



*All India Magazine*  
*May 2021*

*Human Relationships*

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**ALL INDIA MAGAZINE**

**A Monthly Magazine of Sri Aurobindo Society**

Annual Subscription: Rs.200 in India, US \$ 25 by Air-mail

*Owner:* Sri Aurobindo Society

*Printer:* Swadhin Chatterjee for Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press

*Publisher:* Pradeep Narang for Sri Aurobindo Society

*Published from:* Society House, 11 Saint Martin Street, Puducherry - 605 001

*Printed from:* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, No 38, Goubert Avenue,  
Puducherry - 605 001, India.

***Editor: Dr. Alok Pandey***

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

Phone Nos:(0413) 2336396-97-98

**Email: [info@aurosociety.org](mailto:info@aurosociety.org) Website: [www.aurosociety.org](http://www.aurosociety.org)**

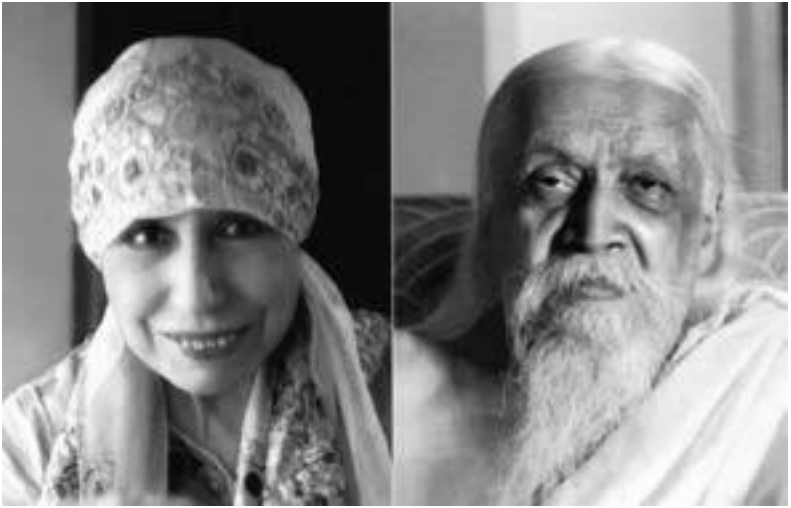
# Human Relationships

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

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*Editorial note: One of the most challenging areas of human existence is our relationship with the world, especially human relationships. It is easier to love God but far more difficult to love Man. Close relationships pose even a greater challenge. This issue is dedicated to the different aspects of human relationships from the yogic understanding of human nature.*



## He Alone is Capable

*Never seek a support elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek satisfaction elsewhere than in the Divine. Never seek the satisfaction of your needs in anyone else except the Divine — never, for anything at all. All your needs can be satisfied only by the Divine. All your weaknesses can be borne and healed only by the Divine. He alone is capable of giving you what you need in everything, always, and if you try to find any satisfaction or support or help or joy or... heaven knows what, in anyone else, you will always fall on your nose one day, and that always hurts, sometimes even hurts very much.*

CWM 4: 390

**The Mother**

## Levels of Human Relationships

If we observe at all attentively the causes which bring us closer to our kind, we see that these contacts occur at various levels of depth in our being, depending on our own special mode of conscious activity.

We can classify these relationships into four main categories corresponding to our four principal modes of activity: physical, vital, psychic and mental. They may have their play in one or several of these categories, simultaneously or successively, according to the quality and type of the manifestation of our activity.

Physical contact is compulsory, so to say, since it depends on the fact that we have a physical body. It inevitably occurs with those who have provided us with this body and with all those who are materially dependent on them. These are the relations of kinship. There are also relationships of proximity: neighbourhood in houses, in the various means of transport, in the street. (I may remark here — and this remark also applies to the other three categories — that this relationship is not necessarily exclusive: this is in fact rare, since we are seldom active on only one plane of our being; what I mean is that the physical relationship is dominant over the other three.)

Vital contact occurs between impulses and desires which are identical or liable to combine in order to complement and heighten one another.

Psychic contact occurs between converging spiritual aspirations.

Mental contact comes from similar or complementary mental capacities and affinities.

Normally, if the predominance of one category is not clearly established — and this can only happen when there is enough

order in our being to organise it in all its depth and complexity — we can and should give material help to those who are near to us for physical reasons.

With certain exceptions, material help is the best assistance we can give to the members of our family or to those whom we chance to meet in the street, in trains, in ships, in buses, etc.: pecuniary help, aid in case of illness or danger.

We should assist the sensitivity of those who are attracted to us because they have identical tastes, artistic or otherwise, by rectifying, balancing or canalising their sense-energies.

We can help those who by a common aspiration for progress have been brought into contact with us, through our example, by showing them the path, and through our love, by smoothing the way for them.

Finally, we must allow the light of our intelligence to shine for those who come close to us as a result of mental affinity, so that, if possible, we may widen their field of thought and enlighten their ideal.

A few rare beings are close to us in all four modes of existence at the same time. These are friends in the deepest sense of the word. It is on them that our actions can have their most integral, their most perfectly helpful and beneficial effect.

We should never forget that the duration of a contact between two human lives depends on the number and depth of the states of being in which the affinities that bind them have their play.

Only those who commune with the eternal essence within themselves and in all things can be eternally united.

Only those are friends forever who have been close or distant friends from all time in this or other worlds.

And whether or not we meet these friends depends on the encounter we must first experience within ourselves, in the un-

known depths of our being.

Moreover, when this meeting occurs, our whole attitude is transformed.

When we become one with the inner Godhead, we become one in depth with all, and it is through Her and by Her that we must come into contact with all beings. Then, free from all attraction and repulsion, all likes and dislikes, we are close to what is close to Her and far from what is far from Her.

