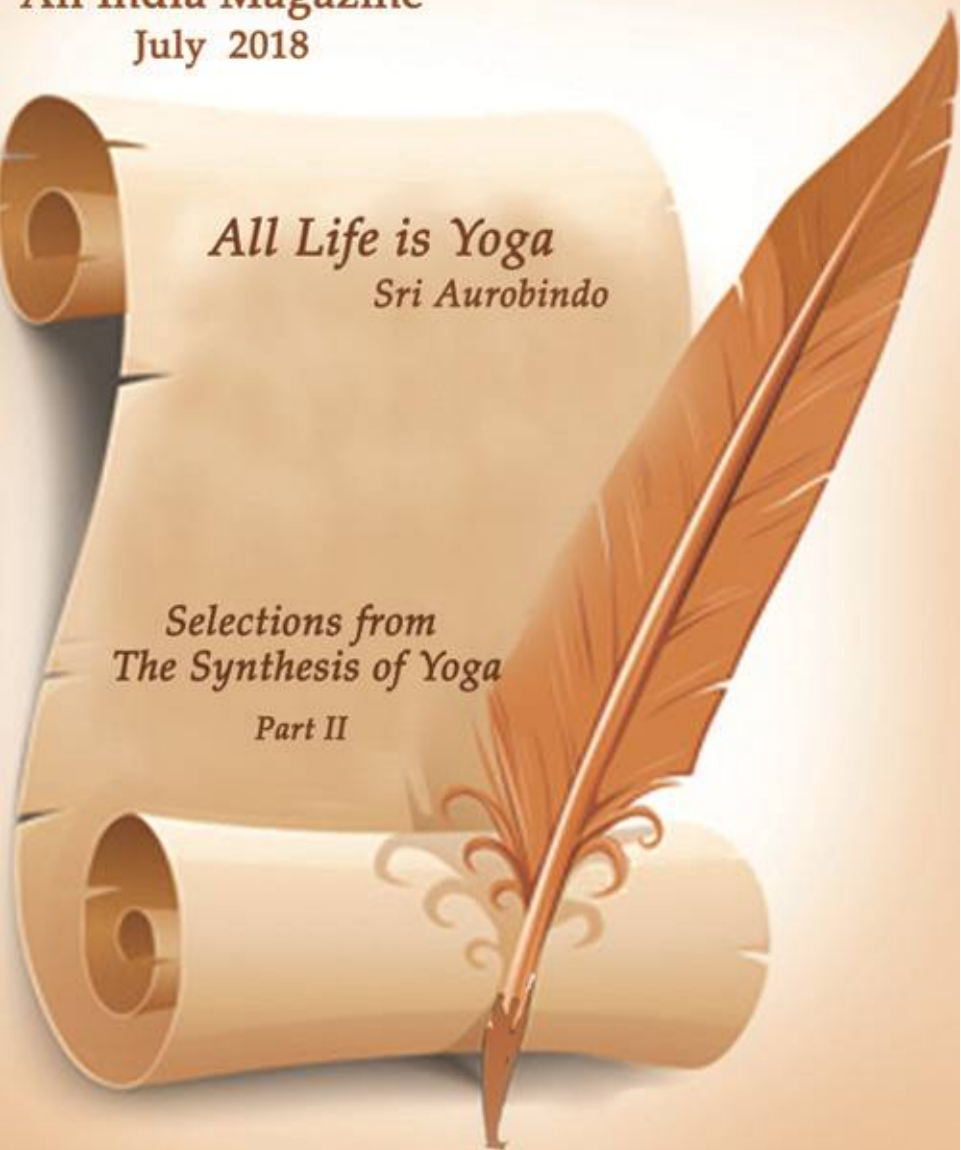


All India Magazine
July 2018

All Life is Yoga
Sri Aurobindo

Selections from
The Synthesis of Yoga
Part II



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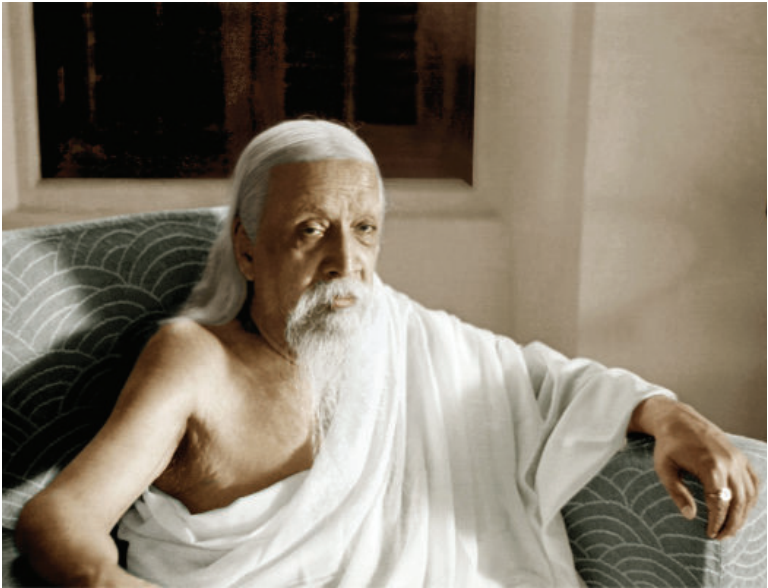
All Life is Yoga

Part II

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

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Editorial note: The Synthesis of Yoga is among the major works of Sri Aurobindo written originally as part of the Arya between 1914 and 1919. It gives us a general outline of the Yoga, its synthetic nature as well as its key processes and results. It may however be noted that the Yoga underwent a series of evolutionary changes, first with the final coming of the Mother and Her taking the charge of the Yoga and next with the Supramental Manifestation of the 29th Feb 1956. Nevertheless the Synthesis gives a very comprehensive overview of the key elements of this yoga and provides the seeker with a very fine framework to start the journey and travel far and deep into it. In this issue and the next we have tried to make the comprehensive selection of significant passages from this wonderful book. However, though full effort has been made to touch upon all the major important elements of the yoga, nothing can replace the systematic study of the entire text in all its details. This issue takes up the Yoga of Integral Knowledge, the Yoga of Divine Love and the Yoga of Integral Self Perfection.



The process of the integral Yoga has three stages, not indeed sharply distinguished or separate, but in a certain measure successive. There must be, first, the effort towards at least an initial and enabling self-transcendence and contact with the Divine; next, the reception of that which transcends, that with which we have gained communion, into ourselves for the transformation of our whole conscious being; last, the utilisation of our transformed humanity as a divine centre in the world.

CWSA 23: 58

Sri Aurobindo

The Yoga of Integral Knowledge

The only thing to be eliminated

The traditional Way of Knowledge proceeds by elimination and rejects successively the body, the life, the senses, the heart, the very thought in order to merge into the quiescent Self or supreme Nihil or indefinite Absolute. The way of integral knowledge supposes that we are intended to arrive at an integral self-fulfilment and the only thing that is to be eliminated is our own unconsciousness, the Ignorance and the results of the Ignorance. Eliminate the falsity of the being which figures as the ego; then our true being can manifest in us. Eliminate the falsity of the life which figures as mere vital craving and the mechanical round of our corporeal existence; our true life in the power of the Godhead and the joy of the Infinite will appear. Eliminate the falsity of the senses with their subjection to material shows and to dual sensations; there is a greater sense in us that can open through these to the Divine in things and divinely reply to it. Eliminate the falsity of the heart with its turbid passions and desires and its dual emotions; a deeper heart in us can open with its divine love for all creatures and its infinite passion and yearning for the responses of the Infinite. Eliminate the falsity of the thought with its imperfect mental constructions, its arrogant assertions and denials, its limited and exclusive concentrations; a greater faculty of knowledge is behind that can open to the true Truth of God and the soul and Nature and the universe.

