

All India Magazine

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Path of Prayer

Cover Picture

The swan is the Indian symbol of the individual soul, the central being, the divine part which is turned towards the Divine, descending from there and ascending to it.

CWSA 30: 172

Sri Aurobindo

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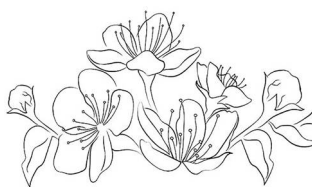
Email: info@aurosociety.org Website: www.aurosociety.org

Path of Prayer

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

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Editorial: There is a general tendency among certain intellectuals to undermine prayer as something religious and inferior. However a look at the spiritual history of mankind reveals that prayers have always been an integral part of spiritual living. There is a rationale and a process behind prayers, a mystic truth of profound implications that the mind does not always recognise but the heart readily discovers. In this issue we take up the different aspects of Prayers as part of our spiritual evolution and growth in the light of Integral Yoga.



God Scorns Nothing

The Theist looks down with reprobation on the form-adoring man-worshipping idolater and polytheist; the Advaitin looks down with a calm and tolerant indulgence on the ignorance of the quality-adoring personality bemused Theist. But it seems to us that God scorns nothing, that the Soul of all things may take as much delight in the prayer of a little child or the offering of a flower or a leaf before a pictured image as in the philosopher's leap from the summit of thought into the indefinable and unknowable and that he does best who can rise and widen into the shoreless realisation and yet keep the heart of the little child and the capacity of the seer of forms.

CWSA 1: 573

Sri Aurobindo

What is Prayer

Prayer must well up from the heart

I don't think you understood very well what Mother was trying to tell you. First of all she did not say that prayers or meditation either were no good — how could she when both count for so much in Yoga? What she said was that the prayer must well up from the heart on a crest of emotion or aspiration, the Japa or meditation come in a live push carrying the joy or the light of the thing in it. If done mechanically and merely as a thing that ought to be done (stern grim duty!), it must tend towards want of interest and dryness and so be ineffective. It was what I meant when I said I thought you were doing Japa too much as a means for bringing about a result — I meant too much as a device, a process laid down for getting the thing done. That again was why I wanted the psychological conditions in you to develop, the psychic, the mental — for when the psychic is forward, there is no lack of life and joy in the prayer, the aspiration, the seeking, no difficulty in having the constant stream of bhakti and when the mind is quiet and intuned and upturned there is no difficulty or want of interest in meditation. Meditation by the way is a process leading towards knowledge and through knowledge, it is a thing of the head and not of the heart; so if you want dhyana, you can't have an aversion to knowledge. Concentration in the heart is not meditation, it is a call on the Divine, on the Beloved. This Yoga too is not a Yoga of knowledge alone — knowledge is one of its means, but its base being self-offering, surrender, bhakti, it is based on the heart and nothing can be eventually done without this base.

CWSA 29: 226

Sri Aurobindo

The seat of aspiration

True aspiration does not come from the head; even when it is formulated by a thought, it springs up like a flame from the heart. I do not know if you have read the articles Sri Aurobindo has written on the Vedas. He explains somewhere that these hymns were not written with the mind; they were not, as one thinks, prayers, but the expression of an aspiration which was an impulse, like a flame coming from the heart (though it is not the “heart” but the psychological centre of the being, to use the exact words). They were not “thought out”, words were not set to experiences, the experience came wholly formulated with the precise, exact, inevitable words—they could not be changed. This is the very nature of aspiration: you do not seek to formulate it, it springs up from you like a ready flame. And if there are words (sometimes there aren’t any), they cannot be changed: you cannot replace one word by another, every word is just the right one. When the aspiration is formulated, this is done categorically, absolutely, without any possibility of change. And it is always something that springs up and gives itself, whereas the very nature of desire is to pull things to oneself.

CWM 4: 136

The Mother

No one is initiated in this Yoga in any formal way. Those are accepted by the Mother who are found to be called or chosen from within for this path or for Sri Aurobindo’s work. That acceptance is sufficient. Those are considered as called or chosen who can open and be receptive to the Power that goes from her here and can feel its working. If by doing what he is doing now, he can in time thus open and receive and feel the Power that will be a sign that he is meant for this way of Yoga. Nothing else is needed; prayer and aspiration are sufficient, if there is sincerity and a true call within.

CWSA 35:542

Sri Aurobindo

Prayer must come from the heart with ardour

“I begin to meditate and pray ardently and fervently, my aspiration is intense and my prayer full of devotion; and then, after a certain length of time — sometimes short, sometimes long — the aspiration becomes mechanical and the prayer purely verbal. What should I do?”

... people who claim to meditate for hours every day and spend their whole day praying, to me it seems that three-fourths of the time it must be absolutely mechanical; that is to say, it loses all its sincerity. For human nature is not made for that and the human mind is not built that way.

In order to concentrate and meditate one must do an exercise which I could call the “mental muscle-building” of concentration. One must really make an effort — as one makes a muscular effort, for instance, to lift a weight — if you want the concentration to be sincere and not artificial.

The same thing for the urge of prayer: suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic *élan*, a great fervour, and express it in words which, to be true, must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with ardour, without passing through the head. That is a prayer. If there are just words jostling in your head, it is no longer a prayer. Well, if you don't throw more fuel into the flame, after a time it dies out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don't slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, for the intensity of the movement to cease after a certain time. Naturally, someone who is accustomed to lifting weights can do it much longer than one who has never done it before. It is the same thing; someone who is accustomed to concentration can concentrate much longer than one who is not in the habit. But for everybody there comes a time when one must let go, relax, in order to begin again. CWM 8: 227-28



Grace can completely annul Karma

Completely, the Divine Grace completely contradicts Karma; you know, It makes it melt away like butter that's put in the sun.

That is what I was saying just now. What you have just told me is another way of speaking. I was putting myself in your place and asking: There you are, if you have an aspiration that's sincere enough or a prayer that's intense enough, you can bring down in you Something that will change everything, everything — truly it changes everything.

