



**ALL
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**THE CAVE
OF
TAPASYA**

Cover Page:
Sri Aurobindo's Room
Pondicherry

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The Cave of Tapasya

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

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Editorial note: Sri Aurobindo came to Pondicherry following an adesa (Divine Command from within). It was destined to become the seat of his tapasya where he would engage in a superhuman sadhana for earth and man. In this tremendous endeavour he will be joined by the Mother. This issue is dedicated to the early years of Sri Aurobindo's arrival to Pondicherry.



Pondicherry is my place of retreat, my cave of tapasya, — not of the ascetic kind, but of a brand of my own invention.

CWSA 36: 255

Sri Aurobindo

Pondicherry

The departure

In February, 1910, he* withdrew to a secret retirement at Chandernagore and in the beginning of April sailed for Pondicherry in French India. A third prosecution was launched against him at this moment for a signed article in the *Karmayogin*; in his absence it was pressed against the printer of the paper who was convicted, but the conviction was quashed on appeal in the High Court of Calcutta. For the third time a prosecution against him had failed. Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal with some intention of returning to the political field under more favourable circumstances; but very soon the magnitude of the spiritual work he had taken up appeared to him and he saw that it would need the exclusive concentration of all his energies. Eventually he cut off connection with politics, refused repeatedly to accept the Presidentship of the National Congress and went into a complete retirement. During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 to the present moment he has remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his *sadhana*.

*

The Arya

In 1914 after four years of silent Yoga he* began the publication of a philosophical monthly, the *Arya*. Most of his more important works, those published since in book form, the *Isha Upanishad*, the *Essays on the Gita*, and others not yet published, the *Life Divine*, the *Synthesis of Yoga*, appeared serially in the *Arya*. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Others were concerned with the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture, the true meaning of the Vedas, the progress of human society, the nature and

**Written by Sri Aurobindo in third person*

evolution of poetry, the possibility of the unification of the human race. At this time also he began to publish his poems, both those written in England and at Baroda and those, fewer in number, added during his period of political activity and in the first years of his residence at Pondicherry. The *Arya* ceased publication in 1921 after six years and a half of uninterrupted appearance.

*

The Asram

Sri Aurobindo lived at first in retirement at Pondicherry with four or five disciples. Afterwards more and yet more began to come to him to follow his spiritual path and the number became so large that a community of sâdhaks had to be formed for the maintenance and collective guidance of those who had left everything behind for the sake of a higher life. This was the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Asram which has less been created than grown around him as its centre.

*

The New Yoga

Sri Aurobindo began his practice of Yoga in 1905. At first gathering into it the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the paths of divine communion and spiritual realisation followed till now in India, he passed on in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonising the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and, in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo's rises to the Spirit to redescend with its gains bringing the light and power and bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. Man's present existence in the material world is in this view or vision of things a life in the Ignorance with the Inconscient at its base, but even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul

returning to heaven or Nirvâna, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material Inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of a Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this supermind that the perfection dreamed of by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by opening to a greater divine consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realise this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

CWSA 36: 8-10 Sri Aurobindo

I see that you have persisted in giving a biography — is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to be a failure, because neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for man to see....

Necessarily I have mentioned only salient facts, leaving out all mere details. As for an estimate of myself I have given none. In my view, a man's value does not depend on what he learns or his position or fame or what he does, but on what he is and inwardly becomes, and of that I have said nothing.

CWSA 36: 12

Sri Aurobindo



My Yoga takes up all the Yoga of the past and goes beyond.

*

One can feel the experiences of any sadhana
as a part of this one.

CWSA 29: 379

Sri Aurobindo



The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both - the central square - is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme - the lotus.

The water - inside the square - represents the multiplicity, the creation.



Sri Aurobindo's Symbol

The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both — the central square — is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme — the lotus.

The water — inside the square — represents the multiplicity, the creation.

CWM 13:28-29

The ascending triangle is the creation's aspiration; the descending triangle is the Divine's response. And the junction of the two makes the square of the manifestation.

*

The red lotus is the flower of Sri Aurobindo, but specially for his centenary we shall choose the blue lotus, which is the colour of his physical aura, to symbolise the centenary of the manifestation of the Supreme upon earth.

CWM 13:16

(Mother designated the red lotus as the flower of Sri Aurobindo and the white lotus as her own.)

Red lotus — symbol of the manifestation of the Supreme upon earth.

White lotus — symbol of the Divine Consciousness.

*

Our Love is an eternal Truth.

*

Without him, I exist not;
without me, he is unmanifest.

*

When in your heart and thought you will make no difference between Sri Aurobindo and me, when to think of Sri Aurobindo will be to think of me and to think of me will mean to think of Sri Aurobindo inevitably, when to see one will mean inevitably to see the other, like *one and the same Person*, — then you will know that you begin to be open to the supramental force and consciousness.

CWM 13:32

The Mother



***A**s a rule the only mantra used in this sadhana is that of the Mother or of my name and the Mother. The concentration in the heart and the concentration in the head can both be used — each has its own result. The first opens up the psychic being and brings bhakti, love and union with the Mother, her presence within the heart and the action of her Force in the nature. The other opens the mind to self-realisation, to the consciousness of what is above mind, to the ascent of the consciousness out of the body and the descent of the higher consciousness into the body.*

CWSA 29 : 326

Sri Aurobindo

Few Interesting Letters

The indwelling Guru of the world

What I started with, what Lele gave me, what I did in jail — all that was a searching for the path, a circling around looking here and there, touching, taking up, handling, testing this and that of all the old partial yogas, getting a more or less complete experience of one and then going off in pursuit of another. Afterwards, when I came to Pondicherry, this unsteady condition ceased. The indwelling Guru of the world indicated my path to me completely, its full theory, the ten limbs of the body of the yoga. These ten years he has been making me develop it in experience; it is not yet finished....

