

The Pure Existent

1. Introduction

Reading Foundations of India Culture (In Defense of Indian Culture)

- I realized how fortunate all of you are to have been born in India
- I consider myself rarely privileged to have been able to come and live here for the past 40 years
- India is the only culture in the world founded on the highest spiritual knowledge.
- Sense experience can tell us only about form and movement

2. Vedic Realizations

During Vedic times the rishis discovered

- A. God manifests himself in cosmos in infinite ways
- B. We can approach the infinite through finite form
- C. All cosmic powers and forces are manifestations of the One
- D. All Gods are forms of that One

3. Discoveries of Vedanta

Founded on 3 fundamental truths of spiritual experience

1. The One Existence
2. An Infinite Conscious Force, executive Energy
3. Each individual soul can approach Supreme Divine through a universal consciousness

In Life Divine, Sri Aurobindo bases himself on these essential discoveries but goes further to reveal hidden truths of the Divine intention.

4. Chapter Outline

A. Human Aspiration

- A Divine Life is not only possible. It is man's destiny. Inevitable

B. Materialist Denial

- To divinize life, we have to reconcile Spirit & Matter
- Cosmic consciousness reveals that Spirit and Matter are two forms, two expressions of the same energy, the same reality.
- Spirit is Real. Matter is also Real.

C. Refusal of the Ascetic

- Spirit and Matter can be reconciled in transcendent consciousness

D. Omnipresent Reality

- Brahman is both Being and Becoming, One and Many, Time and Timelessness

E. Destiny of the Individual

- We too are that Brahman.

- The individual is Divine
- We are destined to become God

F. Man and the Universe

- Then what of Life?
- Life, cosmos, the Many are the universal manifestation of the One.

G. Ego & Dualities

- Our life is subject to the dualities of pleasure and pain, joy and suffering because we live in ego
- Vedanta discovered the remedy – realize Sachchidananda
- We must universalize to discover our psychic being
- Then rise to the transcendent and bring down the Supramental to transform Nature

H. Methods of Vedantic Knowledge

- Reason affirms the existence of the Absolute
- Psychological experience – the highest spiritual intuition -- confirms it
- True knowledge is knowledge by Identity
- Knowing Brahman, all is known.

I. Pure Existent

- Vedanta arrived at the intuitive experience of Sat Brahman
- Existence – pure, indefinable, absolute – as the fundamental Reality, a Pure Existent

Infinity

- Understanding Sri Aurobindo's concept of Infinity is the key to understanding Life Divine
- Discovering the true nature of that Infinite is the key to realizing the Divine Life.
- This chapter describes that nature of that Infinite Reality.
- To see the expressions of that Infinity in life around us is to be conscious.
- To see the action of Grace in one's own life is to be receptive to its touch

5. Who am I?

- But the power of this chapter reveals only when we discover the reality of that Infinity within ourselves and in our own lives.
- What is the truth of your existence?
- Are you the ego?
- Are you your thoughts? Feelings? Words? Acts?
- If so, how can you become immortal?
- This chapter asks us to seek the supreme intuition
- Our senses tell us nothing of these things
- They affirm only the reality of material life
- Our ego affirms only the existence of our transient temporal surface personality
- To know ourselves first we have to emerge out of the prison and blindness imposed on our vision by the ego and our senses

6. Cosmos is Infinite Movement

- A. When we look around us at the world we live in, we do not see the divine anywhere.
- B. If we take a non-egoistic point of view, we see the world as a Boundless energy of infinite existence, infinite movement, infinite activity pouring itself into limitless Space and eternal Time
- C. We see only constant movement.
- D. Cosmos is in constant movement
- E. Science tells us everything is in motion
- F. The earth is moving around the sun
- G. The seasons constantly change
- H. The whole universe is expanding

7. Microcosm is a whirling movement of energy

- A. Matter itself is nothing but moving particles of energy

8. Life & Nature are an Infinite Movement

- A. We live only because we breathe constantly and blood circulates oxygen
- B. If we stop even for a few moments, life ends
- C. Our whole life is a movement from birth through childhood to adulthood, marriage, parenting, old age and death

9. Human life and society are the same movement

- A. "The Speed of Life"
- B. There is a routine movement of every day which never stops
- C. A constant movement of recurring daily routine, rising, bathing, eating, cleaning, work, travel, shopping, schedules, events, outings, festivals marks our lives
- D. Society itself is in constant motion
- E. The Market is a continuous movement of money, goods and services.
- F. Phone, TV, Internet carry a continuous movement of information

10. We think we are the center of that movement

- A. We think everything revolves around us.
- B. We think the world exists to satisfy our egoistic needs and cravings

- C. We interpret all events from our own personal egoistic perspective
- Mrs. Bennet assumes Bingley has come to marry one of her daughters
 - Lady Catherine commands all to play their role in her scheme of things
 - Caroline tries to order everything to serve her purposes
 - Mr. Bennet takes three marriages for granted and asks for more!

