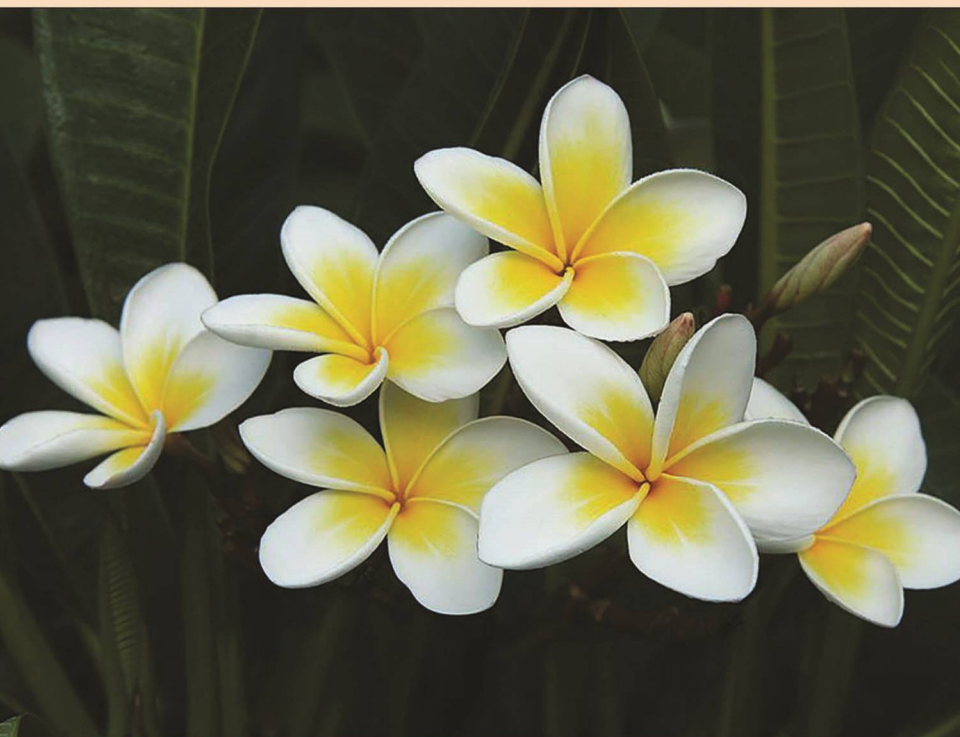


All India Magazine

July 2020



Psychological Perfection

Flower on the Cover:

Psychological Perfection

*There is not one psychological perfection but five.
They are sincerity, faith, devotion, aspiration
and surrender.*

(Extract from a talk by the Mother)

Spiritual significance and explanation of the flower
given by the Mother

Botanical name: *Plumeria rubra*

Common names; Frangipani, Temple tree, Nosegay,
West Indian jasmine, Pagoda tree

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Psychological Perfection

The flower with five petals

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial note: Yoga is not so much about techniques and methods as it is about attitudes that support the process. There are attitudes that help the working of the Mother's Force as well as those which hinder it. In this issue we take up certain attitudes that are part of our psychological perfection indispensable to the integral yoga.



“Lo! here are flowers and benedictions! here is the smile of divine Love! It is without preferences and without repulsions. It streams out towards all in a generous flow and never takes back its marvellous gifts!”

Her arms outstretched in a gesture of ecstasy, the Eternal Mother pours upon the world the unceasing dew of Her purest love!

CWM 1: 367

The Mother

Psychological Perfection

The five Qualities

Mother shows the white Champak flower she is holding in her hand. She has named the flower “Psychological Perfection”.

(Counting the petals) One, two, three, four, five psychological perfections. What are the five psychological perfections?

For they can be changed. And in fact, to tell you my secrets, every time I give it to someone, they are not always the same psychological perfections. That depends on people’s needs. Even to the same person I may give at different times different psychological perfections; so it’s not fixed. But the first time this flower was named “Psychological Perfection”; at that time they were noted down, but as for me it is something very fluid — I told you it depends on the circumstances and needs — I don’t remember what was chosen the first time.

So, if someone knows it, he can tell us, we’ll compare.

I am not sure.

You are not sure. Is there anyone who is sure?

Aspiration, devotion, sincerity and faith.

That makes only four, so far.

And surrender.

Surrender? Someone told me something else.

Faith, sincerity, aspiration, devotion, surrender.

But that’s what he just said. (Turning to another disciple) You

— a little while ago, you told me “faithfulness”.

I said that, but it's not faithfulness, instead of faithfulness it's faith.

But why should there not be faithfulness? I didn't put it down, because I didn't try to recall anything, I simply wrote down what seemed to me the most important and most general. But it may be put in various ways.

Sincerity or transparency

In any case, what is always there, in all combinations and to whomever I give it, the first among them all is sincerity. For if there is no sincerity, one cannot advance even by half a step. So that is the first, and it is always there.

