

Excerpts from the
writings of
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Intuition and Human Knowledge

A circle of progress

Intuition is our first teacher... Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest.

Intuition is as strong as Nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience.

But Intuition by the very nature of its action in man... is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands.

*The Life Divine (LD),
Pondicherry:
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*The Synthesis of Yoga (SY),
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[I]f we examine carefully, we shall find that Intuition is our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be which pursues man always in contradiction of his lower reason and all his normal experience and impels him to formulate that formless perception in the more positive ideas of God, Immortality, Heaven and the rest by which we strive to express it to the mind. For Intuition is as strong as Nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience. It knows what is because it is, because itself it is of that and has come from that, and will not yield it to the judgment of what merely becomes and appears. What the Intuition tells us of, is not so much Existence as the Existent, for it proceeds from that one point of light in us which gives it its advantage, that sometimes opened door in our own self-awareness. Ancient Vedanta seized this message of the Intuition and formulated it in the three great declarations of the Upanishads, "I am He", "Thou art That, O Swetaketu", "All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman".

But Intuition by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, active principally in his more unenlightened, less articulate parts, served in front of the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking conscience, only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its messages,— Intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands. Before it could effect any such completeness of direct knowledge in us, it would have to organise itself in our surface being and take possession there of the leading part. But in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organised and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions. Therefore the age of intuitive knowledge, represented by the early Vedantic thinking of the Upanishads, had to give place to the age of rational knowledge; inspired Scripture made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental Science. Intuitive thought which is a messenger from the superconscient and therefore our highest faculty, was supplanted by the pure reason which is only a sort of deputy and belongs to the middle heights of our being; pure reason in its turn was supplanted for a time by the mixed action of the reason which lives on our plains and lower elevations and does not in its view exceed the horizon of the experience that the physical mind and senses or

And this process which seems to be a descent, is really a circle of progress... the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared.

The reason active in our waking consciousness is only a mediator between the subconscious All that we come from in our evolution upwards and the superconscious All towards which we are impelled by that evolution.

*I use the word "intuition" for want of a better. In truth, it is a makeshift and inadequate to the connotation demanded of it. The same has to be said of the word "consciousness" and many others which our poverty compels us to extend illegitimately in their significance.

Man is not and cannot be wholly governed... by the reason alone.

such aids as we can invent for them can bring to us. And this process which seems to be a descent, is really a circle of progress. For in each case the lower faculty is compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to re-establish it by its own methods. By the attempt it is itself enlarged in its scope and arrives eventually at a more supple and a more ample self-accommodation to the higher faculties. Without this succession and attempt at separate assimilation we should be obliged to remain under the exclusive domination of a part of our nature while the rest remained either depressed and unduly subjected or separate in its field and therefore poor in its development. With this succession and separate attempt the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared. (LD 73-75)

Reason: a mediator

The reason active in our waking consciousness is only a mediator between the subconscious All that we come from in our evolution upwards and the superconscious All towards which we are impelled by that evolution. The subconscious and the superconscious are two different formulations of the same All. The master-word of the subconscious is Life, the master-word of the superconscious is Light. In the subconscious knowledge or consciousness is involved in action, for action is the essence of Life. In the superconscious action re-enters into Light and no longer contains involved knowledge but is itself contained in a supreme consciousness. Intuitional knowledge is that which is common between them and the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. But in the subconscious the intuition manifests itself in the action, in effectivity, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the superconscious, on the contrary, Light being the law and the principle, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the accompaniment or necessary consequent and no longer masks as the primary fact. Between these two states reason and mind act as intermediaries which enable the being to liberate knowledge out of its imprisonment in the act and prepare it to resume its essential primacy. When the self-awareness in the mind applied both to content and content, to own-self and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity, the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitional* knowledge. (LD 71-72)



The thinking mind of man finds its most clear and characteristic satisfaction and its most precise and effective principle of organisation in the reasoning and logical intelligence. It is true that man is not and cannot be wholly governed either in his thought or his action by the reason alone. His mentality is inextricably subjected to a joint, mixed and intricate action of the reasoning intelligence with two other powers, an intuition, actually only half luminous in the human mentality, operating behind the more visible action of the reason or

The reasoning intelligence is an intermediate agent between the life mind and the yet undeveloped supramental intuition. Its business is that of an intermediary.

The reason tends in the intellectual man to ignore the limitations of its power and function and attempts to be not an instrument and agent but a substitute for the self and spirit.

Reason reduces all its experience to rational formulas and blinds itself to half the real nature of the thought and action that is behind it and to the infinite deal that breaks out of its formulas.

veiled and altered in the action of the normal intelligence, and the life-mind of sensation, instinct, impulse, which is in its own nature a sort of obscure involved intuition and which supplies the intelligence from below with its first materials and data... [The latter] is not and cannot be self-sufficient and predominant as it is in the lower creation... Man reverting to a governance of his being by the life mind would become either irrational and erratic or dull and imbecile and would lose the essential character of manhood...