*CWM 2: 71-73*

It is childishly simple. If you have the consciousness of an animal, you will love like an animal. If you have the consciousness of an ordinary man, you will love like an ordinary man. If you have the consciousness of an 'elite being, you will love like an 'elite being, and if you have a god's consciousness, you will love like a god. It is simple! That's what I have said. And so, if by an effort for progress and inner transformation, by aspiration and growth, you pass from one consciousness to the other and your consciousness becomes vaster and vaster, well, the love you experience will be vaster and vaster. That is quite clear!

You take the purest water, water from the crystalline rocks, you collect it in a fairly large vase, and then, in this vase there is a little mud, or much, or a huge quantity of mud. And you could not say it is the same water which came down, yet it is the same, only you have mixed it with so many things in your vase that it no longer resembles it at all! Well, love in its essence is an absolutely pure, crystalline, perfect thing. In the human consciousness it gets mixed with a fairly considerable amount of mud. So it becomes more and more muddy in proportion to the amount of mud.

*CWM 6: 103*

**The Mother**

## Affinities

The phenomenon of which you speak is normal to human nature. People are drawn together or one is drawn to another by a certain feeling of affinity, of agreement or of attraction between some part of one's own nature and some part of the other's nature. At first this only is felt; one sees all that is good or pleasant to one in the other's nature and even attributes, perhaps, qualities to him that are not there or not so much there as one thinks. But with closer acquaintance other parts of the nature are felt with which one is not in affinity—perhaps there is a clash of ideas or opposition of feelings or conflict of two egos. If there is a strong love or friendship of a lasting character, then one may overcome these difficulties of contact and arrive at a harmonising or accommodation; but very often this is not there or the disagreement is so acute as to counteract the tendency of accommodation or else the ego gets so hurt as to recoil. Then it is quite possible for one to begin to see too much and exaggerate the faults of the other or to attribute things to him of a bad or unpleasant character that are not there. The whole view can change, the good feeling change into ill-feeling, alienation, even enmity or antipathy. This is always happening in human life. The opposite also happens, but less easily — i.e. the change from ill-feeling to good feeling, from opposition to harmony. But of course ill-opinion or ill-feeling towards a person need not arise from this cause alone. It happens from many causes, instinctive dislike, jealousy, conflicting interests, etc.

One must try to look calmly on others, not overstress either virtues or defects, without ill-feeling or misunderstanding or injustice, with a calm mind and vision.

*CWSA 31: 299-300*

**Sri Aurobindo**





There is only one safety: to cling to the Divine, like this  
(*gesture of clenched fists*).

Not clinging to what one thinks to be the Divine, not even to that which one feels to be the Divine.... An aspiration... as sincere an aspiration as possible. And to cling to that.

*CWM 11:262*

**The Mother**

## Our Best Friend

*Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves, and yet does not ask us to be other than we are."*

*CWM 14: 288*

... Now, at the beginning of the sentence I said, "He loves you in the best part of yourself...." To put it a little more positively: Your friend is not one who encourages you to come down to your lowest level, encourages you to do foolish things along with him or fall into bad ways with him or one who commends you for all the nasty things you do, that's quite clear. And yet, usually, very, very often, much too often, one makes friends with somebody with whom one doesn't feel uneasy when one has sunk lower. One considers as one's best friend somebody who encourages one in one's follies: one mixes with others to roam about instead of going to school, to go and steal fruit from gardens, to make fun of one's teachers and for all kinds of things like that. I am not making any personal remarks, but indeed I could quote some examples, unhappily far too many. And perhaps this is why I said, "They are not your true friends." But still, they are the most convenient friends, for they don't make you feel that you are in the wrong; while to one who comes and tells you, "Now then, instead of roaming about and doing nothing or doing stupid things, if you came to the class, don't you think it would be better!" usually one replies, "Don't bother me! You are not my friend." This is perhaps why I wrote this sentence. There you are. I repeat, I am not making any personal remarks, but still it is an opportunity to tell you something that unfortunately happens much too often.

There are children here who were full of promise, who were at the top of their class, who used to work seriously, from whom

I expected much, and who have been completely ruined by this kind of friendship. Since we are speaking of this, I shall tell them today that I regret this very much and that I do not call such people friends but mortal enemies against whom one should protect oneself as one would against a contagious disease.

We don't like the company of someone who has a contagious disease, and avoid him carefully; generally he is segregated so that it does not spread. But the contagion of vice and bad behaviour, the contagion of depravity, falsehood and what is base, is infinitely more dangerous than the contagion of any disease, and this is what must be very carefully avoided. You must consider as your best friend the one who tells you that he does not wish to participate in any bad or ugly act, the one who gives you courage to resist low temptations; he is a friend. He is the one you must associate with and not someone with whom you have fun and who strengthens your evil propensities.

That's all. Now, we won't labour the point and I hope that those I have in mind will understand what I have said.

Indeed, you should choose as friends only those who are wiser than yourself, those whose company ennobles you and helps you to master yourself, to progress, to act in a better way and see more clearly. And finally, the best friend one can have — isn't he the Divine, to whom one can say everything, reveal everything? For there indeed is the source of all compassion, of all power to efface every error when it is not repeated,<sup>1</sup> to open the road to true realisation; it is he who can understand all, heal all, and always help on the path, help you not to fail, not to falter, not to fall, but to walk straight to the goal. He is the true friend, the friend of good and bad days, the one who can understand, can heal, and who is always there when you need him. When you call him sincerely, he is always there to guide and uphold you — and to love you in the true way.

*CWM 9: 56-58*

**The Mother**

## **Friendship between Man and Woman**

It is certainly easier to have friendship between man and man or between woman and woman than between man and woman, because there the sexual intrusion is normally absent. In a friendship between man and woman the sexual turn can at any moment come in in a subtle or a direct way and produce perturbations. But there is no impossibility of friendship between man and woman pure of this element; such friendships can exist and have always existed. All that is needed is that the lower vital should not look in at the back door or be permitted to enter. There is often a harmony between a masculine and a feminine nature, an attraction or an affinity which rests on something other than any open or covert lower vital (sexual) basis — it depends sometimes predominantly on the mental or on the psychic or on the higher vital, sometimes on a mixture of these for its substance. In such cases friendship is natural and there is little chance of other elements coming in to pull it downwards or break it.