CWSA 23: 291 – 292

The power of concentration

By concentration on anything whatsoever we are able to know that thing, to make it deliver up its concealed secrets; we must use this power to know not things, but the one Thing-in-itself. By concentration again the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of that which is still ungrasped, still beyond us; this power, if it is sufficiently trained, sufficiently single-minded, sufficiently sincere, sure of itself, faithful to itself alone, absolute in faith, we can use for the acquisition of any object whatsoever; but we ought to use it not for the acquisition of the many objects which the world offers to us, but to grasp spiritually that one object worthy of pursuit which is also the one subject worthy of knowledge. By concentration of our whole being on one status of itself, we can become whatever we choose; we can become, for instance, even if we were before a mass of weaknesses and fears, a mass instead of strength and courage, or we can become all a great purity, holiness and peace or a single universal soul of Love; but we ought, it is said, to use this power to become not even these things, high as they may be in comparison with what we now are, but rather to become that which is above all things and free from all action and attributes, the pure and absolute Being.

CWSA 23: 318

Steps and process of concentration

The first step in concentration must be always to accustom the discursive mind to a settled unwavering pursuit of a single course of connected thought on a single subject and this it must do undistracted by all lures and alien calls on its attention. Such concentration is common enough in our ordinary life, but it becomes more difficult when we have to do it inwardly without any outward object or action on which to keep the mind; yet this inward concentration is

what the seeker of knowledge must effect. Nor must it be merely the consecutive thought of the intellectual thinker, whose only object is to conceive and intellectually link together his conceptions. It is not, except perhaps at first, a process of reasoning that is wanted so much as a dwelling so far as possible on the fruitful essence of the idea which by the insistence of the soul's will upon it must yield up all the facets of its truth. Thus if it be the divine Love that is the subject of concentration, it is on the essence of the idea of God as Love that the mind should concentrate in such a way that the various manifestation of the divine Love should arise luminously, not only to the thought, but in the heart and being and vision of the sadhaka. The thought may come first and the experience afterwards, but equally the experience may come first and the knowledge arise out of the experience. Afterwards the thing attained has to be dwelt on and more and more held till it becomes a constant experience and finally the dharma or law of the being.

This is the process of concentrated meditation; but a more strenuous method is the fixing of the whole mind in concentration on the essence of the idea only, so as to reach not the thought-knowledge or the psychological experience of the subject, but the very essence of the thing behind the idea. In this process thought ceases and passes into the absorbed or ecstatic contemplation of the object or by a merging into it in an inner Samadhi....

A third process is neither at first to concentrate in a strenuous meditation on the one subject nor in a strenuous contemplation of the one object of thought-vision, but first to still the mind altogether. This may be done by various ways; one is to stand back from the mental action altogether not participating in but simply watching it until, tired of its unsanctioned leaping and running, it falls into an

increasing and finally an absolute quiet. Another is to reject the thought-suggestions, to cast them away from the mind whenever they come and firmly hold to the peace of the being which really and always exists behind the trouble and riot of the mind. When this secret peace is unveiled, a great calm settles on the being and there comes usually with it the perception and experience of the all-pervading silent Brahman, everything else at first seeming to be mere form and eidolon. On the basis of this calm everything else may be built up in the knowledge and experience no longer of the external phenomena of things but of the deeper truth of the divine manifestation.

CWSA 23: 323 – 324

Renunciation

Again our renunciation must obviously be an inward renunciation; especially and above all, a renunciation of attachment and the craving of desire in the senses and the heart, of self-will in the thought and action and of egoism in the centre of the consciousness. For these things are the three knots by which we are bound to our lower nature and if we can renounce these utterly, there is nothing else that can bind us. Therefore attachment and desire must be utterly cast out; there is nothing in the world to which we must be attached, not wealth nor poverty, nor joy nor suffering, nor life nor death, nor greatness nor littleness, nor vice nor virtue, nor friend, nor wife, nor children, nor country, nor our work and mission, nor heaven nor earth, nor all that is within them or beyond them. And this does not mean that there is nothing at all that we shall love, nothing in which we shall take delight; for attachment is egoism in love and not love itself, desire is limitation and insecurity in a hunger for pleasure and satisfaction and not the seeking after the divine delight in things....

Self-will in thought and action has, we have already seen, to be quite renounced if we would be perfect in the way of divine works; it has equally to be renounced if we are to be perfect in divine knowledge. This self-will means an egoism in the mind which attaches itself to its preferences, its habits, its past or present formations of thought and view and will because it regards them as itself or its own, weaves around them the delicate threads of "I-ness" and "my-ness" and lives in them like a spider in its web. It hates to be disturbed, as a spider hates attack on its web, and feels foreign and unhappy if transplanted to fresh view-points and formations as a spider feels foreign in another web than its own. This attachment must be entirely excised from the mind. Not only must we give up the ordinary attitude to the world and life to which the unawakened mind clings as its natural element; but we must not remain bound in any mental construction of our own or in any intellectual thought-system or arrangement of religious dogmas or logical conclusions; we must not only cut asunder the snare of the mind and the senses, but flee also beyond the snare of the thinker, the snare of the theologian and the church-builder, the meshes of the Word and the bondage of the Idea.

CWSA 23: 329 – 330

The eye within is all

If the realisation, fulfilment, service of the one Self demands from us an action that seems to others self-service or self-assertion in the egoistic sense or seems egoistic enjoyment and self-indulgence, that action we must do; we must be governed by the guide within rather than by the opinions of men. The influence of the environment works often with great subtlety; we prefer and put on almost unconsciously the garb which will look best in the eye that

regards us from outside and we allow a veil to drop over the eye within; we are impelled to drape ourselves in the vow of poverty, or in the garb of service, or in outward proofs of indifference and renunciation and a spotless sainthood because that is what tradition and opinion demand of us and so we can make best an impression on our environment. But all this is vanity and delusion. We may be called upon to assume these things, for that may be the uniform of our service; but equally it may not. The eye of man outside matters nothing; the eye within is all.

CWSA 23: 331

Renunciation and enjoyment

It will be seen that the scope we give to the idea of renunciation is different from the meaning currently attached to it. Currently its meaning is self-denial, inhibition of pleasure, rejection of the objects of pleasure. Self-denial is a necessary discipline for the soul of man, because his heart is ignorantly attached; inhibition of pleasure is necessary because his sense is caught and clogged in the mud-honey of sensuous satisfactions; rejection of the objects of pleasure is imposed because the mind fixes on the object and will not leave it to go beyond it and within itself. If the mind of man were not thus ignorant, attached, bound even in its restless inconstancy, deluded by the forms of things, renunciation would not have been needed; the soul could have travelled on the path of delight, from the lesser to the greater, from joy to diviner joy. At present that is not practicable. It must give up from within everything to which it is attached in order that it may gain that which they are in their reality. The external renunciation is not the essential, but even that is necessary for a time, indispensable in many things and sometimes useful in all; we may even say that

a complete external renunciation is a stage through which the soul must pass at some period of its progress, — though always it should be without those self-willed violences and fierce self-torturings which are an offence to the Divine seated within us. But in the end this renunciation or self-denial is always an instrument and the period for its use passes. The rejection of the object ceases to be necessary when the object can no longer ensnare us because what the soul enjoys is no longer the object as an object but the Divine which it expresses; the inhibition of pleasure is no longer needed when the soul no longer seeks pleasure but possesses the delight of the Divine in all things equally without the need of a personal or physical possession of the thing itself; self-denial loses its field when the soul no longer claims anything, but obeys consciously the will of the one Self in all beings. It is then that we are freed from the Law and released into the liberty of the Spirit.