The reasoning intelligence is an intermediate agent between the life mind and the yet undeveloped supramental intuition. Its business is that of an intermediary, on the one side to enlighten the life mind, to make it conscient and govern and regulate as much as may be its action until Nature is ready to evolve the supramental energy which will take hold of life and illumine and perfect all its movements by converting its obscurely intuitive motions of desire, emotion, sensation and action into a spiritually and luminously spontaneous life manifestation of the self and spirit. On the other higher side its mission is to take the rays of light which come from above and translate them into terms of intelligent mentality and to accept, examine, develop, intellectually utilise the intuitions that escape the barrier and descend into mind from the superconscience. It does this until man, becoming more and more intelligently conscient of himself and his environment and his being, becomes also aware that he cannot really know these things by his reason, but can only make a mental representation of them to his intelligence. The reason, however, tends in the intellectual man to ignore the limitations of its power and function and attempts to be not an instrument and agent but a substitute for the self and spirit. Made confident by success and predominance, by the comparative greatness of its own light, it regards itself as a thing primary and absolute, assures itself of its own entire truth and sufficiency and endeavours to become the absolute ruler of mind and life. This it cannot do successfully, because it depends on the lower life intuition and on the covert supermind and its intuitive messages for its own real substance and existence. It can only appear to itself to succeed because it reduces all its experience to rational formulas and blinds itself to half the real nature of the thought and action that is behind it and to the infinite deal that breaks out of its formulas. The excess of the reason only makes life artificial and rationally mechanical, deprives it of its spontaneity and vitality and prevents the freedom and expansion of the spirit. The limited and limiting mental reason must make itself plastic and flexible, open itself to its source, receive the light from above, exceed itself and pass by an euthanasia of transformation into the body of the supramental reason. Meanwhile it is given power and leading for an organisation of thought and action on the characteristically human scale intermediate between the subconscious power of the spirit organising the life of the animal and the superconscient power of the spirit which becoming conscient can organise the existence and life of a spiritual supermanhood. (SY 849-851)

Intuition: a projection from higher grades of consciousness

Intuition is in its very nature a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades [of consciousness of the self-manifesting Spirit] into the mind of

A pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity: for what we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallisation which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character.

Our intellect, founding itself on reason, finds it difficult to deal with what is infrarational.

Still more difficult must it be for our reason to understand and deal with the suprarational.

What is magic to our finite reason is the logic of the Infinite.

Ignorance. It is true that in human mind its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity: for what we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallisation which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character; or else the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or intercepted, before it has a chance of manifesting itself, by a rapid imitative mental movement, insight or quick perception or some swift-leaping process of thought which owes its appearance to the stimulus of the coming intuition but obstructs its entry or covers it with a substituted mental suggestion true or erroneous but in either case not the authentic intuitive movement. Nevertheless, the fact of this intervention from above, the fact that behind all our original thinking or authentic perception of things there is a veiled, a half-veiled or a swift unveiled intuitive element is enough to establish a connection between mind and what is above it; it opens a passage of communication and of entry into the superior spirit ranges. (LD 288–289)

The logic of the infinite

[O]ur intellect, founding itself on reason, finds it difficult to deal with what is infrarational; life is infrarational and we find that our intellectual reason applying itself to life is constantly forcing upon it a control, a measure, an artificial procrustean rule that either succeeds in killing or petrifying life or constrains it into rigid forms and conventions that lame and imprison its capacity or ends by a bungle, a revolt of life, a decay or disruption of the systems and superstructures built upon it by our intelligence. An instinct, an intuition is needed which the intellect has not at its command and does not always listen to when it comes in of itself to help the mental working. But still more difficult must it be for our reason to understand and deal with the suprarational; the suprarational is the realm of the spirit, and in the largeness, subtlety, profundity, complexity of its movement the reason is lost; here intuition and inner experience alone are the guide, or, if there is any other, it is that of which intuition is only a sharp edge, an intense projected ray,— the final enlightenment must come from the suprarational Truth-consciousness, from a supramental vision and knowledge.

But the being and action of the Infinite must not be therefore regarded as if it were a magic void of all reason; there is, on the contrary, a greater reason in all the operations of the Infinite, but it is not a mental or intellectual, it is a spiritual and supramental reason: there is a logic in it, because there are relations and connections infallibly seen and executed; what is magic to our finite reason is the logic of the Infinite. It is a greater reason, a greater logic because it is more vast, subtle, complex in its operations: it comprehends all the data which our observation fails to seize, it deduces from them results which neither our deduction nor induction can anticipate, because our conclusions and inferences have a meagre foundation and are fallible and brittle. If we observe a happening, we judge and explain it from the result and from a glimpse of its most external constituents, circumstances or causes; but each

Each happening is the outcome of a complex nexus of forces which we do not and cannot observe, because all forces are to us invisible.

happening is the outcome of a complex nexus of forces which we do not and cannot observe, because all forces are to us invisible,— but they are not invisible to the spiritual vision of the Infinite: some of them are actualities working to produce or occasion a new actuality, some are possibles that are near to the pre-existent actuals and in a way included in their aggregate; but there can intervene always new possibilities that suddenly become dynamic potentials and add themselves to the nexus, and behind all are imperatives or an imperative which these possibilities are labouring to actualise. Moreover, out of the same nexus of forces different results are possible; what will come out of them is determined by a sanction which was no doubt waiting and ready all the time but seems to come in rapidly to intervene and alter everything, a decisive divine imperative. 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 certain 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 an indirect action of a knowledge which constructs itself with difficulty out of the unknown from signs and indications and gathered data. (LD 343–344)

Intuition: always at work

In the cognition of external things, our knowledge has an entirely separative basis; its whole machinery and process are of the nature of an indirect perception. We do not identify ourselves with external objects, not even with other men though they are beings of our own nature; we cannot enter into their existence as if it were our own, we cannot know them and their movements with the directness, immediateness, intimacy with which we know — even though incompletely — ourselves and our movements. But not only identification lacks, direct contact also is absent; there is no direct touch between our consciousness and their consciousness, our substance and their substance, our self of being and their self-being. The only seemingly direct contact with them or direct evidence we have of them is through the senses; sight, hearing, touch seem to initiate some kind of a direct intimacy with the object of knowledge: but this is not so really, not a real directness, a real intimacy, for what we get by our sense is not the inner or intimate touch of the thing itself, but an image of it or a vibration or nerve message in ourselves through which we have to learn to know it. These means are so ineffective, so exiguous in their poverty that, if that were the whole machinery, we could know little or nothing or only achieve a great blur of confusion. But there intervenes a sense-mind intuition which seizes the suggestion of the image or vibration and equates it with the object, a vital intuition which seizes the energy or figure of power of the object through another kind of vibration created by the sense contact, and an intuition of the perceptive mind which at once forms a right idea of the object from all this evidence. Whatever is deficient in the interpretation of the image thus constructed is filled up by the intervention of the reason or the total understanding intelligence.