CWM 5: 90-191

The Mother

The power of good formation

You can make good formations and if you make them properly, they will act in the same way as the others. You can do a lot of good to people just by sitting quietly in your room, perhaps even more good than by undergoing a lot of trouble externally. If you know how to think correctly, with force and intelligence and kindness, if you love someone and wish him well very sincerely, deeply, with all your heart, that does him much good, much more certainly than you think. I have said this often; for example, to those who are here, who learn that someone in their family is very ill and feel that childish impulse of wanting to rush immediately to the spot to attend to the sick person. I tell you, unless it is an exceptional case and there is nobody to attend on the sick person (and at times even in such a case), if you know how to keep the right attitude and concentrate with affection and good will upon the sick person, if you know how to pray for him and make helpful formations, you will do him much more good than if you go to nurse him, feed him, help him wash himself, indeed all that everybody can do. Anybody can nurse a person. But not everybody can make good formations and send out forces that act for healing.

CWM 5: 132-33

Aspiration and 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.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers, spiritual prayers, and each one has its special character, its special value.

There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I have had countless instances of things which have been realised almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardour, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in exchange. For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle, and these are very good.

CWM 5: 141-42

What becomes insincere is if you pretend to meditate when you are no longer meditating or you say prayers like many people who go to the temple or to church, perform ceremonies and repeat their prayers as one repeats a more or less well-learned lesson. Then it is no longer either prayer or meditation, it is simply a profession. It is not interesting.

CWM 8: 228

Prayer is directed towards the Divine

To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them — the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that's a bit troublesome for their *amour propre* [French: self-respect]; so they try to make a world without the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who believe in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater good. Well, these people can have a very great aspiration for progress, and they don't even need any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn't acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference.

CWM 5: 142-43

The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: "I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me." Or else: "You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention." It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something — a force or a being — who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can't ask for anything. Do you understand?

CWM 5:143

The Mother

Light a flame in the heart and pray

Instead of being like a little child that kneels down, joins its hands and says: "My God, I pray to Thee, make me a good child so that I may never hurt my mother...." That of course is very easy and indeed I cannot say that it is bad. It is very good. Only there are children with whom these things do not work, because they say: "Why should I ask You to make me good? You should make me good without there being any need of my asking You for it. Otherwise You are not nice!" It is very good when one has a simple heart and does not think much, but when one begins to think, it becomes more difficult. But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards "something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more." And then, if you throw yourself out a little, if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties, then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised all *together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one's heart; and indeed that can take the form of a prayer and one can ask — ask of what? — ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be! CWM 5: 162-63

Prayer and faith

You see, it is difficult to pray if one doesn't have faith, but if one can make prayer a means of increasing one's faith, or aspiring, having an aspiration, having an aspiration to have faith... Most of these qualities require an effort. If one does not have a thing and wants to have it, well, it needs great, great, great sustained efforts, a constant aspiration, an unflagging will, a sincerity at each moment; then one is sure, it will come one day — it can come in a second. There are people who have it, and then they have contrary movements which come and attack. These people, if their will is sincere, can shield their faith, repel the attacks. There are others who cultivate doubt because it is a kind of diletantism — that, there's nothing more dangerous than that. It is as though one were letting the worm into the fruit: it eventually eats it up completely. This means that when a movement of this sort comes — it usually comes first into the mind — the first thing to do is to be very determined and refuse it. Surely one must not enjoy looking on just to see what is going to happen; that kind of curiosity is terribly dangerous.

It is perhaps more difficult for intellectuals to have faith than for those who are simple, sincere, who are straightforward, without intellectual complications. But I think that if an intellectual person has faith, then that becomes very powerful, a very powerful thing which can truly work miracles.

CWM 6: 121

Prayers full of trust

Well, when one aspires for the Force, when one asks the Divine for help, if one asks with the unshakable certitude that it will come, that it is impossible that it won't, then it

is sure to come. It is this kind... yes, this is truly an inner opening, this trustfulness. And some people are constantly in this state. When there is something to be received, they are always there to receive it. There are others, when there is something to have, a force descends, they are always absent, they are always closed at that moment; while those who have this childlike trust are always there at the right time.

And it is strange, isn't it, outwardly there is no difference. They may have exactly the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same wish to do good, but those who have this smiling confidence within them, do not question, do not ask themselves whether they will have it or not have it, whether the Divine will answer or not — the question does not arise, it is something understood... "What I need will be given to me; if I pray I shall have an answer; if I am in a difficulty and ask for help, the help will come — and not only will it come but it will manage everything." If the trust is there, spontaneous, candid, unquestioning, it works better than anything else, and the results are marvellous. It is with the contradictions and doubts of the mind that one spoils everything, with this kind of notion which comes when one is in difficulties: "Oh, it is impossible! I shall never manage it. And if it is going to be aggravated, if this condition I am in, which I don't want, is going to grow still worse, if I continue to slide down farther and farther, if, if, if, if..." like that, and one builds a wall between oneself and the force one wants to receive. The psychic being has this trust, has it wonderfully, without a shadow, without an argument, without a contradiction. And when it is like that, there is not a prayer which does not get an answer, no aspiration which is not realised.

CWM 6: 403-04

Types of prayers and aspiration

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another; one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself.

There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words; or if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation. You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill-will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be formulated in words; that will be like a springing flame and like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words later, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word

“desire”, but truly it is here that the word “aspire” should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

CWM 5: 139-40

Expecting results from a prayer

But, Mother, when one prays sincerely for the intervention of the Grace, doesn't one expect a particular result?

Excuse me, that depends on the tenor of the prayer. If one simply invokes the Grace or the Divine, and puts oneself in His hands, one does not expect a particular result. To expect a particular result one must formulate one's prayer, must ask for something. If you have only a great aspiration for the divine Grace and evoke it, implore it, without asking it for anything precise, it is the Grace which will choose what it will do for you, not you.

That is better, isn't it?

Ah! that's quite another question.

Why, it is higher in its quality, perhaps. But still, if one wants something precise, it is better to formulate it. If one has a special reason for invoking the Grace, it is better to formulate it precisely and clearly.

Of course, if one is in a state of complete surrender and gives oneself entirely, if one simply offers oneself to the Grace and lets it do what it likes, that is very good. But after that one must not question what it does! One must not say to it, “Oh! I did that with the idea of having this”, for if one really has the idea of obtaining something, it is better to formulate it in all sincerity, simply, just as one sees

it. Afterwards, it is for the Grace to choose if it will do it or not; but in any case, one will have formulated clearly what one wanted. And there is no harm in that.

