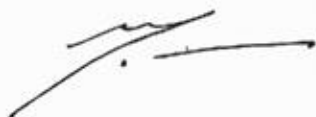




All India Magazine  
March 2024

Science of Living  
— A Simple Attitude

Be simple,  
Be happy,  
Remain quiet.  
Do your work as well as you can,  
Keep yourself always open towards me -  
This is all that is asked from you.



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# Science of Living — A Simple Attitude

(Words of Sri Aurobindo & the Mother)

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

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*This is all that is asked from you.*

*The Mother*

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*The object of the sadhana is opening  
of the consciousness to the Divine  
and the change of the nature.*

CWSA 29: 208

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Q: Sweet Mother, I have concentrated very much on the flame, but alas, my aspiration has not been strong enough to light it.*

It is not your work to light the fire.

As I told you, I am always lighting it — you have only to open yourself to receive it and tend it with your goodwill.

*CWM 17: 127-28*

**The Mother**

## Simplicity — The Consequence of Perfect Sincerity

AS soon as all effort disappears from a manifestation, it becomes very simple, with the simplicity of a flower opening, manifesting its beauty and spreading its fragrance without clamour or vehement gesture. And in this simplicity lies the greatest power, the power which is least mixed and least gives rise to harmful reactions. The power of the vital should be mistrusted, it is a tempter on the path of the work, and there is always a risk of falling into its trap, for it gives you the taste of immediate results; and, in our first eagerness to do the work well, we let ourselves be carried away to make use of this power. But very soon it deflects all our action from the right course and introduces a seed of illusion and death into what we do.

Simplicity, simplicity! How sweet is the purity of Thy Presence! . . .

CWM 1: 17

Integral simplicity: the simplicity which is the consequence of perfect sincerity.

CWM 14: 158

*Q: Sweet Mother, There are times when I feel like abandoning all my activities — the Playground, band, studies, etc. — and devoting all my time to work.*

In the outer nature there is often a tamasic tendency to simplify the conditions of life in order to avoid the effort of organising more complicated circumstances. But when one wants to progress in the integrality of the being, this simplification is hardly advisable.

CWM 16: 303

**The Mother**

## Spontaneity, Simplicity and Sincerity

To be spontaneous means not to think out, organise, decide and make an effort to realise with the personal will.

I am going to give you two examples to make you understand what true spontaneity is. One — you all know about it undoubtedly — is of the time Sri Aurobindo began writing the *Arya*,<sup>1</sup> in 1914. It was neither a mental knowledge nor even a mental creation which he transcribed: he silenced his mind and sat at the typewriter, and from above, from the higher planes, all that had to be written came down, all ready, and he had only to move his fingers on the typewriter and it was transcribed. It was in this state of mental silence which allows the knowledge — and even the expression — from above to pass through that he wrote the whole *Arya*, with its sixty-four printed pages a month. This is why, besides, he could do it, for if it had been a mental work of construction it would have been quite impossible.

That is true mental spontaneity.

And if one carries this a little further, one should never think and plan beforehand what one ought to say or write. One should simply be able to silence one's mind, to turn it like a receptacle towards the higher Consciousness and express as it receives it, in mental silence, what comes from above. That would be true spontaneity.

Naturally, this is not very easy, it asks for preparation.

And if one comes down to the sphere of action, it is still more difficult; for normally, if one wants to act with some kind of logic, one usually has to think out beforehand what one wants to do and plan it before doing it, otherwise one may be tossed about by all

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1. It was in the review *Arya*, within a period of six years (1914-1920), that Sri Aurobindo published most of his major works: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle* (originally *The Psychology of Social Development*), *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *The Future Poetry*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (originally a number of series under other titles).

sorts of desires and impulses which would be very far from the inspiration spoken about in *Wu Wei*; it would simply be movements of the lower nature driving you to act. Therefore, unless one has reached the state of wisdom and detachment of the Chinese sage mentioned in this story, it is better not to be spontaneous in one's daily actions, for one would risk being the plaything of all the most disorderly impulses and influences.

But once one enters the yoga and wants to do yoga, it is very necessary not to be the toy of one's own mental formations. If one wants to rely on one's experiences, one must take great care not to construct within oneself the notion of the experiences one wants to have, the idea one has about them, the form one expects or hopes to see. For, the mental formation, as I already have told you very often, is a real formation, a real creation, and with your idea you create forms which are to a certain extent independent of you and return to you as though from outside and give you the impression of being experiences. But these experiences which are either willed or sought after or expected are not spontaneous experiences and risk being illusions — at times even dangerous illusions.

Therefore, when you follow a mental discipline, you must be particularly careful not to imagine or want to have certain experiences, for in this way you can create for yourself the illusion of these experiences. In the domain of yoga, this very strict and severe spontaneity is *absolutely* indispensable.

For that, naturally, one must not have any ambition or desire or excessive imagination or what I call “spiritual romanticism”, the taste for the miraculous — all this ought to be very carefully eliminated so as to be sure of advancing fearlessly.

Now, after this preliminary explanation, I am going to read to you what I had written and have been asked to comment upon. These aphorisms perhaps call for explanation. I wrote this, inspired perhaps by the reading I was just speaking to you about, but it

was more than anything the expression of a personal experience:

***“One must be spontaneous in order to be divine.”***

This is what I have just explained to you. Then the question arises: how to be spontaneous?

***“One must be perfectly simple in order to be spontaneous.”***

And how to be perfectly simple?