## **Vital and psychic love**

It is also a mistake to think that the vital alone has warmth and the psychic is something frigid without any flame in it. A clear limpid goodwill is a very good and desirable thing — one has only to consider what a changed place the Asram would be if all had it for each other. But that is not what is meant by psychic love. Love is love and not merely goodwill. Psychic love can have a warmth and a flame as intense and more intense than the vital, only it is a pure fire, not dependent on the satisfaction of ego-desire or on the eating up of the fuel it embraces. It is a white flame, not a red one; but white heat is not inferior to the red variety in its ardour. It is true that the psychic love does not usually get its full play in human relations and human nature,

it finds the fullness of its fire and ecstasy more easily when it is lifted towards the Divine. In the human relation the psychic love gets mixed up with other elements which seek at once to use it and overshadow it. It gets an outlet for its own full intensities only at rare moments. Otherwise it comes in only as an element, but even so it contributes all the higher things in a love that is predominantly vital — all the finer sweetness, tenderness, fidelity, self-giving, self-sacrifice, reachings of soul to soul, idealising sublimations that lift up human love beyond itself come from the psychic. If it could dominate and govern and transmute the other elements, mental, vital, physical, of human love, then love could be on the earth some reflection or preparation of the real thing, an integral union of the soul and its instruments in a dual life. But even some imperfect appearance of that is rare.

Here we do not talk of psychic love between sadhaks, for the reason that that comes usually to be employed as a cover and excuse for things that are not at all psychic and have no place in the spiritual life. Our view is that the normal thing is in Yoga for the entire flame of the nature to turn towards the Divine and the rest must wait for the true basis; to build higher things on the sand and mire of the ordinary consciousness is not safe. That does not necessarily exclude friendships or comradeships, but these must be subordinate altogether to the central fire. If anyone makes meanwhile the relation with the Divine his one absorbing aim, that is quite natural and gives the full force to the sadhana. Psychic love finds itself wholly when it is the radiation of the diviner consciousness for which we are seeking; till then it is difficult for it to put out its undimmed integral self and figure.

P. S. Mind, vital, physical are properly instruments for the soul and spirit; when they work for themselves then they

produce ignorant and imperfect things — if they can be made into conscious instruments of the psychic and the spirit, then they get their own diviner fulfilment; that is the idea contained in what we call transformation in this Yoga.

CWSA 31: 307-08

Sri Aurobindo

Is it because we have defects in ourselves that we cannot tolerate them in others? What is the origin of the shock we feel?

Yes, in a general way it is the defects you have in yourselves which seem to you most shocking in others.

Later on, you come to understand that others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are.

\*

You told me, "I would be surprised if Y took your advice seriously." Does that mean that one should not take someone else's advice seriously?

As a general rule it is better not to give advice unless you are asked for it. But if you receive some advice from someone, you should think it over carefully and try to take advantage of it.

CWM 16: 297-98; 17: 36

The Mother

## Human Affection

### An unreliable thing

Human affection is obviously unreliable because it is so much bound up with selfishness and desire; it is a flame of the ego sometimes turbid and misty, sometimes more clear and brightly coloured — sometimes tamasic based on instinct and habit, sometimes rajasic and fed by passion or the cry for vital interchange, sometimes more sattwic and trying to be or look to itself disinterested. But fundamentally it depends on a personal need or a return of some kind inward or outward and when the need is not satisfied or the return ceases or is not given, it most often diminishes or dies or exists only as a tepid or troubled remnant of habit from the past or else turns for satisfaction elsewhere. The more intense it is, the more it is apt to be troubled by tumults, clashes, quarrels, egoistic disturbances of all kinds, selfishness, exactions, lapses even to rage and hatred, ruptures. It is not that these affections cannot last — tamasic instinctive affections last because of habit in spite of everything dividing the persons, e.g. certain family affections; rajasic affections can last sometimes in spite of all disturbances and incompatibilities and furious ruptures because one has a vital need of the other and clings because of that or because both have that need and are constantly separating to return and returning to separate, or proceeding from quarrel to reconciliation and from reconciliation to quarrel; sattwic affections last very often from duty to the ideal or with some other support though they may lose their keenness or intensity or brightness. But the true reliability is there only when the psychic element in human affection becomes strong enough to colour or dominate the rest. For that reason friendship is or rather can oftenest be the most durable of the human affec-

tions because there there is less interference of the vital and even though a flame of the ego it can be a quiet and pure fire giving always its warmth and light. Nevertheless reliable friendship is almost always with a very few; to have a horde of loving, unselfishly faithful friends is a phenomenon so rare that it can be safely taken as an illusion. In any case human affection whatever its value has its place, because through it the psychic being gets the emotional experiences it needs until it is ready to prefer the true to the apparent, the perfect to the imperfect, the divine to the human. As the consciousness has to rise to a higher level, so the activities of the heart also have to rise to that higher level and change their basis and character. Yoga is the founding of all the life and consciousness in the Divine, so also love and affection must be rooted in the Divine and a spiritual and psychic oneness in the Divine must be their foundation — to reach the Divine first leaving other things aside or to seek the Divine alone is the straight road towards that change. That means no attachment — it need not mean turning affection into disaffection or chill indifference. But X seems to want to take his vital emotions just as they are — *tels quels* — into the Divine—let him try and don't bother him with criticisms and lectures; if it can't be done, he will have to find it out himself.

\*

### **Limitations of human relationships**

It is not because of your nature or evil destiny that the vital cannot find the satisfaction it expected from relations with others. These relations can never give a full or permanent satisfaction; if they did, there would be no reason why the human being would ever seek the Divine. He would remain satisfied in the ordinary earth life. It is only when the Divine is found and the consciousness lifted up into the true consciousness that the true relations with others can come.

\*



Absence of love and fellow-feeling is not necessary for nearness to the Divine; on the contrary, a sense of closeness and oneness with others is a part of the divine consciousness into which the sadhak enters by nearness to the Divine and the feeling of oneness with the Divine. ...

