



The Way of Gratitude

All India Magazine — June 2015

Flower on the Cover:

Gratitude

It is you who open all the closed doors and allow
the saving Grace to enter.

(Significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical name: Ipomoea carnea

The excerpts from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother published in All India Magazine carry titles and captions chosen by the editor, highlighting the theme of the excerpts and, whenever possible, borrowing a phrase from the text itself.

The excerpts selected are the editor's choice intended to give the reader some basic idea on the subject. These are by no means exhaustive. These compilations, we hope, will inspire the reader to study the complete works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

ALL INDIA MAGAZINE

A Monthly Magazine of Sri Aurobindo Society,

Society House, 11 Saint Martin Street, Puducherry - 605 001

Annual Subscription: Rs.180 in India, US \$ 25 by Air-mail

Editor : K. C. Anand, Joint Editor : Alok Pandey

Published by Pradeep Narang for Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry

Printed by Swadhin Chatterjee at

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Puducherry - 605 002, India.

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India: No. 22334/71

Phone Nos: (0413) 2336396-97-98

Email: info@aurosociety.org

Website: www.aurosociety.org

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

The Way of Gratitude

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February 8, 1913

O Lord, Thou art my refuge and my blessing, my strength, my health, my hope, and my courage. Thou art supreme Peace, unalloyed Joy, perfect Serenity. My whole being prostrates before Thee in a gratitude beyond measure and a ceaseless worship; and that worship goes up from my heart and my mind towards Thee like the pure smoke of incense of the perfumes of India.

Let me be Thy herald among men, so that all who are ready may taste the beatitude that Thou grantest me in Thy infinite Mercy, and let Thy Peace reign upon earth.

CWM 1: 15

The Mother

Gratitude, — A Rare Virtue

The Virtues (*A tale for young and old*)

Once upon a time there was a splendid palace, in the heart of which lay a secret sanctuary, whose threshold no being had ever crossed. Furthermore, even its outermost galleries were almost inaccessible to mortals, for the palace stood on a very high cloud, and very few, in any age, could find the way to it.

It was the palace of Truth.

One day a festival was held there, not for men but for very different beings, gods and goddesses great and small, who on earth are honoured by the name of Virtues.

The vestibule of the palace was a great hall, where the walls, the floor, the ceiling, luminous in themselves, were resplendent with a myriad glittering fires.

It was the Hall of Intelligence. Near to the ground, the light was very soft and had a beautiful deep sapphire hue, but it became gradually clearer towards the ceiling, from which girandoles of diamonds hung like chandeliers, their myriad facets shooting dazzling rays.

The Virtues came separately, but soon formed congenial groups, full of joy to find themselves for once at least together, for they are usually so widely scattered throughout the world and the worlds, so isolated amid so many alien beings.

Sincerity reigned over the festival. She was dressed in a transparent robe, like clear water, and held in her hand a cube of purest crystal, through which things can be seen as they really are, far different from what they usually seem, for there their image is reflected without distortion.

Near to her, like two faithful guardians, stood Humility, at once respectful and proud, and Courage, lofty-browed,

clear eyed, his lips firm and smiling, with a calm and resolute air.

Close beside Courage, her hand in his, stood a woman, completely veiled, of whom nothing could be seen but her searching eyes, shining through her veils. It was Prudence.

Among them all, coming and going from one to another and yet seeming always to remain near to each one, Charity, at once vigilant and calm, active and yet discrete, left behind her as she passed through the groups a trail of soft white light. The light that she spreads and softens comes to her, through a radiance so subtle that it is invisible to most eyes, from her closest friend, her inseparable companion, her twin sister, Justice.

And around Charity thronged a shining escort, Kindness, Patience, Gentleness, Solitude, and many others.

All of them are there, or so at least they think. But then suddenly, at the golden threshold, a newcomer appears.

With great reluctance the guards, set to watch the gates, have agreed to admit her. Never before had they seen her, and there was nothing in her appearance to impress them.

She was indeed very young and slight, and the white dress which she wore was very simple, almost poor. She takes a few steps forward with a shy, embarrassed air. Then, apparently ill at ease to find herself in such a large and brilliant company, she pauses, not knowing towards whom she should go.

After a brief exchange with her companions, Prudence steps forward at their request and goes towards the stranger. Then, after clearing her throat, as people do when they are embarrassed, to give herself a moment to reflect, she turns to her and says:

“We who are gathered here and who all know each other by our names and our merits are surprised at your coming,

for you appear to be a stranger to us, or at least we do not seem to have ever seen you before. Would you be so kind as to tell us who you are?"

Then the newcomer replied with a sigh:

"Alas! I am not surprised that I appear to be a stranger in this palace, for I am so rarely invited anywhere.

