



SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY:  
A DEFENSE

MR. GREGORY S. KHARMALKI

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN  
PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION  
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY BANGKOK THAILAND

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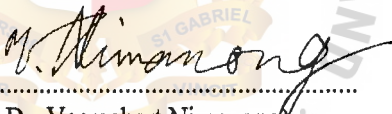
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ACADEMIC YEAR : 2005

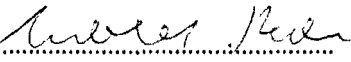
The Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion, Assumption University, has approved this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in **Philosophy**.

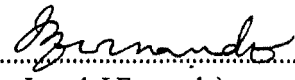
  
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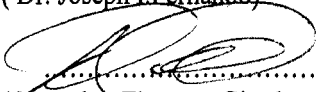
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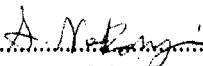
  
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Dissertation Title: **Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution Theory: A Defense**

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Academic Year: 2005

## **ABSTRACT**

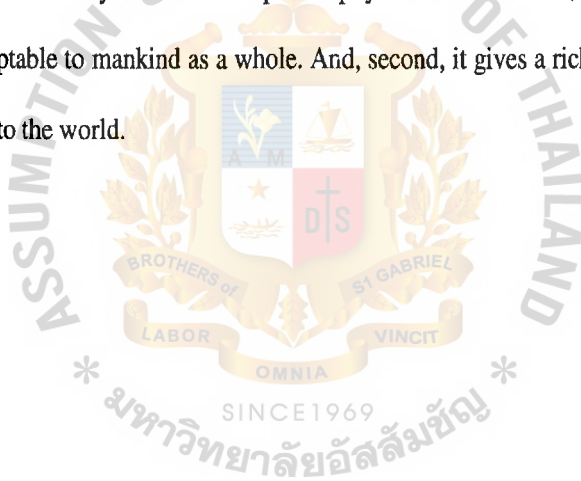
Man's highest aspiration has always been to seek his origin, and to seek for the creator. He tries to develop methods and theories to unravel this mystery, using his power of reason as a tool. Sri Aurobindo envisages a spiritual evolution, through an open-ended eternally optimistic and forward looking ontology. The purpose of evolution in his philosophy is the delight of the Creator, who manifests in inconscient Matter through the power of the Supreme Consciousness Force, which he calls 'Sachchidananda'. It is through the process of Involution and Evolution or the descending and ascending of the Divine, until it reverts back to the Creator or Sachchidananda. The Vedantic concepts of a transcendent, the all inclusive Brahman is thought to be harmonized with a theory of emergent evolution. Illusionism is totally rejected. The purpose of human kind is to go beyond its present form of Consciousness until it attains its divine status again. The Supreme Being is involved here in Matter. Consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and develops into a perfection of Life which is Spiritual and Supramental in nature. So, Spiritual Evolution is the involvement of the Reality and Consciousness in Matter, and through the Evolution process this Reality and Consciousness will revert back, an opening upward. There can never be any evolution without the Involution of the Divine in Matter, because life has already involved in it. It is based on this assumption that Sri Aurobindo concludes that man is a transitional being and not the final product of evolution.

The research work reveals how Sri Aurobindo has made a cogent attempt at re-establishing, under modern conditions, the spiritual practicability of the evolution process.



It is a fact that in his philosophical construction of his spiritual evolution, Sri Aurobindo has neither mentioned nor made any logical arguments with other philosophers. As such, in the defense of his theory, arguments and comparisons with other philosophers were used to reach more acceptable conclusion. Metaphysical reasoning was made use of, justifying readers about the efficacy of his theory. Since all material development is guided by spiritual development, it is imperative therefore that this process is determined by the spiritualization and transformation of matter .This process will be continued and will be completed only when humanity is raised to the level of divinity.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of spiritual evolution provides two great needs of our times, namely, a virtual synthesis of the philosophy of East and West, looking toward a philosophy acceptable to mankind as a whole. And, second, it gives a rich interpretation of Indian thoughts to the world.



## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to my Advisor Asst. Prof. Warayuth Srivarakuel, and Dr. Joseph I. Fernando, my Co-Advisor, for their guidance, encouragement and succor, during the course of preparation, correction, and completion of my writing this Dissertation.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Fr. Joseph Dinh, a visiting professor in the School of Philosophy, Assumption University. His expertise on the subject has been of great help in the completion of this research work.

I would like to thank Bro. P. Martin Kamolmas, Prof. Kirti Bunchua, Ex-Dean, Dr. Veerachart Nimanong, Dr. Imtiaz Yusuf, Dr. Sebastian Vadassery, and Dr. John Giordino. They have encouraged and helped me to complete the writing of this dissertation.

I would be failing in my duty, if I do not express my thanks to Mr. Pankaj, Librarian, Sri Aurobindo's Library, Pondicherry (India), the staff of St. Gabriel's Library, Assumption University, and the Librarian of all University Libraries in Bangkok *Thailand*). They have been very resourceful and helped me to access and locate reference books and other data needed in completing this dissertation.

A special thank is for my friend and colleague, Mr. Kuldeep Nagi, a Fullbright Research Scholar, attached to College of Internet Distance Education. His expertise in Microsoft Words has changed and improved the layout and formats of my dissertation.

Lastly, I thanks my mother Rupamai Kharmalki, who has encouraged and given me confidence to complete my study, and to my wife Somsri Kharmalki and daughter Annette, from whom I received constant support and encouragement to go on with my study. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my classmates and friends, who have given me valuable suggestions and encouragement for the completion of my Ph.D.

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research work is to defend Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution theory, that the world's existence is the delight of the creator (Sachchidananda) to create. It will distinguish and explore the two views on Spirit and Matter, the Involution and Evolution process. Sri Aurobindo in his book "Supramental Manifestation," stated that, "Evolution carries with it in its intrinsic sense, in the idea in its root the necessity of a previous Involution." (Aurobindo; 1949, p.140). It will also use arguments for the theory as well as, counter arguments against the theory, and statements of support from other philosophers and the researcher's own contributions.

Sri Aurobindo envisages the involvement of the spirit in evolution through the processes of ascend and descend or the evolution and involution. It is through this process that he introduced a new idea of integration in the philosophy of evolution. He believes that it is imperative that the World is real and not an illusion. For he said, "The world is real in the Consciousness absorbed in the Nirvana; that is all, that is established." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.420). According to his theory, there must be intelligent beings to have willed its existence. It could not have come out of itself. If we are to explain this, we need to know this being and how he conducts himself. But even to think and try to know him is absurd, because he is the Knower who cannot be known. According to the ancient text of India, which says "How can he be known by whom all this are known? How can we know the Knower Himself?" (Bhaggagita 11-1V-14). So, the World's existence can only be explained ontologically, epistemologically, or teleological and scientifically as others have tried. But, the approach from a spiritual point of view by Sri Aurobindo offers a more plausible reason for the evolution, he says, "A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant



developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of terrestrial existence.”(Aurobindo,1939, p.824). It is on this basis that has prompted the researcher to analyze and defense his spiritual evolution theory.

Firstly, it seems to the researcher that Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy on Evolution offers the most logical explanations for the origin of the Universe. A.C. Bhattacharya agrees with Sri Aurobindo, for he says, “His Doctrines (*Aurobindo*) are much more systematic and centralized and they admit of no contradiction whatsoever, all his works are securely founded on the same metaphysical doctrine”(Bhattacharya, 1972, p.9)

Secondly, the researcher thinks that Sri Aurobindo’s view on Matter have a scientific approach. Science has proved that matter is but atom, proton, etc. A dormant life exists in matter it needs only to be awakened. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this, he says, “The electron and atom are in this view eternal somnambulists; each material object contains an outer or form consciousness involved, absorbed in the form, asleep, seeming to be an unconsciousness driven by unknown and unfelt Existence, - he who is awake in the sleeper.... Unlike that of human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not or ever on the point of wakening.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.711)

Thirdly, the researcher believes Sri Aurobindo is right in advocating that the Supreme Consciousness, through its involution into matter, and the evolution of the spirit back to itself is the only explanation for existence in the world. The reason is that evolution is not a mechanical movement otherwise there is no purpose of talking about morals and social values. Evolution has a purpose, and since it has a purpose it has its goal. So, Sri Aurobindo says, “An involution of the Devine Existence, the Spiritual Reality, in the apparent inconscience of Matter is the starting point of the evolution.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.683)

Lastly the researcher supports Sri Aurobindo ideas, when he very convincingly declared the world existence is the joy and delight of the creator to create, no other reasons other than this delight and joy of the creator. He declares, “Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and into which creation ceases”.(Aurobindo, p.101)

In this research work, the researcher endeavors to include also some ideas about evolution recorded throughout human history. It will give more emphasis to the different interpretations and ideas expressed by thinkers of the eighteen to the nineteenth centuries. In chapter II, the research work will delve on the different aspects of the interpretation, including mechanical, teleological, scientific, cosmological, and spiritual explanation on evolution. It will focus on the standpoints of Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary theory, as he envisaged in the Life Divine. Secondly, the Evolution theory of Darwin will be included for a comparison and that of Teilhard de Chardin for support. The spiritual evolution ideas of Western and Eastern thinkers will also be used in the analysis of the theory. A forum for a critical analysis of Darwin’s theory in the light of the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo will be included in chapter III. The necessity to include this Chapter is part of the philosophical investigations for a balanced judgment. In Chapter IV, the research work will provide statements and arguments on Sri Aurobindo’s stand point, that the delights of Sachchidananda the Supreme Consciousness is the cause of existence in this world. It will analyze ideas presented by other thinkers in defending of the Spiritual Evolution Theory. A Conclusion will be drawn in Chapter V justifying instances for the defense of the theory of Spiritual Evolution, and the research findings. Finally, a recommendation

will be suggested for future research that might be generated from this research work.

A glossary will be included in the appendix for easy references.

### 1.1. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Thinkers from both in the East and in the West have tried from time immemorial to unravel the multiplicity of the world. In the process, they have formulated different theories on evolution. According to Bertrand Russell in his book, 'The History of Western Philosophy', he pointed out that "the early Greek thinkers traced the origin of the world of multiplicity to the primal substance. Thales, the father of Western philosophy, considered that the substance to be water. Anaximander took it to be air, whereas Heraclitus tended to think it to be fire." (Russell, 1922, p.54). Again on this background, according to S. Dasgupta in his book, 'History of Indian Philosophy', also writes, that, "Ramanuja tried to show that the world evolved out of one indivisible primal principle, Ether. Then later come Sankara of the Advaita, who believed the world is an illusion, a Maya, not real." (Dasgupta, 1951, p.34). But in most cases we can see water was believed to be superior to other concrete manifestation, because it is diverse and in plentiful. It should be noted that according to the Indian Text of Chandoga Upanishad, it says, "the ancient Indian philosophers speak about the elements of Akasa or Byoma in addition to the Ksiti Ap, Teja and Marut (earth, water fire and air)." (Chandoga Upanishad, IV-III). So this primal substance mentioned in the Upanishads is Ether. This is in total agreement with the latest research by modern science.

In the Western World, before Aristotle, we find evolution was full of ideas about the universe and everything in it; but all ideas are pretty much what a savage would wish it to be. The polytheistic account of creation was formed in the Babylonians before 2000 BC. In the Zen Avesta, we find Persian myths, mentioning creation,

similar to what we find in the Bible later, its account is in the book of Genesis. It says that God created this world and departed from its contents. The errors in creation legends found in the book of Genesis, must have been apparent to thoughtful minds right from an early period. Therefore, about two thousand years ago, we find that many attempts were made to replace them by a rational theory to explain the origin of the world by natural causes. Democritus, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Aristotle, Lucretius, and others were forerunners of this attempt. In between the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pioneers who had tried to explain the truth of Evolution Included: Hooke (1635-1703), Ray (1627-1705), Buffon (1707-1788), de Millet (1656-1738), Maupertius (1608-1759) and Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), grandfather of Charles Darwin. Then, later come Lamarck (1774-1829), who holds a place in the history of evolution, second only to Charles Darwin (1809-82).

In Indian philosophical speculations on creation and evolution, we find Ramanuja, one of the early Indian philosophers account it as ether. A.C.Bhattacharya, in his 'Synthetic Study' (1972), wrote that this idea in Ramanuja is traceable to the ancient texts of India the Upanishads. According to him, it was found that just like in the Greek's philosophy. They (Indian) also "accept the four elements of earth, water, fire, and air as constituting the Cosmos." (Upanishads IV-III). But 'water' as in Thales ideas, is one element of creation which is found most commonly mentioned in the Upanishads. Bhattacharya mentioned this quotation from it, "In the beginning this world is just water. That water created the Satya, Satya created Brahman, Brahman created Prajapati. And he created God in turn." (Bhagad Upanishad V-V-1). He also mentioned, that in the Chandogya Upanishad asserts that, 'The earth constitutes the essence of all substances; water is the essence of the earth, herb of water and man.' (Chandogya Upanishad, 1-2-3).

It is also found that the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy has made an attempt to make an in depth study into the doctrines found in the Upanishads. They found that it gives a very consistent account on the evolutionary process, both from a theistic and materialistic point of views. According to Prof. J.S. Mackenzie, 'The earliest attempt at a constructive theory of the cosmos and certainly one of the most interesting and remarkable is that, which was set in the Upanishads.' (Mackenzie, 1972. P.94). Their interest in evolutionary theory did not sustain in Indian philosophical world, until Sankara (7<sup>th</sup> century), much earlier, and then Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), both belong to the school of Advaita they attempt to explain evolution from an Indian context. It is on this background that Sri Aurobindo picks up from all these theories to formulate the spiritual theory of evolution.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The most significant point to mention here right at the very outset is the idea on evolution is more prominent in the West, than in the East. In Greek philosophy, we find Heraclitus, Empedocles and others among pre-Socratic philosophers. Plato and Aristotle "they dealt with creation and natural philosophy in the "Timaeus." (S.K.Maitra, 1956, p.33). We can also say that 'evolution' dominated the philosophy of the nineteenth century, and it has developed various view- points, such as those of Darwin and Spencer and those of Hegel, Bergson, Whitehead and others. But in Darwin's and Spencer's the theory of evolution is more naturalistic, they are neutral from a spiritual point of view. Hegel's stand-point on the other hand, is evolution of the spirit. Since there is this conflicting view, we need to understand clearly what is meant by evolution? What has the spirit got to do with evolution? What is it that evolves from what and by what force? Is it necessitated? On this account, we found that scientists are contented to affirm on the originality of matter, which by the very nature of its own

inherent energy, produces, some unexplained laws with constant system of results. Philosophers on the other hands are trying to make their own stand-points, without bulging on what they had erred in their arguments on evolution. In this regards Bergson is right, he says, "History of philosophy is there, how ever; and show us the eternal conflict of the system, the impossibility of satisfactory getting the real.....of our ready-made concept." (Bergson, 1998, p.48).

There are innumerable reasons to speculate on these humanistic aspirations to know more about our own evolution. There are questions the researcher would like to pose such as, is life a creation out of inanimate substance or the appearance of a new power out of material energy? Is the conscious mind a creation out of inconscient or subconscient life? Whether they appeared because they were always there, lying under the suppressed condition or the activity of the noumena (things-in themselves-exist)?

On some of the questions Sri Aurobindo answers that, "Mind alone is the creator of the world." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.116). What of the soul of man? Is it a new result or a new creation of our mental mind? And is man a biological or a spiritual creation? Darwin for instance suggested the adaptation process or the automatic elimination of the un-adapted as a simple idea of the Natural Selections. Bergson, speculated and presented his idea on another possibility, saying that, "Strictly speaking, there is nothing to prevent our imagining that the evolution of life might have taken place in one single individual by means of a series of trans-formations spread over thousand of age." (Bergson, 1998, p.53).

In the West most, prominently Plato believed the world has always been there, and will always be there, no beginning, no end, it is explained in term of the riddle, of the egg and the chicken. Such ideas and theories are being formulated from time to time, but the search seems to be looking for a stable and unifying core of existence.



Evidences are found in ancient Greek and Indian cosmology to unravel the mystery of evolution. It reached its climax in the nineteenth century's biological theories. But, it is in Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution that we find a balanced treatment that answered most of the questions posed above, he answers, "There seems to be no reason why life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of Living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that life already involved in matter, and mind in life."(Aurobindo,1939, p.4).

It is based on this stand-point on the involvement of the spirit in evolution that this research aims to defend Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution. The theory draws its creation or manifestation and concretization, from the power of the Conscious Being. Sri Aurobindo said, "An evolution in the inconscience is the beginning, and evolution in the ignorance is the middle, but the end is the liberation of the spirit into its true consciousness and an evolution in the knowledge."(Aurobindo, 1939, p.703).

Sri Aurobindo also stressed that there must be an original creative power for existence in the world. Although matter is the first substance, yet it is not the original and the ultimate power, and it is not an inconscient material energy, for then he reasoned life and consciousness would be absent, since inconscient cannot evolve consciousness or an inanimate force evolve life. He says 'An ultimate Power is not an inconcient material Energy, for then life and consciousness would be absent, since inconscient cannot evolve consciousness or inanimate Force evolve life.' (ibid, 1939, p.705). It is therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo, absurd to think that the whole course of evolution can be worked out without the help of a form of consciousness. There must be, therefore, Mind and Life, and not only that, but also there must be a secret Consciousness greater than Life-Consciousness or Mind-Consciousness, and Energy more essential than the material Energy. He therefore emphasizes,

‘Since it is greater than Mind; it must be a Supramental Consciousness-Force; since it is a power of essential substance other than Matter; it must be the power of that which is the supreme essence and substance of all things, a power of the spirit. This must be the culminating emergence or, at least, that stage in the emergence which first decisively changes the nature of the evolution by transforming its action of Ignorance and its basis of Inconscience.’ (Aurobindo, 1939, p.705).

So, according to Sri Aurobindo, evolution takes place in a material universe. The foundation, the original substance, and the first established all conditioning element of things is Matter. But Life and Mind which are evolved from Matter, they are also limited and modified in their actions by the obligations to Matter for their instrumentation and their subjection to the law of material Nature. But this is despite the fact that they themselves are modified by that which they have to undergo. This is a sign that neither life nor mind is the original creative power. Sri Aurobindo thinks that the Reality which is Sachchidananda or its Consciousness-Force is the only creative power. So Sri Aurobindo being a Spiritualist will surely be totally against any mechanical conception of evolution. He clarified that Life and Mind are not the original creative power, for he says, ‘they like matter are the bases of an intermediary, an intermediaries, a success and series instruments of evolutionary process.’ (Aurobindo, p.705). It can be interpreted that, Matter, Life and Mind can evolve because there has been an involution of the spirit into matter. But since the Consciousness-Force, the Sachchidananda can never cease to exist in its material form it will have to revert back to itself through the process of evolution. A question may be raised on this process of involution and evolution, as to why Sachchidananda has chosen to do so? In his answer Sri Aurobindo said that it is the urge to create itself. It is

the 'Lila,' the game to be played for the sake of playing it. There is no other reason other than the delight to create. He says, 'we have put aside the solution that it is compelled by its own nature of Force to create, obliged by its own potentiality, but it is not limited, bound or compelled by it; it is free. If then, he said, being free to move or to remain eternally still. It indulges in its power of movement and formation. It can be for one reason only', he concluded that "It is for delight, but the self-delight of the Brahman." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.324)

In this research work, we will have to note for subsequent references, that Sri Aurobindo uses the word Brahman, Supreme Consciousness, Absolute, Infinite Bliss and Sachchidananda to refer to that Supreme Being, the Reality, as the sources of evolution. He identifies Brahman also as Deity, which is not limited by the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. So accordingly these terms will be used intermittently when referring to the reality of Consciousness. We see this in Sri Aurobindo's Chapter XXVIII in "The Life Divine," while explaining on the 'Seven Chord of Being', in explaining the Cosmic existence, he says, 'We laid down that the origin, continent, the initial and the ultimate reality of all that is in the Cosmos is the triune principle of transcendence and infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which is the nature of the Divine Being.' (Aurobindo, p.262)

We also need to mention that in the East, evolution is not a problem. There are instances when it is mentioned in the Upanishads and other ancient texts of India. But is not an issue that has been taken seriously until Sankara and Sri Aurobindo. Both Sri Aurobindo and Sankara belong to the same Advaita school of thought. They believe that metaphysical matters can be known, using the power of intuition to arrive at a conclusion. Sri Aurobindo explained that the force behind this earliest, persistent and ultimate pre-occupation of man is his quest for his origin. In so doing it must involve

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more than human efforts. It is a fact, in philosophy, the problem in searching for a plausible source of knowledge or method of acquiring knowledge on evolution is very vital. Both in the East and in the West, intuitionism and rationalism are considered a problem in explaining the evolution of the Universe. Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly, will place intuition above intellect as the source of knowledge, arguing against reason as advocated by Hegel. In fact Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is often described as intuitive philosophy. It may be pointed that like Bergson, he has made a distinction between mental and supramental knowledge. At the same time it is found out that the highest form of knowledge for Sri Aurobindo, is the supermind, he says, "The creative action of the All-Existent has its nodus in the fourth intermediate principle of Supermind or Real-Idea, in which the divine knowledge, one with self-existence and self-awareness and a substantial Will which is in perfect unison with knowledge." (Aurobindo, 1939. p. 262)

The main problem on further investigation centered round the question of whether, Evolution can be known through rational understanding or through intuition which supercedes reason and intellect. There is a difference between intellect and intuition, according to Sri Aurobindo, "That intuition is born of a direct awareness, while intellect is an indirect action of a knowledge which constructs itself," (Aurobindo, 1939, p.330). It seems that a philosophical approach will need both intellect and intuition to explain the true nature of evolution, as in the case of Sankara and Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo clarifying on intuition, he says, "Again, there is not an entire absence of the penetration from above into our mental limits the phenomena of genius are really the result of such penetration." (ibid, 1939, p.275). Intuition we can say is in the sense of a direct grasp of the facts and truth, it should indicate the reality of a higher level of consciousness not merely mental. The reason is that intuition is a direct knowledge that

requires no via-media in knowing the object known. In this case, evolution would be the only evidence of knowledge that is derived from intuition. It is also evident in psychology that some individuals can expand their minds beyond their limits. In this regard we have to accept that knowledge is intuitive. So, it is for this reason Sankara and Sri Aurobindo used intuition as a source of knowledge. But, we have to note that the use of intellect and reason as intuition in Indian philosophy, were mainly due to Western influence. This happened with regards to empirical and rational knowledge. But, the role of intuition in perceiving evolution becomes more important, as we have seen in Sri Aurobindo, especially, when he has to rise above phenomena and try to reach the realm of metaphysics. On this very fact, Sri Aurobindo said that, the underlying aspiration for something super-human, may and does point out to a source which must be spiritual in origin. This can be known, he says, 'In all this enlightenment obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work, truth-urge that correct or pushes to the corrects or pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous, to labor towards a true picture of things and a true interpretative knowledge.' (ibid, 1939, p.618)

So for Sri Aurobindo, it is the power of intuition that has played a major role in the formulation of his philosophy of spiritual evolution. He says, "If in the evolution the surface consciousness were always open to the action of intuition, the intervention of error would not be possible." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.615). The power of intuition has been made clearer by of Sri Aurobindo, that it aided the understanding about the knowledge of the real nature of evolution. He further clarifies it by re-interpreting the ancient Indian texts of Upanishads and Vedas, where, the ancient sages of India hinted at the concept of spiritual evolution, for they taught that under the appearance of the universe, there is the Reality of Being and Consciousness, one Eternal. They also

taught that all beings are united in that One-Consciousness and Spirit (Sachchidananda), but divided by certain separativity in the mind of consciousness from their true self and reality. Sri Aurobindo combined these teachings with his own ideas to develop the Spiritual Evolution Theory. Firstly, Sri Aurobindo foresees transformation as the basic idea on evolution. His deep seated spiritual outlook must be the main reason for this move. Sri Aurobindo's idea on cosmic transformation resembles that of Teilhard de Chardin. Secondly, his philosophy on evolution is on the fundamentals that matter and spirit are real. According to him, a spiritualistic philosophy on evolution ignoring matter or materialistic philosophy of evolution ignoring spirit are one sided. It based on this synthesis of Matter and Spirit, that he advocated using an integral philosophy for his spiritual evolution theory. He therefore, put it bluntly and said, "In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit, -or of some of them, -it has been a bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.9).

Sri Aurobindo, therefore, through his integral philosophy, tried to reconcile matter and spirit in developing the theory of spiritual evolution. He also advocated the process of ascending and descending or the evolution and involution, as the integrating factor for both the Spirit and Matter in the process of evolution. In this process he also integrates the philosophy of the West with that of the East. S. K. Maitra rightly put it, that, "Indian and Western thought have met in Sri Aurobindo." (Maitra, 1956, p. 31).

Further, according to Sri Aurobindo's evolution process; matter rises into Life, Life into Mind and later Mind into Super mind. Sri Aurobindo explained this phenomena, he says, "In matter, Life appears and living physical being; in Life, Mind



manifests and embodied thinking and living being, in Mind, ever increasing its powers and activities in the form of Matter, Super mind or Truth-Consciousness must appear.” (ibid,1939, p.663). All these are possible because of the involvement of Consciousness. Evolution of consciousness is a movement of ascension, consisting of a double process of supplication and integration. The ascent represents the pressure from below, the force of buoyancy exerted by the involved and secreted consciousness. We also see that according to Sri Aurobindo, the Being and Consciousness are the realizations of the delight to create. At first it involves in Matter, in the involution process. Then, again, through the evolution process, the Consciousness liberates itself. Consciousness has its own self-impelled power to grow higher and higher towards the self-perfection. It tries to be readied for its own returning journey to itself. Life is the first release, next comes the Mind. It finally released itself when Life and Mind reach a spiritual and supramental stage. It is for this reason Sri Aurobindo postulates this development as stage to the Supermind in the conscious being. He envisages that when it reached this stage, the Divinity involved in the involution process, will ultimately be released. This, in the other words is the whole process of spiritual evolution, when Life is finally manifested into perfection. Sri Aurobindo. Says,

“The One Consciousness-Force is liberated into its million forces, and each of these forces has the right to fulfill itself, or assume, if needed, a hegemony and take up for its own utility of the forces. So the Delight of Existence too is loosed out into all manner of delights and each can carry itself to its independent fullness or sovereign extreme. The Overmind thus, gives to the One Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, character of a teeming of infinite possibilities which can be developed into multitude of worlds or thrown together into one world in which endless variables outcome of their play is

determinant of the creation, of its process, its cause, it is the consequence.”(Aurobindo, 1939. p.200).

It is on the above basis that Sri Aurobindo, in agreement with Hegel and Chardin emphasizes that evolution has to be spiritual otherwise there is no evolution at all. But argument on this contention may arise since for Hegel, the spirit is identified with Reason, whereas for Aurobindo it is identified with the Reality. Also for Sri Aurobindo the process of evolution is a triple, ‘heightening, widening and integration.’ (ibid. p. 661). The process means the Consciousness rises higher and higher upwards. That is Matter rises to Life, Life rises to Mind, and so on, till it reaches Supermind. And also when the principle of Life emerges in Matter, Matter sufficiently widens itself to accommodate the new principle, which is the Mind Then come the process of integration. In the process of integration the higher ones get integrated with the lower ones, as in the case of the spirit with matter.

But the process may be argued, the mere drive from below is not sufficient to bring out or establish the higher status. The higher status itself has to descend in order to manifest itself in matter. The urge from below, therefore, is an aspiration, a yearning to move forward and upward; but, the precise goal, the status to be arrived at, is not given in this theory. Nolini Kanta Gupta, in his, “The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo,” clarifies this, he says, “It is more or less vague and groping surge from below is canalized. It assumes a definite size and shape, assumes a local habitation and a name when higher descends at a crucial moment, takes the lower at its peak side, and fixes upon its own norm and form.”(N.K.Gupta,1944,p.48). Thus, all levels of consciousness are created, are loosened out, by a first descent of the spirit into Matter. Life was already there on the plane of life even when it did not manifest itself in Matter. When Matter was stirred and churned sufficiently so as to reach a certain tension and saturation, when it was raised

to a certain degree of maturity as it were, then life appeared. As such, according to Gupta, "Life attains a certain level of growth and maturity, as the vehicle of the psychic element of Consciousness." (Gupta. 1944, p. 44).

Sri Aurobindo based on the reasons above that he emphasized the nature of creation. First, there is an involution, and gradually fore shadowing, a disintegration and concretization, an exclusive concentration and self-oblivion of consciousness, brought forth from the plenary light of One Supreme Spirit. This is followed by evolution. "All evolution is in essence a heightening of the forces of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifested, from matter into life, from life into mind, from mind into the spirit." (Aurobindo, 1939 p.726).

Thus we see that evolution means a transformation of the whole of our terrestrial existence, material, mental and vital. First, by an ascent to higher principle, which is the spirit and secondly by psychical of the whole being, through the life emanating from the soul. Sri Aurobindo philosophically speaking was contented that in the principle of existence, man is part of the cosmos, the Universe is part of that greater cosmos, and also Matter, Life, and Mind are the formulations of this basic energy or Force. He also accepted the Upanishanic solution that Life is already involved in matter, and mind in the living matter, whose origin is Sat, Cit and Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-bliss). Sri Aurobindo advances to us sufficient reasons to prove the reality on the Consciousness and Delight. According to him they belong to the very nature of the ultimate being. So Delight according to him is the aspect of the Reality. He said that, "The world existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva, which multiplies the body of the God as numberless to the view." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.19). This only showed that the ultimate reality have no other purpose or aim in creation excepting for the joy

and delight of Becoming. So we see that delight is inherent in the nature of the Reality, and creation is the result of this very principle, and the Reality therefore, is pure delight. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this, he says, “The world being what it is, it could not be otherwise. For the world is a masked form of Sachchidananda and therefore the thing in which His Force must always find and achieve itself in divine Bliss, an omnipotent self- delight.”(Aurobindo,.p.219).The idea on the Delight of Existence, Sri Aurobindo adopted it from the Indian ancient text of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which says,

“For who could live or breathe if there is not this Delight of existence as ether in which we dwell?

From Delight all these things are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return”. Taittiriya Upanishad II.7, III.6

Sri Aurobindo identified this power as Sachchidananda. It is not only is it an impersonal existence, consciousness and bliss, but also a Personal Being. It is Conscious of itself, and enjoying its conscious existence. Sri Aurobindo keeps insisting that delight is the reason for the creation of Beings and the Universe. Sri Aurobindo says, ‘Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth. Delight is the cause of remaining in existence Delight is the end of birth into which creation ceases.’ (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 101).

Finally, as we have seen from the background study, Sri Aurobindo has contributed immensely to the development and advancement of the theory of Evolution. In his metaphysical Magnum Opus ‘The Life Divine’, he finally declared, “An Involution of the Divine Existence, the spiritual Reality in the apparent inconscience of Matter is the starting point of the evolution. But that the Reality in its nature an eternal Existence , Consciousness, Delight of Existence : the evolution must then be an emergence of this Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence, not at

first in its essence or totality, but in evolutionary forms that express or disguise it.”  
(Aurobindo, 1939, p. 683).

### **1.3 STATUS OF THE THESIS**

The significance of the study is drawn from what we found in the background study. The Spiritual Evolution Theory offered by Sri Aurobindo, has its own merits and uniqueness as it stands out from other theories developed so far. The researcher is most interested on the question, if Spirit really is the source of the world's existence and all that it stands for. Sri Aurobindo clearly elucidated this in his theory, that man is a spiritual being. But how has he arrived at this conclusion? Sri Aurobindo none-the-less, is ready to explain this, he says, “The Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original evolutionary element and factor. Evolution is an inverse action of the involution; what is an ultimate and the last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in evolution the last supreme emergence.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 853).

The researcher defends Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory based on the standpoint that Delight of the Spirit is to create and this is the source of Creation. At the same time, he will try to prove his own standpoint that Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual evolution theory has solved the dichotomy that existed in the philosophy of evolution. It is on this point that S. K. Maitra says, “It created a new philosophy, which we may call scientific philosophy, which tries to build a *Weltanschauung* on the foundation of physics and biology.” (Maitra, 1956, p. 28).

The justification for the defense of his theory arises from the fact that we see Sri Aurobindo tried to reconcile Matter and Spirit, East and West, through his Integral philosophy. The researcher is most impressed with this approach, because it is for the first time that humanity has been equated to a divine entity. In the process he was able

to reconcile the philosophy of the West with that of the East. Sri Aurobindo even went further, predicting that man will transcend his physical body to a complete divinity in this physical world itself. He said, “This has come about the present status of the evolution of which man the apparent culmination but not the real ultimate summit; for him self is the transitional being and stands at a turning-point of the whole movement.” (Aurobindo,1939,p.707). As such, the metaphysical investigation that researcher will try to include in this study involves the creative aspects of the Divine (Sachchidananda), the nature of inconscient matter, how life exists prior to its actual assumption by the descending spirit? What is the final destiny of humans after this transformation? What is the final goal toward which human life is moving?

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE DISSERTATION**

- 1.4.1.** To elucidate Sri Aurobindo’s introspective accounts on the Supreme
- 1.4.2.** To defend the idea that human Evolution is the delight of the Creator to create and, that there is no other reasons.
- 1.4.3.** To present the researcher’s findings and to make necessary recommendations for future researchers in the South East- Asian Regions

#### **1.5. STAND-POINT OF THE STUDY**

The Spiritual Evolution Theory of Sri Aurobindo has solved the dichotomy that existed in the philosophy of evolution.

#### **1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study will utilize extensively all the library resources available in the country and from outside the country. Primary and secondary data from related philosophers will also be used as statements of facts and supports for the defense. Information from



websites will limitedly be used to substantiate the defense in view of the lack of information from other sources.

### **1.7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The research topic undertaken by the researcher is yet to be popular in South East Asia Regions. Sri Aurobindo's line of enquiry and conclusions seems too radical and iconoclastic for the conventional mind to accept. Also critics will find it difficult to understand his Sachchidananda, who can be divided into the three aspects of Sat, Cit and Ananda or Existence-Consciousness-Bliss but functioned as one. But limitations in Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical construction of his Spiritual Evolution Theory will not pose too much of a problem, if we follow Bhattacharya's guidance, he said, "However, we may admit that the supramental evolution is itself a perpetual growth and it cannot be said to be terminating into a certain point as our mental understanding may conceive it." (Bhattacharya, 1972, p.152).

Over and above, the researcher has exhausted all sources for information from the National library, Thammasat, Chula, Srikarin, and Chiangmai University libraries for primary and secondary data, including Websites, yet only a small amount of relevant data were collected. The researcher was compelled to visit the Sri Aurobindo's Library, in Pondicherry, India, but, sad to record here, most related books are in a deplorable conditions, being left in the corridor under the rains and suns, due to lack of space in the library. I was put under severe constraints both in terms of time, money, and other resources. The Researcher is determined to complete the research work despite these limitations.

### **1.8. DEFINATION OF THE TERMS USED**

Advaita, means, monism; the monistic school of Vedanta.

Advaitin, means one who follows the school of advaita.

Ananda, means Bliss, Delight, and Beatitude are the essential principle of delight, a Self- delight, which is the very nature of transcendent and infinite existence.

A p, means water.

Brahman, means the Absolute; the Spirit; the Supreme Being; the Reality, the Eternal.

Cit, means Pure Consciousness; the free and all creative self-awareness of the absolute.

Marut, means Air

Maya means Phenomenal consciousness, creative Consciousness, and Signified Originally in the Veda.

Ksiti, means Earth.

Sachchidananda - Existence (Sat) – Consciousness (cit)–Bliss (ananda); a trinity of absolute existence, Self-awareness and Self-Delight; the Divine Being.

Sankhya - a system of philosophy and spiritual practice.

Sat - being; existence; thing that are timely (cf. asat).

Teja - fire.

Upanisad (Upanishad) - literally inner knowledge, which enters into the final truth. a class of philosophical writing which is posterior to the Vedas.

Veda - Book of knowledge, the earliest-Indian Scripture.

Yoga - Union; the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and Delight of the Divine; a methodized effort towards Self-perfection by expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent existence.

## 1.9 EXPECTATIONS

**1.9.1.** That, this research work on Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy will stimulate further research on other aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

**1.9.2.** The research work on spiritual evolution will strengthen the idea that Evolution is a Divine creation, not otherwise.

**1.9.3.** Sri Aurobindo will be recognized as one of the great philosophers the East has produced, who has contributed greatly to the advancement of the philosophy of Evolution.



## CHAPTER 2

### SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY

Sri Aurobindo in his Spiritual Evolution Theory postulates the nature of the Reality by elucidating different gradations from matter to the supermind. His evolution begins from Consciousness down to the inconscient matter. The inconscient is a suppressed or involved Consciousness in which there is everything, but nothing is formulated or expressed. It functions through the process of involution or the descent of Consciousness into matter, then life came into being. Once life came into being in matter, the upward trends move on to mind. Then mind will develop into supermind, The reverse process begins when the Consciousness in the supermind ascent back to the spirit, which Prof. S. K. Maitra in his book "Meeting of East and West in Sri Aurobindo, "called it, 'the home coming of the spirit or the spirit returning to Itself'" (Maitra, 1956, p.95). Sri Aurobindo confirming this statement, he says, "On that hypothesis, there must be behind the action of the material Energy a secret involved Consciousness, cosmic, infinite building up through the action of that frontal Energy its means of an evolutionary manifestation, a creation out of itself in the boundless finite of the material universe. The apparent inconscience of the material Energy would be an indispensable condition for the structure of the material world-substance in which this Consciousness intends to involve itself so that it may grow by evolution out of its apparent opposite; for without some such device a complete involution would be impossible."(Aurobindo, 1939, p.303).

A very brief accounts about Sri Aurobindo, how he came into the realm of philosophy. Firstly, his early years were spent mostly in the West, in particularly, England, (1885-1890). He picked up most of the occidental languages during this time. He mastered English, French, Latin, German, Spanish, and Italian. It was also, during

these years that he was introduced to Western Philosophy and literature. So, he had the opportunity to study the idealistic philosophies of Hegel, Whitehead, Bergson, and other philosophers. It is no doubt that Bergson's "Élan Vital" has a very close resemblance with Aurobindo's philosophical thinking. Bhattacharya went to the extent in his, "Sri Aurobindo and Bergson, A Synthetic Study," to say, "We may be blamed possibly for reading Sri Aurobindo's philosophy in Bergson." (A.C. Bhattacharya, 1972, p.10). This is a full proof that their thinking was so similar that one might be taken for the other. It may be mentioned here that Sri Aurobindo, after a long stay of fourteen years in the West, finally returned to India in 1893. He joined the Baroda State Service, at the behest of the Raja of Baroda, whom he had met in England. He helped in the Administration, as well as, teaching English and French, and ultimately became the Principal of the Baroda College. He remained in this Service for ten years (1893-1906). He then moved to Calcutta in Bengal in 1906. Thus, having been cut off from his own language and culture, he began to make up the lost years and opportunities by taking up in earnest, the learning of all the major languages of India. He began to learn Bengali his mother tongue, then he picked up Gujarathi, Sanskrit, and Hindi. In a very short time, he mastered these languages as well. He then devoted his spare time, in studying extensively on Indian philosophy and other religious texts of India.

Having language as a tool, he began to delve into the earnest learning of the ancient texts of India, the Upanishad and Vedas and in particular, on Advaita -Vedanta and Yoga. Thus, having studied the literature, philosophy and languages of the West, and having grasped the philosophies and languages of the East (India), he tried to formulate his own vision and reason on human life. Sri Aurobindo's great contributions to Philosophy, is his synthesis approach on evolution. He also develops an integral philosophy in the construction of his Spiritual Evolution. According to Charles A.

