



All India Magazine

November 2024

Sincerity



Cover Page Flower:

Simple Sincerity

The beginning of all progress.

Spiritual Significance and explanation of the flower given by the Mother

Botanical name: Aster amellus

Small single compositae flower with narrow white ray florets and a centre of tiny yellow disc florets; borne in corymbs. An attractive perennial herb.

ALL INDIA MAGAZINE

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

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Phone Nos:(0413) 2336396-97-98

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

SINCERITY

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

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Editorial note: *Spiritual evolution is a vast and complex process that moves along several different lines. But whatever the line of spiritual development we pursue, the one single most important element required is sincerity. The fruit of the sadhana depends upon the sincerity of the practice. This issue is dedicated to this most important fundamental quality of sincerity.*



*If you do your work as an offering which you lay in all
sincerity at the feet of the Divine,
work will do you as much good as meditation.*

CWM 16: 178

The Mother

What Is Sincerity

Degrees of Sincerity

Sincerity means to accept the Divine influence only and not that of lower forces.

CWSA 29: 50

To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life.

CWSA 29: 51

Sri Aurobindo

To be sincere, all the parts of the being must be united in their aspiration for the Divine — not that one part wants and others refuse or revolt.

CWM 14: 65

Q: Sweet Mother, what does “sincerity” mean, exactly?

There are several degrees of sincerity.

...The first degree, you see, is when someone claims, for example, to have a very great aspiration and to want the spiritual life and, at the same time, does completely... how to put it? ... shamelessly, things which are most contradictory to the spiritual life. This is indeed a degree of sincerity, rather of insincerity, which is most obvious.

But there is a second degree... which is like this: there is one part of the being which has an aspiration and says, even thinks, even feels that it would very much like to get rid of defects, imperfections; and then, at the same time, other parts which hide these defects and imperfections very carefully so as not to be compelled

to expose them and get over them. This is very common.

And finally, if we go far enough, if we push the description far enough, so long as there is a part of the being which contradicts the central aspiration for the Divine, one is not perfectly sincere. That is to say, a perfect sincerity is something extremely rare.

...When, at any moment, whatever may happen, the being has given itself to the Divine and wants only the divine Will, when, no matter what is going on in the being, at any moment whatever, always, the whole being in perfect unanimity can say to the Divine and feels for the Divine, "Let Thy Will be done", when it is spontaneous, total, integral, then you are sincere. But until this is established, it is a mixed sincerity, more or less mixed, right up to the point where one is not at all sincere.

CWM 6: 397-98

The Mother

Sincerity means more than mere honesty. It means that you mean what you say, feel what you profess, are earnest in your will. As the sadhak aspires to be an instrument of the Divine and one with the Divine, sincerity in him means that he is really in earnest in his aspiration and refuses all other will or impulse except the Divine's.

CWSA 29: 50

Sri Aurobindo

Mental, vital, physical sincerity

Q: Is there a mental sincerity, a vital sincerity, a physical sincerity? What is the difference between these sincerities?

Naturally, the principle of sincerity is the same everywhere, but its working is different according to the states of being.

... To be perfectly sincere it is indispensable not to have any preference, any desire, any attraction, any dislike, any sympathy or antipathy, any attachment, any repulsion. One must have a total, integral vision of things, in which everything is in its place and one has the same attitude towards all things: the attitude of true

vision. This programme is obviously very difficult for a human being to realise. Unless he has decided to divinise himself, it seems almost impossible that he could be free from all these contraries within him. And yet, so long as one carries them in himself, one cannot be perfectly sincere. Automatically the mental, the vital and even the physical working is falsified. I am emphasising the physical, for even the working of the senses is warped: one does not see, hear, taste, feel things as they are in reality as long as one has a preference. So long as there are things which please you and others which don't, so long as you are attracted by certain things, and repulsed by others, you cannot see things in their reality; you see them through your reaction, your preference or your repulsion. The senses are instruments which get out of order, in the same way as sensations, feelings and thoughts. Therefore, to be sure of what you see, what you feel, what you experience and think, you must have a complete detachment; and this is obviously not an easy task. But until then your perception cannot be wholly true, and so it is not sincere.

... there are others more subtle which are difficult to discern. For instance, so long as you have sympathies and antipathies, quite naturally and as it were spontaneously you will have a favourable perception of what is sympathetic to you and an unfavourable perception of what — or whom — you dislike. And there too the lack of sincerity will be flagrant. However, you may deceive yourself and not perceive that you are being insincere. Then in that case, you have, as it were, the collaboration of mental insincerity. For it is true that there are insincerities of slightly different types according to the state of being or the parts of the being. Only, the origin of these insincerities is always a similar movement arising from desire and the seeking of personal ends — from egoism, from the combination of all the limitations arising from egoism and all the deformations arising from desire.