"My name is Gratitude."

CWM 2: 5-7

The unselfish, uncalculating movement of the soul

Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you.

There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they vibrate internally. The force one gives them—the strength of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that—they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment in them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind), which is

spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful.

The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation has spoilt many things which were much finer before.

Naturally, if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a much greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals I considered much higher than many people, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it — through contact with man they catch it — but there are those who don't have it.

The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world. But the higher one rises in the scale of mental activity, the rarer it becomes. For with intelligence come all the skill and cleverness, and corruption, calculation. For instance, when a rose blossoms it does so spontaneously, for the joy of being beautiful, smelling sweet, expressing all its joy of living, and it does not calculate, it has nothing to gain out of it: it does so spontaneously, in the joy of being and living. Take a human being, well, apart from a very few exceptions, the moment his mind is active he tries to get some advantage out of his beauty and cleverness; he wants it to bring him something, either men's admiration or even much more sordid gains yet. Consequently, from the psychic point of view, the rose is better than human beings.

CWM 5: 239-40

Compassion and Gratitude are psychic qualities

Compassion and gratitude are essentially psychic virtues. They appear in the consciousness only when the psychic being takes part in active life.

The vital and the physical experience them as weaknesses, for they curb the free expression of their impulses, which are based on the power of strength.

As always, the mind, when insufficiently educated, is the accomplice of the vital being and the slave of the physical nature, whose laws, so overpowering in their half-conscious mechanism, it does not fully understand. When the mind awakens to the awareness of the first psychic movements, it distorts them in its ignorance and changes compassion into pity or at best into charity, and gratitude into the wish to repay, followed, little by little, by the capacity to recognise and admire.

It is only when the psychic consciousness is all-powerful in the being that compassion for all that needs help, in whatever domain, and gratitude for all that manifests the divine presence and grace, in whatever form, are expressed in all their original and luminous purity, without mixing compassion with any trace of condescension or gratitude with any sense of inferiority.

CWM 15: 277

Gratitude in its purity has the same vibration as Love

From my earliest childhood (when I was five, my memories at five) and for more than eighty years, I have always been surrounded with people who brought me an abundance of revolt, discontent, and then, more and more so, cases (certain cases have been very acute and still are) of sheer ingratitude – not towards me, that doesn't matter at all: towards the Divine. Ingratitude ... that is something I

have often found very, very painful – that it should exist. It's one of the things I have seen in my life that seemed to me the most ... the most intolerable – that sort of acid bitterness against the Divine, because things are as they are, because all that suffering was permitted. It takes on more or less ignorant, more or less intellectual forms ... but it's a kind of bitterness. It takes sometimes personal forms, which makes the struggle even more difficult because you can't mix in questions of persons – it's not a personal question, it's an ERROR to think that there can be a single "personal" movement in the world; it's man's ignorant consciousness which makes it personal, but it isn't: it's all terrestrial attitudes. It came with the Mind; animals don't have that. And that's why I feel a sweetness in animals, even the supposedly most ferocious, which doesn't exist in man.

(long silence)

And yet, of all movements, the one that gives perhaps the most joy – an unalloyed joy, untainted by that egoism – is spontaneous gratitude.

It is something very special. It isn't love, it isn't self-offering.... It's a very FULL joy. Very full.

It is a very special vibration unlike anything other than itself. It is something that widens you, that fills you – that is so fervent!

It is certainly, of all the movements within the reach of human consciousness, the one that draws you the most out of your ego.

And when it can be a gratitude without motive, that vibration (basically, the vibration of what exists towards the Cause of existence) ... then a great many barriers vanish instantly. (*Mother contemplates that vibration of gratitude for a long time*) When you can enter that vibration in its purity, you realize immediately that it has the same quality as the

vibration of Love: it is directionless. It isn't something going from one thing to another, it doesn't go from here to there (*gesture from low to high*) or there to here ... it is (*round gesture simultaneous and total*).

I mean it isn't something that needs the two poles in order to exist; it doesn't go from one pole to the other or from the other to the one: it's a vibration which in its purity is the same as the vibration of Love, which doesn't go from here to there or from there to here — the two poles of existence.

It exists in itself for its own delight of being. (And what I am saying spoils it a lot.) Like Love.

Men have repeated *ad nauseam* that nothing exists without those two poles, that those two poles are the cause of existence and everything revolves around them (*Mother shakes her head*), but that's not the way it is. This means that man, in his ordinary outward consciousness, cannot understand anything beyond that. There we are. That we know. But in its essence (*Mother again shakes her head*), Love is not like that.