***“One must be absolutely sincere in order to be perfectly simple.”***

And now, what does it mean to be absolutely sincere?

***“To be absolutely sincere is not to have any division, any contradiction in one’s being.”***

If you are made of pieces which are not only different but often quite contradictory, these pieces necessarily create a division in your being. For example, you have one part in yourself which aspires for the divine life, to know the Divine, to unite with Him, to live Him integrally, and then you have another part which has attachments, desires — which it calls “needs” — and which not only seeks these things but is quite upset when it does not have them. There are other contradictions, but this one is the most flagrant. There are others, for instance, like wanting to surrender completely to the Divine, to give oneself up totally to His Will and His Guidance, and at the same time, when the experience comes — a common experience on the path when one sincerely tries to give oneself up to the Divine — the feeling that one is nothing, that one can do nothing, that one doesn’t even exist outside the Divine; that is to say, if He were not there, one would not exist and could not do anything, one would not be anything at all.... This experience naturally comes as a help on the path of total self-giving, but there is a part of the being which, when the experience comes, rises up in a terrible revolt and says, “But, excuse me! I insist on existing, I insist on being something, I insist on doing things my-



self, I want to have a personality.” And naturally, the second one undoes all that the first had done.

These are not exceptional cases, this happens very frequently. I could give you innumerable examples of such contradictions in the being: when one part tries to take a step forward, the other one comes and demolishes everything. So you have to begin again all the time, and every time it is demolished. That is why you must do this work of sincerity which, when you perceive in your being a part that pulls the other way, makes you take it up carefully, educate it as one educates a child and put it in harmony with the central part. That is the work of sincerity and it is indispensable.

And naturally, when there is a unity, an agreement, a harmony among all the wills of the being, your being can become simple, candid and uniform in its action and tendencies. It is only when the whole being is grouped around a single central movement that you can be spontaneous. For if, within you, there is something which is turned towards the Divine and awaits the inspiration and impulse, and at the same time there is another part of the being which seeks its own ends and works to realise its own desires, you no longer know where you stand, and you can no longer be sure of what may happen, for one part can not only undo but totally contradict what the other wants to do. And surely, to be in harmony with what is said in *Wu Wei*, after having seen very clearly what is necessary and what ought to be done, it is recommended not to put either violence or too much zest into the realisation of this programme, for an excess of zest is detrimental to the peace and tranquillity and calm necessary for the divine Consciousness to express itself through the individual. And it comes to this:

Balance is indispensable, the path that carefully avoids opposite extremes is indispensable, too much haste is dangerous, impatience prevents you from advancing; and at the same time, inertia puts a drag on your feet.

CWM 8: 282-86

**The Mother**

## To Reproduce the Primal Simplicity

91. If Life alone were and not death, there could be no immortality; if love were alone and not cruelty, joy would be only a tepid and ephemeral rapture; if reason were alone and not ignorance, our highest attainment would not exceed a limited rationality and worldly wisdom.

*Sri Aurobindo, (Thoughts & Aphorism)*

**The Mother's explanation:** ... opposition and contraries are a stimulus to progress. Sri Aurobindo's idea would seem to be that opposites are the quickest and most effective means of shaping Matter so that it can intensify its manifestation. ...

... what we call life and death: It is this kind of constant "brooding" or presence of Death and the possibility of death, as it is said in *Savitri*: we have a constant companion throughout the journey from cradle to grave; we are constantly accompanied by this threat or presence of Death. Well, along with this, in the cells, there is a call for a Power of Eternity, with an intensity which would not be there except for this constant threat. Then one understands, one begins to feel quite concretely that all these things are only ways of intensifying the manifestation, of making it progress, of making it more perfect. And if the means are crude, it is because the manifestation itself is very crude. And as it becomes more perfect and fit to manifest that which is *eternally progressive*, the very crude means will give way to subtler ones and the world will progress without any need for such brutal oppositions.

... Nature, or rather Nature in her attempt at self-expression, was obliged to resort to an unbelievable and almost infinite complication in order to reproduce the primal Simplicity.

... From this excess of complication arises the possibility of a simplicity which would not be empty but full — a full simplicity, a simplicity that contains everything; whereas without these complications, simplicity is empty.

*CWM 10: 166-69*

**The Mother**

## Internal State of Cheerfulness

*HDsyam* is the active side of *sukham*; it consists in an active internal state of gladness and cheerfulness which no adverse experience mental or physical can trouble. Its perfection is God's stamp and seal on the *siddhi* of the *samatD*. It is in our internal being the image of the smile of Srikrishna playing, *bDlavat*, as the eternal *bDlaka* and *kumDra* in the garden of the world.

CWSA 10: 5-6

Sense of humour? It is the salt of existence. Without it the world would have got utterly out of balance — it is unbalanced enough already — and rushed to blazes long ago.

CWSA 31: 174

It is not necessary to be always serious of face or silent in doing the Yoga, but it is necessary to take the Yoga seriously and silence and inward concentration have a large place. One can't be all the time throwing oneself outward if to go inside and meet the Divine there is one's aim. But that does not mean that one has to be grave and gloomy all the time or gloomy a big part of the time.

CWSA 31: 175

Let the sweetness and the happy feeling increase, for they are the strongest sign of the soul, the psychic being awake and in touch with us. Let not mistakes of thought or speech or action disturb you — put them away from you as something superficial which the Power and Light will deal with and remove. Keep to the one central thing — your soul and these higher realities it brings with it.

