

Chapter One

The Divine and Its Aspects

The Divine

The Divine is the Supreme Truth because it is the Supreme Being from whom all have come and in whom all are.

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The Divine is that from which all comes, in which all lives, and to return to the truth of the Divine now clouded over by Ignorance is the soul's aim in life. In its supreme Truth, the Divine is absolute and infinite peace, consciousness, existence, power and Ananda.

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The Divine is everywhere on all the planes of consciousness seen by us in different ways and aspects of his being. But there is a Supreme which is above all these planes and ways and aspects and from which they come.

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The Divine is neither personal nor impersonal, formless nor formed. He is the Divine. You talk of these distinctions as if they separated the Divine into so many separate Divines which have nothing to do with each other.

The Divine Consciousness

By the Divine Consciousness we mean the spiritual consciousness to which the Divine alone exists, because all is the Divine and by which one passes beyond the Ignorance and the lower nature into unity with the Divine and the Divine Nature.

Here in the Ignorance we are not aware of the Divine and we obey the lower nature.

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All that is true Truth is the direct expression in one way or another of the Divine Consciousness. Life is the dynamic expression of Consciousness-Force when thrown outward to realise itself in concrete harmonies of formation; Love is an intense self-expression of the soul of Ananda, and Light is what always accompanies the Supramental Consciousness and its most essential power.

The Divine: One in All

The Divine is everywhere and in all — but this is a world of Ignorance in which each one is separated from the Divine within him by his ego and he acts according to the ego and not according to the Divine. When he sees the Divine in all, then he begins to have the right consciousness and be free.

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All things are the Divine because the Divine is there, but hidden not manifest; when the mind goes out to things, it is not with the sense of the Divine in them, but for the appearances only which conceal the Divine. It is necessary therefore for you as a sadhak to turn entirely to the Mother in whom the Divine is manifest and not run after the appearances, the desire of which or the interest in which prevents you from meeting the Divine. Once the being is consecrated, then it can see the Divine everywhere — and then it can include all things in the one consciousness without a separate interest or desire.

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Wherever the Divine is, everything is — it is only concealed, not non-existent. The Divine is there below in the inconscience itself — mind and life are concealed in Matter, so is Supermind and Sachchidananda. The below is not something outside the Divine Existence. But as mind manifested in Matter only after the descent of Mind opened it into creation, so it is with Supermind.

Aspects of the Divine

The Divine is infinite and a single experience or poise of experience cannot exhaust all the truth of the Divine. The seers have experienced each some aspect or aspects of the Divine Reality. Their mental differences have been illustrated in the apologue of the blind men who all felt the elephant and described it in different figures according to the part they felt. One must go beyond mind altogether, even beyond the spiritualised mind, to have the real complete experience. “Rare”, says Sri Krishna, “are the few among the seekers who know me in my totality in all the truth of my being.” In fact, it is only in the supramental light that all opposition disappears and the aspects are indivisibly united in the Whole. One must go on enlarging knowledge, adding experience to experience till all the limitation disappears.

The Transcendent, Cosmic and Individual Divine

The Divine has three aspects for us:

1. It is the Cosmic Self and Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings, from which and in which all is manifested in the universe—although it is now a manifestation in the Ignorance.

2. It is the Spirit and Master of our own being within us whom we have to serve and learn to express his will in all our movements so that we may grow out of the Ignorance into the Light.

3. The Divine is transcendent Being and Spirit, all bliss and light and divine knowledge and power, and towards that highest divine existence and its Light we have to rise and bring down the reality of it more and more into our consciousness and life.

In the ordinary nature we live in the Ignorance and do not know the Divine. The forces of the ordinary nature are undivine forces because they weave a veil of ego and desire and unconsciousness which conceals the Divine from us. To get into the higher and deeper consciousness which knows and lives consciously in the Divine, we have to get rid of the forces of the

lower nature and open to the action of the Divine Shakti which will transform our consciousness into that of the Divine Nature.

This is the conception of the Divine from which we have to start—the realisation of its truth can only come with the opening of the consciousness and its change.

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The distinction between the Transcendental, the Cosmic, the Individual Divine is not my invention, nor is it native to India or to Asia — it is on the contrary a recognised European teaching current in the esoteric tradition of the Catholic Church where it is the authorised explanation of the Trinity, — Father, Son and Holy Ghost, — and it is very well-known to European mystic experience. In essence it exists in all spiritual disciplines that recognise the omnipresence of the Divine — in Indian Vedantic experience and in Mahomedan Yoga (not only the Sufi, but other schools also) — the Mahomedans even speak of not two or three but many levels of the Divine until one reaches the Supreme. As for the idea in itself, surely there is a difference between the individual, the cosmos in space and time, and something that exceeds this cosmic formula or any cosmic formula. There is a cosmic consciousness experienced by many which is quite different in its scope and action from the individual consciousness, and if there is a consciousness beyond the cosmic, infinite and essentially eternal, not merely extended in Time, that also must be different from these two. And if the Divine is or manifests Himself in these three, is it not conceivable that in aspect, in His working, He may differentiate Himself so much that we are driven, if we are not to confound all truth of experience, if we are not to limit ourselves to a mere static experience of something indefinable, to speak of a triple aspect of the Divine?