Ultimately, gratitude is only a very slightly colored hue of the essential Vibration of Love. (*meditation*)

Conversations with a disciple: December 21, 1963

FILL our hearts with the delight of Thy love.
Flood our minds with the splendour of Thy light.
Grant that we may effectuate Thy Victory!

CWM 1: 178

The Mother

Fill Your Life with Gratitude

Begin your day with Gratitude

Each morning when you get up, before you begin your day, with love and admiration and gratefulness hail this great family, these saviours of mankind who, ever the same, have come, come and will come until the end of time, as guides and instructors, as humble and marvellous servants of their brothers, in order to help them to scale the steep slope of perfection. Thus when you wake up, concentrate on them your thought full of trust and gratitude and you will soon experience the beneficial effects of this concentration. You will feel their presence responding to your call, you will be surrounded, imbued with their light and love. Then the daily effort to understand a little better, to love a little more, to serve more, will be more fruitful and easier at the same time. The help you give to others will become more effective and your heart will be filled with an unwavering joy.

CWM 2: 115-116

Be grateful to the Divine Grace and Love

If one considers the life and action and heart of men as they are, one would have every right to be surprised at all the hatred, contempt, or at best, the indifference which are returned for this immensity of Love which the divine Grace pours upon the world, for this immensity of Love which acts upon the world at every second to lead it towards the divine delight and which finds so poor a response in the human heart. But people have compassion only for the wicked, the deficient, the misshapen, for the unsuccessful ones and the failures — truly it is an encouragement to wickedness and failure.

If one thought a little more of this aspect of the problem,

perhaps one would have less need to insist on the necessity of returning love for hatred, because if the human heart responded in all sincerity to the Love that is being poured into it with the spontaneous gratitude of a love which understands and appreciates, then things would change quickly in the world.

CWM 3: 187

Be grateful when all is well

People are not aware of the workings of Grace except when there has been some danger, that is, when there has been the beginning of an accident or the accident has taken place and they have escaped it. Then they become aware. But never are they aware that if, for instance, a journey or anything whatever, passes without any accident, it is an infinitely higher Grace. That is, the harmony is established in such a way that nothing can happen. But that seems to them quite natural. When people are ill and get well quickly, they are full of gratitude; but never do they think of being grateful when they are well; and yet that is a much greater miracle! In collective accidents, what is interesting is exactly the proportion, the sort of balance or disequilibrium, the combination made by the different atmospheres of people.

CWM 5: 406

Best way to accept the Grace

Q:What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless. This, to begin with, is the first thing.

It is an experience one can very well have. When, you see, even people who know nothing find themselves in quite difficult circumstances or facing a problem which must be solved or, as I just told you, an impulse which must be overcome or something that has disturbed them... and then they realise they are lost, they don't know what to do—neither their mind nor their will nor their feelings help—they don't know what to do, then it happens; there is within them something like a kind of call, a call to something which can do what one cannot. One aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later — you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips*)—the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, "After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well."

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise

once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

CWM 6: 322-23

Ordinary mishaps and Mahakali's blow

Q: What is the nature of Mahakali's blow?

It makes you feel very happy. It gives you a sweet warmth in the heart, like that. You feel quite satisfied.

Q: Does one have to aspire for it or does it come naturally?

Yes, one must have a sincerity in the aspiration, really want to progress. One must truly say, "Yes, I want to progress" with sincerity... "Whatever happens, I want to progress." Then it comes.

But as I said, it comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy. When one has taken a decision, has decided to stop something in oneself, just not to repeat a stupidity one has committed, or to do something which one finds impossible or difficult to do and which, one knows, should be done, and when one has taken the decision and has put in the full sincerity of one's will, well, then if a terrible blow comes to compel you to do what you have decided to do, it is a blow, but you feel glorified, you are quite happy, it is magnificent, you see, you feel something magnificent here (*Mother points to the heart*).

There is such a big difference between the mishaps that come to you just because you are in a purely external, mechanical, physical consciousness and in a state of ignorance which makes you commit all possible follies which naturally bring their consequences, inevitably — there is such a great difference between this and the altogether higher state to which you rise when you have determined to master yourself, to live only in the consciousness of Truth, whatever the cost, no matter what the price of progress, to progress... and the things that happen to you then are so full of meaning, you see so clearly in them that shining truth, that light which illumines you on the path as though you had a beacon, here, to guide you... you see so clearly! It is no longer something that crushes you, like a block of stone falling on your back. It is an overpowering resplendence.

That is why one always says: it is only the first step that needs an effort. The first step means: come out from that level and climb to this one. After that everything, everything changes.

But one must come out completely from that level, one must not remain there, one must not try to keep one foot here and one foot there, for that will not do.