On the other hand, human society, human friendship, love, affection, fellow-feeling are mostly and usually — not entirely or in all cases — founded on a vital basis and are ego-held at their centre. It is because of the pleasure of being loved, the pleasure of enlarging the ego by contact, mutual penetration of spirit, with another, the exhilaration of the vital interchange which feeds their personality that men usually love — and there are also other and still more selfish motives that mix with this essential movement. There are of course higher spiritual, psychic, mental, vital elements that come in or can come in; but the whole thing is very mixed, even at its best. This is the reason why at a certain stage with or without apparent reason the world and life and human society and relations and philanthropy (which is as ego-ridden as the rest) begin to pall.

CWSA 31: 296-97; 283, 285-86

**Sri Aurobindo**

*There is only one true love — it is the Divine Love; all other loves are diminutions, limitations and deformations of that Love. Even the love of the bhakta for his God is a diminution and often is tainted by egoism. But as one tends quite naturally to become like what one loves, the bhakta, if he is sincere, begins to become like the Divine whom he adores, and thus his love becomes purer and purer. To adore the Divine in the one whom one loves has often been suggested as a solution, but unless one's heart and thought are very pure, it can lead to deplorable abasements.*

CWM 16:297

***The Mother***

## Weakness in social relation

There is a great weakness in social relations, a very great weakness; and that is why, in fact, one gets angry and gets carried away and says things one should not say.

... Agitation, violence, anger, all these things are always, without exception, signs of weakness. And especially when one gets carried away in one's speech and says things one should not say, *this* indeed is the sign of a frightful mental weakness — mental and vital — frightful. Otherwise you may hear all the insults in the world, people may tell you all possible stupidities; if you are not weak, you may perhaps not smile outwardly, for it is not always good taste to smile, but deep within you, you are smiling, you let it pass, it does not touch you.... Simply, if your mind has formed the habit of being quiet as it is recommended here, and you have the perception of truth within yourself, you can hear anything at all. It does not even produce the semblance of a vibration — everything remains absolutely immobile and quiet. And then if the witness we were speaking about a while ago is there, looking on at the comedy, he surely smiles

But if you feel the vibrations which come from the other person who throws on you all his violence and anger, if you feel this... at first it does... and then, suddenly, there is a response; and then if you yourself begin to get into a temper, you may be sure that you are as weak as he.

*CWM 6: 372-73*

Human beings are in the habit of basing their relationships with others on physical, vital and mental contacts; that is why there is almost always discord and suffering. If, on the contrary, they based their relationships on psychic contacts (between soul and soul), they would find that behind the troubled appearances there is a profound and lasting harmony which can express itself in all the activities of life and cause disorder and suffering to be replaced by peace and bliss.

*CWM 10: 246*

**The Mother**

## The Sources of Disharmony

### Inequality of feelings

The inequality of feelings towards others, liking and disliking, is ingrained in the nature of the human vital. This is because some harmonise with one's own vital temperament, others do not; also there is the vital ego which gets displeased when it is hurt or when things do not go or people do not act according to its preferences or its idea of what they should do.

*CWSA 31: 312*

Well, I have said already that quarrels, cuttings are not a part of sadhana; the clashes and friction that you speak of are, just as in the outside world, rubbings of the vital ego. Antagonisms, antipathies, dislikes, quarrellings can no more be proclaimed as part of sadhana than sex impulses or acts can be part of sadhana. Harmony, goodwill, forbearance, equanimity are necessary ideals in the relation of sadhak with sadhak. One is not bound to mix, but if one keeps to oneself, it should be for reasons of sadhana, not out of other motives, — moreover it should be without any sense of superiority or contempt for others. ... If somebody finds that association with another for any reason raises undesirable vital feelings in him or her, he or she can certainly withdraw from that association as a matter of prudence until he or she gets over the weakness. But ostentation of avoidance, public cuttings etc. are not included in the necessity and betray feelings that equally ought to be overcome.

*CWSA 31: 347-48*

**Sri Aurobindo**

## Vital reactions

To feel hurt by what others do or think or say is always a sign of weakness and proof that the whole being is not exclusively turned towards the Divine, not under the divine influence alone. And then, instead of bringing with oneself the divine atmosphere made of love, tolerance, understanding, patience, it is one's ego that throws itself out, in response to another's ego, with stiffness and hurt feelings, and the disharmony is aggravated. The ego never understands that the Divine has different workings in different people and that to judge things from one's own egoistic point of view is a great mistake bound to increase the confusion. What we do with passion and intolerance cannot be divine, because the Divine works only in peace and harmony.

\*

The vital of some people calls always for confusion and disharmony, petty quarrels and confusion; they generally have also a kind of mania of perfection and believe that everybody is against them. To cure that is most difficult and requires a radical transformation of the nature.

The best when dealing with them is *not to mind* the reactions and go on doing what one has to do with simplicity and sincerity.

\*

Do not worry about the reactions of people, however unpleasant they may be — the vital is everywhere and in everybody full of impurities and the physical full of unconsciousness. These two imperfections have to be cured, however long it may take, and we have only to work at it patiently and courageously.

CWM 14: 279-80

**The Mother**

## Quarrels

You must never forget that I disapprove of quarrels and always consider that both sides are equally wrong. To surmount one's feelings, preferences, dislikes and impulses, is an indispensable discipline here.

\*

It is always wrong to quarrel, even if one is not the aggressor.

\*

When you start a quarrel it is as if you were declaring war on the Divine's work.

\*

Yes, all these quarrels are a very sad thing — they interfere terribly in the work and make everything more difficult.

\*

Before getting angry at the mistakes of others one should always remember one's own mistakes.

\*

That one feels sad for one's own faults, — this may, if necessary, be useful to strengthen one's resolution to correct them.

But that one can be offended by another's bad conduct, this has truly nothing to do with the spiritual life and the service of the Divine.