Defect of the Old Yogas

The defect of the old yoga was that, knowing the mind and reason and knowing the Spirit, it remained satisfied with spiritual experience in the mind. But the mind can grasp only the fragmentary; it cannot completely seize the infinite, the undivided. The mind's way to seize it is through the trance of samadhi, the liberation of moksha, the extinction of nirvana, and so forth. It has no other way. Someone here or there may indeed obtain this featureless liberation, but what is the gain? The Spirit, the Self, the Divine is always there. What the Divine wants is for man to embody Him here, in the individual and in the collectivity — to realise God in life. The old system of yoga could not synthesis or unify the Spirit and life; it dismissed the world as an illusion or a transient play of God. The result has been a diminution of the power of life and the decline of India. The Gita says: *utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryāṅkarma cedaham*, “These peoples would crumble to pieces if I did not do actions.” Verily “these peoples” of India have gone down to ruin. What kind of spiritual perfection is it if a few ascetics, renunciates, holy men and realised beings attain liberation, if a few dev-

otees dance in a frenzy of love, god-intoxication and bliss, and an entire race, devoid of life and intelligence, sinks to the depths of darkness and inertia?

Bengali Writings, pp. 359-61

Why did I leave politics

Why did I leave politics? Because our politics is not the genuine Indian thing; it is a European import, an imitation of European ways. But it too was needed. You and I also engaged in politics of the European style. If we had not done so, the country would not have risen, and we would not have had the experience or obtained a full development. Even now there is a need for it, not so much in Bengal as in the other provinces of India. But now the time has come to take hold of the substance instead of extending the shadow. We have to awaken the true soul of India and to do everything in accordance with it....

CWSA 36 :222

God in everything

To look upon the body as a corpse is a sign of asceticism, the path of nirvana. The worldly life does not go along with this idea. There must be delight in everything, in the body as much as in the spirit. The body is made of consciousness, the body is a form of God. I see God in everything in the world. *Sarvam idam brahma, vā sudevaḥ sarvamiti* (“All this here is the Brahman”, “Vasudeva, the Divine, is all”) — this vision brings the universal delight. Concrete waves of this bliss flow even through the body. In this condition, filled with spiritual feeling, one can live the worldly life, get married or do anything else. In every activity one finds a blissful self-expression of the divine.

Difficulty in understanding his writings "Thought-phobia"

There is the same complaint about the Arya; people can't un-

derstand it. Who wants to give so much thought and consideration to his reading?... In this connection let me tell you briefly one or two things I have been observing for a long time. It is my belief that the main cause of India's weakness is not subjection, nor poverty, nor a lack of spirituality or religion, but a diminution of the power of thought, the spread of ignorance in the birthplace of knowledge. Everywhere I see an inability or unwillingness to think — incapacity of thought or “thought-phobia”. This may have been all right in the mediaeval period, but now this attitude is the sign of a great decline. ...

We, however, are not worshippers of power; we are worshippers of the easy way. But one cannot obtain power by the easy way. Our forefathers swam in a vast sea of thought and gained a vast knowledge; they established a vast civilisation. But as they went forward on their path they were overcome by exhaustion and weariness. The force of their thought decreased, and along with it decreased the force of their creative power. Our civilisation has become a stagnant backwater, our religion a bigotry of externals, our spirituality a faint glimmer of light or a momentary wave of intoxication. So long as this state of things lasts, any permanent resurgence of India is impossible....

The foundation of his Yoga

...I do not wish to make emotional excitement, feeling and mental enthusiasm the base any longer. I want to make a vast and strong equality the foundation of my yoga; in all the activities of the being, which will be based on that equality, I want a complete, firm and unshakable power; over that ocean of power I want the radiation of the sun of Knowledge and in that luminous vastness an established ecstasy of infinite love and bliss and oneness. I do not want tens of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get as instruments of God one hundred complete men free from petty

egoism. I have no confidence in guruhood of the usual type. I do not want to be a guru. What I want is for someone, awakened by my touch or by that of another, to manifest from within his sleeping divinity and to realise the divine life. Such men will uplift this country.

Bengali Writings, pp. 365-73

His Mission

You must understand that my mission is not to create maths, ascetics and Sannyasis; but to call back the souls of the strong to the Lila of Krishna & Kali. That is my teaching, as you can see from the Review, and my name must never be connected with monastic forms or the monastic ideal. Every ascetic movement since the time of Buddha has left India weaker and for a very obvious reason. Renunciation of life is one thing, to make life itself, national, individual, worldlife greater & more divine is another. You cannot enforce one ideal on the country without weakening the other. You cannot take away the best souls from life & yet leave life stronger & greater. Renunciation of ego, acceptance of God in life is the Yoga I teach, — no other renunciation.

*

Divine man-making

My business is now not man-making, but divine man-making. My present teaching is that the world is preparing for a new progress, a new evolution. Whatever race, whatever country seizes on the lines of that new evolution and fulfils it, will be the leader of humanity. In the Arya I state the thought upon which this new evolution will be based as I see it, and the method of Yoga by which it can be accomplished....

But the message is there, for those who care to understand. It has really three parts

(1) for each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity, the men of the new Satyayuga

which is striving to be born; (2) to evolve a race of such men to lead humanity and (3) to call all humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen race.

*

Letter to a reader of the Arya

21 Sept 1914

1. *What meditation exactly means.*

There are two words used in English to express the Indian idea of *Dhyana*, “meditation” and “contemplation”. Meditation means properly the concentration of the mind on a single train of ideas which work out a single subject. Contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image, idea so that the knowledge about the object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of the concentration. Both these things are forms of *dhyana*; for the principle of *dhyana* is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge. There are other forms of *dhyana*.

There is a passage in which Vivekananda advises you to stand back from your thoughts, let them occur in your mind as they will and simply observe them & see what they are. This may be called concentration in self-observation.

This form leads to another, the emptying of all thought out of the mind so as to leave it a sort of pure vigilant blank on which the divine knowledge may come and imprint itself, undisturbed by the inferior thoughts of the ordinary human mind and with the clearness of a writing in white chalk on a blackboard. You will find that the Gita speaks of this rejection of all mental thought as one of the methods of Yoga and even the method it seems to prefer. This may be called the *dhyana* of liberation, as it frees the mind from slavery to the mechanical process of thinking and allows it to think or not think as it pleases and when it pleases, or to choose its own thoughts or else to go beyond thought to the pure perception of Truth called in our philosophy *Vijnana*.

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation more difficult, but greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of Thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use them all, each in its own place and for its own object; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of Will in the self-application to the Yoga.