These means are so ineffective, so exiguous in their poverty that, if that were the whole machinery, we could know little or nothing or only achieve a great blur of confusion.

If the first composite intuition were the result of a direct contact or if it summarised the action of a total intuitive mentality master of its perceptions,

there would be no need for the intervention of the reason except as a discoverer or organiser of knowledge not conveyed by the sense and its suggestions: it is, on the contrary, an intuition working on an image, a sense document, an indirect evidence, not working upon a direct contact of consciousness with the object. But since the image or vibration is a defective and summary documentation and the intuition itself limited and communicated through an obscure medium, acting in a blind light, the accuracy of our intuitional interpretative construction of the object is open to question or at least likely to be incomplete. Man has had perforce to develop his reason in order to make up for the deficiencies of his sense instrumentation, the fallibility of his physical mind's perceptions and the paucity of its interpretation of its data.

Our world-knowledge is a difficult structure made up of the imperfect documentation of the sense image, an intuitional interpretation of it by perceptive mind, life-mind and sense-mind, and a supplementary filling up, correction, addition of supplementary knowledge, co-ordination, by the reason.

Power has come with knowledge, but our imperfection of knowledge leaves us without any idea of the true use of the power.... This is worsened by the imperfection of our self-knowledge.

Our world-knowledge is therefore a difficult structure made up of the imperfect documentation of the sense image, an intuitional interpretation of it by perceptive mind, life-mind and sense-mind, and a supplementary filling up, correction, addition of supplementary knowledge, co-ordination, by the reason. Even so our knowledge of the world we live in is narrow and imperfect, our interpretations of its significances doubtful: imagination, speculation, reflection, impartial weighing and reasoning, inference, measurement, testing, a further correction and amplification of sense evidence by Science,— all this apparatus had to be called in to complete the incompleteness. After all that the result still remains a half-certain, half-dubious accumulation of acquired indirect knowledge, a mass of significant images and ideative representations, abstract thought counters, hypotheses, theories, generalisations, but also with all that a mass of doubts and a never-ending debate and inquiry. Power has come with knowledge, but our imperfection of knowledge leaves us without any idea of the true use of the power, even of the aim towards which our utilisation of knowledge and power should be turned and made effective. This is worsened by the imperfection of our self-knowledge which, such as it is, meagre and pitifully insufficient, is of our surface only, of our apparent phenomenal self and nature and not of our true self and the true meaning of our existence. Self-knowledge and self-mastery are wanting in the user, wisdom and right will in his use of world-power and world-knowledge. (LD 547–549)

Intuition and the formation of instinct

The individual animal being in its first conscious self-affirmation has to rely on two sources of knowledge. As it is nescient and helpless, a small modicum of uninformed surface consciousness in a world unknown to it, the secret Conscious-Force sends up to this surface the minimum of *intuition* necessary for it to maintain its existence and go through the operations indispensable to life and survival. This intuition is not possessed by the animal, but possesses and moves it; it is something that manifests of itself in the grain of the vital and physical substance of consciousness under pressure of a need and for the needed occasion: but at the same time a surface result of this intuition accumulates and takes the form of an automatic instinct which works whenever the occasion for it recurs; this instinct belongs to the race and is imparted at birth to its individual members. The intuition, when it occurs or recurs, is unerring; the instinct is automatically correct as a rule, but can err, for it fails or blunders

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If this underlying subliminal consciousness were to come itself to the surface, there would be a direct meeting between the consciousness of the subject and the contents of the object and the result would be a direct knowledge; but this is not possible because the evolutionary intention is to develop slowly through an imperfect but growing surface awareness.

when the surface consciousness or an ill-developed intelligence interferes or if the instinct continues to act mechanically when, owing to changed circumstances, the need or the necessary circumstances are no longer there.

The second source of knowledge is surface contact with the world outside the natural individual being; it is this contact which is the cause first of a conscious sensation and sense-perception and then of intelligence. If there were not an underlying consciousness, the contact would not create any perception or reaction; it is because the contact stimulates into a feeling and a surface response the subliminal of a being already vitalised by the subconscious life-principle and its first needs and seekings that a surface awareness begins to form and develop. Intrinsically the emergence of a surface consciousness by force of life contacts is due to the fact that in both subject and object of the contact consciousness-force is already existent in a subliminal latency: when the life-principle is ready, sufficiently sensitive in the subject, the recipient of the contact, this subliminal consciousness emerges in a response to the stimulus which begins to constitute a vital or life mind, the mind of the animal, and then, in the course of the evolution, a thinking intelligence. The secret consciousness is rendered into surface sensation and perception, the secret force into surface impulse.

If this underlying subliminal consciousness were to come itself to the surface, there would be a direct meeting between the consciousness of the subject and the contents of the object and the result would be a direct knowledge; but this is not possible, first, because of the veto or obstruction of the Inconscience and, secondly, because the evolutionary intention is to develop slowly through an imperfect but growing surface awareness. The secret consciousness-force has therefore to limit itself to imperfect renderings in a surface vital and mental vibration and operation and is forced by the absence, holding back or insufficiency of the direct awareness to develop organs and instincts for an indirect knowledge. This creation of an external knowledge and intelligence takes place in an already prepared indeterminate conscious structure which is the earliest formation on the surface. At first this structure is only a minimum formation of consciousness with a vague sensational perception and a response-impulse; but, as more organised forms of life appear, this grows into a life-mind and vital intelligence largely mechanical and automatic in the beginning and concerned only with practical needs, desires and impulses. All this activity is in its initiation intuitive and instinctive; the underlying consciousness is translated in the surface substratum into automatic movements of the conscious stuff of life and body: the mind movements, when they appear, are involved in these automatisms, they occur as a subordinate mental notation within the predominant vital sense-notation. But slowly mind starts its task of disengaging itself; it still works for the life-instinct, life-need and life-desire, but its own special characters emerge, observation, invention, device, intention, execution of purpose, while sensation and impulse add to themselves emotion and bring a subtler and finer affective urge and value into the crude vital reaction. Mind is still much involved in life and its highest purely mental operations are not in evidence; it accepts a large background of instinct and vital intuition as its support, and the intelligence developed, though always growing as the animal

life-scale rises, is an added superstructure. (LD 635–637)