Moore, "Sri Aurobindo's philosophy provides two great needs of the time, namely, a virtual synthesis of East and West looking towards a philosophy acceptable to all mankind and second, correcting abuses and aberration, thus providing a point of view." (Moore, 1944,p.108). From evidence that abounds in his book, *The Life Divine* is full of ideas on evolution and the future of man. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy can also be identified as integral, since he accepts and integrates both matter and spirit. He also cherished that philosophy of the East and the West will merged to find a unified common denominator for the world existence. He also has a very strong idealistic view on humanity as well. As such, the integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo can also be taken as an idealistic philosophy, because, according to Lall, "It is close to idealistic, because he conceives Reality as Spiritual." (Basant K. Lall; 1973,p.159).

So Sri Aurobindo's *Spiritual Evolution* is integral in its approach, at the same time, it is also idealistic. It is integral also as it views Matter, Life and Mind as Existence the infinite Existence. In fact, the whole philosophy of Sri Aurobindo resolves around the integrated philosophy. It is to be noted that his most significant contribution to philosophy, is his attempts at synthesizing Eastern and Western philosophy. In the West, the theory of evolution is essentially intellectual and cosmic in nature. The Indian philosophy on the other hands is individualistic and static; concentrating in the evolution of an individual only. Hence, the cosmic aspect is neglected. Sri Aurobindo sees that a proper assimilation of the two extreme, is the only solution to the philosophical problem of evolution. Sri Aurobindo foresees that this assimilation can be more effective if we workout a spiritual theory of evolution. He says, "A spiritual evolution, an unfolding here of the Being, from Birth to Birth, of which man becomes the central instruments and human life at the highest offers the critical turning-point, is the link needed for the reconciliation of life and spirit; for it



allows us to take into account the total nature of man and to recognize the legitimate place of his triple attraction, to earth, to heaven and to the supreme reality.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.677). It is on this integral approach by Sri Aurobindo that prompted M.P. Pandit, to confirmed the observations that Sri Aurobindo upholds it as: “an integral view of existence, it reconciles all the three (matter, life and spirit) in its condensation as Earth’ existence.” (M.P.Pandit, 1987, p.27).

Evidences are abounds to show that the spiritual evolution theory is the outcome of Sri Aurobindo's integral approach in philosophy. Sri Aurobindo himself said, “this terrestrial existence is not the only one. There are other planes of existence, according to him, with their own worlds forming a whole with Earth as its Physical Center. All these worlds are inter-related, and are interacting at the time. What is more, he argues, ‘the entire series of worlds derive from a reality that is transcendent. It is not unrelated to this creation, only it transcendent the lower orders of existence .Therefore this integral view should also be part of the cosmos which has well-defined laws at every level of existence” (ibid, 1987, p.27). Thus it shows that when we go beyond, and examine only the intensity of the movement, quality and quantity are the aspects of Brahman. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this, he says, “we realize that this Brahman dwells equally in all existences.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.72). In the opinion of the researcher, this is the goal of creation towards that Existence. Also, the character of this movement seems to be one of evolution, which is none other than, the involution of consciousness in Matter. It is this scheme or process of the movement which recognizes that, “man occupies a key position in as much as he is the focus in the evolutionary course.” (Pandit, 1987, pp.29-30). This is one more evident that proves Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution is also cosmic in its nature. The progress of his integral philosophy ends only when it reaches the supermind. In the process raised human to the realm of the divine.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy on evolution is very close with that of Bergson. Although Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory can be classified as creative, yet it did not have the creative ideas of Bergson. In Bergson's philosophy of evolution we found it has no beginning and no end. It is for this reason that A. C. Bhattacharya commented that Bergson's creative evolution is an evolution out of nothing and ending in nothing. In his book, 'Sri Aurobindo and Bergson, A Synthetic Study,' he writes, "His Evolution being creative, is self-enunciated; with no beginning and no end; an evolution having no source and no destiny." (Bhattacharya, 1972, p.22). On the basis of Bhattacharya's comments we may argue that Sri Aurobindo's conception on evolution is different from that of Bergson. His evolution theory is an evolution out of the involution of the spirit and ending in the spirit. Again, we find Bergson does not make the distinction between the lower and the higher in his philosophy. On the other hands, Sri Aurobindo emphasizes on the transformations. He clarifies that, "this law of Nature's procedure brings in the necessity of a gradation in the last transitional process, a climbing of degrees, an unfolding of higher and higher states that lead us from the spiritualized mind to supermind, a steep passage that could not be accomplished otherwise." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.32). So according to this excerpt, there is a clear distinction between the higher and the lower existence. Therefore, evolution we may interpret has a goal that is, to revert back to the spirit where it originates.

## 2.1. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION IN RELATION TO WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

The spiritual Evolution Theory in relation to Western philosophy can best be understood through the analysis of philosophers from the West such as Hegel, Bergson, Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin and others. The researcher will use their stand-points to defend Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution. In brief, the analysis will

identify similarities, as well as some differences if there is any between Sri Aurobindo's theory and those of the Western philosophers. The main reason for investigating on this point is to find out if Sri Aurobindo in any way was influenced by Western philosophy when he develops his integral philosophy to his spiritual evolution theory. He, having spent fourteen years there, and having read most of the Western literature and philosophical books, the findings will only prove that possibility. Regarding the differences with Western philosophers, it could be because of his adherence to the ancient Indian teaching found in the Vedas and the Upanishads. We found first of all Sri Aurobindo's involvement of the spirit in evolution is based on the records in the ancient texts of India. But the involvement of the spirit may coincide with that of Hegel, but the coincidence ends there, since Hegel did not go beyond the supramental. But we found S.K. Mitra made this comments, he says, "Hegel perhaps comes nearer to (*Aurobindo*) than any other philosophers in the West or in the East." (Maitra, 1956, p.35). The reason most probably for Maitra to make this observation is that from among the Western philosophers in Hegel, "There is a striking resemblance in their views on evolution as emergent. They also agreed that a principle higher than mind will emerge. Of course they have their differences also on these two issues. Sri Aurobindo was very much influenced by Hegel on his idea of the onward march of the Absolute idea through the realm of Nature and History, "treating these not as negations to be annulled, or oppositions to be conquered, but as progressive stages in the evolution of the Absolute in Time." (Maitra, 1956, pp. 103-4).

The other Western philosophers to whom Sri Aurobindo showed his respects and appreciations, is Bergson. We can argue that he may disagree with Bergson on the theory of evolution and the involvement of the spirit as pure reason, but he agreed in most things that Bergson's expresses, especially on intuition. Bergson said, 'There is

no durable system (of philosophy) that is not at least in some of its parts, vivified by intuition." (Bergson, 1964, p.251). According to this statement, it shows that it is similar to Sri Aurobindo for he also says, "an intuition which gives us the touch of things, and a reason which investigates their truth by its conceptive knowledge." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.428). Unlike the case as in Bergson; we find in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin there are more similarities with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution. In many respects both Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, they are able to distinguish matter, life, and mind very clearly. They also agreed on the Alpha point and Omega point as the beginning and the end of creation. The comparison here is only to introduce Sri Aurobindo's relation to western philosophy. A detailed study with other Western philosophers, including Alexander, Hegel, Chardin and Whitehead will be presented in the chapter 4, to defend Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory.

## 2.2. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION IN RELATION TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory is traditionally that of Indian Philosophy. He follows the Advaita philosophical thoughts of Vedanta system. This can be confirmed from the statement he made where he says, "The real monism, the true Advaita, is that which admits all things as one Brahman and does seek to bisect Its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and eternal Falsehood, Brahman and not-Brahman, Self and not-Self, a real Self and an unreal yet, perpetual Maya. If it be true that the self alone exists, it must be also true that the Self alone exists, it must also be true that all is Self." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.31). But at the same times, he does not follow Advaita – Vedanta systems strictly as other Indian philosophers.

Sri Aurobindo despites his long exposure to the Western influence on culture and philosophy, he remained Indian in his approach to life. So having studied all the ancient texts of India, his knowledge and understanding of their philosophies is very

deep. He therefore, argued against Sankhya school of thought, and also with Sankara, an Advaitian, on the basis that their understanding regarding Prakriti and Purusa as the foundation of the world is wrong. Sri Aurobindo maintains the monist foundation of philosophy of life, because he believes that the dualism of the Sankara will be overcome by evolution. He said, "all antimony of the Purusa and Prakriti, that curious division and unbalanced of Soul Nature which afflicts the ignorance entirely revealed.....the being of Iswara." (Aurobindo, 1939, cit. p.889). He also argued against Sankara for denying the involvement of the Spirit in evolution. Sankara maintained that the spirit of Brahman is always there in the unmodified form and in his original purity. But for Sri Aurobindo the spirit has to transform itself through involution into matter, life and mind. The transformation will be completed only when mind is transformed into supermind, by which the spirit will revert back to itself. Sri Aurobindo as a true Advaitian considers such involution as absolutely necessary to the nature of the Divine. George Nedumpalakunnel in his observation comments, "we have seen that Sri Aurobindo's view the observable facts of motion and motionless in the world translate themselves into ontological terms as becoming and being. The Vedantic vision of One Reality that becomes Many explains, according to him, both the being and becoming, but starting from the One and returning to the One through the Many." (Nedumpalakunnel, 1979, p, 38). According to this excerpt, we see clearly how Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is based on the ancient texts of Bhagavadgita and Upanishads, namely, the Chandagoya, where the process of involution and evolution were clearly enshrined. And it is for the same reason that he was able to argue against those who misinterpret these texts.

### 2.2.1 Brahman as the Force in Involution

On the concepts of Brahman and the world, the researcher is convinced that Sri Aurobindo reinterpreted the Vedic concepts of the Divine in the light of his Western influence. He modified the traditional account of the relation between the world and Brahman by re-introducing the concepts of spiritual evolution which was found in the Taittiriya Upanishad (II.7.III.6). First, we found Sri Aurobindo rejected Sankara doctrine, that the cosmos is illusory. Since for Sri Aurobindo, Brahman is the sole Reality. This is confirmed by Vernakar, who said despite all odds, "Sri Aurobindo's ontological doctrines retain the contemplative ideal and reject the world negation, because they delineate the evolution process as catering on the progressive manifestation of the spirit. Sri Aurobindo avers that the emergence of consciousness is not satisfactorily explained either as the consequence of the increased complexity of material organisms, or as the work of an extra-cosmic deity." (Vernakar, 1988, p.25).

On the question of the Reality, it is imperative for Sri Aurobindo, that it is none other than Sachchidananda, the Supreme Being. It is also because of his contemplative intuitions and his studies of the Indian religious traditions, that he defines the Being or Reality as, Triune of External Existence, External consciousness and External bliss. He argued that the Being is all benevolent, in addition to being Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. The Supreme Spirit, which is the Consciousness-Force according to him, involved itself into inconscient matter, for the sheer delight of retracing its steps back to his Triune Supremacy. Vernakar believes this is possible because the 'Triune Supremacy is employing the consciousness aspect of being, an ever evolving modality in his slow, but inevitably certainty of returning to his native divinity by rendering all earthly life into the Divine, by bestowing emancipation or what Sri Aurobindo calls it "Mukti," to the cosmos at large." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.43). This explains that, in Sri



Aurobindo's conception of consciousness, it is already concealed in living Matter, before it evolutionarily power or the spirit emerged into life. According to him it is a very clear indication that the involvement of the Brahman or Sachchidananda is immanent in inconscient matter. This infers that Brahman, by transmutation through Involution or descent, manifests itself in Matter and progressively brings about an unfolding of its powers through the evolution process. It seems to the researcher, that there is a kind of hierarchy of substances appearing successively in this process, but in such away that each higher stage includes its predecessor which is matter, in the process of evolution to the next stage. This could be possible because according to Sri Aurobindo, "Brahman is in this world to represent itself in the value of life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in Itself. Therefore man importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery become possible. To fulfill God in life is man's manhood. He starts from animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.36). Therefore, we can infer that it could be the reason that the beings are also material organisms, in the philosophy of Whitehead. We may say that humankind is transformed from animal characteristics and forms of organism or through the animal stages of evolution. It is on the basis of this process, Sri Aurobindo believed, that humankind should choose to collaborate with nature in its task of divinizing all existences, preparing the necessary circumstances for the 'Supermind or Brahman' arrival, the last stage of the evolution process. In this process, the evolutionary purpose is to change the character of social, cultural, and individual life in man, which can then be fulfilled and completed the whole process of evolution. According to Sri Aurobindo, "If he sees a vision of the Superman, it is the figure of increased degrees of mentality or vitality; he admits no other emergence, see nothing

beyond these principles, for these have traced for us up till now our limit and circle.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.209).

The spiritual evolution theory that Sri Aurobindo developed, is also a testimony of his efforts to serve humanity. Unlike Darwin, who left human development at the animal stage, Sri Aurobindo on the other hands raised humanity at par with divinity or the level of Brahman, in the process divinizing existence. We can testify that, not many philosophers have so far attempted to give humanity, its due place in the Universe, as Sri Aurobindo has done.

### **2.2.2. Absolute Reality and the Spiritual Evolution Theory**

There have been various interpretations by philosophers in the past to span the apparent gulf that exists between the Absolute Reality and the Universe, consisting of diversely related objects. These interpretations are derived from the argument that it is either real or unreal. Sri Aurobindo in his theory of spiritual evolution conceives the Absolute Reality as real, the triune principle of Sachchidananda that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. He acknowledges two fundamental facts, which is the fact of Being and fact of Becoming. Sri Aurobindo also believes that the Absolute Reality is itself existence. He says, “On the other side we have a Becoming, which is the true movement of Being and both Being and Becoming are truths of one Absolute-Reality.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.637). Now, if we consider this view of Sri Aurobindo from an idealistic point of view, Hegel and Kleinman would also observe that, “this problem of the Absolute has been so great that most contemporary Anglo-American philosophers, preferred to withdraw to more empirically-oriented viewpoints.” (Robert M. Kleinman, 1972, p.79). But on the other hands, we find that in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, there is no such problem. Sri Aurobindo had already given a very clear interpretation about the Absolute; as the triune principle. In it, these three are not three

separate entities but one. Brahman the Absolute according to him embraces all relativities. It is transcendent as well as incommunicable. It also is the Purusa, the soul as well as the Iswara, the lord and the executive power of the Absolute.

Sri Aurobindo spiritual evolution theory approaches the idea of the Reality from the point of the Absolute, which is purely ontological. We have to make a distinction between transcendent and immanent, as in the case of Sachchidananda and the Supermind. His concepts of the Sachchidananda, is that of the highest Reality. It brings out an inherent nature of the Absolute itself. Sri Aurobindo clarified this he says, "we speak of 'One' as Sachchidananda: but in the very description, we posit three entities and unite them at a trinity. We say, 'Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, and then we say they are one.' It is the process of the mind. But for Unitarian consciousness such a practice is admissible. Existence is Consciousness and there can be no distinction between them. And since then is not even this differentiation, there can be no world." (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 126).

His viewpoint on the Absolute Reality, and Sachchidananda, is that, fundamentally there is still a knot to be unraveled. That knot according to him is of our own making, as such, the fault does not lie with the Absolute. Sri Aurobindo clarified further, he says,

"We mean by Absolute something greater than ourselves, greater than the cosmos which we live in, the supreme reality of that transcendent being which we call God, something without which all that we see or are conscious of as existing could not have been, could not for a moment remain in existence. Indian thought called it Brahman, In European thought it is the Absolute because it is self-existent which absolved of all bondage to relativities, for all relatives can only exist by something which is the truth of

them all and the source and continent of their powers and properties and yet exceeds them all; it is something of which not only each relativity itself, but also any sum we can make of all relatives that we know, can only be in all that we know of them a partial, interior or practical expression. We see by reason that such an Absolute must exist; we become by spiritual experience aware of its existence; but even when we are most aware of it, we cannot describe it because our language and thought can deal only with relative. The Absolute is for us the Ineffable.” (Aurobindo, 1939, pp.375-76).

The argument above indicates that the most significant point in Sri Aurobindo is when he denies the power of the sense organ to know the Absolute. The researcher argues that, Sri Aurobindo's reflection on the impossibility of the sense organ to know the unknown shows that he is more practical when reflecting on the existence of Absolute. He sticks to his point when he emphasizes that, “it is wholly erroneous to rely on the sense- organs, to prove or deny the existence of God.’ because according to him, “our sense-organs can recognize or perceive only what is external and concrete’. Hence he regards ‘the tendency to associate the real with the materially perceptible as erroneous.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.26).

Sri Aurobindo now argues that, if we rely upon the evidence and experience, we will have to admit that not only are there physical realities which are supra-sensible, but there are also supra-physical senses of the Reality. In order to justify this, firstly, he uses Vedic and Upanishanic arguments to conclude that, “there are subtle bodies, and the means of subtle vision and experiences.” (Aurobindo.1939, p.27). He explains that, “Telepathy, is an example to substantiate this claim.” He concludes that, “there exist realities beyond the physical world.”(Aurobindo,1939, p.28). But in the second argument, we see Sri Aurobindo concedes on the existence of God or the Absolute as

Consciousness, and that it is not limited to the sense, as an instrument. Although, in this second argument Sri Aurobindo sounds conflicting, but he clarifies it later, that the existence of all realities, whether physical or supramental depends on Consciousness. He says, "In the supra cosmic view of things the Supreme Reality is alone entirely real. A certain illusoriness, a sense of vanity of cosmic existence and individual being is a characteristic turn of this seeing of things, but it is not essential, not an indispensable adjunct to maintain its thought principle". (ibid, 1939 P.667). This argument of Sri Aurobindo is very much in line, with the subjective Idealism of Berkley. According to S.K. Maitra, "It is a fact, a mere appendance, put into answer some difficulties, and it is a sort of deus ex machina, the God of Berkley and Liebniz". (Maitra, 1956, p.20).

In his third argument, on the subjective Idealism, Sri Aurobindo argued that if we deny God, human life in this world remains unexplained. So humans have to either choose to live life as much as possible or live an objective-less life. In the latter case, human life is deprived of any meaning or sense. He said that this problem can be overcome, he clarifies, "We arrive at a conception and at the knowledge of a divine existence by exceeding the evidence of the senses and piercing beyond the walls of the physical consciousness we can conceive nothing and know nothing except the material world and its phenomena." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.60).

Finally, Sri Aurobindo spiritual evolution theory pointed out another way of proving the existence of God, that is, through Matter. He said that, everyone recognized the existence of Matter. He said, "Modern physics proved that Matter is not dead or inert but is a formulation of force. So, according to him, since force is manifesting itself in the world with a definite insight and purposefulness, it is regarded as not inert or blind, but the nature of 'Will' or a 'Consciousness applying itself to a work and a result". (Aurobindo, 1939, pp.21-22). Thus, based on this analysis, the triad of Mind,

Life and Matter is but, "one energy triply formulated." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.21). Then from the self-subsistent materiality, Sri Aurobindo comes to the concept of Consciousness or Supreme Consciousness, which is God or Brahman. Clarifying this claims, he quoted the Rig Veda which states, "That which is immortal in mortals is a God and is established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine Powers" (Rig Veda, iv. 2.1). As such, Sri Aurobindo's conception of the Absolute or God represents an Ultimate Reality, a transcendental unity. He says, "In the Upanishads, in the inspired scripture of the most ancient Vedanta, we find the affirmation of this Absolute, the experience concept of the utter an ineffable Transcendence; but we find also, not in contradiction to it but as its corollary, an affirmation of the cosmic Divinity, an experience concept of the cosmic self becoming of Brahman in the Universe." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.635).

This shows Sri Aurobindo attempted to explain God or Brahman in terms of the Omnipresent and Supracosmic Reality by "affirming an eightfold<sup>1</sup> gradation of Being." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.262). These gradations are thought of as the pre-existent links of human contacts with the Divine. He affirmed that, "a sort of refraction of the divine existence in the inverted order of ascent and descent or evolution and involution, it will runs from Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Psyche, Life and Matter." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.264).

As we will see the Eight Principles, the first three in the order, Existence-Consciousness-Force and Bliss are Sat, Cit, and Ananda. According to Sri Aurobindo, the three is one in the Supreme Consciousness or Sachchidananda, the source of the

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<sup>1</sup> At first-in his article in the *Arya* Ch 2, 42 (a weekly Journal he edited), he seems to have conceived only seven terms for the being The Psyche remained without due consideration but in his revised edition of these articles in *The Life Divine*, the psyche (Soul) appears. (cf. LD.p.262ff) if we consider the world-existence in relation to the bliss of Sachchidananda, it is naturally a lila or play. But from an integral view Sri Aurobindo admits maya implying it with



Cosmic World and Life. He stressed that, "It is through the play of this Consciousness-Force and Bliss, that the Spiritualized being will ascend from matter through the developing Life, Soul, and Mind towards the Divine being." (Aurobindo,1939, p.773).

Sri Aurobindo further clarified the existence of God, and says, "the Absolute manifests itself in two terms, Being and Becoming, the Being is the fundamental reality; the Becoming is an effectual reality: It is a dynamic power and result, a creative energy and working out of the Being, a constantly persistent yet mutable form, process outcome of its immutable essence".(Aurobindo,1939, p.550). Here, we again understand Sri Aurobindo explains the Reality concerning the vexed of Being and Becoming. The Absolute Reality, as we already discussed, is conceived as the triune Sachchidananda. At the same time, we have to understand that the Absolute for him is the Pure Existent. Then considering its pure existent, the Absolute renders it beyond Being or Becoming. And at the same time it is impossible for us to conceive the Absolute beyond stability and movement, otherwise it brings in disharmony. So we have to take it that they are both, Being and Becoming. How can this be proved, we may attribute this knowledge to the presence of the Spirit or Reality in us that enables our faculty to assume the reality of the Brahman or the Absolute. This is confirmed by the Authors of Chandogya Upanishad which says that, "The Atman, which is hidden in all beings, can be seen by the sharpened intellect of the philosophers." (Chandogya Upanishad, VI-1-3).

### 2.2.3. The Eight Principles of Evolution

The following are the Descending or involution s and Ascending or evolution processes as explained by Sri Aurobindo.

## Scheme I of the Spiritual Evolution Processes

Existence	Matter
Consciousness-Force	Life
Bliss	Psyche
Super mind	Mind

(The manifestation of the Being in our Universe takes the shape of an involution which is the starting-point of an evolution. Source: (Sri Aurobindo, 1939, p. 264).

### 2.2.3.1. Existence

Sri Aurobindo applied this idea of pure and limitless Existence by postulating the play of Consciousness-Force as Sat or Sachchidananda. In the boundless energy of the infinite existence, he visualized the reconciliation of being and becoming, and unity and multiplicity of all existence. Because we have a Becoming which is the true movement of one being, and both the Being and the Becoming are truths of one absolute Reality. He said that, "Spiritual experience allegedly confirms the perception of a pure Existence that reconciles being and becoming, unity and multiplicity." (Aurobindo, 1939, 650). According to him the highest and unbound Existence of the Supreme Self is simultaneously the infinite and absolute of the many existences and conscious-Being.

### 2.2.3.2 Consciousness-Force

Sri Aurobindo began to describe Consciousness-Force with phenomenological observations of force and arrives at confirming the notion of Cit, specifically Cit-Sakti, as something existing as an inseparable part of the absolute and pure Existence. He argued against the materialists claiming that the force and movements of energy are

simply the outcome of matter without any relation to the pure and boundless Existence. "Consciousness", we found in his book "Letters on Yoga," he writes, "it is made up of two elements, awareness of self and things and Forces and Conscious-Power."(Aurobindo, 1935, L.Y. p. 238).

#### **2.2.3.3. Bliss the Delight of Existence**

Sri Aurobindo, explaining about Bliss or Delight of Existence, pointed out the connecting link that exists between Supreme Existence and Consciousness-Force is Sachchidananda. According to George Nedumpalakunnel, "It is his English rendering of the Vedantic term Ananda, present in Sachchidananda."(Nedumpalakunnel,1979, p.15). The Bliss or Delight of Existence is Sri Aurobindo's vision for creation, he writes this in his book Divine Delight. He seemed to identify Ananda of the Absolute as one principle of attraction between the creation and the Creator. With regard to the relation of this pure Delight to Cosmos, Aurobindo simply describes it as Lila or play of the Eternal, he says, "Creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, or that self-representation, -- Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground."(Aurobindo, 1939, p.103). So, in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the Delight of Existence is one essential mode of Divine Existence, and it manifests itself also in His Self-manifestation, which is creation.

#### **2.2.3.4. Supermind**

In order to understand the Supermind, we must know first, how evolution is linking it to creation. The spirit involved itself into matter. Life evolved from Matter, Mind from Life, finally, Mind into Supermind. So it is only if the involution Spirit is ready to return back to itself, it takes the form of the Supermind. It is, "The intermediate link exists. We call it the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness, because

it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of the things and not like the mind in their appearance and phenomenal division." (Aurobindo, 1939, P. 143).

The unity of Sachchidananda on the one hand, and the multiplicity of individualized existences in the world, pointed to an immediate link between the two, which enables us to have the experience the unity of the Divine in the diversity of mind, life and body. Sri Aurobindo called this "Supermind or Truth-Consciousness". (Aurobindo, 1939, p.117). The process of evolution is shown very clearly in Scheme 1. at 2.3.3.). The process will be completed when the involution process reaches Super mind, this is before it reverts back to Sachchidananda. He further elaborated on this, he says, "this intermediary term, as the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and Omega, the starting point of all differentiation, the instrument of all unification, the originative, executive, and consummative of all realized or realizable harmonies. It has the knowledge of the One, but able to draw out of the One its hidden multitudes; it manifests the Many, but does not lose itself in the differentiations" (Aurobindo, 1939, p.126). Hence, it may also be contemplated, as the creative medium of the Sachchidananda.

#### **2.2.3.5. Mind**

In Sri Aurobindo's scheme of evolution, we see Mind is the next stage of evolution after Matter. Mind is consciousness, a unit of creation, and evolution. A new relation that emerges in the relation of the one and many; that is, a self-existent mental plane which establishes itself as subordinate to Supermind and as a refraction of Supramental plane of Consciousness. This Self-existent mental plane Sri Aurobindo called it the Universal Mind. He says, "the universal consciousness finds all itself by

variations; the individual of number-less individuals, not suppressing variations; the individual Consciousness fulfils all itself when it is universalized into sympathy and identity with the cosmic not by limiting itself with the ego." (Aurobindo 1939, pp 378-79).

The word mental, the researcher thinks Sri Aurobindo referred to a level of consciousness which is in his view identical with level of existence. Sri Aurobindo said "Around us is a universal Mind of which our mind is a formation and our thoughts, feelings, will, impulses are continually little more than a personally modified reception and transcription of its thought-waves, its billows of impulse." (Aurobindo, 1949, p.429). Mind<sup>1</sup> in its universal dimension, as Sri Aurobindo describes it, is a level of Consciousness created by the descent of Sachchidananda's Consciousness which diffuses itself in the apparent non-consciousness of matter. It forms the foundation of what we call mind or individual mind, which is a particularization of the universal mind. Sri Aurobindo used the terms mind and mental to denote or connote specifically the part of nature which has to do with congestion, with intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, and the reaction of thought to things, with truly mental movements. As he put it, they are the "formations, mental, will and vision, etc., that are part of his intelligence." (Aurobindo, 1935, p.320). According to this argument, Mind is the subordination of the Supermind. Sri Aurobindo on the other hands disassociates himself from comparing his conception of mind with the terms, buddhi and manas, the parallel words are used in Indian philosophy, because the two belong to a quite

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<sup>1</sup> **Mind** Ch.2, 47-48, Sri Aurobindo, in fact, disassociates himself from comparing his conception of **mind** with the terms, buddhi and manas, the paralleled used in Indian philosophy, because according to him the two belong to a quite different category of psychological factors, which deals with external dimension of consciousness only.

different category of psychological factors, which deal with external dimension of consciousness only.

### 2.2.3.6. Psyche

Psyche literally means the soul, the soul of man. Sri Aurobindo describes it as, "the psyche principle which is not the life or mind, much less the body, but which holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all that to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy to and beauty and to a refined purity of being." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.220).

Psyche is the general term used by Sri Aurobindo to mean the inner divine principle of the individual human being. Sri Aurobindo described it "as a refraction of the Divine." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.150). It denotes the nuclear and curled manifestation of the Divine's delight or Bliss in a lower hemisphere of existence. He described the term Psyche as follows; "The Soul is something of the Divine that descends into the evolution as a divine principle within it to support the evolution of the individual out of ignorance into the light. It develops in the course of evolution a psyche, individual or soul individuality, which grows from life to life, using evolving mind, vital and body as instruments. It is the soul that is immortal, while the rest disintegrates, it passes from life to life, carrying its experience in essence and the continuity of evolution of the individual". (Aurobindo, 1939, p.721). Hence, it is the Psyche or Soul; a refraction of the Divine Bliss that supports the evolution from 'within' the same idea as Chardin; the individual formulations of existences. The psychic being or psyche, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the original conscience of man. He maintained that it is the concealed witness, "a hidden guiding, inner light and inner voice of the mystic. psychic being, is a simple and sincere devotion to the Divine, a Single-hearted and immediate sense of



what is right which helps toward the Truth and the Divine, and an instinctive withdrawal from all that is opposite, these are its most visible characteristics.” (Aurobindo, 1939, 150,188ff)

Finally, Maitra gives us a more simple and easy to understand explanation on psyche, “as something that already immersed in Matter, Mind and psyche or soul.” (Maitra, 1972, p.204). Sri Aurobindo believes that all human being possessed a soul. He argued that, like the sun it shines without discrimination on all that are exposed to it. So according to him, the purpose for the soul in man is, he explained, “but to realize the Ananda of the Self, in other conditions than the Supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the appositions offered by the terms of an embodied natural existence, by the struggle therefore towards self discovery, would seem to be true object of the birth of the soul in human body .....” (Aurobindo.1939, p.691). So as has been pointed out both by Sri Aurobindo and Maitra, the soul of man is thus related to Ananda, the bliss aspect, just as the body of man is related to its Existence with that of the Consciousness-Force or Sachchidananda. Therefore, the dissolution of the body does not end the psyche in the body, since it is the Supreme Spirit itself.

### 2.2.3.7. Life

Sri Aurobindo called this universal dimension of life Self- Existent vital plane. He explained that, “When we study this Life, as it manifests itself upon earth with Matter as its basis, we observe that essentially it is a form of the one cosmic Energy, dynamic movement or current, of it positive and negative, a consistent act or play of the Force which builds up forms, and energizes them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.176, p. 252). What Sri Aurobindo was trying to

infer here is that, the downward movement of the Divine or the Involution, in which the Consciousness-Force is trying at establishing itself to a new level, which he calls a Purusa -Prakrti. According to this, Life is the dynamic and all-pervading conscious Energy at various levels, which creates a variety of forms and by creating this forms, it renews itself. He maintained that Energy is at rest in Matter or energy in movement in life, but both are forms and formulations of the one Universal Energy. This he calls it the Universal Life.

On the basis of this Universal Life, Sri Aurobindo found that behind the phenomenon of individual human life, the self-limitation of conscious World-Force is essentially, one with Sachchidananda. Therefore, as seen from Sri Aurobindo's views, individual human life is not an existence in itself, but part and parcel of the universal life, and universal life has behind its operations the Consciousness-Force of Sachchidananda.

#### **2.2.3.8. Matter**

Matter and Spirit are two poles of the evolution theory. Matter, in its hidden reality, is a form of suppressed Divine-Consciousness, a form that concealed the Divinity. Sri Aurobindo says it, "Is in the material stage, an emptiness of consciousness, or is not rather only asleep of consciousness even though from the point of view of evolution an original not intermediate play?" (Aurobindo, 1939,p.86). He also found the truth in Matter as a "Conceptive Self-extension of the being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness" (Aurobindo, 1939, p.239). By conceptive self-extension, he means a self-projection or emanation of Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo also associated Matter with Sachchidananda, for he observed, 'Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a

formal basis of objective knowledge, action, and delight of existence.' (Aurobindo, 1939, p.236 and p.239).

Further, if we observe the descending order of existence, Matter is termed by Sri Aurobindo as the last step in the evolution process. Our ordinary experience of matter includes only a particular relation between our senses and the pure-existence, and it does not reveal the truth in its entire dimensions. So, to our ordinary experience, matter appears to be the negation of spiritual existence. Hence, in Sri Aurobindo's views, "Matter is the outermost pole of One Spiritual Existence and between gross substance of matter and pure Spirit of Divine, there is the possibility of infinite gradation of existence." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.279) Matter is first dwelling of consciousness, so is a form of Divine Existence, but the Divine is also infinitely more than Matter. If we take the Sachchidananda, or the Spirit of the Divine Ananda involving himself in the material world of Matter, then the Spirit is in disguise, by concealing itself in Matter. So Matter with the Supreme Spirit in it, is not inert anymore, but become the inherent part of Sachchidananda. It aided in the Evolution of Life and Mind. Matter is inconscient, according to Sri Aurobindo, that is why when the Spirit descends into it, Life and Mind evolved. Clarifying this he says,

"Our substance does not end with physical body; that is only the earthly pedestal, the terrestrial base, the material starting point. As there are behind our waking mentality vaster ranges of consciousness subconscient and superconscient to it of which we become sometimes abnormally aware. So there are behind our gross physical being other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and a greater power which support the denser body and

can by our entering into ranges of consciousness belonging to them and be made to impose that law and power on our dense matter and substitute their purer, intenser conditions of being for the grossness and limitation of our present physical life and impulses and habits.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.260).

It seems to the researcher that, although Sri Aurobindo spoke about the world of matter as the extension of time and space, which is Sachchidananda, as causality, (The Life Divine. Page143), yet he did not elaborate much on the origin of matter. We may take it that the idea had generated from his intuitive mind, a human body or matter from which it is formed. Hence in answer to this observation, he says, “It has been created subsequently to the manifestation of the material Cosmos, to aid the evolution or in some sense a result of it.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.779).

Thus, after elucidating the Eight-principles of existence, we see how Sri Aurobindo had developed a metaphysical idea to develop his spiritual evolution theory. This also is meant to prove that the world does not evolve of itself in a continuous process, but requires at every critical step of its evolution a divine intervention in the shape of a direct descent of the Divine consciousness into matter, the lowest stage of Evolution. But again, Matter cannot automatically raise itself into the next higher stage of Life or Mind. It can emerge to a higher stage only because of the presence of the divine Consciousness. Matter must be, Sri Aurobindo says, “either a figure of existence within the infinite Existence who is beyond all figures or it must be itself the All-Existence”. (Aurobindo,1939, p. 265).

### 2.3 ON THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Sri Aurobindo's cosmology on the spiritual evolution can be attributed as the most important principle in the advancement of the theory of evolution in philosophy. Sri Aurobindo built up his own concepts about the evolution of the world and the universe. The basic ideas on which the whole structure of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution is based on the fundamental idea that Matter, as well as Spirit, are real. So he bases his concept on that truth; that the world is the manifestation of the Supreme Reality. We may call this concept as the seed of his theory of involution in the evolution process. Sri Aurobindo by keeping the Vedic vision of earth and heaven, 'annam Brahman', literally means 'matter is also Brahman,' he was able to formulate his concepts on evolution at a higher pedestal, involving the spirit in it. According to Sri Aurobindo, "we speak of evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states a phenomenon without explaining it, for there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept that Life is already involved in matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.3). Thus, for him evolution without the involvement of the spirit is not a complete evolution at all. While Evolution showed only the ascent, but with involvement of the spirit, there is the descent process. It is on this descent and ascent process that the process of evolution is completed Sri Aurobindo formulated the Spiritual Evolution Theory, based on this idea, where Involution becomes the secret of Evolution. This can be attributed as the new concept in the philosophy of evolution.

Sri Aurobindo believes strongly on evolution. He based his concepts on spiritual evolution, on the involvement of Consciousness in its process. The Consciousness is involved here because of the delight of the divine to transform itself. The metaphysical process of this transformation can better be understood from by following explanations

at 2.2.3. So, with this new concept, he offers a more cogent explanation of evolution. It is on this involvement of the spirit in evolution that he says, "The negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of life." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.9). In his Integral philosophy on evolution, we see that he had tried to reconcile the two extremes matter and spirit by tracing all origin to what he calls the Sachchidananda. In his theory, Sri Aurobindo advocated the process of ascent and descent or evolution and involution the transformations of the Absolute Spirit or Sachchidananda. The bliss of earthly mortality for the self took place at this stage, when the Supreme Consciousness descent into inconscient matter. Sri Aurobindo says that, "The affirmation of a divine life on earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence can have no base unless we recognize not only eternal spirit as the inhabitant of the bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept Matter of which it is made as a fit and noble material out of which he weaves constantly His garbs and builds recurrently, the unending series of His mansions." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.6).

The division that exists between matter and spirit is the reason for Sri Aurobindo to offer the theory of Spiritual Evolution. According to him, without the descent of the Spirit into the world, there cannot be any ascent of the world into Spirit (involution). It is for this, that Matter seeks to evolve into something higher which is life. There is also the descent of the Spirit into life. For this reason, life will try to rise to something higher, which is the Mind. Similarly, there is a descent of the Spirit into Mind. Mind must move toward something higher than itself, which is the Supermind. The ascending process will go on till it reaches Sachchidananda. The ascending and descending process goes on in a cyclic manner.



In brief, as shown in Scheme 1, the order of his concepts on the process of descent of the Spirit is the Involution that begins in Matter, Life, Psyche, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force and Existence. The evolution will be the reverse process of the involution Scheme 2, which will be: Matter, Life, Psyche or Soul, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force, and Existence. The individual, having passed through matter and life, dwells in Mind at the stage of evolution. This was clearly stated by Aurobindo, he says,

“The rending of the veil is the condition of the Divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by illuminating descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being, and the forceful ascent of the lower Being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending Supermind. The soul realizes its divine self in all possessing, all blissful Ananda, life reposes its divine power in the play of Omnipresence conscious-Force, and matter opens to its divine liberty as form of the divine existence.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.404).

So, we see from the process of Involution and Evolution, man did not appear into this world all of a sudden from nowhere, or for that, out of nothing. We need not enter into any argument on this issue since it is a known fact, that neither life nor Mind is inherent in this material world. But if there is to be life in this world, it must start from the spirit down to dead matter, then to plants life and finally, in to animal. This process if we are to follow science, must have taken billion of years before the process could work out up to animal. This process is what all evolutionists, Darwin and others, including Sri Aurobindo had worked it out. We found this in The Life Divine, that Sri Aurobindo says, “If there are rudiments of life-reaction in metal, as has been recently contended, it may be identified with life-reaction in the plant in its essence, but what

might be called the vital-physical difference is so considerable that one seems to us inanimate, the other, though not apparently conscious, might be called a living creature." (Aurobindo 1939, pp.708-09). The full consciousness and the veil are removed only when it reaches its zenith of intelligence in man. Man develops into a thinking animal and slowly develops into a reasoning mental being. But the original animal traits of matter persist, because, "the animal is fixed in vital mind and mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations while man has received in his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the Super mind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense-mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source." (Aurobindo 1939, p.710). But it has to be liberated itself in order for the being to revert back to its Originator, the Sachchidanda so says Sri Aurobindo.

Again as we have already discussed earlier, we have to note that Sri Aurobindo correlated the Divine with the Cosmic and Individual Existence. He presupposed that creation is an emanation of the Divine Being who maintains a relation of essential identity with created existence. Further, if we observe the viewpoint of a larger more plastic reason, taking the logic of the infinite into consideration, he tries to conceive the Absolute-Omnipresent as Reality. The ontological explanations of Sri Aurobindo as the researcher understands it, is more inclined towards spirituality, but which is a necessity principle for the existence of any order, especially the finite universe. It is the reason for all existence of Spiritual and Supra-Consciousness the basis of the Spiritual evolution, which itself is the outcome of the Involution that has to take place first in Matter. Hence, it has to be spiritualistic, not materialistic nor vitalistic. It aims at the transition of the Spirit from its original state of ignorance toward knowledge. When this process is completed, as already mentioned above, it reverts back to its Originator,

the Supreme Spirit; the Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo says, "Evolution is the inverse action of the involution; what is an ultimate derivation in the involution is the first to appears in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution is the last and supreme emergence."(Aurobindo,1939, p.853).