In the practice of Yoga there is a great dynamic difference in one's way of dealing with these three possible realisations. If I realise only the Divine as that, not my personal self, which yet moves secretly all my personal being and which I can bring forward out of the veil, or if I build up the image of that Godhead in my members, it is a realisation but a limited one. If it is the

Cosmic Godhead that I realise, losing in it all personal self, that is a very wide realisation, but I become a mere channel of the universal Power and there is no personal or divinely individual consummation for me. If I shoot up to the transcendental realisation only, I lose both myself and the world in the transcendental Absolute. If on the other hand my aim is none of these things by itself, but to realise and also to manifest the Divine in the world, bringing down for the purpose a yet unmanifested Power, — such as the Supermind, — a harmonisation of all three becomes imperative. I have to bring it down, and from where shall I bring it down — since it is not yet manifested in the cosmic formula — if not from the unmanifest Transcendence, which I must reach and realise? I have to bring it into the cosmic formula and, if so, I must realise the cosmic Divine and become conscious of the cosmic self and the cosmic forces. But I have to embody it here, — otherwise it is left as an influence only and not a thing fixed in the physical world — and it is through the Divine in the individual alone that this can be done.

These are elements in the dynamics of spiritual experience and I am obliged to admit them if a divine work has to be done.

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The European type of monism is usually pantheistic and weaves the universe and the Divine so intimately together that they can hardly be separated. But what explanation of the evil and misery can there be there? The Indian view is that the Divine is the inmost substance of the Universe, but he is also outside it, transcendent; good and evil, happiness and misery are only phenomena of cosmic experience due to a division and diminution of consciousness in the manifestation, but are not part of the essence or of the undivided whole-consciousness either of the Divine or of our own spiritual being.

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I know what is your difficulty about the Cosmic Divine. It was not present to my mind because I look at these things from the point of view of facts as they are both to our spiritual and our

outward experience — whereas the point of view on which you lay stress is that they are not what they ought to be or what the mind, ethical feeling and the vital in man feel that they ought to be. That this world is full of queer, ugly and inharmonious things is the very plain and self-evident fact with which we have to start, — wherever we may want or hope to arrive. But the whole question is there, whether there is something behind, something that warrants this hope to arrive at something better. For the spiritual experience there is — and this something behind is to it as undeniable a fact as the very apparent character of this world in its surface aspect as a world of Ignorance, tribulation, suffering, disharmony, disorder, obscure Inconscience. To spiritual experience it is not a speculation but a fact that there is a God-head immanent within behind this flawed and imperfect human nature into some likeness to which this nature can try to grow; there is something behind the cosmic movement with all its disorder which is of the nature of abiding peace, calm, strength, joy and all-embracing universality and to enter into it and abide in it is possible for our consciousness also. It is also a part of spiritual experience that there is something Beyond in which this Divinity — or whatever other name you may give to it — is above the contradiction offered to it by this world of disorder and ignorance; that is the meaning of the Transcendence. Whatever wide differences there may be between different ways of spiritual experience or whatever names may be put on these things, so much is fairly universal. If there were not these certitudes, there could be no assured spiritual life or endeavour.

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The transcendent [*is the state beyond the universal forces*] — which for the purposes of our universe would mean the Sachchidananda planes and the supramental as a link with the present manifestation.

Of course the absolutely transcendent would be beyond all planes altogether.

Personal and Impersonal Sides of the Divine

There is always the personal and the impersonal side of the Divine and the Truth and it is a mistake to think the impersonal alone true or important — for that leads to a void incompleteness in part of the being while only one side is given satisfaction. Impersonality belongs to the intellectual mind and the static self, personality to the soul and heart and dynamic being. Those who disregard the personal Divine ignore something which is profound and essential.

In X's case there exists a conflict between his ideas of the Truth and his heart. But in following the heart in its purer impulses one follows something that is at least as precious as the mind's loyalty to its own conceptions of what the Truth may be.

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Many have had communion with the Personal Divine, through the mind and the heart — but that is not the complete or supreme realisation.

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The usual experience of the Impersonal is that It is everywhere, without form or limitation in any place or time.

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The impersonal Divine has no abode and cannot have; it is all-pervading. If anybody says the impersonal Divine has its abode in the heart he can be asked what he means by the impersonal Divine.

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Whatever impersonal Truth or Light there is, you have to find it, use it, do what you can with it. It does not trouble itself to hunt after you. It is the Buddhist idea that you must do everything for yourself, that is the only way.

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When one follows after the impersonal Self, one is moving

between two opposite principles—the silence and purity of the impersonal inactive Atman and the activity of the ignorant Prakriti. One can pass into the Self, leaving the ignorant Nature or reducing it to silence. Or else, one can live in the peace and freedom of the Self and watch the action of Nature as a witness. Even one may put some sattwic control, by tapasya, over the action of the Prakriti; but the impersonal Self has no power to change or divinise the Nature. For that one has to go beyond the impersonal Self and seek after the Divine who is both personal and impersonal and beyond these two aspects. If, however, you practise living in the impersonal Self and can achieve a certain spiritual impersonality, then you grow in equality, purity, peace, detachment, you get the power of living in an inner freedom not touched by the surface movement or struggle of the mental, vital and physical nature, and this becomes a great help when you have to go beyond the impersonal and to change the troubled nature also into something divine.

The Divine and the Atman

The Divine is more than the Atman. It is Nature also, it contains everything in Itself.

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It is the individual being that is a portion of the Divine. The universal self or Atman which is the same in all, is not a portion but an aspect of the Divine.

The Divine and the Supermind

One can become one with the Divine on the mental plane. The Supermind is necessary for manifesting the Divine on earth.

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The Divine can be and is everywhere, masked or half-manifest or beginning to be manifest, in all the planes of consciousness; in the Supramental it begins to be manifest without disguise or veil in its own *svarūpa*.