In fact, as long as the ego is there, one cannot say that a be-

ing is perfectly sincere, even though he is striving to become sincere. One must pass beyond the ego, give oneself up totally to the divine Will, surrender without reserve and without calculation... then one can be perfectly sincere, but not before.

... There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood.

Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power.

CWM 8: 397-400

The Mother

Sincerity and yoga

The question is to be sincere. If you are not sincere, do not begin Yoga.

Sincerity is perhaps the most difficult of all things and perhaps it is also the most effective.

If you have perfect sincerity, you are sure of victory. It is infinitely difficult. Sincerity consists in making all the elements of the being, all the movements (whether outer or inner), all the parts of the being, all of them, have one single will to belong to the Divine, to live only for the Divine, to will only what the Divine wills, to express only the divine Will, to have no other source of energy than that of the Divine.

And you find that there is not a day, not an hour, not a minute when you do not need to intensify, rectify your sincerity a — total refusal to deceive the Divine. The first thing is not to deceive oneself. One knows one cannot deceive the Divine; even the cleverest of the Asuras cannot deceive the Divine. But even when one has understood that, one sees that quite often in one's life, in the course of the day, one tries to deceive oneself without even knowing it, spontaneously and almost automatically. One always gives

favourable explanations for all that one does, for one's words, for one's acts. That is what happens first. I am not speaking of obvious things like quarrelling and saying, "It is the other one's fault", I am speaking of the very tiny things of daily life.

I know a child who knocked against a door and he gave a good kick to the door! It is the same thing. It is always the other one who is in the wrong, who has committed the mistake. Even when you have passed the stage of the child, when you have a little reason, you still give the stupidest of all excuses: "If he had not done that, I wouldn't have done this." But it should be just the other way round!

Being sincere

This is what I call being sincere. When you are with someone, if you are sincere, instantaneously your way of reacting should be to do the right thing, even when you are with someone who does not do it. Take the most common example of someone who gets angry: instead of saying things that hurt, you say nothing, you keep calm and quiet, you do not catch the contagion of the anger. You have only to look at yourself to see if this is easy. It is quite an elementary thing, a very small beginning to know whether you are sincere. And I am not speaking of those who catch every contagion, even that of coarse joking nor of those who commit the same stupidity as the others.

I tell you: if you look at yourself with sharp eyes, you will catch in yourself insincerities by the hundred, even though you are trying to be sincere in your general attitude. You will see how difficult it is.

I tell you: If you are sincere in all the elements of your being, to the very cells of your body and if your whole being integrally wants the Divine, you are sure of victory but for nothing less than that. That is what I call being sincere.

I am not speaking of glaring things like obeying your impuls-

es, your caprices and then saying: “I do not belong to myself any more, I belong to the Divine; it is the Divine who is doing everything in me, who is acting in me”, that indeed is crude enough. I am speaking of more refined people, a little more noble, who put on a pretty cloak to cover their desires.

How many things in the course of the day, how many thoughts, sensations, gestures are turned exclusively towards the Divine in an aspiration? How many? I believe if you have a single one in the whole day, you may mark that in red letters.

CWM 5: 5-7

The Mother

When I say, “If you are sincere, you are sure of victory”, I mean true sincerity: to be constantly the true flame that burns like an offering. That intense joy of existing only by the Divine and for the Divine and feeling that without Him nothing exists, that life has no longer any meaning, nothing has any purpose, nothing has any value, nothing has any interest, unless it is this call, this aspiration, this opening to the supreme Truth, to all that we call the Divine (because you must use some word or other), the only reason for the existence of the universe. Remove that and everything disappears.

CWM 5: 5-7

The Mother

Sincerity Helps in Sadhana

Fundamental virtue for the spiritual life

Q: What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated in order to prepare for the spiritual life?

I have said this many times, but this is an opportunity to repeat it: it is *sincerity*.

A sincerity which must become total and absolute, for sincerity alone is your protection on the spiritual path. If you are not sincere, at the very next step you are sure to fall and break your head. All kinds of forces, wills, influences, entities are there, on the look-out for the least little rift in this sincerity and they immediately rush in through that rift and begin to throw you into confusion.

Therefore, before doing anything, beginning anything, trying anything, be sure *first of all* that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but have the intention of becoming still more so.