But it is possible to translate it by another word, if you prefer it, which would be “transparency”. I shall explain this word:

Someone is in front of me and I am looking at him; I look into his eyes. And if this person is sincere or “transparent”, through his eyes I go down and I see his soul — clearly. But — this is precisely the experience — when I look at somebody and see a little cloud, then I continue, I see a screen, and then sometimes it is a wall, and afterwards it is something quite black; and all this must be crossed, and holes bored in order to go through; and even then I am not sure if at the last minute I may not find myself before a door of bronze so thick that I shall never get through and see his soul; so, of such a person I can immediately say that he is not sincere. But I can also say, figuratively, that he is not transparent. That is the first thing.

Faith or trust

There is a second, which is obviously, as indispensable if you want to go forward; it is to have faith. Or another word, which seems more limited but is for me more important, because (it is a question of experience) if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily remain under the impression that you have faith and yet be losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. These are the three stumbling-blocks:

Those who have what they call an unshakable faith in the Divine, and say, “It is the Divine who is doing everything, who can do everything; all that happens in me, in others, everywhere, is the work of the Divine and the Divine alone”, if they follow this with some kind of logic, after some time they will blame the Divine for all the most terrible wrongs which take place in the world and make of Him a real demon, cruel and frightful — if they have no trust.

Or again, they do have faith, but tell themselves, “Well, I have faith in the Divine, but this world, I see quite well what it’s like! First of all, I suffer so much, don’t I? I am very unhappy, far more unhappy than all my neighbours” — for one is always far more unhappy than all one’s neighbours — “I am very unhappy and, truly, life is cruel to me. But then the Divine is divine, He is All-Goodness, All-Generosity, All-Harmony, so how is it that I am so unhappy? He must be powerless; otherwise being so good how could He let me suffer so much?”

That is the second stumbling-block.

And the third: there are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves, “Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing

for me is to give up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!”

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there will be difficulties. So both are necessary. ...

Devotion or Gratitude

Now, we have put “devotion” in this series. Yes, devotion is all very well, but unless it is accompanied by many other things it too may make many mistakes. It may meet with great difficulties.

You have devotion, and you keep your ego. And then your ego makes you do all sorts of things out of devotion, things which are terribly egoistic. That is to say, you think only of yourself, not of others, nor of the world, nor of the work, nor of what ought to be done — you think only of your devotion. And you become tremendously egoistic. And so, when you find out that the Divine, for some reason, does not answer to your devotion with the enthusiasm you expected of Him, you despair and fall back into the same three difficulties I was just speaking about: either the Divine is cruel — we have read that, there are many such stories, of enthusiastic devotees who abuse the Divine because He is no longer as gentle and near to them as before, He has withdrawn, “Why hast Thou deserted me? Thou hast abandoned me, O monster!...” They don’t dare to say this, but think it, or else they say, “Oh! I must have made such a serious mistake that I am thrown out”, and they fall into despair.

But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion.... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvelling thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the

Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just the monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And each time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvellous a joy, such a gratitude as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion — indeed so deep, so intense — that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, gratitude must come with devotion.

Aspiration or courage

I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration — an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, “What’s going to happen?” For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That's why I speak of courage — but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.

Surrender

And now, surrender. In English the word is “surrender”, there is no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said — I think we have read this — that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first attitude indispensable for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin.

Endurance or perseverance

But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary. And I add one more — for so far we have only four — I add endurance. For, if you are not able to face difficulties without getting discouraged and without giving up, because it is too difficult; and if you are incapable... well, of receiving blows and yet continuing, of “pocketing” them, as they say — when you receive blows as a result of your defects, of putting them in your pocket and continuing to go forward without flagging — you don't go very far; at the first turning where you lose sight of your little habitual life, you fall into despair and give up the game.

The most... how shall I put it? the most material form of this is perseverance. Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times if need be... You know, people come to me in despair, “But I thought it was done and now I must begin again!” And if they are told, “But that's nothing, you will probably have to begin again a hundred times, two hundred times, a thousand times; you

take one step forward and think you are secure, but there will always be something to bring back the same difficulty a little farther on. You think you have solved the problem, you must solve it yet once again; it will turn up again looking just a little different, but it will be the same problem”, and if you are not determined that: “Even if it comes back a million times, I shall do it a million times, but I shall go through with it”, well, you won’t be able to do the yoga. This is absolutely indispensable.

People have a beautiful experience and say, “Ah, now this is it!...” And then it settles down, diminishes, gets veiled, and suddenly something quite unexpected, absolutely commonplace and apparently completely uninteresting comes before you and blocks your way. And then you say, “Ah! what’s the good of having made this progress if it’s going to start all over again? Why should I do it? I made an effort, I succeeded, achieved something, and now it’s as if I had done nothing! It’s indeed hopeless.” For you have no endurance.

If one has endurance, one says, “It’s all right. Good, I shall begin again as often as necessary; a thousand times, ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times if necessary, I shall begin again — but I shall go to the end and nothing will have the power to stop me on the way.”

This is most necessary. Most necessary.