2. What should be the objects or ideas for meditation?

Whatever is most consonant with your nature and highest aspirations. But if you ask me for an absolute answer, then I must say that Brahman is always the best object for meditation or contemplation, and the idea on which the mind should fix is that of God in all, all in God and all as God. It does not matter essentially whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God or, subjectively, the One Self. But this is the idea I have found the best, because it is the highest and embraces all other truths, whether truths of this world or of the other worlds or beyond all phenomenal existence,—“All this is the Brahman.”

In the third issue of *Arya*, at the end of the second instalment of the Analysis of the Isha Upanishad, you will find a description of this vision of the [Brahman] which may be of help to you in understanding the idea.

3. Conditions internal and external that are most essential for meditation.

There are no *essential* external conditions, but solitude and seclusion at the time of meditation as well as stillness of the body are helpful, sometimes almost necessary to the beginner. But one should not be bound by external conditions. Once the habit of meditation is formed, it should be made possible to do it in all cir-

cumstances, lying, sitting, walking, alone, in company, in silence or in the midst of noise etc.

The first internal condition necessary is concentration of the will against the obstacles to meditation, ie wandering of the mind, forgetfulness, sleep, physical and nervous impatience and restlessness etc.

The second is an increasing purity and calm of the inner consciousness (*citta*) out of which thought and emotion arise; ie a freedom from all disturbing reactions, such as anger, grief, depression, anxiety about worldly happenings etc. Mental perfection and moral are always closely allied to each other.

CWSA 36: 293-95

Sri Aurobindo

Also it will be a mistake if you make too rigid a separation between A.G (Sri Aurobindo as He was then referred to by some disciples) and Mira (the Mother). Both influences are necessary for the complete development of the sadhana. The work of the two together can alone bring down the supramental Truth into the physical plane. A.G acts directly on the mental and on the vital being through the illumined mind; he represents the Purusha element whose strength is predominantly in illumined (intuitive, supramental or spiritual) knowledge and the power that acts in this knowledge, while the psychic being supports this action and helps to transform the physical and vital plane. Mirra acts directly on the psychic being and on the emotional, vital and physical nature through the illumined psychic consciousness, while the illumined intuitions from the supramental being give her the necessary knowledge to act on the right lines and at the right moment. Her force representing the Shakti element is directly psychic, vital, physical and her spiritual knowledge is predominantly practical in its nature. It is, that is to say, a large and detailed knowledge and experience of the mental, vital and physical forces at play and with the knowledge the power to handle them for the purposes of life and of yoga.

CWSA 36:329-30

Sri Aurobindo



The first process of the yoga is to make the sankalpa of atma-samarpana. Put yourself with all your heart and all your strength into God's hands. Make no conditions, ask for nothing, not even for siddhi in the yoga, for nothing at all except that in you and through you his will may be directly performed. To those who demand from him, God gives what they demand, but to those who give themselves and demand nothing, he gives everything that they might otherwise have asked or needed and in addition he gives himself and the spontaneous boons of his love.

CWSA 13: 74

Sri Aurobindo

Reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo

Leaving politics

At Pondicherry, from this time onwards Sri Aurobindo's practice of Yoga became more and more absorbing. He dropped all participation in any public political activity, refused more than one request to preside at sessions of the restored Indian National Congress and made a rule of abstention from any public utterance of any kind not connected with his spiritual activities or any contribution of writings or articles except what he wrote afterwards in the *Arya*. For some years he kept up some private communication with the revolutionary forces he had led through one or two individuals, but this also he dropped after a time and his abstention from any kind of participation in politics became complete. As his vision of the future grew clearer, he saw that the eventual independence of India was assured by the march of Forces of which he became aware, that Britain would be compelled by the pressure of Indian resistance and by the pressure of international events to concede independence and that she was already moving towards that eventuality with whatever opposition and reluctance. He felt that there would be no need of armed insurrection and that the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause, although the revolutionary spirit had to be maintained and would be maintained intact. His own personal intervention in politics would therefore be no longer indispensable. Apart from all this, the magnitude of the spiritual work set before him became more and more clear to him, and he saw that the concentration of all his energies on it was necessary. Accordingly, when the Ashram came into existence, he kept it free from all political connections or action; even when he intervened in politics twice afterwards on special occasions, this intervention was purely personal and the Ashram was not concerned in it.

But this did not mean, as most people supposed, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in the fate of India. It could not mean that, for the very principle of his Yoga was not only to realise the Divine and attain to a complete spiritual consciousness, but also to take all life and all world activity into the scope of this spiritual consciousness and action and to base life on the Spirit and give it a spiritual meaning. In his retirement Sri Aurobindo kept a close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever necessary, but solely with a spiritual force and silent spiritual action...

Public Interventions

The first was in relation to the second World War. At the beginning he did not actively concern himself with it, but when it appeared as if Hitler would crush all the forces opposed to him and Nazism dominate the world, he began to intervene. He declared himself publicly on the side of the Allies, made some financial contributions in answer to the appeal for funds and encouraged those who sought his advice to enter the army or share in the war effort. Inwardly, he put his spiritual force behind the Allies from the moment of Dunkirk when everybody was expecting the immediate fall of England and the definite triumph of Hitler, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rush of German victory almost immediately arrested and the tide of war begin to turn in the opposite direction. This he did, because he saw that behind Hitler and Nazism were dark Asuric forces and that their success would mean the enslavement of mankind to the tyranny of evil, and a set-back to the course of evolution and especially to the spiritual evolution of mankind: it would lead also to the enslavement not only of Europe but of Asia, and in it India, an enslavement far more terrible than any this country had ever endured, and the undoing of all the

work that had been done for her liberation. It was this reason also that induced him to support publicly the Cripps' offer and to press the Congress leaders to accept it. ... He supported the Cripps' offer because by its acceptance India and Britain could stand united against the Asuric forces and the solution of Cripps could be used as a step towards independence.

CWSA 36: 64-66

Four great realisations

Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by an overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail and of which he has spoken in his speech at Uttarpara. To the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations in Alipore jail.