Further, clarifying the emanation of the Divine, Sri Aurobindo stressed that we often superficially view on things, due to the concentration of thought. But contrary to the appearance but not on what lies behind. He cites an analogy to explain this, he said "Electricity being an operation of water and cloud, because it in such a field that lightning emerges; but a deeper inquiry has shown that both cloud and water have, on the contrary, the energy of electricity as their foundation, their constituent power or energy- substance; that which seems to be a result is - in its reality, though not in its forms, --the origin; the effect is in essence pre-existent to the apparent cause of the principles of the emergent activity precedent to its present field of action."(Aurobindo.1939, p.853). According to this analogy, Sri Aurobindo is referring to the Sachchidananda, the Absolute, who is none other than the Supreme Reality itself. They too are not three, but one entity; the source of power and existence. This power must be supramental Consciousness-Force. His spiritual evolution theory has been conceived also on this basis.

In the Philosophy of Spiritual Evolution, Sri Aurobindo began from the teachings of the ancient Indian Sages, which were found in the Upanishads and the Vedas. They believed that behind the appearance of the Universe there is a Reality of a being and Consciousness, a self of all things one and eternal. All beings are united in that One-self and Spirit, but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness and ignorance of their true selves and reality in the mind, life, and body. Sri Aurobindo stated that, "the language of the Upanishads, the supreme ancient authority for these truths of a higher

experience, when they speak of Divine existence which is manifesting itself, implies the validity of all these experiences. We can only assist the priority of the oneness, to the multiplicity, a priority not in time, but in relation of consciousness, and no statement of spiritual experience, no Vedantic philosophy denies the priority or eternal dependence of the Many on the One.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.148). He further clarifies, that ‘The highest experience of the Reality in the Universe, which shows it is not only to be conscious existence, but supreme intelligence and Self Existence, and Bliss.’ (Aurobindo, 1939, p.32) Sri Aurobindo made it very clear, that this one Being and Consciousness is involved in Matter, and is released into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual. The next step of the evolution is to a higher being, the Superman, for it is only then, that involved Divinity in Matter releases itself for a manifested perfect life.

The most striking feature of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory is in its concepts and processes, which are different from the one offered by other philosophers, ancient or modern. He envisioned man as a transitional being, which correspond to Chardin's idea, as not a final product of evolution. In support of this idea he explained the process of “Evolution” and “Involution”, keeping in mind the future of man. He said that,

“In an involution of spirit in the Inconscience is the beginning; and evolution in the Ignorance with its play of the possibilities of a partial developing knowledge is the middle, and the cause of anomalies of our present nature. Our imperfection is the sign of a transitional state, a growth not yet completed, an effort that is finding its way to a consummation in a development of the spirit's self-knowledge and self-power of its divine being, and consciousness is the culmination. These are the three stages of

this cycle of the spirit's progressive self-expression in life". (Aurobindo, 1939, pp.681-682).

In this excerpt, Sri Aurobindo clarifies how man will surpass his present capacities and rises up to a new state of consciousness, and knowledge, and not only transform his present stage, but raise humanity to a stage of divinity here on this earth itself. In other words, man will transform the whole old systems, which have been nothing but a burden to him so far. At the same time, Sri Aurobindo cautioned us that such a vast and unbelievable change will not be precipitated suddenly as a miracle, but will come about as the logical culminations of the evolutionary process that will persistently and constantly work in nature. Sri Aurobindo insisted that the process is working right at this moment. At the same time, he assured us that this could come about only if we follow strictly, the ancient psychological disciplines and practice of Yoga. In his philosophy of spiritual evolution, Sri Aurobindo we have seen started with the Vedantic Sat, Chit and Ananda or Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. Others may interpret these as being, consciousness, and creative activity. The most important characteristic of his evolutionary theory, the researcher thinks is the spiritualistic nature. In Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory, matter is the bane of his evolutionary processes. It moves from life to mind to higher mind, the illumined mind, intuitive mind, the overmind, and back to the Sachchidananda's, which is the Conscious-Force-Bliss. Thus, this evolutionary process initially aims at the transition from the spirit to ignorance, then towards a true knowledge. This includes also the ascent from non-being of matter to the true being that is, from mortality to immortality. N.K.Gupta concludes, "Thus, ignorance according to Sri Aurobindo is also a poise of Consciousness-Force through limited, practical and exclusive concentration." (Gupta, 1944, p.31). Secondly, Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution is a result of the

integration process. Involution is only the inverse of the process. But, Sri Aurobindo further adds, "An integration of this kind will not be possible if a spiritual evolution were not the sense of our birth, and terrestrial existence; the evolution of mind, life, and spirit in Matter is the sign that this integration, this completed manifestation of a secret self contained in it is its significance." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.681)

Thirdly, Sri Aurobindo's evolution process is also based on the triple principles of heightening, widening, and integrating<sup>1</sup>. Srivastava clarifying this he says that, "the ascending principle implies the increasing complexity of the lower principle. It is the essential condition for the evolution of both forms of existence." (Srivastava, 1968, p.301). The triple principles, is the involvement of consciousness, as a new integration. That is the consciousness, ascends to a new level. The lower level such as matter, life and mind, are taken up or absorbed in the higher and a new integration takes place. This is because evolution is not a straight line, but a cyclic or spiral in its nature.

In support of Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory, the researcher would cite Srivastava who said that, "its (Sri Aurobindo's theory) uniqueness lies mainly in the process of integration to a new height. It showed that it is alive, it functioning." (Srivastava, 1968, p. 418). Sri Aurobindo elaborates more on this he says, "All evolution is in essence a heightening of force of consciousness in the manifest being, so that it can be raised into greater intensity of what is still un-manifested from matter into life, from life to mind, from mind into the spirit." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.726). We find that in all the being, there is the substance of consciousness-force of the spirit, it exists

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<sup>1</sup> **heightening, widening and integration** Ch 2, 61-63 – is in its nature a growth and ascent of the sevenfold ignorance into the integral knowledge. The discovery of this principle of integration as the vital part of evolution is a wonderful stroke of genius by Sri Aurobindo. Bergson also speaks of the continuous setting of the current of life as it proceeds, of the past living in the present and continuing in the future.



in the manifest form and also in the un-manifest form. Now if the whole consciousness-force is already manifested in any being, surely that being would be in a stage of evolution, and he needs to expand and grow to a new height of the evolution process. But if no part of the consciousness-force of the spirit is manifested, then it could not evolve or expand. S. K. Maitra will clarify this further, for he says, "Evolution therefore is possible only in the intermediate condition, that is to say, when part of the consciousness-force of the Spirit is manifest and the rests of it still un-manifest. Evolution mean making more and more manifest the un-manifest consciousness-force that swells in every being. It is therefore an ascent from the less condition of the consciousness-force to more manifest condition." (Mishra, 1956, p.99). So the three principles of Heightening, Widening and Integration is the ascent of the lower to a higher and higher principle of evolution, which is Supermind. In the process, it transforms the whole world into that higher state. There exists the same process of evolution in the rest of the movement of nature; there is a heightening and widening of consciousness. It is an ascent to a new level, taking up the lower levels as an assumption and new integration of the existence by superior power of being. It is the inverse of its own way of action and its character and force of substance-energy, reaching out as much as it can reach at the previously evolved parts of nature. Accordingly, Sri Aurobindo says, "The demand for integration becomes at this highest stage of nature's workings a cardinal of importance." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.370).

Here, we find that evolution for Sri Aurobindo is the emergence of consciousness from matter the lowest form, and into the highest form of Supermind. It reaches Sachchidananda when it finally manifested into the Supreme Reality. Sri Aurobindo says, 'the animal life emerging from Matter is only the inferior term of his existence...energies and subject them to the law of its own progressive

transformation.....in which he takes his effectual station.' (Aurobindo,1939,.p.46)

Hence, it is for this reason Sri Aurobindo concludes that there is no evolution without involution.

Sri Aurobindo like most modern thinkers believed strongly in the theory of evolution. But he differs in that he rejected the mechanical interpretation of the evolution process; for him it was more spiritual in its nature. His concepts of evolution is based on the fact of a prior evolution of Brahman in the material inconscient as mentioned in the ancient Hindu scripture of the Upanishad, which he cited from his book, 'Life Divine,' Chapter II., Page 6, the 'Two Negations', and from the Tattiriya Upanishad, "He energized conscious force (in the austerity of thought) and came to the knowledge that Matter is Brahman. For from Matter all existences are born; born by Matter they increase and enter into matter in their passing hence. Then he went to Varuna his father, and said, 'Lord teach me of the Brahman'. He said to him: 'energize (again) the conscious energy in thee; for the energy is Brahman.'" (Tattiriya Upanishad, III.1, 2.).

It is in the theory of spiritual evolution that Sri Aurobindo demonstrates his genius in building up a cosmology and metaphysics, which are the two main principles of his theory. They form the keys to understand the process of man's development, its goal, methods, meaning, nature and trend of the principle of evolution. We can sum up that the metaphysical which he has build up on the theory of evolution, has set him apart from other theories developed so far, both in the East and in the West. In this principle of evolution, he went to postulate Sat, Chit and Ananda, as the absolute Reality. His Absolute is bound by nothing for it is self- governed. It manifests itself. It does not need to follow the dictates of thought, which can ovulate only at a certain stage. So his theory of evolution has the minimum defect, since it depends on the divine force for its

immortal existence, Sri Aurobindo thus stated that, "The affirmation of divine life upon earth and immortal existence can have no base unless we recognize not only Eternal Spirit as the inhabitant of this bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept the Matter of which it is made as a fit and noble material out of which He weaves constantly his garb, and builds recurrently the un-ending series of his mansions."(Aurobindo, 1939, p.6).

It is a fact that, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy on Spiritual Evolution, centered round the idea of the Delight for existence of the Sachchidananda. Also the forces of descending process of involution formed the very core of his evolutionary theory. There is no other reason we can think of, for evolution to take place other than this delight. It is on this point, where he categorically differed even from the existing scientific understanding of the law of evolution. He considered evolution of the consciousness as a primary and fundamental factor. Spiritual form is only a derivative from evolution of consciousness. In order to understand more clearly Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory, it is important to recognize the fact of Involution, for it contains the entire meaning and direction of his evolution process

Another important aspect of his theory of spiritual evolution to be noted in Sri Aurobindo is that he has no conflict with the Western scientific method in exploring and explaining the concepts of his spiritual evolution. We also find his own position and understanding on the concept of evolution has a deep affinity with the ancient Indian scriptures, especially the Upanishads. One point that made Sri Aurobindo stand out from among the traditional Indian thinkers is that he posits the role of individual in evolution, a clear sign of Western influence. Otherwise, Sri Aurobindo has a tactile knowledge in his philosophical works, especially, when he tries to explain his

philosophical world-view for he says, "The world of which we are apart is in its most obvious view a movement of Force; but that Force, when we penetrate its appearances, proves to be a constant and yet always mutable rhythm of creative consciousness casting up, projecting in itself phenomenal truths of its own innumerable self-representations." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.103). But judging from his book, "The Life Divine." in the section, "Method of Vedantic Knowledge" it proved that he has more of his own Indian touch, rather than any Western influence in developing his theory of evolution.

Lastly, the greater logic in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution is the embodied spirit of man that moves upwards. The movement is mainly concerned with the realization of the innate divinity that dwells in man. The whole concepts of spiritual evolution can be summed up by this excerpt from Sri Aurobindo, he says, "Spiritual evolution, an unfolding here of the Being within from birth to birth, of which man becomes the central instrument and human life at its highest offers the critical turning point of life and spirit; for it allows us to take into account the total nature of man and to recognize the legitimate place his triple attraction, to earth, to heaven and to the Supreme Reality." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.677).

Finally, the full realization of the Spiritual Evolution Theory of Sri Aurobindo, depends to a greater extent on the how we perceive and develop his methods to achieve that goal which he envisioned from his awakening, which he plainly says, "It will not be philosophy, which will witness this transformation, but for history to record, if his aspirations will be realized." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.741). Now if we look at the world as it is, there has been a remarkable change in the transformation of humans from that brute animal-like existence. Man it seems is affirming himself in the universe. He has been able to fly in the sky and sails the open seas, he has traveled to distant planets,

built himself palatial building, protruding towards the sky. In fact he has been able to control nature, altering plants and animals through science. All these are testimonies that his aspirations to rise above himself had already taken place. So, history has witness all these developments in man. The next stage is not far off for him in reaching the mental stage of a Supermind. By then, this research work of defending the spiritual theory of Sri Aurobindo would have proved the reality of evolution.

#### 2.4. PROCESS OF THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The process of evolution worked out by Sri Aurobindo is based on a simple theory, that the world is the enfoldment of the Being, the Supreme Consciousness. It is based on the previous involution of the Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Reality, when Sachchidananda descent into the material inconscient matter. Matter is not dead matter, according to him, but is in a state of sleep of the consciousness. Life he said is not an inexplicable dream "but a mighty pulsation of the divine All-Existence." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.356).

According to this process of evolution, Sri Aurobindo elucidates the nature of the Supreme Consciousness-Force, by postulating its different changes of its growth from Matter and ending at the Supermind. He said, "it is the energy, the emotion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it –not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself." (Aurobindo, 1935, p. 236). Supporting Sri Aurobindo's process of evolution, Haridas Choudry clarifies it further, especially on the 'why' of this process. He agrees with Sri Aurobindo that the Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss is the creative medium of the Supermind as a cosmic being, the Cosmic Christ for Chardin. This implies that the being is essentially the

same both in man and in the Divine, Choudry said, "The universe is therefore in the process of evolution, the Divine returning to itself from the inconscient to Supermind, to Sachchidananda. Since the world moves towards this goal, all life is Nature fulfilling itself. The ultimate fulfillment, the manifestation of the Supermind, the perfect of the world is therefore inevitable however slow and obscure it may be." (Choudry, 1972, pp.181-2). Then on the 'how,' Sri Aurobindo in his book, "The Life Divine," shows that his evolution theory has a special feature in that, there is a double evolution. There is the external evolution in the form of mental in the life and body. Then there is the evolution of the within, that is the inner spiritual being, the external and the within has the same idea with that of Chardin. But if we argue against this interpretation, then we have to think, if mental evolution would be necessary? The possible answer to this argument would be without the mental or external evolution, the evolution of the within or the inner spiritual evolution would render meaningless, since according to the goal of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution, is for the Divine to return to itself. This goal can be realized only if involution has taken place. Sri Aurobindo further elucidates this, he says, "Mind is subordinate to Supermind which takes its standpoint of division. Life is similarly a subordinate power of energy aspect of Sachchidananda, it is the force working out form and the existence of Sachchidananda assumes when it subject itself to this phenomenal action of its own consciousness and force." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.263).

On further analysis of his process on evolution, it reveals that the present evolution in man will not come to an end soon, as we might have anticipated. In fact, we find that he foresees a heaven here in this world itself. He said this can happen only if man had been divinized. He foresees it will happen, because man, according to him, is destined to be divinized, due to the presence of the Absolute Divine in him. "Thus



has come about the present status of evaluation of which man is now apparent culmination but not the real ultimate summit; for he himself is only a transitional being and stands at the turning point of that whole movement. Evolution, being thus continuous must have at any a present in which the results it is laboring over one in the process of becoming till there is the full and perfect manifestation.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.707). We find that he confirmed this in his book, 'The Supra Mental Manifestation', where he writes, “The new type, the Divine body, must continue the already developed evolutionary form; there must be a continuation from the type Nature has all along been developing, a continuity from human to the divine body, no breaking away to something unrecognizable but a high sequel to what has already been achieved and in part perfected. The human body has in its parts an instrument that have been sufficiently evolved to serve the divine life; these have to survive in their in their form, though they must be still further perfected, their limitations and impairment are removed, their liability to defect and malady and impairment eliminated, their capacities of cognition and dynamic action carried beyond the present limit.” (Aurobindo, 1952, p.72).

Apart from arguing for Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution, we have to point out also some of the controversial points which Sri Aurobindo has raised in his theory. For instance, Sri Aurobindo spoke about the rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity, he said, “And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only the form and veil of higher states which are beyond Mind”. (Aurobindo, 1939, p.3). The confusion may arise firstly on the existence of this veil. But we have seen Sri Aurobindo has been harping on this condition, that for any transformation to take place, that veil has to be removed first. It may be argued why this veil has to be removed, and

if it has to be removed at all, the question is how? To solve this problem let us assume that the veil Sri Aurobindo speaks about is the transformation from the lower to the higher, for example, from inconscient matter to life, then to mind. There is a period of time that will be needed for this development from one stage to the next. Hence, the veil will be removed once the period has been completed. This veil remains at each step from life to mind, from mind to supermind. So, this veil, although it is beyond mental perception, is neither a permanent nor a one-time volition in the process of evolution, it is part of Maya.

There are few other controversial points in Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory that need clarifications. For instance, he talks about the divinized man here in this world. But at other times he seems not to be so sure about it, for he says, "The only question is whether the earth is to be the scene of that emergence or the human creation on this or other material scene, in this or other cycle of the large wheeling of Time, its instrument and vehicle." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.269). So does it also mean Sachchidananda will come to dwell among us in this world itself? Or, the researcher thinks it could be some where else in the Universe. Sri Aurobindo did not give us a clearer clarification on this point, except by positing the above question himself. We might as well skip this controversy since he himself seems not to want to linger on this disputed issue, for he says, "if there be any goal to evolution which find, here its present crown and head in the human being other than, aimless circling and individual escape from the circling, if the infinite potentiality of this creature, who alone here stands between spirit and matter with power to mediate between them, has any meaning other than an ultimate awakening from the delusion of life by despair and disgust of the cosmic effort and its complete rejection, then even such a luminous and puissant transfiguration and

emergence of divine in the creature must be that high-uplifted goal, and that supreme significance.”(Aurobindo, 1939, pp.264-265).

Now, having argued on both the pros and cons of his theory, we can say that we are able to understand more, on the ‘Why’ and the ‘How’ of the process of the spiritual evolution, especially, the clarifications given by Haridas Choudry and Sri Aurobindo himself. But if we go back into the philosophy of the divinized man, the rise of the higher faculty of the Mind, which is destined to rise up to the Supermind, there are questions to be posited to Sri Aurobindo, Why the Supermind needs to plunge into Mind? Of course, he will argue that the purpose is to come down and return back again, for he says, “But the Supermind works otherwise. The tree and its process would not be what they are, could not indeed exist, if it were a separate existence; forms are what they are by force of the cosmic existence they develop as they do, as result of their relation to it and to all its manifestation.”(Harrida, 1971, pp.137-8). So, we can take it that since it is a cosmic impulse, the aspirations and impulses in the mind of man is inborn to rise to a higher destiny, which is also the reason why the Supermind acts on man's divinity. Also the in-dwelling spirit within is the inherent urge for it to rise to a Supermind. I think Sri Aurobindo is right if this is the contention, for he clarifies, he says, “As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the mental and the plant up to its full organization in man himself there is the ascending series, the preparation, if not of the higher and divine life. The animal is the living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, work out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and cooperation she will work out the Superman - the God.”(Aurobindo, 1939, pp.136-7).

Other pertinent points that need to be clarified while discussing Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution, is that throughout his discussion, whether in the Life Divine, Supramental Manifestation, or in the Letter on Yoga, Sri Aurobindo conspicuously used the words, Matter, Consciousness, Supreme Consciousness, Consciousness-Force, Reality, Absolute Consciousness, Absolute, conscient, inconcient and Ignorance to explain the phenomena of evolution. It is therefore philosophically worthwhile to work out the questions of how all these expressions have come to be used in his writings. We have only to guess that Sri Aurobindo was using them as varieties in the Reality, and also in order to emphasize his intention to explain the genuinely and authenticity of his theory. The other reason most probably is the influence from the ancient Indian texts, the Gita and Upanishads. Evidences to this claim are abound in all his books, The Life Divine, Synthesis of Yoga, Human Cycle and his famous Epics Savitri, where at each prelude to the Chapter, Sri Aurobindo includes quotations from these texts. But the teachings found in the Upanishads, seems to have influenced him the most.

In his evolutionary process, Sri Aurobindo uses Sachchidananda to show that the world is his manifestations. He has involved Himself into the material inconcient through his involution and evolution process. The emergence of the Sachchidananda marks the beginning of the living world. But as we have also seen that the unfolding Sachchidananda has not been completed. So the process of evolution is still going on right now, the world still remains an unfinished product. Sri Aurobindo therefore concludes that, "The Spiritual man is the sign of this new evolution, this new and higher endeavor of Nature. But this evolution differs from the past process of evolutionary Energy into respect, it is conducted by conscious effort of human mind, and it is not conducted by conscious progression of surface nature.... This is the final aim of the mental stage evolutionary Nature in man. .... The spiritual change begins

by an influence of the inner being and higher spiritual mind ..., we have to live deeper within, we have to exceed our present consciousness and surpass our present status of Nature.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.725). Sri Aurobindo stresses that the appearance of man on earth has decisively changed the course of the process of evolution. In the pre-stage, the force of consciousness was the determining factor in man's evolution. It is this consciousness in man which will lead him to the stage of a supramental being, and he will exceed the spiritual man. He will exist no longer for the ego, but for the Divine in the individual as well as in the universe. Sri Aurobindo affirms this he says, “The body will be turned into a perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit.” (Aurobindo 1939, p.825). In other words the Being will appear as the symbol of evolution from ignorance to the Consciousness of Sachchidananda.

Invariably, we find Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory; the physical foundation of Matter remains, but Matter cannot be the foundation of consciousness. The foundation of the developing existence is a spiritual status which is above Matter. Sri Aurobindo pointed out that, “the mental nature and mental thought are based on a consciousness finite of the Supramental nature is in its very grain a consciousness and power of the infinite.” (Aurobindo, 1939, pp.167-68).

Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo's theory, supramental being or spiritualized individuals will not only work according to his nature, but he will also unite with the other surviving mental world irrespective of its degree of ignorance. We have to note here that it is Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, that when man reaches this stage, it becomes steady and harmonious with nature. At the same time, the evolutionary process will continue until the indwelling spirit finally returned to itself. It is on this point that Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that; “Matter expresses itself eventually as a formulation of

some unknown force. Life too, that yet unfathomed mystery, begins to reveal itself as an obscure energy of sensibility impaired in its material formulation. Then the dividing ignorance is cured which gives us a sense of a gulf between life and matter. It is..... anything else than on energy triply formulated.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.17).

It is to be noted in this research work, that the concept of Matter as a primordial stuff is not confined to Indian philosophy, which Sri Aurobindo championed. ‘The Greeks,’ according to V. Madhusudan Reddy, “they are deemed to have been impressed chiefly by the densities and forms of the various kinds in matter.” (Reddy, 1966, p.42). They classified matter into four elements in order of density: earth, water, air, and fire. They took one of them as primordial and deprived the others from it by a process of condensation or by the rarefaction. Reddy also said that The Greeks came out with a Democritean theory of atoms. This idea of the Greeks is in harmony with modern scientific thought, which is more real than those prescribed by human senses on the question of matter

## **2.5. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION AS THE NEW PARADIGM PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION**

The spiritual evolution theory is new and thought provoking, hence, it could only be an individual opinion of the researcher that in Sri Aurobindo, a paradigm shift in evolution theory has taken place. Why should he consider Sri Aurobindo's theory as such? In the first place, Sri Aurobindo co-related the Divine with the Cosmic and individual existence. He presupposed that all creations are the emanation of the Divine Being, who maintains a relation of an essential identity with the created existence, in the universe. Another convincing point is he said that it is the results of the multiple concentration of the supreme Consciousness. This concentration led to a form of



manifestation of life. He says, "But since this Consciousness is Creatrix of the world, it must ..., but a Will to power and works. And since Mind too is created out of it, Mind must be a development... and this mediatory act of the supreme Consciousness, and must therefore be capable of resolving itself back into it through a reverse development by expansion." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.123).

Sri Aurobindo's concept of the supra consciousness, is the syntheses of the theory of conscious-force with the source of creative Sachchidananda. The whole purpose of creation is the 'Lila' or the 'Play', or the Delight, the purpose-less purpose, or the self-manifestation of the Divine. It is based on this concept of the Delight for creation that renders Sri Aurobindo's cosmology as a new paradigm in evolution theory; which culminates in his spiritual evolution theory. The researcher posed a question on evolution, Are there any other reasons for evolution to take place in this world, other than this Delight to create? The answer to this philosophical question will definitely be affirmative. It is based on this metaphysical construction of his theory of evolution, that Sri Aurobindo stands apart from other philosophers on evolution. C.R Das, the famous solicitor who heads the defense lawyers, in the murder trial against Sri Aurobindo in the Calcutta High Court, referred to Sri Aurobindo, after the acquittal as, 'the Poet of Nationalism and the Prophet of Humanity.' But long before his acquittal, Sri Aurobindo has already been regarded all over India as the spiritual man. He admitted that when he writes on the theory of evolution in his book *The Life Divine*, he felt there is an inspiration and guidance from behind him, and he was just an instrument through which the ideas flowed spontaneously to his writings. Sri Aurobindo himself testifies to this he says, "a guide who is strong to take my hand and carry over difficulty passages as well as to instruct and point out the way." (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 905). There are many other instances in Sri Aurobindo's life that showed an inner guide that led

him to be that prophet which C.R.Das had foreseen. B.C.Mukherji, also in his book, 'A Brief Outline of Sri Aurobindo, Philosophy of Universal Realism', writes, "I have mentioned two eminent personalities who have made the same prophesy as Sri Aurobindo about the birth of a superman or gnostic being out of the human stock as inevitable culmination, namely,, Piere Teilhard de Chardin and Arnold Toynbee." (Bhattacharji, 1988, p. ix).

The prophet of humanity, as commented by C.R.Das, Sri Aurobindo conception of God as the creator showed he is full of concerns for humanity. Also his opinions about the Ultimate Reality, who chooses to manifest himself in the multiple forms of the world corresponds with the Christian epistemology, that God created man in his own image. This can be compared to Sri Aurobindo ideas, that God has entered the body of man and thus establishes Divine's creative energy in the process. Sri Aurobindo's works on his theory of spiritual evolution and other philosophical writings especially on the future of man testified this. S.K. Maitra in support of Sri Aurobindo's process of involution and evolution says, "Unless evolution is connected with creation, it loses all meaning. Creation is the movement downward from the Spirit, and evolution is the movement upward to the Spirit, made possible by the downward movement of the Spirit." (Maitra, 1956, p. 47).

Another idea that should be given due consideration is the caution he had given , not the whole humanity will be raised en block to that divine Supermind, "It must be conceded at once that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising in a block to the supramental level; what is suggested is nothing so revolutionary and astonishing, but only the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to

press forwards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment.”(Aurobindo, 193, p.842).

These are prophetic works coming from a sage and yogi, who devoted his life-time works for humanity. His writing in the philosophy of evolution and the future of humanity deserve due considerations as a landmark on the development of philosophy to new height. It is based on this metaphysical construction of his theory and other standpoints, that has convinced the researcher to offer the spiritual evolution theory as the new paradigm in the philosophy of evolutionary theory

## 2.6. CHARLES DARWIN AND EVOLUTION

Charles Darwin (1800-1882) was the most prominent proponents of a theory of evolution. On first observation, Darwin seems not to have tried to establish the truth about evolution. His works slowly transformed into an attempt to explain adaptation as the basis of evolution. Although it is not totally opposite to the ideas of Sri Aurobindo, the researcher thinks they are not the same.

Darwin's Adaptation was explained mainly by natural selection which according to the Darwinian system is the elimination and death of the unfit and survival of the fittest in a struggle for existence. Darwin's theory of Evolution came to the surface with the publication of, *The Origin of Species* in 1859. It marked a turning point in the scientific and philosophical thoughts of the Nineteenth Century. Most modern evolutionists, especially those from the Botany Science, turned to Darwin as a model. This is not surprising since the roots of all evolutionary theory are traced back to Darwin.

In brief, according to the Darwin's theory of evolution, all plants and animals reproduce in excess, more than actually, than those that can survive. So, they struggle

for survival. In his theory, he also conceives that the number of species vary one from the other. Some of the variations may not be very aggressive, but remain neutral. As a result, the survival of the fittest varies, as expected, with those less fit being destroyed according to their environments. Consequently, species gradually modify towards more advantageous variants. Accordingly, Darwin predicted that, "as each species tends by its geometrical rates of reproduction to increase inordinately in number; and as modified descendants of each species by so much more as they become more diversified in habits and structures, so as to enable to seize on many and widely different places in the economy of nature, there will be a constant tendency in natural selection to preserve the divergent offspring of any one species". (Darwin, 1859, p.366-67).

As a matter of fact, the definition of the term 'Natural Selection' of Darwin, can easily be understood, if we consult the Dictionary of Bioscience, which states that 'Darwin's theory of evolution, according to which organisms tend to produce progeny far above the means of subsistence, in the struggle for existence that ensues only those progeny with favorable variations survive, the favorable variations accumulate through subsequent generations, and descendants diverge from their ancestors.' (Parker, 1997, p. 312).

Darwin tried to account for the countless varieties of living things on earth. This variety is the result of the mean adapted to survive in the tremendous battle for existence. He further said that, "member of each species compete with each other, as well as, with members of different species for a chance in life. Individual or groups with superior variations will win the struggle for existence." (Darwin, 1859, p.41). Darwin designated this process as 'Natural Selection'. We may comment, that during Darwin's time, very little was known about the process of variation. Later studies of the

process have been demonstrated that it is by the progeny. It was found out that variations take place mainly through mutation, according to Fenton,

“Modern Studies of evolution have shown that inheritable variation arises in at least three ways. Many develop because gene changes .... Other variations appear when chromosomes, with their sets of genes take place when chromosomes are doubled or when sets of chromosomes are repeated in the process of reproduction.” (Fenton, 1973, p.333-37)

The Darwin's theory of evolution is also naturalistic, but regarding spiritual views, it remains neutral. Darwin's initial purpose is to find out the origin of life and species. But it seems it did not go the way it was planned. It was diverted to the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest instead. But as a biological theory on the origin of species, it exerted tremendous influence during the 19<sup>th</sup> century's human knowledge and belief.

Darwin's theory of evolution lays down that living beings have the tendency to vary and to over multiply. His theory has two aspects, (1) variations in producing inheritance of living beings. (2) Natural Selection, his theory on survival of the fittest; it is on this theory that he laid more emphasis. In fact, Darwin's evolution theory can be traced back to the realm from Herbert Spencer's, 'Evolution School's of Philosophy.' It remained very popular as a mechanical theory. It greatly influenced Nietzsche and Bergson in their approach to evolution. But one fact remained; it had degraded humans to the level of an ape, an animal. All the same Rohit Mehta, giving credit to the theory of evolution says, 'Since, then the law of evolution has unraveled many mysteries of life, making life's events and happenings truly intelligible' He further adds, "Evolution was indeed a great break-through without which life would have remained an unintelligible enigma." (Mehta, 1973, p.48). A Criticism on Darwin's Theory of

Evolution, from the perspective of the Spiritual Evolution, will be presented in Chapter 3.

## 2.7 TEILHARD DE CHARDIN EVOLUTION THEORY

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was the most distinguished thinker and scientist. He was a biologist and paleontologist of world renown and also a Jesuit priest. He combined in his life, tremendous intellect and a great spiritual faith in building a philosophy that could bridge or reconcile Christian theology with the scientific theory of evolution. He wrote his two famous books which were translated into English 'Man Christianity Evolution,' 'The Heart of Matter' and 'Phenomenon of Man'; which were published posthumously after his death, due to the restriction the Church imposed on his ideas while he was alive. These books contained the quintessence of his thought.

Firstly, we find that Chardin's theory of evolution is built on a simple theory like that of Sri Aurobindo, which leads to philosophical and scientific purposes. He believes that the principle of the dynamic of the Universe is biological as well as physical. He believes that the goal of evolution is the attainment of entropy as assumed by physical science, but also the attainment of maximum consciousness or the Christogenesis. Chardin saw human consciousness as the individual pinnacle of reformation and evolution. He argued that the cosmos of today is due to the organizational level of unitary expression. According to him, consciousness, spirit, and even life, existed in some form, however rudimentary the form may be, from atom to the galaxy.

Teilhard de Chardin approached evolution from a scientific point of views. In his Phenomenon of Man, he had affected the threefold synthesis of material and physical world with the world of mind and spirit. He was able to do this by examining of all facts of his investigation on sub specie evolutionist, with reference to the development



in time and its evolutionary position. And conversely envisage the whole of knowledge reality not as static mechanism but as a process. Consequently this led him search human significance of the trends and comprehensive process.

Teilhard, according to Sir Julian Huxley an old school's friend and translator of his 'Phenomenon of Man', states that, 'Pierre Teilhard starts from the position that mankind in its totality is a phenomenon to be described and analyzed like any other phenomenon: it and all its manifestations, including human history and human values, are proper objects for scientific studies.' (Huxley, 1976, Trans, p.12). Teilhard felt it is necessary in the process in adopting an evolutionary point of view, since phenomenon itself, should be approach as isolated in time as they are never static.

### **2.7.1. Teilhard de Chardin on Cosmic Theology and Evolution**

In the theory of his evolutionary concepts, Chardin claimed that the story of life provides sufficient ideas for thinking about God and his relationship to humanity. Those contemporary theological ideas on biological evolution can be placed in more expansive context of cosmic evolution. Chardin attributed the entire evolution cause to cosmology, which he included in it, the Cosmic Christ as the main focus. C. B Shin and Abraham, in their writings on the Cosmic Christ say, "The term Cosmic Christ is rooted in the New Testament. It is the involvement of Christ in the universe, so the universe is Christocentric. Christ is the source of and goal of all things." (Shin & Abraham, 1999, p.5).

It is true that the Cosmic Christ or the Third Nature of Christ is the most controversial features of Teilhard's on Christ's three-fold nature: Christ dominates the universe by imposing the three characteristics of truths, which is the personal nature of the Divine; the manifestation of the supreme Personality in Christ; the supratererestrial nature of the world consummated in God. Teilhard locates the precise link between

Christ's human and cosmic natures in the resurrection. Christ assumes his cosmic role through the resurrection. In his book, 'Christianity and Evolution', Chardin speaks of the need for 'Christ to be reincarnated in the present world, as the Christ of evolution'. ([catholicworldinfo/sharing/cosmicchrist.htm](http://catholicworldinfo/sharing/cosmicchrist.htm))

According to Haught, 'Teilhard de Chardin, being a priest and paleontologists sought to show how our awareness of cosmic and biological evolution could enhance and enrich traditional teachings about God and God's way of acting in the world.' (Haught, 1936, p.36). Teilhard besides introducing God to fill a gap in scientific exploration, also suggested that a metaphysically adequate explanation of the universe in which evolution occurs is needed. It requires a transcendent force that causes the matter to evolve toward life and Mind or what he terms Christogenesis or the emergent Divinity. This is in line with Sri Aurobindo's scheme of the development of the evolution through his Involution and Evolution processes, which is the involvement of the Spirit in Matter, where life, mind and superman developed. Chardin also, said that "evolution requires God as the driving or determining force events from behind or from the past, but drawing the world from up ahead (ab-ante) toward the future." (Teilhard, 1918, pp.192-183). The ultimate goal of evolution according to Chardin is the Omega point.

Firstly, we find Chardin regards the universe as one gigantic process of becoming, attaining new levels of experience or consciousness, which he called it noogenesis, for he said, "Considered in its physical, concrete reality, the stuff of the universe cannot divide itself, but as a kind of gigantic atom." (Chardin, 1975, trans. p.43). He stressed that cosmogenesis should be the new word instead of cosmology, which is the reasons why he used the term hominisation, by which the original human stock became truly human. The future stage of human development he

termed it as ultra-humanization. Again, for the super- pose of human during evolution, he termed it as convergence. He also use the term complexification, to describe the genesis of more elaborated organization from subatomic units to atom, from atoms to inorganic and later to organic which generates molecules, then to cells, to multi-cellular individuals, to a cephalized metazoan with brains, to primitive man, and finally, to a civilized societies.

Chardin believes that complexification by convergent integration will lead to intensification of mental subjective activity, or the evolution of the more progressively conscious mind, he called this the organized complexity. On the other hand he explains that noosphere as the increasing in human numbers, combined with human communications, all the parts will become one. He also predicted that in the process of convergence and coalescence, mankind again will become more complex and with more integrated mental, activity, which will lead human species to a higher level of homonisation. This, according to Julian Huxley, is in opposition to the Alpha materials energy. The two he said, are two factors operating to promote the further complexifications of the noosphere. Huxley interpreted this as, 'One is the increase of knowledge about the universe at large, from galaxies and stars, to human societies and individuals. The other ones is the increasing of psychosocial pressure on the surface of our planet.' (Huxley, 1975, Trans, p.18). And according to him, he thinks Teilhard means it to be the end result, is the attainment of the Omega point, when the noosphere will have achieved a hypersonal organization. On the term Christogenesis, 'the time has come to tackle this problem, and for that purpose, to analyze still further the nature of the personal center of convergence upon whose existence hangs the evolutionary equilibrium of the noosphere.' (Huxley, 1995, Trans. p.260). Huxley interprets that according to Teilhard, it means to be the emergent Divinity, but sometimes it seems to

envisage a desirable merging of individuals with human societies, he said. On this account Sri Aurobindo said, "A perfect community also can exist only by the perfection of its individuals, and perfection can come only by the discovery and affirmation in life by each of his own spiritual being and the discovery by all of their spiritual unity and resultant life-unity." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.1031).

Sir Julian Huxley in his introduction to the translation of the 'Phenomenon of Man,' noted that Teilhard de Chardin showed a very strong conviction on the supreme importance of personality. A developed human being according to Chardin, is not merely a more highly individualized individual. He also said that it showed Teilhard, had crossed the threshold of self-consciousness to a new mode of thought, and as a result, has achieved some degree of conscious integration that is the integration of the self with the outer world of men and nature, also the integration of the separate elements of the self with each other. On this point, Teilhard says, 'a person is; an organism which has transcended individually in personality. The importance of individuality, according to Teilhard, depends on a matter of faith based on scientific knowledge.' (Huxley, 1975. p. 248).

On the question of creation, Chardin agrees with Sri Aurobindo, that God cannot create without involving himself in this world through incarnation, nor can he become incarnate without engaging in the redemptive effort of raising the world to himself. Sri Aurobindo confirms this, he says, "The manifestation of Being in our universe takes the shape of involution which is the starting-point of an evolution, --Matter the nethermost stage, Spirit the summit." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.662). Thus creation or involution, is the incarnation in matter constitute the movement towards the realization of God, the Absolute. So according to Chardin, it is an involving Universe, because for him, matter is not the same as mindlessness, which in other words implies the attraction

to the center of the Universe or to what he called the Cosmic Christ, the Alpha and the Omega of the evolution process.

Chardin, in line with Sri Aurobindo's idea on evolution, believed that God could not create without involving himself in this world. This movement Teilhard called it "Pleromization", which involved, "creation, incarnation toward the fullness of being, in which God and his completed world exist united together." (Teilhard, 1918, p.197). In shaping his teleological view of evolution, Chardin developed his Christian eschatology, especially when he expressed the idea of Christ as the Omega Point. According to him, it is related to all things in the Universe. Christ as the Omega means that he is Omnipresent in all creation. Every creature lives and proceeds towards this telos, the Omega or the Cosmic Christ.

Therefore, the process of evolution for Chardin is not a matter of continuous steady development. It is characterized by critical points of which 'incarnation can be seen as one of such critical point in the evolution of the universe.' (Teilhard, 1918, p.67). Teilhard went further, asserting that that evolutionary movement of the universe is directed toward the building up of Christ and the goal of the universe is Christ, the Omega, through the process of Christogenesis.

