. It is the purpose of her universal strivings.

4. Evolution

- A. Purpose of Nature's universal strivings is Evolution
- B. Why should life evolve out of matter or mind out of life?
1. Matter is a veiled form of Life
 2. Life is a form of veiled consciousness
 3. An evolution must be preceded by an involution.
 4. By this involution, the Infinite has become Finite.
 5. The finite being frontal appearance of the Infinite, the evolutionary pressure to emerge must be infinite.
- C. That which is involved evolves
1. Vedantic solution
 - life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life
 - Life has evolved out of Matter
 - Mind has evolved out of Life
 - Vedanta stops there
 2. He says do not stop in the middle
- D. Can be no objection to a farther step
1. Mental consciousness is a veiled form of higher consciousness beyond Mind
 2. Mind is there in the animal

Animal is the living laboratory in which Nature has worked out man. Man is a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious participation, she wills to work out the superman, the god... to manifest God

3. Evolution is the manifestation of what Nature secretly is.

Man's impulse toward God, light, freedom immortality is the impulse of Nature seeking to evolve beyond Mind.

4. Supermind can evolve out of Mind. Superman can evolve out of Man.

E. P&P

1. Mrs. Bennet rose from Middle Class to marry gentleman, Eliza rises further to aristocracy
2. Wickham's father served Pemberley, Wickham becomes relative
3. Darcy possessed wealth and status. He sought emotional happiness, psychological growth and spiritual progress

5. Inevitability

A. Eternal Paradox is Eternal Truth

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth

1. The aspiration of Man for Divine Life is an eternal paradox.
2. Paradox of contradictions
3. Divine life in an animal body
4. Immortal aspiration in mortal tenement
5. Single universal consciousness is limited minds and divided egos
6. Transcendent timeless spaceless Being who makes Space, Time and Cosmos possible
7. In all these, the higher truth is realizable by the lower term
8. They justify themselves to deliberate reason and persistent instinct or intuition

B. Evasions will be defeated

1. Attempts are made to persuade man to limit our mental activities to practical and immediate problems of material existence
2. Sri Aurobindo identifies the sources of resistance to the forward movement.
 - Attempts to stifle truth which is still obscure – is a form of obscurantism
 - Skepticism that refuses to inquire
 - victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature,
 - the satiation issuing out of it, the obscure physical mentality
 - the body subjected to death and mutation,
 - the material intellect that acts, the animal part of Man that is ready to compromise, inertia, capacity for evasion,
 - falling a pray to the religionist,
 - Practical mind's complaints against absence of tangible results
 - Will to escape from cosmic necessity because it is arduous, slow, does not yield immediate tangible results
3. Material intellect says stop questioning & stop aspiring
 - Jane should forget Bingley
 - Darcy should give up Eliza
 - Eliza should forget Darcy after the elopement

4. These are all revolts against the secret mightier will of the great Mother
 - New religions rise
- C. Paradox contains in itself the energy of violent opposition.
1. Man returns with more vehement impulse, violent hunger for an immediate solution
 - Darcy did not give up
 2. Violent opposition resolves itself as higher truth in lower forms.
 3. In this transition rises evasion. Violent hunger rises from one side.
 4. Vehemence is released all over.
 5. The Finite Nature is the evolving Infinite Absolute -- Transitions release powerful energies.
- D. Sri Aurobindo's places before deliberate reason the mystic truth of evolution the world has not yet conceived.
1. It releases enormous power.
 2. One who receives it in the reason will witness the process in his Mind of reason becoming intuition.
 3. He says the obscure intuition needs to be raised to conscious self-guiding will.
 4. Intuition is the will of knowledge.
 5. Better and more rational to accept what Divine Mother will not allow us to reject
 6. Mind is only a form and veil of next higher stage of consciousness
 7. Lift it from blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into light of reason and consciously self-guiding will
 8. No need to fear to aspire
- E. Evolution cannot be stopped -- phrases
1. The earliest preoccupation
 2. His inevitable and ultimate preoccupation – inevitability implies infinity, the ultimate signifies the total journey.
 3. Survives the longest periods of skepticism – the greater the opposition, the fuller is the vigor of the original impulse.
 4. Impulse towards perfection – Perfection shows the fullness.
 5. Constant aspiration – constant presence is infinity.
 6. Return to primeval longings – Origin.
 7. Earliest formula is the last – total coverage
 8. The persistent ideals contradict the normal experience.
 9. Unsolved discord and the instinct of undiscovered unity.
 10. The greater the disorder, the stronger is the spur.
 11. Material immortality is the perfect solution.

12. The unconquerable impulse presents itself as an imperative impulse of Nature.
13. Persistent instinct and intuition of Mankind.
14. Cosmic necessity cannot be escaped.

F. We cannot ask Nature to stop

1. You cannot ask the poor to be content with their poverty while others enjoy prosperity
2. You cannot expect Mrs. Bennet to keep quiet so long as she has an unmarried daughter and there are rich unmarried men in need of wives.
3. We cannot condemn higher aspirations with the religionist or rationalist

G. The evolutionary impulse is irresistible and inevitable

1. It is the inevitable next step to the evolution of Mind.
2. The undying aspiration of a part for the whole
3. The divided parts of the being evolve to become a whole, matter & spirit become one.

Spirit is involved in Matter – apparent Nature is secret God

4. Nature, having evolved the Man, evolves the Spiritual Man out of him.
5. He invites humanity to join and to lead the upward movement

Manifestation of Divine and the realization of God in man is the highest and most legitimate aim of man on earth.

6. He invites us to accept and follow on faith till the knowledge dawns on us.
7. It is an invitation to shed the ego, overcome the evil.
8. Man is evolving God.
9. Humanity will continue to aspire until it reaches its ultimate resting-place

6. Summary

1. Human aspiration will inevitably be achieved
2. Evolution is an irresistible movement of Nature
3. Either we join it or be discarded along the way
4. Nature's goal is Divine Life
5. Nature's method is reconciliation of contradictions into complements
6. Our viewpoint matters – we need deliberate reason
7. Reject common-sense of the material intellect
8. Chapter I -- goal is reconciliation of Matter & Spirit, the ultimate contradictions
9. Chapter II – tells us how they are reconciled in cosmic consciousness
10. Chapter III – tells how they are reconciled in transcendent consciousness
11. Chapter IV -- describes the Omnipresent Reality that includes and reconciles all contradictions