Where it becomes bad is when the request is not granted and one revolts. Then naturally it becomes bad. It is at that moment one must understand that the desire one has, or the aspiration, may not have been very enlightened and that perhaps one has asked for something which was not exactly what was good for one. Then at that moment one must be wise and say simply, "Well, let Thy Will be done." But so long as one has an inner perception and an inner preference, there is no harm in formulating it. It is a very natural movement.

For example, if one has been foolish or has made a mistake and one truly, sincerely wishes never to do it again, well, I don't see any harm in asking for it. And in fact, if one asks for it with sincerity, a true inner sincerity, there is a great chance that it will be granted.

You must not think that the Divine likes to contradict you. He is not at all keen on doing it! He can see better than you what is really good for you; but it is only when it is absolutely indispensable that He opposes your aspiration. Otherwise He is always ready to give what you ask.

CWM 8: 254-55

The Mother

Different kinds of prayers

Men of devotion are also of many kinds and hymns and prayers are used in different ways. A man becoming a devotee because of distress takes to hymns and prayers in order to cry out to God, to pray for His help in the hope of getting relief. One who is a devotee with a purpose takes to hymns and prayers in the hope of the fulfilment of his purpose, with the intention of securing wealth, fame, happiness, prosperity, victory, welfare, enjoyment,

liberation, etc. Devotees of this category at times even try to tempt God and propitiate Him; some failing to achieve their objective get terribly indignant with God and abuse Him calling Him names such as that He is cruel, He is a cheat, declaring they would never more worship God, never see His face, never accept Him. Many again in despair turn atheists and arrive at the conclusion that this world is a domain of suffering, a kingdom of torture, that there is no God. These two categories of devotion are an ignorant devotion; even so it is not to be despised; for from the lesser one rises to the greater. The discipline of ignorance is the first step to the discipline of knowledge. The child is ignorant; but there is a charm in the ignorance of a child. The child too comes weeping to its mother, demands redress from suffering, rushes to her for the sake of some satisfaction and self-interest, laments, pleads and when refused gets enraged, creates trouble. Even so, the Mother of the worlds bears with a smiling face all the claims and clamours of the ignorant devotees.

Now, a devotee in quest of knowledge does not take to hymns and prayers for the sake of securing a desired object or for pleasing God. For him, hymns and prayers are only a way to realising God's self-being and developing his own consciousness. But for the devotee who has already the knowledge, that necessity too disappears; because he has realised his self-being, his consciousness has become firm and well established: hymns and prayers are needed only for the outpouring of the fullness of the heart. The Gita says, these four categories of devotees are all large-hearted, none negligible, all are dear to God, but of them the devotee who has the knowledge ranks highest; for one who has the knowledge and God are the same in being.

CWSA 9: 186-87

Sri Aurobindo

Collective meditation and prayer

What may be called a collective meditation is a group of people who gather together for a definite purpose; for example, in all ages it has been a practice to gather for prayers. Naturally in the Churches, it is a sort of collective meditation but even outside the Churches, some people have organised collective meditations for group prayer. These prayers are of two different kinds.

From the beginning of human history, it is known that certain groups of people would meet to express a certain common state of soul: some to sing together the praise of God, hymns, thanksgiving, to express adoration, thankfulness, gratitude, and to praise God; others — and there are historical examples of this — a certain number of people gathered together for a common invocation, for instance, to ask God for something, and this was done all together, united, in the hope that this invocation, this prayer, this asking would carry more weight.

CWM 9: 37

Different kinds of collective prayers

Besides, there are different kinds of collective prayer, just as there are different kinds of collectivities. There is the anonymous mass, the crowd, formed by chance circumstances, without any inner coordination, impelled by the force of circumstance, as for instance when a king or a person who attracts public attention is in a critical situation, either ill or the victim of an accident, and the people gather to obtain news and also to express their feelings; and through chance circumstances people have collected there, that is, there is no inner link except that of the same emotion or interest. There have been cases of crowds spontaneously beginning to pray to ask for the recovery of someone in

whom they were specially interested. Of course, these very crowds can gather for a completely different purpose, out of hatred, and their cries are also a sort of prayer, a prayer to the adverse and destructive forces.

Those movements are spontaneous, not organised, unexpected.

There is also the collectivity formed by individuals who have gathered together around an ideal or a teaching or an action they want to carry out, and who have an organising link between them, the link of the same purpose, the same will and the same faith. These can gather in a methodical manner to practise common prayer and meditation, and if their aim is high, their organisation good, their ideal powerful, through their prayers or meditations these groups can have a considerable effect on world events or on their own inner development and collective progress. These groups are necessarily far superior to others, but they don't have the blind strength of the mobs, the collective action of the crowd. They replace this vehemence, this intensity by the strength of a deliberate and conscious organisation.

CWM 9: 369-70

The Mother

We who have a common uplifting ideal, shall unite; and in this union and by this union we will face and overcome the attacks of all opposing forces of darkness and devastation. In union is the strength, in union is the power, in union the certitude of Victory.

CWM 15: 194-95

The Mother

Prayers and Destiny

Prayers of intervention to change destiny

The art of living would then consist in maintaining oneself in one's highest state of consciousness and thus allowing one's highest destiny to dominate the others in life and action. So one can say without any fear of making a mistake: be always at the summit of your consciousness and the best will always happen to you. But that is a maximum which is not easy to reach. If this ideal condition turns out to be unrealisable, the individual can at least, when he is confronted by a danger or a critical situation, call upon his highest destiny by aspiration, prayer and trustful surrender to the divine will. Then, in proportion to the sincerity of his call, this higher destiny intervenes favourably in the normal destiny of the being and changes the course of events insofar as they concern him personally. It is events of this kind that appear to the outer consciousness as miracles, as divine interventions.