CWSA 36: 94

A note on his yoga

Until I went to Pondicherry I took no disciples; with those who accompanied me or joined me in Pondicherry I had at first the relation of friends and companions rather than of a guru and disciples; it was on the ground of politics that I had come to know them and not on the spiritual ground. Afterwards only

there was a gradual development of spiritual relations until the Mother came back from Japan and the Ashram was founded or rather founded itself in 1926. I began my yoga in 1904 without a guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta yogi and discovered the foundations of my sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help from anyone else. My sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads; these were the only books from which I found guidance; the Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my sadhana. CWSA 36: 98

Concentration and the Grace

. . . By the way what is this story about my four or five hours' concentration a day for several years before anything came down? Such a thing never happened, if by concentration you mean laborious meditation. What I did was four or five hours a day pranayama—which is quite another matter. And what flow do you speak of? The flow of poetry came down while I was doing pranayam, not some years afterwards. If it is the flow of experiences, that did come after some years, but after I had stopped the pranayama for a long time and was doing nothing and did not know what to do or where to turn once all my efforts had failed. And it came as a result not of years of pranayam or concentration, but in a ridiculously easy way, by the grace either of a temporary guru (but it wasn't that, for he was himself bewildered by it) or by the grace of the eternal Brahman and afterwards by the grace of Mahakali and Krishna. So don't try to turn me into an argument against the Divine; that attempt will be perfectly ineffective. CWSA 35: 237

Formation of the Asram

There was no Asram at first, only a few people came to live near Sri Aurobindo and practise Yoga. It was only some time after the Mother came from Japan that it took the form of the Asram, more from the wish of the sadhaks who desired to entrust their whole inner and outer life to the Mother than from any intention or plan of hers or of Sri Aurobindo....

In the meantime, the Mother, after a long stay in France and Japan, returned to Pondicherry on the 24th April, 1920. The number of disciples then showed a tendency to increase rather rapidly. When the Asram began to develop, it fell to the Mother to organise it; Sri Aurobindo soon retired into seclusion and the whole material and spiritual charge of it devolved on her.

CWSA 36: 102-03

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo never even dreamed of taking Sannyas or of entering into any established order of Sannyasis. It ought to be well known to everybody that Sannyas was never accepted by him as part of his yoga; he has founded an Asram in Pondicherry but its members are not Sannyasis, do not wear the ochre garb or practice complete asceticism but are sadhaks of a yoga of life based on spiritual realisation.

CWSA 36: 93-94

Sri Aurobindo

Reminiscences of the Mother

Sri Aurobindo's atmosphere

People say, “When the supramental force manifests, we shall know it quite well. It will be seen” — not necessarily. They will not feel it any more than those people of little sensitivity who may pass through this place, even live here, without feeling that the atmosphere is different from elsewhere — who among you feels it in such a precise way as to be able to affirm it?... You may feel in your heart, in your thought that it is not the same, but it is rather vague, isn't it? But to have this precise perception... Listen, as I had when I came from Japan: I was on the boat, at sea, not expecting anything (I was of course busy with the inner life, but I was living physically on the boat), when all of a sudden, abruptly, about two nautical miles from Pondicherry, the quality, I may even say the physical quality of the atmosphere, of the air, changed so much that I knew we were entering the aura of Sri Aurobindo. It was a *physical* experience and I guarantee that whoever has a sufficiently awakened consciousness can feel the same thing.

I had the contrary experience also, the first time that I went out in a car after many, many years here. When I reached a little beyond the lake, I felt all of a sudden that the atmosphere was changing; where there had been plenitude, energy, light and force, all that diminished, diminished... and then... nothing. I was not in a mental or vital consciousness, I was in an absolutely physical consciousness. Well, those who are sensitive in their physical consciousness ought to feel that quite concretely. And I can assure you that the area we call “the Ashram” has a condensation of force which is not at all the same as that of the town, and still less that of the countryside.

CWM 4: 223–24

The power of His Word

I first met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but which were somehow not manifesting. I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, “Yes.” And immediately I saw that the Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to be realised! This was the first time I had witnessed the power to make real what is true: it is the very same power that will bring about the realisation in you of the truth when you come in all sincerity, saying, “This falsehood I want to get rid of”, and the answer which you get is “Yes.”

CWM 3: 141-42

Solid Peace

You remember the night of the great cyclone, when there was a tremendous noise and splash of rain all about the place. I thought I would go to Sri Aurobindo’s room and help him shut the windows. I just opened his door and found him sitting quietly at his desk, writing. There was such a solid peace in the room that nobody would have dreamed that a cyclone was raging outside. All the windows were wide open, not a drop of rain was coming inside.

CWM 3:155

Meditation in Sri Aurobindo’s Room

Sweet Mother, You have said that to be allowed to sit in Sri Aurobindo’s room and meditate there, “one must have done much for Him”. What do you mean by that, Mother? What can one do for the Lord which will be this “much”?

To do something for the Lord is to give Him something of what one has, or of what one does, or of what one is. That is to say, to

offer to Him one part of our goods or all of our possessions, to consecrate to Him one part of our work or all our activities, or to give ourselves to Him totally and without reserve so that He may take possession of our nature in order to transform and divinise it. But there are many people who, without giving anything, always want to take and to receive. These people are selfish and unworthy to meditate in Sri Aurobindo's room.

CWM1 3:29-30

Work of the Avatara

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth.... The step which is being added now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true

place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

CWM 3: 178-79

The Mother

When someone is destined for the Path all circumstances, through all the deviations of mind and life, help in one way or another to lead him to it. It is his own psychic being within him and the Divine Power above that use to that end the vicissitudes both of mind and outward circumstance.

CWM 3: 30-31

The Mother

The Program for (Sri Aurobindo) Yoga

SAPTA CHATUSTHAYA

Yoganga

Sapta Chatusthaya

1. Siddhichatusthaya

Shuddhi, Mukti, Bhukti, Siddhi.

2. Brahma Chatusthaya

Sarvam Anantam Jnanam Anandam Brahma.

3. Karma Chatusthaya

Krishna, Kali, Karma, Kama

4. Shanti Chatusthaya

Samata, Shanti, Sukha, Hasya (Atmaprasada)

5. Shakti Chatusthaya

Virya, Shakti, Chandibhava, Sraddha.

