

The Absolute Man of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy

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Abstract: *Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, known as conscious evolution, holds that humans are active participants in their own transformation rather than passive beneficiaries of external circumstances. The Absolute Man, according to Aurobindo, is the culmination of this developmental journey: a being who has transcended the constraints of ego-centric consciousness and realised his connection with the Divine. Aurobindo believes that the Absolute Man is distinguished by a harmonious blending of the spiritual and material, the individual and the general. Unlike traditional spiritual paradigms that preach renunciation and isolation from the world, Aurobindo promotes holistic yoga, which embraces life in its fullness. The Absolute Man is not an ascetic recluse, but an engaged participant in global affairs, guided by a higher spiritual consciousness. Aurobindo emphasises the necessity of collective progress, picturing a future in which humanity as a whole strives to realise its divine potential. As a result, the Absolute Man is not a singular phenomenon, but rather the precursor to a new paradigm of collective awakening and transformation. In today's world, Aurobindo's concept of the Absolute Man provides profound insights into humanity's most serious concerns, including environmental degradation, social injustice, and existential crisis. By nurturing a greater awareness of our interconnectivity and inherent divinity, we can strive to realise the Absolute Man within ourselves and contribute to the creation of a more enlightened and harmonious world.*

Keywords: Absolute, Spiritual, Consciousness, Enlightened, Divine, Evolution

I. INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo is one of the world's greatest philosophers. He made substantial contributions to contemporary Indian social, political, and educational philosophy. He had created and elaborated a system that synthesised fundamental principles derived from various Western and Indian sources. Sri Aurobindo was a Vedantic who studied practically every ancient school of thought to determine what is relevant and helpful for current and future generations. He coined fresh terms for traditional concepts. Sri Aurobindo attempted to combine traditional spiritual freedom with the Western concept of material progress, as well as the light of evolutionary science. His ultimate goal was to elevate human life to the level of heavenly existence. Aurobindo was theist, absolutist, and mystic. Sri Aurobindo proposed a holistic, comprehensive view of reality in which he merged all forms of existing matter, life, mind, and super-mind into a single entity.

The Absolute Man of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo's worldview sought to reconcile all opposing forces and ideals. He argued that in the ultimate composition of reality, all divisions and distinctions collapse into one undivided perfectly harmonious and all-encompassing unity. It was the identity of all the experiences, oppositions, and differences that demonstrated that daily life does not represent the fundamental character of reality. Reality is always expanding and revealing itself as a variety of spontaneous illusions. According to Sri Aurobindo, "The ultimate reality is inaccessible, dividing existence into fragments and missing its holistic core. As a result, reality is non-conceptual, nonverbal, and ineffable. It is logically indefinable and indeterminate. It cannot be seen as an instrument of rational analysis. Reality cannot be described using the conceptual tools of materialism or idealism".ⁱ According to Sri Aurobindo, "Reality is indefinable and inconceivable to the finite and defining mind. It is ineffable in mind-created discourse, and it cannot be described by our negations, neti-neti. We cannot limit it by claiming it isn't that, nor can we affirm it. We can't cure it by repeating, this Itti-itti".ⁱⁱ

Aurobindo's perspective is fundamentally based on holistic monism. All-encompassing integrality is a fundamental feature of Aurobindo's worldview. His integrated monism reconciles the supra-cosmos, supra-terrestrial, and cosmic conceptions of reality. Aurobindo made it plain that his approach is closest to the stance of the Gita, and we know that the Bhagwat Gita is digested by the Upanidh, which contains synthesised Vedic wisdom. Aurobindo's integral monism is not pure monism, despite its belief in one unchanging, pure, everlasting self as the root of all cosmic life. It is not qualified monism, despite the fact that it combines the exterior ultimate Prakrti into one manifestation in the form of Jiva. It avoids determinism to ensure its universal comprehensiveness.