We can conclude, Chardin like Sri Aurobindo in his spiritual evolution theory, rejected the cyclical view of the universe and replaced it with a linear view, with its culmination in a divinized world. Chardin also placed evolution in between the Cosmogogenesis and Christogenesis, or what he termed anthropogenesis or noogenesis. Cosmogogenesis, the third nature of Christ, is part of the creation process. Because for Teilhard; Christ is the center of the universe. On this basis, Christ manifests the cosmic presence through an incarnation as one among God's creation. Sri Aurobindo would agree in that, "In all spiritual living the inner life is the thing of first importance; The

spiritual man lives always Within, and in a world of the Ignorance that refuses to change he has to be in a certain sense separate from it and to guard his inner life against the intrusions and influences of darker forces of Ignorance: he is out of the world even when he is within it; If ...he is one with Supreme Existence or the soul and God are alone together.” (Aurobindo,1939, p. 978). The Researcher will use Chardin's views on evolution, in Chapter IV, to defend Sri Aurobindo's spiritual Evolution Theory. In the next Chapter, he will present his arguments against Darwin's Evolution theory from the perspective of the Spiritual Evolution Theory of Sri Aurobindo.





### CHAPTER 3

#### SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION REJECTS DARWIN'S EVOLUTION THEORY

The theories advocated by Darwin and that of Sri Aurobindo are evolutionary in nature. But each originated separately, from two diverse realms of thought. One is Occidental and the other Oriental. Darwin's evolutionary theory is neutral, whereas that of Sri Aurobindo is spiritual. The researcher notes that it is strange in term of human values, that there exists this disparity in thinking after all, life is universal. But philosophically it can not be denied that, although they are dealing on the same subject, differences can crop up due to interpretation and the process of thought and backgrounds of the philosopher. The criticism therefore, will focus on this differences that need to be thwarted out for a balanced judgment of the defense. It is also basically on the existence of this chasm of differences between the two theories that has prompted the researcher to support Sri Aurobindo and to reject Darwin's Natural Selection Theory.

In this Chapter the researcher will critically analyze and argue against Darwin's Natural Selection, from a perspective of the Spiritual Evolution Theory of Sri Aurobindo. In the process, it will unravel the fictitious claims of Darwin, and his natural selection as the process of evolution, found in his two books, 'Origin of Species' (1859) and 'Descent of Man' (1871). The purpose of this criticism is to prove Darwin's theory on evolution is false, and at the same time defense Aurobindo's theory of Spiritual Evolution as true.

Darwin's theory of evolution as evidences are found in his two books, they show that he has not deal with evolution, either from a spiritualistic or from a humanistic point of view. The scientific claim of his theory is also not sound, since

according to history he did not possess scientific background as such. He based his theory purely on observation on farm animals and his voyage by ship to some South American islands.

The argument against Darwin evolution, firstly we find, George Nedumpalakunnel in his book, 'The Realization of God', where he writes that, "Darwin, according to Sri Aurobindo explained only the external phenomenon of evolution, but not the internal drive towards perfection inherent in man." (George,1979, pp.38-9). This is an instance, where a philosopher like George Nedumpalakunnel, who had done a lot of research on Sri Aurobindo evolution theory, had come up with a very clear observation on the shaky ground on which the evolutionary theory of Darwin stood. There are many instances in Volume I, Book I, of Sri Aurobindo's book, The "Life Divine", and "Synthesis of Yoga" and "Supramental Manifestation"; where he openly criticized Darwin's and the Darwinians theory on evolution. He also strongly argued against the mechanical and materialistic interpretation of evolution. Sri Aurobindo, strongly believe in the involvement of the spirit in evolution. He therefore, disagreed with the mechanical interpretation of evolution.

Darwin's theory of evolution is mechanical, and is largely based on materialist ideology. So surely, Sri Aurobindo will reject Darwin's theory. Sri Aurobindo says that, "Reason and Science can only help by standardization, by fixing everything in to an artificially arranged and mechanized unit, in material life". (Aurobindo, 1939, p.1055). Sri Aurobindo would have accepted the phenomenon of evolution put forward by Darwin and further developed by Bergson, based on the idea of the élan vital, since they emphasized on the possibility of man's triumph over matter, and his environment, but it runs short from Sri Aurobindo's vision of human reality and the

spiritual aspect of Nature. Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that neither eternal motion nor eternal motionless is true Reality, so the differences lies here. According to George Nedumpalakunnel, the theory of emanation of Sri Aurobindo gives a clear idea of creation, and it gives coherence to the postulation of the Divine descent into matter. It is a Vedantic theory, *Brahma parinama vada*, which propounds that the whole world emerged from Brahma, as an objective fact. Therefore, the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo will argue against Darwin's theory of evolution on the question, how species has come into existence on their own? There is no sign of the power for emanation of life. In fact, there is no direction as to how the species will proceed and ends.

The Natural Selection Theory of Darwin no doubt is identified with the modern scientific testing and very much inclined toward natural phenomena. The Spiritual Evolution theory, on the other hand, is based on the teachings of the ancient Indian texts of the Vedas and Upanishads, plus Sri Aurobindo owns metaphysical interpretations. He also integrates some of the Western thoughts in his theory of evolution. If we compare the natural selection theory of Darwin with the Spiritual evolution, both are external and temporal in nature. But Sri Aurobindo uses metaphysical and teleological processes to explain evolution as spiritual. The difference lies on the personality of the two exponents of the philosophy of evolution. We find J. Moore in his book, "Post Darwin Controversies" 1981, where he comments that, "analytical exponents of their respective views, while Occidental generally attempt synthesis of the philosophies of the East and West. Yet, strangely enough, Orientals approach to life is said to be synthetic and Occidental approach, analytic. The truth is that analysis and synthesis are aspects of the same process, though the emphasis may shift from one to the other at different times and under

different conditions. The problem of synthesis seems to relate not only to philosophical views of East and West, but also differing doctrines in each hemisphere or each country.” (Moore, 1981, p.170). This shows Moore, agrees with Sri Aurobindo's on the involvement of the spirit in evolution. Fundamentally more so, when he showed us that this opposition of the two worlds of Occidental and Orientals is based only in the denial of distinctions, and to the evident denial of some kind of divine guidance to the processes leading to human evolution. Here it is implied that Darwin was neither a “Utilitarian nor a Deontologist.” (Richard, 1999, p.136).

### 3.1 DARWIN'S CONCEPT OF NATURAL SELECTION: ANALYSIS

‘Natural Selection,’ is a new term used by Darwin, when he changes it from the ‘Survival of the fittest’. Darwin used it also when he published his two books, ‘Origin of Species’ (1859) and ‘The Descent of Man’ (1871). Darwinian Theory of Natural Selection was first extended into the realm of philosophy by Herbert Spencer, who started the ‘Evolution School of Evolution’. The theory is the mechanical view of evolution. Herbert Spencer used the term when he called the principle that has slight variation. Darwin borrowed this term between 1842-1844 while revising his theory of Evolution by natural selection, as an explanation for the Adoption and speciation<sup>1</sup>. He defined Natural Selection as, “the principle by which each slight-variation of traits, if useful is preserved.” (Darwin, 1872, p.46). This concept is very highly influential during the Nineteenth Century. Darwin interprets it

<sup>1</sup> **Speciation:** Ch 3, 91-93 It requires selective mating, which results in the one forever. Selective mating can be the result of, for example, a change in the physical environment (Physical isolation by intrinsic barrier), or by Sexual Selection resulting in assertive mating. Over time subgroups might diverge radically to become different species, either because of different populations, or because of founder's effect, some potentially beneficial alleles may, by chance, be present in one another of two sub-groups when they first become separated. A lesser known mechanism of speciation occurs via “Hybridization”. Well-document “Plants” are occasionally observed in species rich-in-group of animals such as “Cyclid”. Such mechanisms of rapid speciation can reflect a mechanism

to mean that individual best adapted to their environment is likely to survive and reproduce, as long as there are some variations between them. He also stated that in the process, there will be inevitable selection of individuals with most advantageous varieties that is, if variation is inherited, differential reproduce is successful, it will then lead to what Darwin called progressive population of species. Further, Darwin claimed populations that are so involved, will be sufficiently different and might eventually become different species in the process. We may argue that this is in contrary to the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo, which stresses the involvement of the Spirit at every step of the evolutionary process and does not become new creation, but instead more developed than the previous one. It is for this reason Sri Aurobindo links the problem of evolution with creation in involution. He said that we cannot understand evolution unless we viewed it as the reverse of creation. This implied that even matter must have the trace of its spiritual origin, this alone can give evolution the meaning otherwise, it has no reason to take place at all. Sri Aurobindo says, "In a sense, the whole creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all are involved and out of which all evolve downward towards the other pole of matter, matter in which all evolves upward to the other pole of Spirit." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.129).

Darwin used his concept of Natural Selection as a theory of Evolution based on his biological studies during his voyage in the "Beagle." He also used this term in his records the outcome from his observations of farm animals. We know that the idea about evolution in biology was adopted only during the nineteenth Century. In the early part of that century, the theory of 'transformations,' by Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), was current. It was also from this idea that Darwin picked up and tries

to develop it as his theory of the Origin of Species. Later, he termed it as natural selection. It amounts to plagiarism on the part of Darwin. But we also found that the same term was later adopted by Alfred Russell's Wallace (1823-1913) again, it is plagiarism.

In his book 'Origin of Species' (1859) and his second book on the same subject, 'The Descent of Man' (1871), we find that Darwin made many mistakes. Firstly, we have a problem understanding his Natural Selection, especially, when he states that the complex forms of life evolved from simple forms through the process of natural selection. There are no instances being cited in his theory to give us an example, if such a transformation had actually taken place, or how actually a simple form could develop into that complex form? The development of a species from one stage to the next stage we know, is not because of the natural selection, this is complete tautology, because according to Sri Aurobindo,

"Forces other than hereditary variation have been at work in bringing about the appearance of new characteristics; there are physical forces such as, food, light-rays and other s that we are only beginning to know, there are surely others which we do not yet know; there are at work invincible life-forces and obscure psychological forces. For these subtler powers have to be admitted even in physical evolutionary theory to account for natural selection; if the occult or subconscious energy in some types answers to the need of the environment, in others remains unresponsive and unable to survive, this is the clear sign of varying life-energy and psychology, of a consciousness and a force other than the



physical at work making for variation in Nature.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p. 830).

But for Darwin, Natural selection, occurred through a struggle for existence, in which those representatives of a species that possessed characteristics, that gave them an advantage in the struggle and survived, while those who lacked these characteristics perished. Another claim we find Darwin made in his theory was that the universe is random, where the fittest displace the unfit and the weaker ones. This, the researcher thinks is nothing; but the mechanical process of the natural working of nature it self, but not a struggle for existence. It is an example of the existence of a savage. This suggests that nature works according to natural laws and logic, which is tautology. But we see that Darwin instead has made the natural selection the principle of the mechanical process in his theory of evolution. This he has confirmed, since he defined the term natural selection in his “Origin of Species” (1859), as the “presentation of favorable variations and the rejection of injurious, where variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection, and would be left as fluctuating elements, as we see in species called polymorphic.”(Darwin, 1859, p.69). In fact, what we see in this quotation, Darwin, has gone astray from his previous claim about the functions of the natural selection as the evolutionary process. It seems the natural selection has no fixed functions, since Darwin is suggesting that there are exceptions to its functions. It is unlike the evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo, where the descent of the spirit seems to occur eternally from the pure Existence of the Divine Spirit to the infinitesimal particle of matter and it is fixed. The involution is a continuous process according to Sri Aurobindo, he says, ‘the involution of the conscious delight of existence in self-oblivious force and in self driving and in self-dividing, infinitesimally disaggregated

form of substance.' (Aurobindo, 1939, p.243). The problem with Darwin theory is that, it is not consistent with regards to the functions of the natural selection in the progressive developments of the biological species. In fact, Darwin's natural selection did not show how evolution of the species took place, as he had intended to do.

### **3.2 SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION ARGUES AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF NATURAL SELECTION**

The natural selection theory of Darwin as we have seen tried to explain the origin of man. But the range given to chance by Darwin is quite inadmissible from the point of the spiritual evolution theory. Firstly, accidental variations cannot account for the origin of new species, since accidental variations which prove beneficial to creatures are very rare. They also cannot account for the evolution of complex species from simple species. And if organic modification according to Darwin is accidental; it cannot in general occur in individuals of different sexes. The meeting of such sexes even if it does occur is very seldom. The genes are the determining factor in any species. The species by themselves cannot make any changes. Secondly, natural selection cannot account for the conservation of the fittest and total elimination of the unfit. If so, there can be no heredity transmission of accidental variations on which the Darwinian hypothesis depends. The struggle for existence, heredity, and spontaneous variations are all based upon assumptions. Thirdly, heredity is not due to the transmission of body-cells with spontaneous variations from parents to the offspring, as put forward by Darwin, but through the genes. Fourthly, natural selection according to Darwin is the shifting process in nature. But the fact is, nature does not select or reject. Lastly, natural selection is only a metaphor in which nature is personified and supposed to be able to select the fittest with many favorable variations. In reality such an occurrence is not only rare

but also impossible. The natural selection tried to trace the origin of man, but it will be seen in the arguments that it did not even indicate the origin of even that of the species. The spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo on the other hand, traced human evolution to the supreme spirit or the Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo countered Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, he said, "Heredity upon which Science builds its concepts of life-evolution, is certainly a power, a machinery for keeping a type of species in unchanged being: the demonstration that it is also an instrument for persistent and progressive Variation is very questionable; its tendency is conservative rather than evolutionary, --it seems to accept with difficulty the new character that the Life-Force attempts to force upon it." (Aurobindo,1939, p.828).

It is observed that ever since Darwin adopted Natural Selection for his theory of evolution, evidences has been accumulating for years that problems exist not only in his natural selection, but on the other aspects as well, including the growing belief that it is more of an artificial selection and a clever tautology which explains nothing that we did not already know. It was even held that it lacked scientific basis, since the experiments were made not in natural situations, but in farms and other man-controlled environments. The researcher simply cannot agree that the development of complex species from simple species as shown in the biological evolution of Darwin can be termed as a natural selection or the evolution of new species as indicated in his "Origin of Species", 1859. In fact, we can say that natural selection is only a metaphor. In the first place according to the natural selection theory, Nature is personified and supposed to be able to select the fittest with many favorable variations. It seems as if the natural selection is getting more involved in the animal kingdom, which we have not seen such involvement in the present day. Darwin used the term to show the shifting process of nature. But we can argue against Darwin in

this respect that nature does not select or reject, as already mentioned. We know that natural selection as a theory proposed by Darwin is nothing but a mechanical action. Selection is an intelligent action, but not a random selection. It is on this claim of Darwin, that Sri Aurobindo rejects this contention, he says,

“Other forces other than heredity variation have been at work in bringing about the appearance of new characteristics; there are physical forces, such as food, light-rays and others that are only beginning to know; they are at work invisible life-forces and obscure psychological forces, for these subtler powers have to be admitted even in the physical evolutionary to account for the natural selection; if the occult or subconscious energy in some types answers to the need of the environment, in others remains unresponsive and unable to survive, of a consciousness and a force other than the physical work making for variation in nature.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.830).

In this study that spiritual evolution condemns Darwin's natural selection theory, we need to also mention that in philosophy it is a known fact, one of the most persistent questions is that of evolution and human destiny. Indeed it is a uniquely intriguing one, but not as simple as Darwin has put it. This is not to speak about the dilemma which Darwin's theory has created in the process, where instead Sri Aurobindo seems to have tried to avoid it. It is a dilemma that needs to be resolved with reasonableness and consistency, since there is only one truth for evolution to take place. Any whimsical ideas should be put to history. It is also true that philosophy and science have vied with each other to give an account of evolution. This plethora of metaphysical systems, scientific theories, and religious beliefs, have confounded more than convinced about the hidden possibilities of the whole

meaning of evolution. So it was only in the Nineteenth Century that earnest efforts were being made to explain evolution. But the irony was during that period Darwin came up with a very simple theory in which he claimed that the natural selection comes due to the abundant production of genetic variations in every generation. He affirmed this he says, "A well-developed individual will survive and give rise to the next generation." (Darwin, 1872, p.117). This implies, and also it may be construed that the natural selection theory rejects any outside force involvement in the process of evolution. On this account Sri Aurobindo would categorically refute the natural selection of Darwin, taking into consideration that according to his spiritual evolution, life had already been manifested in Matter by the power of the Consciousness-Force<sup>1</sup> that lies concealed and hidden in it.

Again refuting Darwin ideas on matter, Sri Aurobindo said that it is not the dead inert matter, but the matter what he called it as the, "The sole dumb and stark cosmic reality." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.849). It implies that it is alive and thriving. In the Taittiriya Upanishad it referred to matter as Annam Brahmeti Vyajanat or "he arrived at knowledge that Matter is Brahman." (Taittiriya Upanishad, 102). It is because of the presence of Brahman that Sri Aurobindo called matter, as the indwelling spirit of cosmic existence. This is involution, the evolution be when it reverts back to the Supreme Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo affirms that, "Evolution therefore is purely conceptive - a spirituality not a mentally conceptive difference ending in a practical distinction, which creates the series descending from Spirit through Mind to Matter and ascending again from Matter through Mind to Spirit."(Aurobindo,1939,p.241).

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<sup>1</sup> **Conscious Force**- Ch 3, p. 98 Existence is in its nature, Consciousness and Force; but the third term in which these two constituents meet, They become ultimately is one in the Delight of Existence..

But if taken from another point, Sri Aurobindo may agree with the idea given by Darwin that there are different grades and stages of practical variations in evolution, but it depends on nature for any change. Even then, Sri Aurobindo believes the creative power not only has the purpose of creation, but also can use many processes, since it is not bound by any power, even to the extent of creating different forces and different grades to act together at the same time. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, argued that these variations or stages that are inherited as in the case of Darwin, cannot be the basis of evolution, since they function without a purpose, Sri Aurobindo states,

“An evolutionary process must be by the very terms of the problem to be solved a development, in some first established basic principle of being or substance of something that that basic principle holds involved in itself or else admit from outside itself and modified by the admission; for it must necessarily modify by its own laws of nature all that enters into it and is not already parts of it own nature. This must be so even if it is a creative evolution in the sense of manifesting always new powers of existence that are not nature to the first foundation but introduced to it, accepted into the original substance. If on the contrary, there is already an involution, - present in the first foundation, but not yet manifested or not yet organized, - the new principle or power of existence that has to be evolved, then when it appears, it will still have to accept modification.”(Aurobindo, 1939, pp 703-4).

The Natural Selection of Darwin failed mentioned about the origin and the evolution of the world not to mention on the origin of the organism. The spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo on the other hands very clearly stressed that the world is



the creation of the superconscious energy of the Supreme Spirit. It is the manifestation of Prakriti or Avidya, which is the delight of the spirit. So according to Sri Aurobindo, the world will be transfigured in a new light of Matter, Life, Mind and Soul. Matter would appear as the veiled manifestation of Brahman as Being, an element of 'Sat' in Sachchidananda. We can argue for Sri Aurobindo's that his process of evolution is completely different from Darwin's, especially on the developed individual. We find that Darwin's explanation has no direction, no purpose and did not show any evolution process because in the end, variation for Darwin individual organisms is an accident. So we are not sure if it happens or if it occurs. Accidents do not happen in actuality, without any cause. Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo, Darwin is wrong if he attributed variations as an accident.

On further investigation, the Darwin's natural selection theory has also many impractical aspects for instance, he claims that "there is an inevitable selection with most advantageous variations is inherited, the differential reproduce is successful' (Darwin, 1872, p.215). The researcher thinks, that what we need is not a mere concept of evolution struggling to explain a few random factors of existence, but it must, in every possibility be a theory that is not derived through experiment, but something that is in actuality possible naturally. The conclusion which Darwin arrives at seems to be the result of a long awaited experimental result. The researcher believes scientifically we can also conduct experiments for example, 'a fertilized chicken egg can be hatched, using electric bulbs in the incubator, but a full twenty days as dictated by nature is needed and finally a chick is hatched'(Researcher). This is probably what Darwin called 'Successful.' Actually, it means to hatch chicks from fertilized eggs, the process needs heat and period of time. Life in the form of a gene is already in the egg. And so, Sri Aurobindo would find Darwin's conclusion as

impractical, given that variation is inherited as he claimed. It is impractical according to Sri Aurobindo because, in nature everything is fixed. It has its own natural course and when that period or seasons in nature arrived and the environment is favorable, changes will take place, therefore he argued,

“How the seed can grow into a tree. We know that germs and chromosomes are the cause of hereditary transmission, not of physical but psychological variations; but we do not discover how psychological characteristics can be contained and transmitted in this inconscient material vehicle. We do not see or know, but it is expounded to us as a cogent account of Nature process, that a play of electrons, of atoms and their resultant molecule, of cells, glands, chemical secretions and physiological processes manages by their activity on the nerves and brain of Shakespeare or Plato.....” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.299).

So, unlike Darwin's evolution theory; evolution according to Sri Aurobindo is spiritual, it is the work of consciousness. Darwin attributes variations, as the cause of evolution. Where as, for Sri Aurobindo life has already existed in matter, although it is still in a dormant or inconscient stage. It needs only the descent of Consciousness power to awaken this inconscient, indwelling spirit into life. Plato would agree with Sri Aurobindo on this pre-existence of life in matter. For Plato there are eternal Ideas,<sup>1</sup> of different species, which are fixed and unchangeable (Plato). And according to the theory of Speciation Creation, different species were created by God at a particular time and they are fixed and immutable. But, we have seen that Darwin and Lamarck maintained that species are not fixed and not immutable. Sri Aurobindo would side with Plato, and argue that Darwin and Lamarck are wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> **Ideas:** Ch. 3 102 Plato is an idealist. For him the absolute was in essence, a substance, an idea, a concepts a thing in it self, a pure reason or logical dialectic. The world has always exist, no beginning no end.( Tateem).

Sri Aurobindo reasoned that species remained within their own species, and they do not transmute to other forms, other than through themselves, for he explains,

“In fact we see that the principles of creation are permanent and unchanging: each type of being remains itself and does not try nor have any needs to become other than itself; granting that some types of existence disappear and others come into being. It is because the Conscious-Force withdraws its life-light from those that perish and turns to create others for its pleasure. But, each type of life, while it lasts; has its own pattern and remains faithful to whatever minor variations to that pattern. It is bound to its own Consciousness and cannot get away from it, into other-Consciousness Limited by its own nature it cannot transgress these boundaries and pass to other-nature.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.827).

The researcher believes that the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo is right in arguing against the natural selection theory of Darwin. Since we find that there is immense multiplicity of creatures in all spheres in nature, not confined to the selected ones as in Darwin's theory. In fact, the whole process of evolution only reveals what is already there, such as a seed that germinates into a tree; it will be a tree and none other. This is nothing but the continuity and variety that existed in life, which science termed it as heredity and variation. The researcher also believe that according to science, variation is in the real sense is nothing but the modified expressions of heredity. But why should the researcher agree with Science? It is because, within the same species, it should have its own heredity background; otherwise, from what or from where hereditary could have been inherited. Darwin seems to be silent and did not try to clarify on this point. But we find that within the same species, according to Sri Aurobindo, members have to have the same identical

background to claim their hereditary status otherwise there would be no variations at all. As such, heredity for Sri Aurobindo, it remains unchanged; it is fixed. Sri Aurobindo argued that, "each type of life, while it lasts, has its own pattern and remains faithful to whatever minor variations there are." (Aurobindo,1939, p. 827).

Sri Aurobindo is very critical with the natural selection he argued that if we follow the natural selection process of Darwin, we will see that species will be denied their own identity because they lacked their originality. It is base only on their backgrounds that they can inherit; it is the only way that guarantees species their own identity. Scientifically, this is one of the most important characteristics for them to thrive in nature. So, it seems we have evidence enough to confirm that Darwin must have only made general assumptions in explaining the adaptation and variation process of his natural selection theory. As such, the natural selection cannot be taken as having established any truth about evolution. Of course, on this point, Darwin would still claim that natural selection has an effect only in the natural world and its living things. But in the process, Darwin missed the point that there are other living things that do not show life. In the spiritual evolution theory, matter<sup>1</sup>, is thriving and alive, because of the indwelling spirit Sri Aurobindo argued on this point, he said, "But as the scientific sought to extend to life the mechanical proper to the existence and concealed mechanical consciousness in matter, not seeing that a new principle has entered whose very reason of being is the subject to itself the mechanical, so the Darwin formula was used to extend too largely the aggressive principle of life, the vital selfishness of the individual, the instinct and process of the

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<sup>1</sup> **Matter:** Ch 3 p 104-105 Matter was thought to consist of atoms which are not, indestructible, and homogeneous and form the very bed-rock of reality. The movements of atoms were, it was believed, determine, by the laws of mechanics and dynamics. The Greek classified matter into 4 elements. Empirical work out the theory that all existing varieties of matter are formed by combination of the four elements in different proportions.

self-preservation, self assertion and aggressive living.”(Aurobindo,1939, pp.199-200).

Further, if we examine the natural selection process more closely, it will only show that, the Darwin's natural selection did not explain anything, beyond showing that his natural selection selects out living forms. On this contention we can argue that by itself-species can survive, and others that cannot handle their environment are bound to perish. It seems to the researcher there is no new explanation in Darwin's theory other than what can occur in nature, naturally. We see different animal species dying out and becoming extinct not because of the prediction given by the natural selection of Darwin, but due to the unexplained process in natural phenomena. We see this as the natural process of Nature, which is beyond human imaginations. The researcher thinks Darwin made this mistake because he failed to make a distinction between Natural Selection, and Evolution<sup>2</sup> which are two entirely different entities by themselves. In support to Sri Aurobindo's theory, John Creeper also argued against Darwin's natural selection, because according to him, natural selection may have produced genes frequency, but “neither natural selection nor any changes in gene frequency will automatically produce evolution. They most certainly have been observed doing so.” (John Creeper, 1977, p.3).

### 3.3. NATURAL SELECTION FAILED TO EXPLAIN ORIGIN OF LIFE

We have found that evidences from the previous discourses have led us to believe that the natural selection can be understood more as a kind of revolution in nature, to fits in with Darwin's intentions, rather than to explain the evolution of life in nature. It is unlike the spiritual evolution where every steps of the evolution

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<sup>2</sup> **Evolution:** Ch 3 p 104-105 a theory according to which types of plant, and animal, changed gradually over a long period of time, to become more suitable to their environment. Also, origin of some thing for example, the

process has been elucidated very clearly. First of all, we can say, the natural selection is not synonymous to evolution. They are two different identical things. Natural Selection is a new innovative way of thinking on the development of species on the part of science, even if we consider Darwin's ideas as mutation and scientific. Hence, it is more of a process of change rather than that of evolution. Darwin's natural selection was found mentioned in the Rutledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where Craig the editor, stated that, "the main tenet of evolutionary theory is the descent of life, but does not to explain about life itself." He went on, saying that, "according to the biological theory of evolution, the varieties of forms of life are the result of descent with modification from earlier forms of life. The theory does not attempt to explain the origin of life itself, nor does it apply to the history of changes of the non-biological part of the universe, which are often described as 'evolution', Charles Darwin who offered the mechanism, natural selection, which is accepted as a primary process by which evolutionary change is affected." (Craig, 1998, p.476).

On the other hands, Sri Aurobindo, from his spiritual evolution points of view, would see that one of the blatant mistakes that Darwin's theory has committed was, when he tried to champion his Natural Selection as the theory of evolution, ignoring absolutely the existence of any intelligent plans or the involvement of any supernatural power in the existence of life on earth. In support of Sri Aurobindo, Alex Patterson in his, 'Critique of Darwin's Natural Selection', argued that Darwin avoidance of attributing evolution to a Divine intervention or Divine creation is where he went wrong. Patterson thinks that Darwin went wrong, in that he postulated, "life on earth arose from non-living matter, entirely by way of some unknown 'Unconscious' mechanistic, natural process on a pre-biotic earth, and then



proceeded to evolve into more complex life forms almost exclusively by way of random mutation and natural process, and all occurring without the involvement of an over lighting Consciousness or Creator.” (Patterson, 1999, p.2). Patterson would accept Sri Aurobindo's idea, on how life emerged from inconscient matter, where life already existed in a dormant stage. But, as we have seen, he countered Darwin's idea of life arising from non-living matter. Sri Aurobindo stressed, that at every stage of the evolution process it needs a divine intervention. In support of Sri Aurobindo, we find V. Madhusudan Reddy clarifies further he says, “for Sri Aurobindo, therefore, the world does not evolve of itself in a continuous process, but it requires at every critical stage of its evolution Divine intervention in the shape of the direct descent of the Divine Consciousness.”( Reddy,1966,p.151).

On a stronger point against the natural selection, Sri Aurobindo's argues from the spiritual point of views, about the whole creation, he says, ‘to be a movement, between two involutions, spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of matter. Then in matter in which also all is evolved and out of which all evolved upwards to the other pole of the spirit.’ (Aurobindo, 1939, p.129).

### 3.3.1 Postmodern Argues Against Natural Selection

Postmodernists, who shared the same thought and idea on evolution with Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution will surely, challenge the biological conclusions on evolution by Darwin and the Darwinians. Charles Birch a postmodernist, states that the biology or the natural selection of Darwin is strictly mechanistic and reductionist in approach. The methodology he said, was to investigate whether living organisms were machines. Sri Aurobindo who had done his own investigations agrees with

Charles Birch, he says "Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardized shapes; it can at best coerce them, make soul and mind inert and stationary and regulate the life's outward action; that if this to be effectively done, coercion and compression of the mind of life is indispensable and that again spells either unprogressive or decadence." (Aurobindo, 1939, p1058).

This above investigation had been carried out by many scientists. But, Rene Descartes went a step further Charles Birch, he included metaphysics in his investigation. He disagrees that biology which concludes that living organisms as machines. The mechanists and reductionisms were right, because according to Birch, this way of thinking; the limbs operate as a lever and the heart operates as a pump. So, the body functions as a machine. But again, this is not the spiritual evolution from Sri Aurobindo's points of view. The controversy arises when Descartes wanted to reduce biology to the laws of matter and motion, since organisms for him function as machines, much closer to Darwin than to the spiritual evolution. Descartes believed that the Universe was made up of matter and motion. That is why he said if you can give him matter and motion, he shall construct a Universe. But, Charles Birch contested against Descartes claims for the artificial universe or about his entities as machines. He argued that, the parts of the machine are subject only to the laws of mechanics, with its external force acting on those parts only. Then we found Whitehead one of the Post Modernists, also took up the challenge and supports Sri Aurobindo's idea on evolution. Whitehead argued against Descartes on this critical distinction in botany, and supports the spiritual evolution instead, he says,

"A thorough-going evolutionary philosophy is inconsistent with materialism. The aboriginal stuff, or material, from which materialistic philosophy starts, is incapable of evolution. This material is in itself the

ultimate substance. Evolution, in the materialistic theory, is reduced to the role of being another word for the description of the changes of the external relations between portions of matter. There is nothing to evolve, because one set of external relations is as good as any other set of external relations. There can be merely changes, purposeless and progressive.... The doctrine thus cries for a conception of organisms as fundamental to nature.”

(Whitehead, 1933.pp.133-35).

So, the main reason for postmodern challenges to biology is to seek recognition apart from the external, but also from internal<sup>1</sup> points of view regarding the world's evolution, which is in line with the spiritual evolution theory. Charles Birch agreed with the postmodern view, because their arguments make sense to him. Supporting them, he said, 'it takes the human experience as a high level exemplification of entities in general, be they cells, atoms or electron. All are subject, all have internal relations. Consequently, in biology, a distinction is made between biology that is compositional (Substantialist) and that which is rational 'Ecologist.' (Charles Birch, 1992.p.393).

The researcher believes Charles Birch, argued against biology, from the prospective of the spiritual evolution points of view, referring to the fundamental insights of mankind or the universe itself, the same idea as expressed by of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin. Charles Birch argued that biology or other sciences could provide only the empirical corroboration of that insight only but not beyond it. He said they may also be able to provide the manner in which the secret

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<sup>1</sup> **External & Internal:** Ch 3, 108-109 I am what I am partly as a consequence of all external relations that have impeached me since conception. But I am that I am by virtue of internal relations-the ways I have chosen to respond to those external conditions.(Charles Birch, 1992.p.392)

purpose of the world-process is realized, because if change has to take place, but change according to him, must be in the nature of evolution or progress. But to admit this change, the researcher thinks, we must accept the fundamental law of the universe. As we have seen Sri Aurobindo always has mankind at heart in his philosophy, so he would appreciate the support on his view on evolution shown by the these philosophers, he stressed further and says,

“As the outpost of the scientific knowledge come more and more to set on the borders that divides the material from the immaterial, so also the highest achievements of practical Science are those that to simplify and reduce to the vanishing-point the machinery by which the greatest effects are produced. Wireless telepathy Nature's exterior sign, and pretext for a new orientation.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.15).

So far, the challenge put up by postmodern against biology is to increase the avenues of thought which is scientific, and we can take this as a support of Sri Aurobindo's ideas on the influence of the mind on evolution. It is on this basis, Birch explains that,

“To exhibit self determination is to exhibit mind, so that it will have some degree of freedom at the molecular level, because there is more consistency with this proposition, that the cells and their DNA molecules are more mind-like in the sense of having internal relations than with the proposition that they are machine-like. Machines can be pulled to pieces and seem to come into existence as a consequence of spatial relationships, but not at a critical moments in the development of the embryo.” (Charles Birch 1992 p.836).

The post moderns questioned the mechanistic development of biology. Charles Birch, supporting the Post Modern, agreed with Lewontin, who said that, “if development is really in an important sense a consequence of relation between things, how we introduce the incredible complexity relationships to a manageable set of regularities? And how are we to do this using experimental thought that itself so wedded to Cartesian analysis?” (Lewontin, 1933. p.3).

The researcher thinks that Charles Birch agreed with Lewontin for the reason that he had made an attempt to call for a biology that is related rather than a compositional one. Birch used an analogy to explain Lewontin's idea, when he says,

“A mechanistic brain physiologist analyses his sitting at a word processor in terms of light waves impinging on his retina from the keyboard and the screen, which set in train chemical processes in his nerves and brain. Messages from the brain to his muscles cause them to contract in ways that result in very complex movements of his fingers as he sits at the machine.”(Charles Birch, 1992, p.336).

Charles Birch in his comments on Lewontin's argument against the natural selection is in actuality showing his supports to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory. He clarified his point he says that the interpretation that Lewontin has given is fine, as far as it goes. But it does not account for the fact that there are some thoughts in mind that he proposes to put into writing. According to Birch, Lewontin's thought is to initiate the complex sequence of events that the physiologist studied. He concludes that what the physiologist describes are external relations, but the influences of his thought are internal relations, the same as the within and the external of Sri Aurobindo and Chardin.

Sri Aurobindo seems to accept Charles Birch supports, he clarified the External and internal of things further he says, "This essence of will and desire are evident every where in Nature and, though this is not yet envisaged; they are associated with an indeed the expression of subconscious or if you will, incoscient or quite involved sense and intelligence which are equally pervasive. Present in every atom of Matter all this is necessarily present in everything which is formed by aggregation of those atoms; and they are present in the Force which builds up and constitutes the atom. That Force is fundamentally, the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta, consciousness-force, inherent in conscious-force of conscious-being." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.184).

Birch in support on the External and Internal as explained by Sri Aurobindo, claimed that the distinction between these External and Internal are sorts of causes in human behavior. We do not find this idea of external and internal in any of the natural Selection theory of Darwin. Birch claimed, it was found that it has been clearly explained by Socrates in Plato's dialogue 'The Phaedo'. Birch quoted Plato, 'the cause of his actions as he sits in prison awaiting death, are the mechanical forces on his bones and muscles and sinews. But the real cause of his sitting in prison was that he made a choice to bow to the Athenian's sentence (Plato). In mechanical analysis, he concludes, that there is an immense gap exists between what the scientist describes and what he experiences. Birch confirms this, that it is recognized by some brain physiologists, notable Sperry, who considers that a thought itself can initiate chemical and electrical impulses of cells in the brain. Charles Birch agrees with Sri Aurobindo evolution theory, he condemns the mechanistic developmental in biological thought, saying that 'Darwinism is a shattering blow to those who conceived of nature as completely determined, be it



by an outside designer or some in built principle in nature.' (Birch, 1992 p.394)

Here he argued that to take chance seriously is the first step in moving away from the concept of deterministic designs. This is the main problem for Darwin he pointed out. Birch believes that Darwin could not admit the reality of chance, despite the role that Darwin has attributed to chance in his natural selection theory. Birch further says, "Darwin is like Einstein, who cannot believe that God plays dice." (Birch, 1992, p.386). In confirmation to this statement, he quoted from Darwin's letter, where he wrote to Asa Gray, "I cannot think that the world... is the result of chance; yet I cannot look at each separate thing as a result of Design.... I am and shall ever remain, in a hopeless muddle." ("Darwin's Letter" 1810-88)

Hartshorne in support of Birch, on Darwin's dilemma, also argued that, "neither pure chance nor the pure absence of chance can explain the world." (Hartshorne, 1989, p.69).

Charles Birch continues his arguments, in support of Sri Aurobindo spiritual evolution. He said logically there is no need to really draw a line anywhere in the total evolutionary sequence from atom to human. The challenge of Post Modern Thought to evolutionary biology today he said is to propose a role together with chance in evolution.. This is a propose purpose, in addition to external relations as casual. Internal relations, he clarifies, are causal and also influence the direction of evolution. He concludes by asking these questions,

"Why did atoms evolve into cells and into plants and animals? Why didn't reality stop with the first DNA molecule? Mechanism provides no answer. The ecological model opens up ways to explore this in terms of lure and response, or purposive influence and self-determination. Self-determination is minimal at the atomic level. It is greatest in higher

organisms. Because natural entities always have, with their own particular degrees of freedom, in addition to external relations as casual, internal relations which are causal also in determining the direction of evolution.” (Birch. ed, 1992, p.397).

In agreement with the argument from Post Modern against the natural selection, Sri claimed that the support is based that spiritual evolution was built on metaphysics. He may accept that Science will be able to explain some part of evolution process, but not everything that is connected with evolution, as we have seen with the natural selection. He therefore said that, “Reason and Science can only help standardizing, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanized unity of material life.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.1052).

### 3.3.2. Gaia Theory condemned Natural Selection Theory

Gaians are group of researchers who study the origin of the world. They developed a thesis for its origin. Their thesis is closer to the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo. So they disagree with Darwins's natural selection theory.

According to Edward Goldsmith, in his article, ‘Gaia<sup>1</sup> and Evolution’, he condemned the natural selection theory of Darwin, on the grounds that it is a disastrous process of unrestrained technological process and economic development problems in which the natural selection was constructed. According to him it is anti-evolutionary. It is a single self regulatory system and is a process which emanates from an extreme competition to survive. It does not provide, he said, any

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<sup>1</sup> **Gaia:** Ch 3, 114, According to the Gaia thesis, the biosphere, together with it atmospheric environments, forms a single entity or natural system. This system is the product of organic forces that are highly coordinated by the system itself. Gaia has, in effect, created herself, not in a random manner but in a goal-directed manner since the system is highly stable and is capable of maintaining itself in the face of internal and external challenges (Love Lock).

evolutionary theory that can be reconciled with knowledge of the structure and function of the world of the living things.

Many philosophers on evolution including Sri Aurobindo will agree with the Gaian Theory on evolution. According to them the Darwin's theory of natural selection provides no serious evidence or attempt to explain evolution. Goldsmith clarifies he said that, neither Darwin nor any Darwinian has so far given an actual causal explanation of the adaptive evolution of any organisms or single organ- at all that has been shown and this is very much, only a hypothesis. Such an explanation, he continues might exist, but they are not logically possible. Thus, Goldsmith also criticized the natural selection on the ground that the paradigm of reductionisms science of the Darwin and Neo-Darwinism is now under assault for its anti-evolution process. Indeed, he said if humans are to survive for a very long; one of the requirements is the replacement of the reductionism paradigm. This, according to him, can be done only by restoring the proper functioning of the Gaia process, where the biosphere together with its atmospheric environment formed a single entity or a natural system. He further argued against the natural selection, saying that if Gaia is a single entity system, which created itself in a coordinated and goal-oriented way, then Gaia is clearly a unit of evolution. So, it is not only a contemporaneous organization of the living things, but also a spacio-temporal system. It means that it is not only an entity but also a process, which also means among other things that evolution is a long term strategy and not just a set of ad-hoc adaptations as advocated by Darwin, but more in lines with the theory of spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo.