11. The movement has its own gigantic aims

- A. The universe is infinitely vast
- There are more stars in the universe than grains of sand on the beaches of earth
- B. The world exists for itself
- Other people have their own aspirations, not merely to serve ours.
 - Jane Austen's England strives to achieve social evolution without revolution
 - Today India seeks prosperity and a leading place in world affairs
 - Cosmos strives for spiritual evolution of consciousness which no one sees
 - The Divine seeks the Delight of self-manifestation

12. Minute care and device on smallest of its works

- A. We should not insist on a too positive idea of our own insignificance
- B. Science tells us how minute is the care and cunning the device it bestows on the smallest of its works
- Perfection of the infinitesimal – flower petal
 - Earth is the evolutionary center of the universe
- C. The Individual is essential for progress of the collective
- The Psychic is the divine in man and gives man evolutionary status
 - One man can change the world -- Napoleon, Gandhi, Churchill, FDR, Steve Jobs
 - Lizzy rises to Pemberley
 - Even the least significant person can act with infinite consequences
 - Even Mrs. Reynolds and Mrs. Young and the chamber maid have crucial roles to play

13. Illusion of quantity

- A. It is the illusion of size, of quantity that makes us look on one as great, the other as petty
- B. The intensity and force of movement are the same in the formation and upholding of a system of Suns and in the organization of an ant hill
- C. Same atoms and molecules make up the smallest bacteria and the tallest tree, the grain of sand and the Himalayas
- D. Four forces of nature are the same in atom and star

14. Illusion of quality

- A. If we look at force of quality
- B. We say ant is more complex than the solar system it inhabits

C. Man is greater than all inanimate Nature

- Complexity and perfection of the human body is a marvel
- Man is the most complex creation of all Nature -- integrated physical, vital, mental and spiritual
- Society is far more complex than the entire Milky Way -- marriage customs, man and woman
 - It even has rules to decide whether and to whom Collins can introduce himself.

15. Samam Brahman

A. Quality too is an illusion

B. The mighty energy is an equal and impartial mother

C. It gives its whole self to all

D. Indivisible yet as if divided and distributed

E. Brahman dwells equally in all existences

F. It is the intensity that is the same in all, the whole consciousness of the All

G. Our smallest acts express our personality as much as our greatest -- personality is indivisible

- Mr. Collins' letter of introduction
- Darcy's one word 'tolerable' expresses his whole personality
- Jane Austen is equally in all her characters and all her novels

H. For Brahman there are no whole and parts – each thing is all itself

- Man is fully there in all his relationships -- parent, child, friend, worker, citizen -- he is indivisibly present
- Mother's name or photo carries Her entire Presence and Power

16. Force of strength and weakness is the same

A. Quantity and quality differ, the self is equal

B. Form and manner vary infinitely

- Jewels come in all shapes, sizes and varieties but gold remains the same

C. The eternal, infinite energy is the same in all

- Clock, computer, factory, government, national economy are all powered by the same energy -- electricity
- Human aspiration is there in all of us -- the assertive servant, Mrs. Young, Lydia, Collins, Eliza, Darcy

D. The force of strength that goes to make the strong man is no greater than the force of weakness that goes to make the weak.

- It takes as great an actor to play a coward or a fool like Collins as it does to play a brave man or a genius.
- Fear is negative desire. Intensity is the same, direction is opposite.
- The miser and the spendthrift are equally intense in their beliefs.
- Inaction requires as great a strength as action or more, e.g. Gandhi's satyagraha, Anna Hazare's fasting
- Courage is outwardly directed expansiveness. Cowardice is inwardly directed shrinking. Intensity can be the same.
- Non-reaction requires greater strength than the greatest acts

17. We keep a false account

- A. We are infinitely important to the All
- B. To us, the All is negligible – we don't know the Infinite and its purpose. We are like actors in a play without a script who do not even know the story making things up as we go along.