CWM 6: 325-26

Be grateful to those who show you your faults

In all Scriptures meant to help mankind to progress, it is always said that you must be very grateful to those who show you your faults and so you must seek their company; but the form used here* is particularly felicitous: if a fault is shown to you it is as if a treasure were shown to you; that is to say, each time that you discover in yourself a fault,

* We should seek the company of the sage who shows us our faults, as if he were showing us a hidden treasure. — Dhammapada

incapacity, lack of understanding, weakness, insincerity, all that prevents you from making a progress, it is as if you discovered a wonderful treasure.

Instead of growing sad and telling yourself, "Oh, there is still another defect", you should, on the contrary, rejoice as if you had made a wonderful acquisition, because you have just caught hold of one of those things that prevented you from progressing. And once you have caught hold of it, pull it out! For those who practise a yogic discipline consider that the moment you know that a thing should not be, you have the power to remove it, discard it, destroy it.

To discover a fault is an acquisition. It is as though a flood of light had come to replace the little speck of obscurity which has just been driven out.

When you follow a yogic discipline, you must not accept this weakness, this baseness, this lack of will, which means that knowledge is not immediately followed by power. To know that a thing should not be and yet continue to allow it to be is such a sign of weakness that it is not accepted in any serious discipline, it is a lack of will that verges on insincerity. You know that a thing should not be and the moment you know it, you are the one who decides that it shall not be. For knowledge and power are essentially the same thing — that is to say, you must not admit in any part of your being this shadow of bad will which is in contradiction to the central will for progress and which makes you impotent, without courage, without strength in the face of an evil that you must destroy.

To sin through ignorance is not a sin; that is part of the general evil in the world as it is, but to sin when you know, that is serious. It means that there is hidden somewhere, like a worm in the fruit, an element of bad will that must be hunted out and destroyed, at any cost, because any weak-

ness on such a point is the source of difficulties that sometimes, later on, become irreparable.

So then the first thing is to be perfectly happy when someone shows a fault in yourself which you did not know. Instead of lamenting, you must rejoice and in this joy must find the strength to get rid of the thing which should not be.

CWM 3: 220–22

The highest prayer is a prayer of gratitude

Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self-forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

CWM 5: 141

Never forget this wonderful grace of the Supreme

By definition, the Ashramite has resolved to dedicate his life to the Divine Realisation. But to be true to his resolution he must be sincere, faithful, modest and grateful in his consecration, because these qualities are indispensable for all progress, and progress, a steady and rapid progress is indispens-

able to follow the pace of Nature's evolutionary advance.

Without these qualities, one may have sometimes the appearance of progress but it is only an appearance, a pretence, and at the first occasion it crumbles down.

To be sincere all the parts of the being must be united in their aspiration for the divine — not that one part wants and the others refuse or revolt to be sincere in the aspiration, — to want the divine for the divine's sake, not for fame or name or prestige or power or any satisfaction of the vanity.

To be faithful and steady in their consecration, — not to have faith one day and the next one, because things are not as they wish them to be, to lose their faith and shelter all sorts of doubts. Doubt is not a sport to indulge in with impunity; it is a poison which drop by drop corrodes the soul.

To be modest means to have the correct appreciation of what one is, and never to forget that whatever are one's achievements, they are practically nothing in comparison with what one ought to be to fulfill the Lord's expectation. And above all to feel in an absolute way one's own incapacity to judge the Divine and his ways.

To be grateful, never to forget this wonderful grace of the supreme who leads each one to his divine goal by the shortest ways, in spite of himself, his ignorance and misunderstandings, in spite of the ego, its protests and its revolts.

White Roses, p. 35

The Mother

A self-willed man cannot be grateful — because when he gets what he wants he gives all the credit for it to his own will, and when he gets what he does not want he resents it badly and throws all the blame on whomever he considers responsible, God, man or Nature.

CWM 14: 155

The Mother

The Way of Gratitude

Difference between a calm and a grateful submission

Q: Last time, in the text it was said: "They [those who have faith in a God, their God] belong to him integrally; all the events of their lives are an expression of the divine will and they accept them not merely with calm submission but with gratitude, for they are convinced that whatever happens to them is always for their own good."

What is the difference between a calm and a grateful submission?

A calm and a grateful submission?... When you receive an order, you may carry it out with resignation because you have resolved to submit; so you carry out this order without any joy or pleasure, just very drily and superficially, and you tell yourself, "I was told to do this and I am doing it." This means that you do not try to understand and make no effort to adhere willingly to what is asked. This is resigned submission. You accept your fate and if you do not complain it is because you have determined not to complain, it is because of this determination, otherwise you would complain.

The other instance is of understanding why an order was given, of grasping its inner value and wanting to express what has been asked with all one's strength, with the knowledge and joy that it is something that's bound to bring the Divine closer and give you full satisfaction. Then you are happy, you are satisfied and you collaborate. That makes quite a considerable difference.

