

# THE MIND'S METHOD OF ABSTRACTION

“But while the highest truths or the pure ideas are to the ideative mind **abstractions**, because mind lives partly in the phenomenal and partly in intellectual constructions and has to use the **method of abstraction** to arrive at higher realities,...

Sri Aurobindo

“The universal and infinite consciousness can always seize on and surround the mind and it is when it does so with a certain continuity, frequency or persistence that the mind can **most easily** transform itself into the intuitive mentality and that again into the Supramental movement.”

Sri Aurobindo

Supermind, mind, life and body are the four instruments which the Spirit uses for its manifestation in the workings of Nature. Supermind is Spiritual Consciousness acting as self-luminous Knowledge, Will and Delight. Mind is essentially the faculty of Supermind, which measures and limits and fixes a particular centre for cosmic movement and action and only very indirectly and partially illumined and it can look upward and receive the Supramental communication and passes it on to the other lower members. And since man is a mental being, so thought is at least his most constant, normal and effective means for enlightening his Ignorance.

The normal thought action of the mind is divided into triple movement; (1) first and the lowest is the habitual thought mind whose ideas are based on the available data given by the senses and by surface experiences of nervous and emotional being and on the customary notions formed by the education and outward life and environment; it can think nothing as entirely true and all its formulations break down under the test of new suggestions from the infinite; (2) the second grade of thinking activity of the creative pragmatic mind which can link the truth of life and the truth of idea not yet manifested in life; the thinking mind finds its most clear, precise, effective principle of organisation and characteristic satisfaction in the reasoning and logical intelligence; a more precise and assured action of the intelligence will get rid of the superficiality of this ordinary method of the mind, test every step, scrutinize severely every conclusion, efficiently guard against error and reduce the mind's action to a well-founded system, synthesis and order; (3) the last gradation of thinking opens in us the pure, subtle, flexible ideative mind which lives disinterestedly in the truth of idea for Divine action and Spiritual experience and lives far from the ordinary mental habit which turns truth into purveyors of error.

All action of mind is a derivation of secret Supermind and such a truth is diminished in scope, degraded into lower movement and even when it is widest and most complete, mental knowing is still an indirect knowledge; it is a

habituated divider of the Indivisible and its whole nature is to dwell on one thing at a time to the exclusion of others or to stress it to the subordination of others. To train the mind as pure, clear and passive reflector of the Divine is identified as an important exercise in integral Yoga. So the preliminary need is a right thought which can be effective and established by liberating oneself from negative habit of sense-error, desire, old association, intellectual prejudgment, exclusiveness, systematizing and attachment to its own constructions and followed by positive opening towards vision, spiritual experience and realization. The last difficulty of the mind is identified as its inability to hold at once the unity and multiplicity of the existence and realization of all this as Sachchidananda is its great difficulty and its supreme difficulty is to unify without losing and integralise without rejecting.

The advantage of progressive mind is that firstly, it aims at perfecting itself as well as the house in which it dwells and the means of life that it uses, and is capable of awaking by a progressive self-realisation to its own true nature as a form of the Spirit; secondly, the characteristic energy of pure Mind is change through self-enlargement and self-improvement and moves continually from a smaller and simpler to a larger and more complex perfection; thirdly, the fullness of mental life, the suppleness, plasticity, flexibility and wide capacity of intellect to open itself towards its Source, receive the light from above, the ordered richness of emotion and sensibility, largeness and harmonized action of the will are passages towards the development of more powerful faculties and higher life; the reason can become an intermediary between the subconscious power of the Spirit organizing the life of the animal and the superconscious power of the Spirit which becoming conscient can organize the existence and life of a spiritual supermanhood; fourthly, mind can stand on the top as the leader of the journey towards the innermost door of consciousness through its functioning of gathering and reflection, meditation, fixed contemplation, the absorbed dwelling of the mind on its object; fifthly, it is not a seer of occult imperatives that necessitate the movement of creation but a half light thrown from the Infinite, a half view taken for the whole, a pale refracted light idealized as the burning body of the Sun and its splendour; its idealized vision does not arrive at the essence of Being but it is only an inferior mode of Nature; sixthly, from ordinary point of view its knowledge is an intellectual appreciation of facts of life, mind and matter and the laws that govern them and it is undertaken partly for the pure satisfaction of the intellect, partly for practical efficiency and is used in helping, saving and liberating or hurting, oppressing and destroying others; seventhly, in proportion as we become more mental, we attain to a subtler action of our whole nature which becomes more apt to reflect and receive higher thoughts, a purer will, more inward influences, striving to enlarge itself and pressing against the concealed body of true gnosis; initially mind is satisfied with first spiritual enlightenment, then afterwards it finds that to rest satisfied here would be to rest in partial knowledge and realizes subsequently that it has to go on heightening and enlarging the consciousness indefinitely; eighthly, if its passage is through crooked ways of

error, ignorance and falsehood still its impulse is truth seeking, truth finding and truth creation and finally its goal is always Integral Knowledge; ninthly, mind has to learn to awaken to the true seeking of the soul veiled within itself, to the Reality from which all things hold their truth, to the Consciousness of which all consciousness are multiple entities, to the Power from which all get what force of being they have within them, to Delight to which all delight are partial figures.