CWM 12: 78-79

The Mother

The efficacy of prayer

The efficacy of prayer is often doubted and prayer itself supposed to be a thing irrational and necessarily superfluous and ineffective. It is true that the universal will executes always its aim and cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty, it is true of the Transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order that being omniscient his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done and it does not need direction or stimulation by human thought and that the individual's desires are not and cannot be in any world-order the true determining factor. But neither is that order or the execution of the universal will altogether

effected by mechanical Law, but by powers and forces of which for human life at least human will, aspiration and faith are not among the least important. Prayer is only a particular form given to that will, aspiration and faith. Its forms are very often crude and not only childlike, which is in itself no defect, but childish; but still it has a real power and significance. Its power and sense is to put the will, aspiration and faith of man into touch with the divine Will as that of a conscious Being with whom we can enter into conscious and living relations. For our will and aspiration can act either by our own strength and endeavour, which can no doubt be made a thing great and effective whether for lower or higher purposes, — and there are plenty of disciplines which put it forward as the one force to be used, — or it can act in dependence upon and with subordination to the divine or the universal Will. And this latter way again may either look upon that Will as responsive indeed to our aspiration, but almost mechanically, by a sort of law of energy, or at any rate quite impersonally, or else it may look upon it as responding consciously to the divine aspiration and faith of the human soul and consciously bringing to it the help, the guidance, the protection and fruition demanded, *yogaksemamivahāmyaham*.

CWSA 24: 566–67

No hard and fast rule

Of course all prayer is not heard — the world would be a still more disastrous affair than it is, if everybody's prayers were heard, however sincere. Even the Godward prayer is not always heard — at once, even as faith is not always justified at once. Both prayer and faith are powers towards realisation which have been given to man to aid him in his struggle — without them, without aspiration and will and

faith (for aspiration is a prayer) it would be difficult for him to get anywhere. But all these things are merely means for setting the Divine Force in action — and it sometimes takes long, very long even, before the forces come into action or at least before they are seen to be in action or bear their result.

*

As for prayer, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Some prayers are answered, all are not. You may ask, why should not then all prayers be answered? But why should they be? It is not a machinery: put a prayer in the slot and get your asking. Besides, considering all the contradictory things mankind is praying for at the same moment, God would be in a rather awkward hole if he had to grant all of them; it wouldn't do.

*

If one lives in the world one can offer such prayers [*for help in resolving worldly problems*]; but one must not expect that the Divine shall fulfil all those prayers or think that he is bound to do so. When one is a sadhak the prayer should be for the inner things belonging to the sadhana and for outer things only so far as they are necessary for that and for the divine work.

*

What you say about prayer is correct. That [*impersonal prayer*] is the highest kind of prayer, but the other kind also (i.e. the more personal) is permissible and even desirable. All prayer rightly offered brings us closer to the Divine and establishes a right relation with Him.

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As for the prayers, the fact of praying and the attitude it brings, especially unselfish prayer for others, itself opens you to the higher Power, even if there is no corresponding result in the person prayed for. Nothing can be positively

said about that, for the result must necessarily depend on the persons, whether they are open or receptive or something in them can respond to any Force the prayer brings down.

CWSA 29: 366-67

Sri Aurobindo

Sincere and intense prayer can change the path of Destiny

Who says that a sufficiently sincere aspiration, a sufficiently intense prayer is not capable of changing the path of the unfolding?

This means that all is possible.

Now, one must have a sufficient aspiration and a prayer that's sufficiently intense. But that has been given to human nature. It is one of the marvellous gifts of grace given to human nature; only, one does not know how to make use of it.

This comes to saying that in spite of the most absolute determinisms in the horizontal line, if one knows how to cross all these horizontal lines and reach the highest Point of consciousness, one is able to make things change, things apparently absolutely determined. So you may call it by any name you like, but it is a kind of combination of an absolute determinism with an absolute freedom. You may pull yourself out of it in any way you like, but it is like that.

CWM 5:88

The Mother

But how can I get this psychic consciousness?

By aspiration, prayer and concentration.

CWM 17: 102

The Mother

The play of forces is complex and subtle

A thing seems to have been completely determined: it is *going* to be so. But you have within you a will that surges up, a flame that is kindled, a great aspiration that is in harmony with a higher Will and you force it upon the event. And then a kind of combination takes place: what had to happen will happen, but along with something else which comes at the same time and changes the nature of the former. For events of importance to the earth, this happens very often. For example, when an entire set of movements, circumstances, combinations of forces bring about an absolute necessity of war, one can, by calling in another force, change the extent and the consequences, and sometimes even the nature of the war, but one is not able to avert it. I could give you examples of this kind, of a very general nature....

What I would like to bring home to you is that the problem is extremely complicated and subtle, and that at times the direction of the movement can be altered a little; at other times, the movement can be reversed; and at still others just the consequences and the inner attitude with regard to the movement alone can be changed. And naturally men see all these things in a too simplified way and translate all this by their prayer to God: they say, in one case, "God has given me what I asked from him", in another case, "He has refused me." And so, that's that. That is how they understand and it is sheer stupidity. To know how it happens, you must have a general, collective consciousness, at least as wide as the earth. That is the minimum. To understand truly one must have a universal consciousness. Then you can understand.

CWM 5: 191-92

I am with you

I am with you because I am you or you are me.

I am with you, that signifies a world of things, because I am with you on all levels, on all planes, from the supreme consciousness down to my most physical consciousness. Here, in Pondicherry, you cannot breathe without breathing my consciousness. It saturates the atmosphere almost materially, in the subtle physical, and extends to the Lake, ten kilometres from here. Farther, my consciousness can be felt in the material vital, then on the mental plane and the other higher planes, everywhere. When I came here for the first time, I felt the atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo, felt it materially at a distance of ten miles, ten nautical miles, not kilometres. It was very sudden, very concrete, an atmosphere pure, luminous, light, light that lifts you up.

It is now long since Sri Aurobindo has put up everywhere in the Ashram this reminder that you all know: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you, because she is, indeed, always present."

This is not a mere phrase, not simply words, it is a fact. I am with you in a very concrete manner and they who have a subtle vision can see me. In a general way my Force is there constantly at work, constantly shifting the psychological elements of your being to put them in new relations and defining to yourself the different facets of your nature so that you may see what should be changed, developed, rejected.