*CWM 14: 262-64*

## Narrowness and one-sidedness

The whole trouble comes from the fact that you cannot harmonise with someone unless he is in agreement with your own ideas and his opinion and way of doing things are in conformity with yours.

You must widen your consciousness and understand that everyone has his own law. It is necessary to find the ground of understanding and harmony in a happy combination of indi-

vidual wills and not to try that all may be the same in an identical will and action.

\*

One of the chief obstacles to the establishment of a progressive harmony is our eagerness to prove to an opponent that he is wrong and we are right.

\*

Among human beings, the most widely spread disease is mental narrowness. They understand only what is in their own consciousness and cannot tolerate anything else.

\*

A person who considers only his own opinion becomes more and more narrow.

\*

For each problem there is a solution that can give satisfaction to everybody, but for finding this ideal solution each one must want it, instead of meeting the others with the will to enforce one's own preference.

\*

Enlarge your consciousness and aspire for the satisfaction of all.

\*

You see only your side of the question, but if you want to widen your consciousness it would be better to look from all sides impartially. Later you will discover that this attitude has great advantages.

*CWM 14: 266-68*

**The Mother**

## Fault finding and criticism

There is no harm in seeing and observing [*the behaviour of others*] if it is done with sympathy and impartiality — it is the tendency unnecessarily to criticise, find fault, condemn others (often quite wrongly) which creates a bad atmosphere both for oneself and others. And why this harshness and cocksure condemnation? Has not each man his own faults — why should he be so eager to find fault with others and condemn them? Sometimes one has to judge but it should not be done hastily or in a censorious spirit.

\*

Men are always more able to criticise sharply the work of others and tell them how to do things or what not to do than skilful to avoid the same mistakes themselves. Often indeed one sees easily in others faults which are there in oneself but which one fails to see. These and other defects such as the last you mention are common to human nature and few escape them. The human mind is not really conscious of itself — that is why in Yoga one has always to look and see what is in oneself and become more and more conscious.

\*

It is the petty ego in each that likes to discover and talk about the (real or unreal) defects of others — and it does not matter whether they are real or unreal. The ego has no right to judge them, because it has not the right view or the right spirit. It is only the calm, disinterested, dispassionate, all-compassionate and all-loving Spirit that can judge and see rightly the strength and the weakness in each being.

CWSA 31: 351-52

**Sri Aurobindo**



*The next greatest rapture to the love of God, is the  
love of God in men; there, too,  
one has the joy of multiplicity.*

\*

*If thou canst not love the vilest worm and the foulest of  
criminals, how canst thou believe that thou hast  
accepted God in thy spirit?*

CWSA 12: 483, 485-86

**Sri Aurobindo**



## A Deeper Way to Heal

### The true liberation

This world is a world of conflict, suffering, difficulty, strain; it is made of it. It has not yet changed, it will take some time before changing. And for each one there is a possibility of getting out. If you lean back on the presence of the Supreme Grace, that is the *only* way out. ...

For your work there is nothing to say. You are doing it perfectly well, exactly as it has to be done; it is all right. Your work is quite all right. ...

Don't expect human appreciation — because human beings don't know on what grounds to appreciate something, and, moreover, when there is something that is superior to them, they don't like it.

*But where to get such a strength?*

Within you. The Divine Presence is in you. It is in you. You look for it outside; look inside. It is in you. The Presence is there. You want the appreciation of others to get strength — you will never get it. The strength is in you. If you want, you can aspire for what seems to you the supreme goal, supreme light, supreme knowledge, supreme love. But it is in you — otherwise you would never be able to contact it. If you go deep enough inside you, you will find it there, like a flame that is always burning straight up.

And don't believe that it is so difficult to do. It is because the look is always turned outside that you don't feel the Presence. But if, instead of looking outside for support, you concentrate and you pray — inside, to the supreme knowledge — to know at each moment what is to be done, the way to do it, and if you

give all you are, all you do in order to acquire perfection, you will feel that the support is there, always guiding, showing the way. And if there is a difficulty, then instead of wanting to fight, you hand it over, hand it over to the supreme wisdom to deal with it — to deal with all the bad wills, all the misunderstandings, all the bad reactions. If you surrender completely, it is no more your concern: it's the concern of the Supreme who takes it up and knows better than anybody else what is to be done. The only way out, only way out. There, my child.

*CWM 15: 399-400*

### **To know how to suffer**

If at any time a deep sorrow, a searing doubt or an intense pain overwhelms you and drives you to despair, there is an infallible way to regain calm and peace.

In the depths of our being there shines a light whose brilliance is equalled only by its purity; a light, a living and conscious portion of a universal godhead who animates and nourishes and illumines Matter, a powerful and unfailing guide for those who are willing to heed his law, a helper full of solace and loving forbearance towards all who aspire to see and hear and obey him. No sincere and lasting aspiration towards him can be in vain; no strong and respectful trust can be disappointed, no expectation ever deceived.

My heart has suffered and lamented, almost breaking beneath a sorrow too heavy, almost sinking beneath a pain too strong.... But I have called to thee, O divine comforter, I have prayed ardently to thee, and the splendour of thy dazzling light has appeared to me and revived me.

As the rays of thy glory penetrated and illumined all my being, I clearly perceived the path to follow, the use that can be made of suffering; I understood that the sorrow that held me in

its grip was but a pale reflection of the sorrow of the earth, of this abyss of suffering and anguish.

Only those who have suffered can understand the suffering of others; understand it, commune with it and relieve it. And I understood, O divine comforter, sublime Holocaust, that in order to sustain us in all our troubles, to soothe all our pangs, thou must have known and felt all the sufferings of earth and man, all without exception.

How is it that among those who claim to be thy worshippers, some regard thee as a cruel torturer, as an inexorable judge witnessing the torments that are tolerated by thee or even created by thy own will?

No, I now perceive that these sufferings come from the very imperfection of Matter which, in its disorder and crudeness, is unfit to manifest thee; and thou art the very first to suffer from it, to bewail it, thou art the first to toil and strive in thy ardent desire to change disorder into order, suffering into happiness, discord into harmony.