CWSA 30: 344

**Sri Aurobindo**

## Try to be Happy

Try to be happy — immediately you will be closer to the Light.

*CWM 14: 193*

And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a... what shall I call it? — a kind of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is an English word which expresses this very well — cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

*CWM 8: 23*

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down. Keep smiling. I seem always to be joking but it is not mere joking. It is a confidence born from the psychic. A smile expresses the faith that nothing can stand against the Divine and that everything will come out all right in the end.

*CWM 14: 221*

The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic...

*CWM 9: 40*

Open yourself to the new Light that has dawned upon earth and a luminous path will spread in front of you.

*CWM 15: 97*

No joy is comparable to the feeling of the eternal Presence in one's heart.

*CWM 14: 195*

**The Mother**

## How to Remain Happy

The only way to true and lasting happiness is a complete and exclusive reliance on the Divine's Grace.

CWM 14: 193

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

CWM 16: 315

Check pessimism in your thoughts as much as you can and become a voluntary optimist.

CWM 12: 141

Let us always do the right thing and we shall always be quiet and happy.

CWM 14: 194

Indeed, nothing brings more happiness than a pure and disinterested love.

CWM 16: 175

Real happiness is of divine origin; it is pure and *unconditioned*. Ordinary happiness is of vital origin; it is impure and depends on circumstances.

CWM 17: 18

It is so good to be simple, simply good-willed, to do the best one can, and in the best way possible; not to build anything very considerable but only to aspire for progress, for light, a peace full of goodwill, and let That which knows in the world decide for you what you will become, and what you will have to do. One no longer has any cares, and one is ***perfectly happy!***

CWM 6: 248

The Mother

## Learn of Pure Delight

“The meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the Divine into the human and a self-immersion of man in the Divinity.

“But that immersion is not in the nature of an annihilation. Extinction is not the fulfilment of all this search and passion, suffering and rapture. The game would never have been begun if that were to be its ending.

“Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God. ...”

— Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glimpses*

*Q: Mother, how can one “learn of pure delight”?*

First of all, to begin with, one must through an attentive observation grow aware that desires and the satisfaction of desires give only a vague, uncertain pleasure, mixed, fugitive and altogether unsatisfactory. That is usually the starting-point.

Then, if one is a reasonable being, one must learn to discern what is desire and refrain from doing anything that may satisfy one’s desires. One must reject them without trying to satisfy them. And so the first result is exactly one of the first observations stated by the Buddha in his teaching: there is an infinitely greater delight in conquering and eliminating a desire than in satisfying it. Every sincere and steadfast seeker will realise after some time, sooner or later, at times very soon, that this is an absolute truth, and that the delight felt in overcoming a desire is incomparably higher than the small pleasure, so fleeting and mixed, which may be found in the satisfaction of his desires.

That is the second step.

Naturally, with this continuous discipline, in a very short time the desires will keep their distance and will no longer bother you. So you will be free to enter a little more deeply into your being and open yourself in an aspiration to... the Giver of Delight, the divine Element, the divine Grace. And if this is done with a sincere

self-giving — something that gives itself, offers itself and expects nothing in exchange for its offering — one will feel that kind of sweet warmth, comfortable, intimate, radiant, which fills the heart and is the herald of Delight.

After this, the path is easy. ...

There comes a time when one begins to be almost ready, when one can feel in everything, every object, in every movement, in every vibration, in all the things around — not only people and conscious beings, but things, objects; not only trees and plants and living things, but simply any object one uses, the things around one — this delight, this delight of being, of being just as one is, simply being. And one sees that all this vibrates like that. One touches a thing and feels this delight. But naturally, I say, one must have followed the discipline I spoke about at the beginning; otherwise, so long as one has a desire, a preference, an attachment or affinities and repulsions and all that, one cannot — one cannot.

And so long as one finds pleasures — pleasure, well, yes, vital or physical pleasure in a thing — one cannot feel this delight. For this delight is everywhere. This delight is something very subtle. One moves in the midst of things and it is as though they were all singing to you their delight. There comes a time when it becomes very familiar in the life around you. Of course, I must admit that it is a little more difficult to feel it in human beings, because there are all their mental and vital formations which come into the field of perception and disturb it. There is too much of this kind of egoistic asperity which gets mixed with things, so it is more difficult to contact the Delight there. But even in animals one feels it; it is already a little more difficult than in plants. But in plants, in flowers, it is so wonderful! They speak all their joy, they express it. And as I said, in all familiar objects, the things around you, which you use, there is a state of consciousness in which each one is happy to be, just as it is. So at that moment one knows one has touched

true Delight. And it is not conditioned. I mean it does not depend upon... it depends on nothing. It does not depend on outer circumstances, does not depend on a more or less favourable state, it does not depend on anything: it is a communion with the *raison d'être* of the universe.

And when this comes it fills all the cells of the body. It is not even a thing which is thought out — one does not reason, does not analyse, it is not that: it is a *state* in which one lives. And when the body shares in it, it is so fresh — so fresh, so spontaneous, so... it no longer turns back upon itself, there is no longer any sense of self-observation, of self-analysis or of analysing things. All that is like a canticle of joyous vibrations, but very, very quiet, without violence, without passion, nothing of all that. It is very subtle and very intense at the same time, and when it comes, it seems that the whole universe is a marvellous harmony. Even what is to the ordinary human consciousness ugly, unpleasant, appears marvellous.