Q: In a calm submission, doesn't one feel happy?

Usually one is very proud of oneself! One becomes vain,

tells oneself that one is doing something remarkable. One doesn't question, doesn't try to understand: one obeys, and besides is resigned. One doesn't even ask oneself if it is good or not: one is too superior! One is puffed up with pride. There are many people of this kind here.

Q: So it is not a true submission, is it?

I think the other one is better. At least here one has the satisfaction of understanding why he does things; one does them with joy and feels strengthened through the very fact of doing them, while in the first instance one bends the head lower and lower and feels as though one were a poor victim of some despotic authority crushing one with its omnipotence.

CWM 6: 63-64

The Mother

The best possible way is to allow the Divine Grace to work in you, never to oppose it, never to be ungrateful and turn against it – but to follow it always to the goal of Light and Peace and unity and Ananda.

*

Few are those from whom the Grace withdraws, but many are those who withdraw from the Grace.

SABCL 23: 613

Sri Aurobindo

The best way to express one's gratitude to the Divine is to feel simply happy.

*

There is no better way to show one's gratefulness to the Divine than to be quietly happy.

CWM 14: 154-55

The Mother

The Joy of Gratitude

Absolute trust in the (Supreme Wisdom of) Divine Grace

One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has happened, and they tell themselves, "Yes, naturally it had to be like that." So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be.

CWM 7: 239

Most powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine

There are two principal things. This, the capacity for enthusiasm which makes one come out of his greater or lesser inertia in order to throw himself more or less totally into the thing which rouses him. As for instance, the artist for his art, the scientist for his science. And in general, every person who creates or builds has an opening, the opening of a special faculty, a special possibility, creating an enthusiasm in him. When this is active, something in the being awakens, and there is a participation of almost the whole being in the thing done.

There is this. And then there are those who have an innate faculty of gratitude, those who have an ardent need to respond, respond with warmth, devotion, joy, to something



The pure flame of gratefulness must always burn in our heart, warm, sweet and bright, to dissolve all egoism and all obscurity; the flame of gratefulness for the Supreme's Grace who leads the sadhak to his goal — and the more he is grateful, recognises this action of the grace and is thankful for it, the shorter is the way.

White Roses, 26 June 1964

The Mother



Gratitude:

A loving recognition of the Grace received from the Divine.

A humble recognition of all that the Divine has done and is doing for you.

The spontaneous feeling of obligation to the Divine, which makes you do your best to become less unworthy of what the Divine is doing for you.

CWM 14: 154

The Mother

which they feel like a marvel hidden behind the whole of life, behind the tiniest little element, the least little event of life, who feel this sovereign beauty or infinite Grace which is behind all things.

I knew people who had no knowledge, so to say, of anything, who were hardly educated, whose minds were altogether of the ordinary kind, and who had in them this capacity of gratitude, of warmth, which gives itself, understands and is thankful. Well, for them, the contact with the psychic was very frequent, almost constant and, to the extent that they were capable of it, conscious — not very conscious but a little — in the sense that they felt that they were carried, helped, uplifted above themselves. These two things prepare people the most. They are born with one or the other; and if they take the trouble, it develops gradually, it increases.

We say: the capacity for enthusiasm, something which throws you out of your miserable and mean little ego; and the generous gratitude, the generosity of the gratitude which also flings itself in thanksgiving out of the little ego. These are the two most powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine in one's psychic being. This serves as a link with the psychic being — the surest link.

CWM 7: 418-19

Devotion without gratitude is incomplete

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 marvellous 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.

CWM 8: 39-40

Gratitude is a way to open the door to change

Q: Mother, how to change one’s consciousness?

Sometimes, when one sees a generous act, hears of something exceptional, when one witnesses heroism or generosity or greatness of soul, meets someone who shows a special talent or acts in an exceptional and beautiful way, there is a kind of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude which suddenly awakens in the being and opens the door to a state, a new state of consciousness, a light, a warmth, a joy one did not know before. That too is a way of catching the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, one has only to be awake and to watch.

CWM 8: 405

Gratitude shortens the nights; ingratitude covers the Light

Periods of obscurity are frequent and common; generally, it is enough to keep quiet without worrying, knowing that these are spiritual nights which alternate with the full light of the days.

But to be able to remain in peace you must keep in your heart gratitude towards the Divine for all the help He gives. If gratitude also is veiled, the obscure periods last much longer. There is, however, a swift and effective remedy: it is to keep always burning in your heart the flame of purification, the aspiration for progress, the intensity, the ardour of consecration. This flame is kindled in the heart of all who are sincere; you must not let ingratitude cover it up with its ashes.