So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said—that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the way*. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency

Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude
Courage or Aspiration
Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*, faithfulness to one's resolution — being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one's resolution. This is endurance.

There you are.

If one persists, there comes a time when one is victorious.

Victory is to the most persistent.

CWM 8: 36-42

The Mother

Mother contemplates a flower she is holding in her hand. It is the golden champak flower (*Michelia champaka*). Have you noticed this flower?

It has twelve petals in three rows of four.

We have called it "Supramental psychological perfection".

I had never noticed that it had three rows: a small row like this, another one a little larger and a third one larger still. They are in gradations of four: four petals, four petals, four petals.

Well, if one indeed wants to see in the forms of Nature a symbolic expression, one can see a centre which is the supreme Truth, and a triple manifestation—because four indicates manifestation — in three superimposed worlds: the outermost — these are the largest petals, the lightest in colour — that is a physical world, then a vital world and a mental world, and then at the centre, the supramental Truth.

And you can discover all kinds of other analogies.

CWM 8: 158

The Mother



All can be done by the Divine, the heart and nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed, if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence — and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance comes and the contact and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow in you, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone.

CWSA 29-69

Sri Aurobindo

Qualities Needed for Sadhana

Indispensable Qualities

It goes without saying that the qualities you speak of are helpful in the approach to the spiritual path, while the defects you enumerate are each a serious stumbling-block in the way. Sincerity especially is indispensable to the spiritual endeavour, and crookedness a constant obstacle. The sattwic nature has always been held to be the most apt and ready for the spiritual life, while the rajasic nature is encumbered by its desires and passions. At the same time, spirituality is something above the dualities, and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration. This may come to the rajasic man as well as to the sattwic. If it does, he can rise by it above his failings and desires and passions, just as the other can rise beyond his virtues, to the Divine Purity and Light and Love. Necessarily this can only happen if he conquers his lower nature and throws it from him; for if he relapses into it, he is likely to fall from the path or at least to be, so long as the relapse lasts, held back by it from inner progress. But for all that the conversion of great sinners into great saints, of men of little or no virtue into spiritual seekers and God-lovers has frequently happened in religious and spiritual history — as in Europe St. Augustine, in India Chaitanya's Jagai and Madhai, Bilwamangal and many others. The house of the Divine is not closed to any who knock sincerely at its gates, whatever their past stumbles and errors. Human virtues and human errors are bright and dark wrappings of a divine element within which once it pierces the veil, can burn through both towards the heights of the Spirit.

Humility before the Divine is also a *sine qua non* of the spiritual life, and spiritual pride, arrogance, or vanity and self-assurance press always downward. But confidence in the

Divine and a faith in one's spiritual destiny (i.e. since my heart and soul seek for the Divine, I cannot fail one day to reach Him) are much needed in view of the difficulties of the Path. A contempt for others is out of place, especially since the Divine is in all. Evidently, the activities and aspirations of men are not trivial and worthless, for all life is a growth of the soul out of the darkness towards the Light. But our attitude is that humanity cannot grow out of its limitations by the ordinary means adopted by the human mind, politics, social reform, philanthropy, etc., — these can only be temporary or local palliatives. The only true escape is a change of consciousness, a change into a greater, wider and purer way of being, and a life and action based upon that change. It is therefore to that that the energies must be turned, once the spiritual orientation is complete. This implies no contempt, but the preference of the only effective means over those which have been found ineffective.

*

Such qualities as faith, sincerity, aspiration, devotion etc. make up the perfection indicated in our language of the flowers. In ordinary language it would mean something else such as purity, love, benevolence, fidelity and a host of other virtues.

CWSA 29: 42-43

Sri Aurobindo



**Supramentalised
Psychological Perfection**
*A psychological perfection
aspiring to be Divinised.*

Botanical name:
Michelia champaca
Common name: Champaca,
Fragrant champaca

Sincerity

The Meaning of Sincerity

There is one indispensable condition, sincerity.

*

What is meant by “sincere”? Sincerity means to accept the Divine influence only and not that of lower forces.

*

Sincerity means to be turned wholly to the Divine and accept only the Divine impulses — it means also the true and constant will or effort to be like this.

*

Sincere is simply an adjective meaning that the will must be a true will. If you simply think “I aspire” and do things inconsistent with the aspiration, or follow your desires or open yourself to contrary influences, then it is not a sincere will.

*

Sincerity means more than mere honesty. It means that you mean what you say, feel what you profess, are earnest in your will. As the sadhak aspires to be an instrument of the Divine and one with the Divine, sincerity in him means that he is really in earnest in his aspiration and refuses all other will or impulse except the Divine’s.

*

[Sincerity:] To allow no part of the being to contradict the highest aspiration towards the Divine.

*

All sincere aspiration has its effect; if you are sincere, you will grow into the divine life.

To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than

this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life.

One cannot become altogether this at once, but if one aspires at all times to it and calls in always the aid of the Divine Shakti with a true heart and straightforward will, one grows more and more into this consciousness.