We also find Ludwig Von Bertalanffy a Gaian, who also seems to support Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution. He observes that there are some defects in

Darwin's theory of evolution. In his arguments against natural selection he says, 'there has been no more concern with proof than in the operation of a "Tibetan prayer wheel."<sup>1</sup>' (Bertalanffy, 1976 p. 22). He claimed that a theory so vague, so insufficiently verifiable and so far from criteria otherwise applied in hard science, has become a dogma can only be explained on sociological background. Society and science have been so steeped in the ideas of mechanism and economic concepts of free competition that instead of God, natural selection was enthroned as ultimate reality.

Thus according to the Gaia Theory, if we are to follow Darwin's mechanical theory, we will be led into automata. It has no purpose or goal to reach, because for Bartalanffy to suppose that evolutionary change is the effect of germinal mutation is nothing but pure assumption. The natural selection cannot take the place of the reality. There is no such assumption in the spiritual evolution process of evolution, which attributes evolution solely to the reality.

Perhaps the most renowned case of criticism, concerning the metaphysical and scientific problem of the natural selection theory of Darwin came from a Gaian, Sir Karl Popper. In support of Sri Aurobindo spiritual evolution, he criticized the natural selection saying that, "Darwinism is not a testable theory but a metaphysical search program", that is, 'natural selection was seen to be almost tautologous and at best only a possible framework for testable scientific theories." (Popper, 1974, p.134). But, just four years later Popper recanted this statement, due to pressure from the evolutionary community. He later said that, "the theory of natural selection may be so formulated that it is far from tautological" (Popper, 1974, p.339). But Karl Popper

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<sup>1</sup> **Tibetan prayer wheel:** Ch 3, 115, a wheel suspended on a rod, which can be spun round and round, while one mumbles or repeats some Buddhist mantras or Prayers.

may be questioned, as to how it is possible that a case of insufficient or even false evidence for natural selection can be bolstered and presented and later recanted about it. It appears to be so convincing and entirely compelling that even the best minds of the world, such as Karl Popper, can be grossly misled, even to the point of modifying a published evaluation which he made against the natural selection. As to why he recanted his criticism against the natural selection, the reasons are not far to seek, most probably under pressure from fundamental Darwinians. This assumptions needs to be verified further in the future studies.

Many thinkers had criticized the over reliance of Darwin on biology and its random variations of the natural selection. We also found Alex Paterson, another Gaian, who seems to agree with Karl Popper but did not recant later. He argued against the natural selection for lacking in scientific details explanation and evidence on the part of Darwin and the Darwinians. He condemned Darwin's natural selection as not scientific at all.

We also find Patterson supports the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo. He has very strong doubts about Darwin's philosophy on the natural selection theory of evolution. Criticizing Darwin, he made this remark, "However, close examination of a whole raft of scientific data reveals the absence of virtually any empirical scientific evidence in support of the theory, even regarding the alleged spontaneous generation of life in the first place, let alone the evolution of life forms from one species into another." (Patternson, 1999 p.17).

So eventually, we find Evolution according to the Gaia process is no longer the mere product of natural selection from a random variations or genetic mutations, but at every step it is a process of living things. Again, this implies that there is an end-state or a goal of the process for the natural selection theory of Darwin. On this

aspect, Sri Aurobindo agreed with the Gaia process, he concludes and said, "And if there be any goal to evolution which finds here its present crown and head in the human being, other than an aimless circling and individual escape from circling. ... does it have any meaning other than an ultimate awakening by decision from a life of despair and disgust of the cosmic effort and its complete rejection then of even such a luminous and puissant transfiguration and emergence as the Divine in the creature must be that high-uplift goal and that supreme significance."(Aurobindo,1939;p.265).

Further, Goldsmith and Popper agree with Polanyi, another critic of the natural selection theory of Darwin. Polanyi argued that although neo-Darwinism is firmly accredited and highly regarded by science, yet there is little direct evidence for it to be considered a science. We conclude that Gaian thinkers condemned Darwin's natural selection as a theory of evolution.

### **3.3.3. Randomness of the Natural Selection Theory**

Darwin seems to follow the biologists to the core, for they explained the whole process of life in terms of random variation and the struggle for existence. They do not in the least explain the most fundamental term of the evolution process, which expects that all living things should progress upwards. If we take the involution process of Sri Aurobindo, it leads the course upwards to evolution. In this case natural selection is a non-fact and does not lead to evolution, the process of evolution needs t movement upwards. So if the mere survival is the random purpose of the natural selection theory, then Aurobindo would have concluded that rudimentary type of organism would have served its purpose long before they multiply and select their species.



We also found Darwin in his "Origin of Species", did not go further than halfway to evolution; he did not show that the natural selection really demonstrates how species originates. What we see is the random selection of the natural selection in its process for evolution, which demonstrates that in creation it is considered as a rare chance to happen. On the contrary, in the spiritual evolution theory, there is no place for random or chance. The spiritual evolution on the other hands, at each step of its process, there is the involvement of the spirit. Lamarck, Waddington, and Julian Huxley, all Darwinians, advocated the notion that the biosphere is the product of random variations. But, Goldsmith who championed the Gaian Thesis and supports the process of spiritual evolution, argued that even ordinary cultural phenomena with which we are all acquainted in terms of paradigms of reductionism science, are interpreted as random.. He says that behavior of the natural selection exhibits randomness that it is questionable whether living things are in fact, capable of behaving in a random way as claimed by the natural selection of Darwin. He argued that in a world of living things, randomness is so rare that to achieve a state which even approximates it; it has to be manufactured, he puts it sarcastically. We also find in Stafford Beer, one of the ardent critics of Darwin, he cannot believe that evolution is as simple as demonstrated by the natural selection theory. He pointed out the absurdity of the natural selection theory on a situation where nature could aids evolution without any predetermine factors.

But, we fail to understand why randomness is essential to Darwin's notion on natural selection, since it is a purposeless exercise of nature. It is the strong notion of Darwin on the randomness in natural selection that prompted Goldsmith to argue strongly, saying that it is already hard enough to demonstrate that natural selection, from random variations to even be one of the mechanisms of evolution. The

researcher thinks the term “natural selection” is very vague, probably because of the term itself, which rendered it to have no meaning in the real sense of evolution. Darwin himself actually admitted that he had used it metaphorically. As such, the researcher thinks there is no epistemological justification in maintaining such an idea because as already argued living things ontologically do not evolve randomly.

Karl Popper again argued against the randomness of the natural selection. He showed his supports to the spiritual evolution theory by pointing out the problems with the natural selection as a theory of evolution. He argued against the random variation of the natural selection, in the same observation as Goldsmith has made. He points out that only an organism which exhibits in its behavior a strong tendency of disposition or propensity to struggle for its survival, will, in fact be likely to survive, but not through any randomness. He concludes that if the organism competes, it is but to exhibit a goal-direct less. Indeed for Popper like Sri Aurobindo, goal-directness is one of the conditions for evolution. Sri Aurobindo would agree with Karl Popper, for he pointed out that, “We see for instance in animals, operations of a perfect purposefulness and an exact, indeed a scientifically minute knowledge, which is quite beyond the capacities of animal mentality and which man himself can only acquire by long culture and education and even then uses with less sure rapidity The animal and the insect may be more intelligent, more purposeful, more aware of its intention, its end, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.89).

It is the opinion of the researcher that Darwin instead of following the random biological explanation, should have include metaphysics to make his theory meaningful or attempt a more compromising approach. This could have bridged the

gaps that existed between matter and spirit, which were as we have seen been forged together in the spiritual evolution theory. This could have resulted in the avoidance of the woes his theory has brought about in political and economic field in the world. Sri Aurobindo on the other hands attempt to explain evolution, with the end in view, in the process, it brings in harmony and understanding by bridging the philosophical gaps between the East and the West; Spiritual and the Material world. E. McBride and Waddington, contented that there are many philosophers who they say, would have chosen to approach the natural selection theory of Darwin, from a metaphysical point of view rather than from the biological point of view only. Considering this, it seems to the researcher that Darwin, being a high advocate of science of biology, failed to explain the whole phenomena of evolution, or he might on purpose ignored to consider any metaphysical considerations. Therefore, the reason to ignore Darwin, according to McBride, is based on the problem which he describes as, 'a long tradition among scholars to view the concept of natural selection to be tautology.' (McBride, 1929, Waddington, 1960, Mahner and Budge, 1997 p.134). Waddington, by himself, later added, that the theory of "Natural selection" states that, "the fittest individuals in a population (defined as those who leave the most offspring) will leave the most offspring." (Waddington, 1960. p.385).

So, Waddington would still be insisting that the metaphysics of the evolution of the Universe would require a balanced consideration of its nature in the context of our total experience. According to him it should include such experience that embraces mystic realization on the one hand and an ordinary man's entanglement in the temporal or the other situations on the other. Sri Aurobindo surely will agree with all these thinkers who support his spiritual evolution, because according to him, "no firm metaphysical building can be created upon these shifting quicksands. Heredity, upon

which science builds its concept of life-evolution, is a power, a machinery for keeping a type of species in unchanged beings: the demonstration that is also an instrument for persistent and progressive variations is questionable; its tendency is conservative rather than evolutionary,.... Life-Force attempts to force upon it heredity.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.828). The researcher believes that Darwin over-reliance on biological observations without giving due consideration to metaphysics, has rendered his theory of evolution untenable in the light of the spiritual evolution championed by Sri Aurobindo. Why so? It is because there is an old saying that, “science without metaphysics (Philosophy) is blind, and metaphysics (Philosophy) without science is lame”(Anonymous), still holds good. That is, if we still consider natural selection as a theory of evolution.

So far, from the arguments against Darwin natural selection, mostly they have targeted on the range he had given to chance and randomness, on the evolution of species which is quite improbable. We have also seen in biology that, accidental variations cannot account for the origin of new species, since accidental variations, which are advantageous and beneficial to creatures are very rare. Darwin conceded that they cannot account for the evolution of complex species from simple ones. He himself stated, that, “only a few species are undergoing changes at any time period; and all changes are slowly affected,” (Darwin, 1859, p.378). Secondly, Darwin's natural selection cannot account for the conservation of stable forms in the survival of fittest, and the elimination of the unfit. Darwin holds that organic modification is accidental, but in general, this assurance according to science, is also very rare. The researcher thinks that if such modification takes place, it is usually detrimental to species, in the form of an unfriendly adaptation that may destroy the species instead. Again, Darwin's theory is based only on three biological assumptions, the struggle

for existence; a presupposed insurgency and spontaneity of life, and the development of complex species from simple species. Sri Aurobindo clarifies his standpoints against the natural selection stating that, "The principles of creation are permanent and unchanging. Each type of being remains itself, and does not try nor have any need to become other. That some types of existence disappeared and other comes into being is because of the Conscious-Force in the Universe, which draws it self-delight from these that perish to create others for its pleasure. But, each type of life while it lasts, has its own pattern, and remains faithful with whatever minor variations to that pattern." (Aurobindo, 1939; p.827).

Teilhard de Chardin in support of Sri Aurobindo ideas on the species countered Darwin's theory of evolution. Chardin attacked Darwin using more or less the same argument as Sri Aurobindo had done against the natural selection. He argues that, "though there may be evolution within a given type, we see no new type produced by evolution, so increasingly rare survivors of the 'fixed type' could still contend." (Chardin, 1955, p.120). Chardin arguments is implied, that this is only due to insurgency of life, rather than that of the action of a negative principle like natural selection. Biological evolution is due to the nature of life itself. The researcher would like to draw an example in the case of a bonzai plant<sup>1</sup>, despites of being crippled by the cutting off of its main root, it thrives and lives. But it cannot reproduce the like of itself (*the researcher's analogy*). This only explains the will to live and survive of individuals within a species. Darwin, from this analogy has missed explaining the primordial impulse of life to live. Heredity, which Darwin stresses as one of the process of evolution, may not be due to the transmission of body-cells with their

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<sup>1</sup> **Bonzais** Ch 3, 124-125 This is the researcher's analogy: Bonzais are ornamental plants, originating from the Japanese practice of decorating their gardens with ornamental plant whose main root has been severed to stunt its growth.

spontaneous variations from parents to offspring. According to the science of biology, this is due to the transmission of immortal cells from parents to offspring. Darwin's natural selection therefore should work in accordance to science, that there is an intelligent decision being made and species simply have to act upon that dictate, a fact which Darwin seems to have ignored on purpose. Was it with ulterior motives that Darwin ignored science and try to pacify the evolution trends of that time? The answer is not far to seek taking the natural selection as the theory of evolution into consideration.

Apart from the arguments presented so far against the natural selection, there is also evidence that seventeenth to nineteenth century science was essentially materialistic. Matter was taken as an object, hard, simple, indubitably real, and as such, calculated to form a foundation upon which the whole sense of the practical man was based. Science is concerned with the structure and behavior of things, not with their inmost essence. It also does not consider the principle which deals with the ultimate entities. If you build up a theory of evolution as Darwin has done with his Natural Selection, you reach a point denying the involvement of the ultimate entities due to egoism. In the process, you will be denying and misguiding humanity to an extent that it may cause catastrophic misunderstanding. As Daniel C. Dennett plainly puts it,

“The Darwin theory is a scientific theory, a great one, but that is not all it is. The creationists who oppose it are right about one thing; Darwin's dangerous idea cuts much deeper into the fabric of our most fundamental beliefs than many of its sophisticated apologists have yet admitted.”  
(Dennett, 1995, p.15).



It is also a fact that Darwin's theory of Natural Selection has also confronted the theory of creation. The theory of natural selection had also been misinterpreted, misrepresented, and abused for their political and economic gains by vested interest. We find Dennett criticizes strongly against Darwin, saying "It has been misappropriated to lend scientific respectability to appalling political and social doctrines" (Dennett, 1995, p.18).

The researcher on the other hands, believes that as a theory; Natural Selection, is not to be blamed for the woes it brought to humanity in the later part of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, but as Dennett said, it was misrepresented because of the loop holes it created in its effort to champion materialistic views, as the instrument in the evolution process. This has drastically contrasted with the idea on evolution presented by the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo. In this regard, the materialistic approach of Darwin in the guise of his natural selection theory, surfaced very prominently. Wiker in his book, "Does Science Point to God? writes,

"The problem with Darwinism is that it is not merely a scientific theory.

It is in fact a full blown materialistic cosmology, an account of every biological theory with pre-suppositions reaching all the way through nature and into the aspect of human nature. Like it or not, indiscriminate accommodationism to the full blow of cosmology means submitting everything to inspection and consequent formulation disposal according to the materialist canon of Darwinism. There is no such thing as partial surrender." ( Wiker, 1998,p.136).

In the excerpt Wiker argued against Darwinism. The researcher believes that there is a link between the influence of Darwin's evolution theory (natural selection), and the detrimental rise of the materialistic approach on the theory. It has affected

economic and political development. It has impacted the nineteenth century social and political life. The adverse outcome was the evil days of absolute communism. It almost swept the whole of Eastern Europe, Asia, and later also spread to other parts of the world. Remnants of it can still be found in some countries even to this day. It is none other than the ill-effect from the Natural Selection of Darwin.

The other most misleading mistake that Darwin evolution has made is the postulation that life on earth solely arose from non-living matter and entirely by an unknown unconscious mechanistic, natural process on our pre-biotic earth. Darwin stated that "it proceeds to a more complex life-form exclusively from random mutation and the natural selection process." (Darwin 1859, p.132). Thus, it showed the whole process is without the involvement of any intelligent intervention. For this reason, David Ray Griffin agreed with Woolridge, when he argued against Darwin. Woolridge says that, "within an evolutionary framework, especially, the Neo-Darwinian one presupposed by materialists, the emergence of stabilization of new property can only be explained in terms of the enchantment of the chances of survival." (Woolridge, 1963:p.240).

Wiker and Woolridge, as we have seen here, had already given us a cue as to why, during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Darwin's theory was so trenchantly defended. I believe the answer may lie in the history of contemporary Western society despite the lack of empirical evidence and in spite of the increasing opposition against it itself since it is rooted in the concept of reality known in philosophical materialism.<sup>1</sup> This idea later was developed in the Communist

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<sup>1</sup> **Philosophical materialism** Ch 3, 126 totally rejects the concept of creative principle or universal consciousness. This denial of the involvement of the creative principle (Here Darwin remained silent of this involvement) has led to materialism to interpret Darwin's theory as it championed their standpoint.

ideology of Marx and Engel. So Darwin's theory of natural selection became a reference book for the materialistic view of communism, justifying its ideology. Karl Marx no wonder, wrote in praise of Darwin's book, the Origin of Species. He said, 'This is the book which contains the basis in Natural History for the view of our materialist friends.' (Harunya, 1986, p.16). It is for this reason Karl Marx leans heavily on the Origin of species, to justify his stands on materialism and economic philosophy. That is why Sri Aurobindo argued that "the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.729). Aurobindo seems to foresee this deceit, in materialist beliefs to be short-lived. The crumbling of communism in the world testifies to this. So also would be the phasing-out the Darwin Theory.

We can say that survival is not the only aim of existence of species. There are other noble things that can be aspired for, when we consider human beings. But, if we equate humans as one of the species that developed according to Darwin's theory, that is a different question.

### 3.3.4 Darwinism -Marxism Clique

It may be argued that evidences are abounds that there is a strong clique between Marxism and Darwin's Natural Selection. The Marxism and Darwinism clique may be traced through history. At about the same time when Marx advocated a class-less society (communism), Charles Darwin advocated the theory of evolution. In 1859, at the same time that Darwin published his "Origin of the Species", Marx made public the formulas of the materialistic conception of history in his book 'A Constitution to the Critique of Political Economy.' He categorically stated that the Marxists theory and the Origin of species, established the general thought of the evolution of living beings. We should note that Darwin theory was fundamentally

different from the other evolution theories, which tries to ascribe life force to a Supreme Being or spirit, as in Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin and others. It is regarded as essentially irreducible to matter. In contrast, Darwin advocated non-directional mutation and natural selection. How this is rooted in materialism? It is to be noted that Gould found that Darwin has a strong inclination towards materialism, in his notebook, it was found he writes, "Love of the Deity, Effect of Organization, oh You, Materialist? Why is thought a secretion of brain, more wonderful than gravity a property of Matter? It is arrogance, an admiration of oneself." (Gould 1977, p. 25). However, the researcher thinks, Darwin refrained from disclosing his theory of evolution was based on materialism, due to the prevalence of creation belief at that time. In confirming this, it is in this same notebook, Gould, found Darwin had written in it, "to avoid stating how far, I believe, in materialism, I say only that emotions instinct, and degrees of talent, are hereditary because the brain of a child resembles the parent stock." (Gould, 1977, p. 26). Marx was quick to perceive the implications of Darwin's theory of evolution and accepted it as a strong ally. Frederick Engel said, "just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history." (Engel, 1970, p.162). The question is what is wrong with this Marx-Darwin alliance<sup>1</sup>? The answer would be that Darwin's theory of evolution, which was based on materialism as he

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**1 The detriments of materialism** Ch 3, 128 are not only limited to individuals. Materialism also seeks to abolish the basic values on which the state and society rests and generate a soulless, and intensities society that pays attention only to matter. Since the members of such a society can never possess idealistic notions such as patronize love for one's people, justice, loyalty, honesty, sacrifice, honor, and good morals, the social order established by these individuals is doomed to be shattered in a short while. For these reasons, Materialism is one of the severest menaces to the values of the political and social order of a nation (Hanun Yaya). Another great evil of materialism is its underpinning of anarchist and divisive ideologies that aim at perpetuity of the state and the people. Communism, the foremost of these ideologies, is the natural political outcome of materialist philosophy. Seeking to abolish such sacred notions as state and family, it constitutes the fundamental ideology of every form of separatist actions direct against university structure of the state (Harun Yaya.)

himself had admitted, had a destructive effect upon Christianity and traditional Western thought which had existed before Darwin. It is also wrong for the strength and inspiration that it gave to Marxism. The Darwin's theory of evolution is not only a view of nature. More than that, it has guided people toward denying of God. In a manner of speaking, the Darwin theory of evolution has given impetus and prepared a good climate for Marxism and later for communism to grow in strength, which ultimately forced the people where the ideology prevails to completely deny the existence of God. Homer Duncan says, "The battle between creation and evolution is not a neat game. It is merely a matter of proving that the other side is wrong. The conflict between creation and evolution is a major part of the gigantic battle between God and Satan. It is a battle of the mind, and soul of men." (Duncan, 1978, p. 59).

Although today the ideal of communism, the outcome of materialistic approach of Darwin's Natural selection, has been discarded in many parts of the world, the damage done is irreparable. On the loss of lives, the researcher wonders if this process of elimination of opponents is line with Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. The materialistic ideas developed by Marx and the elimination of the opponents, seems to the researcher as the outcome from Darwin's theory. But, developing and drawing wrong conclusions from the evolutionary theory, as Darwin has done, will still permeate human society. We really need to have an alternative, such as the Spiritual Evolution Theory to explain on the fact of Evolution. As Mr. Smart has said, "Although the sign is seeded to guide humanity on the right track Materialism has of course been thought to be inimical to theism." (Smart, Haldane, 1996.p.6). On the contrary, we can argue that the Spiritual Evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo, a theistic approach to evolution theory, offers a reprieve from the much tainted and tawdry Darwin's natural selection theory. The spiritual evolution tries to

build up human relations through the integral approach. It looks forwards to a world of divinized man where human developments and harmonies life is assured, on all humanities in the world. Instead of degenerating humanity, Spiritual Evolution Theory will instate humanity to its just place at par with divinity.

We see in the Spiritual Evolution process, there is a descent and ascending process, is double approach, it distinctly show spiritual power is involved in the process of evolution. Whereas, in the Darwinian evolutionary approach it denies the existence of any creative power; since it demonstrated, that only the mutation of genes in the survival of the fittest and the Natural Selection to justify and to explain existence. It may be justified to say that natural selection has taken over the place of the creator. It has become the determining factor for Darwin's existence of the Universe. In fact, arguing against Darwin, Campbell clarifies that, "it is against the ontological reductionism of the materialistic world view, according to which all causation runs sideways and upward, from parts to parts and from parts to the whole (with all apparent wholes really being aggregates). These are now the developments in science stressing 'downward', from the whole to the parts. One of the most striking developments is evidence that the genes, which Neo-Darwinism considers necessarily impervious to influence from the organism as a purposive whole, are in fact influenced by the organisms." (Campbell, 1982, p.134-135). These difficulties posed by the natural selection theory on evolution, has resulted in a variety of criticisms that were eventually led to downfall of Darwin's origin of species or the natural selection. The theory itself has been made difficult to explain with obvious empirical phenomena, such as variation and natural selection.

The argument can be taken from another angle, from the point of evolution process between the spiritual evolution and the natural selection. The development of



the evolutionary process for the spiritual evolution is implied, it begins from the spirit at the top, then down to the bottom in matter. It becomes more meaningful since the process reverts back to the top. But if the development process is from the bottom up only as in the natural selection, it is aimless and purposeless it will ultimately has to come back down. It will be like the old Khasi<sup>1</sup> saying, the young bamboo shoot coming out of the ground, aims to pierce the sky, but after a short duration and maturity, it realizes that it does not belong to the sky and it is limitless and impregnable. It bows down and points toward the ground where it belongs. (Khasi Folklore). So the morals from this khasi folklore, it can be inferred that in the dualism of the theists, who believes that the origination is from the spirit, through its downward journey, it can in fact, rise up and return back to the spirit. There is no problem because, as Thomas Reid strongly said, "God, being omnipotent, can cause mind and matter to interact even if such interaction is inconceivable to us." (Thomas Reid, 1969:pp.96-97).

So the weak point of Darwin's Origin of the Species or Natural Selection is the mistake it committed by stating that there is no intelligent cause for the world's existence. It only indicates to us that his theory stems from an atheistic approach. The theological doctrine of Atheism is the logical consequence of the metaphysical doctrine of materialism. We may therefore place Darwin in the category of a critical atheist, because he neither denies, nor accepts the involvement of an intelligent being in his evolution process. In the process, he failed to satisfy majority of intellects. Secondly, he failed to win the heart of the majority of the people who have read his theory for no other

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<sup>1</sup> **The Khasi:** Ch 3, 131 they belong to the Mon-Khmer race, with very highly developed political, religious and philosophical life. They practice a matrilineal and matriarchal customary way of life. They have very strong affinities to the Thai, and other south-east Asians. people in terms of language, folklores, customs & culture. The researcher belongs to this society. (For more information, please see P.R.Gordon, "The Khasis" in *N. E. India*).

reason, than to deserve his denial of the existence of a creator. Therefore, Darwin's evolution had no substance in the involvement of the reality of creativity or, for that matter, any intervention of the divine in the process of evolution, for he could not admit the reality of chance. Hartshorne pointed out very clearly in his "Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes," that, "neither pure chance nor pure absence of chance can explain the World."( Hartshorne, 1976,p.212).

The analysis showed the defect of Darwin's evolution theory lies in its having approached evolution, from a single idea, the survival of the species. It is typical of a materialistic approach to center on the lowest point, then slowly to rise up to higher rungs of the ladder, but at the end of the ladder there is no direction to proceed further on. The mistaken approach of this theory also lies in its denial of the possibility of other approaches, such as the spiritual approach of Sri Aurobindo. The arguments discussed so far against the Natural Selection theory of Darwin, arose from the complexity of the evolution theory he presented in it. The researcher believed the Darwin natural selection theory has become obsolete in the present Century the main reason is, he failed to take the cultural, religious, political affinities or even the sentiments of humanity into consideration. There are other issues, other than biological, that needs to be considered, such as teleology, and relation between evolutionary naturalism, traditions and religious beliefs on creation. The spiritual evolution theory on the other hands has taken into considerations all the human aspirations. Hence it can offer a better explanation on evolution.

Summarizing the arguments that the spiritual evolution argued against Darwin's theory, we can say the impact is nothing but negatives throughout. The Darwin's theory of natural selection had changed political, religious, scientific and economic life, in almost all parts of the world. A century has been lost at the

purposeless purpose of the natural selection theory. The barrage of criticism targeted against the Darwin's Theory is exhaustive to berate. As a philosophical theory on evolution, we have no objection at all. It is scientific, but a halfway scientific proves with lots of flaws. Secondly, the fact remains that it has been misunderstood and misrepresented in many ways, even by the Darwinists.

Finally, the researcher is contented that Natural Selection has served its purpose. In the elimination of the sick, the weak, and the infirm, it is one of the effective devices of nature that works silently and effectively, and in the process maintains and retains the fitter species for future generation through hereditary from the fittest. Philosophically the theory is functional both in animal and plant life. In the human world, viruses, and bacteria developed anti-bodies and those that have no resistance are eliminated. Those who having developed immunity survive; it has nothing to do with heredity. In support of this argument, we see plague, wars, diseases, such as SARS, and Avian Flu in 2003, are examples of the working of the natural selection.( Researcher).

We conclude that the natural selection has failed from a scientific perspective as well as from any ontological arguments, as a theory of evolution. The spiritual evolution theory offers a more viable theory of evolution, Green and Depaur would recommend that, "effort to deal with evolution from a longer tradition of philosophy should continue." (Green and Depaur, 2007, p.26). Therefore, the detrimental effects and the aftermath derived from natural selection should be forgotten. We should instead, concentrate and accept the Spiritual evolution offered by Sri Aurobindo. It offers a more cogent reason for the world existence. The Evolutionists and Creationists should put the natural selection to history and delve deeper into the Spiritual Evolution theory propounded by Sri Aurobindo. In the first place, it offers a

more plausible explanation for the evolution of the Universe. It accepts the existence of the Absolute Supreme Being. Secondly, it explains the reason for creation, as the sheer delight of the creator to create .The defense of this theory will be presented in Chapter IV.



## CHAPTER 4

### A DEFENSE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY

This Chapter presents the defense of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of spiritual evolution, on the standpoint that it had solved the dichotomy that existed in the philosophy of evolution. The spiritual evolution theory expounded by Sri Aurobindo is new and thought provoking. It is based on metaphysical and teleological concepts of both East and West. It offers a new paradigm and a new way of thinking as to how the universe has come into existence. It is the integral philosophy on evolution. Sri Aurobindo metaphysical works on evolution have been accepted all over the world, as seen from the interest shown in the research works being conducted on his philosophy and other subjects. The defense study is deemed necessary in view of the fact that there are still conflicting ideas on the philosophy of evolution theory. The discourse in the defense will expose some of the hidden factors apart from what Sri Aurobindo has expressed in his books written on the evolution.

The researcher while defending the theory will argue how Sri Aurobindo has come up with this very intriguing solution on the philosophical problem on evolution. Also on the strategies he had worked out on philosophy of evolution He will analyze the theory of spiritual evolution how it has been expounded so uniquely and in a simple process. It will bring out if there are other philosophers who shared the same view of Sri Aurobindo on the metaphysical involvements of the spirit in evolution. It will also include a defense against the critiques of the theory of spiritual evolution.

#### 4.1. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION ITS NATURE AND TELEOLOGY

The theory of spiritual evolution postulates the involvement of Consciousness as the creative power for existence, Sri Aurobindo says, "It is the energy, the motion, the

movement of Consciousness that created the universe and all that is in it –not only the macrocosm, but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness.” (Aurobindo, 1944, p. 236). Sri Aurobindo based his theory of spiritual evolution on two concepts, metaphysics and teleology, and testimonies from the ancient texts of India. His theory is metaphysical and teleological because, his philosophy of spiritual evolution begins from the spirit then descends down to the inconscient matter. It is in the inconscient matter that the indwelling spirit concealed itself. In the other words, inconscient stage of matter according to Sri Aurobindo is already involved potentially as Consciousness. It will rise higher to which he calls the ‘Supermind’, the last stage of evolution after mind. “It is this Supermind that enable Consciousness to undergo evolution. Thus, the inconscient is the suppressed or involved consciousness, in which there is everything, but nothing formulated or expressed.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 359-60). Inconscient means that it is nothing but the complete sub-conscious, which is the lowest form of consciousness. It is this efficacy and genius of Sri Aurobindo that led professor K D Sethna to eulogize Sri Aurobindo's achievements as a writer and thinker he says,

“He poses a challenge to the conventional mind and habits of thinking, aligned to a logical, linear, and ratiocinative method.” (Sethna, 1977, p. 27).

The spiritual evolution process is the cosmogenesis process of evolution. Thus cosmogenesis is identical with the idea given by Teilhard de Chardin, on the cosmic creation. There is the process of involution whereby the supreme reality descends down, ultimately plunged into inconscient matter. This is the first creation that took place in matter. The answer to question ‘how’ this process of creation is possible is ‘Lila’, the joy of the Creator to create. After the involution, after the downward spiral, the upward spiral begins it is here that Sri Aurobindo has in a very great detail developed the whole concept of spiritual evolution. He points out how from the densest matter, from mineral



life, life gradually began to develop. This concept is now a well known scientific fact, which accepts how from the early form of mineral, then vegetable, then animal and billion of years later man came into the scene. It is the anthropogenesis of Teilhard de Chardin. So, for Sri Aurobindo and Chardin have no problem with scientific interpretation of evolution, in spite of the fact that they believe strongly in the involvement of the spirit in the process of evolution. Whitehead on the other hands, although he believes in the involvement of the spirit in evolution, yet he still has problem with the subjective concept of nature and conception of organism, as he expresses,

“A thoroughgoing evolutionary philosophy is inconsistent with materialism. The aboriginal stuff, or material, from which a materialistic philosophy starts, is incapable of evolution. The material is in itself the ultimate substance. Evolution, on the materialistic theory, is reduced to the role of being another word for the description of the changes of the external relations between portions of matter. There is nothing to evolve, because one set of external relations is as good as any other set of external relations. There can be merely be change, purposeless, and unprogressive.... The doctrine thus cries aloud for a conception of organism as fundamental to nature.” (Whitehead, 1925. p. 157).

But Sri Aurobindo views man not as a being who suddenly descends upon earth or developed from organism. The coming of man on earth through the evolution process is a new dimension that took place in the history of evolution. Sri Aurobindo also holds man as an intermediate creature, based firmly in material consciousness and yet can reach out upwards into the divine consciousness, into what he calls the supramental. It

is this progress according to Sri Aurobindo, by which man will speed up the process of evolution.

#### 4.2. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION CONCEPT: AN ANALYSIS

In developing his spiritual evolution theory, Sri Aurobindo has drawn inspirations from the ancient texts of India, for instance, there are records of the spirit pervading not only in manifested cosmos but also in the un-manifested, even transcending, both in the concept of the purushottama, who is both manifested and unmanifested cosmos and something beyond. This was found recorded in the Upanishads, which runs, *ishavasyamidam sarvam yatkinchya jagatyam jagat*, (manifested cosmos). This basic reality, Sri Aurobindo accepts and he incorporates these ideas in developing his spiritual evolution theory.

The development of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual evolution and its process are found spread out in most of his writings, but more specifically in his opus operandi, *The Life Divine*, where he writes on evolution and man's destiny. The other books where he discussed on evolution are in the *Savitri*, *Synthesis of Yoga* and *Supramental Manifestation*. It is in these books we will find some more of his concepts on spiritual evolution. The defense will focus on the facts presented in the *Life Divine*, where most of his philosophical expressions on evolution were recorded. Prof. E.Olson, in the preface of his book, "*The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*", published by the Christian Literature Society, Bangalore writes, "In his massive book, *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo deals with the Spiritual Evolution of the universe, giving startling new interpretations of old revelations. It is considered as the greatest philosophical work produced in India for centuries." (Olson, 1958. p. ii).

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) besides being the exponent of the spiritual evolution theory also excelled as a writer. Although it is beside the point, but mention must be

made that he had authored a number of voluminous books on various subjects, chief among them is, 'Savitri.' It has been recognized as the longest epic ever to have been written in English. But, his landmark work is his opus operandi, "The Life Divine", a one thousand twelve-page work, written exclusively on Evolution. The other books are, "Synthesis on Yoga" and the "Supramental Manifestation," where he further clarifies his spiritual evolution theory. Besides these, he had also authored many other books on other subjects too exhaustive to mention them here. He also was the editor of the 'Arya', a revolutionary newspaper. Sri Aurobindo is an original thinker, a prolific writer, and a great philosopher on evolution. In recognition of Sri Aurobindo as the original thinker, Dick Bolston, On the Sri Aurobindo's Centenary Symposium (1872-1972) in New York, writing the editorial in the Herald, On the Pioneer of the Future of Man, Bolston writes,

"The resulting tone in Sri Aurobindo's writings is one of authenticity and authority. For instance, in the Life Divine, the Synthesis of Yoga and Essays on Yoga, there is hardly any mention of any past or contemporary writers and no element of polemic. The argument arises entirely from the confrontation of the thinker and situation, from his own sense of the problem at issue and from his own experience and data relevant to their situations." (Bolston, 1972, p. VIII)

#### **4.3. IN DEFENSE OF THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY.**

The defense of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution generated from a brief account that he tries to solve the problem that existed in the philosophy of evolution. Evolution and human destiny remained a persistent problem and they are uniquely intriguing and baffling, especially with the new evolution theories expounded by scientists and philosophers in the nineteenth century. The discovery of new planets, the

advancements in science, technology and religious movements in the last century, has further compounded the theory on evolution. But the evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo, through his integral and synthetic approaches, was able to forge a new theory involving spirit in the process of evolution. He even predicted that man is not the last rung of the ladder of evolution process. He says, 'Man is a transitional being.' (Aurobindo, 1939, p.706). What so remarkable about his theory is that, evolution he said, will slowly becomes conscious of itself, and will move to a future higher evolution, and certainly, it must be the evolution of a spiritual being, who will become more conscious of himself. Then it would transforms itself from a spiritualized Mind to Supermind, which is the summit of evolution. He assured us he says, "A Supramental change of the whole substance of being and therefore necessary of all its characters, powers, movements takes place when the involved Supermind in Nature emerges to meet and join with the Supramental light and power descending from the Supernature." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.962).

In the arguments for the spiritual evolution theory, Teilhard de Chardin, whose prophetic vision and deep conviction to evolution becomes a strong ally for Sri Aurobindo. In line with Sri Aurobindo evolution theory, Chardin also said that it is nothing less than the pervading spirit that is involved in evolution. He confirms this, he says, "one sentence will serve all answers: By becoming. For God is the reinforcement of evolution." (Chardin, 1971, p.92). Again, besides the spiritual evolution, Teilhard de Chardin because of his sincerity and the temerity to probe into things, has comes to certain conclusions regarding the Superman or the Supermind of Sri Aurobindo, he says,

“The outcome of the world, the gates of the future; the entry into Superman—these are not thrown open to few of the privileged groups nor to one chosen people to the exclusion of all others”. (Chardin, 1971, p.244).

Sri Aurobindo following Chardin ideas on evolution said, man as he is now, is too imperfect for that transformation. Sri Aurobindo and Chardin believe that a new man or a divinized being will be the next evolution to be transformed into a Superman or Supermind, and the transformation if it takes place individually. Therefore Chardin argues, “But it is also true that our salvation is not pursued or achieved except in solidarity with justification of the ‘whole body of the elect’. In a real sense, only one man will be saved; Christ the head and the living summary of humanity.” (Chardin, 1957, p.148). According to Bhattacharya, Sri Aurobindo following the traditional Indian philosophy of individual salvation have the same idea, he says, “we have to note that Chardin and Aurobindo’s Superman is different from the Superman envisioned by Nietzsche.” (Bhattacharya, 1971, p.23). At the same time, Sri Aurobindo while criticizing Nietzsche Superman, on the basis that, “A Nietzschean supermanhood, for example, --can only colossalise the human creature, it cannot transform or divinize him.” (Aurobindo, 1939. p.722).

At the same time, it was found that the transformation was considered only in terms of individual evolution, but not at all, as cosmic as in the West. In India, there are several schools of thought, such as the Vedanta of Sankhya School<sup>1</sup> which treats the whole question about the world as unreal; they denied spiritual involvement in evolution. They believe that Brahman the Spirit is indivisible. But in modern

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<sup>1</sup>Vedanta of Sankhya Ch 4, 141-142– a system of philosophy and spiritual practice; the analysis, the enumeration, and discriminative setting forth of the principles of over bearing; the abstract and analytical realization of truth.

<sup>2</sup>Sankara ( 788-820 CE) – a noted thinker of the Vedantic school, He berated the materialistic interpretation of the school’s existentialism.

thought, it stems from philosophical interaction in compliance with the modern scientific observations. In the West, people strive to make complete scheme and institutions of the physical method. In the East, it may again be mentioned Sankara tried psychological elements researching the total evolutionary process by analyzing mind and sense, but by ignoring nature and the cosmos, they too ended as failures. So overall, Sri Aurobindo as a master synthesizer, it seemed he had picked up the threads of both the East and the West, and with his own experience, he then kneaded his synthesis, into the spiritual evolution. This only reflects on the dexterity and strength of his contributions to the philosophy of Evolution. The end results was a more cogent and simple theory of spiritual evolution. V.M. Reddy rightly commented, he says,

“Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is a new creative synthesis which holds together and reconciles many contradictions. The Logic of the Infinite and the Logic of finitude appear in it side by side. It is difficult to write a philosophy of this kind, without sacrificing its subtlety and fineness.”(Reddy, 1966, p. XV).

It is on this line of thought from Reddy, the Sankhya and Sankara, strayed away from the main stream on spiritual involvement, and are bereft of this reconciliation approach. But Sri Aurobindo followed the trend he synthesizes those opposites of the East which is spirit, and those of the West which is matter. And, it is on this integration effort that S.K. Maitra aptly comments, “It is in Sri Aurobindo that the East and the West have met.”(Maitra,1956,p.3). Further he emphasizes, he says.” This meeting is not a mere hand-shaking, but there is a real synthesis of these two types of thought in him. There is even something more, a fulfillment of what each of them aims at but has not been able to realize.” (Maitra, 1956, p.32).