CWM 14: 246-47

The ego thinks of what it wants and has not. This is its constant preoccupation.

The soul is aware of what it is given and lives in endless gratitude.

CWM 14: 257

The whole world may perish provided my whims are gratified!

Such is the attitude of the egoistic mind which seeks to impose its principles upon all.

In the divine sight, principles and desires are one and the same thing: principles are whims of the mind just as desires are whims of the vital.

CWM 14: 342

Our gratitude should go towards the Divine

Q: Sweet Mother, What is the best way of expressing one's gratitude towards man and towards the Divine?

Why do you put man and the Divine together?

It is true that man is essentially divine, but at present, apart from a few very rare exceptions, man is quite unconscious of the Divine he carries within him; and it is just this unconsciousness which constitutes the falsehood of the material world.

I have already written to you that our gratitude should go to the Divine and that as for men what is required is an attitude of goodwill, understanding and mutual help.

To feel deeply, intensely and constantly a total gratitude towards the Divine is the best way to be happy and peaceful.

And the only true way of expressing one's gratitude to the Divine is to identify with Him.

CWM 16: 313-14

The Mother

Whoever the recipient, whatever the gift, it is the Supreme, the Eternal in things, who receives and accepts it, even if it be rejected or ignored by the immediate recipient. For the Supreme who transcends the universe, is yet here too, how-

ever veiled, in us and in the world and in its happenings; he is there as the omniscient Witness and Receiver of all our works and their secret Master. All our actions, all our efforts, even our sins and stumblings and sufferings and struggles are obscurely or consciously, known to us and seen or else unknown and in a disguise, governed in their last result by the One. All is turned towards him in his numberless forms and offered through them to the single Omnipresence. In whatever form and with whatever spirit we approach him, in that form and with that spirit he receives the sacrifice.

CWSA 23 :110

Every moment and every movement of our being is to be resolved into a continuous and a devoted self-giving to the Eternal. All our actions, not less the smallest and most ordinary and trifling than the greatest and most uncommon and noble, must be performed as consecrated acts. Our individualised nature must live in the single consciousness of an inner and outer movement dedicated to Something that is beyond us and greater than our ego. No matter what the gift or to whom it is presented by us, there must be a consciousness in the act that we are presenting it to the one divine Being in all beings.

CWSA 23: 111

Sri Aurobindo

Best way to express our gratitude

The best thing we can do to express our gratitude is to overcome all egoism in ourselves and make a constant effort towards this transformation. Human egoism refuses to abdicate on the grounds that others are not transformed. But that is the stronghold of bad will, for each one's duty is to transform himself regardless of what others may do.

If men knew that this transformation, the abolition of

egoism, is the only way to gain constant peace and delight, they would consent to make the necessary effort. This, then, is the conviction that must awaken in them.

Everyone should repeatedly be told: abolish your ego and peace will reign in you.

The Divine help always responds to a sincere aspiration.

CWM 16: 428

Giving entirely to the Divine in perfect trust and gratitude

The first thing the physical consciousness must understand is that all the difficulties we meet with in life come from the fact that we do not rely exclusively on the Divine for the help we need.

The Divine alone can liberate us from the mechanism of universal Nature. And this liberation is indispensable for the birth and development of the new race.

It is only by giving ourselves entirely to the Divine in perfect trust and gratitude that the difficulties will be overcome.

CWM 16: 433

Make an effort for the love and joy of effort

Q: Sweet Mother, when we make an effort to do better but don't see any progress, we feel discouraged. What is the best thing to do?

Not to be discouraged! Despondency leads nowhere.

To begin with, the first thing to tell yourself is that you are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long — sometimes long, but in any case not endless — preparation for a leap forward. We sometimes seem to be marking time for weeks or months,

and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain.... Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for *that* is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining. You say, "See! I am going to make an effort, but that's because I want this in exchange for my effort." You are no longer spontaneous, no longer natural.

So there are two things to remember. First, we are incapable of judging *what* the result ought to be. If we put

our trust in the Divine, if we say... if we say, "Well now, I am going to give everything, everything, all I can give, effort, concentration, and *He* will judge what has to be given in exchange or even whether anything should be given in exchange, and I do not know what the result should be." Before we transform anything in ourselves, are we quite sure of the direction, the way, the form that this transformation should take? — Not at all. So, it is only our imagination and usually we greatly limit the result to be obtained and make it altogether petty, mean, superficial, relative. We do not know what the result can truly be, what it ought to be. We know it later. When it comes, when the change takes place, then if we look back, we say, "Ah! That's it, that is what I was moving towards" — but we know it only later. Before that we only have vague imaginations which are quite superficial and childish in comparison with the true progress, the true transformation.