CWSA 23: 333

Detachment

We shall find, if we try, that the mind has this power of detachment and can stand back from the body not only in idea, but in act and as it were physically or rather vitally. This detachment of the mind must be strengthened by a certain attitude of indifference to the things of the body; we must not care essentially about its sleep or its waking, its movement or its rest, its pain or its pleasure, its health or ill-health, its vigour or its fatigue, its comfort or its discomfort, or what it eats or drinks. This does not mean that we shall not keep the body in right order so far as we can; we have not to fall into violent asceticisms or a positive neglect of the physical frame. But we have not either to be affected in mind by hunger or thirst or discomfort or ill health or

attach the importance which the physical and vital man attaches to the things of the body, or indeed any but a quite subordinate and purely instrumental importance. Nor must this instrumental importance be allowed to assume the proportions of a necessity; we must not for instance imagine that the purity of the mind depends on the things we eat or drink, although during a certain stage restrictions in eating and drinking are useful to our inner progress; nor on the other hand must we continue to think that the dependence of the mind or even of the life on food and drink is anything more than a habit, a customary relation which Nature has set up between these principles. As a matter of fact the food we take can be reduced by contrary habit and new relation to a minimum without the mental or vital vigour being in any way reduced; even on the contrary with a judicious development they can be trained to a greater potentiality of vigour by learning to rely on the secret fountains of mental and vital energy with which they are connected more than upon the minor aid of physical aliments.

CWSA 23: 343 – 344

The Inner separation

Therefore the mental Purusha has to separate himself from association and self-identification with this desire-mind. He has to say “I am not this thing that struggles and suffers, grieves and rejoices, loves and hates, hopes and is baffled, is angry and afraid and cheerful and depressed, a thing of vital moods and emotional passions. All these are merely workings and habits of Prakriti in the sensational and emotional mind.” The mind then draws back from its emotions and becomes with these, as with the bodily movements and experiences, the observer or witness. There is again an inner cleavage. There is this emotional mind in

which these moods and passions continue to occur according to the habit of the modes of Nature and there is the observing mind which sees them, studies and understands but is detached from them. It observes them as if in a sort of action and play on a mental stage of personages other than itself, at first with interest and a habit of relapse into identification, then with entire calm and detachment, and, finally, attaining not only to calm but to the pure delight of its own silent existence, with a smile at their unreality as at the imaginary joys and sorrows of a child who is playing and loses himself in the play. Secondly, it becomes aware of itself as master of the sanction who by his withdrawal of sanction can make this play to cease. When the sanction is withdrawn, another significant phenomenon takes place; the emotional mind becomes normally calm and pure and free from these reactions, and even when they come, they no longer rise from within but seem to fall on it as impressions from outside to which its fibres are still able to respond; but this habit of response dies away and the emotional mind is in time entirely liberated from the passions which it has renounced. Hope and fear, joy and grief, liking and disliking, attraction and repulsion, content and discontent, gladness and depression, horror and wrath and fear and disgust and shame and the passions of love and hatred fall away from the liberated psychic being.

CWSA 23: 353 – 353

Sri Aurobindo

.....purification, liberation, perfection, delight of being are four constituent elements of the Yoga, — *śuddhi, mukti, siddhi, bhukti*.

CWSA 24: 639

Sri Aurobindo

Knowing and seeing God in the world

The Yogin continues to know and see God in the finite and be a channel of God-consciousness and God-action in the world; therefore the knowledge of the world and the enlarging and uplifting of all that appertains to life comes within his scope. Only, in all he sees God, sees the supreme reality, and his motive of work is to help mankind towards the knowledge of God and the possession of the supreme reality. He sees God through the data of science, God through the conclusions of philosophy, God through the forms of Beauty and the forms of Good, God in all the activities of life, God in the past of the world and its effects, in the present and its tendencies, in the future and its great progression. Into any or all of these he can bring his illumined vision and his liberated power of the spirit. The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher; the higher illumines for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation.

CWSA 23: 517 – 518

Sri Aurobindo

It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun; it accepts and clings to all that is divine or progressing towards divinity, and draws back from all that is a perversion or a denial of it, from all that is false and undivine.

CWSA 23: 153

Sri Aurobindo



It is the ignorant, limited, egoistic consciousness which demands miracles. As soon as one is enlightened, one knows that everywhere and always there is miracle.

And the more faith one has in this miracle and this Grace, the more capable one becomes of seeing it, or perceiving it constantly at every place where it is. It is ignorance and lack of faith, it is blind egoism which prevents one from seeing.

CWM 7: 379

The Mother

The Yoga of Divine Love

The supreme Being

...this supreme Being is also the universal Being... All the emotions with which we confront the action of the universal existence upon us, are really directed towards him, in ignorance at first, but it is by directing them in growing knowledge towards him that we enter into more intimate relations with him, and all that is false and ignorant in them will fall away as we draw nearer towards unity. To all of them he answers, taking us in the stage of progress in which we are; for if we met no kind of response or help to our imperfect approach, the more perfect relations could never be established. Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their bhakti, *tathaiva bhajate*. Whatever form of being, whatever qualities they lend to him, through that form and those qualities he helps them to develop, encourages or governs their advance and in their straight way or their crooked draws them towards him. What they see of him is a truth, but a truth represented to them in the terms of their own being and consciousness, partially, distortedly, not in the terms of its own higher reality, not in the aspect which it assumes when we become aware of the complete Divinity. This is the justification of the cruder and more primitive elements of religion and also their sentence of transience and passing. They are justified because there is a truth of the Divine behind them and only so could that truth of the Divine be approached in that stage of the developing human consciousness and be helped forward; they are condemned, because to persist always in these crude conceptions and relations with the Divine is to miss that closer union towards which these crude beginnings are the first steps, however faltering.

CWSA 24: 558

The Lord of all worlds and the friend of all creatures

The Divine even as the Master does not punish anybody, does not threaten, does not force obedience. It is the human soul that has freely to come to the Divine and offer itself to his overpowering force that he may seize and uplift it towards his own divine levels, and give it that joy of mastery of the finite nature by the Infinite and of service to the Highest by which there comes freedom from the ego and the lower nature. Love is the key of this relation, and this service, *dāsyam*, is in Indian Yoga the happy service of the divine Friend or the passionate service to the divine Beloved. The Master of the worlds who in the Gita demands of his servant, the bhakta, to be nothing more in life than his instrument, makes this claim as the friend, the guide, the higher Self, and describes himself as the Lord of all the worlds who is the friend of all creatures, *sarvalokamaheśvaram suhrdam sarvabhūtānām*; the two relations in fact must go together and neither can be perfect without the other. So too it is not the fatherhood of God as the Creator who demands obedience because he is the maker of our being, but the fatherhood of love which leads us towards the closer soul-union of Yoga. Love is the real key in both, and perfect love is inconsistent with the admission of the motive of fear. Closeness of the human soul to the Divine is the object, and fear sets always a barrier and a distance; even awe and reverence for the divine Power are a sign of distance and division and they disappear in the intimacy of the union of love. Moreover, fear belongs to the lower nature, to the lower self, and in approaching the higher Self must be put aside before we can enter into its presence.

CWSA 24: 565 – 566

Prayer and relations with the Divine

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.

