Chapter XXIII

The Double Soul in Man

The Purusha, the inner Self, no larger than the size of a man’s thumb. 

He who knows this Self who is the eater of the honey of existence and the lord of what is and shall be, has thenceforward no shrinking.

Whence shall he have grief, how shall he be deluded who sees everywhere the Oneness?

He who has found the bliss of the Eternal has no fear from any quarter.

The FIRST status of Life we found to be characterised by a dumb inconscient drive or urge, a force of some involved will in the material or atomic existence, not free and possessor of itself or its works or their results, but entirely possessed by the universal movement in which it arises as the obscure unformed seed of individuality. The root of the second status is desire, eager to possess but limited in capacity; the bud of the third is Love which seeks both to possess and be possessed, to receive and to give itself; the fine flower of the fourth, its sign of perfection, we conceive as the pure and full emergence of the original will, the illumined fulfilment of the intermediate desire, the high and deep satisfaction of the conscious interchange of Love by the unification of the state of the possessor and possessed in the divine unity of souls which is the foundation of the supramental existence. If we scrutinise these terms carefully we

---

1 II. 12, 13; II. 3. 17.  
2 III. 13.  
3 II. 1. 5.  
4 Verse 7.  
5 II. 9.
shall see that they are shapes and stages of the soul's seeking for the individual and universal delight of things; the ascent of Life is in its nature the ascent of the divine Delight in things from its dumb conception in Matter through vicissitudes and opposites to its luminous consummation in Spirit.

The world being what it is, it could not be otherwise. For the world is a masked form of Sachchidananda, and the nature of the consciousness of Sachchidananda and therefore the thing in which His force must always find and achieve itself is divine Bliss, an omnipresent self-delight. Since Life is an energy of His conscious-force, the secret of all its movements must be a hidden delight inherent in all things which is at once cause, motive and object of its activities; and if by reason of egoistic division that delight is missed, if it is held back behind a veil, if it is represented as its own opposite, even as being is masked in death, consciousness figures as the inconscient and force mocks itself with the guise of incapacity, then that which lives cannot be satisfied, cannot either rest from the movement or fulfil the movement except by laying hold on this universal delight which is at once the secret total delight of its own being and the original, all-encompassing, all-informing, all-upholding delight of the transcendent and immanent Sachchidananda. To seek for delight is therefore the fundamental impulse and sense of Life; to find and possess and fulfil it is its whole motive.

But where in us is this principle of Delight? through what term of our being does it manifest and fulfil itself in the action of the cosmos as the principle of Conscious-Force manifests and uses Life for its cosmic term and the principle of Supermind manifests and uses Mind? We have distinguished a fourfold principle of divine Being creative of the universe,—Existence, Conscious-Force, Bliss and Supermind. Supermind, we have seen, is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled; it is behind the actual phenomenon of things and occultly expresses itself there, but uses for effectuation its own subordinate term, Mind. The divine Conscious-Force is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, operative secretly behind the actual phenomenon of things, and it expresses itself there
characteristically through its own subordinate term, Life. And, though we have not yet examined separately the principle of Matter, yet we can already see that the divine All-existence also is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, hidden behind the actual phenomenon of things, and manifests itself there initially through its own subordinate term, Substance, Form of being or Matter. Then, equally, the principle of divine Bliss must be omnipresent in the cosmos, veiled indeed and possessing itself behind the actual phenomenon of things, but still manifested in us through some subordinate principle of its own in which it is hidden and by which it must be found and achieved in the action of the universe.

That term is something in us which we sometimes call in a special sense the soul, — that is to say, the psychic principle which is not the life or the mind, much less the body, but which holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all these to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy and beauty and to a refined purity of being. In fact, however, there is a double soul or psychic term in us, as every other cosmic principle in us is also double. For we have two minds, one the surface mind of our expressed evolutionary ego, the superficial mentality created by us in our emergence out of Matter, another a subliminal mind which is not hampered by our actual mental life and its strict limitations, something large, powerful and luminous, the true mental being behind that superficial form of mental personality which we mistake for ourselves. So also we have two lives, one outer, involved in the physical body, bound by its past evolution in Matter, which lives and was born and will die, the other a subliminal force of life which is not cabined between the narrow boundaries of our physical birth and death, but is our true vital being behind the form of living which we ignorantly take for our real existence. Even in the matter of our being there is this duality; for behind our body we have a subtler material existence which provides the substance not only of our physical but of our vital and mental sheaths and is therefore our real substance supporting this physical form which we erroneously imagine to be the whole body of our
spirit. So too we have a double psychic entity in us, the surface desire-soul which works in our vital cravings, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness, and a subliminal psychic entity, a pure power of light, love, joy and refined essence of being which is our true soul behind the outer form of psychic existence we so often dignify by the name. It is when some reflection of this larger and purer psychic entity comes to the surface that we say of a man, he has a soul, and when it is absent in his outward psychic life that we say of him, he has no soul.