Intuition corrupted by reason

When human intelligence adds itself to the animal basis, this basis still remains present and active, but it is largely changed, subtilised and uplifted by conscious will and intention; the automatic life of instinct and vital intuition diminishes and cannot keep its original predominant proportion to the self-aware mental intelligence. Intuition becomes less purely intuitive: even when there is still a strong vital intuition, its vital character is concealed by mentalisation, and mental intuition is most often a mixture, not the pure article, for an alloy is added to make it mentally current and serviceable. In the animal also the surface consciousness can obstruct or alter the intuition but, because its capacity is less, it interferes less with the automatic, mechanical or instinctive action of Nature: in mental man when the intuition rises towards the surface, it is caught at once before it reaches and is translated into terms of mind-intelligence with a gloss or mental interpretation added which conceals the origin of the knowledge. Instinct also is deprived of its intuitive character by being taken up and mentalised and by that change becomes less sure, though more assisted, when not replaced, by the plastic power of adaptation of things and self-adaptation proper to the intelligence. The emergence of mind in life brings an immense increase of the range and capacity of the evolving consciousness-force; but it also brings an immense increase in the range and capacity of error. For evolving mind trails constantly error as its shadow, a shadow that grows with the growing body of consciousness and knowledge.

If in the evolution the surface consciousness were always open to the action of intuition, the intervention of error would not be possible. For intuition is an edge of light thrust out by the secret supermind, and an emergent truth-consciousness, however limited, yet sure in its action, would be the consequence. Instinct, if it had to form, would be plastic to the intuition and adapt itself freely to evolutionary change and the change of inner or environing circumstance. Intelligence, if it had to form, would be subservient to intuition and would be its accurate mental expression; its brilliancy would perhaps be modulated to suit a diminished action serving as a minor, not, as it is now, a major function and movement, but it would not be erratic by deviation, would not by its parts of obscurity sink into the false or fallible. But this could not be, because the hold of Inconscience on the matter, the surface substance, in which mind and life have to express themselves, makes the surface consciousness obscure and unresponsive to the light within; it is impelled moreover to cherish this defect, to substitute more and more its own incomplete but better grasped clarities for the unaccountable inner intimations, because a rapid development of the truth-consciousness is not the intention in Nature. For the method chosen by her is a slow and difficult evolution of Inconscience developing into Ignorance and Ignorance forming itself into a mixed, modified and partial knowledge before it can be ready for transformation into a higher truth-consciousness and truth-knowledge. Our imperfect mental intelligence is a necessary stage of transition before this higher transformation can be made possible. (LD 637–638)

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A rapid development of the truth-consciousness is not the intention in Nature.

*The Divine Being is described as the *adhyakṣa*, he who seated over all in the supreme ether over-sees things, views and controls them from above.

The nearest the human mind usually gets to this truth-conscious knowledge is that imperfect action of illumined finding which occurs when there is a great stress of thought and the intellect electrified by constant discharges from behind the veil and yielding to a higher enthusiasm admits a considerable instreaming from the intuitive and inspired faculty of knowledge.

**In this sense the power of prophecy has been aptly called a memory of the future.



[There is] a higher *buddhi* which is not intelligence but vision, is not understanding but rather an over-standing* in knowledge, and does not seek knowledge and attain it in subjection to the data it observes but possesses already the truth and brings it out in the terms of a revelatory and intuitional thought. The nearest the human mind usually gets to this truth-conscious knowledge is that imperfect action of illumined finding which occurs when there is a great stress of thought and the intellect electrified by constant discharges from behind the veil and yielding to a higher enthusiasm admits a considerable instreaming from the intuitive and inspired faculty of knowledge. For there is an intuitive mind in man which serves as a recipient and channel for these instreamings from a supramental faculty. But the action of intuition and inspiration in us is imperfect in kind as well as intermittent in action; ordinarily, it comes in response to a claim from the labouring and struggling heart or intellect and, even before its givings enter the conscious mind, they are already affected by the thought or aspiration which went up to meet them, are no longer pure but altered to the needs of the heart or intellect; and after they enter the conscious mind, they are immediately seized upon by the intellectual understanding and dissipated or broken up so as to fit in with our imperfect intellectual knowledge, or by the heart and remoulded to suit our blind or half-blind emotional longings and preferences, or even by the lower cravings and distorted to the vehement uses of our hungers and passions.