For that is your only protection.

CWM 8: 247-248

Q: For Sri Aurobindo's centenary, what is the best offering that I can personally make to Sri Aurobindo?

Offer him your mind in all sincerity.

CWM 12: 205

The Mother

“Any method sincerely and persistently followed can end by bringing the opening...”

CWSA 31: 729

The grace and protection are always with you. When in any inner or outer difficulty or trouble do not allow it to oppress you; take refuge with the Divine Force that protects.

If you do that always with faith and sincerity, you will find something opening in you which will always remain calm and peaceful in spite of all superficial disturbances.

CWSA 31: 724–725

Divine Grace and sincerity

There can be no doubt about the Divine Grace. It is perfectly true also that if a man is sincere, he will reach the Divine. But it does not follow that he will reach immediately, easily and without delay. Your error is there, to fix for God a term, five years, six years, and doubt because the effect is not yet there. A man may be centrally sincere and yet there may be many things that have to be changed in him before realisation can begin. His sincerity must enable him to persevere always — for it is a longing for the Divine that nothing can quench, neither delay nor disappointment nor difficulty nor anything else.

CWSA 29: 116–117

There are no conditions for receiving the influence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother except faith, an entire sincerity in following the spiritual path and a will and capacity to open oneself to the influence; but this capacity usually comes as the result of sincerity and faith.

CWSA 32: 106

If he cannot receive help from a distance how does he expect to carry on the Yoga here? This is a Yoga which does not depend upon verbal instructions or anything outward but on the power to open themselves and receive the force and influence even in a complete silence. Those who do not receive it at a distance cannot receive it here also. Also without establishing in oneself calm, sincerity, peace, patience and perseverance this Yoga cannot be done, for many difficulties have to be faced and it takes years and years to

overcome them definitely and altogether.

CWSA 35: 597

Q: What is the truest and surest means to recognise the Mother's Force when it acts and to distinguish it from other egoistic or ignorant forces?

One has only to be perfectly sincere, not to justify one's own desires and faults by the mind's reasonings, to look impartially and quietly at oneself and one's movements and to call on the Mother's Light — then gradually one will begin to discern everything in that light. Even if it cannot be done perfectly at once, the judgment and feeling will get clearer and surer and a right consciousness of these things will be established.

CWSA 32: 225

As for the desires, the proper way is to have a sincere aspiration and call on the Mother's force to work in you. When the Mother's light and force are working in you they will show you all that has to be changed in you and will change it provided you give your sincere and full consent.

CWSA 32: 393

To perceive one's own weaknesses is one result of sincerity.

CWSA 29: 53

Sri Aurobindo

To want what the Divine wants

Q: Your love for me is my true refuge and sole strength. What I offer you, my Mother, is a turbid mixture of which I am ashamed but which you alone can purify.

My very dear child,

Whatever is the nature of the offering, when it is made with

sincerity it always contains a spark of divine light which can grow into a full sun and illuminate the whole being. You can be sure of my love, you can be sure of my help, and our blessings are always with you.

CWM 16: 211

In your sadhana what is important is sincerity at every point; if there is that, mistakes can be rectified and do not so much matter. If there is any insincerity, that pulls down the sadhana at once. But whether this constant sincerity is there or there is any falling off from it at any point, is a thing you must learn to see in yourself; if there is the earnest and constant will for it, the power to see will come. Sincerity does not at all depend on satisfying others — it is an inner matter and lies solely between you and me.

CWM 14: 68

To want what the Divine wants, in all sincerity, is the essential condition for peace and joy in life. Almost all human miseries come from the fact that men are nearly always convinced that they know better than the Divine what they need and what life ought to give them. Most human beings want other human beings to conform to their expectations and circumstances to conform to their desires — therefore they suffer and are unhappy.

CWM 16: 433

The Mother

*Be honest towards yourself —
(no self-deception).*

*Be sincere towards the Divine —
(no bargaining in the surrender).*

*Be straightforward with humanity —
(no pretence and show).*

CWM 14: 70

The Mother

The Power Of Sincerity

Sutras of sincerity

Fear not, your sincerity is your safeguard.

*

Be perfectly sincere and no victory will be denied to you.

*

Be perfectly sincere in your consecration to the Divine's work. This will assure you strength and success.

*

Be sincere.

Sincerity is the gate to Divinity.

*

Those who are earnest and sincere have always the Divine for companion.

*

Be sincere and absolute in your consecration to the Divine and your life will become harmonious and beautiful.