But that apart, there is a special personal tie between you and me, between all who have turned to the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and myself, — and, it is well understood, distance does not count here, you may be in France, you may be at the other end of the world or in Pondicherry, this tie is always true and living. And each time there comes a

call, each time there is a need for me to know so that I may send out a force, an inspiration, a protection or any other thing, a sort of message comes to me all of a sudden and I do the needful. These communications reach me evidently at any moment, and you must have seen me more than once stop suddenly in the middle of a sentence or work; it is because something comes to me, a communication and I concentrate.

... there is more than a tie, there is an emanation of me. This emanation warns me whenever it is necessary and tells me what is happening. ...

And if for some reason you write to me asking for my help and I answer "I am with you", it means that the communication with you becomes active, you come into my active consciousness for a time, for the time necessary.

CWM 13: 73-74

The Mother

Some dislike prayer; if they entered deep into their heart, they would find it was pride — worse than that, vanity. And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one's Karma.

CWM 5: 92

The Mother

Prayers and Spiritual Life

Prayer and aspiration are a part of the spiritual life

Prayer and aspiration are a part of the spiritual life and do not conflict with surrender, provided one is not disturbed in either way by the fulfilment or unfulfilment of the prayer and keeps one's faith and quietude all the same. In the ordinary life prayer is one of the chief elements of human relation with the Divine and is often but not always answered; when it is not answered the religious man keeps his faith in the Divine and either understands that to answer was not the Divine Will or else he prays more fervently till his prayer is heard — that depends on the man and the circumstances. A sadhak can intercede internally for others in their affairs, provided he remains unattached and equal-minded, but he is not bound to intervene.

CWSA 29: 365-66

Prayers and hymns as a means of God realisation

One important way for realising the Divine is through prayers and hymns. But this is not suitable for everybody. One who follows the path of knowledge takes to meditation and concentration. For the worker, dedication of works is the best way. Prayers and hymns form a limb of devotion; even then it is not the highest limb; for unqualified love is the highest perfection of devotion. That love can realise God's true self through hymns and prayers and then, transcending their necessity, merges itself in God's self-enjoyment. And yet there is hardly a man of devotion who can do without hymns and prayers. When there is no need of the process and practice (sadhana) even then the heart wells out in hymns and prayers. Only one has to remember that the way is not the objective and my way may not be another's.

Many men of devotion have this notion that one who does not take to hymns and prayers, who does not take delight in them, is not a spiritual man (one following the true law). This is a sign of error and narrowness. Buddha did not indulge in hymns and prayers but who would declare that Buddha is unspiritual? Hymns and prayers have developed for the practice of devotion.

CWSA 9: 186

A means of forming relation with God

Prayer helps to prepare this relation for us at first on the lower plane even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange. In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience. Necessarily in the end prayer either ceases in the greater thing for which it prepared us, — in fact the form we call prayer is not itself essential so long as the faith, the will, the aspiration are there, — or remains only for the joy of the relation. Also its objects, the artha or interest it seeks to realise, become higher and higher until we reach the highest motiveless devotion, which is that of divine love pure and simple without any other demand or longing.

CWSA 24: 567-68

***Prayers should be full of confidence and without
sorrow or lamenting.***

CWSA 29:367

Sri Aurobindo

Nature of relations with the Divine

The relations which arise out of this attitude towards the Divine, are that of the divine Father and the Mother with the child and that of the divine Friend. To the Divine as these things the human soul comes for help, for protection, for guidance, for fruition, — or if knowledge be the aim, to the Guide, Teacher, Giver of light, for the Divine is the Sun of knowledge, — or it comes in pain and suffering for relief and solace and deliverance, it may be deliverance either from the suffering itself or from the world-existence which is the habitat of the suffering or from all its inner and real causes.¹ In these things we find there is a certain gradation. For the relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense, passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of mutual self-giving; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles and the divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

CWSA 24: 568

1. *These are three of the four classes of devotee which are recognised by the Gīta, āṛta, arthārthī, jijñāsu, the distressed, the seeker of personal objects and the seeker of God-knowledge.*

The highest and greatest relation

But the highest and the greatest relation is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is rather of the very essence of Yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. Wherever there is the desire of the soul for its utter union with God, this form of the divine yearning makes its way even into religions which seem to do without it and give it no place in their ordinary system. Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love; for all other things either do not exist for the lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. All love is indeed in its nature self-existent because it springs from a secret oneness in being and a sense of that oneness or desire of oneness in the heart between souls that are yet able to conceive of themselves as different from each other and divided. Therefore all these other relations too can arrive at their self-existent motiveless joy of being for the sake of love alone. But still they start from and to the end they to some extent find a satisfaction of their play in other motives. But here the beginning is love and the end is love and the whole aim is love. There is indeed the desire of possession, but even this is overcome in the fullness of the self-existent love and the final demand of the Bhakta is simply that his bhakti may never cease nor diminish. He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.

CWSA 24: 569

The atmosphere of wish-fulfilling places

I saw in one of the most beautiful cathedrals of France, which, from the artistic point of view, is one of the most

magnificent monuments imaginable — in the most sacred spot I saw an *enormous* black, vital spider which had made its web and spread it over the whole place, and was catching in it and then absorbing all the forces emanating from people's devotion, their prayers and all that. It was not a very cheering sight; the people who were there and were praying, felt a divine touch, they received all kinds of boons from their prayers, and yet what was there was this, this thing. But they had their faith which could change that evil thing into something good in them; they had their faith. So, truly, if I had gone and told them, "Do you think you are praying to God? It is an enormous vital spider that's feeding upon all your forces!", that would really not have been very charitable. And that's how it is most of the time, almost everywhere; it is a vital force which is there, for these vital entities feed upon the vibration of human emotions, and very few people, very few, an insignificant number, go to church or temple with a true religious feeling, that is, not to pray and beg for something from God but to offer themselves, give thanks, aspire, give themselves. There is hardly one in a million who does that.

CWM 6: 194-95

The Mother

Praying for outer or inner things

You say, "When one is a sadhak the prayer should be for the inner things belonging to the sadhana and for outer things only so far as they are necessary for that and for the Divine work." This latter portion about prayer for outer things is not clear to me. Can you kindly explain?

All depends on whether the outer things are sought for one's own convenience, pleasure, profit etc., or as part of the spiritual life, necessary for the success of the work, the devel-

opment and fitness of the instruments etc. It is a question mainly of inner attitude. If for instance you pray for money for buying nice food to please the palate, that is not a proper prayer for a sadhak; if you pray for money to give to the Mother and help her work, then it is legitimate.