6. Vijnana Chatusthaya

Jnana, Trikaladrishti, Ashtasiddhi, Samadhi

7. Sharira Chatusthaya

Arogya, Utthapana, Saundarya, Vividhananda

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All these impurities and inadequacies result in various kinds of limitation and bondage: but there are two or three primary knots of the bondage, — ego is the principal knot, — from which the others derive. These bonds must be got rid of; purification is not complete till it brings about liberation. Besides, after a certain purification and liberation has been effected, there is still the conversion of the purified instruments to the law of a higher object and utility, a large, real and perfect order of action. By the conversion man can arrive at a certain perfection of fullness of being, calm, power and knowledge, even a greater vital action and more perfect physical existence. One result of this perfection is a large and perfected delight of being, Ananda. Thus purification, liberation, perfection, delight of being are four constituent elements of the Yoga,— śuddhi, mukti, siddhi, bhukti. **CWSA 24: 639**

(It may be noted that in the Synthesis of Yoga, Sri Aurobindo slightly changes the order. Bhukti follows Siddhi rather than the other way round.)

Few Passages from Sapta Chatusthya

Siddhi Chatusthaya

Shuddhi, Mukti, Bhukti, Siddhi

Shuddhi

(1) Of the Pranas — Release from Vasana or desire, that is Asakti or attachment, action of emotion, e.g. I must have that, I cannot do without that; Kamana or longing, action of desire, i.e. I want that; Raga-dwesa or preference, action of mind, i.e. I prefer this. There are also [the opposites of these], non-attachment, non-longing or craving and non-preference. We have also to [be released] from these things. When you have effected these three things you will have perfect Samata. Then you will naturally have perfect Shanti, that is Divine Peace [and] perfect or Shuddha Bhoga, that is Divine Enjoyment.

Shanti is the negative Ananda and those have it who rest in the Nirguna Brahman. Shuddha Bhoga is the positive Ananda and those have it who rest in the Trigunatita Ananta Brahman. Enjoy the world with Shuddha Bhoga based on the perfect Shanti. That which you get as the result of satisfied desire is troubled, unsafe, feverish or limited, but Shuddha Bhoga is calm, self-possessed, victorious, unlimited, without satiety and vairagya, immortally blissful. It is in a word, not Harsha, not Sukha, but Ananda. It is Amrita, it is Divinity and Immortality, it is [becoming of] one nature with God. [The soul] has then no Kama but pure Lipsa, an infinite readiness to take and enjoy whatever God gives.

*

Brahma Chatusthaya

Sarvam, Anantam, Jnanam, Anandam Brahma

Sarvam Brahma — when we realise one thing in the universe.

Anantam Brahma — when we realise Infinite Force and Quality at play in all forms.

Jnanam Brahma — when we realise a consciousness in everything

which is aware of all.

Anandam Brahma — when we realise in that consciousness a delight in all things.

*

Karma Chatusthaya

Krishna, Kali, Karma, Kama

Krishna is the Ishwara taking delight in the world.

Kali is the Shakti carrying out the Lila according to the pleasure of the Ishwara.

Karma is the Divine Action.

Kama is the Divine Enjoyment.

*

Shanti-Chatusthaya

Samata shantih sukham hasyam iti shantichatusthayam.

Samata

The basis of internal peace is *samata*, the capacity of receiving with a calm and equal mind all the attacks and appearances of outward things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, ill-fortune and good-fortune, pleasure and pain, honour and ill-repute, praise and blame, friendship and enmity, sinner and saint, or, physically, heat and cold etc. There are two forms of *samata*, passive and active, *samata* in reception of the things of the outward world and *samata* in reaction to them.

*

Nati is the submission of the soul to the will of God; its acceptance of all touches as His touches, of all experience as His play with the soul of man. *Nati* may be with *titiksha*, feeling the sorrow but accepting it as God's will, or with *udasinatá*, rising superior to it and regarding joy and sorrow equally as God's working in these lower instruments, or with *ananda*, receiving everything as the play of Krishna and therefore in itself delightful. The last is the state of the complete Yogin, for by this continual joyous or *anandamaya*

namaskara to God constantly practised we arrive eventually at the entire elimination of grief, pain etc, the entire freedom from the dwandwas, and find the Brahmananda in every smallest, most trivial, most apparently discordant detail of life & experience in this human body. We get rid entirely of fear and suffering; *Anandam Brahmano vidvân na bibheti kutaschana*. We may have to begin with titiksha and udasinata but it is in this ananda that we must consummate the siddhi of samata. The Yogin receives victory and defeat, success and ill-success, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace with an equal, a sama ananda, first by buddhi-yoga, separating himself from his habitual mental & nervous reactions & insisting by vichara on the true nature of the experience itself and of his own soul which is secretly anandamaya, full of the sama ananda in all things. He comes to change all the ordinary values of experience; amangala reveals itself to him as mangala, defeat & ill-success as the fulfilment of God's immediate purpose and a step towards ultimate victory, grief and pain as concealed and perverse forms of pleasure. A stage arrives even, when physical pain itself, the hardest thing for material man to bear, changes its nature in experience and becomes physical ananda; but this is only at the end when this human being, imprisoned in matter, subjected to mind, emerges from his subjection, conquers his mind and delivers himself utterly in his body, realising his true anandamaya self in every part of the adhâra.

CWSA 10: 3-4

Shakti Chatusthaya

Virya, shakti, chandibhavah, sraddha, iti shaktichatusthayam.

Virya: The Chaturvarnya

By Virya is meant the fundamental swabhavashakti or the energy of the divine temperament expressing itself in the fourfold type of the *châturvarnya*, in *Brahmanyam, brahmashakti, brahmate-*

jas, in kshatram, kshatrashakti, kshatratejas, in Vaishyaswabhava, shakti and tejas, in Shudraswabhava, shakti and tejas. We must realise that the ancient Aryan Rishis meant by the *chaturvarnya* not a mere social division, but a recognition of God manifesting Himself in fundamental *swabhava*, which our bodily distinctions, our social orders are merely an attempt to organise in the symbols of human life, often a confused attempt, often a mere parody and distortion of the divine thing they try to express. Every man has in himself all the four *dharma*s, but one predominates, in one he is born and that strikes the note of his character and determines the type and cast of all his actions; the rest is subordinated to the dominant type and helps to give it its complement. No Brahmana is a complete Brahmana, unless he has the *Kshatratejas* in him, the *Vaishyashakti* and the *Shudrashakti*, but all these have to serve in him the fullness of his *Brahmanyam*. God manifests Himself as the four *Prajapatis* or *Manus*, the *chatwara manavah* of the *Gita*, & each man is born in the *ansha* of one of the four; the first characterised by wisdom and largeness, the second by heroism and force, the third by dexterity and enjoyment, the fourth by work and service. The perfected man develops in himself all four capacities and contains at once the god of wisdom & largeness, the god of heroism and force, the god of skill and enjoyment, the god of work & service. Only, one stands dominant and leads and uses the others.