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. 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: 567 – 568

Yearning for the Divine Beloved

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

Three stages of seeking through devotion of the mind

There is also the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine. In its inception this is the attempt to fix the mind on the object of adoration, — for naturally the restless human mind is occupied with other objects and, even when it is directed upwards, constantly drawn away by the world, — so that in the end it habitually thinks of him and all else is only secondary and thought of only in relation to him. This is done often with the aid of a physical image or, more intimately and characteristically, of a mantra or a divine name through which the divine being is realised. There are supposed by those who systematise to be three stages of the seeking through the devotion of the mind, first, the constant hearing of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them, secondly, the constant thinking on them or on the divine being or personality, thirdly, the settling

and fixing of the mind on the object; and by this comes the full realisation. And by these, too, there comes when the accompanying feeling or the concentration is very intense, the Samadhi, the ecstatic trance in which the consciousness passes away from outer objects. But all this is really incidental; the one thing essential is the intense devotion of the thought in the mind to the object of adoration. Although it seems akin to the contemplation of the way of knowledge, it differs from that in its spirit. It is in its real nature not a still, but an ecstatic contemplation; it seeks not to pass into the being of the Divine, but to bring the Divine into ourselves and to lose ourselves in the deep ecstasy of his presence or of his possession; and its bliss is not the peace of unity, but the ecstasy of union. Here, too, there may be the separative self consecration which ends in the giving up of all other thought of life for the possession of this ecstasy, eternal afterwards in planes beyond, or the comprehensive consecration in which all the thoughts are full of the Divine and even in the occupations of life every thought remembers him. As in the other Yogas, so in this, one comes to see the Divine everywhere and in all and to pour out the realisation of the Divine in all one's inner activities and outward actions.



CWSA 24: 574 – 575

Love for the Divine

*The vegetal kingdom
gathers together its most
beautiful possibilities to offer
them to the Divine.*

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

Common name: Rosa

The way of integral bhakti

The way of the integral Yoga of bhakti will be to universalise this conception of the Deity, to personalise him intimately by a multiple and an all-embracing relation, to make him constantly present to all the being and to devote, give up, surrender the whole being to him, so that he shall dwell near to us and in us and we with him and in him. Manana and *darśana*, a constant thinking of him in all things and seeing of him always and everywhere is essential to this way of devotion. When we look on the things of physical Nature, in them we have to see the divine object of our love; when we look upon men and beings, we have to see him in them and in our relation with them to see that we are entering into relations with forms of him; when breaking beyond the limitation of the material world we know or have relations with the beings of other planes, still the same thought and vision has to be made real to our minds. The normal habit of our minds which are open only to the material and apparent form and the ordinary mutilated relation and ignore the secret Godhead within, has to yield by an unceasing habit of all-embracing love and delight to this deeper and ampler comprehension and this greater relation. In all godheads we have to see this one God whom we worship with our heart and all our being; they are forms of his divinity. So enlarging our spiritual embrace we reach a point at which all is he and the delight of this consciousness becomes to us our normal uninterrupted way of looking at the world. That brings us the outward or objective universality of our union with him.

CWSA 24: 601 – 602

The Image of the Beloved

Inwardly, the image of the Beloved has to become visible to the eye within, dwelling in us as in his mansion, informing our hearts with the sweetness of his presence, presiding over all our activities of mind and life as the friend, master and lover from the summit of our being, uniting us from above with himself in the universe. A constant inner communion is the joy to be made close and permanent and unfailing. This communion is not to be confined to an exceptional nearness and adoration when we retire quite into ourselves away from our normal preoccupations, nor is it to be sought by a putting away of our human activities. All our thoughts, impulses, feelings, actions have to be referred to him for his sanction or disallowance, or if we cannot yet reach this point, to be offered to him in our sacrifice of aspiration, so that he may more and more descend into us and be present in them all and pervade them with all his will and power, his light and knowledge, his love and delight. In the end all our thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions will begin to proceed from him and change into some divine seed and form of themselves; in our whole inner living we shall have grown conscious of ourselves as a part of his being till between the existence of the Divine whom we adore and our own lives there is no longer any division. So too in all happenings we have to come to see the dealings with us of the divine Lover and take such pleasure in them that even grief and suffering and physical pain become his gifts and turn to delight and disappear finally into delight, slain by the sense of the divine contact, because the touch of his hands is the alchemist of a miraculous transformation. Some reject life because it is tainted with grief and pain, but to the God-lover grief and pain become means of meeting with him,

imprints of his pressure and finally cease as soon as our union with his nature becomes too complete for these masks of the universal delight at all to conceal it. They change into the Ananda.

CWSA 24: 602

Manifold relation with the Divine

All the relations by which this union comes about, become on this path intensely and blissfully personal. That which in the end contains, takes up or unifies them all, is the relation of lover and beloved, because that is the most intense and blissful of all and carries up all the rest into its heights and yet exceeds them. He is the teacher and guide and leads us to knowledge; at every step of the developing inner light and vision, we feel his touch like that of the artist moulding our clay of mind, his voice revealing the truth and its word, the thought he gives us to which we respond, the flashing of his spears of lightning which chase the darkness of our ignorance....

He is the Master; but in this way of approach all distance and separation, all awe and fear and mere obedience disappear, because we become too close and united with him for these things to endure and it is the lover of our being who takes it up and occupies and uses and does with it whatever he wills. Obedience is the sign of the servant, but that is the lowest stage of this relation, *dāsya*. Afterwards we do not obey, but move to his will as the string replies to the finger of the musician. To be the instrument is this higher stage of self-surrender and submission. But this is the living and loving instrument and it ends in the whole nature of our being becoming the slave of God, rejoicing in his possession and its own blissful subjection to the divine grasp and mastery....

He is the friend, the adviser, helper, saviour in trouble and distress, the defender from enemies, the hero who fights our battles for us or under whose shield we fight, the charioteer, the pilot of our ways. And here we come at once to a closer intimacy; he is the comrade and eternal companion, the playmate of the game of living. But still there is so far a certain division, however pleasant, and friendship is too much limited by the appearance of beneficence. The lover can wound, abandon, be wroth with us, seem to betray, yet our love endures and even grows by these oppositions; they increase the joy of reunion and the joy of possession; through them the lover remains the friend, and all that he does we find in the end has been done by the lover and helper of our being for our soul's perfection as well as for his joy in us. These contradictions lead to a greater intimacy. He is the father and mother too of our being, its source and protector and its indulgent cherisher and giver of our desires. He is the child born to our desire whom we cherish and rear. All these things the lover takes up; his love in its intimacy and oneness keeps in it the paternal and maternal care and lends itself to our demands upon it. All is unified in that deepest many-sided relation.

CWSA 24: 603 – 604

The growing love of God

The growing of the love of God must carry with it in him an expansion of the knowledge of God and of the action of the divine Will in his nature and living. The divine Lover reveals himself; he takes possession of the life. But still the essential relation will be that of love from which all things flow, love passionate, complete, seeking a hundred ways of fulfilment, every means of mutual possession, a million facets of the joy of union. All the distinctions of the mind,

all its barriers and “cannot be”s, all the cold analyses of the reason are mocked at by this love or they are only used as the tests and fields and gates of union. Love comes to us in many ways; it may come as an awakening to the beauty of the Lover, by the sight of an ideal face and image of him, by his mysterious hints to us of himself behind the thousand faces of things in the world, by a slow or sudden need of the heart, by a vague thirst in the soul, by the sense of someone near us drawing us or pursuing us with love or of someone blissful and beautiful whom we must discover.

CWSA 24: 604 – 605

We may seek Him or the Divine Lover may pursue us

We may seek after him passionately and pursue the unseen beloved; but also the lover whom we think not of, may pursue us, may come upon us in the midst of the world and seize on us for his own whether at first we will or no. Even, he may come to us at first as an enemy, with the wrath of love, and our earliest relations with him may be those of battle and struggle. Where first there is love and attraction, the relations between the Divine and the soul may still for long be chequered with misunderstanding and offence, jealousy and wrath, strife and the quarrels of love, hope and despair and the pain of absence and separation. We throw up all the passions of the heart against him, till they are purified into a sole ecstasy of bliss and oneness. But that too is no monotony; it is not possible for the tongue of human speech to tell all the utter unity and all the eternal variety of the ananda of divine love. Our higher and our lower members are both flooded with it, the mind and life no less than the soul: even the physical body takes its share of the joy, feels the touch, is filled in all its limbs, veins, nerves with the flowing of the wine of the ecstasy, *amṛta*. Love and Ananda

are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries.

