

# CONCEPT OF SUPREME IN SRI AUROBINDO'S INTEGRAL IDEALISM

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## ABSTRACT

*Sri Aurobindo's vision constitutes a complex philosophy. His integral idealism is a monumental synthesis and happy reconciliation of ordinary, one side idealism and militant materialism. Through an intense life of continuous meditation, Sri Aurobindo has given the concept of Reality (Supreme). The central and basic concept of Sri Aurobindo's integral idealism is that 'All this is the Brahman'. An Omnipresent Reality is the Brahman: everything great or small, mental or physical, spiritual or material is in Brahman, manifests Brahman and is Brahman. The Reality or Brahman is the alpha and omega of all existence.*

**Keywords:** *Reality (Supreme); Sat; Chit; Ananda; Sachchidanand; Super conscient-Inconscient; Supermind*

## INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy or integral yoga is not a product of mental reasoning or speculation. There has to be an experience of the being in one's consciousness first. And when that is presented in terms of the intellect, it becomes philosophy. The experience may pertain to any field of life, viz., art, poetry, religion, spirituality, occultism, and it may be visual or sensational or psychic. When it is organised as a verifiable knowledge, it is philosophy.

In modern times, Sri Aurobindo's has been the greatest spiritual adventure of mysticism and occultism. He is an explorer of inner realms who brings a flood of spiritual light with tireless spiritual inspiration to illumine works like *Savitri* and *The Life Divine*. Throughout he lived his life in the Radiance of Truth and brought forth its rays through innumerable writings.

He accepts nothing unless it is based on experience and is capable of verification in experience. Whether it is metaphysics or poetry, he has to experience before he could proceed to put it in words. He is a scientist at the core: before he could offer anything for acceptance by others he had to test it for himself first many times. He explains himself:

We do not find ourselves on faith alone, but on a great ground of knowledge which we have been developing and testing all our lives. I think I can say that I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane. (Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself* 468-69)

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Another Indian term for the omnipresent Reality is Sachchidananda, which constitutes of three terms – Sat, Chit and Ananda. Sri Aurobindo explains the inherent relationship between these terms:

Sachchidananda is the One with a triple aspect. In the Supreme the three are not three but one -existence is consciousness, consciousness is bliss, and they are thus inseparable, not only inseparable but so much each other that they are not distinct at all. In these superior planes of manifestation they become triune - although inseparable, one can be made more prominent and baser or lead the others. In the lower planes below they become separable in appearance, though not in their secret reality, and one can exist phenomenally without the others so that we become aware of what seems to us an inconscient or a painful existence or a consciousness without Ananda. Indeed, without this separation of them in experience pain and ignorance and falsehood and death and what we call in conscience could not have manifested themselves - there could not have been this evolution of a limited and suffering consciousness out of the universal nascence of Matter. (*Letters on Yoga* 239)

The supreme Reality - the fount and origin of things and even that which is beyond - although essentially something absolute, indescribable, ineffable, indeterminable, has been for purposes of human understanding signalized as a triune entity of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. That is to say, first of all, it is, it exists always and forever invariably, in unbroken continuity; secondly, it exists not unconsciously but consciously, in and as full consciousness; thirdly, it exists in delight - through delight and for and as delight; it has no other reason for existence but the pleasure and joy of simply existing. This primal, this original truth or reality transcends creation and is beyond and antecedent to it.

Two seem his goals, yet ever are the one  
And gaze at each other over boundless Time;  
Spirit and Matter are their end and source. (*Savitri* 69)

What then is creation, what is its nature and character? Strange to say, it is the very opposite of the primal reality. First of all, it is not really existent, its existence is only another name for non-existence, as, in its phenomenal constitution, it is variable, ephemeral, transient and fragmentary or even seems made, as it were, of the stuff of dream. Secondly, it is not conscious; on the contrary, it is unconsciousness. And lastly it is not delight; there is an original insensibility and much undelight, grief and sorrow. Apart from these bipolar terms, one more is there described in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* within the context of Sachchidananda, which reveals the phenomenon of mortality and death in the physical creation instead of immortality and eternity.

*asato ma sadgamaya,  
tamso ma jyotirgamaya,  
marturmaamrat gameti.*(1:3:28)

The prayer clearly demonstrates two realms: the earthly existence dominated by unreality, darkness and death, and the beyond which in contrast represents the realm of real, light and immortality. So in the physical plane there is death, sorrow, suffering, insensibility, unconsciousness and non-existence. That is the actual physical creation; or so, at least, it appears to be. How is this paradox to be explained? What is the significance of this riddle?

This riddle is the structure of cosmic plan. It has its own pattern and geographical ground on which the phenomenon of this universe takes place. It is simply a plan or a layout like that of a building, a structure of the cosmos built on the foundation of involution- evolution and descent-ascent. Some ancient traditions also conceived two worlds, the lower world of ignorance, and the higher world of knowledge and truth.

Sri Aurobindo describes seven planes of existence. Above are the triple planes of Sat-Chit-Ananda and below are the lower planes of Mind, Life and Matter. Supermind is the link between the eternal illimitable Sachchidananda and the triple worlds of Mind, Life and Matter. Supermind creates a multiplicity out of the eternal unity of Sachchidananda which is projected as many in the lower planes.

The world of Sachchidananda is illimitable, infinite and eternal. There is only unity. Below this level is the level of Supermind. At this level multiplicity is created out of unity. But the unity is never lost in the Supermind. It is there as a sure foundation and a perfect truth, knowledge and self-effective power.

As one moves or comes down the ladder from the Supermind to the triple worlds of mind, life and matter, unity is relegated to the background and multiplicity becomes predominant and finally unity is completely lost. There is only fragmentation, inertia and unconscinded at the physical level. It is the level, where Sachchidananda disappears, then becomes fragmented and appears in the form of Asat, Achit and Anananda, the inverse of Sachchidananda at its root.

The creation starts its career on a base of contradiction. For the creative Reality, the Absolute is confronted at the end of its downward plunge with a totally opposite formation of itself.

According to integralism the opposition between the so-called lower nature and the higher nature develops within the cosmic self-expression of the same ultimate reality. The lower nature is the source of physical forces in the world and of instinctual drives in the unconscious mind. The higher nature comprises man's rational self-consciousness and his ethical and religious aspiration. The lower nature is the realm of brute fact and blind energy, whereas the higher nature is the realm of intelligence value and ideal. In spite of all apparent opposition between them the higher nature evolves out of the matrix of the lower nature through the operation of the super conscient creative dynamism of ultimate reality.

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