If this higher *buddhi* could act pure of the interference of these lower members, it would give pure forms of the truth; observation would be dominated or replaced by a vision which could see without subservient dependence on the testimony of the sense-mind and senses; imagination would give place to the self-assured inspiration of the truth, reasoning to the spontaneous discernment of relations and conclusion from reasoning to an intuition containing in itself those relations and not building laboriously upon them, judgment to a thought-vision in whose light the truth would stand revealed without the mask which it now wears and which our intellectual judgment has to penetrate; while memory too would take upon itself that larger sense given to it in Greek thought and be no longer a paltry selection from the store gained by the individual in his present life, but rather the all-recording knowledge which secretly holds and constantly gives from itself everything that we now seem painfully to acquire but really in this sense remember, a knowledge which includes the future** no less than the past. Certainly, we are intended to grow in our receptivity to this higher faculty of truth-conscious knowledge, but its full and unveiled use is . . . beyond our present human stature. (SY 311–312)



Reason or intellect is only the lower *buddhi*; it is dependent for its action on the percepts of the sense-mind and on the concepts of the mental intelligence. It is not like the gnosis, self-luminous, authentic, making the subject one with the object. There is, indeed, a higher form of the *buddhi* that can be called the intuitive mind or intuitive reason, and this by its intuitions, its inspirations, its swift revelatory vision, its luminous insight and discrimination can do the work

of the reason with a higher power, a swifter action, a greater and spontaneous certitude. It acts in a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the torch-flares of the sense-mind and its limited uncertain percepts; it proceeds not by intelligent but by visional concepts: it is a kind of truth-vision, truth-hearing, truth-memory, direct truth-discernment.

This true and authentic intuition must be distinguished from a power of the ordinary mental reason which is too easily confused with it, the power of involved reasoning that reaches its conclusion by a bound and does not need the ordinary steps of the logical mind. The logical reason proceeds pace after pace and tries the sureness of each step like a man who is walking over unsafe ground and has to test by the hesitating touch of his foot each span of soil that he perceives with his eye. But this other supralogical process of the reason is a motion of rapid insight or swift discernment; it proceeds by a stride or leap, like a man who springs from one sure spot to another point of sure footing,— or at least held by him to be sure. He sees the space he covers in one compact and flashing view, but he does not distinguish or measure either by eye or touch its successions, features and circumstances. This movement has something of the sense of power of the intuition, something of its velocity, some appearance of its light and certainty, and we always are apt to take it for the intuition. But our assumption is an error and, if we trust to it, may lead us into grievous blunders.

This movement has something of the sense of power of the intuition... and we always are apt to take it for the intuition. But our assumption is an error and, if we trust to it, may lead us into grievous blunders.

It is even thought by the intellectualists that the intuition itself is nothing more than this rapid process in which the whole action of the logical mind is swiftly done or perhaps half-consciously or subconsciously done, not deliberately worked out in its reasoned method. In its nature, however, this proceeding is quite different from the intuition and it is not necessarily a truth-movement. The power of its leap may end in a stumble, its swiftness may betray, its certainty is too often a confident error. The validity of its conclusions must always depend on a subsequent verification or support from the evidence of the sense-perceptions or a rational linking of intelligent conceptions must intervene to explain to it its own certitudes. This lower light may indeed receive very readily a mixture of actual intuition into it and then a pseudo-intuitive or half-intuitive mind is created, very misleading by its frequent luminous successes palliating a whirl of intensely self-assured false certitudes.

The true intuition carries in itself its own guarantee of truth... And so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or intellectual ideation, it is never contradicted by experience.

The true intuition on the contrary carries in itself its own guarantee of truth; it is sure and infallible within its limits. And so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or intellectual ideation, it is never contradicted by experience: the intuition may be verified by the reason or the sense-perception afterwards, but its truth does not depend on that verification, it is assured by an automatic self-evidence. If the reason depending on its inferences contradicts the greater light, it will be found in the end on ampler knowledge that the intuitional conclusion was correct and that the more plausible rational and inferential conclusion was an error...

[Even when the mental intuition of the human being] is not marred by the imitative pseudo-intuition, it is restricted in man like the instinct in the animal, restricted to a particular purpose of will or knowledge as is the instinct to a particular life utility or Nature purpose. And when the intelligence, as is its

When the intelligence tries to make use of it, it builds round the intuitive nucleus a mass of mixed truth and error. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited light; at the worst it may lead us into perplexities and confusions.

almost invariable habit, tries to make use of it, to apply it, to add to it, it builds round the intuitive nucleus in its own characteristic fashion a mass of mixed truth and error. More often than not, by foisting an element of sense-error and conceptual error into the very substance of the intuition or by coating it up in mental additions and deviations, it not merely deflects but deforms its truth and converts it into a falsehood. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited, though an intense light; at the worst, through our misuse of it or false imitations of it, it may lead us into perplexities and confusions which the less ambitious intellectual reason avoids by remaining satisfied with its own safe and plodding method,— safe for the inferior purposes of the reason, though never a satisfying guide to the inner truth of things. (SY 477–480)

The character of human knowledge

There are, in practical fact, two poles of the conscious being between which the evolutionary process works, one a surface nescience which has to change gradually into knowledge, the other a secret Consciousness-Force in which all power of knowledge is and which has slowly to manifest in the nescience. The surface nescience full of incomprehension and inapprehension can change into knowledge because consciousness is there involved in it; if it were intrinsically an entire absence of consciousness, the change would be impossible: but still it works as an inconscience trying to be conscious; it is at first a nescience compelled by need and outer impact to feeling and response and then an ignorance labouring to know. The means used is a contact with the world and its forces and objects which, like the rubbing of tinders, creates a spark of awareness; the response from within is that spark leaping out into manifestation. But the surface nescience in receiving the response from an underlying source of knowledge subdues and changes it into something obscure and incomplete; there is an imperfect seizure or a misprision of the intuition that answers to the contact: still by this process an initiation of responsive consciousness, a first accumulation of ingrained or habitual instinctive knowledge begins, and there follows upon it first a primitive and then a developed capacity of receptive awareness, understanding, reply of action, previsionial initiation of action,— an evolving consciousness which is half-knowledge, half-ignorance. All that is unknown is met on the basis of what is known; but as this knowledge is imperfect, as it receives imperfectly and responds imperfectly to the contacts of things, there can be a misprision of the new contact as well as a misprision or deformation of the intuitive response, a double source of error.