CWSA 32: 314-15

The way for allowing the psychic being to manifest

The mind is an instrument for formation and organisation, and if the mind lets the psychic make use of it, that will be very good. But it is not the mind which will help the psychic to manifest. The roles are reversed. The mind can be an instrument for the manifestation of the psychic later, when it has already taken possession of the outer consciousness. It is rarely so before that. Usually it is a veil and an obstruction. But surely it can't help in the manifestation. It can help in the action if it takes its true place and true movement. And if it becomes completely docile to the psychic inspiration, it can help to organise life, for this is its function, its reason of existence. But first of all the psychic being must have taken possession of the field, must be the master of the house. Then, later, things can be arranged.

There is only one way for the outer being. Let us take the physical being — the physical being, the poor little physical being, the outer being, which knows nothing, can do nothing by itself. Well, for it there is only one way of allowing the psychic being to manifest: with the candid warmth of a child (*Mother speaks very softly*) to aspire, pray, ask, want with all its strength, without reasoning or trying to understand. One can't imagine how great an obstruction reasoning and this effort to understand put in the experience. At the moment when you are on the point of reaching a state in which something will happen, some vibration will be changed in

the consciousness of the being... you are all tense in an aspiration and have succeeded in fastening your aspiration, and you are standing there awaiting the answer, if this wretched mind begins to stir and to wonder, "What is happening, and what's going to happen, when is it going to happen, how is it going to happen, and why is it like that, and in what order will things manifest?" it is all over, you may get up and sweep out your room, you are not fit for anything else.

CWM 7:41-42

The 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.

CWM 16: 428

The Mother

The life of saṁsāra is in its nature a field of unrest—to go through it in the right way one has to offer one's life and actions to the Divine and pray for the peace of the Divine within. When the mind becomes quiet, one can feel the Divine Mother supporting the life and put everything into her hands.

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In her condition the one thing by which she can enter into the sadhana is to remember the Divine always, taking her difficulties as ordeals to be passed through, to pray constantly and seek the Divine help and protection and ask for the opening of her heart and consciousness to the supporting Divine Presence.

CWSA 31:345

Sri Aurobindo

Sadhana Sutras

Need for a central faith

I spoke of a strong central and if possible complete faith because your attitude seemed to be that you only cared for the full response— that is, realisation, the Presence, regarding all else as quite unsatisfactory, and your prayer was not bringing you that. But prayer by itself does not usually bring that at once—only if there is a burning faith at the centre or a complete faith in all the parts of the being. That does not mean that those whose faith is not so strong or surrender complete cannot arrive, but usually they have to go at first by small steps and to face the difficulties of their nature until by perseverance or tapasya they make a sufficient opening. Even a faltering faith and a slow and partial surrender have their force and their result, otherwise only the rare few could do sadhana at all. What I mean by the central faith is a faith in the soul or the central being behind, a faith which is there even when the mind doubts and the vital despairs and the physical wants to collapse, and after the attack is over, reappears and pushes on the path again.

CWSA 29: 95–96

These [*calling the Mother, praying to her*] are acts of the mind, openness is a *state* of consciousness which keeps it turned to the Mother, free from other movements, expecting and able to receive what may come from the Divine.

CWSA 29: 105

The whole principle of this yoga

In this Yoga the whole principle is to open oneself to the Divine Influence. It is there above you and, if you can once become conscious of it, you have then to call it down into

you. It descends into the mind and into the body as Peace, as a Light, as a Force that works, as the Presence of the Divine with or without form, as Ananda. Before one has this consciousness, one has to have faith and aspire for the opening. Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing and are all effective; you can take the form that comes to you or is easiest to you. The other way is concentration; you concentrate your consciousness in the heart (some do it in the head or above the head) and meditate on the Mother in the heart and call her in there. One can do either and both at different times — whatever comes naturally to you or you are moved to do at the moment. Especially in the beginning the one great necessity is to get the mind quiet, reject at the time of meditation all thoughts and movements that are foreign to the sadhana. In the quiet mind there will be a progressive preparation for the experience. But you must not become impatient if all is not done at once; it takes time to bring entire quiet into the mind; you have to go on till the consciousness is ready.

CWSA 29: 106

All depends on whether one can open or not

In this Yoga all depends on whether one can open to the Influence or not. If there is a sincerity in the aspiration and a patient will to arrive at the higher consciousness in spite of all obstacles, then the opening in one form or another is sure to arrive. But it may take a long or a short time according to the prepared or unprepared condition of the mind, heart and body; so if one has not the necessary patience, the effort may be abandoned owing to the difficulty of the beginning. There is no method in this Yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of the Mother to take up the being and by the

workings of her force transform the consciousness; one can concentrate also in the head or between the eyebrows, but for many this is a too difficult opening. When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence.

CWSA 29: 107

The sadhana of inner concentration

The sadhana of inner concentration consists in:

(1) Fixing the consciousness in the heart and concentrating there on the idea, image or name of the Divine Mother, whichever comes easiest to you.

(2) A gradual and progressive quieting of the mind by this concentration in the heart.

(3) An aspiration for the Mother's presence in the heart and the control by her of mind, life and action.

CWSA 29: 225

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

CWSA 29: 69

Sri Aurobindo

The two most important openings

It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana — accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being — the Peace first or the Peace and Force together.

CWSA 30:327-28

Bhakti and love are part of the psychic movement

Bhakti and love are part of the psychic movement, a large part of it; in aspiring for the psychic change, you are aspiring for bhakti and love. But it is not useful to restrict your aspiration by a single movement like that of the Vaishnava sadhana; for this Yoga is more ample and contains, but is not confined to, what is essential in the Vaishnava sadhana. Whether you visit the physical Brindavan or not does not matter; what is necessary is to find the inner union through love and bhakti.

CWSA 30: 362

In the beginning of the sadhana you need nothing more than just what you say, “concentration with faith, devotion and sincerity” on a form of the Divine Being — you can add prayer or the name, if you like.

Reading good books can be of help in the early mental stage — they prepare the mind, put it in the right atmosphere — can even if one is very sensitive bring some glimpses of realisation on the mental plane. Afterwards the utility diminishes—you have to find the right knowledge and experience in yourself.