In the Divine Life, Aurobindo portrayed the ultimate reality for us. There is a supreme reality that is eternal, absolute, and unlimited. It is indeterminable in essence, yet we cannot know it in this sense. It is not all together and is completely unknown. It is self-evident in itself, and while inexpressible, it is self-evidence to knowing by identity, of which a spiritual being must be capable because it is the essence of an original and infinite reality, not to mention the supreme existence. Aurobindo defined, "The reality as Brahman, or Sat-Chit-Ananda existence, consciousness, and happiness. There is no need, desire, or deficiency, yet there are three possibilities for establishing names and forms. Shankaracharya defined the absolute Sat-Chit-Ananda as the immutable static passive and non-creative code of the changing universe".ⁱⁱⁱ

Brahma represents transcendental consciousness. Aurobindo's notion of Sat-Chit-Ananda differs significantly from Shankara's. He sees Sat-chit-Ananda as both static and dynamic, unchanging and changing, consciousness and force. The absolute possesses eternal real and creative power that generates the universe shakti or force, as both awareness and force are real in it. Aurobindo observes that, "Force is inherent in existence." Since Brahman and Shakti are not different entities, we must conclude that both everlasting status and eternal dynamic are authentic realities. Dynamic and status are equally real, and neither are illusions".^{iv}

Sri Aurobindo's reality is more than only consciousness of the body of life; the mind and spiritual stages of consciousness represent the hierarchy of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sat-Chit-Ananda's presentations in many forms are not illusory changes, but rather the divine becoming. The absolute generates different realities, all of which exist. Sat-Chit-Ananda represents the harmony of several principles. It's full with possibilities and realities. Aurobindo postulated the hierarchy in reality one is lower and other is higher and God is harmony of principles and possibilities. According to Advaita Vedanta Shankara, the material world is understood as relative to empirical awareness, and so Aurobindo considers it to be only dependent reality. The world is equal to genuine Brahman. It is a true manifestation of Brahman in time and space. That is why existence cannot be dismissed as a mere illusion. The consciousness force was the principle of manifestation.

The theory of evolution occurs in a multifaceted and divergent manner, rather than a constant climb. The evolution of new realities from the original vital impetus is both understandable and incalculable. The cause of evolution can take many various ways, all of which differ from this creative view of evolution. Hegel proposed the hypothesis of continuous graded development, which progresses through interconnected hierarchical phases. The entire succession of stages that have yet to occur may be calculated and forecast for haggling, as all principles evolve one by one from the pure existence. Evolution is the expression of involved realities. Sri Aurobindo's theology of evolutionism has the unique distinction of portraying reality's purposefulness. It is a thesis on evolution for integration in the sense. It is clearly distinguishable from other evolutionary theories. For Aurobindo, reality has a definite intrinsic nature, and the road of evolution is the route towards the integration of the real. Evolution is more than just an increasing complex combination of matter and form determined by chance.

The evolution is the infinitely diverse self-determination of an intrinsically undeterminable reality. Evolution is the progressive manifestation of the absolute. According to Aurobindo, "The universe is genuine if it does not reveal to us in its forms and powers the reality that it is, if it appears merely as a persistent but changing movement in space and time. This must be not because it is unreal, but because it is a growing self-expression, a manifestation, an evolving and self-employment of that which our awareness cannot yet see in its entirety or vital meaning".^v Aurobindo conceived of consciousness as shakti, or force. The extreme is chit-shakti. The world is real, and it is God; it is divine, and it is created by existence. The cosmos evolves and discloses the divine progressively and successively in open and concrete existence. On Earth, the spirit manifests, uncovers, and discloses itself. The cosmic evolution gradually regulates the spirit until it manifests itself plainly.

The creation of the world matter appears to be a denial of spirit since it possesses properties such as rigidity and divisibility. Similarly, life is seen as relative rather than absolute since it subjects death to desire and incapacity. Man suffers from limitations, imperfections, and ignorance. Sri Aurobindo's entire Advaita is a clear attempt to overcome the empirical antagonism between spirit and matter, as well as Brahman and the universe. The antagonism between them is either obvious or important, or it appears to be the reverse. The distinct is nothing more than the finite expressions of the absolute; matter is a lower form of spirit; the flaws of life, matter, and consciousness are just temporary and will vanish as evolution progresses. When the divine manifests in its supreme effigy in matter becomes conscious life immortal powerful mind and omnipresent perfect.

Aurobindo defines, "Creation as a circular process in which the absolute Brahman descends into matter and the matter ascends to Brahman. The absolute expresses itself in a circular process, hence the world is not real due to maya, avidaya, or ignorance".^{vi} Ignorance is one part of knowledge and the power of belonging to Brahman. The world is generated from Brahman, and it is a play on Brahman's leela. Reality is a never-ending creative process that begins with consent and progresses to divine consent. Nothing in this process is unreal, contingent, or accidental, therefore every organism is possibly capable of reaching the super consent state, which is the ultimate goal of all existence.