CWSA 24: 604

There is nothing beyond the reach of the God-lover

Thus universalised, personalised, raised to its intensities, made all-occupying, all-embracing, all-fulfilling, the way of love and delight gives the supreme liberation. Its highest crest is a supracosmic union. But for love complete union is *mukti*; liberation has to it no other sense; and it includes all kinds of *mukti* together, nor are they in the end, as some would have it, merely successive to each other and therefore mutually exclusive. We have the absolute union of the divine with the human spirit, *sāyujya*; in that reveals itself a content of all that depends here upon difference, — but there the difference is only a form of oneness, — ananda too of nearness and contact and mutual presence, *sāmīpya*, *sālokya*, ananda of mutual reflection, the thing that we call likeness, *sādṛśya*, and other wonderful things too for which language has as yet no name. There is nothing which is beyond the reach of the God-lover or denied to him; for he is the favourite of the divine Lover and the self of the Beloved.

CWSA 24: 605–06

Sri Aurobindo

In the method of synthesis which we have been following, another clue of principle has been pursued which is derived from another view of the possibilities of Yoga. This starts from the method of Vedanta to arrive at the aim of the Tantra. In the Tantric method Shakti is all-important, becomes the key to the finding of spirit; in this synthesis spirit, soul is all-important, becomes the secret of the taking up of Shakti.

CWSA 24: 612

Sri Aurobindo



Towards an Integral Self-Perfection

Impersonality, universality and equality

A wise impersonality, a quiescent equality, a universality which sees all things as the manifestations of the Divine, the one Existence, is not angry, troubled, impatient with the way of things or on the other hand excited, over-eager and precipitate, but sees that the law must be obeyed and the pace of time respected, observes and understands with sympathy the actuality of things and beings, but looks also behind the present appearance to their inner significances and forward to the unrolling of their divine possibilities, is the first thing demanded of those who would do works as the perfect instruments of the Divine.

The perfected human soul must always be an instrument for the hastening of the ways of this evolution. For that a divine power acting with the royalty of the divine will in it must be in whatever degree present in the nature. But to be accomplished and permanent, steadfast in action, truly divine, it has to proceed on the basis of a spiritual equality, a calm, impersonal and equal self-identification with all beings, an understanding of all energies. The Divine acts with a mighty power in the myriad workings of the universe, but with the supporting light and force of an imperturbable oneness, freedom and peace. That must be the type of the perfected soul's divine works. And equality is the condition of the being which makes possible this changed spirit in the action.

CWSA 24: 700 – 701

Equality is the very sign of liberation

A perfect equality not only of the self, but in the nature is a condition of the Yoga of self-perfection. The first obvious step to it will be the conquest of our emotional and vital being, for here are the sources of greatest trouble, the most rampant forces of inequality and subjection, the most insistent claim of our imperfection. The equality of these parts of our nature comes by purification and freedom. We might say that equality is the very sign of liberation. To be free from the domination of the urge of vital desire and the stormy mastery of the soul by the passions is to have a calm and equal heart and a life-principle governed by the large and even view of a universal spirit. Desire is the impurity of the Prana, the life-principle, and its chain of bondage. A free Prana means a content and satisfied lifesoul which fronts the contact of outward things without desire and receives them with an equal response; delivered, uplifted above the servile duality of liking and disliking, indifferent to the urgings of pleasure and pain, not excited by the pleasant, not troubled and overpowered by the unpleasant, not clinging with attachment to the touches it prefers or violently repelling those for which it has an aversion, it will be opened to a greater system of values of experience. All that comes to it from the world with menace or with sollicitation, it will refer to the higher principles, to a reason and heart in touch with or changed by the light and calm joy of the spirit. Thus quieted, mastered by the spirit and no longer trying to impose its own mastery on the deeper and finer soul in us, this life-soul will be itself spiritualised and work as a clear and noble instrument of the diviner dealings of the spirit with things. There is no question here of an ascetic killing of the life-impulse and its native utilities and functions; not its killing is demanded, but its transformation. CWSA 24: 702-03

The way of Equality

The soul which seeks mastery may begin by turning upon these reactions the encountering and opposing force of a strong and equal endurance. Instead of seeking to protect itself from or to shun and escape the unpleasant impacts it may confront them and teach itself to suffer and to bear them with perseverance, with fortitude, an increasing equanimity or an austere or calm acceptance. ...

The second way is an attitude of impartial indifference. Its method is to reject at once the attraction or the repulsion of things, to cultivate for them a luminous impassivity, an inhibiting rejection, a habit of dissociation and desuetude. This attitude reposes less on the will, though will is always necessary, than on the knowledge. ...

The third way is that of submission, which may be the Christian resignation founded on submission to the will of God, or an unegoistic acceptance of things and happenings as a manifestation of the universal Will in time, or a complete surrender of the person to the Divine, to the supreme Purusha. As the first was a way of the will and the second a way of knowledge, of the understanding reason, so this is a way of the temperament and heart and very intimately connected with the principle of Bhakti. If it is pushed to the end, it arrives at the same result of a perfect equality. For the knot of the ego is loosened and the personal claim begins to disappear, we find that we are no longer bound to joy in things pleasant or sorrow over the unpleasant; we bear them without either eager acceptance or troubled rejection, refer them to the Master of our being, concern ourselves less and less with their personal result to us and hold only one thing of importance, to approach God, or to be in touch and tune with the universal and infinite Existence, or to be united with the Divine, his channel, instrument, servant, lover, rejoicing

in him and in our relation with him and having no other object or cause of joy or sorrow.

CWSA 24: 711 – 714

Complete surrender is the chief mainstay

This complete self-surrender must be the chief mainstay of the sadhaka because it is the only way, apart from complete quiescence and indifference to all action, — and that has to be avoided, — by which the absolute calm and peace can come. The persistence of trouble, *ásanti*, the length of time taken for this purification and perfection, itself must not be allowed to become a reason for discouragement and impatience. It comes because there is still something in the nature which responds to it, and the recurrence of trouble serves to bring out the presence of the defect, put the sadhaka upon his guard and bring about a more enlightened and consistent action of the will to get rid of it. When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, until finally calm becomes the law of the being.

CWSA 24: 723

Sri Aurobindo

The impartial equality of soul of the selfless worker and knower is Transformed by the magic touch of divine Love into an all-embracing Ecstasy and million-bodied beatitude. All things become bodies and all movements the playings of the divine Beloved in his infinite house of pleasure. Even pain is changed and in their reaction and even in their essence things painful alter; the forms of pain fall away, there are created in their place the forms of Ananda.

CWSA 23: 161

Sri Aurobindo

Kalyana Sraddha: The heart's faith and will in good

An equal heart is needed for perfection, but not only a passive equality; there must be the sense of a divine power making for good behind all experiences, a faith and will which can turn the poisons of the world to nectar, see the happier spiritual intention behind adversity, the mystery of love behind suffering, the flower of divine strength and joy in the seed of pain. This faith, *kalyāṇaśraddhā*, is needed in order that the heart and the whole overt psychic being may respond to the secret divine Ananda and change itself into this true original essence. This faith and will must be accompanied by and open into an illimitable widest and intensest capacity for love. For the main business of the heart, its true function is love. It is our destined instrument of complete union and oneness; for to see oneness in the world by the understanding is not enough unless we also feel it with the heart and in the psychic being, and this means a delight in the One and in all existences in the world in him, a love of God and all beings. The heart's faith and will in good are founded on a perception of the one Divine immanent in all things and leading the world.

CWSA 24: 737

The kind of faith demanded

Our faith must first be abiding in the essential truth and principles of the Yoga, and even if this is clouded in the intellect, despondent in the heart, outwearied and exhausted by constant denial and failure in the desire of the vital mind, there must be something in the innermost soul which clings and returns to it, otherwise we may fall on the path or abandon it from weakness and inability to bear temporary defeat, disappointment, difficulty and peril. In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in

the face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradicting events and powers who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible. And even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession than the sceptical doubt which turns its back on our spiritual possibilities or the constant carping of the narrow pettily critical uncreative intellect, *asūyā* , which pursues our endeavour with a paralysing incertitude.