CWSA 29: 50-51

Sincerity in Sadhana

Men are always mixed and there are qualities and defects mingled together almost inextricably in their nature. What a man wants to be or wants others to see in him or what he is some times on one side of his nature or in some relations can be very different from what he is in the actual fact or in other relations or on another side of his nature. To be absolutely sincere, straightforward, open, is not an easy achievement for human nature. It is only by spiritual endeavour that one can realise it — and to do it needs a severity of introspective self-vision, an unsparing scrutiny of self-observation of which many sadhaks or Yogins even are not capable and it is only by an illumining Grace that reveals the sadhak to himself and transforms what is deficient in him that it can be done. And even then only if he himself consents and lends himself wholly to the divine working.

*

Straightforwardness means simply to be honest with oneself and with the Divine and not to be crooked in one's ways.

Self-justification is unwillingness to recognise a mistake and an attempt to prove oneself right even against the censure of the Mother.

CWSA 29: 51, 54

Aspiration

The Value of Aspiration

A simple, straight and sincere call and aspiration from the heart is the one important thing and more essential and effective than capacities.

*

One has only to aspire sincerely and keep oneself as open as possible to the Mother's Force. Then whatever difficulties come, they will be overcome — it may take some time, but the result is sure.

*

One has to suppose that [*the Mother's*] force everywhere around and call it in — if one feels it, so much the better, but even otherwise if there is faith and power in the call, it can flow in.

*

One must rely on the Divine and yet do some enabling sadhana — the Divine gives the fruits, not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul and its aspiration. Also worrying does no good — “I shall be this, I shall be that, what shall I be?” Say “I am ready to be not what I want, but what the Divine wants me to be” — all the rest should go on that base.

*

But why allow *anything* to come in the way between you and the Divine, any idea, any incident; when you are in full aspiration and joy, let nothing count, nothing be of any importance except the Divine and your aspiration. If one wants the Divine quickly, absolutely, entirely, that must be the spirit of approach, absolute, all-engrossing, making that the one point with which nothing else must interfere.

What value have mental ideas about the Divine, ideas about what he should be, how he should act, how he should not act — they can only come in the way. Only the Divine Himself matters. When your consciousness embraces the Divine, then you can know what the Divine is, not before. Krishna is Krishna, one does not care what he did or did not do; only to see Him, meet Him, feel the Light, the Presence, the Love, the Ananda is what matters. So it is always for the spiritual aspiration — it is the law of the spiritual life.

Don't waste time any longer in these ideas of the mind or in any starts of the vital — blow these clouds away. Keep fixed on the one thing indispensable.

CWSA 29: 55-56

Aspiration and Pulling

Pulling comes usually from a desire to get things for oneself — in aspiration there is a self-giving for the higher consciousness to descend and take possession — the more intense the call, the greater the self-giving.

*

It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force — to pull it down. The supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself — but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste.

CWSA 29: 61

Sri Aurobindo

But whatever way is followed, the one thing to be done is to be faithful and go to the end. You have so often taken that decision — stand by it, do not let the storms of the vital quench the aspiration of your soul.

CWSA 29:71

Sri Aurobindo

Surrender

The Meaning of Surrender

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda.

*

Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine — to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one's own, to obey only the Divine will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego.

*

Self-surrender is to give up yourself and all that is yours, mind and everything else to the Divine, so that the Divine Force may take everything and change it.

*

Surrender means to consecrate everything in oneself to the Divine, to offer all one is and has, not to insist on one's ideas, desires, habits etc., but to allow the divine Truth to replace them by its knowledge, will and action everywhere.

*

There are two possibilities, one of purification by personal effort, which takes a long time, another by a direct intervention of the Divine Grace which is usually rapid in its action. For the latter there must be a complete surrender and self-giving and for that again usually it is necessary to have a mind that can remain quite quiet and allow the Divine Force to act supporting it with its complete adhesion at every step, but otherwise remaining still and quiet. This last condition which resembles the baby cat attitude spoken of by Ramakrishna, is difficult to have. Those who are accustomed to a

very active movement of their thought and will in all they do, find it difficult to still the activity and adopt the quietude of mental self-giving. This does not mean that they cannot do the Yoga or cannot arrive at self-giving — only the purification and the self-giving take a long time to accomplish and one must have the patience and steady perseverance and resolution to go through.

*

Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence, weakness and surrender to the impulses of the lower nature; it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements or to one's ego or to some Force of the ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine.

CWSA 29:67, 86-87

The process of surrender

Surrender cannot be made at once — it is not so easy; for there is much in the being that resists. But one must have the will to surrender. It is the same with becoming an instrument. If one has the will and calls on the Mother and opens oneself as much as possible to her, then gradually these things develop in the nature.