*

Be sincere and I am ready to correct your mistakes a thousand times if necessary.

*

Those who are sincere, I can help and turn easily towards the Divine. But where there is insincerity I can do very little.

CWM 14: 65-68

All sincere prayers are granted, but it may take some time to realise materially.

*

Sincere calls surely are heard and receive an answer.

CWM 15: 207-08

It helps only if one has the sincere will to change; if one sincerely

has the will to change, it is a powerful help because it gives you the force to make the change, the fulcrum to make the change. But one must sincerely want to change.

CWM 4: 349

Whenever there is sincerity, you find that the help, the guidance, the grace are always there to give you the answer and you are not mistaken for long.

It is this sincerity in the aspiration for progress, in the will for truth, in the need to be truly pure — pure as it is understood in the spiritual life — it is this sincerity which is the key to all progress.

CWM 3: 192

...No matter what aspect of the Divine you adore or even what guide you choose, if you are perfect in your self-giving and absolutely sincere, you are sure to attain the spiritual goal...

Spiritual realisation — as it was formerly understood, as it is still commonly understood — is union with the Supreme in some way or other, either within you or through some form or other; it is the fusion of your being with the Supreme, with the Absolute, almost the disappearance of your individuality in this fusion. And that depends absolutely on the sincerity and the integrality of your self-giving, rather than on the choice you make of that to which you want to give yourself. For... the very sincerity of your aspiration will make you cross all limitations and find the Supreme, for you carry Him within yourself.

CWM 8: 243-244

The Mother

To walk through life

To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together — the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure,

candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven. Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces.

Let your sincerity and surrender be genuine and entire. When you give yourself, give completely, without demand, without condition, without reservation so that all in you shall belong to the Divine Mother and nothing be left to the ego or given to any other power.

The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.

CWSA 32: 8-9

Sri Aurobindo

Sincerity In Practice

In the face of difficulties

Q: Sweet Mother, when one has a difficulty in the day and it is not possible to see you or tell you about it, what should one do?

If it is not at all possible, you must sit quite alone, try to become silent, call, call me as though I were there, make me come and put the difficulty before me absolutely sincerely and objectively; and then remain very silent, very quiet and wait for the result.

And I think the result comes. For it depends on the nature of the difficulty. ...

If the difficulty comes from one part of the being wanting one thing and another part of the being knowing that one must not have it, then it becomes complicated because the part which wants can try to introduce its own will into the answer. So when one sits down, first one must begin by persuading it to make a little act of sincere surrender, and it is here that one can make true progress, saying, "Now I am conscious that it is this that I desire, but I am ready to give up my desire if that should be done." But you must do this not only in the head, it must be done sincerely, and then you proceed as I said. Then one knows — knows what's to be done.

Sometimes it is easier when you write it down; you imagine that I am there and then take a paper and write on it what you wanted to tell me. Then just the very fact of formulating it clearly sometimes gives you the true picture of the situation and you can have the answer more easily. It depends, sometimes it is necessary, sometimes not, but if you are in a confusion, a kind of whirlwind, above all, if there is a vital upsurge, the fact of compelling yourself to put it on paper already quietens you, it begins the work of purification.

CWM 7: 105-06

Doing foolish things

Q: There are people who do foolish things...

Yes.

And they know they are doing so, but their mind does not justify them, it gives no support, no excuse, no reasoning or explanation. What is this state?

What is this state? People who know that they are doing foolish things, who are conscious, but who are not able to refrain from them, because their mind does not have enough strength to check them?...

It is only the psychic being that has the strength to intervene. If your mind is in contact with your psychic being, if it receives the influence of the psychic being, then it is strong enough to organise the resistance. It knows what the true thing is and what the false; and knowing what the true thing is, if it has the goodwill, it will organise the resistance, give battle and gain the victory. But that is the only condition: it must be in contact with the psychic being. ...