It is evident, in these conditions, that Error is a necessary accompaniment, almost an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge in a consciousness that begins from nescience and works in the stuff of a general nescience. The evolving consciousness has to acquire knowledge by an indirect means which does not give even a fragmentary certitude.

It is evident, in these conditions, that Error is a necessary accompaniment, almost a necessary condition and instrumentation, an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge in a consciousness that begins from nescience and works in the stuff of a general nescience. The evolving consciousness has to acquire knowledge by an indirect means which does not give even a fragmentary certitude; for there is at first only a figure or a sign, an image or a vibration physical in character created by contact with the object and a resulting vital sensation which have to be interpreted by mind and sense and turned into a corresponding mental idea or figure. . . . Observation is the first instrument of the mind, but observation itself is a complex process open at

In the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dovetailed in anyhow or rejected.

In all this enlightened obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work.

A great confusion of half-grasped material and an experimental building with it, a representation or mental structure of the figure of self and things rigid and yet chaotic, half formed and arranged half jumbled, half true half erroneous, but always imperfect, is the character of human knowledge.

Intuition is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity.

every step to the mistakes of the ignorant observing consciousness; misprision of the fact by the senses and the sense-mind, omission, wrong selection and putting together, unconscious additions made by a personal impression or personal reaction create a false or an imperfect composite picture; to these errors are added the errors of inference, judgment, interpretation of facts by the intelligence: when even the data are not sure or perfect, the conclusions built on them must also be insecure and imperfect.

Consciousness in its acquisition of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown; it builds a structure of acquired experience, memories, impressions, judgments, a composite mental plan of things which is of the nature of a shifting and ever modifiable fixity. In the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dovetailed in anyhow or rejected: but the existing knowledge and its structures or standards may not be applicable to the new object or new field of knowledge, the fitting may be a misfitting or the rejection may be an erroneous response. To misprision and wrong interpretation of facts, there is added misapplication of knowledge, miscombination, misconstruction, misrepresentation, a complicated machinery of mental error. In all this enlightened obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work, a truth-urge that corrects or pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous, to labour towards a true picture of things and a true interpretative knowledge. But intuition itself is limited in the human mind by mental misprision of its intimations and is unable to act in its own right; for whether it be physical, vital or mental intuition, it has to present itself in order to be received, not nude and pure, but garbed with a mental coating or entirely enveloped in an ample mental vesture; so disguised, its true nature cannot be recognised and its relation to mind and its office are not understood, its way of working is ignored by the hasty and half-aware human intelligence. There are intuitions of actuality, of possibility, of the determining truth behind things, but all are mistaken by the mind for each other. A great confusion of half-grasped material and an experimental building with it, a representation or mental structure of the figure of self and things rigid and yet chaotic, half formed and arranged half jumbled, half true half erroneous, but always imperfect, is the character of human knowledge. (LD 638–641)

Communications are not intuitions

Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze

There are seeming intuitions on all levels of the being which are communications rather than intuitions, and these have a very various provenance, value and character. The infrarational "mystic", so styled,— for to be a true mystic it is not sufficient to reject reason and rely on sources of thought or action of which one has no understanding,— is often inspired by such communications on the vital level from a dark and dangerous source. An intuition passed in judicial review by the reason ceases to be an intuition.

of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude.

In the human mind the intuition is even such a truth-remembrance or truth-conveyance, or such a revealing flash or blaze breaking into a great mass of ignorance or through a veil of nescience: but ... it is subject there to an invading mixture or a mental coating or an interception and substitution; there is too a manifold possibility of misinterpretation which comes in the way of the purity and fullness of its action. Moreover, there are seeming intuitions on all levels of the being which are communications rather than intuitions, and these have a very various provenance, value and character. The infrarational "mystic", so styled,— for to be a true mystic it is not sufficient to reject reason and rely on sources of thought or action of which one has no understanding,— is often inspired by such communications on the vital level from a dark and dangerous source. In these circumstances we are driven to rely mainly on the reason and are disposed even to control the suggestions of the intuition — or the pseudo-intuition, which is the more frequent phenomenon,— by the observing and discriminating intelligence; for we feel in our intellectual part that we cannot be sure otherwise what is the true thing and what the mixed or adulterated article or false substitute. But this largely discounts for us the utility of the intuition: for the reason is not in this field a reliable arbiter, since its methods are different, tentative, uncertain, an intellectual seeking; even though it itself really relies on a camouflaged intuition for its conclusions,— for without that help it could not choose its course or arrive at any assured finding,— it hides this dependence from itself under the process of a reasoned conclusion or a verified conjecture. An intuition passed in judicial review by the reason ceases to be an intuition and can only have the authority of the reason for which there is no inner source of direct certitude. But even if the mind became predominantly an intuitive mind reliant upon its portion of the higher faculty, the co-ordination of its cognitions and its separated activities,— for in mind these would always be apt to appear as a series of imperfectly connected flashes,— would remain difficult so long as this new mentality has not a conscious liaison with its suprarational source or a self-uplifting access to a higher plane of consciousness in which an intuitive action is pure and native. (LD 981-983)

Reason's limits

The characteristic power of the reason in its fullness is a logical movement assuring itself first of all available materials and data by observation and arrangement, then acting upon them for a resultant knowledge gained, assured and enlarged by a first use of the reflective powers, and lastly assuring itself of the correctness of its results by a more careful and formal action, more vigilant, deliberate, severely logical which tests, rejects or confirms them according to

The reason with regard even to the inner movements of our internal being acts best and knows them most correctly by detaching itself and regarding them quite impersonally and objectively, a movement which ... ends in viewing our own active being too as not self, a mechanism of Nature like the rest of the world-existence.