S.K Maitra has aptly commented on the, 'meeting and hand-shaking between East and West in Sri Aurobindo', the researcher stressed that the synthesis should be of particular interests to philosophy. Otherwise, the standpoints on which each camp argues on the spirituality and materialistic aspects of evolution remains in isolation without any hands shaking. It may be argued that Sri Aurobindo has taken the right initiative through his integral philosophy otherwise it seemed that they will be maintaining their standpoint without ever being able to solve the evolution problem in philosophy. If we look at spirit and things that are spiritual, it refers to transcending and rejecting the world, and is things of the world. Then, the materialists are talking about the one side of the coin only. But since both sides of the coin is needed; a holistic and synthetic approach as Sri Aurobindo had done is only way that can solve this dichotomy in the philosophy. But if we consider spirit as pure spirit, an Absolute that has no relation with existence, as in the West, then it becomes static we are again only considering one side of the same coin. The same can be said with the materialistic and mechanical emphasis of the West. It too, becomes static and detrimental to the overall progress in philosophy. In this respect the spiritual evolution offers a respite from this dilemma in philosophy.

If we look from the arguments so far, if the Western metaphysics on the ultimate truth is the Absolute or Absolute Consciousness, it needed Sri Aurobindo to synthesize it with the metaphysics of the East, recognizes Brahman as the Absolute the Supreme consciousness of existence. Then only the reconciliation is possible for Sri Aurobindo clarifies the 'How' of this synthesis he states, "we have found already in the cosmic consciousness a meeting-place where Matter becomes real to Spirit, Spirit becomes real to Matter. For in the cosmic consciousness Mind and Life are intermediaries and no longer seen with ordinary egoistic materiality, agents of

separate, promoters of artificial quarrel between position and negative principles of the same unknowable Reality.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.25-6).

#### 4.4 SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THE NEW APPROACH TO THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Sri Aurobindo's approach on the spiritual evolution is the key and a great contribution to the philosophy of evolution. The first approach that he made is to recognize that spiritual aspirations is innate in man, because of the insistence of the consciousness-force which is the sole reason for man's existence., he says, “Out of the seed there evolves that which is already in the seed, pre-existent in being, pre-destined in its will to become pre-arranged in the delight of the becoming.” (Aurobindo, 1939 p.112). His second approach on the spiritual evolution is that East and West have two ways of looking at life, which in fact are only opposite sides of the same reality. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this he says, “The passionate aspiration of man upward to the Divine has not sufficiently related to the descending movement of the Divine, leading downward to embrace eternally its manifestation. Its meaning in Matter has not been so well understood as Its Truth in the spirit.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.24). The third approach is through the integral philosophy. In this approach he tries to consolidate the philosophies of the West with the Vedantic philosophy of evolution of the East. This integral view on the part of Sri Aurobindo, the researcher believes is his effort to go beyond West and East, but to concentrate on the rich resources of Consciousness. This can be confirmed from what Sri Aurobindo says, “In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as a sole truth and to dominate the concept of life.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.9).

Sri Aurobindo realized that a holistic science is rapidly gaining ground on the knowledge about the universe. He also recognized the necessary of harmonizing various discordant elements stubbornly still persisted in the theory of evolution. The tool he used for societal harmony and unity in the theory of evolution is his reconciliation approach, where one recognized the others values and understandings. Sri Aurobindo through his spiritual evolution has proved Rudyard Kipling's was wrong when he declared, "East is East and West is West; neither the twain can meet," (Kipling). Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of integration and his ingenuity in building up the spiritual evolution theory has proved this. "The East and West have met commented in Sri Aurobindo", said professor Maitra, (cited p.136). In fact, in Post Modern thought, the East-West idiocy does not have a place anymore in modern philosophical thought. Humanity, through the Spiritual evolution theory, now demonstrates that, there is no place for contradiction between the East and West any more, as Kipling has predicted. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo's effort is a giant leap for humanity in term of the theory of evolution. He was able to fuse together spirit and mind, with the spirit as the dynamic force of the Reality and the creative conscious energy, and Matter, the vibrant energy that was conceived within it, life and consciousness have finally become one force of Life and Mind.

Secondly, the spiritual evolution theory was able to solve another long conflict that existed within Western philosophy on the question of whether Reality is Existence or Reality is Values. In the West, the Reality is Value, whereas in the East, God and Absolute are one and the same Reality. It is both the subject as well as the object. The spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo settled this conflict of ideas by positing Reality as Existence. Sri Aurobindo confirming this he said, "The cosmic-terrestrial view which we may take next as the opposite of the supracosmic,

considers cosmic existence as real; it goes farther and accepts it as the only reality, and its view is confined, ordinarily, to life in the material universe..."(Aurobindo,1939,p.670).

Lastly, Sri Aurobindo in his approach to the theory of spiritual evolution conceded that it may not be identified with scientific theories of evolution. It is the metaphysical approach on evolution. He has therefore developed it from a standpoint that it has its own inherent justification as a theory. He clarifies this he says, 'A spiritual evolution an evolution of Consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence.'(Aurobindo,1939. p. 824).

#### **4.5. DEFENSE OF THE INTUITIVE APPROACH FOR THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY**

Intuition is the power of the brain to concentrate and understand situations, without the need for conscious reasoning or study. Sri Aurobindo used intuitional knowledge successfully to fathom into the Reality and its existence, its involvement in the evolution process. He did not outright condemn reason as the sources of knowledge. So like Bergson and Chardin, he emphasized that Reality can be known by interaction only after considering the argument arrived at through reason. That is how he avoids committing mistakes by not using intuition solely to arrive at the truth of the spiritual involvement. He therefore says, "All this our reason cannot grasp because it is the instrument of an ignorance with a very limited vision and a small stock of accumulated and not always very or reliable knowledge and because too it has no means of direct awareness; for this is the difference between intuition and intellect, that intuition is born of a direct awareness while intellect is the an indirect action of a knowledge which constructs itself with difficulty out of the unknown

from signs and indications and gathered data.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p. 330). He was able to draw the involvement of the spirit in evolution, due to the highest intuition he could arrive at, through extreme concentration. Because for him intuition, can create its own logic and need not wait for logic to come up with reason. In fact this is the intuition of Bergson, which Sri Aurobindo picked up and explained how it is used and how the spirit is involved in evolution. Prof. Reddy explain how Sri Aurobindo avoided the pitfall of avoiding reason, he states, “Aurobindo makes this compromise to avoid Plato's tragedy, not by lowering the intuitions, nor by raising the logic, as Aristotle does but by further raising the intuitions.”(Reddy, 1966, p.147)

M. Rafique in his book ‘Sri Aurobindo Ideals of Human Life,’ argued for Sri Aurobindo's intuitive approach on the knowledge about the Reality is unique in comparison with that of the Western approaches. He states, ‘the history of the Western philosophy on knowledge, they have different Schools that are laid an exclusive emphasis on different methods. So their philosophies on knowledge have become one-sided’ (Rafique, 1987, p.28). This is true, for instance the School of Empiricism held that all knowledge is derived from experience that is, from sense-perception and denies the existence of the innate ideas or prior truth. It stands in sharp antagonism with rationalism. Rationalism on the other hand assigns reason as against sense-experience. It also opposed to any knowledge based on faith. Then, more or less in agreement with Sri Aurobindo, the School of Institutionalism on the other hands, maintains that knowledge can be apprehended directly and immediately without any help from either from experience or reason. When we reflect upon these various methods of knowledge, we find all of them do possess some elements of values, but individually they present only partial truth. It is here that the synthesis approach of the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo comes in handy. Sri

Aurobindo used three sources of knowledge, which includes the discovery of the secret psychic entity, the realization of eternal self in all, and the knowledge of the Divine, Cosmic as well as Transcendent. He uses the same method to build his spiritual evolution theory. Raja Rammohun Roy in his, "Metaphysical Background of Sri Aurobindo's Social Philosophy" remarks thus, "Knowledge, according to Sri Aurobindo, is an integral consciousness of the Reality. It is not created but discovered. It is not an activity but truth itself..... It is the very stuff of man's spiritual consciousness." (Roy, 1991, p. 30-1).

#### 4.6 ARGUMENTS FOR THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY

Spiritual Evolution implied that the Spirit is involved in evolution. In order to examine Sri Aurobindo's theory that there is the involvement of the spirit in his evolution, let us quote Hegel who said, "Spirit is in its simple truth, Consciousness and forces its moment apart. Action divides it into substance, and consciousness of substance as well as consciousness. Substance as the universal as the essence end, stands over against the individualized reality; the finite middle term is self consciousness which, being the implicit unity of itself and substance, now becomes that unity explicitly and unite the universal essence and its individualized reality." (Hegel, 1977, p.266). There is one fundamental fact that evidences abounds in Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution is very much in accord with the spiritual insight of the teachings of the Vedic seers and ancient Indian Vedantic thinkers, who say, "The bodiless and immortal Life and Light is Brahman" (Brihadaranya Upanishad IV 1.1, 8). Besides these observations, he also recognized differences and made a lot of arguments especially against the latter. The differences arise mostly because they clash with his spiritual experiences. His metaphysical conclusions are found to have resonance and amplify his experience and the knowledge derived from his long



association with the study on human-nature. We can testify that Sri Aurobindo made many original contributions to the metaphysical understanding of such intricacies as the theory on evolution. In praise of the spiritual explanation on evolution, Chardin says, "Those who adopt the spiritual explanation are right when they defend so vehemently a certain transcendence of man over the rest of nature." (Chardin, 1955. p.169). Over and above, his background in Western education and languages, his knowledge of the Eastern philosophy, enabled him to forge a theory that is universally acceptable. Testimonies to this can be found in the increased numbers Sri Aurobindo Study centers all over the world and also many Post-Graduate thesis and Doctorate dissertations on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo are being conducted. A.C. Bhattacharya in his *Sri Aurobindo and Bergson, A Synthetic Study*, gives a very clear explanation on the East-West philosophical differences, writes, "The world is the same at any place; the fundamental truths are all the same; the problem of life are also the same; the necessities and laws of nature do not exhibit different characters." (Bhattacharya, 1972, p.14). It is on this observation made by Bhattacharya, who testifies that Sri Aurobindo's effort to integrate various methods of knowledge that existed in the West with those of the Advaitian philosophy of the East has made his theory of spiritual evolution an undeniable asset in philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo's great contribution to philosophy is seen when he expertly handled a long standing problem on the theory of evolution, and the problem on knowledge of the reality. He accepted the cosmic view of evolution of the West, but rejected its mechanical interpretations. At the same time he rejected the individualistic approach of Indian philosophy and so he substituted it with the cosmic outlook of the West. He clashed with Sankara, also an Advaitist like him, from the East for rejecting the involvement of the spirit in evolution. (A distinction between Sankara (788-820 CE)

an Advaitist, from Sankhya the Indian school of Thought should be noted). So, regarding the involvement of the spirit in evolution against their argument, S. K. Maitra supported Sri Aurobindo, he pointed out that both Sankara, and the Sankhya school are wrong, he says, "Sankara in his commentary on the Brahma (Sutras 2; Pada 2, Sutras 1- 10) has shown how absolutely illogical is the claim of the Sankhya that an unconscious Prakrti evolve for the sake the Purusas." (Maitra, 1956. p. 51). Sri Aurobindo regards evolution as spiritual and opposed to mechanical evolution. He also think that the main hindrance in the realization of the divine life is that our human nature is still tempted towards its indulgence in physical grossness and inertia, not readily respond to the demand of the spirit. He clarifies this he says, "It is only the emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental supernature that can affect this evolutionary miracle." (Aurobindo, 1939. p. 1258).

On further analysis, Sri Aurobindo's metaphysical philosophy on spiritual evolution shows that both in the East as well as in the West both have genuine philosophical approach to life. These differences can be fused together to bring out a more balanced and sound metaphysical explanation to life. So Sri Aurobindo has made an earnest effort by taking out the very best ideas from the East and from the West, from the Old and the New and combined them all with his own experience, using the metaphysics of the Spirit as the main ingredient. The blend is the new innovative thought, the outcome of which is a new theory of evolution. Through this blending he comes to the conclusion on the emergence or evolution of the Sachchidananda, out of His involved state in matter, marks the creation of the world. Sri Aurobindo says that, "The world expresses a foreseen Truth, obeys a

predetermined will, realizes an original formative self-vision--it is growing image of a divine creation." (Aurobindo, 1939. p.191). It is based on his genius in the construction of the new approach on evolution theory, that the researcher has made the offer in Chapter 2, to consider Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution as the new paradigm in the history of evolution theory.

We have already discussed, Sri Aurobindo's whole philosophy centered round evolution. He, like Teilhard de Chardin, is a strong believer in evolution and the involvement of the spirit in its process of evolution. Both condemn the idea of creation without evolution. Sri Aurobindo in his philosophy of evolution covers every aspect concerning mind, life, and matter. In the process he unravels all the hidden truths and the higher ranges of the spirit with a comprehensive outlook of the philosophy of religion. As seen, evolution is the main tenet of his philosophy. In the whole range of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, Professor S. K.Maitra observed, "he envisaged a world in which spirit and matter, life and mind are all essential ingredients and they work harmoniously together where truth is achieved not by negation or annulment of any of these, but by a transformation of them in the light of the highest." (Maitra, 1956, p.103). This observation by Prof. Maitra, we can say sums up the governing principle of Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics on evolution as the power of nature and the essence of the Consciousness-Force of Sachchidananda, (the Sat, Cit and Ananda) Existence, Consciousness – Force and Bliss, the sole reason for evolution.

Thus, we find that the dichotomy and the dogmatic philosophical speculation on matter and spirit experienced in both East and West finally were resolved by Sri Aurobindo. He was able to resolve this outstanding philosophical problem, through his evolution and involution processes, demonstrating how they had been integrated

together metaphysically. Haridas Choudhury in his book, "The Philosophy of Integralism," commenting on this integral philosophy and metaphysical Interpretation on the Sachchidananda (Sat, Cit and Ananda) or (Existence, Consciousness–Force and Bliss) and the delight of creation; said that; "it is the configuration found in the spiritual evolution theory only." (Choudhury, 1987, p.200). We noted here, that H. Choudhury has made a very close observation on the aspects of the total involvement of the spirit in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution. The involvement of the spirit in evolution is convincingly demonstrated in the Chapter 2 page 43, Scheme 1.

We observe in the Scheme 1, Sri Aurobindo arranged the principles of existence of our present cosmic existence into two columns, one for involution and the second for evolution. In the first column, we see the involution or descent process and in the second, for the ascent process. In the first column, there are four divine principles or the higher quaternary. In the second column are the finite manifestations, which are the lower quaternary. Between the two quaternaries, the separation is called a 'veil', which Sri Aurobindo also called it 'ignorance'. The psyche in the second column breaks through the veil, allowing the life divine to illuminate the lower quaternary. In this scheme he explained that, "the divine descends from pure existence through the play of consciousness – force and bliss and the creative medium of super-mind into cosmic being; we ascend from matter through the developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of super-mind toward the divine being." (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 624).

It is only after analyzing the scheme of involution and evolution that we come to know that Sri Aurobindo began his plot of his theory on spiritual evolution from the Supreme Consciousness as the pivot. It showed part of the Absolute Reality, the

supreme consciousness, descending into matter or what he called the inconscience matter. The spirit had already involved in matter, but remained in a dormant stupor-like stage. Since life is already existed in the inconscience matter, the spirit's descent is like a wake-up call to that life. It will make sure that progress of life began rudimentarily, and then evolved into a more complex organisms minutely (more or less the same idea on organisms of Darwin and Whitehead). Then, following the general evolution concept, after a lapse of long a period of time, mind began to emerge among living creatures. It is understood, that it is not a sudden upsurge from matter into living creatures or human beings. This developments from rudimentary to more complex form of life according to Sri Aurobindo, took ions of years to finally reach the present stage of human. Thus, gradually it brought in to the manifestation mind, life, and matter. The manifestation of the Supermind in the universe will take more or less the same number of years, to reach the stage of what Sri Aurobindo predicted the appearance of the Supermind, the divinized man. On his contention, Sri Aurobindo idea is supported by O.P. Mathur, who also agrees on the involvement of the spirit in the evolution process. He even claimed that this has been scientifically proved, he says, "If his philosophy can be defined as spiritual nationalism, his thought can be defined as spiritual evolution. He points out how from densest matter, from mineral life, life gradually beginning to develop. This is a well known scientific fact. From .....matter, the early form of life, from mineral then to vegetable, then animal- and billion of years later finally the stage comes when man appears on the scene, anthropogenesis." (Mathur, 1997, p. 28).

The evolution process in the reversed order, as shown in **Scheme I**, from page 43, it runs as follows:

#### 4.6.1 Scheme-2

**Fig. 2, Reverse Process of the Spiritual Evolution Theory**

Evolution	Involution
Matter	Supermind
Life	Bliss
Psyche	Consciousness – Force
Mind	Existence

(A reverse of scheme-I, rearranged by the researcher)

The researcher would like to clarify on the ascending process as shown in the reversed **Scheme 2**. In scheme-1 it is the involution process, the evolution process in this scheme is shown in scheme-2, that the mind will transcend to the supermind or as S.K. Maitra termed it the 'home-coming of the spirit'. A question may be posed to Sri Aurobindo as to the necessity for the spirit to be transformed. But most probably, he would fall back on the metaphysical reasons, that creation is but for the delight of the Spirit to transform or expand itself in space and time, and once the game or 'Lila' is over, he would like to return to his own self. But the game, we can argue is a purposeless purpose a spontaneous self-manifestations of the Divine. It is completed only when the mind stage will be transformed into the Supermind. It is at this stage of the transformation, that the game will be completed, when the spirit would revert back to the Sachchidananda. The transformation the researcher thinks is necessary due to the fact that a human being is an unfinished product. According to Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, he is still too imperfect now for a complete transformation. At the same time Sri Aurobindo terms man as a transitional being, who needs to be transformed to a superman or supermind first, ultimately back to the Spirit itself. Another question may be posed to Sri Aurobindo, as to whether the



transformation of life-mind to a supermind is possible? Most definitely in clarifies to this question Sri Aurobindo says:

“Lila the play, the child’s joy, the poet’s joy, the actor’s joy the mechanician’s joy or the soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and recreating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation, Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground.” (Aurobind,1939.P.15 ).

If we reflect back on the scheme in figs 1 and 2, evolution is conditioned by involution. The metaphysical explanation will be that without involution there will never be a possibility for evolution to take place. The two schemes demonstrated the metaphysical geniuses initiated by Sri Aurobindo in constructing his theory of Spiritual Evolution. It is understood that the process in itself is the effort to merge Spirit and Matter, forcing ‘delights’ to be instrumental in the creation of the universe. We can say that Sri Aurobindo has been successful in this effort, using his spiritual evolution theory as a tool to solve the mentioned problem in philosophy

In order to arrive at a further philosophical conclusion on his spiritual evolution theory, we need to discuss Sri Aurobindo’s metaphysical construction of his theory of evolution. At the same time to examine it more closely on the whole gamut of his evolution process. Sri Aurobindo’s metaphysical construction of the spiritual evolution has a special feature of his own. We have seen in his theory of evolution, there is a double evolution; the evolution of external nature in the form of both life and body, and the within (same idea of Chardin), the evolution of the inner spiritual being, he calls psyche or soul. It may be argued why this double evolution has to take place at all. Whether, the inner evolution can keep pace with the external evolution. Sri Aurobindo would answer that it is possible. Evidences from his

writings showed there are three stages in the evolution of life, namely, material life or sub-conscious; vital life or conscious; and mental life or self-conscious. Since these developments did not take place simultaneously at the same time, but their developments are at different stages. We may conclude that there will be no conflict between the inner and external evolution. In fact the idea on the 'External' and the 'within; of Sri Aurobindo is identical with the idea of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who speaks about the 'external' and the 'within' of the universe, he says, "It is used to denote the 'psychic' face of the stuff of cosmos enclosed from the beginning of time within the narrow scope of the early earth. In that fragment of sidereal matter which has just been isolated, as in other parts of the universe, the exterior world must inevitably be lined at every point with the interior one. ... Matter no longer spreads out round itself in a closer volume. How will its 'inner' layer react to such an Involution." (Chardin, 1955.p.72).

Hence from the arguments above we can say that the double evolution (interior and exterior), for Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin is a necessity priority for the completion of the evolution process. Sri Aurobindo clarifies his claim, he says,

"In a world of involution and evolution, not physical form only, but conscious being through life and mind to spirit, such an isolated assumption of life in human body could not be the rule of the individual soul's existence It would be quite a meaningless and inconsequential arrangement, a freak by which the nature and the system of things have no place, a contrary violence which would break the rhythm of the spirit's self manifestation." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.758).

Secondly, the other measure that we need to find out is; what makes the spiritual evolution theory to stand out from the rests? The answer is not far to seek, we can argue that it has its own feature; it is based on metaphysics, but without any

resemblance to the scientific theory on evolution. It deals with the evolution of consciousness and the progressive manifestation of life and mind and soul (psyche) from inconscient matter. But scientific evolution is concerned solely with the development of life and mind, the soul is completely ignored. The reason is not far to seek, since Sri Aurobindo has already pointed out that, "Science and metaphysics, (whether founded on pure intellectual speculation or as in India, ultimately on a spiritual vision of things and spiritual experience), have each its own province and method or inquiry. Science; cannot dictate its conclusions on metaphysics any more than metaphysics can impose its conclusions on Science." (Aurobindo, 1939, fn, p.178). But Teilhard de Chardin has a different view on the contribution of science to evolution theory, he said, 'The evidence of science is necessarily, and always will be since the experimental background of dogma coincides with that of evolution.' (Chardin, 1971, p.196). Sri Aurobindo as we have seen may argue against Chardin stand-point, since he approaches evolution from the scientific experiences in paleontology. But the researcher thinks this will not make any difference on the issue of evolution process since both agreed on the involvement of the spirit, which is the main contention of this discussion.

Thirdly, another aspect to be clarified is on Sri Aurobindo's claim that evolution has its bases primarily in involution. Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin had made this very clear as we had seen. All that which has evolved originated from the involutionary formation of matter. We know that matter is not the creative power. The creative power identified by Sri Aurobindo is the original creative power or evolutionary power which is none other than inconscient material's power of Life-Consciousness or Mind-Consciousness. Teilhard de Chardin supports Sri Aurobindo by attributing the spirit as the evolutionary power

he confirmed that, "to fulfill and to purify the world for God, to unify it by uniting it organically with himself 'How' does he unify it? By partial immersing himself in things, by becoming 'element' and then, from this point of vantage is the heart of matter, assuming the control and leadership of what we now call evolution Christ principle of universal vitality." (Chardin, 1955. p.294). Sri Aurobindo showing his appreciations with the support from Chardin, says,

"Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original involutionary element and factor. Evolution is inverse action of the involution: what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in evolution; what was original and primal in involution, is in the involution that last and supreme emergence." (Aurobindo, 1939 p. 853).

Fourthly, the other feature that we need to confirm is his philosophy on evolution is the simple clear-cut it shows definite stages as indicated in the scheme-1. This we can see when the higher descends into the lower; it alters the lower and modified and is diminished by it, which means that it assumes a new identity. But, Sri Aurobindo cautions us against any misinterpretation in saying that, "it is not a logical series of separate segments; it is the totality of ascending powers of being which penetrates and dovetails and exercises in action on its power of natural modification." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.955). Chardin giving his conclusions on involution as a process of evolution, he supports Sri Aurobindo's view on the idea of involution, says, "the passage, for life, from state of relative irreversibility (the physical impossibility of the cosmic involution to stop, once it has begun) to a state of absolute irreversibility (the radical dynamic incompatibility of a certain prospect of total death with continuation of an evolution that has become reflective)." (Chardin, 1955, p.304). Sri Aurobindo, although he tries to explain his

thoughts logically as Chardin, but since he did not trust logic, but relies more on reason, explaining his thoughts he says, "In ordinary tongue of metaphysical thought we have to be content with a distant indication, an approximation by abstractions, which may still be of some service to our intellect, for it is this kind of speech which suits our method of logical and rational understanding ; but if it is to be real of service, the intellect must consent to pass out of the bounds of a finite logic and accustom itself to the logic of the infinite." (Aurobindo,1939, p.323). The other aspect which the spiritual evolution process of Sri Aurobindo demonstrates, is the heightening and widening of consciousness. This implied that the consciousness ascends to a new level in the evolution process. The lower levels are taken up to the higher, a new integration takes place, because of this, but the process of going up is slow and difficult.

We can conclude that the above analysis traced the ultimate aim of the spiritual evolution, which is to establish the Divine on earth-consciousness. This, according to Sri Aurobindo, will lead to the self-affirmation of the spirit, free from the limitation of the present mind, for he said, "Man must become a superman. Superhumanity must become the normal nature of ignorance seeking knowledge and growing into knowledge, so supermind must be established on a basis of knowledge growing into its greater light." (Aurobindo,1939, p . 890).

What Sri Aurobindo foresees here is the same view expressed by Chardin, that man is not the last rung of the ladder of evolution. He will develop into a higher being, a divinized being, a superman.

#### **4.6.2. Creative power in the Spiritual Evolution Theory**

There are several reasons why we have to accept Sri Aurobindo's concept of descent and ascent in evolution. It is the same idea as taught by the Saiva School of

Thought. Although Aurobindo is often branded a Neo-Vedantist, yet he does not follow the traditional Vedantist views like Ramanuja or Shankaras. He does not subscribe to the Sankara's doctrine of Maya either, nor does he agree with the Sankhya's materialistic interpretations of the world. But, on the "Why" and "How" the world has come into being, he follows the teachings found in the ancient text of the Upanishads, which says:

"For who could live or breathe, if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell? From delight all these are born, by delight they exist and grow, to delight they return". (Taittiriya Upanishad).

Sri Aurobindo reinterprets the Upanishadic verse above, associating it with the vedantic teaching that the Absolute Delight as the source and subsistence of existence. It is the beginning and the end of this resource of the whole creation. Further, we find him associating Ananda of the Absolute as the principle the attraction between the creation and the Creator. Then regarding the relation between this Delight and the cosmos, Aurobindo associate it with 'Lila' or a play of the eternals, he says, "creating and recreating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.103). So, Divine Existence is one essential mode of Existence, as it manifests itself also in his self-manifestation. Sri Aurobindo clarifies this, he quotes the ancient he writes, 'If there were not, 'says the ancient seer', 'this all-encompassing ether of Delight of existence in which we dwell, if that delight were not our ether, then none could breathe, none could live.' (Aurobindo, 1939, p.266). Again in the section on Delight of Existence; the Solution, of his book the Life Divine, he again emphasizes the delight of existence, clarifying this, he says,



‘Delight is existence, delight is the secret of creation, delight is the root of birth, delight is the cause of remaining in existence, delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases. “From Ananda”, say the Upanishads, “all existence is born, by Ananda it remains in being and increases, to Ananda it departs.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.101).

Sri Aurobindo explained that in this world, there is both suffering and happiness, but they are both the substance of delight. Delight Ananda pervades the world like ether in life. In its deepest layers of this creation of suffering and happiness is the outcome of Delight. So Delight constitutes and contains our existence. And it is because of Delight, despite all problems in life, man still enjoys living. But we have to understand literally that this delight is different from human joy and pleasure. So this Delight keeps on vibrating against all odds, because delight is the root of our existence. The creative poise of the Sat-Cit-Ananda, the supreme creative Reality is Ananda, for the very stuff of its being is constituted of Ananda. This is precisely what Sri Aurobindo is implying while expressing his views on the Delight as the source of all creations.

The researcher agrees with Sri Aurobindo on delight for creation. The evolution of life and all that is in this world needs not really have to have a reason for existence. Existence is the will of the Delight to recreate and to expand in it self. That should satisfy even the most inquisitive mind on the question “why,” as there is no other reason whatsoever for our existence other than the delights of the Creator. Again, if we ask the question “How”, Sri Aurobindo, in answer to this, he would again simply say that it is the delight of the Creator to create and to multiply that is all, because the Creator has everything in him, he does not need anything. He gave a very clear clarification, by repeating the answers he had given on the two

previous questions, that the absolute reality is the Sachchidananda, the Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss (Sat, Cit and Ananda). The world being what it is, it could not be otherwise than the delight of “Ananda” and “Bliss”. Therefore, there is no other reason, other than the delights, the joy and happiness of the creator. The self delight of the creator or the “Lila” or a “game” the Gods plays, that the world had been created. Clarifying the “why”, as the delight in the game, he explains further, “We may regard or describe it as Lila, “the play, the child’s joy, the poet’s joy, the mechanician’s joy of the soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and recreating himself in himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation, himself the play, himself the player, himself the play ground.” (Aurobindo,1939,pp.102-103).

Why Sri Aurobindo stresses on the delight for creation by the creator? The researcher assumes that Sri Aurobindo is trying to find the reason for the “why” and the “how” of creation, since this is where the philosophical problem on evolution lies. He finds that the ideas found in the Upanishads which says that there is no other reason for creation other than Brahman’s or Sachchidananda’s delights and bliss for creation is tenable, and should satisfy human aspirations to know the ‘How’ of evolution. We confirm further that Sachchidananda for Sri Aurobindo is the Alpha and the Omega, the same as the Alpha and the Omega for Chardin. In reality Sachchidananda has no need of the world. He created our world for the sheer joy of it. Sri Aurobindo also explains this concept of creation through descent and ascent (involution and evolution), which served the purpose in solving the philosophical and metaphysical problem that existed between the spirit and matter, a long existing philosophical problem. In the process, according to his integral philosophy, he was able to forge together Eastern spirituality and the materiality of the West. He

concludes this he says, "We arrive at a true solution of the problem we are seeking. The self of things is an infinite indivisible existence, the essential nature or knowledge of itself is, an infinite inalienable delight of being in its formlessness and in all forms of these self existences preserves perpetually its self-delight. As apparent in conscience of matter ... this delight is its own delight, but in our ordinary views of self and things which awake and move only upon surfaces, it remains hidden, profoundly subconscious. As it is within all forms, so it is within all experience." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.100). Finally he sums up and concludes "this is the play of the One, the Lord, All as it reveals itself to our liberated and enlightened knowledge from the conceptual standpoint of his material universe." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.111).

#### 4.6.3. Evolution is the Involvement of the Spirit

According to S. Radhakrishnan, one of the great philosopher of India, "The greatest, vastness, and the most difficult of all cosmic problem is that of the origin and development of the world—the 'question of creation', in a word." (S. Radhakrishnan, 1965, P.551).

The spiritual evolution theory which solves the cosmic problem, receive support from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a great Indian philosopher and the ex-President of the republic of India, pointed out on the origin and the development of the world and creation as one of the cosmic problem in philosophy. Sri Aurobindo was able to solve this problem posit by Dr. Radhakrisnan, by involving the spirit in the evolution process. The spiritual evolution theory as seen from analysis showed that it has been constructed from very simple and easily discernable ontological arguments. It is an integral philosophy of evolution. It bases itself in that, if God exists and he is instrumental in the existence of the universe, there is no reason for

him to hide behind jargons and problematic theory. Sri Aurobindo seems to realize this fact, Dr. Thomas Padiyath, in his book, "Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo: Potential for East-West Engagement," praises of Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead, he comments, "My contention is that Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead are constructors of a suggestive post / modern world view in their own respective ways by proposing a new paradigm for doing metaphysics and thereby opening up the possibility for a better engagement between East and West. For metaphysical thinking this suggestive paradigm points to a 'middle way' which they represents and further exemplified in their philosophies: the West's reawakening to the Truth of the Spirit and East's reawakening to the Truth of Life and Light of their awareness that Truth is beyond all determinations and comprehensions." (Padiyath, 1988, p.32).

Sri Aurobindo, the proponent of spiritual evolution theory, argued that the universe and our very own existence is a sort of refraction of the divine existence in us. In Scheme, fig-I, the eight principles of the involution and evolution process, had aptly demonstrated in a clear and succinct manner. Anyone could follow it very easily without any further clarifications. His philosophy on evolution is the descent of heaven on earth. His spiritual evolution shows there is an inner urge, a divine spirit that has an aspiration for something divine. Sri Aurobindo is convinced that this urge in man, is his aspiration for something perfect, something higher than himself. He says, "The earliest pre-occupation of man in his awakening thought ..., manifests itself in the divination of Godhead the impulse towards perfection, the search after the pure truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of secret immortality." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.1). Sri Aurobindo assured that we can become divine human, even in this world itself, it will only be right to quote lines taken from *The Life Divine* itself, where Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness – Force, and Bliss, and Creative medium of the Supermind into a cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, Soul and Mind, and an illuminating Medium of Supermind toward the Divine Being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemisphere, is where mind and Super-mind meet with a veil between them. The rending of the veil is a condition of the divine life in humanity, for by that rending, by illumining descend of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all comprehending Supermind. The Soul (psyche) realizes its divine self in all-processing, all blissful Ananda, life repossesses its divine power in the play of the Omnipresent Conscious-Force, and Matter opens to its divine liberty as a form of divine Existence.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.264).

In this excerpt, as understood by the researcher, Sri Aurobindo tries to clarify the practicability of the transformation from Matter to Life, and Life to Mind, then to Supermind, the Consciousness-Force and Bliss. There has to be a change first from an essential possibility into a dynamic potentiality, in order that evolution could take place. It is therefore imperative that, in order to fully grasp the whole evolution process as shown in the scheme, Fig –I, we have to understand the psychology with which Sri Aurobindo constructed his evolution theory. It is based primarily on the assumption that Matter and Spirit are real. Evolution took place because of involution of spirit into the inconscient Matter. We have to discern not only the essential principles of the descent of Sachchidananda into cosmic existence, but also on the manifested power of Consciousness-Force or the Divine Grace of Teilhard de Chardin, which are the conditions under which we are all now exists. Critics may

question the eight principles of existence. But the researcher believes that the process of the eight principles is self explanatory and can be proved. The principles are essential to all cosmic creations, whether manifested as living organisms, or as unmanifested. Also for that which is still in an inconscient state, provided there is the involvement of the Consciousness-Force. In Sri Aurobindo's thesis, the Delight of the Supreme Consciences or the Sachchidananda is an undisputed fact as the source and basis of all existence. He clarified that,

"No universe can merely be a form of being which has sprung up and outlined itself in an absolute nullity and void and remains standing against a non-existent emptiness. It must be either a figure of existence within infinite Existence, which is beyond all figure or it must be itself the infinite-existence. We see that it is really both of these things at once; that is to say, it is the All-Existent figure Himself out of the definite series of Rhythms in his own conceptual extension of himself as Time and Space." (Aurobindo 1939, p,265).

The other aspects of his spiritual evolution theory, the researcher thinks that unless the Spirit itself is involved in lower nature and matter; matter cannot evolve into life and mind, where there is the urge for perfection. He solved this through his process of involution, when the spirit first descent into matter. His theory of involution and evolution as we have seen has its source the spirit therefore there is the possibility of life. His elucidation on the process of evolution is possible because, "he uses the Yoga system of Parajanjali, that is it is the philosophy which has a very strong bearing on man and his possibilities." (Bhattacharya, 1972, p. 229). E. H. Brewster also mentioned this in his, "The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Ghose", an article published in the "Review of Philosophy and Religion", where he



writes, "Sri Aurobindo has been able to awaken in his readers, a greater and richer conception of life and its possibilities, a more logical understanding of its process and to arouse a faith in his psychological expositions and in the unique message which constitute his integral Yoga." (Brewster, Journal Article, 1941).

#### **4.7. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

In this section of the research work, the researcher feels the necessity of providing a space for criticism to justify, and also for a balance judgment from the stand point of this Defense. The criticism may really be valid, depending on the modalities or arguments that it stands for. But some will come to agree with the theory in the process of criticizing it, due to the fact that their criticism lacked the solid ground to argue. The arguments against Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution from the Atheists, Science, Naturalists, and from the East, those of the Sankhya School and Sankara, were included in this section of the research work anticipating that if there is any criticism against the spiritual evolution, most probably it will serve the purpose of further clarifying the spiritual evolution.

##### **4.7.1. Sankhyas and Sankara, Argued Against the Spiritual Evolution**

Within the Eastern (Indian), philosophy, contrary to the general assumptions, there was no consensus in the interpretation of the ancient texts of the Upanishads and Vedas. According to this analysis, it is found that Sankara (788-820 CE), although an Advaitian like Sri Aurobindo, does not share the same view on various philosophical and religious issues, such as on the reality and evolution. It may be argued that their differences lie mainly in their separate viewpoints and interpretations of the ancient texts of India.

The Sankhya schools of thought for instance, argued against Sri Aurobindo's conception of reality, on the basis that reality is unreal, since it is the product of

Maya, which is an illusion. Sankara the ancient Indian thinker is a strong believer in the power of Maya, agrees with the Sankhyas. Sri Aurobindo on the other hands do not contribute in the belief in Maya. He will argue that Maya cannot be a power, since power rests only in the supreme spirit, the Sachchidananda, which is also the Supreme Consciousness–Power of Sat, Cit, and Ananda. Sankara belongs to Advaita system of thought like Sri Aurobindo, but he also like the Sankhayas disagree with Sri Aurobindo on the involvement of the spirit in evolution. He would argue against the spiritual evolution on the ground that, there can never be an evolution of the spirit, since the spirit or Brahman is always there in an unmodified form in-tack with its original purity. Therefore, according to Sankara, there can never be any real evolution of the spirit in any form whatsoever. So for Sankara, there is only an apparent change or a seeming transformation that we see in the analogy of a rope and a snake, where there is no real snake. Hence, for Sankara, Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution is another illusion of the rope as a snake in the dark. There is no real evolution or ascent or descent of the spirit. Everything is a false transformation, which can never be real. Hence, this spiritual evolution is also a false transformation, it is unreal for Sankara.

#### **4.7.2. Atheists Argue Against the Spiritual Evolution**

Atheists do not believe that God exists, so they would surely argue against Sri Aurobindo's involvement of the spirit in his evolution theory. They based on the arguments that the world is made up of matter and motion, and that there is no intelligent cause of the world. Sri Aurobindo may accept this as a logical argument from Atheists, since they believe in the metaphysical doctrine of materialism, but not on spiritualism. Again there are problems that arose from among the Atheists themselves, they are divided on the interpretation of God's existence. First, the

dogmatic atheism will absolutely deny the existence of God. So there is no possibility of any involvement of such an entity in evolution. Secondly, skeptical atheism, although does not deny the existence of God, but denies the capacity of the human mind to know God's existence, and so they doubted if we can know that God can be involved in the evolution process. Thirdly, critical atheism neither denies the existence of God nor accept the capacity of man to know God's existence, but simply asserts that since there is no valid proof of the existence or non-existence of God, so the spiritual evolution is false. Lastly, practical atheism asserts that the existence or non-existence of God has nothing to do with life. Life, they believe, is possible even at its best without God. It seems that from these interpretations, there is no unity in atheistic ideas on the existence or non existence of God. From the arguments presented, they are more inclined toward the existence of God, rather than his non- existence. But since they denied of the existence of God; it only indicate that their argument is weak and there is no validity in their arguments for or against God's involvement in the process for the existence of the universe.

Atheists, looking from the arguments above, have no reason to argue against the spiritual evolution, since they cannot give reasons why the spirit cannot be the source of existence. The world cannot come of itself. So their arguments have no validity to oppose the spiritual evolution and the involvement of the spirit evolution process. The argument that the existence of God cannot be proved; only prove the non-existence of God cannot be proved either. The Atheists arguments only proved that they are not sure on the non- existence of God. So neither can they be sure why God cannot create the universe. The syllogism proved that God exists, and he creates this universe.