The external forms of our being are those of our small egoistic existence; the subliminal are the formations of our larger true individuality. Therefore are these that concealed part of our being in which our individuality is close to our universality, touches it, is in constant relation and commerce with it. The subliminal mind in us is open to the universal knowledge of the cosmic Mind, the subliminal life in us to the universal force of the cosmic Life, the subliminal physicality in us to the universal force-formation of cosmic Matter; the thick walls which divide from these things our surface mind, life, body and which Nature has to pierce with so much trouble, so imperfectly and by so many skilful-clumsy physical devices, are there, in the subliminal, only a rarefied medium at once of separation and communication.

So too is the subliminal soul in us open to the universal delight which the cosmic soul takes in its own existence and in the existence of the myriad souls that represent it and in the operations of mind, life and matter by which Nature lends herself to their play and development; but from this cosmic delight the surface soul is shut off by egoistic walls of great thickness which have indeed gates of penetration, but in their entry through them the touches of the divine cosmic Delight become dwarfed, distorted or have to come in masked as their own opposites.

It follows that in this surface or desire-soul there is no true soul-life, but a psychic deformation and wrong reception of the touch of things. The malady of the world is that the individual cannot find his real soul, and the root-cause of this malady is again that he cannot meet in his embrace of things outward
the real soul of the world in which he lives. He seeks to find there the essence of being, the essence of power, the essence of conscious-existence, the essence of delight, but receives instead a crowd of contradictory touches and impressions. If he could find that essence, he would find also the one universal being, power, conscious existence and delight even in this throng of touches and impressions; the contradictions of what seems would be reconciled in the unity and harmony of the Truth that reaches out to us in these contacts. At the same time he would find his own true soul and through it his self, because the true soul is his self’s delegate and his self and the self of the world are one. But this he cannot do because of the egoistic ignorance in the mind of thought, the heart of emotion, the sense which responds to the touch of things not by a courageous and whole-hearted embrace of the world, but by a flux of reachings and shrinkings, cautious approaches or eager rushes and sullen or discontented or panic or angry recoils according as the touch pleases or displeases, comforts or alarms, satisfies or dissatisfies. It is the desire-soul that by its wrong reception of life becomes the cause of a triple misinterpretation of the *rasa*, the delight in things, so that, instead of figuring the pure essential joy of being, it comes rendered unequally into the three terms of pleasure, pain and indifference.

We have seen, when we considered the Delight of Existence in its relations to the world, that there is no absoluteness or essential validity in our standards of pleasure and pain and indifference, that they are entirely determined by the subjectivity of the receiving consciousness and that the degree of either pleasure and pain can be heightened to a maximum or depressed to a minimum or even effaced entirely in its apparent nature. Pleasure can become pain or pain pleasure because in their secret reality they are the same thing differently reproduced in the sensations and emotions. Indifference is either the inattention of the surface desire-soul in its mind, sensations, emotions and cravings to the *rasa* of things, or its incapacity to receive and respond to it, or its refusal to give any surface response or, again, its driving and crushing down of the pleasure or the pain by the will into the
neutral tint of unacceptance. In all these cases what happens is that either there is a positive refusal or a negative unreadiness or incapacity to render or in any way represent positively on the surface something that is yet subliminally active.