*

The process of surrender is itself a Tapasya. Not only so, but in fact a double process of Tapasya and increasing surrender persists for a long time even when the surrender has fairly

well begun. But a time comes when one feels the Presence and the Force constantly and more and more feels that that is doing everything — so that the worst difficulties cannot disturb this sense and personal effort is no longer necessary, hardly even possible. That is the sign of the full surrender of the nature into the hands of the Divine. There are some who take this position in faith even before there is this experience and if the Bhakti and the faith are strong it carries them through till the experience is there. But all cannot take this position from the beginning — and for some it would be dangerous since they might put themselves into the hand of a wrong Force thinking it to be the Divine. For most it is necessary to grow through Tapasya into surrender.

CWSA 29:69, 82

Core of Surrender

What I meant by surrender was this inner surrender of the mind and vital. There is of course the outer surrender also, the giving up of all that is found to conflict with the spirit or need of the sadhana, the offering, the obedience to the guidance of the Divine, whether directly, if one has reached that stage, or through the psychic or to the guidance of the Guru. I may say that *prāyopaveśana* does not seem to me to have anything to do with surrender; it is a form of *tapasya* of a very austere and in my opinion very excessive kind, often dangerous. But what I was speaking of in my letter was the inner surrender.

The core of this inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude, “I want the Divine and nothing else.” I do not know why you should think that you can be asked to give up that — if there is not that, then the Yoga cannot be done. “I want to give myself entirely to him

and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet him and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way, I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and turn to him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy.

CWSA 29:70-71

The fact that you have to give up your ordinary work when you get depressed does not mean that you have not gained in steadiness — it only means that the steadiness you have gained is not a personal virtue but depends on your keeping the contact with the Mother — for it is her Force that is behind it and behind all the progress you can make. Learn to rely on that Force more, to open to it more completely and to seek spiritual progress even not for your own sake but for the sake of the Divine — then you will go on more smoothly. Get the full psychic opening in the most external physical consciousness. That and not despondency is the lesson you ought to draw from your present adverse experience.

CWSA 29:113-14

Sri Aurobindo

The surrender must be to the Mother — not even to the Force, but to the Mother herself.

CWSA 29: 78

Sri Aurobindo

Faith

Faith, Belief, Confidence, Trust

Faith is a general word = *Śraddhā* — the soul's belief in the Divine's existence, wisdom, power, love and grace — confidence and trust are aspects of faith and results of it.

Confidence is a feeling of sureness that the Divine will hear when sincerely called and help and that all the Divine does is for the best.

Trust is the mind's and heart's complete reliance on the Divine and its guidance and protection.

*

Faith — a dynamic entire belief and acceptance.

Belief — intellectual acceptance only.

Conviction — intellectual belief held on what seem to be good reasons.

Reliance — dependence on another for something, based on trust.

Trust — the feeling of sure expectation of another's help and reliance on his word, character etc.

Confidence — the sense of security that goes with trust.

Faith does not depend upon experience

First of all, faith does not depend upon experience; it is something that is there before experience. When one starts the Yoga, it is not usually on the strength of experience, but on the strength of faith. It is so not only in Yoga and the spiritual life, but in ordinary life also. All men of action, discoverers, inventors, creators of knowledge proceed by faith and, until the proof is made or the thing done, they go on in spite of disappointment, failure, disproof, denial, because of something in them that tells them that this is the truth, the

thing that must be followed and done. Ramakrishna even went so far as to say, when asked whether blind faith was not wrong, that blind faith was the only kind to have, for faith is either blind or it is not faith but something else — reasoned inference, proved conviction or ascertained knowledge.

The fundamental faith needed in the yoga

Faith is the soul's witness to something not yet manifested, achieved or realised, but which yet the Knower within us, even in the absence of all indications, feels to be true or supremely worth following or achieving. This thing within us can last even when there is no fixed belief in the mind, even when the vital struggles and revolts and refuses. Who is there that practises the Yoga and has not his periods, long periods of disappointment and failure and disbelief and darkness — but there is something that sustains him and even goes on in spite of himself, because it feels that what it followed after was yet true and it more than feels, it knows. The fundamental faith in Yoga is this, inherent in the soul, that the Divine exists and the Divine is the one thing to be followed after — nothing else in life is worth having in comparison with that. It was this faith growing in you that made you come for Yoga and this faith has not died or diminished — to judge from what you say in your letters, it has become more insistent and abiding. So long as a man has that, he is marked for the spiritual life and I will say that, even if his nature is full of obstacles and crammed with denials and difficulties, and even if he has many years of struggle, he is marked out for success in the spiritual life.

*

It is this faith that you need to develop, — a faith which is in accordance with reason and common sense — that if the Divine exists and has called you to the Path, as is evident, then there must be a Divine Guidance behind and that through and in spite of all difficulties you will arrive. Not to listen to the hostile voices that suggest failure or to the voices of impatient vital haste that echo them, not to believe that because great difficulties are there, there can be no success or that because the Divine has not yet shown himself he will never show himself, but to take the position that everyone takes when he fixes his mind on a great and difficult goal, “I will go on till I succeed and I will succeed — all difficulties notwithstanding.” To which the believer in the Divine adds, “The Divine exists, he is there, and since he exists, my following after the Divine cannot fail. I will go on through everything till I find him.”