So we say, first point: we have an aspiration but we don't really know the true result we ought to obtain. Only the Divine can know that.

And secondly, if we tell the Divine, "I am giving you my effort, but, you know, in exchange I must make progress, otherwise I won't give you anything at all!" — that is bargaining. That's all.

A spontaneous act, done because one cannot do otherwise, and done as an offering of goodwill, is the only one which truly has any value.

CWM 9: 316-18

The Mother

Gratitude: it is you who open all the closed doors and let the Grace which saves penetrate deeply.

CWM 14: 154

The Mother



When man becomes a little wiser, he will not complain about anything and will take the things the Divine sends him as a manifestation of His all-compassionate Grace.

The more surrendered we are, the more we shall understand. The more grateful we are, the happier we shall be.

CWM 10: 342

The Mother



To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee.

CWM 13: 7

The Mother

Remembering the Divine with Gratitude

Meditate on the remembrance of Sri Aurobindo

This evening, instead of answering questions, I would like us to meditate on the remembrance of Sri Aurobindo, on the way to keep it alive in us and on the gratitude we owe him for all that he has done and is still doing in his ever luminous, living and active consciousness for this great realisation which he came not only to announce to the Earth but also to realise, and which he continues to realise.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of his birth, an eternal birth in the history of the universe.

CWM 9: 172

Understand his teaching better and try to put into practice

To understand his teaching better and try to put it into practice, is certainly the best way of showing our gratitude to him for all the light, knowledge and force which he has so generously brought to the earth.

May his teaching enlighten and guide us, and what we cannot do today, we shall do tomorrow.

Let us take the right attitude in all sincerity, and it will truly be a BONNE ANNÉE.

CWM 13: 16

To express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo we can do nothing better than to be a living demonstration of his teaching.

CWM 13: 28

Q: What qualities are necessary for one to be called "a true child of the Ashram"?

Sincerity, courage, discipline, endurance, absolute faith in

the Divine work and unassailable trust in the Divine Grace. All this must be accompanied by a sustained, ardent and persevering aspiration, and by a limitless patience.

CWM 13: 113

The meaning of gratitude

This, then, is the meaning of gratitude: that the Divine exists and a sublime joy fills our being with a marvellous sensation of self-giving in an act of perpetual thankfulness, and we submit ourselves in a peaceful adoration to the Supreme Lord of our being.

The Supreme, p. 63

Q: Mother, I have always thought, in what way could I show my gratitude, my gratefulness towards You?

To me! .. Ah! This is a privilege to which I have no right. For no one takes the trouble. If there is a difficulty, an obstacle or an attack, at once they send a prayer to me, a supplication for help: "Please save me. Please protect me"; or even in order to surmount the difficulties: "Mother, come to our help. Stretch out your hands to protect us. Extend your compassion. Have pity on us." And when the Grace has accomplished its work, the benevolent Power that She is ... then, never a word of gratitude for the thousand and one things that I constantly accomplish for them. When I protect them, or surmount a difficulty for them, not a word after that.. .. When the Grace has done everything for them, — saved them, protected them, and has overcome all the difficulties, — not a word which goes up from below. Forgotten immediately. It makes no difference to them that there was a formidable force that had pulled them out of danger, without which how could they have been saved and how

could they remain safe and at peace! Phew! Forgotten and gone without leaving a trace on them; the great miraculous phenomenon which had saved them, they do not remember.. .. The attitude of gratefulness is really neglected, an act that is not to be found in the world. At least, it is very rare Hmm! To be grateful! That is the difference.

The Supreme, pp. 59-60

The Mother

As to gratitude, it is a psychic feeling and all that is psychic helps the soul to flower. There is nothing wrong from the spiritual point of view in emotion. The only thing is that it should not become a tie of bondage in the path.

SABCL 24: 1768

Sri Aurobindo

...you should write daily a prayer, expressing your aspiration, or your gratitude, or your adoration, the progress you want to make. It does not need to be long, only a few lines; and it will help you to understand yourself. You will write as if you were speaking to him and to me directly and thus you will create an intimacy with him and myself.

White Roses, p. 35

The Mother

Two Tales of Divine Gratitude

The Mother met Sri Aurobindo for the first time on March 29, 1914. Following instructions given to her, she approached the house where Sri Aurobindo was living at 3.30 p.m. She asked a man in the street, "Where does Aurobindo Ghose live?" The man silently pointed to the door of the "Guest House". The Mother ascertained this man's name and address. Thereafter, every month for the rest of his life, she sent him a fixed amount of money through Kameshwar. Later he was also permitted to see them on Darshan days. She said that she took care of him out of gratitude because he had pointed out to her the residence of the Lord.