18. Sign of the Original Ignorance

- A. This is the sign of the original ignorance which is the root of the ego
- B. Ego can think only with itself as center as if it were the All – we each want to be the hero at every moment.
- C. Mrs. Bennet thinks every unmarried man is meant for her daughter
- D. Lady Catherine thinks the world revolves around Rosings
- E. Darcy assumes every girl wants to marry him
- F. In a sense our sense of importance is true, but it is our soul that is important, not the ego
- G. We are only a partial movement of this Infinite Movement
- H. We have to know that Infinite
- I. In our true selves we are one with the total movement and not minor or subordinate
- J. The Individual is the key to divine manifestation
- K. The first necessity is for us to mend the relationship between the infinite movement of energy and ourselves
- L. To settle the account, we have to know what is this All, this infinite energy
- M. We have to come out of the ego and identify with the Total Movement and become one with it.
- N. Practically it means to be responsible, think of others first, practice self-giving, have goodwill.

19. Infinite Movement has no absolute end or beginning

- A. Then we observe that the movement itself has no end or beginning in space and time – it is Infinite & Eternal
- B. All beginnings and ends presuppose something before and after
- C. Manifestation is Eternal and it reoccurs every moment

20. Infinite Existence

- A. When we come out of the ego, Infinity imposes itself on the appearances of the finite by its ineffugable self-existence.

21. Eternal movement is an endless spiral of Time

- A. Like tracing the River back to its source – we see only what is in front of us in the moment
- B. Any act can be traced back to a prior act
 - Elopement to Hunsford to Netherfield to Tolerable to Wickham's elopement with Georgiana to Darcy's father to the marriage of Mr & Mrs Bennet 25 years ago
 - Perhaps Eliza's granddaughter will marry Wickham's grandson

22. Becoming is the only Being

- A. If all is movement, perhaps the movement alone exists
- B. Science believes only in the movement
- C. Intuition fixing on what we become sees a eternal succession in Time, the river & flame in Buddhism – it exists only when it burns
- D. Is existence only an expression of energy or does energy presuppose existence?
- E. Like the earth that seems to stand still or a moving train passing another train going more rapidly, the sense of stability may be an illusion.
- F. Becoming is the only being.
- G. According to this view, we can only live our lives fully. That is all we have and all we are.

23. Time and Space are only symbols of that infinite existence

- A. It is not enough we know the Infinity of the Movement.
- B. There is something beyond that – there is a meaning we do not know, a purpose, a destiny. There is a Being we do not see.
- C. The Finite is the frontal appearance of the Infinite – the whole Brahman is Here, Now
- D. Pure reason tells us that Time & Space are only categories of our consciousness, conditions under which we arrange our perceptions
 - Einstein tells us space and time are relative depending on the observer
 - We cannot say absolutely when an event took place
 - We cannot say absolutely how large an object or distance is
 - Both depend on our perception
- E. Space and Time are only symbols for something that is Infinite and Eternal
 - Space is a psychological extension – we do not experience it when we are lost in thought or dream
 - Time is a psychological duration – when we are lost in joyous wonder, time stands still
- F. Extension & duration are only symbols to represent to mind an Eternity & Infinity

- Eternity seems to us a single all-containing ever-new moment
- Infinity seems to us the same all-pervading, all-containing point without magnitude
 - Imagine a moment that contains all moments
 - Imagine a point without boundaries that contains all points
- Infinity is Here, Now

G. Like the characters in Jane Austen's novel who will live forever in consciousness

H. Love exists eternally – it exists independent of space and time

I. Like Krishna and Arjuna at Kuruskhetra in the Indian imagination

24. Movement presupposes Stability

A. Energy is an output of infinite existence

B. You cannot have wind without air

C. Silence supports activity and makes it possible

- The silence makes music possible
- Tagore's story of the mother and child at carnival
- Law provides invisible basis for society
- Security and comfort of family provides the energy for man's outer work
- Darcy's confidentiality
- Non-action is a greater force
- Dr. Thorne's silence, Mary's dignified non-reaction to Arabella
- Behind every successful man is a devoted wife
 - King's Speech -- Queen Elizabeth is the silent source of King George's strength

D. Movement without a stable base is a staircase suspended in a void

25. Movement is subordinate to Existence

A. As we are subordinate to the Movement, the movement is subordinate to Timeless, spaceless, immutable existence which is not energy

B. The movement must be supported by an existence

- Wave rises from the immobility of the ocean depths
- Darcy could transform only because his behavior was based on a strong silent foundation of character and values