Unfortunately, as I said, people, circumstances, all that, with all those mental and vital formations — that disturbs it all the time. Then one is obliged to return to this ignorant, blind perception of things. But otherwise, as soon as all this stops and one can get out of it... everything changes. As he says there, at the end: everything changes. A marvellous harmony. And it is all Delight, true Delight, real Delight.

This demands a little work.

And this discipline I spoke about, which one must undergo, if it is practised with the aim of finding Delight, the result is delayed, for an egoistic element is introduced into it, it is done with an aim and is no longer an offering, it is a demand. and then.... It comes, it will come, even if it takes much longer — when one asks nothing, expects nothing, hopes for nothing, when it is simply that, it is self-giving and aspiration, and the spontaneous need without any bargaining — the need to be divine, that's all.

CWM 9: 20-23

**The Mother**



### SECTION 3: REMAIN QUIET

## Quietness

Quietness, quietness, a calm and concentrated strength, so quiet that nothing can shake it — this is the indispensable basis for the integral realisation.

\*

Surely to be quiet is not *tamas*. In fact it is only in quietness that the proper thing can be done. What I call quietness is to do work without being disturbed by anything and to observe everything without being disturbed by anything.

\*

In quietness you will feel that the divine force, help and protection are always with you.

\*

The only thing you have to do is to remain quiet, undisturbed, solely turned towards the Divine; the rest is in His hands.

\*

It is in quietness, peace and silence that the spiritual forces act. All agitation and excitement come from an adverse influence.

\*

It is not in the outward circumstances that you must look for quietness, it is from inside yourself. Deep inside the being there is a peace that brings quietness in the whole being down to the body, if we allow it to do so.

It is that peace you must seek and then you will get the quietness you wish for.

*CWM 14: 135, 142-145*

*Q: The pressure is constantly there. Grant me quietness, my sweet Mother.*

I never cease pouring peace and quietness and calm on you — why don't you accept them.

*Q: What must I do to accept the peace and quietness and calm?*

Want them sincerely and integrally — not only with one part of your being.

*CWM 17: 60*

You are not so far from me as you think. You have only to calm the agitation of your mind and vital a little, remain a bit quiet and concentrated, and at once you will find my presence within you and around you.

*CWM 17: 68-69*

If he keeps his mind quiet and his heart peaceful he will cope with the situation.

*CWM 17: 413*

A strong being is always quiet. It is weakness that causes restlessness.

*CWM 16: 125*

**The Mother**

**I**n all there lacks the unchanging peace of the Divine's sovereign contemplation, and the calm vision of the Divine's immutable eternity.

*CWM 16: 125*

**The Mother**

## Meaning of "One Must be Calm"

Someone has asked me what I meant by these words:

*"One must be calm."*

It is obvious that when I tell someone, "Be calm", I mean many different things according to the person. But the first indispensable calm is mental quietude, for generally that is the one that's most lacking. When I tell someone, "Be calm", I mean: Try not to have restless, excited, agitated thoughts; try to quieten your mind and to stop turning around in all your imaginations and observations and mental constructions.

One could justifiably add a question: You tell us "Be calm", but what should we do to be calm?... The answer is always more or less the same: you must first of all feel the need for it and want it, and then aspire, and then try! For trying, there are innumerable methods which have been prescribed and attempted by many. These methods are generally long, arduous, difficult; and many people get discouraged before reaching the goal, for, the more they try, the more do their thoughts start whirling around and becoming restless in their heads.

For each one the method is different, but first one must feel the need, for whatever reason it may be — whether because one is tired or because one is overstrained or because one truly wants to rise beyond the state one lives in — one must first understand, feel the need of this quietude, this peace in the mind. And then, afterwards, one may try out successively all the methods, known ones and new, to attain the result.

Now, one quickly realises that there is another quietude which is necessary, and even very urgently needed — this is vital quietude, that is to say, the absence of desire. Only, the vital when not sufficiently developed, as soon as it is told to keep quiet, either goes to sleep or goes on strike; it says, "Ah! no. Nothing do-

ing! I won't go any farther. If you don't give me the sustenance I need, excitement, enthusiasm, desire, even passion, I prefer not to move and I won't do anything any longer." So there the problem becomes a little more delicate and perhaps even more difficult still; for surely, to fall from excitement into inertia is very far from being a progress! One must never mistake inertia or a somnolent passivity for calm.

Quietude is a very positive state; there is a positive peace which is not the opposite of conflict—an active peace, contagious, powerful, which controls and calms, which puts everything in order, organises. It is of this I am speaking; when I tell someone, "Be calm", I don't mean to say "Go and sleep, be inert and passive, and don't do anything", far from it!... True quietude is a very great force, a very great strength. In fact one can say, looking at the problem from the other side, that all those who are really strong, powerful, are always very calm. It is only the weak who are agitated; as soon as one becomes truly strong, one is peaceful, calm, quiet, and one has the power of endurance to face the adverse waves which come rushing from outside in the hope of disturbing one. This true quietude is always a sign of force. Calmness belongs to the strong.

And this is true even in the physical field. I don't know if you have observed animals like lions, tigers, elephants, but it is a fact that when they are not in action, they are always so perfectly still. A lion sitting and looking at you always seems to be telling you, "Oh, how fidgety you are!" It looks at you with such a peaceful air of wisdom! And all its power, energy, physical strength are there, gathered, collected, concentrated and — without a shadow of agitation — ready for action when the order is given.