CWSA 29: 88, 91-94

Faithfulness

When I spoke of being faithful to the light of the soul and the divine Call, I was not referring to anything in the past or to any lapse on your part. I was simply affirming the great need in all crises and attacks, — to refuse to listen to any suggestions, impulses, lures and to oppose to them all the call of the Truth, the imperative beckoning of the Light. In all doubt and depression, to say “I belong to the Divine, I cannot fail”; to all suggestions of impurity and unfitness, to reply “I am a child of Immortality chosen by the Divine; I have but to be true to myself and to Him — the victory is sure; even if I fell, I would be sure to rise again”; to all impulses to depart and serve some smaller ideal, to reply “This is the greatest, this is the Truth that alone can satisfy the soul within me; I

will endure through all tests and tribulations to the very end of the divine journey.” This is what I mean by faithfulness to the Light and the Call.

CWSA 29: 99

The Gospel of Faith

I spoke of a strong central and if possible complete faith because your attitude seemed to be that you only cared for the full response — that is, realisation, the Presence, regarding all else as quite unsatisfactory, and your prayer was not bringing you that. But prayer by itself does not usually bring that at once—only if there is a burning faith at the centre or a complete faith in all the parts of the being. That does not mean that those whose faith is not so strong or surrender complete cannot arrive, but usually they have to go at first by small steps and to face the difficulties of their nature until by perseverance or tapasya they make a sufficient opening. Even a faltering faith and a slow and partial surrender have their force and their result, otherwise only the rare few could do sadhana at all. What I mean by the central faith is a faith in the soul or the central being behind, a faith which is there even when the mind doubts and the vital despairs and the physical wants to collapse, and after the attack is over, reappears and pushes on the path again. It may be strong and bright, it may be pale and in appearance weak, but if it persists each time in going on, it is the real thing. Fits of despair and darkness are a tradition in the path of sadhana — in all Yogas oriental and occidental they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself — but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before

them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has only to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun. Your dream of the sea was a perfectly true one — in the end the storm and swell do not prevent the arrival of the state of Grace in the sadhak and with it the arrival of the Grace itself. That I suppose is what something in you is always asking for — the suprarational miracle of Grace, something that is impatient of the demand for tapasya and self-perfection and long labour. Well, it can come, it has come to several here after years upon years of blank failure and difficulty or terrible internal struggles. But it comes usually in that way — as opposed to a slowly developing Grace — after much difficulty and not at once. If you go on asking for it in spite of the apparent failure of response, it is sure to come.

CWSA 29: 95-96

Sri Aurobindo

There can be no doubt about the Divine Grace. It is perfectly true also that if a man is sincere, he will reach the Divine. But it does not follow that he will reach immediately, easily and without delay. Your error is there, to fix for God a term, five years, six years, and doubt because the effect is not yet there. A man may be centrally sincere and yet there may be many things that have to be changed in him before realisation can begin. His sincerity must enable him to persevere always — for it is a longing for the Divine that nothing can quench, neither delay nor disappointment nor difficulty nor anything else.

CWSA 29:117

Sri Aurobindo

Perseverance

Haste delays the progress

In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the consciousness than any physical thing can be. Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; mine came fifteen years after my first pre-Yogic experience in London and in the fifth year after I started Yoga. That I consider extraordinarily quick, an express train speed almost — though there may no doubt have been several quicker achievements. But to expect and demand it so soon and get fed up because it does not come and declare Yoga impossible except for two or three in the ages would betoken in the eyes of any experienced Yogi or sadhaka a rather rash and abnormal impatience. Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come. To some rapid preparatory experiences can come at a comparatively early stage, but even they cannot escape the labour of the consciousness which will make these experiences culminate in the realisation that is enduring and complete. It is not a question of my liking or disliking your demand or attitude. It is a matter of fact and truth and experience, not of liking or disliking, two things which do not usually sway me. It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient

and in haste and at each step despair or murmur. It is what I have always seen — there may be instances to the contrary and I have no objection to your being one, — none at all. I only say that if you could maintain “hope and fervour and faith”, there would be a much bigger chance — that is all.

Need of patience in the yoga of transformation

You say after several years you have not changed your nature. I only wish the external nature were so easy to transform that it could be done in a few years. You forget also that the real problem — to get rid of the pervading ego in this nature — is a task you have seriously tackled only a short time ago. And it is not in a few months that that can be done. Even the best sadhaks find after many experiences and large changes on the higher planes that here much remains to be done. How do you expect to get rid of it at once unlike everybody else? A Yoga like this needs patience, because it means a change both of the radical motives and of each part and detail of the nature. It will not do to say — “Yesterday I determined this time to give myself entirely to the Mother, and look it is not done, on the contrary all the old opposite things turn up once more; so there is nothing to do but to proclaim myself unfit and give up the Yoga.” Of course when you come to the point where you make a resolution of that kind, immediately all that stands in the way does rise up — it invariably happens. The thing to be done is to stand back, observe and reject, not to allow these things to get hold of you, to keep your central will separate from them and call in the Mother’s Force to meet them. If one does get involved as often happens, then to get disinvolved as soon as possible and go forward again. That is what everybody, every Yogin does — to

be depressed because one cannot do everything in a rush is quite contrary to the truth of the matter. A stumble does not mean that one is unfit, nor does prolonged difficulty mean that for oneself the thing is impossible.