It is more and more perceived that the knowledge of phenomena increases, but the knowledge of reality escapes this laborious process. A time must come, is already coming when the mind perceives the necessity of calling to its aid and developing fully the intuition and all the great range of powers that lie concealed behind our vague use of the word and uncertain perception of its significance. In the end it must discover that these powers can not only aid and complete but even replace its own proper action.

certain secure standards and processes developed by reflection and experience. The first business of the logical reason is therefore a right, careful and complete observation of its available material and data. The first and easiest field of data open to our knowledge is the world of Nature, of the physical objects made external to it by the separative action of mind, things not ourself and therefore only indirectly knowable by an interpreting of our sense perceptions, by observation, accumulated experience, inference and reflective thinking. Another field is our own internal being and its movements which one knows naturally by an internally acting mental sense, by intuitive perception and constant experience and by reflective thought on the evidences of our nature. The reason with regard even to these inner movements acts best and knows them most correctly by detaching itself and regarding them quite impersonally and objectively, a movement which in the Yoga of knowledge ends in viewing our own active being too as not self, a mechanism of Nature like the rest of the world-existence....

Another field of data which the reason has to observe is its own action and the action of the whole human intelligence, for without that study it cannot be assured of the correctness of its knowledge or of right method and process. Finally, there are other fields of knowledge for which the data are not so easily available and which need the development of abnormal faculties,— the discovery of things and ranges of existence behind the appearances of the physical world and the discovery of the secret self or principle of being of man and of Nature. The first the logical reason can attempt to deal with, accepting subject to its scrutiny whatever data become available, in the same way as it deals with the physical world, but ordinarily it is little disposed to deal with them, finding it more easy to question and deny, and its action here is seldom assured or effective. The second it usually attempts to discover by a constructive metaphysical logic founded on its analytic and synthetic observation of the phenomena of life, mind and matter....

And if this elaborated method of the mind were really sufficient for truth, there would be no need of any higher step in the evolution of knowledge. In fact, it increases the mind's hold on itself and on the world around it and serves great and undeniable utilities: but it can never be sure whether its data supply it with the frame of a real knowledge or only a frame useful and necessary for the human mind and will in its own present form of action. It is more and more perceived that the knowledge of phenomena increases, but the knowledge of reality escapes this laborious process. A time must come, is already coming when the mind perceives the necessity of calling to its aid and developing fully the intuition and all the great range of powers that lie concealed behind our vague use of the word and uncertain perception of its significance. In the end it must discover that these powers can not only aid and complete but even replace its own proper action. That will be the beginning of the discovery of the supramental energy of the spirit. (SY 851–855)



[I]ntellectual thought is in itself inadequate and is not the highest thinking; the highest is that which comes through the intuitive mind and from the supra-

So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind.

Not only do our intuitions come to us incrusting in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty.

His task is much more complex and difficult because he is an evolutionary being.

If an animal mind were called upon to leave consciently the safe ground of sense impulse, sense understanding and instinct for the perilous adventure of a reasoning intelligence, it might well turn back alarmed and unwilling from the effort. The human mind would here be called upon to make a still greater change and, although self-conscious and adventurous in the circle of its possibility, might well hold this to be beyond the circle and reject the adventure.

mental faculty. So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit and by the lower workings, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind; or if it works consciously, then only with an inadequate rarity and a great imperfection in its functioning. In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought as we have already effected between the understanding and the sense-mind; and this is no easy task, for not only do our intuitions come to us incrusting in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. In this way it is possible to transmute a great part of our intellectual thinking into the luminous truth-conscious vision,— the ideal would be a complete transition,— or at least to increase greatly the frequency, purity and conscious force of the ideal knowledge working behind the intellect. The latter must learn to be subject and passive to the ideal faculty. (SY 315–316)

Beyond intuition

[Man] has not merely to uncover the hidden sun of the supermind in the subliminal cavern of his secret being or remove the cloud of his mental ignorance from its face in the spiritual skies so that it shall at once shine out in all its glory. His task is much more complex and difficult because he is an evolutionary being and by the evolution of Nature of which he is a part he has been constituted with an inferior kind of knowledge, and this inferior, this mental power of knowledge forms by its persistent customary action an obstacle to a new formation greater than its own nature. A limited mental intelligence enlightening a limited mind of sense and the capacity not always well used of a considerable extension of it by the use of the reason are the powers by which he is at present distinguished from all other terrestrial creatures. This sense mind, this intelligence, this reason, however inadequate, are the instruments in which he has learned to put his trust and he has erected by their means certain foundations which he is not over willing to disturb and has traced limits outside of which he feels all to be confusion, uncertainty and a perilous adventure. Moreover the transition to the higher principle means not only a difficult conversion of his whole mind and reason and intelligence, but in a certain sense a reversal of all their methods. The soul climbing above a certain critical line of change sees all its former operations as an inferior and ignorant action and has to effect another kind of working which sets out from a different starting-point and has quite another kind of initiation of the energy of the being. If an animal mind were called upon to leave consciently the safe ground of sense impulse, sense understanding and instinct for the perilous adventure of a reasoning intelligence, it might well turn back alarmed and unwilling from the effort. The human mind would here be called upon to make a still greater change and, although self-conscious and adventurous in the circle of its

Intuition, a power of which we can feel the presence and the workings and are impressed, when it acts, by its superior efficiency, light, direct inspiration and force, but cannot understand or analyse it as we understand or analyse the workings of our reason. The reason understands itself, but not what is beyond it.

possibility, might well hold this to be beyond the circle and reject the adventure. In fact the change is only possible if there is first a spiritual development on our present level of consciousness and it can only be undertaken securely when the mind has become aware of the greater self within, enamoured of the Infinite and confident of the presence and guidance of the Divine and his Shakti.