*

A sadhika who used to sew and repair the Mother's clothes was once asked to darn a handkerchief. She told Datta, the Mother's companion, "This handkerchief has been darned so often that there is hardly any of the original material left." Datta replied, "No matter. Once I told the Mother, 'This handkerchief is too torn,' and I put it to one side. 'It has served me so long, so nicely, and now you are throwing it away!' With these words the Mother jumped up from her chair, picked up the handkerchief and held it on her lap. Since then I never say anything."

More Vignettes of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, pp. 37,45

Sutras on Gratitude

Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine.

*

For your heart to remain happy keep it always filled with gratefulness.

Gratefulness is the surest way to the Divine.

*

To accept gladly what I give is never selfish.

There is no better cure for egoism than a happy gratefulness.

*

Always joyfully accept what is given you by the Divine.

*

It is very difficult to keep up your gratitude; for a time it comes very strongly and again it goes back. The Divine can go on tolerating everything in spite of your ingratitude because He knows fully the how and why and wherefore of everything. He knows why you are doing a certain thing. He knows the full working and that is why He can tolerate it.

*

The nobility of a being is measured by its capacity of gratitude.

CWM: 14: 25, 154-155

The Mother

Announcement for the Savitri Study Camp

The Savitri Study Camp will be facilitated by Dr. Alok Pandey from the 16th to the 22nd August 2015 at the Society House (Beach Office), Sri Aurobindo Society.

The Savitri study Camp is now a regular feature since last few years. The camp is held for one week (7 days) soon after the Mother's Birthday (22nd to 28th February) and Sri Aurobindo's Birthday (16th to 22nd August).

There will usually be two sessions daily, from 5.15 to 6.00 p.m. and 6.15 to 7.00 p.m. It is a continuation Study but one can join at any point of time. There is no fee or any prior registration required for the Camp. The stay (boarding and lodging) at Pondicherry has to be however arranged by the participants themselves.

During this Study Camp starting from 16th August 2015, we shall be continuing our study of *Savitri* Book 6, The Book of Fate, Canto 2, The Way of Fate and the Problem of Pain.

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In print since 1971, Sri Aurobindo Society has ceaselessly published All India Magazine (AIM) regularly every month to bring forth the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Integral Yoga and its everyday application. In keeping with the times, we have NOW made AIM in English available online. The issues will be available for access on the 10th of every month at www.aim.aurosociety.org

The print version of the All India Magazine will also continue and will be mailed as usual to the Members/ Subscribers as before. Renewals will also be received by the Society as usual.



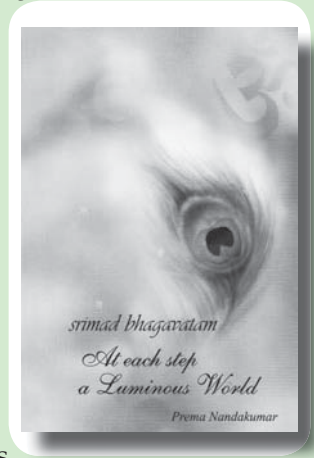
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(An initiative of Sri Aurobindo Society)

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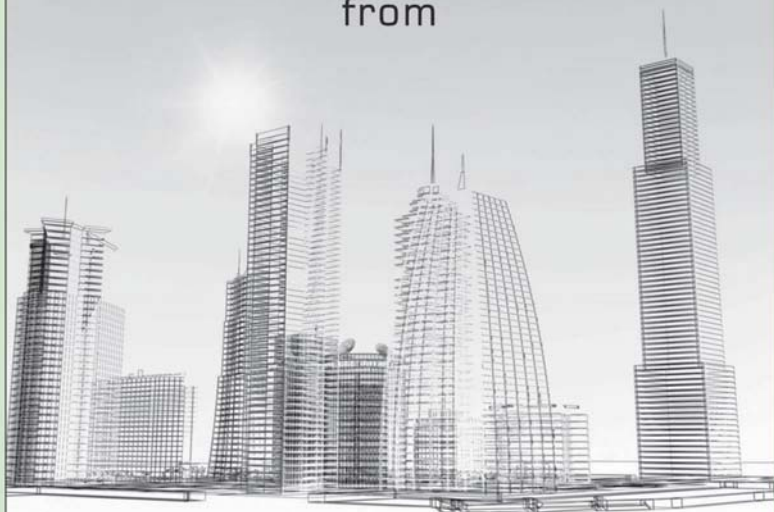


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Regd.: SSP/PY/42/2015-2017

ISSN 0972-0782 WPP No.TN/PMG/(CCR)/WPP-471/2015-2017

Date of Publication: 01. 06. 2015 (Monthly) RNI No. 22334/71

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