The problem with Atheism is it associates itself with materialists who explained everything about the world by the idea of matter and motion. They assume the world is self-existent. One of them is David Hume (1711-1776) an Atheist, believed in Berkeley's dictum, *esse est percipi*,<sup>1</sup> and therefore derives the perception of any permanent spiritual substance distinct from ideas or mental process. So he would deny the possibility of the spiritual evolution in inconscient matter. Hume would even deny mind, that which Sri Aurobindo so laboriously tried to explain, showing the possibility that mind will be elevated to a supermind. However, this would not pacify Hume, who would argue that, "what we call 'mind' is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity." (Hume, 1999, p.200). He described the mind of man as fictitious, identical to an animal's mind. Hume would also condemn Sri Aurobindo's ideas of the spirit, the consciousness-force which is instrumental in awakening the indwelling spirit in inconscient matter. He asserted that 'the so-called spirit or self is a figment of imagination men are nothing but bundles or collections of different perceptions, which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement.' (Hume, 1999, p.239).

Hume is an Empiricist, he considers all men, being in perpetual flux and movement, being only a perception. He therefore rejects the existence of soul, and God. Hence, he will argue against Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory as mere flux. Sri Aurobindo believes strongly in the existence of God, he will strongly counter Hume's arguments. Sri Aurobindo will counter Hume using metaphysics to explain

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<sup>1</sup> *Esse est percipi*: Ch 4, 171 The existence of an entity consists in being perceived.

the Sachchidananda, as the creator of the world, and theological views in explaining the world's existence, Sri Aurobindo therefore says, "No universe can be merely a form of being, which has sprung up and outlined itself in the absolute nullity and void and remaining standing out against a non-existent emptiness. It must be either a figure or it must be itself the All-Existence." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.265). But this explanation will not pacify Hume, who would argue like the Atheists that the whole of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution scheme, has no impression of God, since even the soul is out of his purview. The Naturalists will side with Hume's in their arguments against the spiritual evolution. The Materialists and Naturalists stressed on matter and regard life as a complex physical and chemical force and consider mind as a phenomenon of the brain. They believe in physical sciences and think the world of matter, life, and mind can be satisfactorily be explained by physical and chemical laws and the importance of biological and mental science to explain evolution. They believe that Nature is the cause of the developments of evolution. They, like Hume, deny the existence of God<sup>1</sup>. Sri Aurobindo in his argument tries to pacify the materialists and naturalists that the spiritual evolution also takes into consideration the involvement of matter in the process. And he also did not outright condemn science and nature, as such. On the contrary, he said that, "nothing can be more remarkable and suggestive than the extent to which modern science confirms in the domain of Matter the conceptions and the very formulae of language which was arrived at by the very method in the Vedanta, the original Vedanta, not the school of metaphysical philosophy, but of the Upanishads." (Aurobindo 1939, pp. 13-4).

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<sup>1</sup> For Hume, Ch 4, 172 there is no God. There is no valid proof for the existence of God. There is no impression of God. We cannot perceive Him nor can we infer His existence. We wish to believe in God to fulfill our

Naturalists would further argue against the spiritual evolution on the basis that the theory cannot be proved scientifically. Hence, they would condemn it as unscientific. Again, most Naturalists do not believe in God's existence and believe that Matter is the only reality, the beginning and the end of evolution. Most biologists and modern scientists support the Naturalists view. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), Charles Darwin (1812-1882), and to a lesser degree Alfred Russels Wallace (1823-1913) are Naturalists<sup>1</sup>. Their inquiries include scientific research, and the investigation of the transformation of species. Among them, Charles Darwin is the most prominent. Darwin propounded the theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest (discussed in Chapter 2 and condemned in Chapter 3). Like the rest of the Naturalists, he believes that life arose from non-living matter, entirely by way of unknown, unconscious, mechanistic, natural processes on pre-biotic earth, and it proceeded to evolve into more complex forms, exclusively by random mutation and natural selection. He claims that it occurred without the involvement of any outside power. Chardin would argue on behalf of the spiritual evolution, he says, "To form an idea of the first phase of this evolution<spiritual evolution> it will be enough to compare stage by stage, on the one hand the general laws we have felt able to lay down for the development of spiritual energy, and in the other the physico-chemical conditions we have just acknowledged in the nescient earth. We have said the spiritual energy, by its very nature, increases in 'radial' value, positively, absolutely, and without determinable limits, in step with the increasing chemical complexity of the elements of which it represents the inner linings. But the complexity of the chemical of the earth

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aspirations, so we believe in God, he said. The idea of God, according to Hume, is man-made. He therefore rejects matter, soul, and God. There is no certainty in knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Naturalists, Ch 4, 172 Naturalism is the modern expression of the materialistic or materialism.



increases inconformity with the thermo-dynamics in the particular, superficial zone in which the elements polymerize.”(Chardin, 1955, p.22).

Thus the argument by Chardin should settle the arguments raised by the Naturalists and others against the spiritual evolution theory. At the same time the spiritual evolution theory itself, does not comprehend the possibility that Nature is the only force that is in accord with scientific proofs and investigations. As such, Sri Aurobindo does not condemn science in fact he uses science to explain his spiritual theory. He says, “The electron and atom are in this view eternal somnambulists; each material object contains an outer or form of consciousness involved, absorbed in the form, asleep, seeming to be unconscious driven by unknown and unfelt Existence,—he who is awake in the sleeper....Unlike that of human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not or ever on the point of waking.” (Aurobindo, 1939. pp.711-12.). Sri Aurobindo demonstrates how consciousness is involved in matter, and it needs the involvements of the spirit for life to evolve. Sri Aurobindo agrees that his theory of spiritual evolution is not scientific, but he counters this contention, he says, “It is true that Science now affirms an evolutionary terrestrial existence: but if the fact with which science deals are reliable, the generalizations it hazards are short-lived; it hold them for some decades or some centuries, then passed to another generalization, another theory of things. This happens even in physical Science where the facts are ascertainable and verifiable by experiments: in psychology,—which is relevant here for the evolution of Consciousness comes into the picture,—its instability is still greater....., indeed several conflicting theories hold the field together. No firm metaphysical building can be erected upon these shifting quick sands.” (Aurobindo, 1939 p.823).

Sri Aurobindo, besides being a modern thinker who accepts scientific explanations on evolution, also relies on the Ancient texts of the Upanishads. Therefore, he would reserve his agreement; arguing that all manifestation is the expression of self-delight of the all-delight, the bliss of the infinite. But a question arises why in spite of the delight and all-delight in creation, there exists evils and ugliness all around us? On the problem of evil, Sri Aurobindo first posed a question himself, he asks, "who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering?" (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 94). Sri Aurobindo will not leave such questions without a clarification. He would justify existence, as part of the process of evolution for he says, "Pain of mind and body is a device of Nature, that is to say, of Force of her works, meant to subserve a definite transitional end in her evolution. The world is from the point of view of the individual a play and complex shock of multitudinous forces." (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 107). It would be ridiculous therefore for the critics to argue and to assume an all-good, all-wise Omniscient extra Cosmic Creator who deliberately plunged his creatures into mental and physical sufferings, when as a matter of principles, he could have willed nothing, but good, ease, and comfort for his creatures. An all-mighty creator in some distant heaven could not otherwise justify his existence theory on the basis other than the delight of that creator. Therefore according to Sri Aurobindo, "To the normal life- being an existence without the reactions of success and frustration, vital joy and grief, peril and passion, pleasure and pain, vicissitudes and uncertainties of fate and struggle and battle and endeavor, a joy of novelty and surprise and creation projecting itself to the unknown, might seem to be void of variety and therefore, void of vital savor." (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 1069).

In response to the critics on the metaphysical explanation of the delight of creation, in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution, Hartshorne who argued against the onslaught of anti-evolutionists, anti spiritualist. He strongly believed on the involvement of the spirit, although he posits spirit as organisms. In support of the spiritual evolution, he states that,

"A philosopher may believe in God who many have done so and so. But, Philosophers do not now make statements about "the word of God" as though God uttered or wrote sounds or words of some human language for us to read. There is, however, a genuine philosophical question about the religious meaning of religion."(Hartshorne, 1984, p.67).

The outcome from the above arguments by Sri Aurobindo showed that he center his ontological arguments round the difference in the argument between theists and atheists. We see that he maintains the originality and eternality on the existence of the Reality or the Absolute, Sachchidananda. It is pertinent that something must be self-existent and that which is self-existent must necessarily be eternal and infinite and could be the original cause, just as the gold is to the vessel and the vessel is to the gold. The gold remains despite its transformation. Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo there will be no dispute about God's existence. Irrespective, of whether they hold that matter only is necessary, and the form is contingent on it, the self-existent of the being is an intelligent being. Hence, from this argument we can conclude that there is no possibility for an atheist than to assert that either there is no intelligent being at all in the universe, or that intelligence has no distinct perfection of figure or motion. Evidence from the arguments made so far only showed that it is otherwise. Sri Aurobindo asserted that their arguments against the existence of God only emboldened the Theists belief in

God, and raised the question of whether the atheists really believed in the non-existence of God.

The researcher believes each of the argument posed against the spiritual; evolution theory has been answered affirmatively by Sri Aurobindo himself or by other philosophers who agree with his theory. The first solution was given to the argument raised by the Atheists. The second was solution is that of the Naturalists and that of Hume arguments. The third was the solution given to the Eastern philosopher or schools of philosophy, they are the Sakhayas and Sankara the ancient thinkers. Thus do we realize only too well how futile is any attempt at undermining the spiritual involvement of the spirit in evolution, until we learn to accept facts. In support of the spiritual evolution on this conclusion, Samuel Clarke says:

“Now that the self-existent being is not such a blind and unintelligent necessity, but in the most proper sense an understanding and really active being, does not obviously and directly appear to us by considerations to be a *Priori*, because although the imperfection of our faculties we know not wherein intelligence consists nor can (we) see the immediate and necessary connection of it with self-existence,..... But, a *posteriori*, almost everything in the world demonstrates to us this great truth and upholds undeniable arguments to prove that the world and all things in it are an effect of an intelligent and knowing cause.” (Clarke, ed. Ezio Vailati, 1998, p.38).

The argument Clarke presented above shows that, whatever exists must have a cause and reason for its existence, and if it exists at all, either is the necessity of its own nature or in the will of some other being. In the case of Sri Aurobindo, it is the delight to create. He clarifies that, saying, “If then, being free to move or remain

eternally still, to throw itself into forms or retain the potentiality of form in itself, it indulges to reason, for delight" (Clark, ed.Ezio Vailati, p.91).

We can conclude on the three arguments pitted against the Spiritual Evolution Theory that it seems to the researcher that Sri Aurobindo takes all these arguments against his theory as a boon rather than a bane. Reacting against the Atheists he threw the ball into their court, he claims that, "we shall observe with respect and wonder the work that Atheism has done for the divine and admire the services that Agnosticism has rendered in preparing the illimitable increase in knowledge." (Aurobindo,1939, p.12). Sri Aurobindo doubted the sincerity of atheists on the non-existence of God. In fact, from their denial, they were laying the ground for them and for the theist's conscious beliefs that God exists, and in their denial support, why God needs to exist. In the process, the theists became more persistent in insisting that God exists. For the Theist, he is instrumental in all creation. Sri Aurobindo, will agree with Warayutha Sriewarakul, who, in his dissertation "Hartshorne on God: A Defense", supports Hartshorne's views on God, he says "Hartshorne seems to realize that it is a mission of all Theists to defend the existence of God no matter how difficult it is." (Sriewarakul,1976, p.29). He continues, saying that 'in the demonstration of existence of God, Hartshorne has used the ontological argument which was discovered by St.Ansel.' Hartshorne uses the ontological argument as proof for God's existence. Sri Aurobindo seems to agree with Srivakuel and Hartshorne, since Sri Aurobindo also uses an analogy to prove the existence of God as a reality. He asked this question, "If the Gold of which the vessel is made is real, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage?"(Aurobindo, 1939, p.32).

Briefly, if life and everything that are in it is the outcome of the involution of the spirit, it will be true only that the outcomes are themselves the Spirit. The vessel, which was made from gold remains a vessel; and the gold, from which the vessel was made remain gold. The originality of the gold is retained despite the transformations. So also the spirit's involvement and transformation of inconscient matter unto itself does not diminish its originality. We conclude that all the arguments against the spiritual evolution failed on this involvement of the spirit in evolution.

#### **4.8 TEILHARD DE CHARDIN SUPPORTS THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION**

An introduction to Pierres Teilhard de Chardin evolution theory had been presented in Chapter 2. Now we will investigate into Chardin's philosophy on evolution supporting Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory. Teilhard de Chardin's understanding on evolution and his arguments to justify the spiritual evolution is being used in the defense of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution. We will now delve further, to demonstrate how Chardin has been instrumental in the defense arguments for the Spiritual Evolution theory. There are many instances during this study to show that these two thinkers support the views on evolution and the involvement of the spirit in its process. The views are so identical, one tends to think that the two had met and had discussed these in person. K.D.Sethna, in his book, 'Teilhard and Sri Aurobindo: A focus of Fundamentals,' has rightly made an observation on the implicit supports Chardin has rendered to Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution. He writes, "In as much as Teilhard conceives of this (weltanschauung) realization in an evolutionary light, he is an Aurobindian and helps to lay a new foundation for individual mystical effort; his philosophy."(Sethna, 1973. p.34-5). But the researcher would differ with Sethna for using the word Aurobindian, which



may be interpreted as being a follower. In fact Chardin has his own place in the philosophy of evolution he was able to claim this with a lot of sacrifices during his life time. So let us take the word Aurobindian, to say what Sethna means to say is an ally or comrade of the spiritual evolution theory. At the same time it should not be misunderstood, an ally to mean Sri Aurobindo cannot defend himself from the Critiques. The controversy if any, has arose from the initiative the researcher took, using Chardin to prop up the defense of the spiritual evolution. So we take them as co-defenders of the spiritual evolution theory. Of course, it cannot be denied that in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy some traits of western influence especially on the idea of individual are detected, again this has no direct influence from Chardin either. So, Teilhard de Chardin's ideas on evolution were being used as a necessity in this study to justify the defense. Other philosophers and thinkers, like Bergson, Hegel, Whitehead, Alexander, and others will be presented later after Teilhard de Chardin.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a priest and scientist and a philosopher, and Sri Aurobindo, a Yogi, and a philosopher are contemporaries, but they had never met. Chardin knows about Sri Aurobindo's works when he visited India in 1930. They definitely shared the same philosophical thought, even though they expressed their views on the evolution theory in different language and expressions. The terminology and phrases are quite similar, especially on the topic of Evolution. Chardin, like Sri Aurobindo, has made a very clear distinction between Matter, Life, and Mind, which he terms them as Lithosphere of the earth (with barysphere, hydrosphere, and noosphere). Life, he terms it as biosphere or the living layer in which the material universe is being enveloped millions of years after it came into existence. The Mind, he termed; noosphere' or a thinking layer which enveloped the earth millions of years later. Teilhard, being a man of science, used scientific terms

to describe the different stages of the evolution process. Sri Aurobindo describes such things, as Matter, Life, and Mind. Teilhard, on the other hand, Chardin describes them as Lithosphere, Biosphere, and noosphere. He believed the world was still developing and would continue to develop. In essence, for Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard, the development would be the Consciousness-Force on which both agreed that this Force would converge on it self until it reached the Omega point of the Universal Christ or Supermind for Sri Aurobindo. There are ample panegyric proofs to show that Teilhard de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo have a lot of affinities in wordings and phrases they used which gives the same meaning. B. C. Mukerji, in his book *Philosophy of Universal Realism* provides us with the proof, he writes, "Like Sri Aurobindo, Father Teilhard de Chardin has distinguished between Matter, Life and Mind. By matter, he means the lithosphere (along with barysphere hydrosphere and noosphere), to life he gave the name of biosphere or a living layer in which the material universe or rather earth was clothed many million of years after it comes into existence, and finally mind (or rather the thinking self aware mind) he gave the name noosphere or a thinking layer which enveloped the earth million years later." (Mukerji, 1988, p. 108). In the previous page of the same book, Mukerji wrote that Teilhard predicted the birth of a superman, and Sri Aurobindo spoke about the Gnostic being or divine being the supermind. Mukerji also mentioned that both the philosophers agreed that out of the same stock there will be the culmination of the terrestrial or cosmic evolution.

Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin believe that evolution is the progress and unfolding of the involved spirit. They also agreed that man was an unfinished product of the past. He must be completed or surpassed, through a process of transformations. Sri Aurobindo and Dillard made a prophecy on the birth of the

Superman or Supermind as already mentioned. The researcher would like to make a note on the superman as foreseen by Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin, it is different from the one predicted by Nietzsche. Sri Aurobindo very clearly endorsed what was found in the Kenai Upanishad, which says that, "The visible principle of supermind (superman) can only emerge when the necessary mental conditions are proposed which by prolongation were developed in the lower stages of evolution. ...., it will not be by creation of a new or quite different type...., same position as are animals to man, but by the elevation of humanity as a whole to a higher level." (Agnostic: Section-6, Kenai Upanishad). Regarding Teilhard de Chardin's ideas, we have to refer to his "Phenomenon of Man" page 211, Chapter 3, where he discussed Indian Civilization and the wise men of India. It seems to the researcher that Teilhard is in favor with the ideas given by Sri Aurobindo especially, on what the Kenai Upanishad predicted otherwise he will not include this comments in his book.

#### **4.8.1. Chardin on the Involvement of the Spirit in Evolution**

Teilhard de Chardin and Chardin believe strongly on the involvement of the spirit in evolution. There is a very clear sign, that he is convinced of its positive involvement as seen from Julian Huxley, in his translation of the "Phenomenon of Man", remarks that, "Teilhard de Chardin, as a thinker, he had reached a point where the entire phenomenal universe, including man, was revealed as a process of evolution, and he found himself impelled to build up a generalized theory or philosophy of spiritual evolution process which would take account of human history and human personality as well as of biology, and from which one could draw conclusions as to the future evolution of man on earth. And as a dedicated Christian priest, he felt it imperative to try to reconcile Christian philosophy with

this evolutionary philosophy, to relate the facts of religious experience to those of natural science.” (Huxley, 1975, p. 22-3).

On the question of spirit involvement in evolution, Teilhard de Chardin defends Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, he says, 'Those who adopt the spiritual explanation are right when they defend so vehemently a certain transcendence of over the rest of nature. But neither are the materialists wrong when they maintain that man is just one further term in a series of animal forms. Here, as in many cases, the two antithetical kinds of evidences are resolved in a movement –provided that in this movement we emphasize the highly natural phenomenon of the “change of the state.”’(Chardin, 1975, p.169). It is not surprising for Chardin to support both the spiritualists and the materialists on evolution, being himself a Naturalist, he declares, “As I am a naturalist rather than a physicist” (Chardin, 1955, p.39). This may be so, since he attributes the organic whole of which today we find ourselves to be a part, without being able to escape from it. Likewise, Sri Aurobindo uses the integral philosophy to fuse together spirit and matter in the construction of his spiritual evolution theory. We have noted that during the last two centuries in our study of science, history, and philosophy, it appeared to be a matter of speculation, imagination, and hypothesis. In countless subtle ways, the concept of evolution has been weaving its web around us for centuries. Now, it is in Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, that this web has been disentangled. They have proved through their theories that evolution is real for both the spiritualists as well as for the materialists.

On the question of change in the process of evolution, the researcher fully supports Teilhard de Chardin's views, for he maintains that, “we have not changed, but now, like newborn infants, whose eyes are moving to the light, we are becoming

aware of a world in which neo-time is endowing the totality of our knowledge and beliefs with a new structure and a new direction.” (Chardin, 1955, pp.86-8). We find here Teilhard de Chardin a spiritualist like Sri Aurobindo, speaks very convincingly on the concept of change in the evolution process, despite the fact that Chardin was brought up under the scrutiny of the Church, which stood firmly in favor of creation.. He seems to have been fully convinced, since for him evolution is no longer in a state of speculation, but is a reality. Sri Aurobindo also believed that evolution is a fact, but he admitted that it is possible to challenge the theory of evolution without the involvement of the spirit, he says, “It is possible to challenge the theory of evolution on the ground that it is insufficiently founded and that it is superfluous as an explanation of the process of terrestrial existence,” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.826). So it is not just any theory of evolution can be valid to explain evolution and existence of the universe. But on the existence of the universe he declares, ‘it is true that science now affirms an evolutionary terrestrial existence (Aurobindo, 1939, p.828). In this regard, we have to note that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin also explained that in the scientific age, we have become conscious that evolution means something very different from and much more than having discovered one further fact, however massive and important that fact might be, he says, “As happens with a child when he acquires the power of perception, that we have become alive to a new dimension”. On the idea of evolution, Chardin clarifies, “it is not, as is sometimes still said, a mere hypothesis, but a condition of all experience – or again, if you find for the expression, the universal curve to which all our present and future ways of construction of the universe must conform, if they are to be scientifically valid or even thinkable.”(Chardin, 1971, p.193). Teilhard de Chardin in his book, “The Phenomenon of Man”, also claimed that evolution is only

a hypothesis. The Post modern thought, will agree with Chardin, they believe nobody contributes to this idea anymore. Evolution is no longer a hypothesis it is a fact. Science, Philosophy, and Historical facts which derived from paleontology have confirmed this. Teilhard de Chardin in his "Phenomenon of Man" demonstrates this. He analyzed the World as being subject to a new evolutionary process, which he called 'Humanization.' Humanization, according to him, connotes a dual meaning, "that of the individual and his instantaneous leap from instinct to thought, and also the progressive pyretic spiritualization in human civilization of all forces contained in the animal world." (Chardin,1955,p.35). He identifies "humanization" with "monogenesis," he explains as 'World Mind' or the 'Omega Point,' and he posits it as the reason of love and the reason for survival. Sri Aurobindo expresses the same idea, while clarifying the transformations from basic animal instinct to life-thought. He said that, "the animal's life emerging from matter is only an inferior form of existence. The life of thought....., which we named in its totality, Mind ..., is our progressive transformation ...." (Chardin,1955, p. 46).

The evidence derived from this discussion is sufficient proof that evolution is real. It is needless to dig further. Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin confirmed that human existence was a slow endowment from a very basic rudimentary stage of existence, before it took the present existence as Man, with life and Mind. It is based on this argument that they disagree with the theory of creation, especially the absolute creation theory. Chardin says, "And correspondingly, if a Christ is to be completely acceptable as an object of worship, he must be presented as the savior of the idea and reality of evolution." (Chardin, 1969, p.78). Sri Aurobindo, on the other



hand argued against the logic of the theory of creation, but stress only on the delight of creation, he says,

“In fact, the Infinite does not create. It manifests what is in itself, in its own essence of reality; it is in itself that the essence of all reality and all realities are power so that there is reality. The Absolute neither creates nor is created.” (Chardin, 1955, p. 333).

Teilhard de Chardin supports Sri Aurobindo's argument against absolute creation. We find this comment from 'Seth Newsletter' Vol. XXIII, 'Phenomenon of Teilhard', Published in 1975, N.Y., where Donald P. Gray writes, "Creation is not construed as an exclusively divine act at the beginning of all things, although he does attempt with some difficulties to make room for such a *creatio ex nihilo* at the beginning. .... God neither creates alone nor is His creation was already completed." (Gray, 1975 p. 35). We observe here that Gray has made a very apt observation, in that Teilhard proposes to review the church's teachings, arguing that the scholastic philosophy of creation is the *ex nihilo sui et subject*, or that created substance is drawn in its entirety (matter and form) from nothingness. Chardin says, "Thus for scholasticism creation and transformation are two absolutely heterogeneous and mutually exclusive modes of movement within the concrete reality of one and the same act." (Chardin, 1955, p. 21). This concept obviously comes up against all sorts of historical improbabilities and intellectual incapacities. Besides 'Creation ex nihilo' (*creation out of nothing*), there is room for an act *Sui generis* (making use of a preexistent created being) and building it into a complete new being. In other words, what Chardin is insinuating here is that, even if there has to be a being, it should come out of the present existing being; what Sri Aurobindo would call the inconscient matter, where life is still in the process of

transformations, as the being and much later becoming a superman. In support of Sri Aurobindo, Chardin further clarifies his standpoints when he said that in creating a being out of the existing being not *ex nihilo*, but in the same idea. What Chardin means is the creation through the evolution process. Sri Aurobindo in the same language says that it through transformation and modifications of the evolution process that creation is possible. Chardin further clarifies this he says,

“As Understood in this way Creation is not a periodic intrusion of the First Cause: it is an act co-extensive with whole duration of the Universe. God had been creating ever since the beginning of time as seen from within, his creation (even his initial creation?) takes the form of transformation. Participated beings are not introduced in batches which are differentiated later as a result of non-creative modification. God is continually breathing new being into us.” (Chardin, 1971, p.23).

Chardin and Sri Aurobindo's share the same idea on the future of man. Both see evolution as the collective and teleological progression through matter, life and mind or inorganic earth, biosphere and noosphere. They also believe that evolution is an ongoing process to a higher being. If the universe continue to exist, evolution will continue, a higher being is on the offing. Chardin says, “Man is still embryonic.” (Chardin, 1955, p.280). And also we find in Sri Aurobindo that man; “He is too imperfect in the expressions of the Spirit.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.1009). Chardin further argues that, ‘We have seen and admitted that evolution is an ascent towards consciousness. That is no longer contested even most materialistic, or at all events by the most agnostic of humanitarians’ (Aurobindo, 1955, p. 258). Beatrice Brunteau, in her book, ‘Evolution, Towards Divinity,’ agreed that evolution is still being transformed and modified in the ongoing progress towards divinization, She

writes, "Thus, like Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard claims that a 'Privileged axis' is discernable in evolution, in the development of greater complexity, greater consciousness and development of the nervous system and brain." (Bruteau, 1998, p. 154). We can conclude therefore, that Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, disagree with the notion of creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Creation for both of them is possible only if there was a prior evolution. Since, there has never been such an inhibited subjection of nothingness on subject matter, apart from considering the universe in its total formation throughout the past ages. So convinced was they on the evolution of existence that he emphasized on creative transformation process in evolution. In his "The Phenomenon of Man", Chardin clarifies that,

"We summarize in a few lines the idea about the transformation of matter accepted by science today; but only by considering the latter in their temporal succession, and without as yet putting them anywhere within the cosmic expanse. Historically, the stuff of the universe goes on becoming concentrated into evermore organized forms of matter. But where, then, do these metamorphoses take place, beginning, let us say, with framework of molecules? Is it differently at any point space? Not at all, as we all know, but only in the heart and on the surface of the stars. For having considered the infinity small elements we are abruptly compelled to raise our eyes to infinitely great sidereal masses." (Chardin, 1955, p.49).

Thus, Teilhard de Chardin, having criticized the scholastic philosophy on creation, proposes a change in the scriptural records of the existence of the world, in line with the postmodern scientific understanding. In the same manner, Sri Aurobindo, having detected passivity in Hinduism, also proposes a reinterpretation of the Hindu scriptures. Chardin a scientist and a priest, in his

book, *Christianity and Evolution*, in one section of the book, he recorded that when he was requested to answer a request about his opinions on creation, by Mgr. Bruno his senior, in organization in Rome, he replied with the following committed words, without mentioning a word on creation,

“I believe that the universe is an evolution.

I believe that evolution proceeds towards the spirit.

I believe that the spirit is fully realized in the form of personality.

I believe that the supremely personal is the universal Christ.”

(Teilhard, '71 p.96).

Chardin did not mince-words, we can see in this reply to his senior. This testified his strong convictions on the reality of the universe existence, which is none other than through the evolutionary process. Perhaps the most fundamental point for Chardin is the absolute necessity of adopting an evolutionary view point on existence. Like-wise, we find Sri Aurobindo expressed the same convictions as Chardin when he deals with the transformations. Both, Sri Aurobindo and Chardin are strong believers in the spirit, its involvement in evolution of the world. It is on this conviction that we find Teilhard's stresses that, “evolution proceeds towards the spirit.” (Teilhard, 1971, p.126). This corresponds with Sri Aurobindo's “Evolution moving toward a goal.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.265). “In a sense”, he said, “the whole of creation may be said to be the movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all are evolved and of which all evolves upwards to the other pole of Spirit”.(Aurobindo,1939,p.129). Teilhard de Chardin, while on the same topic, further shows us how strongly he support the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo, confirming this he said, “logically we should have to admit that the world is advancing toward the spirit and there must be a

conscious power to the universe.”(Aurobindo,1939, p.90). As such, on the Conscious power of the Universe Force, Teilhard obviously referred to the Supreme Consciousness-Force or the Sachchidananda of Sri Aurobindo. In the involution and evolution process of Sri Aurobindo, the spirit, after its manifestation in inconscient matter, reverts back after under going through the ‘Flight Flightless’ as he calls it, until the completion of its flight back or ‘the home coming’ of Mishra. So, we see Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard envisaged that the final goal of evolution will be the Omega point or Universal Christ: for Teilhard, and for Sri Aurobindo, it will be Supermind.’ Secondly, the Universal Christ that Chardin mentioned has also a very strong semblance with the Supermind or Truth-Consciousness of Sri Aurobindo, who said that, “the nature of the Divine Consciousness-Force governs their development through self – evolution by the inherent knowledge-will of the truth of existing or the real-idea which formed it. The being that is thus conscient in what we called God.” (Aurobindo,1939, p.144).

So far in our discussions on Chardin’s support for the spiritual evolution, it centered around two areas; on the why evolution took place, and on the how of evolution. They agree in most areas of discussion on the subject of evolution. The researcher believes theologically or philosophically they can never agree totally even on the point that they shared the same view, such as on the subject of evolution. This is true if we consider what Klemn and Shoemaker have already cautioned us, which also can be applied in the case of Sri Aurobindo and Chardin that, “there are no two thinkers, no matter how much they have in common on a particular idea, who will express their philosophical or theological thought, exactly word for word regarding their intention and meaning.” (Klemn, et al, edited.1993, p 5). Further, in their book, “Meanings in Tests and Action”, They also questioned

Paul Ricoeur, when they write, "Conversely, Ricoeur's hermeneutics requires that thinkers who seeks to interpret complex and ambiguous patterns of meaning draw on the scourges of any number of expanded methods." (Khlemn et al, ed. 1993: p.2). It is not the ambiguity or complexity of the two thinkers, Aurobindo and Teilhard, that prompted the researcher to quote Khlemn's hermeneutics conclusions on humanities, but to refer to the fact that the term used may not be identical, but the meanings in their texts are the same. For instance in "The Divines Milieu", Teilhard de Chardin defined the "Son of God" as the "Total Christ", and later identified it also as the "Universal Christ," (Chardin,1955, p.101). We can argue that Sri Aurobindo's 'Supermind, Truth-Consciousness, or Divine-Consciousness' they all connote one meaning, referring to Brahman as "God." Thus the Cosmic or Universal Christ, of Teilhard, and the Sachchidananda or Cosmic Existence of Sri Aurobindo is comparable, for they carry the same meaning.

Thirdly, Sri Aurobindo referred to the Omnipresent Reality as the truth of life and Existence (evolution) saying that, "from all variations begin, in that all variations consist, to that all variations return." (Aurobindo,1939, p. 33). He, like Teilhard, also said that, "Brahman is the Alpha and Omega. Brahman is the One beside whom there is nothing else in existence." (Aurobindo,1939,: p.33).

More or less in the same tone used by Sri Aurobindo a yogi, Teilhard a priest posits, "the Son of God as the Universal Christ or the Second Adam". (Chardin, 1971, p.41). Or as, "the Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega".(Sri Aurobindo, 1939. P.33), to which in reply, Chardin says, "Christ, if he is to remain without diminution at the center of our world, and of the world is indeed evolutionary, then this cosmic Christ is the beginning of the bond (the Alpha) and terminus (the Omega), or all creation must now offer himself for our adoration as the evaluative



Christ. Creation, incarnation, and redemption together constitute one movement, viz; pleronization: the movement goes toward “Pleroma 1.” (Aurobindo,1939, p.197-198).

Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin were revolutionaries from traditions with regards to the idea on evolution.. We have seen this from their approaches on philosophy of life and religious teachings. Both strayed from the main stream on the questions of creation and evolution. Both had their mysteries, “these are rebirth, transmigration of the soul, and re-incarnation, although the last is not too explicit as an idea in his spiritual evolution.” (Aurobindo,1939, p.795). Like Sri Aurobindo, Chardin also has his mysteries. ‘Pleronization,’ or the Fourth mystery of Christ. But it is not a mystery any more now in light of his New Christology. Teilhard de Chardin aimed at changing the errors found in the creation legends, and the cognate belief in miracles. Sri Aurobindo also made the same attempt by developing his Spiritual evolution theory, aiming at Hinduism which stresses only on spiritualism. He, like Teilhard, wanted to purge the passivity and perverted interpretation of the ancient Hindu Scriptures. In his book, ‘Sri Aurobindo Ideal of Human Life’, M. Rafique understands Sri Aurobindo’s move, for he write, “He (Aurobindo) aims at a re-interpretation and reconstruction of the religious philosophy in the light of the requirements of the modern scientific age. It may be said that Sri Aurobindo has rendered a great service to Indian philosophy and religion by trying to present them

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1 Pleroma: Ch 4, 191 Is a movement toward the fullness of the being, in which God and his completed world exist, united together, or the whole creation in its union with Christ (ibid, 1971:p.20). The Pleroma is more (in absolute values) than “God alone” before Christ has entered into it” with the world incorporated in himself. The personalization must be one day be linked to “dramatization in some generalized ontology” (Letter to Pire J.M.Le Blond, April 1953).

in their true and original form removing at the interpretations and pollutions in the original stream.” (Rafique,1987. p.1).

Sri Aurobindo went on to say that, “the line of evolution cannot stop where man is now, but must go beyond its present term in him or else beyond him if he himself is not the force to go forward.” (Aurobindo,..1993, p.121). Teilhard also it seems to have foreseen that perhaps man is, ‘the bud from which something more complicated and more centered than man him self should emerge.” (Chardin, 1955 p.229).

The arguments so far showed that Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, believed evolution had taken place and will continue; it has not come to an end yet. They believe in the transformation and progression of man. Ursula King made the following observations in her book, ‘Science & Mysticism’, “Teilhard was really a pioneer of what today is called the ‘new age thinking’, one of the early observers of our planet Earth, who clearly saw its need for proponent transformation, for an entirely new culture which cannot come about without new spirituality ..... The general principle of his spirituality is the emphasis on creative transformation.”(King. 1984, p.8). Almost the same identical attributes was also given by Indrani Sanyl in her book, she writes, ‘Understanding Sri Aurobindo’, she writes, “Aurobindo Ghosh was one of the most systematic thinkers of the so called Hindu renaissance.” ( Sanyl, 2007, P. 27).

#### **4.8.2. Aurobindo and Chardin Philosophy on Spiritual Evolution**

Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard philosophy demonstrate a very strong believe in the involvement of the spirit in evolution. But, despite the fact that they agree on many philosophical issues, the difference exists, it lies in that Sri Aurobindo writes from a Hindu perspective with consciousness, Brahman at the base. And Teilhard writes

from a Christian perspective, with stress on Jesus figure is his base. One has the Oriental background with exposure to the Western thought. The other is Occidental with exposure to Eastern life style and culture. It is base on this assumption that the researcher agrees with Khlemn and Shoemaker, that no two thinkers are identical in their thoughts especially, when the philosophers are dealing with a metaphysical problems on evolution and creation. So it is a fact now that the two thinkers agree on many issues concerning evolution, and the future of man. The two philosophers are contemporaries, since one live almost at the same time as the other. But since they had never met, whatever philosophical affinities they may have is a matter of coincidence. Now let us analyze their differences.

Firstly, we find in the observation made by Dr. K.D. Sethna that some important differences existed between Sri Aurobindo, a Yogi, and Teilhard a scientist and devote Christian priest in their philosophical approach on evolution. According to Dr. Sethna, "Teilhard puts the realm of perfection still beyond the earth, in an epiphany that already exists in the Divine beyond." (Sethna, 1973, p.36). Further, Sethna blames it on Chardin's religious conservatism, as seen in his *Phenomena of Man*, where he tried to make his vision compatible more to his with Roman Catholicism. Sethna further commented that Chardin would have agreed if,

"A somewhat elastic Roman Catholicism which would not exclude his mystic-Scientific Weltanschauung of evolution ... would wholly satisfy him. He wants to retain the old form as much as possible for his noble substance; other-wise he could not remain a devout Jesuit in spite of the church's suspicion of his philosophy". (Sethna, 1973, p 36-7).

Sri Aurobindo on the other hands, as the researcher observed, his philosophy on evolution lies on the fact that he tried to fulfill the main problem in philosophy; the

problem of evolution, which is a problem of Yoga, and a problem of the nurture of Reality. Another difference that exists between Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard is the evidence found in an observation made by S.K. Maitra, who says; "Sri Aurobindo is a revolutionary in everything. His centrism, in fact, is in itself revolutionary. He breaks loose from all traditions –the tradition of his own country which looks upon progress as a further development of higher parts and shedding of the lower ones, or emergence by looking upon later stages as arising through the complete obliteration of earlier ones." (Maitra, 1956,p.327). But Chardin although a revolutionary in his own terms, yet is not as revolutionary as Sri Aurobindo, especially on his standpoint on the theory of evolution. Evidences seen in his book, "Divine Milieu", produced by the English edition of 'Teilhard Works', edited by Bernard Wall, we find Chardin, wrote a letter from Cape Town, to his Superior, the Very Reverend Father Johnssens, in Rome. He writes, "It is on this important point of formal loyalty and obedience that I am particularly anxious –it is in fact my real reason for writing this letter- to assure you that, in spite of any apparent evidence to the contrary, I am resolved to remain a 'child of obedience.'"(Chardin, 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1951). Although the letter sounds as if Chardin is apologizing for something, yet the researcher will argue that this letter instead, showed Chardin under duress as a priest.

Evidence from the above arguments showed that de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo each saw evolution through the same tinted glass. They shared many things in common. But, like all revolutionaries, they also had their differences. I think that if they had shared the same faith, and ethnicity, they would have more philosophical issues to agree. Overall philosophically, they agreed on many points on evolution and human existence. It is mainly on this idea that the researcher brought in Teilhard de Chardin in this defense of Sri Aurobindo Spiritual Evolution Theory.

#### 4.9. WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS SUPPORT THE THEORY OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

In this section of the defense of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory, the researcher will draw supports from the views of some Western Philosophers who have the same understanding on the involvements of the spirit in the evolution process. A few to be included are, Samuel Alexander, Hegel, Henri Bergson and A.N Whitehead. The purpose of this approach is to try a fresh look and think about other philosophers views on the spiritual evolution. This process will enable us to avoid lengthy arguments with materialistic, reductionism and nihilism, but concentrate more on those who concentrates on the spiritual involvements. The objective is also to find out through these Western philosophers the reason why Sri Aurobindo calls evolution the involvement of Consciousness and how the involvement of the spirit will make sense to the evolutionary process.

The other philosopher from the West, besides Teilhard de Chardin, who can be considered closest to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of spiritual evolution, is Samuel Alexander. In his book, "Space, Time, and Deity", we find his theory of evolution resembles in many respects with that of Sri Aurobindo. Both speak of evolution as emergent from Consciousness to higher levels. Sri Aurobindo and Alexander stressed strongly the power of Consciousness. Thus, evolution is the progression of the transformation of Matter. In the case of Sri Aurobindo and Alexander, this is the transformations of life. Alexander stressed on this particular point, when he said that, "But for philosophy, God's Deity is not different from the Spirit in degree, but in kind, as a novelty in a series of empirical qualities." (Alexander, 1951, p.350). Sri Aurobindo agreed with Alexander, but at the same time suggested a remedy to the idea about the ideas on the Deity, when Alexander says, "All theistic explanations

of existence starting from the extracosmic<sup>1</sup>. Deity stumbles over this difficulty and can only evade it; it would disappear only if the Creator were, even though exceeding the creation, yet immanent in it, himself in some way both players and the play, an infinite causing infinite possibilities in a set form of an evolutionary cosmic order.”(Alexander, 1951, p.302).