It happens only when you have decided: "Well, this time, I am going to try not to do it, and I shall not do it, I shall apply all my strength and I shall not do it." Even if you have just a little success, it is much. Not a big success, but just a small success, a very partial success: you do not carry out what you yearn to do; but the yearning, the desire, the passion is still there and that produces whirls within, but outside you resist, "I shall not do it, I shall not move; even if I have to bind myself hand and foot, I shall not do it." It is a partial success — but it is a great victory because, due to this, next time you will be able to do a little more. That is to say, instead of holding all the violent passions within yourself, you can begin calming them a little; and you will calm them slowly at first,

with difficulty. They will remain long, they will come back, they will trouble you, vex you, produce in you a great disgust, all that, but if you resist well ... then little by little, little by little, that thins out, thins out and you begin to learn the second attitude: "Now I want my consciousness to be above those things. There will still be many battles but if my consciousness stands above that, little by little there will come a time when this will return no longer." And then there is a time when you feel that you are absolutely free: you do not even perceive it, and then that is all. It may take a long time, it may come soon: that depends on the strength of character, on the sincerity of the aspiration. But even for people who have just a little sincerity, if they subject themselves to this process, they succeed. It takes time. They succeed in the first item: in not expressing. All forces upon earth tend towards self-expression. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse to express them, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet."

CWM 5: 210-212

Offering to Sri Aurobindo

Q: To be able to offer my mind to Sri Aurobindo in all sincerity, is it not very necessary to develop a great power of concentration? Will you tell me by what method I could cultivate this precious faculty?

Fix a time when you can be quiet every day.

Take one of Sri Aurobindo's books. Read a sentence or two. Then remain silent and concentrated to understand the deeper meaning. Try to concentrate deeply enough to obtain mental silence and begin again daily until you obtain a result.

Naturally you should not fall asleep.

CWM 12: 205

The Mother

It is quite possible for you to do sadhana at home and in the midst of your work — many do so. What is necessary at the beginning is to remember the Mother as much as possible, to concentrate on her in the heart for a time every day, if possible thinking of her as the Divine Mother, to aspire to feel her there within you, offer her your works and pray that from within she may guide and sustain you. This is a preliminary stage which often takes long, but if one goes through it with sincerity and steadfastness, the mentality begins little by little to change and a new consciousness opens in the sadhak which begins to be aware more and more of the Mother's presence within, of her working in the nature and in the life or of some other spiritual experience which opens the gate towards realisation.

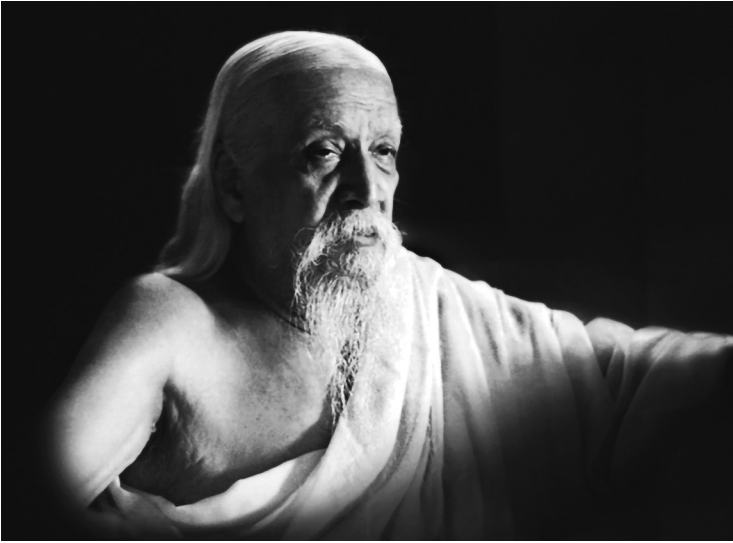
CWSA 32: 186

Sri Aurobindo

***There is only one thing needed
to make anyone fit for the Mother's grace
— it is a perfect sincerity and a truthful
openness to the Mother
in all the being.***

CWSA 32: 164

Sri Aurobindo



*All sincere aspiration
has its effect;
if you are sincere,
you will
grow into the divine life.*

Sri Aurobindo

CWSA 29: 51

Obstacles On The Path To Sincerity

Difficulties and being sincere

Set to work sincerely and sooner or later the obstacles will be overcome.

CWM 12: 354

The greatest enemies of a perfect sincerity are preferences (either mental, vital or physical) and preconceived ideas. It is these obstacles that must be overcome.

CWM 14: 71

When you are sure that you have attained absolute sincerity, you may be certain that you have plunged into falsehood.

CWM 14: 69

Q: Someone has said that when you open the door to Yoga, you are confronted by a multitude of obstacles. Is this true?

It is not an absolute rule; and much depends upon the person. Adverse conditions come to many as a test for the weak points in their nature. The indispensable basis for Yoga, which must be well established before you can walk freely on the path, is equanimity. Naturally, from that point of view, all disturbances are tests which you have to pass. But they are necessary too in order to break down the limits which your mental constructions have built around you and which prevent your opening to the Light and the Truth.