C. An absolute energy not in action is pure existence

- Energy in action carries with the possibility of energy abstaining from action

D. Infinite Energy of movement is subordinate to timeless, spaceless stable eternity -- sthanu

E. Sthanu does not act, but contains all action

F. There is something in us that is not involved with the movement behind.

G. We can have the experience and intuition of it.

H. We can draw back into it , live in and from there, and change our lives and action in the world.

26. Pure existence is not an aggregate

- A. This existence exceeds form, quantity and quality
 - Jane Austen's creative consciousness cannot be characterized by any quantity or quality of characters or characteristic
- B. It is beyond form, quality and quantity
- C. They emerge out of it like colors out of white light

27. Two facts of existence – Being and Becoming

- A. The truth of Being does not deny the truth in the movement
- B. Since we cannot think beyond unity and multiplicity, we must accept the double fact of existence – Shiva and Kali

28. Two facts: Which is the reality, which is the reflection?

- A. Denying one or the other is easy (Buddha or Shankara) but to find out the truth of both of them, their integral reality, is Integral Knowledge.

29. Absolute is Being & Becoming

- A. Movement and stability are only our psychological representations of something that lies beyond them,
- B. Unity and multiplicity are only its expressions.
- C. Manifest and unmanifest, finite and infinite, time eternity and timeless eternity are only two sides of the same indivisible Reality.

30. The Absolute whirls around itself in infinite multiplicity

- A. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement
- B. It takes its eternal poise in one and the stable
- C. It whirls around itself infinitely in the moving and multitudinous
- D. It leaves the WHITE EXISTENCE where and what it was, ever is and ever will be

31. World existence is the ecstatic dance of shiva

- A. This is the ecstatic dance of shiva
- B. It multiplies the body of the God numberlessly
 - Hinduism has 30 crores Gods -- many forms of the One
- C. Brahman withdrawing /destroying the universe to prepare for a new one
- D. Its sole object is the joy of dancing

32. Bliss of Brahman

- A. This is the Integral Brahman
- B. He calls this status the intensive unity
- C. It is no void or nihil but an infinite FULLNESS
- D. Infinity is fullness of Existence.
- E. Eternity is fullness of Being.

I have become a foam-white sea of bliss,
I am a curling wave of God's delight,
A shapeless flow of happy passionate light,
A whirlpool of the streams of Paradise.

I am a cup of His felicities,
A thunderblast of His golden ecstasy's might,
A fire of joy upon creation's height,
I am His rapture's wonderful abyss.

I am drunken with the glory of the Lord,
I am vanquished by the beauty of the Unborn;
I have looked, alive, upon the Eternal's face.

My mind is cloven by His radiant sword,
My heart by His beatific touch is torn;
My life is a meteor-dust of His flaming Grace.

F. Mother's experience of the Infinite Movement (Agenda, 5/24/60)

- Her physical ego dissolved and she experienced the whole universe as Sachchidananda – a constant flood
- Nothing existed except the Supreme manifesting through the eternal Mother
- The Lord Manifesting himself

It was as vast as the universe, a continuous movement – the movement of manifestation of something which was EVERYTHING at once, a single whole. There was no division. And such a variety of colors, vibrations, powers – extraordinary! It was one single thing, and everything was within it.

33. The Play (Savitri)

- A. The whole wide world is only He & She
- B. Ellipse -- their dance or play is the source of all movement of the universe

This is the knot that ties together the stars:

The Two who are one are the secret of all power,

The Two who are one are the might and right in things.

34. What is the nature of the force: Prakriti or Shakti?

- A. This is the reality of the Absolute

- B. We must now seek to know the relationship of the measureless movement to the timeless and spaceless existence
- C. We see what pure reason and intuition say about Sat. What do they say about Chit?
- D. Is Prakriti blind mechanical force of Nature?
- E. Or is it the Conscious Force of the Iswara?
- F. On this, everything else hinges

35. Supramental Shakti

- A. The Supramental Shakti is the force of that Infinity that manifests the Infinite universe
- B. When Sri Aurobindo says Mother can supramentalize the world in a day, when Appa says anything is possible, it is based on a knowledge of Infinity.
- C. She stands at the border where the Infinite unmanifest and the infinite manifestation meet.
- D. When Mother responds to our prayers instantaneously in moments of intense aspiration, need or crisis, it is because Mother is that Infinity.