CWSA 24: 773

Faith in the Divine Shakti and Her workings

The Shakti in her workings will strike ruthlessly at all forms of ignorance and blindness and all even that trusts wrongly and superstitiously in her, and we must be prepared to abandon a too persistent attachment to forms of faith and cling to the saving reality alone. A great and wide spiritual and intelligent faith, intelligent with the intelligence of that larger reason which assents to high possibilities, is the character of the *śraddha* needed for the integral Yoga.

This *śraddhā* — the English word faith is inadequate to express it — is in reality an influence from the supreme Spirit and its light a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is not so much the intellect, the heart or the life mind, but the inner soul which better knows the truth of its own destiny and mission. The circumstances that provoke our first entry into the path are not the real index of the thing that is at work in us. There the intellect, the heart, or the desires of the life mind may take a prominent place, or even more

fortuitous accidents and outward incentives; but if these are all, then there can be no surety of our fidelity to the call and our enduring perseverance in the Yoga. The intellect may abandon the idea that attracted it, the heart weary or fail us, the desire of the life mind turn to other objectives. But outward circumstances are only a cover for the real workings of the spirit, and if it is the spirit that has been touched, the inward soul that has received the call, the *śraddhā* will remain firm and resist all attempts to defeat or slay it.

CWSA 24: 774

Workings of the Divine Shakti should not perplex us

There is not only much that will be strongly raised in us in order to be cast out and rejected, a battle between the powers of ignorance and the lower nature and the higher powers that have to replace them, but experiences, states of thought and feeling, forms of realisation that are helpful and have to be accepted on the way and may seem to us for the time to be spiritual finalities, are found afterwards to be steps of transition, have to be exceeded and the working faith that supported them withdrawn in favour of other and greater things or of more full and comprehensive realisations and experiences, which replace them or into which they are taken up in a completing transformation. There can be for the seeker of the integral Yoga no clinging to resting-places on the road or to half-way houses; he cannot be satisfied till he has laid down all the great enduring bases of his perfection and broken out into its large and free infinities, and even there he has to be constantly filling himself with more experiences of the Infinite. His progress is an ascent from level to level and each new height brings in other vistas and revelations of the much that has still to be done, *bhūri kartvam*, till the divine Shakti has at last taken up all his

endeavour and he has only to assent and participate gladly by a consenting oneness in her luminous workings. That which will support him through these changes, struggles, transformations which might otherwise dishearten and baffle, — for the intellect and life and emotion always grasp too much at things, fasten on premature certitudes and are apt to be afflicted and unwilling when forced to abandon that on which they rested,—is a firm faith in the Shakti that is at work and reliance on the guidance of the Master of the Yoga whose wisdom is not in haste and whose steps through all the perplexities of the mind are assured and just and sound, because they are founded on a perfectly comprehending transaction with the necessities of our nature.

CWSA 24: 775-76

The Power of the Divine Shakti is illimitable

A present incapacity, however heavy may seem its pressure, is only a trial of faith and a temporary difficulty and to yield to the sense of inability is for the seeker of the integral Yoga a non-sense, for his object is a development of a perfection that is there already, latent in the being, because man carries the seed of the divine life in himself, in his own spirit, the possibility of success is involved and implied in the effort and victory is assured because behind is the call and guidance of an omnipotent power. At the same time this faith in oneself must be purified from all touch of rajasic egoism and spiritual pride. The sadhaka should keep as much as possible in his mind the idea that his strength is not his own in the egoistic sense but that of the divine universal Shakti and whatever is egoistic in his use of it must be a cause of limitation and in the end an obstacle. The power of the divine universal Shakti which is behind our aspiration is illimitable, and when it is rightly called upon it cannot fail to pour itself

into us and to remove whatever incapacity and obstacle, now or later; for the times and durations of our struggle while they depend at first, instrumentally and in part, on the strength of our faith and our endeavour, are yet eventually in the hands of the wisely determining secret Spirit, alone the Master of the Yoga, the Ishwara.

CWSA 24: 780

The Divine Mother and Her four Aspects

The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination: she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the *attahāsyā*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of

the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

CWSA 24: 780 – 781

Sri Aurobindo

There is one kind of faith demanded as indispensable by the integral Yoga and that may be described as faith in God and the Shakti, faith in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world, a faith that all in the world is the working of one divine Shakti, that all the steps of the Yoga, its strivings and sufferings and failures as well as its successes and satisfactions and victories are utilities and necessities of her workings and that by a firm and strong dependence on and a total self-surrender to the Divine and to his Shakti in us we can attain to oneness and freedom and victory and perfection.

CWSA 24: 771

Sri Aurobindo



Integral Love for the Divine

*Pure, complete and irrevocable, it is a love
that gives itself for ever.*

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical name: Rosa, Rose

Words of the Mother

An Integral idea of the Divine

“If we are to attempt an integral Yoga, it will be as well to start with an idea of the Divine that is itself integral. There should be an aspiration in the heart wide enough for a realisation without any narrow limits. Not only should we avoid a sectarian religious outlook, but also all one-sided philosophical conceptions which try to shut up the Ineffable in a restricting mental formula.”

Sweet Mother, what does Sri Aurobindo mean by an integral idea of the Divine?

Everyone forms an idea of the Divine for himself according to his personal taste, his possibilities of understanding, his mental preferences, and even his desires. People form the idea of the Divine they want, the Divine they wish to meet, and so naturally they limit their realisation considerably. ...

You form an idea of the Divine which suits your own nature and your own conception, don't you? So if you want to get out of yourself a little and attempt to do a truly integral yoga, you must try to understand that the Divine is not only what you think or feel Him to be, but also what others think and feel Him to be — and in addition something that nobody can think and feel.

So, if you understand this, you have taken the first step on the path of integrality.

Instinctively, and without even being aware of it, people persist in wanting the Divine to suit their own conceptions. For, without thinking, quite spontaneously, they tell you, “Oh, this is divine, this is not divine!” What do they know about it? And then there are those who have not yet set foot

on the path, who come here and see things or people, and tell you, "This Ashram has nothing to do with the Divine, it is not at all divine." But if you ask them, "What is divine?", they would be hard put to it to answer; they know nothing about it. And the less one knows, the more one judges; that's an absolute fact. The more one knows, the less can one pronounce judgments on things.

And there comes a time when all one can do is observe, but to judge is impossible. One can see things, see them as they are, in their relations and in their place, with an awareness of the difference between the place they now are in and the one they ought to occupy — for this is the great disorder in the world — but one does not judge. One simply observes.

And there is a moment when one would be unable to say, "This is divine and that is not divine", for a time comes when one sees the whole universe in so total and comprehensive a way that, to tell the truth, it is impossible to take away anything from it without disturbing everything....

Now, if one comes down again from this consciousness to a more external consciousness, naturally one begins to feel, very precisely, the things which help one to reach the true consciousness and those which bar the way or pull one back or even struggle against the progress. And so the outlook changes and one has to say, "This is divine, or this helps me toward the Divine; and that is against the Divine, it is the enemy of the Divine."

But this is a pragmatic point of view, for action, for the movement in material life — because one has not yet reached the consciousness which goes beyond all that; because one has not attained that inner perfection, having which one has no longer to struggle, for one has gone beyond the zone of struggle or the time of struggle or the utility of struggle. But before that, before attaining that

state in one's consciousness and action, necessarily there is struggle, and if there is struggle there is choice and for the choice discernment is necessary.

And the surest means to discernment is a conscious and willing surrender, as complete as possible, to the divine Will and Guidance. Then there is no risk of making a mistake and of taking false lights for true ones.