I have seen people, many people, who could not sit still for half an hour without fidgeting. They had to move a foot or a leg, or an arm or their head; they had to stir restlessly all the time, for they did not have the power or the strength to remain quiet.

This capacity to remain still when one wants to, to gather all one's energies and spend them as one wishes, completely if one wants, or to apportion them as one wants in action, with a perfect calm even in action — that is always the sign of strength. It may be physical strength or vital strength or mental strength. But if you are in the least agitated, you may be sure there is a weakness somewhere; and if your restlessness is integral, it is an integral weakness.

CWM 8: 328-330

The Mother

## Quietness of Mind

Silence is always good; but I do not mean by quietness of mind entire silence. I mean a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to be open to the Force that will change the nature. The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it more difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily. It should be possible to see things that have to be changed in you without being upset or depressed; the change is the more easily done.

CWSA 29: 161

To be calm, steady, fixed in the spirit, *dhīra*, *sthira*, this quietude of the mind, **this separation of the inner Purusha from the outer Prakriti** is very helpful, almost indispensable. So long as the being is subject to the whirl of thoughts or the turmoil of the vital movements one cannot be thus calm and fixed in the spirit. To detach oneself, to stand back from them, to feel them separate from oneself is indispensable.

CWSA 29: 160

How can the mind find out or decide what is the right thing to do for your sadhana? The more it is active in that way, the more confusion there will be. In sadhana the mind has to be quiet, fixed in aspiration towards the Divine — the true experience and change will come in the quietude of the mind from within and from above.

\*

To quiet your mind means to stop thinking about the things that disturb you and let the peace and power manifest themselves and work. The “living inside” will come of itself in that case — that is to say, you will feel the inner peace and the consciousness that comes with it more and more as **yourself** and all else as something outer and superficial.

\*

There is no possibility of doing this Yoga, if one cannot give himself to the Divine Power and trust to its workings. If one lives only in the mind and its questioning and ideas, it is not possible. The test of capacity is to be able to quiet the mind, to feel a greater Divine Power at work in one, the Power of the Mother, and to be able to trust to it and aid its workings by the rejection of all that contradicts them in the nature.

CWSA 31: 27-28

Sri Aurobindo

*Our nature acts on a basis of confusion and restless compulsion to action, the Divine acts freely out of a fathomless calm. Into that abyss of tranquillity we must plunge and become that, if we are to annul the hold of this lower nature upon the soul.*

CWSA 23: 365

Sri Aurobindo

## All Work is a School of Experience

If you don't do anything, you cannot have any experience. The whole life is a field of experience. Each movement you make, each thought you have, each work you do, can be an experience, and must be an experience; and naturally work in particular is a field of experience where one must apply all the progress which one endeavours to make inwardly.

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don't know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness — you can become aware of all this by working. But if you remain enclosed in a meditation that's altogether personal, you may enter into a total illusion and never come out of it, and believe that you have realised extraordinary things, while really you have only the impression, the illusion that you have done so.

*CWM 7:287-88*

THE outer life, the activity of each day and each instant, is it not the indispensable complement of our hours of meditation and contemplation? And is not the proportion of time given to

each the exact image of the proportion which exists between the amount of effort to be made for the preparation and realisation? For meditation, contemplation, Union is the result obtained — the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and repass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be thus passed one after the other through the crucible before outer activity becomes needless for the integral development. Then is this activity turned into the means to manifest Thee so as to awaken the other centers of consciousness to the same dual work of the forge and the illumination. Therefore are pride and satisfaction with oneself the worst of all obstacles. Very modestly we must take advantage of all the minute opportunities offered to knead and purify some of the innumerable elements, to make them supple, to make them impersonal, to teach them forgetfulness of self and abnegation and devotion and kindness and gentleness; and when all these modes of being have become habitual to them, then are they ready to participate in the Contemplation, and to identify themselves with Thee in the supreme Concentration. That is why it seems to me that the work must be long and slow even for the best and that striking conversions cannot be integral. They change the orientation of the being, they put it definitively on the straight path; but truly to attain the goal none can escape the need of innumerable experiences of every kind and every instant.

CWM 1:6-7

The Mother

***Work is part of the Yoga and it gives the best opportunity for calling down the Presence, the Light and the Power into the vital and its activities; it increases also the field and the opportunity of surrender.***

CWSA 32: 247

**Sri Aurobindo**



## Progressive Perfection

The first condition is not to have one's own personal interest as a goal.

The first qualities needed are boldness, courage and perseverance.

And then to be conscious that one knows nothing compared to what one ought to know, that one can do nothing compared to what one ought to do, that one is nothing compared to what one ought to be.

One must have an invariable will to acquire what is lacking in one's nature, to know what one does not yet know, to be able to do what one is not yet able to do.

One must constantly progress in the light and peace that come from the absence of personal desires.

One could take as a programme:

“Always better. Forward!”

And to have only one goal: to know the Divine in order to be able to manifest Him.

Persevere, and what you cannot do today you will be able to do tomorrow.

*CWM 16: 430*

\*

And it is there we have the solution of the problem. You can at every minute make the gift of your will in an aspiration — and an aspiration which formulates itself very simply, not just “Lord, Thy will be done”, but “Grant that I may do as well as I can the best thing to do.”

You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do or how to do it, but you can place your will at the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible.

You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself

getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn't it? One must do things with all the ardour of one's soul, with all the strength of one's will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible. What others do is not your concern — this is something I shall never be able to repeat to you often enough.