CWM 3: 52

Aspiration and adverse forces

When we come to the spiritual life with an aspiration, can the adverse forces attack us?

Everybody, without exception.

Even though they look very nice?

Sometimes, yes. Sometimes these are the most dangerous.

But how can we know?

Ah! The easiest way, when you have a Guru, is to go and ask him. It is within the reach of everyone. It is enough to have faith in one's Guru, to go and find him and ask him; he will tell you, for he indeed knows.

If you do not have a Guru, then it is a little more difficult, because these forces are very clever; they do not put on a look of catastrophe and misery and wickedness, for you will immediately find it out and will not let yourself be taken in; generally they come in the garb of a friend. If you are very sincere, soon you notice some little indications, like small suggestions that satisfy your vanity or awaken in you doubts or make you a bit unconscious of what exactly is to be done — very tiny things. If you are very sincere, you see through them; particularly if you are alert enough not to allow yourself to be deceived by compliments or attempts that encourage you in these satisfactions of *amour-propre*. Things that give just a little encouragement to your vanity — that is the surest sign; something that makes you think: “After all, I am not so bad. All that I do, I do well. My attempt is very praiseworthy. My sincerity is above all reproach, etc.” You become more and more self-satisfied and then there you may be sure. But even there, it does not always take these forms. There are other things, depending upon the persons. For some it is this; for others, they awaken ideas of grandeur: “If I continue in this way I shall become a great Yogi. I shall have great powers. I shall do much fine work. How nicely I am going to serve the Divine, how happy he will be with me!” It is very dangerous. The very opposite thing may happen: “After all, perhaps I am good for nothing. Is it worth while my mak-

ing any effort? Nothing will come out of this effort. Am I capable of the spiritual life? Probably I shall never do anything, I am giving up tangible things for the sake of an unrealisable dream. And what am I after all? A grain of dust. Is it worth my making an effort to find the Divine? Probably I shall find nothing at all and all my efforts are futile.” That is even much more dangerous. I could cite hundreds of examples like that.

CWM 5: 155-56

One thing that can truly save

There is only one thing that can truly save you, it is to have a contact, even the slightest, with your psychic being — to have felt the *solidity* of that contact. Then whatever comes to you from this person or that circumstance you place in front of that and see whether it is all right or not. Even if you are satisfied — in every way — even if you say to yourself: “At last I have found the friend I wanted to have. I am in the best circumstances of my life, etc.”, then put that before this little contact with your psychic being, you will see whether it keeps its bright colour or suddenly there comes a little uneasiness, not much, nothing making a great noise, but just a little uneasiness. You are no longer so sure that it was as you thought! Then you know: yes, it is that small voice which one must listen to always. It is that which is the truth and the other can’t trouble you any longer.

If you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration, sometimes an avalanche of unpleasant things falls upon you: you quarrel with your best friends, your family kicks you out of the house, you lose what you thought you had gained.... I knew someone who had come to India with a great aspiration and after a very long effort towards knowledge and even towards Yoga. That was long long ago. At that time, people used to put on watch-chains and trinkets. This gentleman had a golden pencil which his grandmother had given him to which he was attached as the most pre-

cious thing in the world. It was fixed to his chain. When he landed at one of these ports — at Pondicherry or perhaps elsewhere in India or at Colombo, I believe it was at Colombo — they used to get into small boats and the boats took you ashore. And so this gentleman had to jump from the gangway of the ship into the boat. He missed his step, somehow got back his balance, but he made a sudden movement and the little gold pencil dropped into the sea and went straight down into the depths. He was at first very much aggrieved, but he told himself: “Why, that is the effect of India: I am freed from my attachments....” It is for very sincere people that the thing takes such a form. Fundamentally, the avalanche of troubles is always for sincere people. Those who are not sincere receive things with the most beautiful bright colours just to deceive them, and then in the end to enable them to find out that they are mistaken! But when someone has big troubles, it proves that he has reached a certain degree of sincerity.

CWM 5: 155-158

After all, it is quite possible — I am joking a little — it is quite possible that if they have even the least bit of sincerity — not too much, for that is tiring! just a little sincerity — that will give them a few good knocks to make them go faster. This is possible. In fact, I think, this is what will happen.

But indeed, this attitude... this attitude, which is a little too mercenary, is not usually very profitable. If one aspires sincerely and if one has difficulties, perhaps these difficulties will diminish. Let us hope so.

(Turning to the disciple) So this is what you can tell them: be sincere and you will be helped.