The problem of this conversion resolves itself at first into a passage through a mediary status and by the help of the one power already at work in the human mind which we can recognise as something supramental in its nature or at least in its origin, the faculty of intuition, a power of which we can feel the presence and the workings and are impressed, when it acts, by its superior efficiency, light, direct inspiration and force, but cannot understand or analyse it as we understand or analyse the workings of our reason. The reason understands itself, but not what is beyond it; of that it can only make a general figure or representation; the supermind alone can discern the method of its own workings.

The power of intuition acts in us at present for the most part in a covert manner secret and involved in or mostly veiled by the action of the reason and the normal intelligence; so far as it emerges into a clear separate action, it is still occasional, partial, fragmentary and of an intermittent character. It casts a sudden light, it makes a luminous suggestion or it throws out a solitary brilliant clue or scatters a small number of isolated or related intuitions, lustrous discriminations, inspirations or revelations, and it leaves the reason, will, mental sense or intelligence to do what each can or pleases with this seed of succour that has come to them from the depths or the heights of our being. The mental powers immediately proceed to lay hold on these things and to manipulate and utilise them for our mental or vital purposes, to adapt them to the forms of the inferior knowledge, to coat them up in or infiltrate them with the mental stuff and suggestion, often altering their truth in the process and always limiting their potential force of enlightenment by these accretions and by this subdual to the exigencies of the inferior agent, and almost always they make at once too little and too much of them, too little by not allowing them time to settle and extend their full power for illumination, too much by insisting on them or rather on the form into which the mentality casts them to the exclusion of the larger truth that the more consistent use of the intuitive faculty might have given. Thus the intuition intervening in the ordinary mental operations acts in lightning flashes that make lustrous a space of truth, but is not a steady sunlight illumining securely the whole reach and kingdom of our thought and will and feeling and action.

It appears at once that there are two necessary lines of progress which we must follow, and the first is to extend the action of the intuition and make it more constant, more persistent and regular and all-embracing until it is so intimate and normal to our being that it can take up all the action now done by the ordinary mind and assume its place in the whole system. This cannot wholly be done so long as the ordinary mind continues to assert its power of independent action and intervention or its habit of seizing on the light of the intuition and manipulating it for its own purposes. The higher mentality cannot be complete

It is the calm and still mind much more readily and with a much greater purity than the mind in agitation and action that opens to the Infinite, reflects the Spirit... It is true also that the freedom of this silence gives a possibility of a larger play of the intuitive being and admits with less obstruction and turmoil of mental groping and seizing the great intuitions, inspirations, revelations which emerge from within or descend from above.

The powers we are now satisfied to call gnosis, intuition or illumination are only fainter lights of which that is the full and flaming source, and between the highest human intelligence and it there lie many levels of ascending consciousness, highest mental or overmental, which we would have to conquer before we arrived there or could bring down its greatness and glory here.

or secure so long as the inferior intelligence is able to deform it or even to bring in any of its own intermixture. And either then we must silence altogether the intellect and the intellectual will and the other inferior activities and leave room only for the intuitive action or we must lay hold on and transform the lower action by the constant pressure of the intuition. Or else there must be an alternation and combination of the two methods if that be the most natural way or at all possible.

At first it might seem the straight and right way to silence the mind altogether, to silence the intellect, the mental and personal will, the desire mind and the mind of emotion and sensation, and to allow in that perfect silence the Self, the Spirit, the Divine to disclose himself and leave him to illuminate the being by the supramental light and power and Ananda. And this is indeed a great and powerful discipline. It is the calm and still mind much more readily and with a much greater purity than the mind in agitation and action that opens to the Infinite, reflects the Spirit, becomes full of the Self and awaits like a consecrated and purified temple the unveiling of the Lord of all our being and nature. It is true also that the freedom of this silence gives a possibility of a larger play of the intuitive being and admits with less obstruction and turmoil of mental groping and seizing the great intuitions, inspirations, revelations which emerge from within or descend from above...

Nevertheless it is not the fact that by this method the supramental light will immediately replace the lower mind and reflective reason. When the inner action proceeds after the silence, even if it be then a more predominately intuitive thought and movement, the old powers will yet interfere, if not from within, then by a hundred suggestions from without, and an inferior mentality will mix in, will question or obstruct or will try to lay hold on the greater movement and to lower or darken or distort or minimise it in the process. Therefore the necessity of a process of elimination or transformation of the inferior mentality remains always imperative. (SY 800-803)



A Transcendent who is beyond all world and all Nature and yet possesses the world and its nature, who has descended with something of himself into it and is shaping it into that which as yet it is not, is the Source of our being, the Source of our works and their Master. But the seat of the Transcendent Consciousness is above in an absoluteness of divine Existence — and there too is the absolute Power, Truth, Bliss of the Eternal — of which our mentality can form no conception and of which even our greatest spiritual experience is only a diminished reflection in the spiritualised mind and heart, a faint shadow, a thin derivate. Yet proceeding from it there is a sort of golden corona of Light, Power, Bliss and Truth — a divine Truth-Consciousness as the ancient mystics called it, a Supermind, a Gnosis, with which this world of a lesser consciousness proceeding by Ignorance is in secret relation and which alone maintains it and prevents it from falling into a disintegrated chaos. The powers we are now satisfied to call gnosis, intuition or illumination are only fainter lights of which that is the full and flaming source, and between the highest human intelligence and it there lie many levels of ascending consciousness, highest mental or

Yet, however difficult, that ascent, that victory is the destiny of the human spirit and that luminous descent or bringing down of the divine Truth is the inevitable term of the troubled evolution of the earth-nature; that intended consummation is its raison d'être, our culminating state and the explanation of our terrestrial existence.

overmental, which we would have to conquer before we arrived there or could bring down its greatness and glory here. Yet, however difficult, that ascent, that victory is the destiny of the human spirit and that luminous descent or bringing down of the divine Truth is the inevitable term of the troubled evolution of the earth-nature; that intended consummation is its raison d'être, our culminating state and the explanation of our terrestrial existence. (SY 254–255)