Never say, “So-and-so does not do this”, “So-and-so does something else”, “That one does what he should not do” — **all this is not your concern.** You have been put upon earth, in a physical body, with a definite aim, which is to make this body as conscious as possible, make it the most perfect and most conscious instrument of the Divine. He has given you a certain amount of substance and of matter in all the domains — mental, vital and physical — in proportion to what He expects from you, and all the circumstances around you are also in proportion to what He expects of you, and those who tell you, “My life is terrible, I lead the most miserable life in the world”, are donkeys! **Everyone has a life appropriate to his total development, everyone has experiences which help him in his total development, and everyone has difficulties which help him in his total realisation.**

CWM 4:117-18

The Mother

*Whatever work you do, do it as perfectly as you can.  
That is the best service to the Divine in man.*

\*

*Let nothing short of perfection be your ideal in work  
and you are sure to become a true instrument  
of the Divine.*

CWM 14: 306, 304

The Mother

## Did You Know This?

The Master and Mover of our works is the One, the Universal and Supreme, the Eternal and Infinite. He is the transcendent unknown or unknowable Absolute, the unexpressed and unmanifested Ineffable above us; but he is also the Self of all beings, the Master of all worlds, transcending all worlds, the Light and the Guide, the All-Beautiful and All-Blissful, the Beloved and the Lover. He is the Cosmic Spirit and all-creating Energy around us; he is the Immanent within us. All that is is he, and he is the More than all that is, and we ourselves, though we know it not, are being of his being, force of his force, conscious with a consciousness derived from his; even our mortal existence is made out of his substance and there is an immortal within us that is a spark of the Light and Bliss that are for ever. No matter whether by knowledge, works, love or any other means, to become aware of this truth of our being, to realise it, to make it effective here or elsewhere is the object of all Yoga. ...

The Master of the work does not reveal himself at once to the seeker. Always it is his Power that acts behind the veil, but it is manifest only when we renounce the egoism of the worker, and its direct movement increases in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more complete. Only when our surrender to his Divine Shakti is absolute, shall we have the right to live in his absolute presence. ...

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; ... The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; ... The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker.

CWSA 23: 243, 247

**Sri Aurobindo**



A Wisdom knows and guides the mystiered world;  
A Truth-gaze shapes its beings and events.

*Savitri*, 271

**Sri Aurobindo**

## The Divine Does the Sadhana in Us

In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the Jiva in the lower nature.

In Yoga also it is the Divine who is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana; it is his Shakti with her light, power, knowledge, consciousness, Ananda, acting upon the adhara and, when it is opened to her, pouring into it with these divine forces that makes the Sadhana possible.

*CWSA 32: 6*

The true love for the Divine is a self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger — for these things are not in its composition.

In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely — and this represents itself in an inner giving — her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards.

It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness.

*CWSA 29: 338*

**Sri Aurobindo**

### ***Q: Mother, How is the Divine the Sadhana?***

Because it is the Divine who does the sadhana in the being. Without the Divine there would be no sadhana. Only, you know nothing about it... you think — you are under the illusion — that it is you. And precisely, so long as you are under this illusion, you must

make an effort; but the truth is that it is the Divine who does the sadhana in you, and that without the Divine there would be no sadhana.

*Q: Here it is written: "... the Divine... is the Sadhaka and the Sadhana." (Another child) Then, Mother, why the personal effort? If it is the Divine who does the sadhana, let the Divine do it; and where is the personal effort?*

Yes, this is precisely what people say in their laziness! But if you were not lazy, you wouldn't say it! *(Laughter)*

*Q: What does personal effort mean?*

Effort which thinks it is personal. You have the sense of your separate person. Do you feel that you are the Divine, and only the Divine? No! *(Laughter)* Well, the Divine is this... Precisely, so long as you feel that you are Manoj, well, Manoj must make an effort. If you can completely get rid of the notion of Manoj, there is no longer anything but the Divine, and it is the Divine who will make the effort, naturally!... But so long as there is a Manoj, it is Manoj who has to make the effort.

*Q: But when Manoj makes the effort, it is the Divine in Manoj who is making the effort !*

Perhaps, but Manoj knows nothing about it! *(Laughter)* I say simply that if there were no Divine, Manoj could not make the effort. But Manoj is not yet in a state to know that, so he knows that he is making an effort.

*Manoj: But now you have told me ! Today I know, so...*

*(Instantaneously)* Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha !... *(Laughter)* Mental knowledge is not enough, you must have the practical experience. ...

## Openness Towards the Divine

... openness is a **state** of consciousness which keeps it turned to the Mother, free from other movements, expecting and able to receive what may come from the Divine.

*CWSA 29: 105*

To be open is simply to be so turned to the Mother that her Force can work in you without anything refusing or obstructing her action. If the mind is shut up in its own ideas and refuses to allow her to bring in the Light and the Truth, if the vital clings to its desires and does not admit the true initiative and impulses that the Mother's power brings, if the physical is shut up in its desire, habits and inertia and does not allow the Light and Force to enter in it and work, then one is not open.

It is not possible to be entirely open all at once in all the movements, but there must be a central opening in each part and a dominant aspiration or will in each part (not in the mind alone) to admit only the Mother's workings, the rest will then be progressively done.

*CWSA 32: 151*

Always keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement.

*CWSA 29: 189*

Opening is a thing that happens of itself by sincerity of will and aspiration.