CWM 8: 132-133

The Mother

Everyone has struggle

There can be no doubt that you can go through — everyone has these struggles; what is needed to pass through is sincerity and perseverance.

There is no use in inviting these struggles, as many do, or even in accepting them when they come for the sake of fighting them out, for they always repeat themselves. When they cannot be avoided then they must be faced — one cannot be altogether without them, especially in the earlier part of the Yoga; but if you can quietly evade them, that is already an advance. To become quiet and quietly to call back the true psychic state until it becomes normal and either eliminates or minimises the struggle, that is the best way to progress.

CWSA 31: 744-745

It is because both your mind and vital have become sincere that the attack is strong and seems to you abnormal. Before as you were yielding from time to time, the part that wants was not acutely insistent and, when it pressed, it was not so acutely felt by the rest of the vital nature. It is your mental, psychic and higher vital beings that now stand completely apart from it. It is your physical vital that still keeps the desire and is pushed from time to time by opposite forces to make the desire active. It was also this desire that created the physical disturbance from which you suffered a few days ago. You must get rid of this desire of the lower vital altogether.

CWSA 31: 263

When there is something in the nature that has to be got over, it is always drawing on itself incidents that put it to the test till the sadhak has overcome and is free. At least it is a thing that often happens especially if the person is making a sincere effort to overcome. One does not always know whether it is the hostiles who

are trying to break the resolution or putting it to the test (for they claim the right to do it) or whether it is, let us say, the gods who are doing it so as to press and hasten the progress or insisting on the reality and thoroughness of the change aspired after. Perhaps it helps most when one can take it from the latter standpoint.

CWSA 31: 653

Sri Aurobindo

Those who are worried, grieved or discouraged

The first verse gives some very wise advice: the war elephant who has been well trained does not start running away as soon as he receives an arrow. He continues to advance and bears the pain, with no change in his attitude of heroic resistance. Those who wish to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all forms of bad will, which not only do not understand, but generally hate what they do not understand.

If you are worried, grieved or even discouraged by the malicious stupidities that men say about you, you will not advance far on the way. And such things come to you, not because you are unlucky or because your lot is not a happy one, but because, on the contrary, the divine Consciousness and the divine Grace take your resolution seriously and allow the circumstances to become a touchstone on your way, to see whether your resolution is sincere and whether you are strong enough to face the difficulties. Therefore, if anyone sneers at you or says something that is not very charitable, the first thing you should do is to look within yourself for whatever weakness or imperfection has allowed such a thing to happen and not to be disconsolate, indignant or aggrieved, because people do not appreciate you at what you think to be your true value; on the contrary, you must be thankful to the divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you must correct. Therefore, instead of being unhappy, you can be fully satisfied and derive advantage, a great advantage from the harm that was intended against you.

Besides, if you truly want to follow the path and practise yoga, you must not do it for appreciation or honour, you must do it because it is an imperative need of your being, because you cannot be happy in any other way. Whether people appreciate you or do not appreciate you, it is of absolutely no importance. You may tell yourself beforehand that the further you are from ordinary men, foreign to the ordinary mode of being, the less people will appreciate you, quite naturally, because they will not understand you. And I repeat, it has absolutely no importance.

CWM 3: 280-283

The Mother

True sincerity consists in advancing on the way because you cannot do otherwise, to consecrate yourself to the divine life because you cannot do otherwise, to seek to transform your being and come out into the light because you cannot do otherwise, because it is the purpose of your life.

When it is like that you may be sure that you are on the right path.

CWM 3: 283

The Mother



*A sincere heart is
worth all the extraordinary powers
in the world.*

CWSA 28: 577

Sri Aurobindo

Shadows of Insincerity

Sutras

Q: I feel sincerely that I want the Divine and nothing else. But when I am in contact with other people, when I am busy with things without any value, I naturally forget the Divine, my one goal. Is it insincerity? If not, then what does it mean?

Yes. It is insincerity of the being, in which one part wants the Divine and another part wants something else.

It is through ignorance and stupidity that the being is insincere. But with a persevering will and an absolute confidence in the Divine Grace, one can cure this insincerity.

CWM 14: 68

Q: Sri Aurobindo says in one letter:

'All prayer rightly offered brings us closer to the Divine and establishes right relation with him.'

What is meant by 'rightly offered' in this letter? Will you please elucidate?

With humility and sincerity.

It goes without saying that all bargaining spirit is an insincerity that takes away all value from the prayer.

CWM 15: 209

As long as there is within a person the possibility of an inner conflict, it means that there is still in him some insincerity.

*

All division in the being is an insincerity.