For, as we now know by psychological observation and experiment that the subliminal mind receives and remembers all those touches of things which the surface mind ignores, so also we shall find that the subliminal soul responds to the \textit{rasa}, or essence in experience, of these things which the surface desire-soul rejects by distaste and refusal or ignores by neutral unacceptance. Self-knowledge is impossible unless we go behind our surface existence, which is a mere result of selective outer experiences, an imperfect sounding-board or a hasty, incompetent and fragmentary translation of a little out of the much that we are, — unless we go behind this and send down our plummet into the subconscient and open ourself to the superconscient so as to know their relation to our surface being. For between these three things our existence moves and finds in them its totality. The superconscient in us is one with the self and soul of the world and is not governed by any phenomenal diversity; it possesses therefore the truth of things and the delight of things in their plenitude. The subconscient, so called,\textsuperscript{6} in that luminous head of itself which we call the subliminal, is, on the contrary, not a true possessor but an instrument of experience; it is not practically one with the soul and self of the world, but it is open to it through its world-experience. The subliminal soul is conscious inwardly of the \textit{rasa} of things and has an equal delight in all contacts; it is conscious also of the values and standards of the surface desire-soul and receives on its own surface corresponding touches of pleasure, pain and indifference, but takes an equal delight in all. In other words, our real soul within takes joy of all its experiences, gathers from them strength, pleasure and knowledge, grows by them in its store and its plenty. It is this

\textsuperscript{6} The real subconscious is a nether diminished consciousness close to the Inconscient; the subliminal is a consciousness larger than our surface existence. But both belong to the inner realm of our being of which our surface is unaware, so both are jumbled together in our common conception and parlance.
The real soul in us which compels the shrinking desire-mind to bear and even to seek and find a pleasure in what is painful to it, to reject what is pleasant to it, to modify or even reverse its values, to equalise things in indifference or to equalise them in joy, the joy of the variety of existence. And this it does because it is impelled by the universal to develop itself by all kinds of experience so as to grow in Nature. Otherwise, if we lived only by the surface desire-soul, we could no more change or advance than the plant or stone in whose immobility or in whose routine of existence, because life is not superficially conscious, the secret soul of things has as yet no instrument by which it can rescue the life out of the fixed and narrow gamut into which it is born. The desire-soul left to itself would circle in the same grooves forever.

In the view of old philosophies pleasure and pain are inseparable like intellectual truth and falsehood and power and incapacity and birth and death; therefore the only possible escape from them would be a total indifference, a blank response to the excitations of the world-self. But a subtler psychological knowledge shows us that this view which is based on the surface facts of existence only, does not really exhaust the possibilities of the problem. It is possible by bringing the real soul to the surface to replace the egoistic standards of pleasure and pain by an equal, an all-embracing personal-impersonal delight. The lover of Nature does this when he takes joy in all the things of Nature universally without admitting repulsion or fear or mere liking and disliking, perceiving beauty in that which seems to others mean and insignificant, bare and savage, terrible and repellent. The artist and the poet do it when they seek the rasa of the universal from the aesthetic emotion or from the physical line or from the mental form of beauty or from the inner sense and power alike of that from which the ordinary man turns away and of that to which he is attached by a sense of pleasure. The seeker of knowledge, the God-lover who finds the object of his love everywhere, the spiritual man, the intellectual, the sensuous, the aesthetic all do this in their own fashion and must do it if they would find embracingly the Knowledge, the Beauty, the Joy.
or the Divinity which they seek. It is only in the parts where the little ego is usually too strong for us, it is only in our emotional or physical joy and suffering, our pleasure and pain of life, before which the desire-soul in us is utterly weak and cowardly, that the application of the divine principle becomes supremely difficult and seems to many impossible or even monstrous and repellent. Here the ignorance of the ego shrinks from the principle of impersonality which it yet applies without too much difficulty in Science, in Art and even in a certain kind of imperfect spiritual living because there the rule of impersonality does not attack those desires cherished by the surface soul and those values of desire fixed by the surface mind in which our outward life is most vitally interested. In the freer and higher movements there is demanded of us only a limited and specialised equality and impersonality proper to a particular field of consciousness and activity while the egoistic basis of our practical life remains to us; in the lower movements the whole foundation of our life has to be changed in order to make room for impersonality, and this the desire-soul finds impossible.