*CWSA 29: 105*

Surrender is the best way of opening; but aspiration and quietness can do it up to a certain point so long as there is not the surrender.  
CWSA 29: 106

It is by the constant remembrance that the being is prepared for the full opening.  
CWSA 32: 167

To remain open to the Mother is to remain always quiet and happy and confident, not restless, not grieving or desponding, to let her force work in you, guide you, give you knowledge, give you peace and Ananda. If you cannot keep yourself open, then aspire constantly but quietly that you may be open.  
CWSA 32: 151

It is true that the Force can work effectively without any effort on your part. It is not the effort, it is the assent of the being that it needs for its work.  
CWSA 31: 721

Well, that is the idea in Yoga — that by a right passivity one opens oneself to something greater than one's limited self, and effort is only useful for getting that condition.  
CWSA 29: 108

To be a Yogi, a Sannyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here. The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater than your own; it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the Divine Mother.

CWSA 32: 143

**Sri Aurobindo**

### **A Mantra / Prayer Given by Sri Aurobindo**

*OM Sri Aurobindo Mira*

*Open my mind, my heart, my life to your Light, your Love, your Power. In all things may I see the Divine.*

*(This was given by Sri Aurobindo to a Sadhak, 16.07.1938)*



## How the Opening Comes

First of all you must feel the need for it.

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

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

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

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

pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well.”

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

*Q: But Mother, even when one tries to think that one is powerless, there is something which believes one is powerful. So?*

Ah, yes, ah, yes! Ah, it is very difficult to be sincere.... That is why the blows multiply and sometimes become terrible, because that's the only thing which breaks your stupidity. This is the justification of calamities. Only when you are in an acutely painful situation and indeed before something that affects you deeply, then that makes the stupidity melt away a little. But as you say, even when there is something that melts, there is still a little something which remains inside. And that is why it lasts so long...

How many blows are needed in life for one to know to the very depths that one is *nothing*, that one can do *nothing*, that one *does not exist*, that one is *nothing*, that there is no entity without the divine Consciousness and the Grace. From the moment one knows it, it is over; all the difficulties have gone. When one knows it integrally and there is nothing which resists... but till that moment... And it takes very long.

CWM 6: 322-24

**The Mother**

## Receptivity Should be Increased

Openness is the will to receive and to utilise for progress the force and influence; the constant aspiration to remain in touch with the Consciousness; the faith that the force and consciousness are always with you, around you, inside you and that you have only to let nothing stand in the way of your receiving them.

\*

Open to the consciousness which is working on and in you and keep always as quiet and peaceful as you can.

\*

“To open more to love and to the light.” This is exactly the answer I send to your last letter. Rise higher in the consciousness, love more widely, open to the light — and all divergences will disappear. You must be as vast and comprehensive as the world to do the Yoga.

CWM 14: 151-52

*Q: My dear mother, I don't know what to do. I want to open to you, but something prevents me from opening.*

My dear child, You find it difficult to open because you have not yet made the resolution to allow my will, and not your own, to govern your life. As soon as you have understood the need for this, everything will become easier — and you will at last be able to acquire the peace you need so much.

I am always with you in this effort and aspiration.

CWM 16: 156

*Q: Your hands are open to give everything, but I can only receive a small part of it because I am not receptive enough.*

This is the exact image of the state of the world which suffers

because it is not receptive, when it could live in beatitude if it would open to the Divine Love.

But there is a remedy:

Sincere and constant aspiration.

CWM 16: 365

My love is always with you; if then you do not feel it, it is because you are not capable of receiving it. It is your receptivity that is lacking and should be increased; for this you must open yourself, **and one opens oneself only if one gives oneself.** Surely you are trying more or less consciously to draw the forces and the divine love towards you. The method is bad. Give yourself without calculating and without expecting anything in return, and then you will become capable of receiving.

CWM 14: 155

The Mother

*True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity — a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.*

CWM 5:46

The Mother

## Conversation of a Sadhak with the Mother

One day I asked the Mother, "I have been doing the yoga for many years but I am not absolutely certain how to do the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. I read all the books and try to do the yoga but I am not certain how far I have progressed." I asked the Mother to help me.

"You are doing it all wrong," She said.

"But what shall I do?" I asked.

She replied, "I will do the yoga for you." I was thrilled!

"What do I have to do?" I then asked.

"Give yourself over to me and I will do it for you," She said.

I asked, "How...?" She asked me, "Do you sincerely want to?"

I answered, "Yes, certainly Mother."

Then the Mother asked, "When you get up in the morning what is the first thing you do?"

I said, "I brush my teeth." She asked, "How do you brush your teeth?"

I wondered, "How?! Like everybody else does."

She said, "Then you're doing it *unconsciously*. Instead, think of me while you're doing it. Think that I'm doing it.

"Or when you're washing your face, think that I'm doing it with you, or when you're eating that I'm eating with you, that I'm enjoying your food with you."

She added, "When you go to sleep that is the time when you should be very conscious of me. Let me put you to sleep and then the whole night you will have a conscious sleep. When you awake and begin your day you will then begin it in a more conscious way."