The findings above show Alexander posited that the Consciousness is higher than what has emerged, which is the Deity. It can be made compatible to the idea of Sri Aurobindo's Consciousness as the Creator. They both could have reached an ontological understanding of the question and functions of the Deity, provided Alexander had changed his views on God. God, for Alexander is the whole World possessing the quality of Deity. Alexander, unlike Sri Aurobindo, who deified God, explained that, 'infinite, belongs to, or is lodged in, but is only a portion of the Universe.' (Alexander, 1951, p.349). The argument elucidated here shows that although there are similarities between these two thinkers, when it came to a question of Being and the Nature of God, they parted company.

We can summarize the arguments between Sri Aurobindo and Alexander First, Alexander agreed on the emergent philosophy of Evolution. Sri Aurobindo spoke about creation beginning with the Consciousness-Force working in Matter. Up to this point, they had similarities on the question of evolution because Alexander spoke about the progression of Life, but not on Matter. Again, Alexander did not speak about creation or what evolution is. But, on the question of Evolution, they agreed on many points as seen from the arguments presented above.

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<sup>1</sup> **extra cosmic** Ch 4, 197-198 Sri Aurobindo clarifies, that it is true that certain religions seems to suppose an **extra cosmic** Deity who created world outside and apart from his own existence; but when they construct a theology or spiritual philosophy, these too admit Omnipresence or immanence, for this Omnipresence imposes itself, is a necessity of Spiritual thinking.



The next philosopher we will discuss who speaks on the spiritual involvement in evolution is Hegel, a Western philosopher. Hegel can be taken as one of those who championed the view of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution theory. According to the Hegelian standpoint on evolution, all evolution is evolution of the Spirit, even evolution of nature is not an exception. Sri Aurobindo agrees with Hegel on the Spiritual cause of evolution. They both agreed that evolution was the inverse of the process of creation. Evolution for Sri Aurobindo meant the Spirit returning to it self after its projection in the World was completed or "The Home coming of the Spirit." (Maitra, 1956, p.39). S.K.Maitra confirmed that Hegel's philosophy was the same as that of Sri Aurobindo, when he said:

"Hegel perhaps comes nearest to Aurobindo, more than any other philosophers either in the West or the East. For it was he who laid before us the secret of the onward march of the Absolute Idea through the realms of Nature and History, treating these two as negations to be annulled or oppositions to be conquered, but as progressive stages in the evolution of the Absolute in Time." (Maitra, 1956, pp.103-4).

But, we also see Hegel in his philosophy of evolution, he conceives of a common identity between logic and metaphysics, which in turn shows a self-same identity between Thought and Being. This fact makes it evident that Hegel agrees with Sri Aurobindo on evolution, but when speaking of being as thought, Hegel strayed away from Sri Aurobindo, who rejects the idea of thought as the Being. It is here that they disagree because partly, Hegel is reviving the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle that the Spirit is nothing but "Idea". Hegel later changed 'Idea' to 'Reason', when he based evolution on logic or dialectical thinking. But for Sri Aurobindo, 'Reason' cannot be equated with 'Intuition', Sri Aurobindo argues:

“There are several rungs on the Spiritual ladder which are higher than Reason.”(Aurobindo, 1939, p.36). Hence, in Sri Aurobindo’s view, Hegel is wrong in identifying Spirit with Reason. We can say that Hegel in many respects agreed with Sri Aurobindo’s Spiritual Evolution theory, but, they differ on the question of the Being.

We can summarize the interpretation of evolution by Sri Aurobindo and Hegel. Both looked at evolution from the standpoint of the end. But the end as conceived by Hegel is different from the end conceived by Sri Aurobindo. For Hegel, it is a rational end, an end conceived by thought. Thought, for Sri Aurobindo, is not reality. At the same time, for him, there are various grades before the ultimate reality can be reached. For Sri Aurobindo, reality accounts for the nature of evolution being above thought. Overall, we can conclude that Hegel and Sri Aurobindo shared the same view on involvement of the spirit in the whole evolution process. So they differ on philosophical ideas about existence.

The other philosopher from the West that we will consider is Bergson. He expounds the concept what may be called the Vital Absolute in his theory of the *élan vital*, which is an eternally creative principle continually bringing out ever unforeseen forms. On evolution Bergson starts from pure Time, free from all spatial images and conceived of pure change and pure evolution. Bergson’s philosophy on evolution and that of Sri Aurobindo, there is more of an influence, than any resemblance. Professor S.K.Maitra, in his book, *East meets West in Sri Aurobindo*, wrote that, “In reading Sri Aurobindo philosophy you might be mistaken as having read Bergson’s.” (Maitra, 1971, p.39). This confirmed why Sri Aurobindo agrees with most of Bergson’s philosophy on evolution. We think Maitra’s observation is right. The other point to be considered Bergson’s in relation to Sri Aurobindo is his

emphasis on the standpoint of intuition. Intuition for Bergson means a direct approach to reality. In his, 'Introduction to Metaphysics', he defines intuition as a kind of intellectual empathy by which we can enter into the heart of a thing and thereby coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Sri Aurobindo we can say also stressed on intuition as the medium of knowledge, but he goes a step further than Bergson. He identified five levels of consciousness or knowledge namely, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitions, Overmind and Super mind. As regards to the relative status of intuition and reason, Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly gives intuition a higher place than reason. But it should be noted that Sri Aurobindo also uses Reason to aid intuition.

We have to note also that Bergson deviated from the traditional line of the Western thought, but has no sign of Eastern influence either. Whatever differences Bergson has with the West, are purely intellectual differences. Hence, he made his theory of evolution as one of the main principles in his philosophy. He dealt with evolution differently from Darwin and Spencer on one hand, and Hegel. Bergson like Sri Aurobindo shunned naturalistic interpretations of evolution. He called his theory of evolution, "Creative Evolution", or evolution through the *elan vital*. He gave an analogy of creative evolution, as the creative work of a painter, "The unfinished Portrait." (S.K.Maitra, Journal article, 'Philosophy of Henri Bergson, Oct. 1941, p.126). It implied that creation, unlike as in Sri Aurobindo's where the "Spirit" is the artist, and knows exactly what it is creating when it descends into inconscient Matter. In Bergson's Artist's work, it seems that the artist could not anticipate the outcome of his artistic work. But for Sri Aurobindo, the creator knows and can foresee the outcome of his work. Sri Aurobindo regards intuition as the source of true knowledge and intellect. But Bergson, approached the reality through

intuition, with the help of reason. Sri Aurobindo argued why only intuition should be the only source for true knowledge, he says,

“Intuition is our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operation. Intuition brings to man, those brilliant messages from the unknown which are the beginning of the highest knowledge. Reason, only comes in forward, to see what profit it can get from the slimming harvest.”(Maitra,1941, p.67).

We also find Bergson unlike Sri Aurobindo defines intuition as ‘a kind of intellectually sympathy by which we can enter into the heart of a thing and theory, coinciding with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible,’ (Bergson, 1974. p.8). Bergson, when questioned about the power of entering into the heart of other thing, failed to give a direct answer. His inability to give an answer when posed with the above question, most probably, means that he does not believe in the power of the intellect, as we saw when he depicted his ideas in the, “Unfinished Portrait.”<sup>1</sup> Instead, he stressed on empathy and occultation. In the Creative Evolution, he explained that knowledge of reality is evoked by interaction. It ‘is a thing of pure flow or a spontaneous movements,’ which he called, ‘the movement of Time.’(ibid, 1974. p.6)

One important aspect we observed Sri Aurobindo and Bergson agreed on the question of evolution and intuition, except for the mode of its occurrence. We can say

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<sup>1</sup> **The unfinished portrait**” Ch 4, 202 is explained by the nature of the artist in the color spread in the palette; even with the knowledge of what explains it. Not, even the artist could have foreseen exactly what the portrait will look like it is far from the product we would have wanted to produce it, before it was actually produced. This is an absurd Artypothesis which is its own refutation. Even so, with regard to the moment of life, we are the artisans. Each of us is a kind of creation. And just as the task of the painter is formed or deformed in any case is modified – under the influence of the works he produces, so each of our states, at the moment of its issue, modifies our personality, being indeed the new form that we are just assuming (Creative Evolution, Trans, Mitchell Manilas, 1928m p.7)

that Eastern philosophers are more familiar with intuition, as seen in Sri Aurobindo's higher consciousness. As already mentioned he gave the range as higher mind, illumined mind, over-mind, and super-mind. All these are intuitive, except the first. For Sri Aurobindo, the value of intuition depends upon the source from which it emanates and upon the presence or absence of mental stuff, to non-sensuous. He said that, "such an experience, far from being communications from a higher region, may even be from a lower plane." Sri Aurobindo warned us particularly 'against such spurious intuitions.' (Aurobindo, 1939, p.998).

It is clear from the study that the intuitive experience of Sri Aurobindo is different from that of Bergson. Sri Aurobindo distinguished intuition into five levels; whereas Bergson huddled together all forms of consciousness under the single term of intuition with emphasis on reason. Sri Aurobindo we see differentiate between intuition and reason; he gave intuition a higher place, for he said,

"A consciousness that proceeds by sight, the consciousness of the seers, is a greater power for knowledge than the consciousness of the thinker. The perpetual power of thought is a spiritual sense that seizes something of the substance of the truth and not on her figure; but it outlines the figure also, and at the same time catches the significance of the figure and can embody her with a fairer and larger comprehension and power of totality than thought conception can manage." (Aurobindo, 1939, p.945).

In summary, the similarities and differences between Sri Aurobindo and Bergson's philosophies of evolution and intuition lie in that Bergson advocates evolution as creative. He gave an example of the "Unfinished Portrait", where we do not really see any creativity. Everything is unclear right from the time when the colors are on the palette. He could not tell us what sort of talents the artist had, or his ideas about what

he was going to do. So creative for Bergson means that he denies any control in the creation process. But in the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo, at every step in the process, it reveals its spiritual source, because for Sri Aurobindo every step of evolution process is directed by the Spirit. Evolution in Sri Aurobindo is the spirit returning to itself, which he calls the ascent. The Ascent or evolution is possible because there has been a descent which is the involution of the spirit into matter.

The last philosopher from the West that the researcher thinks, should be included in this Defense of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution, is A.N. Whitehead. He was one of the most famous philosophers who dealt extensively with the theory of evolution. He is also highly respected for various philosophical reasons among them is the theory of Creativity, he said creativity is the urge of novelty. A comparison of Sri Aurobindo and Prof. A. N. Whitehead's philosophy of evolution reveals striking resemblances as well as some differences. For them, evolution is not merely one principle among many others, but it is one principle round which has clustered all other principles and without which they cannot be understood. As for their fundamental differences, Whitehead's theory of evolution is naturalistic, whereas Sri Aurobindo's is spiritualistic. One reason, why Whitehead was chosen to defend Sri Aurobindo, is that he strongly advocated the theory of Evolution. This observation was supported by Professor S.K. Maitra, who writes,

"Whitehead is the most systematic thinker in the West today, as Sri Aurobindo is in the East. System is an obsession of Whitehead as originality is an obsession of Bergson. There was perhaps one important thinker in the West from Heraclitus and Plato in ancient times, down to Bergson and Alexander in our days, from whom Whitehead has not drawn his ideas for building his system in the second place. As a consequence of his great love



for system, his philosophy acquires a wonderful representative character.

There is hardly any trend of Western thought which he has not tried to represent and incorporate in his philosophy.” (Maitra, 1956, p.410).

Whitehead represents not only Western philosophy, but also, Western science. He championed monism, as perhaps as Sri Aurobindo did in the East, although there is a slight difference in the votary of it. He, like Sri Aurobindo was a great exponent of the principle of spiritual evolution. Both thinkers made evolution the basis of their philosophies. Evolution, for Whitehead, was the urge for novelty, and, for Sri Aurobindo, the delight of the Creator. The nature of this urge, Whitehead explained:

“Creativity is without a character of its own, in exactly the same sense which the Aristotalian “Matter” is without a character of its own. It is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. It cannot be characterized, because all characters are more special than It self. But creativity is always found under conditions and described as conditioned. The non-temporal act of all inclusive unfiltered valuation is at once a creation of creativity and a condition for creativity. It shares this double character with all creatures.” (Whitehead, 1978, p.43).

This is in brief the scheme of creativity unfolded by Whitehead. He tried to give an answer to the question, “Why” of evolution? Why did the world evolved at all? Why does God seek temporization of his conceptual realization? His creativity is the urge of the reality. Whitehead explained the actual entity of the world; it is the urge that comes from the physical pole of enjoyment, the same as the Delight of the creator for Sri Aurobindo, and the mental pole of apparition or the urge to create, as in Bergson’s *élan vital*. There are striking resemblances in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy with that of Whitehead. This we already observed when we compared

Western philosophers with Sri Aurobindo. One striking resemblance is on the theory of evolution. Like Sri Aurobindo in the East, Whitehead was the most outstanding evolutionary philosopher of his days in the West. Evolution, for them it was not merely one principle among many others, which explained the world as it is, but is also as it will be in the future. They also, were thoroughgoing evolutionists and followed the absolute monism. They both opposed any form of dualism, Whitehead called all forms of dualism, "bifurcation theories". Both were not devotees exclusively either of Being or of Becoming. In fact, both of them made a distinction between Beings and Becoming, which has become a much debated issue in philosophy. It is to be noted, this distinction has greatly hampered the progress of philosophy. They strongly adhered to the principle of evolution and both were forward looking. They were not tied to past happenings or to what is happening at present. Both of them hated being dominated by any stereotyped ways of thinking.

In spite of these many resemblances in their ways of thinking and philosophy, we also find fundamental differences between them. We find that Whitehead's theory of evolution is naturalistic or a standpoint from the beginning, whereas for Sri Aurobindo it is spiritualistic and from the standpoint of the end, as also found in Hegel. Whitehead's philosophy of organisms was based upon a purely naturalistic principle, namely, what he called "Prehension", a kind of feeling which is the, "inner spring or motive force of the entire world of process (ibid.p.430). Hence, the process of evolution of Whitehead was basically of the same order as evolution conceived in the nineteenth century; an evolution from the standpoint of the beginning. It is mainly on this issue that their differences lie.

In Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary theory, we find that it is in contrast with that of Whitehead. Firstly, in Sri Aurobindo, the principle of evolution itself is derived

from the nature of the highest principle, which is the Ultimate Reality. Sri Aurobindo put it very clearly that natural process of evolution was not to be found in the process of nature, but to be sought in Ultimate Reality. He clarified as follows:

“An original creative power there must be, but although Matter is the first substance, the original and ultimate power is not an inconscient material energy, for then life and consciousness, are not an inanimate force that evolved life. There must be, therefore, since mind and life are not that, a secret consciousness; an energy more essential than material energy. Since it is greater than mind, it must be a supramental consciousness – force; since it is the power of essential substance other than matter, it must be the power of that which is supreme the essence and substance of all things, a power of the spirit. There is a creative energy of mind and a creative life-force, but they are instrumental and partial, not original and decisive. If there is to be an entire transformation, it can only be by the full emergence of the law of spirit; its power of supermind or gnosis must have entered into matter and it must evolve in matter.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.705).

Here, we see Sri Aurobindo unlike Whitehead, very clearly stated that, the root of evolution is something higher than life, even higher than mind. In fact, it is nothing else other than the power of spirit itself. So, evolution is the ascent of physical nature, life, mind, etc, to the ultimate reality. In fact, what Sri Aurobindo infers in the above excerpt is more in agreement with the view expressed by Hegel. Both look at evolution from the standpoint of the end. Of course they differed on the ideas of thought and the reality. Also, we find that Sri Aurobindo differs from the idea of Whitehead, who stressed the involvement of nature in the evolution process,

whereas, for Sri Aurobindo, the spirit is the source of evolution through its ascending process.

Analysis reveals that Whitehead in his *Process and Reality* shows us the necessity of the principle of creativity. He identified creativity with novelty. This novelty of Whitehead, we may identify with the delight for creation of Sri Aurobindo. According to Whitehead, this creativity of novelty is nothing but the inner spring of the process of evolution, whereas, in Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory, the delight is not merely an urge for novelty, but the more teleological idea of the entire process of evolution, by which it takes the infinite beyond the limit of the Infinite. Hence, it is determined by the manner in which the whole world originated. In Sri Aurobindo's theory it originated from the Sachchidananda. Its goal is to return back to Him and be merged back with Him through the process of evolution and involution. Of course, Whitehead's creativity and novelty is more prominent. It has all the thoroughness with which he developed his philosophy of organisms. Whitehead, unlike Sri Aurobindo, conceived the world as composed of vast microscopic entities. For Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, the world was composed of the entity of the spirit which would last to eternity. It differed from Whitehead's organic philosophy in which each of the atoms was termed an actual entity. These entities or organisms grows, they mature, and finally perish. It is this ending of his organisms that made Whitehead concerned about the characteristics of inter-relationship between actual entities and their beings and becoming, which is the final things the world is made up of. It may be remarked here that even God, for Whitehead, is an actual entity, except in that it is primordial. But, Sri Aurobindo's creation is the scene of evolution unfolding of the being which moves to the revelation of a supreme spiritual light, power, joy, and oneness, which includes the

manifold diversity of the self achieving spirit. There is an all seeing purpose in the, “terrestrial creature.” (Aurobindo,1939,p.606).Therefore, in Sri Aurobindo, we see the evolutionary movement of evolution as the progressive self-manifestation of the spirit in the material universe.

Analyzing further, the researcher thinks that Sri Aurobindo’s evolution theory of inconscient matter and Whitehead’s philosophy of organisms are comparable. The spiritual involution into matter reveals the immense complexity of man’s nature at its very initial stage, more or less like the development of organisms to the living-organism stage in Whitehead’s philosophy. Teilhard de Chardin would support this idea since for him also in that life originates from non-life. As a matter of fact, there is scientific backing for the common descent of man from one ancestor. Phylogeny, the study of ancestry of species, also confirms this contention.

Summarizing Sri Aurobindo’s and Whitehead’s philosophies of evolution, it cannot be understood unless they are viewed as reversed sides of Creation. In Whitehead’s theory of evolution, creativity is the guiding principle. In Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual evolution, creativity is the descent or involution of the Sachchidananda into the world. As such, the evolution is the reverse process of the ascent or the evolution of the world to its source, the Sachchidananda. We find no such goal in Whitehead’s theory of organisms. Instead, we find that his organisms, after a lot of transformations end up dead and decayed. Their differences lie in the fact that Whitehead’s organism is purposeless and without any goal, but for Sri Aurobindo’s theory of evolution, there is a purpose and goal. This in brief, is the similarity and differences between Sri Aurobindo’s and Whitehead’s evolution theories. Overall, we conclude, there are more similarities than differences between these two great philosophers.

#### 4.10. A SUMMARY

This section summarizes Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution, in its relation to Western evolutionary thought. There are points of similarities and difference. Firstly, the analysis showed that the Eastern philosophy of evolution concentrates mostly on the individual. The West it is more cosmic in nature. Secondly, in the East, the philosophy of evolution has not been given its due importance, since in the East it concerns more with the future, and the after-life rather than the before-life. The Western philosophy of evolution is more interested in investigating, the before-life. This has been discussed from Heraclitus, Thales of Miletus, Plato, Aristotle down to Darwin and Spencer of later days. And now, with the new breeds of philosophers such as Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, and others are continuing the task. During all these periods from Plato to Whitehead, it has undergone radical changes due to the influence of logic and science. Thirdly, in the East, since it is more concerned with the after-life, philosophers deal with the spirit more there has not seen much changes until Sri Aurobindo came in to the scene. In the West, philosophers are not very particular with the spirit, but more on the material parts of life. But over all they support the idea that evolution is the work of consciousness or the involvement of the spirit in its process. There is a great deal of truth in the support on the spiritual evolution theory. But if we reflect on the thought provoking words of Fichte, particularly that, "What Philosophy a man has depends on what sort of a man he is, so unless we assume that all men all over the world are identical, there must be some differences in their temperaments and outlooks on life, which are bound to be reflected in their philosophies." (Fichte, 1988, p.26). The researcher thinks that Fichte has hit the nail on the head regarding the semblances and differences between Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution and those of the



Western philosophers. In the end we can say that there are reasons why there are these resemblances and differences between Eastern and Western philosophy. But one fact identified is that all the philosophers mentioned in this study have strong belief in the involvement of the spirit in the evolution process.

#### **4.11. DEFENSE OF THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION THEORY: A CONCLUSION**

The defense of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution, it is appropriate to make a clarification and argue against the critics and academicians who are likely to observe Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution as leaning toward mysticism and occultism. At a glance, taking the process of involution and evolution, and the delights of the creator, these allegations and observations seem to be so. But, on closer analysis of the theory, there is a sense of experience. The critics may feel that it has a limit which cannot in reality be the limit of sense experience, which has a greater dynamic, than one who denounces it. Secondly, defending against allegations of critics on Sri Aurobindo's delight of the creator, as a matter of fact, he did not subscribe to the Sankarite doctrine of Maya. He did not consider total emancipation from the physical world to be the final stage of human progress. He envisaged the traditional sense, a state of rejuvenation, reformation, and recreation or the resurrection of the whole physical, vital, and mental existence, to become a new being. These processes of progress to that new being, he admits, took millions of years to manifest it self even to a human-like beings. It is not an instantaneous existence, as seen in the Absolute Creation<sup>1</sup>, but more as in conditional creation. Sri

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<sup>1</sup> God created Ch 4, 211-212 According to this theory, God created the world out of nothing by an act of divine faith. "Let there be world and there was world". Book of Genesis, Bible (1.1-11.3). God existed alone before this. But, in spiritual evolution he is like an architect who manufactured the world from primitive matter. Matter and God are co-eternal: the primordial matter was in a chaotic stage; God produced this cosmos out of that chaos.

Aurobindo on this account did not condemn biological evolution either. He differed only in that in these theories, ignored the involvement of the spirit. He would have agreed even with Darwin, if he had attributed evolution to a supreme being. But, in Sri Aurobindo, it is purposive, unlike Darwin who claims that evolution of species is an accidental process. Sri Aurobindo clarified this when he said,

“At first rudimentary mostly half unconsciousness or just conscious instinct, it develops slowly until it is more organized form of living man, the thinking animal who developed into a reasoning mental being but carries along with him, even at his highest elevation the mould of original anima. First she houses herself in forms of matter which appear to be altogether unconsciousness, then struggle to mentality in the guise of living matter, and attain it imperfectly in the conscious animal. This consciousness is lity, the dead weight of subconsciousness of body, the downward pull of gravitation towards the original inertia and nescience.”( Aurobindo,1939,p.825).

While arguing against critics, the researcher observes that Sri Aurobindo seemed to know the mind of his critics, so he explained further. He said ‘this terrestrial evolution, working from Matter to Mind and beyond. has a double process: there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as the machinery for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness which is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity...’(Aurobindo,1939, p.825). The above facts in the defense of Sri Aurobindo’s theory of evolution were presented in a very elaborate way, yet the researcher thinks some critics are likely to consider the evolutionary theory of Sri Aurobindo as something utopian, and that his philosophy is a form of Neo-Vedantism, and at the same times, Vedantic and Tantric in nature. Such ideas may

have been retained in Sri Aurobindo's thought, as seen from his steadfast clinging to the ancient teachings of the Indian ancient Texts of the Upanishads and Bhaghadita. But, overall, he does not attribute his thought to the Vedantic or tantric philosophy. This was clarified when the researcher compared Sri Aurobindo with the Sankhya doctrine. The researcher would also defend Sri Aurobindo regarding the argument that his theory is utopian. In fact, there is nothing Utopian in Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary theory. There are evidences of changes that have taken place in the evolutionary process and human existence. Now, it is an accepted fact even in scientific and philosophical thought that the entire universe is in a process of continuous change, which has already been explained by the concept of evolution as advocated by Sri Aurobindo.

So the concept of evolution in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, as seen from the defense, is meant to explain evolution as a fact for the world's existence, for this world cannot come of it self, He emphasized that there is a force that can bring in this transformation. Life, he said, exists in inconscient matter. The force is the supreme spirit or what he called supreme consciousness that transforms the inconscient life in matter into Life. But he forewarn that it should not be construed that life came instantaneously immediately after this descend of the Spirit. At first it is rudimentarily, then slowly after million of years a more complex form of life is formed and finally, man came into being. Teilhard de Chardin also speaks about this transformation into life. Sri Aurobindo and Chardin agreed that the old form did not disappear in order to give rise to the new. In fact, evolution through transformations reinvigorates the old. The result from such a transformation is that it improved the old to a new and superior form.

Regarding this development of existence, the researcher fully endorsed this, citing the case of war materials used by primitive people. If we follow the development of war materials being used from one generation to the next, we will see a very drastically change, from conventional to a more sophisticated weaponry. Whitehead said, "The changes of war materials from one generation to the next, only shows, that the vital minds have developed in intelligence and reasoning. And, as our intelligence developed and increased, the war materials did also, becoming more sophisticated. In our age, we don't need to fight wars in the battlefield any more. We can use submarines, supersonic jets, missiles with atomic warheads, or drones, to fight distant wars while sitting in the comfort of our war offices. Attesting to this, Hartshorne warned us about such an eventuality when he said, "After Hiroshima we know that there can be hell enough on earth." (Hartshorne, 1984, p.110). This only demonstrates how far the mind's intelligence has advanced and progressed within a span of a few hundred years, to have developed such sophisticated war materials. So there are changes there are growth, because of the detrimental effects on humanity, the researcher thinks, this growth of intelligence in the evolutionary progress of man has to be rein in. The question is, can we really halt this development of the mind. The answer will surely be in the negative, since it is part of the development of the human evolution process. But man's intelligence may destroy whatever he has been able to achieve during the past three billion years of existence, and all our achievements and progress will come to naught in a matter of few seconds. Using these instances of development, the researcher, has on purpose, reflected here to prove that the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution theory is real as seen from the development of intelligence in the minds of beings. The development or changes will continue unabated, since this it

self is part of the process of evolution. According to Sri Aurobindo and Chardin, evolution process has not cease yet, it is still continuing even at this very moment.

Finally, this defense Study refers to Hartshorne who seems to have given the final support on Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, addressing his critics, he posits, "We have navels. If Adam has one, then he came from a mother. At least, this is eminently reasonable conclusion. If not, then Adam was not fully human as we know our species." (Hartshorn, 1984,p.91). What Hartshorne wanted to imply here is that an Adam with a navel means he was born of a mother, who herself was also born from her mother. We can go on backward until we reach the species of Darwin where life is formed, not as he envisaged, but as Sri Aurobindo predicted where at every step of development there is a spirit of consciousness. This development will go on till ultimately life and mind transcended into a new being, the superman or supermind as predicted by Sri Aurobindo in his Spiritual Evolution Theory.

In defending Sri Aurobindo's evolution theory, the arguments and counter arguments presented in this study are primarily based on ontological and metaphysical arguments. The other angle by which a theory can be considered is on its metaphysical soundness, practicability, and the reality it presents. It can be comprehended by reason or through knowledge. In this regards, we have seen Kant tried to reconcile a priori with posteriori factors of knowledge in his Formalistic Rationalism. Also, Herbert Spencer tried to do the same, by the modification of empiricism through the doctrine of evolution. Both could to a great extent, explain the growth of knowledge, but could not account for knowledge itself. It is a fact Sri Aurobindo who tried to reconcile Spirit and Matter in his evolution theory. He was able to explain both the "Why" and the "How" of evolution, in his theory. But, a

theory as a theory has no credibility unless it can be proven that it can face the test. I think the theory of Sri Aurobindo has passed the test, as seen from the developments of the mind and changes that have taken place in the world so far. The spiritual evolution theory propounded by Sri Aurobindo is tenable and has proven that it has become the only plausible theory that can explain evolution from the aspect of the East as well as from the West. So far, no other theory can surpass it. In philosophy no conclusive conclusion can be given, until another alternative are presented. As such, the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo will remain a viable theory until such time.

This researcher work concludes the defense for the Spiritual Evolution Theory with the recommendations that it offers four alternatives; the delights of the creator to create, through the process of involution and evolution, evolution of human from rudimentary form of inconscient matter, a spontaneous appearance of a fully developed human and finally, a divinized man a superman, through the process of transformation or in the future through the scientific process of the genetically modified organisms such as GMO foods, and cloning.<sup>1</sup> All these have been predicted by Sri Aurobindo, through the progressive process of his Spiritual Evolution Theory.

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<sup>1</sup> **Cloning** Ch 4, 216 :has become a fad in recent years, after Dolly the sheep was successfully cloned in Scotland. Now stem cell research is a much debated issues with a strong opposition from religious and Ethical groups. It is argued that cloning may lead to cloning human body parts and may be human itself. Otherwise, it is nothing but the development of the mind as I had discussed on the changes in war materials.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this Chapter concludes the defense on the spiritual evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo. The theory was found to have centered around five principles. It rests strongly first, on the teachings of two Indian ancient texts, the Upanishads and the Vedas. The evidence for this is found in his metaphysical text, *The Life Divine*, wherein famous sayings from these texts are quoted extensively, at the prelude of each Chapter. Western influence on his theory of evolution are often seen when he deals with individualism. At other times, we see Sri Aurobindo either criticized or was in agreement with these occidental thoughts. We have discussed these in chapter 4. The third finding is, Sri Aurobindo had synthesized the Evolution theory of the East and of the West, integrating Matter and Spirit. According to A. Bhattacharya, this new idea has not been found in any other system, either ancient or modern. The fourth finding of this study is Sri Aurobindo on the whole, does not totally reject the scientific interpretation of the evolution process, as often thought or pointed out by his critics. And lastly, Sri Aurobindo used his own genius synthesizing the best of theories on evolution found through the history of philosophy of evolution. Sri Aurobindo pooled different thoughts, and supplemented them with his own interpretations and understanding, including science, to meet the comprehensive ideas of his Spiritual Evolution Theory. This testifies that Sri Aurobindo's theory on evolution used integral methods to explain how evolution took place. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy has been rightly termed a synthesizing approach and it stands out from other theory on evolution. In this regard, Sri Aurobindo testified, he says, "Once the evolutionary hypothesis is put forward and the facts supporting it are marshaled, this process of terrestrial existence becomes so striking as to appear

indisputable. The precise machinery by which this is done or the exact genealogy or chronological succession of types of being is secondary, though in itself an interesting and important question. The development of one form of life out of a precedent less evolved, from natural selection as a struggle for life, and the survival is the acquired characteristics may or may not be accepted, but the fact of successive creation, with a developing plan in it is the one conclusion which is of primary consequence. Another self-evident conclusion is that there is a graduated necessary succession in the evolution of Matter, then evolution of Mind in living Matter, and in the last stage an animal evolution followed by human evolution.” (Aurobindo, 1939, p.826).

The defense of the theory also showed that there are more supports than any counter arguments between Sri Aurobindo’s theory on evolution, and those views from other philosophers of evolution. The fact is, his evolution process takes place not because of the latent principle of its urge, to emerge, as in Bergson, but from the pressure of what we call the corresponding typal world of mind on the vital world. It moulds the living body through force and light, in order to increase its self-expression. He stresses the point that mind could emerge in the living body due to the operation of the two pulls, which are ascent and descent or evolution and involution. It is the drive of the mind itself, resulting from the typal world of mind in the vital world that has molded the living body through that force. Hence, the ascent and descent create a link in the long chain of the evolutionary process. Here, we can see a plausible mechanism in the working toward higher levels of evolution, not devoid of the organic connection with their substructure. There is an element in this, mainly due to the descent from above and also due to the integration that takes place after that. What Sri Aurobindo categorically meant was that, unless involution or

descent takes place, evolution on its own will not be possible. The integration of the two processes is a necessary condition for the Divine existence in matter, through what he calls the descent of the Divine Consciousness.

The evolution theory of Sri Aurobindo, especially concerning his spiritual involvement in evolution admits of no contradiction as we have seen. It is under the triadic movement of evolution wherein Consciousness is involved. It would not mean only for it gaining a higher consciousness, it also works in the lower and external part of the evolution process. This is what Sri Aurobindo has been harping on the ascent, descent and integration, which is the triadic movement in the process of spiritual evolution.

We also found that, the philosophy on spiritual evolution has become a topic of interest in the East, and also slowly his theory of spiritual evolution has evoked keen interests also in the West. Prior to this, as found in Chapter 2, the idea about 'Evolution' is devoid of the spiritual aspect in philosophy in spite of the fact that it has been widely discussed and debated in the West for a long period of time. The integral non-dualism or integral idealism of Sri Aurobindo's has now attracted inquiries and most modern philosophers have shown keen interest in this approach to evolution. The integrals approach of his theory of spiritual evolution has rendered it as a highly viable, and it has become so realistic and so vibrant that it now stands out from the other theories in evolution. This feat can be attributed to none other than Sri Aurobindo himself who through his owns genius in the arts of synthesizing and his in-depth understanding of the problem. Any other claim of originality can easily be denied, because of the superfluous language he uses, and also the consolidation of the causes of evolution on Sachchidananda, the Supreme Consciousness is unsurpassed. On the how of evolution, we have seen he simply attributes it as the

“Lila”, in which the Supreme Being manifests itself, for the joy and delight of recreating it self. The manifestation, having been metaphysically explained, it will not easily succumb to any arguments, maybe, “for” but not “against”. In every theory, we find fence-sitters. For such groups, Sri Aurobindo would like to remind them that, since evolution is a divine process, man has divinity born into him. As such, man can know supraphysical truth, since he possesses reason and the power of intuition, derived from the Supreme consciousness. In the Arya, the weekly newspaper which he edited, we find these convincing words to the fence sitters, by raising human beings, equating them to the level of divine. Through intuition we can know our own process evolution, for he writes, “Ye are God, None of the heavenly gods quits his sphere to come upon earth, while man mounts up to heaven and measure it. He knows what is on high and what is below. He knows all correctly, and, what is more, has no need to leave the earth in order to exalt him self, none is greater than he. The gods themselves will have to descend upon earth and it is in human form that they will get their salvation. Man alone reaches that perfections of which the gods themselves are ignorant,” (Aurobindo, 1914, p.317).

Sri Aurobindo in his statements above, showed full confidence, conviction and authority, leaving little space for doubt, on its authority and authenticity. It is with the same profundity he has constructed the spiritual evolution theory. It is true scientifically it cannot be proved, but it can be explained Metaphysically, Scientifically in the form of the physical components and in the life of an atom in matter which can only lend support the metaphysical explanations of Sri Aurobindo about the evolution process. So the principle higher than these, he asserts, is already involved in matter, the Divine himself has already manifested in matter. The superimposition of these ideas is being supported by modern science that

intuitively we can transcend beyond our mind to know about supra cosmic or the world beyond us.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of spiritual evolution envisaging and integrating within itself all that is best from the West and from the East. His philosophy of evolution is the direct outcome of his integral approach in the philosophy of evolution. The integral or synthetic view of Sri Aurobindo on existence is a Becoming, and divine Being, a spiritual evolution with the supra cosmic. Its sources and supports are aimed at a higher and higher perfection. In the other words, the spiritual evolution must be transformed into a higher stage, to that of a Divine. The spiritual evolution is in actuality, an identity that will be the continuation and transformation of the present human being. Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution, man has evolved as a mental being, and he has the potential for developing into a higher status.

Finally, we conclude that evolution that we have witnessed took place on the basis explained by the Spiritual Evolution theory. There is no other theories identified so far that can implicitly and explicitly explain evolution. It has preserved all the materialistic and idealistic theories which explained the whole truth about evolution. Sri Aurobindo made an attempt to integrate the intellectual and cosmic outlook of the West with the spiritual and individualistic standpoint of the East. The end result is harmony in the Theory of Evolution. This harmony is essential, since the reconciliation of the two extremes is a necessity. This necessity for a balanced theory of evolution has finally come to rest in the Spiritual Evolution theory expounded by Sri Aurobindo.

The metaphysical analysis of Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution and the process of the integrated theory, through this research work, had given us an insight into the criterion by which Sri Aurobindo has built his Spiritual Evolution theory. It clarifies that material development should be guided by spiritual development. It determines that the ideal of the spiritual evolution is a complete spiritualization and the transformation of Matter. Based on this development alone, the urge to evolve can be fully manifested in the ultimate Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, the sources of creation. It is for this purpose Sri Aurobindo has taken a special interest and made "Spiritual Evolution Theory", a fundamental point, removing some of the dichotomy in philosophy. This was how he accomplished "through his integral futuristic vision," commented Sachchidananda Mohanty. (ed.Setna:1997.p.17). This fulfills the purpose this research work in defending Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution Theory.

We may sum up the defense and findings of Sri Aurobindo Spiritual Evolution Theory of Sri Aurobindo in the following points:

1. It is a spiritual evolution of the emergence type.
2. Evolution is possible because of involution.
3. Involution originates from God and evolution culminates in God
4. It is teleological, the whole purpose being the pleasure and delights of creation

In this process, Sri Aurobindo not only showed the need to go beyond mental consciousness, but laid down a line of inner discipline by which one can attempt to open the Higher Consciousness and bring it down in Life. It is by this distinctive effort of Sri Aurobindo in bringing down a power to act on the Earth's Consciousness, that the human evolution process become a reality, different from



other efforts that had been made so far. The efforts of raising humans to the level of divinity, was another feat that Sri Aurobindo has contributed to philosophy, through his theory of spiritual evolution.

### 5.1 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research on Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Evolution is recommended, in particular on the "Future Evolution of Man", since, "Sri Aurobindo does not believe that man's spiritual evolution is limited only to the terrestrial world." (Rafique, 1987, p. 93).

Beside the physical plane of existence, there are other planes of consciousness also to which we can rise and we already have with those planes some sort of "hidden links" (Aurobindo, 1939, p. 588). This dimensional aspect of his philosophy still has a wide range and is open for further investigation.

We can make it a mission, the ideal of fulfilling those hidden ideals, for a wider meaning into our human life and our own future existence. If we can continue further research work based on these recommendations, the researcher's endeavors would have been fulfilled.

## GLOSSARY

1. **Brahma:** Also *Brahman*, the universal reality or worlds-souls the Supreme all pervasive essence and ground of the universe. The notion of sacrificial power in Vedic Hinduism was controlled by priest. *Brahma*: Creator God of the *Trimurti* in *Bhakti* Hinduism.
2. **Cit, Sat and Ananda:** Existence, Consciousness-Force, and Bliss.
3. **Lila:** play, game ; cosmic play.
4. **Matter:** Supermind, Supreme, Truth- Consciousness, the link between the Supreme Consciousness and Spiritual Evolution.
5. **Manomaya** (Purusa): the mental being; mental self, soul in mind.
6. **Maya:** phenomenal consciousness. The creative consciousness, signified Originality in the Veda the comprehension and creative knowledge wisdom that is from the old; afterwards taken in its second and derivative sense, cunning, magic, Illusion
7. Purna – Advaita : Integral non – dualism.  
Purnada – Ideal integralism.
8. **Sachchidananda:** Indian Philosophy, Existence/Knowledge/Bliss: Existence, Absolute-Consciousness, Bliss, and Absolute.
9. **Sankhya:** a system of philosophy and spiritual practice; the analysis, the enumeration, and discriminative setting forth the principles of our being; analytical realization of truth
10. **Sankhayas:** those who follows the system of sankhaya, the analytical thinker.

11. **U panishads:** To sit close by devoted. The teaching of Indian ancient sages which form of knowledge. The Central teaching of the Self of human being is the same as Brahman.
12. **Vedanta:** Literally, “end of the Vedas, one of Hinduism’ s formal schools of emancipation which draws heavily on the Upanishads and the Brahma Suthas and the Doctrine of Atman Brahman; its two main sub- schools are Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta (Monistic Vedanta ) and Ramanuja’s Vishista-Advaita Vedanta (qualified Vedanta).
13. **Vedas:** Hindu Sacred texts of the Aryan invaders written between 1500-800 BCE which include the Rig Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Artharva-Veda.
14. **vidya;** the Knowledge; Knowledge in its highest spiritual sense; the Consciousness of Unity,(cf. Avidya)
15. **Vishnu (visnu):** one of the Gods of the Hindu trinity, the preserver.  
**Yoga:** union ;the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine; a methodized effort towards self-perfect expression of the potentialities latent in the being and union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence.

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