CWSA 31:63

Sri Aurobindo

A way out of the falsehood prevailing in the world

The only thing to do is to pray — from the heart — for the Divine intervention as that is the only thing that can save us. And all people who can become conscious of this must decide very firmly to stand only on the Truth and to act only in the Truth. *There should be no compromise.* This is very essential. It is the only way.

Even if things seem to go wrong and badly for us, as indeed they will, because of the present prevailing falsehood — we should not be deterred from our own determination to stand on the Truth.

This is the only way.

CWM 13:372

We know, we have said this many a time, that all work is a prayer made with the body and that the true attitude in work is an offering to the Divine.

*

I remember and love all my children equally even if they never write to me — and all sincere prayers are always answered even if I do not write myself. So have no pain and be cheerful.

CWM 7:386; 13: 71

The Mother

Effort and Grace

Always you may try, but it is for the Divine to give you the fruit of your effort or not to give it. There your personal power stops; if the result comes, it is the Divine Power and not yours that brings it. You question if it is right to ask the Divine for these things. But there is no more harm in turning to the Divine for the removal of a physical imperfection than in praying for the removal of a moral defect. But whatever you ask for or whatever your effort, you must feel, even while trying your best, using knowledge or putting forth power, that the result depends upon the Divine Grace. Once you have taken up the Yoga, whatever you do must be done in a spirit of complete surrender. This must be your attitude, — “I aspire, I try to cure my imperfections, I do my best, but for the result I put myself entirely into the hands of the Divine.”

CWM 3: 97

Workings of the Grace

When you are in a particular set of circumstances and certain events take place, these events often oppose your desire or what seems best to you, and often you happen to regret this and say to yourself, “Ah! how good it would have been if it were otherwise, if it had been like this or like that”, for little things and big things.... Then years pass by, events are unfolded; you progress, become more conscious, understand better, and when you look back, you notice — first with astonishment, then later with a smile — that those very circumstances which seemed to you quite disastrous or unfavourable, were exactly the best thing that could have happened to you to make you progress as you should have. And if you are the least bit wise you tell yourself, “Truly, the divine Grace is infinite.”

So, when this sort of thing has happened to you a num-

ber of times, you begin to understand that in spite of the blindness of man and deceptive appearances, the Grace is at work everywhere, so that at every moment it is the best possible thing that happens in the state the world is in at that moment. It is because our vision is limited or even because we are blinded by our own preferences that we cannot discern that things are like this.

But when one begins to see it, one enters upon a state of wonder which nothing can describe. For behind the appearances one perceives this Grace — infinite, wonderful, all powerful — which knows all, organises all, arranges all, and leads us, whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, towards the supreme goal, that is, union with the Divine, the awareness of the Godhead and union with Him.

Then one lives in the Action and Presence of the Grace a life full of joy, of wonder, with the feeling of a marvellous strength, and at the same time with a trust so calm, so complete, that nothing can shake it any longer.

And when one is in this state of perfect receptivity and perfect adherence, one diminishes to that extent the resistance of the world to the divine Action; consequently, this is the best collaboration one can bring to the Action of the Divine. One understands what He wants and, with all one's consciousness, adheres to His Will.

CWM 8: 256-57

It is the lesson of life that always in this world everything fails a man — only the Divine does not fail him, if he turns entirely to the Divine. It is not because there is something bad in you that blows fall on you — blows fall on all human beings because they are full of desire for things that cannot last and they lose them or, even if they get, it brings disappointment and cannot satisfy them. To turn to the Divine is the only truth in life.

CWSA 31:25

Sri Aurobindo

He is everywhere

There is something I have often wondered about: when one prays to the Lord, when one wants to make Him understand that something is wrong, I always have the impression that one must concentrate very hard and that after all one is calling to something far away. Is that right?

That depends on us!

Now I can feel Him everywhere, all the time, all the time... even a physical contact—it is subtle physical, but physical— in things, in the air, in people, in... like this. (*Mother presses her hands to her face.*) And then, it is not far to go, all I have to do is this (*Mother turns her hands slightly inwards*), one second of concentration—He is there! He is there, He is everywhere. He is far away only when we think He is far away.

Naturally, when we begin to think of all the zones, all the planes of universal consciousness and that it is at the very end, at the very end, right at the very end, then it becomes very far away, very, very far! (*Mother laughs.*) But when we think that He is everywhere, that He is everything and that it is only our perception that prevents us from seeing Him and feeling Him and that we only have to do this (*Mother turns her hands inwards*); it is a movement like this and like that (*Mother turns her hands alternately inwards and outwards*), it becomes very concrete: you do this (outward movement), everything becomes artificial, hard, dry, false, untrue, artificial; you do this (*inward movement*), everything becomes wide, tranquil, luminous, peaceful, vast, joyful. And it is simply this, that (*Mother turns her hands alternately inwards and outwards*). How? Where? It cannot be described, it is only, *only* a movement of consciousness, nothing else. A movement of consciousness. And the difference between the true consciousness and the false consciousness becomes more and more precise, and at

the same time, *thin* — you don't have to do "great things" to come out of it. Before that, one has the impression that one is living inside something and that a great interiorisation, concentration, absorption, is needed to get out of it; but now the impression is of something one accepts (*Mother screens her face with her hand*), something like a thin little peel that is very hard — very hard but malleable, very, very dry, very thin, very thin, something like putting on a mask; and then one does this (*gesture*), and it disappears.

CWM 10: 153

Instead of being upset and struggling, the best thing to do is to offer one's body to the Divine with the sincere prayer, "Let Thy Will be done." If there is any possibility of cure, it will establish the best conditions for it; and if cure is impossible, it will be the very best preparation for getting out of the body and the life without it.

In any case the first indispensable condition is a quiet surrender to the Divine's will.

With love and blessings.

CWM 15: 149

The Mother

As for the prayers, the fact of praying and the attitude it brings, especially unselfish prayer for others, itself opens you to the higher Power, even if there is no corresponding result in the person prayed for.

CWSA 29: 367

Sri Aurobindo

It is the Divine Grace that must be prayed for — if justice were to manifest, very few would be those who could stand in front of it.