The true soul secret in us — subliminal, we have said, but the word is misleading, for this presence is not situated below the threshold of waking mind, but rather burns in the temple of the inmost heart behind the thick screen of an ignorant mind, life and body, not subliminal but behind the veil, — this veiled psychic entity is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by that dense unconsciousness of any spiritual self within which obscures our outward nature. It is a flame born out of the Divine and, luminous inhabitant of the Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine. Not the unborn Self or Atman, for the Self even in presiding over the existence of the individual is aware always of its universality and transcendence, it is yet its deputy in the forms of Nature, the individual soul,
caitya puruṣa, supporting mind, life and body, standing behind the mental, the vital, the subtle-physical being in us and watching and profiting by their development and experience. These other person-powers in man, these beings of his being, are also veiled in their true entity, but they put forward temporary personalities which compose our outer individuality and whose combined superficial action and appearance of status we call ourselves: this inmost entity also, taking form in us as the psychic Person, puts forward a psychic personality which changes, grows, develops from life to life; for this is the traveller between birth and death and between death and birth, our nature parts are only its manifold and changing vesture. The psychic being can at first exercise only a concealed and partial and indirect action through the mind, the life and the body, since it is these parts of Nature that have to be developed as its instruments of self-expression, and it is long confined by their evolution. Missioned to lead man in the Ignorance towards the light of the Divine Consciousness, it takes the essence of all experience in the Ignorance to form a nucleus of soul-growth in the nature; the rest it turns into material for the future growth of the instruments which it has to use until they are ready to be a luminous instrumentation of the Divine. It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness. On the contrary, where the psychic personality is weak, crude or ill-developed, the finer parts and movements in us are lacking or poor in character and power, even though the mind may be forceful and brilliant, the heart of vital emotions hard and strong and masterful, the
life-force dominant and successful, the bodily existence rich and fortunate and an apparent lord and victor. It is then the outer desire-soul, the pseudo-psychic entity, that reigns and we mistake its misinterpretations of psychic suggestion and aspiration, its ideas and ideals, its desires and yearnings for true soul-stuff and wealth of spiritual experience.\footnote{The word “psychic” in our ordinary parlance is more often used in reference to this desire-soul than to the true psychic. It is used still more loosely of psychological and other phenomena of an abnormal or supernormal character which are really connected with the inner mind, inner vital, subtle physical being subliminal in us and are not at all direct operations of the psyche. Even such phenomena as materialisation and dematerialisation are included, though, if established, they evidently are not soul-action and would not shed any light upon the nature or existence of the psychic entity, but would rather be an abnormal action of an occult subtle physical energy intervening in the ordinary status of the gross body of things, reducing it to its own subtle condition and again reconstituting it in the terms of gross matter.} If the secret psychic Person can come forward into the front and, replacing the desire-soul, govern overtly and entirely and not only partially and from behind the veil this outer nature of mind, life and body, then these can be cast into soul images of what is true, right and beautiful and in the end the whole nature can be turned towards the real aim of life, the supreme victory, the ascent into spiritual existence.

But it might seem then that by bringing this psychic entity, this true soul in us, into the front and giving it there the lead and rule we shall gain all the fulfilment of our natural being that we can seek for and open also the gates of the kingdom of the Spirit. And it might well be reasoned that there is no need for any intervention of a superior Truth-Consciousness or principle of Supermind to help us to attain to the divine status or the divine perfection. Yet, although the psychic transformation is one necessary condition of the total transformation of our existence, it is not all that is needed for the largest spiritual change. In the first place, since this is the individual soul in Nature, it can open to the hidden diviner ranges of our being and receive and reflect their light and power and experience, but another, a spiritual transformation from above is needed for us to possess our self in its universality and transcendence. By itself
the psychic being at a certain stage might be content to create a formation of truth, good and beauty and make that its station; at a farther stage it might become passively subject to the world-self, a mirror of the universal existence, consciousness, power, delight, but not their full participant or possessor. Although more nearly and thrillingly united to the cosmic consciousness in knowledge, emotion and even appreciation through the senses, it might become purely recipient and passive, remote from mastery and action in the world; or, one with the static self behind the cosmos, but separate inwardly from the world-movement, losing its individuality in its Source, it might return to that Source and have neither the will nor the power any further for that which was its ultimate mission here, to lead the nature also towards its divine realisation. For the psychic being came into Nature from the Self, the Divine, and it can turn back from Nature to the silent Divine through the silence of the Self and a supreme spiritual immobility. Again, an eternal portion of the Divine, this part is by the law of the Infinite inseparable from its Divine Whole, this part is indeed itself that Whole, except in its frontal appearance, its frontal separative self-experience; it may awaken to that reality and plunge into it to the apparent extinction or at least the merging of the individual existence. A small nucleus here in the mass of our ignorant Nature, so that it is described in the Upanishad as no bigger than a man’s thumb, it can by the spiritual influx enlarge itself and embrace the whole world with the heart and mind in an intimate communion or oneness. Or it may become aware of its eternal Companion and elect to live for ever in His presence, in an imperishable union and oneness as the eternal lover with the eternal Beloved, which of all spiritual experiences is the most intense in beauty and rapture. All these are great and splendid achievements of our spiritual self-finding, but they are not necessarily the last end and entire consummation; more is possible.