*

The Shudra is God descending entirely into the lower world and its nature, giving himself up entirely for the working out of God's *lila* in Matter & in the material world. From this standpoint he is the greatest of the four *shakti*s, because his nature goes direct towards complete *atmasamarpana*; but the Shudra bound has cut himself off from knowledge, power and skill & lost himself in the *tamoguna*. He has to recover the Brahmana, *Kshatriya* & *Vaishya*

in himself and give them up to the service of God, of man, of all beings. The principle of *kamah* or desire in him must change from the seeking after physical well-being, and self-indulgence to the joy of God manifest in matter. The principle of *prema* must find itself and fulfil itself in *dasyalipsa* and *atmasamarpana*, in the surrender of himself to God and to God in man and the selfless service of God and of God in man. The Shudra is the master-spirit of the Kali, as is the Vaishya of the Dwapara, the Kshatriya of the Treta and the Brahmana of the Satya.

*

There must be faith in the love & wisdom of God fulfilling Himself through us, fulfilling the *Yogasiddhi*, fulfilling our life work, working out all for our good even when it is apparently veiled in evil; and there must be faith in the power of the *Shakti* manifested by Him in this *adhāra* to sustain, work out and fulfil the divine knowledge, power & joy in the *Yoga* and in the life. Without *srad-dha* there is no *shakti*; imperfect *srad-dha* means imperfect *shakti*. Imperfection may be either in the force of the faith or in its illumination. It is sufficient at first to have full force of the faith, for we cannot from the beginning of the *Yoga* have full illumination. Then, however we err & stumble, our force of faith will sustain us. When we cannot see, we shall know that God withholds the light, imposing on us error as a step towards knowledge, just as He imposes on us defeat as a step towards victory.

*

Vijnanachatusthaya

Vijnana

Jnanam, trikaldrishtir, ashtasiddhih, samadhir, iti vijnanachatusthaya-
am.

Intuition & viveka

Intuition is the power which distinguishes the truth and sug-

gests at once the right reasons for its being the truth; viveka the power which makes at once the necessary limitations and distinctions & prevents intellectual error from creeping in or an imperfect truth from being taken for the whole satyam.

The importance of viveka for the purposes of man's progress in his present stage, is supreme. At present in the greatest men the powers of the vijnana act not in their own power, place & nature, but in the intellect; as helpers of the intellect & occasional guides. Directly we get an intuition or revelation, the intellect, memory, imagination, logical faculty seize hold of it & begin to disguise it in a garb of mingled truth & error, bringing down truth to the level of the nature, sanskaras and preferences of a man instead of purifying & elevating his nature & judgments to the level of the truth. Without viveka, these powers are as dangerous to man as they are helpful. The light they give is brighter than the light of the intellect, but the shadow which the intellect creates around them is often murkier than the mist of ignorance which surrounds ordinary intellectual knowledge. Thus men who use these powers ignorantly, often stumble much more than those who walk by the clear though limited light of the intellect. When these powers begin to work in us, we must be dhira and sthira and not be led away by our enthusiasm; we must give time for the viveka to seize on our thoughts & intuitions, arrange them, separate their intellectual from their vijnanamaya elements, correct their false extensions, false limitations, misapplications & assign them their right application, right extension, right limitation, make, — in the image of the Upanishads, the vyùha or just marshalling of the rays of the sun of knowledge, suryasya rashmayah. Knowledge is not for the hasty mind but only for the dhira, who can sit long accumulating & arranging his store and does not rush away with fragments like a crow darting off with the first morsel of food on which it can seize.

*

The body is the pratistha in this material universe; for the working out of the divine lila on earth it is necessary that it should have especially the *dharanasamarthyam* or power of sustaining the full stream of force, of ananda, of widening knowledge & being which descends into mind and prana and the vital and bodily functions with the progress of the siddhi. If the body is unfit, the system is unable to hold these things perfectly. In extreme cases the physical brain is so disturbed by the shock from above as to lead to madness, but this is only in entirely unfit & impure adharas or when Kali descends angrily & violently avenging the attempt of the Asura to seize on her and force her to serve his foul & impure desires. Ordinarily, the incapacity of the body, the nervous system and the physical brain shows itself in slowness of progress, in slight derangements and ailments, in unsteady hold of the siddhi which comes & slips away, works & is spilled out. *Dharanasamarthyam* comes by purification of the mind, prana and body; full siddhi depends upon full shuddhi.

CWSA 10: 7-8

Sri Aurobindo

A spiritual opportunity is not a thing that should be lightly thrown away with the idea that it will be all right some other time — one cannot be so sure of the other time. Besides, these things leave a mark and at the place of the mark there can be a recurrence.

CWSA 29: 31

Sri Aurobindo

The Yoga and its Objects

Yoga must be practiced for the Divine

The Yoga we practise is not for ourselves alone, but for the Divine; its aim is to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to effect a spiritual transformation and to bring down a divine nature and a divine life into the mental, vital and physical nature and life of humanity. Its object is not personal Mukti, although Mukti is a necessary condition of the yoga, but the liberation and transformation of the human being. It is not personal Ananda, but the bringing down of the divine Ananda — Christ's kingdom of heaven, our Satyayuga — upon the earth. Of *mokṣa* we have no personal need; for the soul is nityamukta and bondage is an illusion. We play at being bound, we are not really bound. We can be free when God wills; for he, our supreme Self, is the master of the game, and without his grace and permission no soul can leave the game. It is often God's will in us to take through the mind the *bhoga* of ignorance, of the dualities, of joy and grief, of pleasure and pain, of virtue and sin, of enjoyment and renunciation: for long ages, in many countries, he never even thinks of the yoga but plays out this play century after century without wearying of it. There is nothing evil in this, nothing which we need condemn or from which we need shrink, — it is God's play. The wise man is he who recognises this truth and knowing his freedom, yet plays out God's play, waiting for his command to change the methods of the game.