CWM 8: 1-3

Intellectual preparation and Integral Yoga

"This intellectual preparation can indeed be the first stage in a powerful Yoga, but it is not indispensable."

Yes. A powerful yoga is a very complete yoga, which contains many things, takes in many elements. So this element of intellectual knowledge makes the yoga more powerful.

Is it the same as the integral yoga?

Not quite. An integral yoga is one which comprises all the parts of the being and all the activities of the being. But the activities of one being are not as powerful as the activities of another; and the integrality of one being is not as total as the integrality of another. You don't understand?

If all your being, as it is, participates in the yoga, it becomes for you an integral yoga. But your participation may be very poor and mediocre compared with that of someone else, and the number of elements of consciousness which you contain may be very small compared with the elements of consciousness contained in another person. And yet your yoga is integral for you, that is, it is done in all the parts and all the activities of your being.

CWM 8: 7

Positive and negative side of the work

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes, "For all this first period he [the individual] has to work by means of the instruments of the lower Nature."

What is this work, and how is it accomplished?

There is a positive side and a negative side to this work.

The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them before this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place in relation to this centre; finally, to organise all one's aspiration towards the Divine and one's progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side.

At the same time the negative side consists in refusing methodically and with discernment all the influences which come from outside or from the subconscious or inconscient or from the environment, and stand in the way of spiritual progress. One must discern these influences, suggestions, impulses, and systematically refuse them without ever getting discouraged by their persistence and ever yielding to their will. One must, at the same time, observe clearly in one's being all its different elements, obscure, egoistic, unconscious, or even ill-willed, which consciously or otherwise, answer these bad influences, and allow them not only to penetrate into the consciousness, but sometimes to get settled there. That is the negative side.

Both must be practised at the same time. According to the moment, the occasion, the inner readiness, you must insist now on one, now on the other, but never forget either of them.

CWM 8: 22

The inner enemies

Sweet Mother, I have not understood this: "The spirit's inner enemies... have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker."

Not understood? This has never happened to you? No? When, for instance, you have a movement you don't like — a movement of anger or spite, all kinds of things like that, or an insincerity or something you don't like — when you reject it from yourself, when you want to make an effort not to have it any more, it hurts you, doesn't it? It hurts, it is as though something was being pulled out. Well, this is the pain he is speaking about; he says that it is the bad thing you throw away from you which, when leaving, gives you a nice little knock as a parting gift. That's what he says.

For you are always under the illusion that pain belongs to you. This is not true. Pain is something thrust upon you. The same event could occur, *exactly* the same in all its details, without its inflicting the shadow of a pain on you; on the contrary, sometimes it can fill you with ecstatic joy. And it is exactly the same thing. But in one case, you are open to the adverse forces you want to reject from yourself, and in the other you are not, you are already too far away from them to be affected by them any longer; and so, instead of feeling the negative side they represent, you feel only the positive side the Divine represents in the experience. It is the divine Grace which makes you progress, and with the divine Grace you feel the divine Joy. But instead of identifying yourself with the Grace which makes you progress, you identify yourself with the ugly thing you want to get rid of; and so, naturally, you feel like it and suffer.

CWM 8: 83 – 84

Self dynamising meditation

"The practice of this Yoga demands a constant inward remembrance of the one central liberating knowledge.... In all is the one Self, the one Divine is all; all are in the Divine, all are the Divine and there is nothing else in the universe, — this thought or this faith is the whole background until it becomes the whole substance of the consciousness of the worker. A memory, a self-dynamising meditation of this kind, must and does in its end turn into profound and uninterrupted vision and a vivid and all-embracing consciousness of that which we so powerfully remember or on which we so constantly meditate."

Sweet Mother, what does Sri Aurobindo mean by "a self-dynamising meditation"?

It is a meditation that has the power of transforming your being. It is a meditation which makes you progress, as opposed to static meditation which is immobile and relatively inert, and which changes nothing in your consciousness or in your way of being. A dynamic meditation is a meditation of transformation.

Generally, people don't have a dynamic meditation. When they enter into meditation — or at least what they call meditation — they enter into a kind of immobility where nothing stirs, and they come out of it exactly as they went in, without any change either in their being or in their consciousness. And the more motionless it is, the happier they are. They could meditate in this way for eternities, it would never change anything either in the universe or in themselves. That is why Sri Aurobindo speaks of a dynamic meditation which is exactly the very opposite. It is a transforming meditation.

How is it done? Is it done in a different way?

I think it is the aspiration that should be different, the attitude should be different. "Different way"--what do you mean by "way"-- (*laughing*) the way of sitting?... Not that? The inner way?

Yes.

But for each one it is different.

I think the most important thing is to know why one meditates; this is what gives the quality of the meditation and makes it of one order or another.

You may meditate to open yourself to the divine Force, you may meditate to reject the ordinary consciousness, you may meditate to enter the depths of your being, you may meditate to learn how to give yourself integrally; you may meditate for all kinds of things. You may meditate to enter into peace and calm and silence — this is what people generally do, but without much success. But you may also meditate to receive the Force of transformation, to discover the points to be transformed, to trace out the line of progress. And then you may also meditate for very practical reasons: when you have a difficulty to clear up, a solution to find, when you want help in some action or other. You may meditate for that too.

I think everyone has his own mode of meditation. But if one wants the meditation to be dynamic, one must have an aspiration for progress and the meditation must be done to help and fulfil this aspiration for progress. Then it becomes dynamic.

CWM 8: 88-89

Asking from the Divine

"A spiritual Truth and Right have convicted the good and evil of this world of imperfection or of falsehood and unveiled a supreme good.... But behind all these and in them he has felt a

Divinity who is all these things, a Bringer of Light, a Guide and All-Knower, a Master of Force, a Giver of Bliss, Friend, Helper, Father, Mother, Playmate in the world-game, an absolute Master of his being, his soul's Beloved and Lover."

If, for example, one wants to know something or one needs guidance, or something else, how can one have it from the Divine, according to one's need?

By asking the Divine for it. If you do not ask Him, how can you have it?

If you turn to the Divine and have full trust and ask Him, you will get what you need — not necessarily what you imagine you need; but the true thing you need, you will get. But you must ask Him for it.

You must make the experiment sincerely; you must not endeavour to get it by all sorts of external means and then expect the Divine to give it to you, without even having asked Him. Indeed, when you want somebody to give you something, you ask him for it, don't you? And why do you expect the Divine to give it to you without your having asked Him for it?

In the ordinary consciousness the movement is just the opposite. You assume something, saying, "I need this, I need this relationship, I need this affection, I need this knowledge, etc. Well, the Divine ought to give it to me, otherwise He is not the Divine." That is to say, you reverse the problem completely.

First of all, you say, "I need." Do you know whether you truly need it or whether it is only an impression you have or a desire or quite an ignorant movement? First point: you know nothing about it.

Second point: it is precisely your own will you want to

impose upon the Divine, telling Him, "I need this." And then you don't even ask Him for it: "Give it to me." You say, "I need it. Therefore, since I need it, it must come to me, quite naturally, spontaneously; it's the Divine's job to give me all that I need."

But if it so happens that truly you don't know what you need and it is merely an illusion and not a truth and that, into the bargain, you ask it from life around you and don't turn to the Divine, don't create any relationship between yourself and Him, don't think of Him or turn to Him with at least some sincerity in your attitude, then, as you ask nothing from Him, there is no reason for Him to give you anything.

But if you ask Him, as He is the Divine He knows a little better than you what you need; He will give you what you need.

Or else, if you insist and want to impose your own will, He may give you what you want in order to enlighten you and make you conscious of your mistake, that it was truly not the thing you needed. And then you begin to protest — I don't mean you personally, I am speaking of all human beings — and you say, "Why has the Divine given me something which harms me?" — completely forgetting that it was you who asked for it!