Aurobindo claims that current evolutionary ideas are incomplete. He simply discussed the progression from matter to mind and the subsequent higher phases, but he did not explain why mind evolves from matter throughout life. He claims that the difficulty can only be explained by supposing a similar descent from consciousness to matter. First, the spirit evolves in matter, and in this sense, spirit takes on the form of matter, implying that consciousness is implicit and unmanifest in matter. The spirit is matter in its latent and unmanifested state. There is no inherent difference between spirit and matter. When we consider the transitional realities between spirit and matter that exist between the two extremes, the distinction between them fades. We have a sequence of realities that arise over time as the universe evolves. Evolution is the process of expressing and manifesting the divine. It is a dual process of involution and evolution. The divine process includes two aspects: creation and manifestation. Creation refers to the descent of the divine into matter or lower forms of reality. Here, the divine takes on material shape, and spiritual substance evolves. Evolution refers to the manifestation of higher spiritual and supermental levels of reality or consciousness. There is an increasing manifestation of principles. The creation means the involution of spirit in lesser degrees of reality. The descent of the supermind into the lower realities occurs during the creation of the universe.

Evolution is a manifestation of the divine that follows the process of involution. The phases of descent from Brahman and Brahman include super-mind, over-mind, thought, life, and matter. The opposing movement of essence begins with matter, and evolution presupposes involution. It is a descent from the higher hemisphere of reality, bliss, to the lower hemisphere of reality, which includes matter, life, psyche, and consciousness. Evolution is only possible because involution has already occurred. It is owing to the spirit descend into matter, life, and mind. These are capable of ascending to higher spiritual realms. Matter can only evolve into life because life is inherently present. Life may only ascend to mind because thought has already sunk into life, and the entire lower hemisphere can only exist because the higher one does not. Evolution cannot occur from nothing. Evolution is the reserve-out, complementing process of involution.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution is spiritualistic, as he proposes Sat-Chit-Aanda as the source of human evolution. The objective of evolution cannot be restricted to the adaptation of individuals to their natural environment, as proposed by biological evolutionists, or the realisation of kingdoms of ends, as advocated by Kant. For Aurobindo, the goal of evolution is nothing less than to become Sat-Chit-Aanda, from which the entire universe began. It represents the evolution of a divinized man and a divinized universe. That is why evolution must be complete, not partial.

The holistic monism ideology holds that all existence is integrated in a single being whose primary nature is consciousness and happiness. The world is made up of a being, and it is the play of this being's Leela. The soul motivates an object of the cosmos. Existence is endless and inalienable play and delight. Our basic being or real self, which is hidden from us by the mental ego, likewise enjoys that play and delight since it is one with the divine consciousness. If we want to live a heavenly existence, we must first reveal our hidden nature by rising above our current position to our true self, or atma. However, the unity of Sat-Chit-Aanda and the divided mentality are diametrically opposed entities; one must be false, the other must be truthful; one must be eliminated, while the other must be enjoyed.

The solution to this difficulty consists in intermediate links between two, which can explain them and form a relationship between them that will allow us to realise that one existence consciousness and delight, as well as the shape of mind, life, and body. The intermediate link is known as the supermind. The super-mind, also known as truth consciousness, is a higher-order principle that exists, acts, and proceeds in fundamental truth and unity. Aurobindo saw supermind as an intermediary principle between Sat-Chit-Aanda and human progress. The super-mind is responsible for world formation and manifestation; the creation of the cosmos, as well as the manifestation of the superior, is dependent on it.

II. CONCLUSION

Sri Aurobindo is a humanist, idealist, absolutist, and single-minded thinker who attempted to offer a fair assessment of various concepts. He proposed that reality is an inherent entity that manifests itself as existence, consciousness, power, and happiness even in the absolute. His ideology can be accurately described as humanistic, realistic, and idealistic. The creative power that creates the world and manifests as a non-fictional idea with no essential tie to the truth of existence. According to Aurobindo's philosophy, the creative idea is a real notion, or a power of conscious force that expresses the real being. It is the conscious reality transforming itself into versatile forms. The world is not a fabrication of the global mind's imagination, but rather the conscious birth of that which exists outside of mind into forms of its own.

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