Suffering is not something inevitable or even desirable, but when it comes to us, how helpful it can be!

Each time we feel that our heart is breaking, a deeper door opens within us, revealing new horizons, ever richer in hidden treasures, whose golden influx brings once more a new and intenser life to the organism on the brink of destruction. And when, by these successive descents, we reach the veil that reveals thee as it is lifted, O Lord, who can describe the intensity of Life that penetrates the whole being, the radiance of the Light that floods it, the sublimity of the Love that transforms it for ever!

*CWM 2: 20-21*

**The Mother**

## **Suffering — A lever**

After having suffered acutely from their suffering, I turned towards Thee, trying to heal it by infusing into it a little of that divine Love which is the source of all peace and all happiness. We must not run away from suffering, we must not love and cultivate it either, we must learn how to go deep down into it sufficiently to turn it into a lever powerful enough for us to force open the doors of the eternal consciousness and enter the serenity of Thy unchanging Oneness.

Surely this sentimental and physical attachment which causes an agonizing wrench when bodies are separated, is childish from a certain point of view, when we contemplate the impermanence of outer forms and the reality of Thy essential Oneness; but, on the other hand, is not this attachment, this personal affection, an unconscious effort in men to realise outwardly, as far as possible, that fundamental oneness towards which they always move without even being aware of it? And precisely because of that, is not the suffering that separation brings one of the most effective means of transcending this outer consciousness, of replacing this superficial attachment by the integral realisation of Thy eternal Oneness?

This is what I wished for them all; this is what I ardently willed for them, and that is why, assured of Thy victory, certain of Thy triumph, I confided their grief to Thee that by illuminating it Thou mayst heal it.

O Lord, grant that all this beauty of affection and tenderness may be transformed into glorious knowledge.

Grant that the best may emerge from everything and Thy happy Peace reign over the earth.

*CWM 1: 89-90*

**The Mother**



The Mother and Sri Aurobindo  
Darshan, 24 April 1950

## A New Basis for Relationship

### The principle of this yoga

You seem not to have understood the principle of this Yoga. The old Yoga demanded a complete renunciation extending to the giving up of the worldly life itself. This Yoga aims instead at a new and transformed life. But it insists as inexorably on a complete throwing away of desire and attachment in the mind, life and body. Its aim is to refound life in the truth of the spirit and for that purpose to transfer the roots of all we are and do from the mind, life and body to a greater consciousness above the mind. That means that in the new life all the connections must be founded on a spiritual intimacy and a truth quite other than any which supports our present connections. One must be prepared to renounce at the higher call what are called the natural affections. Even if they are kept at all, it can only be with a change which transforms them altogether. But whether they are to be renounced or kept and changed must be decided not by the personal desires but by the truth above. All must be given up to the Supreme Master of the Yoga.

*CWSA 36: 369*

The idea that all sadhaks must be aloof from each other and at daggers drawn is itself a preconceived idea that must be abandoned. Harmony and not strife is the law of Yogic living.

... Moreover, all relations should pass from the vital to the spiritual basis with the vital only as a form and instrument of the spiritual;—this means that from whatever relations they have with each other all jealousy, strife, hatred, aversion, rancour and other evil vital feelings should be abandoned, for they can be no part of the spiritual life. So also all egoistic love and attachment will have to disappear — the love that loves only

for the ego's sake and as soon as the ego is hurt and dissatisfied ceases to love or even cherishes rancour and hate. There must be a real living and lasting unity behind the love. It is understood of course that such things as sexual impurity must disappear also.

*CWSA 31: 288-89*

There is a love in which the emotion is turned towards the Divine in an increasing receptivity and growing union. What it receives from the Divine it pours out on others, but freely without demanding a return. If you are capable of that, then that is the highest and most satisfying way to love.

*CWSA 31: 291*

**Sri Aurobindo**

### **Friendship or affection**

Friendship or affection excluded from the Yoga. Friendship with the Divine is a recognised relation in the sadhana. Friendships between the sadhaks exist and are encouraged by the Mother. Only we seek to found them on a surer basis than that on which the bulk of human friendships are insecurely founded. It is precisely because we hold friendship, brotherhood, love to be sacred things that we want this change — because we do not want to see them broken at every moment by the movements of the ego, soiled and spoiled and destroyed by the passions, jealousies, treacheries to which the vital is prone — it is to make them truly sacred and secure that we want them rooted in the soul, founded on the rock of the Divine. Our Yoga is not an ascetic Yoga: it aims at purity, but not at a cold austerity. Friendship and love are indispensable notes in the harmony to which we aspire. It is not a vain dream, for we have seen that even in imperfect conditions when a little of the indispensable element is there at the very root the thing is possible. It is dif-

difficult and the old obstacles still cling obstinately. But no victory can be won without a fixed fidelity to the aim and a long effort. There is no other way than to persevere.

\*

In Yoga friendship can remain, but attachment has to fall away or any such engrossing affection as would keep one tied to the ordinary life and consciousness — human relations must take quite a small and secondary place and not interfere with the turn to the Divine.

*CWSA 31: 294-95*

### **To love means to give**

When one gives one's love to another human being, the first mistake one generally makes is to want to be loved by the other person, not in his own way and according to his character, but in one's own way and to satisfy one's desires. This is the number one cause of all human miseries, disappointments and sufferings.

To love means to give oneself without bargaining — otherwise it is not love. But this is rarely understood and even more rarely practised. And the consequences are painful.

\*

It is the control over oneself that is the first thing needed, and especially the control over one's tongue! If people could learn to keep silent how many troubles would be avoided!

\*

So many things are said uselessly, they bring misunderstandings and bad feelings which could have been saved with silence.

If were spoken only the words that needed to be spoken, the world would be a very silent place.

*CWM 17: 370; 14: 203*

**The Mother**



## Sympathy and helping others

To want unwaveringly the welfare of another both in the head and the heart, is the best help one can give.