There are difficulties but not impossibilities

To put it more soberly, — accept once for all that this thing has to be done, that it is the only thing left for yourself or the earth. Outside are earthquakes and Hitlers and a collapsing civilisation and — generally speaking — the jackal in the flood? All the more reason to tend towards the one thing to be done, the thing you have been sent to aid in getting done. It is difficult and the way long and the encouragement given meagre? What then? Why should you expect so great a thing to be easy or that There must be either a swift success or none? The difficulties have to be faced and the more cheerfully they are faced, the sooner they will be overcome. The one thing to do is to keep the mantra of success, the determination of victory, the fixed resolve, “Have it I must and have it I will.” Impossible? There is no such thing as an impossibility — there are difficulties and things of *longue haleine*, but no impossibles. What one is determined fixedly to do, will get done now or later — it becomes possible.

CWSA 29: 112-116

Sri Aurobindo

Even if there is much darkness — and this world is full of it and the physical nature of man also — yet a ray of the true Light can prevail eventually against a tenfold darkness. Believe that and cleave to it always.

CWSA 29:102

Sri Aurobindo

Devotion

The only short cut to the Divine

Meditation is one means of the approach to the Divine and a great way, but it cannot be called a short cut — for most it is a long and difficult though very high ascent. It can by no means be short unless it brings a descent and even then it is only a foundation that is quickly laid — afterwards meditation has to build laboriously a big superstructure on that foundation. It is very indispensable, but there is nothing of the short cut about it.

Karma is a much simpler road — provided one's mind is not fixed on the karma to the exclusion of the Divine. The aim must be the Divine and the work can only be a means. The use of poetry etc. is to keep one in contact with one's inner being and that helps to prepare for the direct contact with the inmost, but one must not stop with that, one must go on to the real thing. If one thinks of being a “literary man”, a poet, a painter as things worthwhile for their own sake, then it is no longer the Yogic spirit. That is why I have sometimes to say that our business is to be Yogis, not merely poets, painters etc.

Love, bhakti, surrender, the psychic opening are the only short cut to the Divine — or can be; for if the love and bhakti are too vital, then there is likely to be a seesaw between ecstatic expectation and *viraha*, *abhimāna*, despair, which will make it not a short cut but a long one, a zigzag, not a straight flight, a whirling round one's own ego instead of a running towards the Divine.

CWSA 29: 212

Love is not vital sentimentality

The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the Yoga. The true love for the Divine is a self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger — for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely — and this represents itself in an inner giving — her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power recreating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires and gets it, there ought to be no room for any other claim or for any disappointed desire. And if one truly aspires, one does unfailingly get it, more and more as the purification proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

CWSA 29: 338-39

Bhakti and Love

The nature of bhakti is adoration, worship, self-offering to what is greater than oneself — the nature of love is a feeling or seeking for closeness and union. Self-giving is the character of both; both are necessary in the Yoga and each gets its full force when supported by the other.

*

Love is not a name of the Divine, it is a power of his consciousness and being. Bhakti and love are not quite the same thing, but love is one of the elements of bhakti. There are different kinds of bhakti and that which is of the nature of love is the strongest and is considered the highest, most intense and ecstatic of all. Also in love itself that form of it which is made of self-giving; surrender, absolute adoration, urge towards a selfless union is the true kind of bhakti that is love. “Conquering love” or “Love the victor” means love prevailing over all that stands in the way of its reign, over ignorance, falsehood, selfishness, ego, passion and lust, outward or self-regarding desires and all else till it reigns alone and victorious, bringing down all the other gifts of the Divine Consciousness. It is by force of love and selflessness and self-giving that the sadhak can help Love to conquer.

*

I suppose it [*premahakti*] is bhakti with love as its basis; there can be bhakti of worship, submission, reverence, obedience etc. but without love.

*

Selflessness, self-giving, entire faith and confidence, absence of demand and desire, surrender to the Divine Will, love concentrated on the Divine — are some of the main signs [*of true love and bhakti*].

CWSA 29: 356

Sri Aurobindo

Be Simple

You know, we are surrounded by complications, but there is always a place where it all opens out simple and straight – this is a fact of my experience. You go around in circles, seeking, working at it, and you feel stuck; then something in the inner attitude gives way, and all of a sudden it opens out – quite simply.

I have had this experience very often. So I have asked Sri Aurobindo to give it to you.

And he says repeatedly, insistently: *Be simple, be simple. Say simply what you feel. Be simple, be simple, insistently.* These are only words, but as a matter of fact, when he spoke these words it was like a path of light opening up, and everything became very simple: 'Just take one step after another, that's all we have to do!' – that's how it seemed to me.