CWSA 13:71

The command is now

The command is now. God always keeps for himself a chosen country in which the higher knowledge is through all chances and dangers, by the few or the many, continually preserved, and for the present, in this Chaturyuga at least, that country is India.

Whenever he chooses to take the full pleasure of ignorance, of the dualities, of strife and wrath and tears and weakness and selfishness, the tamasic and rajasic pleasures, of the play of the Kali in short, he dims the knowledge in India and puts her down into weakness and degradation so that she may retire into herself and not interfere with this movement of his Lila. When he wants to rise up from the mud and Narayana in man to become once again mighty and wise and blissful, then he once more pours out the knowledge on India and raises her up so that she may give the knowledge with its necessary consequences of might, wisdom and bliss to the whole world. When there is the contracted movement of knowledge, the yogins in India withdraw from the world and practise yoga for their own liberation and delight or for the liberation of a few disciples; but when the movement of knowledge again expands and the soul of India expands with it, they come forth once more and work in the world and for the world. Yogins like Janaka, Ajatashatru and Kartavirya once more sit on the thrones of the world and govern the nations.

*

Purnayoga

The nature of man and of things is at present a discord, a harmony that has got out of tune. The whole heart and action and mind of man must be changed, but from within, not from without, not by political and social institutions, not even by creeds and philosophies, but by realisation of God in ourselves and the world and a remoulding of life by that realisation. This can only be effected by Purnayoga, a yoga not devoted to a particular purpose, even though that purpose be Mukti or Ananda, but to the fulfilment of the divine humanity in ourselves and others. For this purpose the practices of Hatha and Raja Yoga are not sufficient and even the Trimarga will not serve; we must go higher and resort to the Adhyatmayoga.

CWSA 13: 71-73

The danger of Sattvaguna

The danger of the *sattvagun*. a is when the sadhak becomes attached to any one-sided conclusion of his reason, to some particular *kriyā* or movement of the sadhana, to the joy of any particular *siddhi* of the yoga, perhaps the sense of purity or the possession of some particular power or the Ananda of the contact with God or the sense of freedom and hungers after it, becomes attached to that only and would have nothing else. Remember that the yoga is not for yourself; for these things, though they are part of the *siddhi*, are not the object of the *siddhi*, for you have decided at the beginning to make no claim upon God but take what he gives you freely and, as for the Ananda, the selfless soul will even forego the joy of God's presence, when that is God's will. You must be free even from the highest sattwic *aharikāra*, even from the subtle ignorance of *mumukṣutva*, the desire of liberation, and take all joy and delight without attachment. You will then be the *siddha* or perfect man of the Gita.

*

Remember that one-sided philosophies are always a partial statement of truth. The world, as God has made it, is not a rigid exercise in logic but, like a strain of music, an infinite harmony of many diversities, and his own existence, being free and absolute, cannot be logically defined.

*

The Goal

The goal marked out for us is not to speculate about these things, but to experience them. The call upon us is to grow into the image of God, to dwell in him and with him and be a channel of his joy and might and an instrument of his works. Purified from all that is *aśubha*, transfigured in soul by his touch, we have to act in the world as dynamos of that divine electricity and send it thrilling and radiating through mankind, so that wherever one

of us stands, hundreds around may become full of his light and force, full of God and full of Ananda. Churches, Orders, theologies, philosophies have failed to save mankind because they have busied themselves with intellectual creeds, dogmas, rites and institutions, with *ācāraśuddhi* and *darśana*, as if these could save mankind, and have neglected the one thing needful, the power and purification of the soul. We must go back to the one thing needful, take up again Christ's gospel of the purity and perfection of mankind, Mahomed's gospel of perfect submission, self-surrender and servitude to God, Chaitanya's gospel of the perfect love and joy of God in man, Ramakrishna's gospel of the unity of all religions and the divinity of God in man, and, gathering all these streams into one mighty river, one purifying and redeeming Ganges, pour it over the death-in-life of a materialistic humanity as Bhagirath led down the Ganges and flooded with it the ashes of his fathers, so that they may be a resurrection of the soul in mankind and the Satyayuga for a while return to the world. Nor is this the whole object of the Lila or the Yoga; the reason for which the Avatars descend is to raise up man again and again, developing in him a higher and ever higher humanity, a greater and yet greater development of divine being, bringing more and more of heaven again and again upon the earth until our toil is done, our work accomplished and Sachchidananda fulfilled in all even here, even in this material universe. Small is his work, even if he succeeds, who labours for his own salvation or the salvation of a few; infinitely great is his, even if he fail or succeed only partially or for a season, who lives only to bring about peace of soul, joy, purity and perfection among all mankind.

CWSA 13:85-91

The Path

It is said in the “Sanatsujatiya” that four things are necessary for *siddhi* — *sastra*, *utsaha*, *guru* and *kala* — the teaching of the path, zeal in following it, the Guru and time. Your path is that which I am pointing out, the *utsāha* needed is this *anumati* and this *nitya smarāna*, the Guru is God himself and for the rest only time is needed. That God himself is the Guru, you will find when knowledge comes to you; you will see how every little circumstance within you and without you has been subtly planned and brought about by infinite wisdom to carry out the natural process of the yoga, how the internal and external movements are arranged and brought together to work on each other, so as to work out the imperfection and work in the perfection. An almighty love and wisdom are at work for your uplifting. Therefore never be troubled by the time that is being taken, even if it seems very long, but when imperfections and obstructions arise, be *apramatta*, *dhira*, have the *utsāha*, and leave God to do the rest. Time is necessary. It is a tremendous work that is being done in you, the alteration of your whole human nature into a divine nature, the crowding of centuries of evolution into a few years. You ought not to grudge the time. There are other paths that offer more immediate results or at any rate, by offering you some definite *kriyā* you can work at yourself, give your *ahaṅkāra* the satisfaction of feeling that you are doing something, so many more *prāṇāyāmā* today, so much longer a time for the *āsana*, so many more repetitions of the *japa*, so much done, so much definite progress marked. But once you have chosen this path, you must cleave to it. Those are human methods, not the way that the infinite Shakti works, which moves silently, sometimes imperceptibly to its goal, advances here, seems to pause there, then mightily and triumphantly reveals the grandiose thing that it has done. Artificial paths are like canals hewn by the intelligence of man; you travel easily, safely, surely, but from one given

place to another. This path is the broad and trackless ocean by which you can travel widely to all parts of the world and are admitted to the freedom of the infinite. All that you need are the ship, the steering-wheel, the compass, the motive-power and a skilful captain. Your ship is the Brahmavidya, faith is your steering-wheel, self-surrender your compass, the motive-power is she who makes, directs and destroys the worlds at God's command and God himself is your captain. But he has his own way of working and his own time for everything. Watch his way and wait for his time.