\*

Whatever or whomever you have handed over to the Divine, you should not be any longer attached or anxious about him or it but leave all to the Divine to do for the best.

\*

It is very good that the condition you speak of has settled itself — that is a great progress. 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 31: 320-21

Sri Aurobindo

## To love truly

*Mother, what kind of love is that which says, “If you love me, I shall love you”?*

If you love me, I shall love you? That’s exactly the way men speak: “If you love me, I love you, if you don’t love me, I don’t love you.” This is just the most human expression of love. And it goes still farther, they apply it also to their relation with the Divine. They say to the Divine: “If you do what I want, I shall say that you love me, and I shall love you. But if you don’t do what I want, then I won’t think at all that you love me, and I certainly will not love you.”

That’s how it is. That means that it becomes commercial.

*But “If you don’t love me, I shall love you”?*

That begins to be better!

And what is better still is not to ask oneself whether one is loved or not, one should be absolutely indifferent to that. And that begins to be true love: one loves because one loves, not at all because one receives a response to one’s love or because the other person loves you. All those conditions — that is not love. One loves because one cannot do otherwise but love. One loves because one loves. One doesn’t care at all about what will happen; one is perfectly satisfied with the feeling of one’s love. One loves because one loves.

All the rest is bargaining, it is not love.

And, moreover, one thing is certain: the moment one experiences true love, one doesn’t even put the question any longer. It seems altogether childish and ridiculous and insignificant to ask this question. One has the complete plenitude of joy and realisation the moment one experiences true love and one doesn’t at all need any kind of response. One is love, that’s all. And one has the plenitude of the satisfaction of love. There is no need at all of any reciprocity.

I tell you, so long as there is this calculation in the mind or the feelings and sensations, so long as there is some calculation, more or less acknowledged, it is bargaining, it is not love.

You can’t manage to understand?... I hope it will come one day!

All the rest is exactly what men have made of love. And besides it is not very pretty and leads to all kinds of things which are still less pretty, like jealousy, for instance, or envy, and in violent natures it goes as far as hatred. The small beginning is this: the need, when one loves, that what one loves or the person one loves should know that he is loved. But in the relation with the Divine: one loves the Divine but insists that the Divine

should know that one loves Him! That's the beginning of the fall. One does not even think about the real thing. It doesn't even slightly touch the mind.

One doesn't think: one loves, that's all. One loves and is in the plenitude of love and the intense joy of love, and then, that's all.

It is a long, long, long way to go from what men call "love" to true love — a long way.

I am not even speaking here about all the repulsive forms it takes in the ordinary human consciousness; I am telling you about the best conditions, about love in its best form, even the most disinterested. I don't know, if you question human beings, I would like to know very much the percentage of those who don't even care for reciprocity. Simply that. Not those who say: "If you love me, I love you", that indeed is at the very bottom of the ladder, right at the bottom, almost in the pit.... There is a still lower rung: "Love me and then I shall see if I love you." There you have to deal with altogether disgusting people. I am speaking only of the need of reciprocity: that is the first step of the descending scale.

However, you will understand this one day. You are still very young.

*CWM 15: 237-38*

**The Mother**

### **Love — Human and Divine**

When one loves the Divine truly and totally, then one also loves His creation and His creatures; and naturally, among His creatures, there may be some that one feels closer to and loves more specially. But then the love that one feels is not a selfish love of the ordinary human kind; it is no longer a love that wants to hold and possess, but a love that gives itself without asking anything in return.

To love for the joy of loving is the best condition for a peaceful and happy life; it amounts, in other words, to loving the Divine in all things.

If this culminates in wanting only what the Divine wants, then there is perfect peace.

*CWM 17:371*

For one who has known love for the Divine, all other forms of love are obscure and too mixed with pettiness and egoism and darkness; they are like a perpetual haggling or a struggle for supremacy and domination, and even among the best they are full of misunderstanding and irritability, of friction and incomprehension.

Moreover, it is a well-known fact that one grows into the likeness of what one loves. Therefore if you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone. Only one who has known the ecstasy of the exchange of love with the Divine can know how insipid and dull and feeble any other exchange is in comparison. And even if the most austere discipline is required to arrive at this exchange, nothing is too hard, too long or too severe in order to achieve it, for it surpasses all expression. ...

Since we have decided to reserve love in all its splendour for our personal relationship with the Divine, we shall replace it in our relations with others by a total, unvarying, constant and egoless kindness and goodwill that will not expect any reward or gratitude or even any recognition. However others may treat you, you will never allow yourself to be carried away by any resentment; and in your unmixed love for the Divine, you will leave him sole judge as to how he is to protect you and defend you against the misunderstanding and bad will of others.

You will await your joys and pleasures from the Divine alone. In him alone will you seek and find help and support. He

will comfort you in all your sorrows, guide you on the path, lift you up if you stumble, and if there are moments of failure and exhaustion, he will take you up in his strong arms of love and enfold you in his soothing sweetness.

CWM 12: 69-70

### **Passing from human to divine love**

*It is said that to become conscious of divine Love all other love has to be abandoned. What is the best way of rejecting the other love which clings so obstinately (laughter) and does not easily leave us?*

To go through it. Ah!

To go through, to see what is behind it, not to stop at the appearance, not to be satisfied with the outer form, to look for the principle which is behind this love, and not be content until one has found the origin of the feeling in oneself. Then the outer form will crumble of itself and you will be in contact with the divine Love which is behind all things.

That is the best way.

To want to get rid of the one in order to find the other is very difficult. It is almost impossible. For human nature is so limited, so full of contradictions and so exclusive in its movements that if one wants to reject love in its lower form, that is to say, human love as human beings experience it, if one makes an inner effort to reject it, one usually rejects the entire capacity of feeling love and becomes like a stone. And then sometimes one has to wait for years or centuries before there is a reawakening in oneself of the capacity to receive and manifest love.