It's curious, all the complications seemed to be there (*Mother touches her temples*), very complicated and very difficult to adjust; and then when he said, Be simple – how strange – it was like a light coming from his eyes, as if one had suddenly emerged into a garden of light.

It gave that impression – like a garden bathed in light

Such great insistence on the simple thing: say simply what you see or what you know – simple, simple. A simplicity ... it was altogether the impression of a joyous garden.

Be simple, be simple.

The complications are there (*same gesture*), it is hard and complicated – and then a door opens: *Be simple....*

What he calls being simple is a joyous spontaneity; in action, in expression, in movement, in life – be simple, be simple, be simple. A joyous spontaneity. To rediscover in evolution that condition he calls divine, which was a spon-

taneous and happy condition. He wants us to rediscover that. And for days now he has been here telling me (and the same goes for your work): Be simple, be simple, be simple. And in his simplicity was a luminous joy.

A joyous spontaneity.

What's terrible is this organizing mind. It's terrible! It has us so convinced that we can't do without it that it's very difficult to resist. Indeed, it has convinced all humanity. The whole so-called elite of humanity has been convinced that nothing worthwhile can be achieved without this mental organizing power.

But Sri Aurobindo wants us to have the same simple joy as a blossoming rose: Be simple, be simple, be simple. And when I hear it or see it, it's like a rivulet of golden light, like a fragrant garden – all, all, all is open. Be simple....

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: September 16, 1961

What I wrote was in answer to your statement about your former idea of the Yoga that if one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences. I meant to say that it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting oneself in the hands of the Divine rather than trusting to one's own efforts alone and it implies one's putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana that I myself followed and it is the central part of the Yoga as I envisage it. It is, I suppose, what Ramakrishna meant by the method of the baby cat in his image. But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it – it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet.

CWSA 29: 70

Be simple,
Be happy,
Remain quiet,
Do your work as well as you can,
Keep yourself always open towards me.
This is all that is asked from you.

—
yogi—

Be simple,
Be happy,
Remain quiet,
Do your work as well as you can,
Keep yourself always open towards me.
This is all that is asked from you.

The Mother

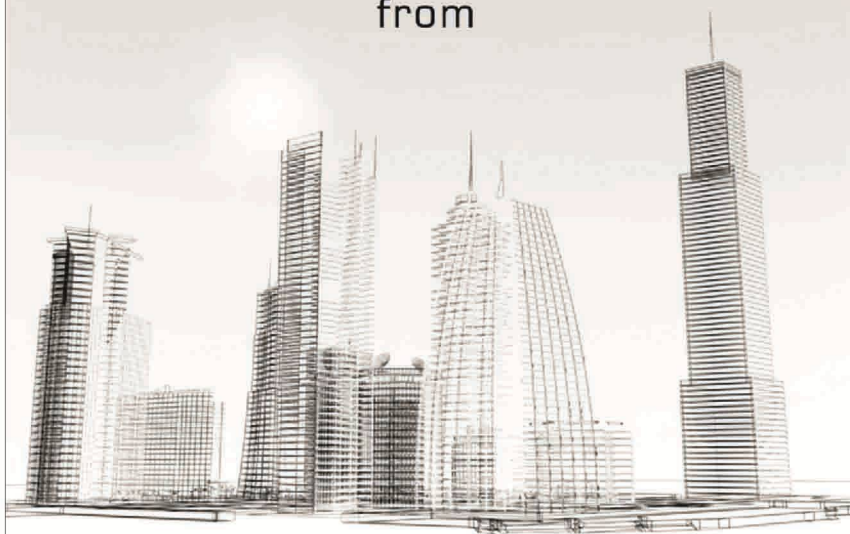
I should perhaps add one or two things to avoid misapprehensions. First, the love for the Divine of which I speak is not a psychic love only; it is the love of all the being, the vital and vital-physical included, — all are capable of the same self-giving. It is a mistake to believe that if the vital loves, it must be a love that demands and imposes the satisfaction of its desire; it is a mistake to think that it must be either that or else the vital, in order to escape from its “attachment”, must draw away altogether from the object of its love. The vital can be as absolute in its unquestioning self-giving as any other part of the nature; nothing can be more generous than its movement when it forgets self for the Beloved. The vital and physical should both give themselves in the true way — the way of true love, not of ego-desire.

CWSA 29: 339

Sri Aurobindo



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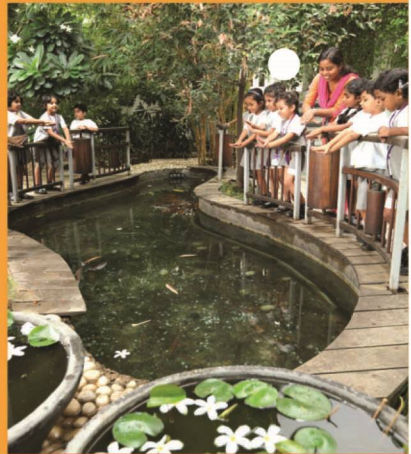
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