For these are achievements of the spiritual mind in man; they are movements of that mind passing beyond itself, but on

---

8 Gita, XV. 7.
its own plane, into the splendours of the Spirit. Mind, even at its highest stages far beyond our present mentality, acts yet in its nature by division; it takes the aspects of the Eternal and treats each aspect as if it were the whole truth of the Eternal Being and can find in each its own perfect fulfilment. Even it erects them into opposites and creates a whole range of these opposites, the Silence of the Divine and the divine Dynamis, the immobile Brahman aloof from existence, without qualities, and the active Brahman with qualities, Lord of existence, Being and Becoming, the Divine Person and an impersonal pure Existence; it can then cut itself away from the one and plunge itself into the other as the sole abiding Truth of existence. It can regard the Person as the sole Reality or the Impersonal as alone true; it can regard the Lover as only a means of expression of eternal Love or love as only the self-expression of the Lover; it can see beings as only personal powers of an impersonal Existence or impersonal existence as only a state of the one Being, the Infinite Person. Its spiritual achievement, its road of passage towards the supreme aim will follow these dividing lines. But beyond this movement of spiritual Mind is the higher experience of the supermind Truth-Consciousness; there these opposites disappear and these partialities are relinquished in the rich totality of a supreme and integral realisation of eternal Being. It is this that is the aim we have conceived, the consummation of our existence here by an ascent to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and its descent into our nature. The psychic transformation after rising into the spiritual change has then to be completed, integralised, exceeded and uplifted by a supramental transformation which lifts it to the summit of the ascending endeavour.

Even as between the other divided and opposed terms of manifested Being, so also a supramental consciousness-energy could alone establish a perfect harmony between these two terms — apparently opposite only because of the Ignorance — of spirit status and world dynamism in our embodied existence. In the Ignorance Nature centres the order of her psychological movements, not around the secret spiritual self, but around its substitute, the ego-principle: a certain ego-centrism is the basis
on which we bind together our experiences and relations in the midst of the complex contacts, contradictions, dualities, incoherences of the world in which we live; this ego-centrism is our rock of safety against the cosmic and the infinite, our defence. But in our spiritual change we have to forego this defence; ego has to vanish, the person finds itself dissolved into a vast impersonality, and in this impersonality there is at first no key to an ordered dynamism of action. A very usual result is that one is divided into two parts of being, the spiritual within, the natural without; in one there is the divine realisation seated in a perfect inner freedom, but the natural part goes on with the old action of Nature, continues by a mechanical movement of past energies her already transmitted impulse. Even, if there is an entire dissolution of the limited person and the old ego-centric order, the outer nature may become the field of an apparent incoherence, although all within is luminous with the Self. Thus we become outwardly inert and inactive, moved by circumstance or forces but not self-mobile, even though the consciousness is enlightened within, or as a child though within is a plenary self-knowledge, or as one inconsequent in thought and impulse though within is an utter calm and serenity, or as the wild and disordered soul though inwardly there is the purity and poise of the Spirit. Or if there is an ordered dynamism in the outward nature, it may be a continuation of superficial ego-action witnessed but not accepted by the inner being, or a mental dynamism that cannot be perfectly expressive of the inner spiritual realisation; for there is no equipollence between action of mind and status of spirit. Even at the best where there is an intuitive guidance of Light from within, the nature of its expression in dynamism of action must be marked with the imperfections of mind, life and body, a King with incapable ministers, a Knowledge expressed in the values of the Ignorance. Only the descent of the Supermind with its perfect unity of Truth-Knowledge and Truth-Will can establish in the outer as

9 píśacavat.
10 balavat.
11 unmattavat.
12 píśacavat.
in the inner existence the harmony of the Spirit; for it alone can turn the values of the Ignorance entirely into the values of the Knowledge.

In the fulfilment of our psychic being as in the consummation of our parts of mind and life, it is the relating of it to its divine source, to its correspondent truth in the Supreme Reality, that is the indispensable movement; and, here too as there, it is by the power of the Supermind that it can be done with an integral completeness, an intimacy that becomes an authentic identity; for it is the Supermind which links the higher and the lower hemispheres of the One Existence. In Supermind is the integrating Light, the consummating Force, the wide entry into the supreme Ananda: the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original Delight of existence from which it came: overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure, delivering from all fear and shrinking the mind, life and body, it can recast the contacts of existence in the world into terms of the Divine Ananda.