The limitation of mind is that firstly, fear, desire and sorrow are recognized as diseases of the mind, born of its sense of division and limitation; it is an inveterate divider of the Indivisible and its observation and understanding is always incomplete, uncertain, relative, partial and inconclusive, and its out going action and creation is still more confused, narrow, inferior and imperfect; the error of practical reason is an excessive subjection to apparent facts of existence and makes life artificial and rationally mechanical, deprives it of its spontaneity and vitality, prevents the freedom and expansion of the spirit and not courageous enough to carry the profounder facts of potentiality to their logical conclusion; secondly, mental activity is restricted to this life, limited in time and scope and form, life that is death, hunger and incapacity attempting to become life that is immortality, satisfied delight and omnipotence; so long as there is a mixed action and the mental constructions and imaginations are allowed to operate, this passivity of intuitive mind to the higher light, the truth light, cannot be complete or securely dominate and there cannot therefore be a firm organization of the triple time knowledge; thirdly, mental consciousness is rescued from a sleep of inconscience, subjected to means it uses, limited by body and ego; it finds its relation negatively with others by various means of hostile contact and antipathy and positively by various means of uniting contact and sympathy; fourthly, mind seeks for the delight and the self-luminous Divine Consciousness and finds only the apparent negations of pleasure, pain, grief, indifference and the dualities which is again merely a certain trick of false reception of our divided mental being; it is not our true state at all but only a fragmentary formulation or discoloured spray of conscious-force tossed up by the infinite sea of our self-existence; fifthly, the veil or lid created by mind prevents the attainment and realization of the Divine; mind with its exclusive concentration cannot bridge the gulf between the passive and active *Brahman* and build a wall of non-communication between the two and puts itself away from the dynamic aspect of Consciousness; sixthly, mind is a power of ignorance and acts always partially and by limitation, it may even and it does forget itself in a complete inconscience, or nescience, awaken from it to the ignorance of a partial knowledge and move from the ignorance towards a complete knowledge; and even if it arrived at integral knowledge, it would still be by a sort of putting together, a mental and intellectual arrangement, an artificial unity, a surface manipulation of things and not an essential and real oneness and not the spiritual change of consciousness; seventhly, mental truth is always an intellectual, emotional and sensational representation and not the direct truth, not the truth itself in its body and essence; eighthly, the mental

man thinks and sees on the level of present life and is oblivious of past and future lives or all life; his main basis of knowledge is the present moment with a ill grasped glimpse into the past and blind look towards the future, he bases himself on actual appearance of outward things and oblivious of vast domain of inner living; and ninthly, when the intellectual reason is applied to the disciplining of infrarational life, it constantly forces life a control, a measure, an artificial procrustean rule that succeeds either hardening life or killing or constrains it into rigid forms and conventions that ends by a revolt of life, a decay or disruption of systems and imprisons its capacity; or our nature is shaped rigidly by the practice of the ideals constructed by human mind and to limit ourselves by it is to restrict the growth of our larger Self; it is still more difficult for the reason to understand and handle with the suprarational life and the reason is lost in the largeness, subtlety, profundity and complexity of intuitive movement and guidance.

Mind indeed can never be a perfect instrument of the Spirit; a supreme self-expression is not possible in its movements because to separate, divide, limit is its very character and its nature is reflected, diluted and diffused or a narrowly intensive light and sets up willed barriers against higher faculties; it cannot give free admission to the vast and comprehensive self-existent luminosity and joy of the Spirit and all Truth's infinities because by that it would lose itself in an unreconciled variety, an undetermined immensity and would be unable to act and proceed to practical consequences and an effective creation. At first when the Supramental pressure falls on the unpurified mind a contrary phenomenon may for a time appear. That is due to several causes. First, there may be a disturbance, even a derangement created by impact of the greater hardly measurable power on an inferior consciousness which is not capable of responding to it organically or even perhaps of bearing the pressure; secondly, the very fact of the simultaneous and yet uncoordinated activity of two quite different forces, especially if the mind insists on its own way, if it tries obstinately or violently to profit by the Supermind instead of giving itself up to it and its purpose and acting as a transmitting channel, if it is not sufficiently passive and obedient to the higher guidance, may lead to a great excitation of power but also an increased disorder and obstrucutor of power and light that comes from above; there is a disparateness between the Supramental consciousness in which the Purusha now stands, thinks and wills and the mental, vital and physical consciousness through which he has to effectuate its light and knowledge; he lives and sees with an ideal consciousness, but he has yet in his lower self to make it entirely practical and effective; otherwise he can only act with a greater or less spiritual effectiveness through an internal communication with others on the spiritual level and on the higher mental level that is most easily affected by it, but the effect is diminished and is retarded by the inferiority or lack of the integral play of the being; this can only be remedied by the Supramental taking hold of and Supramentalising the mental, the vital and the physical consciousness, --transforming them, that is to say, into moulds of the Supramental nature; thirdly, mind can be the qualifier of transmission of Supramental force

much more easily if there is a previous Yogic preparation and long purification of lower nature, a passivity of the mind calmly and strongly open to the Spirit and reason's plasticity towards all sides and all aspects of self-development; otherwise there is much difficulty in getting rid of the discord or disparateness between the ideal Supramentality and the mental transmitting instruments, the mind channel, the heart, the sense, the nervous and the physical being.

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