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Self-giving is true prayer.

CWM 14: 83, 100

The Mother



Prayer

Self-giving is true prayer.

*(Spiritual significance and explanation for the flower
given by the Mother)*

Botanical Name: Zephyranthes

An Announcement

**Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre,
Jhunjhunu (Rajasthan)**

The basic object of this centre established by Sri Aurobindo society is to work for the realisation of a divine life upon earth as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It aspires to create a community of spiritual aspirants who seek this goal.

This education centre has been functioning since 15th August 1994. The new academic session begins every year from 15th August for children aged between 6 to 12 years. It is a residential school with English as the medium of instruction. The education is completely free. There are no tuition fees, nor any charges for lodging and boarding.

The centre aspires to provide an integral education and to offer scope for the full development of the being. Parents who are not interested in degrees and diplomas or Government recognised certificates for their children, but who simply aspire for the better growth of their children's consciousness and total personality, and wish to admit them in this school, may write to the organisers at the earliest. Admissions are open throughout the year.

Also are invited the seekers of divine life who would like to stay at the centre, pursue a life of sadhana and dedicate their lives for this cause. For details please write to:

**Pankaj Bagaria,
Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Education Centre,
Mira Ambika Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla,
Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan, India
Tel. Nos. (01592)-232887, 237428
E-mail: sadlecjn@gmail.com
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NAMAH, the Journal of Integral Health, invites you to an event:

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS 13-14th August, 2019

Emotions are powerhouses of nature. Refined and purified, they can push us tremendously forward. But if unregulated and left crude, they are like the fire that can bring down the house where it burns. Rightly nurtured and harnessed, they can open the doors of joy and beatitude for us. Wrongly used, they can be the source of much suffering and pain. Can we truly claim to be in charge of our emotions? We are never taught how to handle this tremendous energy, let alone how to purify and transform it. But there is a consciousness-based approach which is both dynamic and integral in both its effects and implications.

This workshop aims to touch upon some of the relevant and important issues related to our emotional parts of nature such as:

- Dealing with negative emotions such as anger, depression, fear and hate.
- Cultivating positive emotions such as forgiveness, compassion, love and trust.
- Refining our emotional being.
- Purifying and uplifting emotions.
- Transforming our emotional parts of nature.

Venue:

Society Hall, Beach Office, Pondicherry.
For details please contact
James at (0413) 2226263 / 7094898789
or e-mail: james@namahjournal.com

NAMAH

The Journal of Integral Health

NAMAH is a quarterly journal dedicated to the cause of an integral approach to psychology, health and medicine. The basic concept is that a human being is a complex whole constituted by the body, emotional nature, mind and behind all these, the core self soul or spirit.



An integral approach is one that takes into account all these aspects and their interactions and embraces diverse modalities of treatment, while recognising that each one has its own virtues and limitations.

“At each given moment the world is being created anew. Yet we do not sense or feel it, partly because our eyes are glued to a small and fixed scene that immediately concerns us and partly because the old movements continue to persist out of the force of sheer habit. Yet none can deny that change is the only ultimate constant in life.”

“We are at a moment of transition in the history of the earth. It is merely a moment in eternal time. But this moment is long compared to human life. Matter is changing to prepare itself for a new

manifestation; but the human body is not plastic enough and offers resistance; this is the reason why illnesses and even incomprehensible illnesses are increasing in number and pose a problem for the medical science.”

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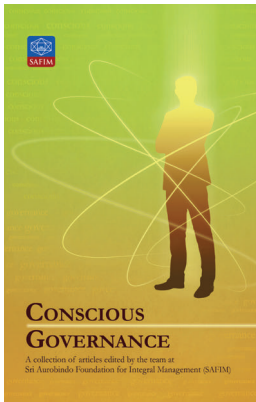
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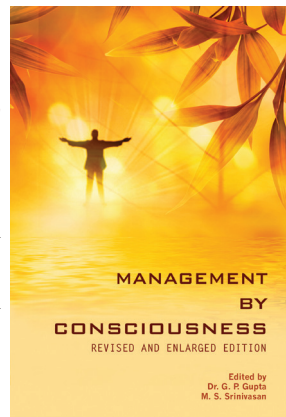
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Savitri Study Camp August 2019

Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri": Book 10
(Continued from previous Savitri Camp)
Facilitator: Alok Pandey

Venue: Sri Aurobindo Society Beach Office
Dates: 16th August to 23rd August 2019.
Timings: Two sessions every day as follows:

First Session: 5.15 to 6 PM
Second Session: 6.15 to 7 PM.

*(There will be only one session on the days when
dining room is early)*



Lord, we pray to Thee:

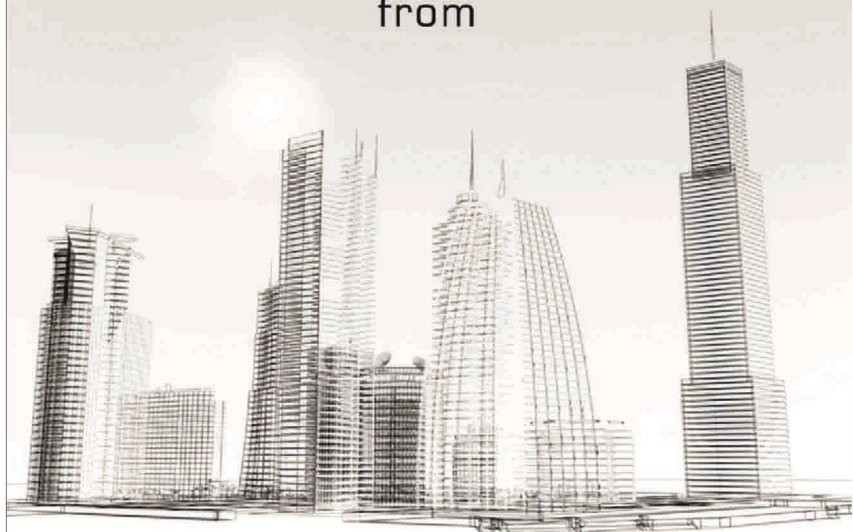
*May we understand better why we are here,
May we do better what we have to do here,
May we be what we ought to become here,
So that Thy will may be fulfilled harmoniously.*

CWM 12: 126

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