(Source: *Udar, One of the Mother's Children*, p.141)

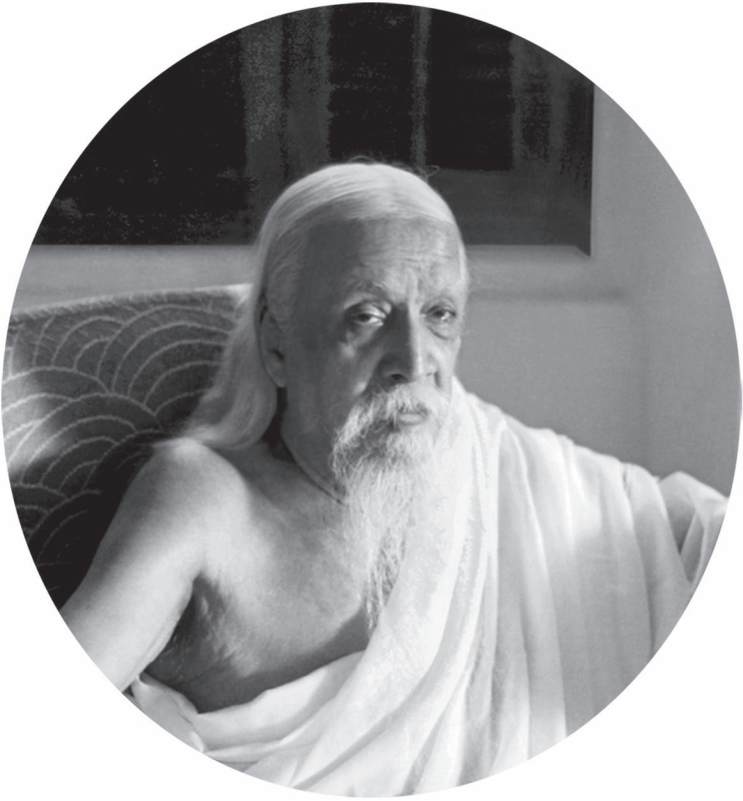
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Whatever you do, always remember the Divine.

CWM 14: 10

The Mother

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Broadly, the sadhana consists of a progressive surrender of oneself — inward and based upon it the outward also — to the Guru, to the Divine; meditation, concentration, work, service — all these are means for a self-gathering in all one's movements with the sole aim of delivering oneself into the hands of a Higher Power for being worked on and led towards the Goal.

The Mother guides, helps each according to his nature and need, and, where necessary, herself intervenes with her Power enabling the sadhak to withstand the rigours and demands of the Path. She has placed herself — with all the Love, Peace, Knowledge and Consciousness that she is — at the disposal of every aspiring soul that looks for help.

CWSA 32: 332

**Sri Aurobindo**

## Ego-centric to God-centric Attitude

(Make the Divine the Living Centre of your Being)

... first stages of the sadhana are with almost everybody ego-centric. The main idea in it is always one's own sadhana, one's own endeavour, one's own development, perfection, siddhi. It is inevitable for most, for without that personal endeavour there would not be sufficient will or push to bring about the first necessary changes. But none of these things — development, perfection or siddhi — can really come in any degree of completeness or un-mixed finality until this ego-centric attitude changes into the God-centric, until it becomes the development, perfection, siddhi of the Divine Consciousness, its will and its instrumentation in this body — and that can only be when these things become secondary, and bhakti for the Divine, love for the Divine, oneness with the Divine in consciousness, will, heart and body, become the sole aim — the rest is then only the fulfilment of the Divine Will by the Divine Power. This attitude is never difficult for the psychic, it is its natural position and feeling...

CWSA 31: 229

As for Krishna, why not approach simply and straight? **The simple approach means trust.** If you pray, trust that he hears. If the reply takes long in coming, trust that he knows and loves and that he is wisest in the choice of the time. Meanwhile quietly clear the ground, so that he may not have to trip over stone and jungle when he comes. That is my suggestion and I know what I am saying — for whatever you may say, I know very well all human difficulties and struggles and I know of the cure. That is why I press always on the things that would minimise and shorten the struggles and difficulties, — the psychic turn, faith, perfect and simple confidence and reliance.

CWSA 29: 487

Sri Aurobindo

## Rigid Standardisation Not Necessary

The one rule of the gnostic life would be the self-expression of the Spirit, the will of the Divine Being; that will, that self-expression could manifest through extreme simplicity or through extreme complexity and opulence or in their natural balance, — for beauty and plenitude, a hidden sweetness and laughter in things, a sunshine and gladness of life are also powers and expressions of the Spirit. In all directions the Spirit within determining the law of the nature would determine the frame of the life and its detail and circumstance. In all there would be the same plastic principle; a rigid standardisation, however necessary for the mind's arrangement of things, could not be the law of the spiritual life. A great diversity and liberty of self-expression based on an underlying unity might well become manifest; but everywhere there would be harmony and truth of order.

CWSA 21: 1104

Sri Aurobindo

### O Thou!

*O Thou source of all love and all light, Thou whom we cannot know in Thyself but can manifest ever more completely and perfectly, Thou whom we cannot conceive but can approach in profound silence. ...*

*Let that true love be born which soothes all suffering; establish that immutable peace wherein resides true power; give us the sovereign knowledge which dispels all darkness. ...*

*From the infinite depths to this most external body, in its smallest elements, Thou dost move and live and vibrate and set all in motion, and the whole being is now only a single block, infinitely multiple yet absolutely coherent, animated by one tremendous vibration: Thou.*

CWM 1: 179

June 20, 1914

**The Mother**





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

CWSA 29: 367

*Sri Aurobindo*



*Our Gratitude and consecration to the  
Mother and Sri Aurobindo*

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