CWSA 13: 87-88

The practice of concentration

You have asked what is the discipline to be followed in order to convert the mental seeking into a living spiritual experience. The first necessity is the practice of concentration of your consciousness within yourself. The ordinary human mind has an activity on the surface which veils the real self. But there is another, a hidden consciousness within behind the surface one in which we can become aware of the real self and of a larger, deeper truth of nature, can realise the self and liberate and transform the nature. To quiet the surface mind and begin to live within is the object of this concentration. Of this true consciousness other than the superficial there are two main centres, one in the heart (not the physical heart, but the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest), one in the head. The concentration in the heart opens within and by following this inward opening and going deep one becomes aware of the soul or psychic being, the divine element in the individual. This being unveiled begins to come forward, to govern the nature, to turn it and all its movements towards the Truth, towards the Divine, and to call down into it all that is above. It brings the consciousness of the Presence, the dedication of the being to the Highest and invites the descent into our nature of

a greater Force and Consciousness which is waiting above us. To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way.

That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. It is important, however, to remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there. For some the mental concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately — but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable.

CWSA 29: 7-8

The other side of the discipline

The other side of discipline is with regard to the activities of the nature, of the mind, of the life-self or vital, of the physical being. Here the principle is to accord the nature with the inner realisation so that one may not be divided into two discordant parts. There are here several disciplines or processes possible. One is to offer all the activities to the Divine and call for the inner guidance and the taking up of one's nature by a Higher Power. If there is the inward soul-opening, if the psychic being comes forward, then there is no great difficulty — there comes with it a psychic discrimination, a constant intimation, finally a governance which discloses and quietly and patiently removes all imperfections, brings the right mental and vital movements and reshapes the physical consciousness also. Another method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life, physical being, to regard their activities as only a habitual formation of general Nature in the individual imposed on us by past workings, not as any part of our real being; in proportion as one succeeds in this, becomes detached, sees mind and its activities as not oneself, life and its activities as not oneself, the body and its activities as not oneself, one becomes aware of an inner Being within us — inner mental, inner vital, inner physical — silent, calm, unbound, unattached which reflects the true Self above and can be its direct representative; from this inner silent Being proceeds a rejection of all that is to be rejected, an acceptance only of what can be kept and transformed, an inmost Will to perfection or a call to the Divine Power to do at each step what is necessary for the change of the Nature. It can also open mind, life and body to the inmost psychic entity and its guiding influence or its direct guidance. In most cases these two methods emerge and work together and finally fuse into one. But one can begin with either, the one that one feels most natural and easy to follow.

Finally, in all difficulties where personal effort is hampered, the help of the Teacher can intervene and bring about what is needed for the realisation or for the immediate step that is necessary.

CWSA 29: 8

The further method is,—

(1) To concentrate in the heart and aspire and (2) to call to the divine Mother to enter there and purify the mind and vital and unveil the psychic being so that her constant guidance and presence in it may be felt always and (3) to concentrate in the quiet mind and (in the head) open oneself first to the divine force and light which is always above the mind and call to it to descend into the body and the whole being — either of these or both, according to the capacity of the sadhaka.

CWSA 29: 45

Sri Aurobindo

A day will come, I hope, when we shall be able to tell freely and truly all that Sri Aurobindo's Presence has meant for the town of Pondicherry....

CWM 13: 375

The Mother

Call and the fitness for the Path

By readiness I did not mean capacity but willingness. If there is the will within to face all difficulties and go through, no matter how long it takes, then the path can be taken.

*

A mere restless dissatisfaction with the ordinary life is not a sufficient preparation for this Yoga. A positive inner call, a strong will and a great steadiness are necessary for success in the spiritual life.

*

It is useless to raise the question of fitness. No one is fit — for all human beings are full of faults and incapacities — even the greatest sadhaks are not free. It is a question only of aspiration, of believing in the divine Grace and letting the Divine work in you, not making a refusal.

*

It is difficult to say that any particular quality makes one fit or the lack of it unfit. One may have strong sex impulses, doubts, revolts and yet succeed in the end, while another may fail. If one has a fundamental sincerity, a will to go through in spite of all things and a readiness to be guided, that is the best security in the sadhana.

*

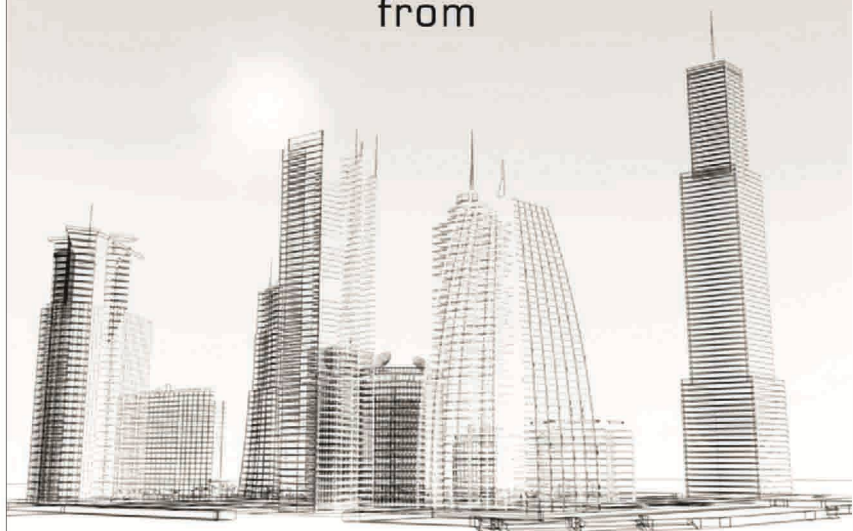
Fitness for Yoga is a very relative term — the real fitness comes by the soul's call and the power to open oneself to the Divine. If you have that, you have the fitness, and your past actions cannot stand in the way: the past cannot bind the future.

CWSA 29: 27-28, 33

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