In both cases you protest all the same. If He gives you what you ask and then that brings you more harm than good, you protest. And again, if He doesn't give it, you also protest: "What! I told Him I needed it and He doesn't give it to me."

In both cases you protest, and the poor Divine is accused.

Only, if instead of all that, you simply have an aspiration within you, an urge, an intense ardent need to find That,

which you conceive more or less clearly to be the Truth of your being, the Source of all things, the supreme Good, the Answer to all we desire, the Solution to all problems; if there is this intense need in you and you aspire to realise it, you won't any longer say to the Divine, "Give me this, give me that", or, "I need this, I must have that." You will tell Him, "Do what is necessary for me and lead me to the Truth of my being. Give me what Thou in Thy supreme Wisdom seest as the thing I need."

And then you are sure of not being mistaken, and He will not give you something which harms you.

There is a still higher step, but it's a little more difficult to begin with that.

But the first one is already a much truer approach than that of telling the Divine, "I need this. Give it to me." For indeed, very few people really know what they need — very few. And the proof of it is that they are always in pursuit of the fulfilment of their desires, all their effort is bent upon that, and each time one of their desires is fulfilled, they are disappointed. And they pass on to another.

And after much seeking, making many mistakes, suffering a good deal and being very disappointed, then, sometimes, one begins to grow wise and wonders if there isn't a way out of all this, that is to say, a way to come out of one's own ignorance.

And it is then, at that moment that one can do this (*Mother opens her arms*): "Here I am, take me and lead me along the true path."

Then all begins to go well.

CWM 8: 120-24

Complete act of Divine love and worship

"It may be said that a complete act of divine love and worship has in it three parts that are the expressions of a single whole, — a practical worship of the Divine in the act, a symbol of worship in the form of the act expressing some vision and seeking or some relation with the Divine, an inner adoration and longing for oneness or feeling of oneness in the heart and soul and spirit."

I have not understood the first two parts very well.

There is a purely physical form of the act, like those forms in cults in which a particular gesture, a particular movement is meant to express the consecration. That is purely material, as for example, lighting incense, arranging offerings, or even looking after a temple, decorating an idol, indeed all such purely physical acts.

The second part is a sort of mental consecration which makes the act that is performed a symbol. One is not satisfied with merely lighting the incense, but while lighting the incense one makes this gesture symbolic — for example, of the aspiration burning in the body or of self-giving in a dissolution, in the purification of the fire. That is to say, first the act, then the symbol in this act and the symbolic understanding of what is done.

And finally, behind these two, an aspiration for union; that all this, these acts and the symbol you make of them, may be only a means of drawing closer and closer to the Divine and making yourself fit to unite with Him.

These three things must be there for the act to be complete: that is, something purely material, something mental, and something psychic, the psychic aspiration. If one of the three is there without the other two, it is incomplete. As a rule, very rarely are the three consciously combined. That produces beings of exceptional sincerity and consecration: the entire being, in all its parts, participates in the action. CWM 8: 234–235

Lighting the psychic fire

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: "A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it."

Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

It is not always lit.

Then how to light it?

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make — if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

CWM 8: 251

Sweetness and joy in difficulty

"For devotion by its embodiment in acts not only makes its own way broad and full and dynamic, but brings at once into the harder way of works in the world the divinely passionate element of joy and love which is often absent in its beginning when it is only the austere spiritual will that follows in a struggling uplifting tension the steep ascent, and the heart is still asleep or bound to silence. If the spirit of divine love can enter, the hardness of the way diminishes, the tension is lightened, there is a sweetness and joy even in the core of difficulty and struggle."

How can one feel sweetness and joy when one is in difficulty?

Exactly, when the difficulty is egoistic or personal, if one makes an offering of it and throws it into the fire of purification, one immediately feels the joy of progress. If one does it sincerely, at once there is a welling up of joy.

That is obviously what ought to be done instead of despairing and lamenting. If one offers it up and aspires sincerely for transformation and purification, one immediately feels joy springing up in the depths of the heart. Even when the difficulty is a great sorrow, one may do this with much success. One realises that behind the sorrow, no matter how intense it may be, there is a divine joy.

CWM 8: 251

Chosen by the Infinite

Mother, here it is said: "He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite."

It is a magnificent sentence!

And it is absolutely true. There is in *Thoughts and Glimpses* also a sentence like this where I think he uses the word "God" instead of the Infinite. But the idea is the same — that it is God who has chosen you, the Divine who has chosen you. And that is why you run after Him!

And this is what gives — that's what he says, doesn't he? — this is what gives that kind of confidence, of certitude, precisely, that one is predestined; and if one is predestined, even if there are mountains of difficulties, what can that matter since one is sure to succeed! This gives you an indomitable courage to face all difficulties and a patience that stands all trials: you are sure to succeed.

And it's a fact — in fact, it is like that: the moment you thought about it, well, you thought about it because someone thought about you; you chose because you were chosen. And once you have been chosen, you are sure of the thing. There-

fore, doubts, hesitations, depressions, uncertainties, all this is quite simply a waste of time and energy; it is of no use at all.

From the moment one has felt just once within himself:

“Ah! This is the truth for me”, it is finished; it is finished, it is settled. Even if you spend years cutting your way through the virgin forest, it’s of no importance — it is finished, it is settled. That is why I told you one day, “After all, you all are here because you have wanted it somewhere; and if you wanted it somewhere, it means that the Divine wanted it thus in you.”

So there are some who follow a very straight path and arrive very quickly; there are others who love labyrinths, it takes longer. But the end is there, the goal is there. I know by experience that there isn’t one being who, were it only once in his life, has had a great urge towards... it doesn’t matter what he calls it — let us say the Divine for facility of speech, who is not sure to arrive; even if he turns his back on Him at a certain time, it’s of no importance — he is sure to arrive. He will have to struggle more or less, will have more or less difficulty, but he is sure to succeed one day. It’s a soul that has been chosen, it has become conscious because its hour has come — once the hour has come, well, the result will follow more or less quickly. You can do this in a few months; you can do it in some years; you can do it in some lives — but you will do it.

And what is remarkable is that this freedom of choice is left to you and that, if you decide within yourself that you will do it in this lifetime, you will do it. And I am not speaking here of a permanent and continuous decision because then you can arrive in twelve months. No, I mean: if you have suddenly been seized by this, “I want this”, even once, in a flash, the seal is put, there, like that.

CWM 7: 338-40

The Mother



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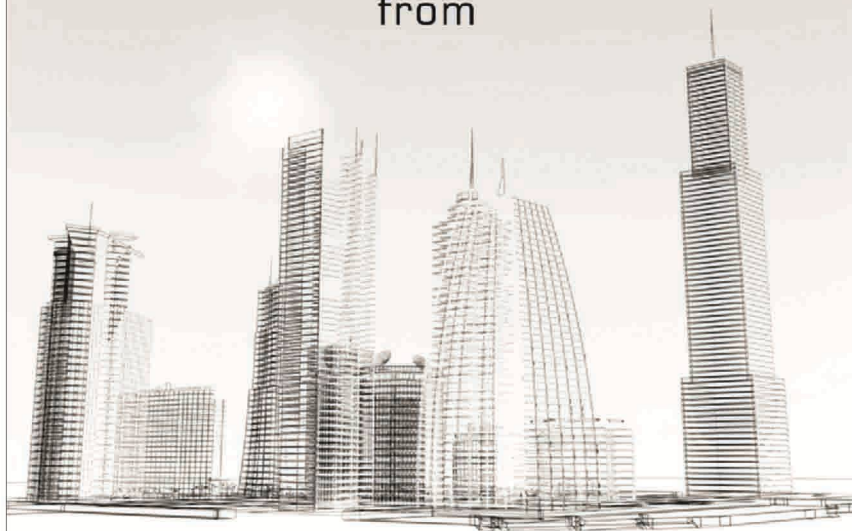
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