Therefore, the best way when love comes, in whatever form it may be, is to try and pierce through its outer appearance

and find the divine principle which is behind and which gives it existence. Naturally, it is full of snares and difficulties, but it is more effective. That is to say, instead of ceasing to love because one loves wrongly, one must cease to love wrongly and want to love well.

For instance, love between human beings, in all its forms, the love of parents for children, of children for parents, of brothers and sisters, of friends and lovers, is all tainted with ignorance, selfishness and all the other defects which are man's ordinary drawbacks; so instead of completely ceasing to love—which, besides, is very difficult as Sri Aurobindo says, which would simply dry up the heart and serve no end—one must learn how to love better: to love with devotion, with self-giving, selfabnegation, and to struggle, not against love itself, but against its distorted forms: against all forms of monopolising, of attachment, possessiveness, jealousy, and all the feelings which accompany these main movements. Not to want to possess, to dominate; and not to want to impose one's will, one's whims, one's desires; not to want to take, to receive, but to give; not to insist on the other's response, but be content with one's own love; not to seek one's personal interest and joy and the fulfilment of one's personal desire, but to be satisfied with the giving of one's love and affection; and not to ask for any response. Simply to be happy to love, nothing more.

If you do that, you have taken a great stride forward and can, through this attitude, gradually advance farther in the feeling itself, and realise one day that love is not something personal, that love is a universal divine feeling which manifests through you more or less finely, but which in its essence is something divine.

The first step is to stop being selfish. For everyone it is the same thing, not only for those who want to do yoga but also in

ordinary life: if one wants to know how to love, one must not love oneself first and above all selfishly; one must give oneself to the object of love without exacting anything in return. This discipline is elementary in order to surmount oneself and lead a life which is not altogether gross.

As for yoga we may add something else: it is as I said in the beginning, the will to pierce through this limited and human form of love and discover the principle of divine Love which is behind it. Then one is sure to get a result. This is better than drying up one's heart. It is perhaps a little more difficult but it is better in every way, for like this, instead of egoistically making others suffer, well, one may leave them quiet in their own movement and only make an effort to transform oneself without imposing one's will on others, which even in ordinary life is a step towards something higher and a little more harmonious.

*CWM 8: 300-02*

### **Helping others and the world**

Suffering inflicted on others is not a good base on which to build spiritual realisation.

To advance alone on the path can be a form of egoism. One can liberate oneself alone only if the others refuse to follow. One must therefore first offer to lead them along. And if this burdens the advance and increases the difficulties, one should take it as the effect of a special Grace that tests the sincerity of the consecration in this way. The capacity to receive the divine help is in proportion to this sincerity.

*CWM 14: 275*

## Duty towards the Divine and Others

Duty towards the Divine is far more sacred than any social or family duty; it is all the more sacred because within the human collectivity it is almost wholly ignored or misunderstood.

\*

One who has given himself to the Divine has no longer any other duty than to make that consecration more and more perfect. The world and those who live in it have always wanted to put human — social and family — duty before duty to the Divine, which they have stigmatised as egoism. How indeed could they judge otherwise, they who have no experience of the reality of the Divine? But for the divine regard their opinion has no value, their will has no force. These are movements of ignorance, nothing more. You should not attempt to convince; above all, you should not let yourself be touched or shaken. You must shut yourself carefully within your ivory tower of consecration and await from the Divine alone help, protection, guidance and *approbation*. To be condemned by the whole world is nothing to him who knows that he has the approval of the Divine and his support.

Besides, has not mankind proved its utter incompetence in the organisation of its own existence? Governments succeed governments, regimes follow regimes, centuries pass after centuries, but human misery remains lamentably the same. It will always be so, as long as man remains what he is, blind and ignorant, closed to all spiritual reality. A transformation, an illumination of the human consciousness alone can bring about a real amelioration in the condition of humanity. Thus even from the standpoint of human life, it follows logically that the first duty of man is to seek and possess the divine consciousness.

CWM 14: 286



## **Divine Love**

Among those who have come into this world seeking to reveal the Divine here and transform earthly life, there are some who have manifested the Divine love in a greater fullness. In some the purity of the manifestation is so great that they are misunderstood by the whole of humanity and are even accused of being hard and unloving, although the Divine love is there. But it is in them divine and not human in its form as in its substance. For when man speaks of love, he associates it with an emotional and sentimental weakness. But the divine intensity of self-forgetfulness, the capacity of throwing oneself out entirely, making no restriction and no reservation, as a gift, asking nothing in exchange, this is little known to human beings. And when it is there unmixed with weak and sentimental emotions, they find it hard and cold; they cannot recognise in it the very highest and intensest power of love. ...

CWM 3: 70-71

**The Mother**

**... find your psychic being and you will understand what divine Love is. Do not try to come into direct contact with divine Love because this will yet again be a vital desire pushing you; you will perhaps not be aware of it, but it will be a vital desire.**

**You must make an effort to come into touch with your psychic being, to become aware and free in the consciousness of your psychic being, and then, quite naturally, spontaneously, you will know what divine Love is.**

CWM 4: 345-46

**The Mother**

*The inner loneliness can only be cured by the inner experience of union with the Divine; no human association can fill the void. In the same way, for the spiritual life the harmony with others must be founded not on mental and vital affinities, but on the divine consciousness and the union with the Divine. When one finds the Divine and finds others in the Divine, then the real harmony comes. Meanwhile what there can be is the goodwill and unity founded on the feeling of a common divine goal and the sense of being all children of the Mother. Real harmony can come only on a psychic or a spiritual basis.*

CWSA 31: 310-11

**Sri Aurobindo**

## 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: sadlecjrn@gmail.com  
URL: [www.sadlec.org](http://www.sadlec.org)**

**Rs.30.00**

**Vol. 50, No.10**

**Regd.:SSP/PY/42/2021-2023**

**ISSN 0972-0782**

**WPPNo. TN/PMG/(CCR)/WPP-471/21-2023**

**Date of Publication: 01. 05. 2021 (Monthly)**

**RNI No. 22334/71**