The greatest insincerity is to dig an abyss between your body and the truth of your being.

When an abyss separates the true being from the physical being, Nature fills it up immediately with all kinds of adverse sugges-

tions, the most formidable of which is fear, and the most pernicious, doubt.

*

Habits of deceiving

Human beings for the most part have the inveterate habit of deceiving themselves. They deceive themselves in hundreds of different ways, each more slyly tricky and subtle than the other, and all this with at once a perfect candour and a perfect insincerity.

CWM 14: 68-70

One must have an absolutely transparent sincerity. Lack of sincerity is the cause of the difficulties we meet at present. Insincerity is in all men. ... Man's very nature makes him insincere — it is very complicated, for he is constantly deceiving himself, hiding the truth from himself, making excuses for himself. ...

It is difficult to be sincere, but at least one can be mentally sincere; this is what can be demanded of Aurovilians. The force is there, present as never before; man's insincerity prevents it from descending, from being felt. The world lives in falsehood, all relations between men have until now been based on falsehood and deceit.

CWM 13: 268

Recognising insincerity

Insincerity seems to be an incurable defect which nullifies the working of the Grace in a being. It is certainly insincerity which has necessitated the violent intervention of Kali in the world.

I cannot possibly give orders to an insincere person because he will respond hypocritically, and that increases even further the darkness he is engulfed in.

One must either have nothing to do with insincere people or else take them as they are.

Blessings.

CWM 17: 343

If a fault is shown to you it is as if a treasure were shown to you; that is to say, each time that you discover in yourself a fault, incapacity, lack of understanding, weakness, insincerity, all that prevents you from making a progress, it is as if you discovered a wonderful treasure.

CWM 3: 220-221

Q: I want to overcome a difficulty: it is that when I perceive faults or weaknesses in myself, something tries to justify them or to prevent me from attending to them.

This “something” is the insincerity of an ignorant self-esteem which has not yet understood that it is nobler and loftier to recognise one’s faults in order to correct them, than to conceal them in the hope that they will not be noticed.

As for all psychological problems, here too sincerity, a total and uncompromising sincerity, is the true remedy.

CWM 16: 364

The Mother

You speak of insincerity in your nature. If insincerity means the unwillingness of some part of the being to live according to the highest light one has or to equate the outer with the inner man, then this part is always insincere in all. The only way is to lay stress on the inner being and develop in it the psychic and spiritual consciousness till that comes down in it which pushes out the darkness from the outer man also.

CWSA 29: 52

Insincerity and insanity

Those who fall into insanity have lost the true touch and got into the wrong contact. It is due either to some impurity and unspiritual desire with which the seeker enters into the way or some

insincerity, egoism and false attitude or to some weakness in the brain or nervous system which cannot bear the Power it has called down into it.

The safest way is to follow the guidance of someone who has himself attained to mastery in the path. Only that guidance should be implicitly and sincerely followed; one's own mind and its ideas and fancies must not be allowed to interfere. It goes without saying that it must be a true guidance, not the leading of a tyro or an impostor.

CWSA 31: 810

It is difficult for the ordinary Christian to be of a piece, because the teachings of Christ are on quite another plane from the consciousness of the intellectual and vital man trained by the education and society of Europe — the latter, even as a minister or priest, has never been called upon to practise what he preached in entire earnest. But it is difficult for the human nature anywhere to think, feel and act from one centre of true faith, belief or vision. The average Hindu considers the spiritual life the highest, reveres the Sannyasi, is moved by the Bhakta; but if one of the family circle leaves the world for spiritual life, what tears, arguments, remonstrances, lamentations! It is almost worse than if he had died a natural death. It is not conscious mental insincerity — they will argue like Pandits and go to Shastra to prove you in the wrong; it is unconsciousness, a vital insincerity which they are not aware of and which uses the reasoning mind as an accomplice.

CWSA 29: 53–54

Sri Aurobindo

Soul's Sincerity

I mean by the measure of the soul's sincerity a yearning after the Divine and its aspiration towards the higher life.

CWSA 29: 55–56

Sri Aurobindo

There are two things we must not confuse: certain necessities (which are purely necessities if one wants to succeed in completely controlling physical matter), and then moral notions. These are two very different things. One may, for instance, refrain from poisoning one's body or besotting one's brains or annulling one's will because one wants to become master of one's physical consciousness and capable of transforming one's body. But if one does these things solely because one thinks one will gain moral merit by doing so, that will lead you nowhere, to nothing at all. Because it is not meant for that. One does it for purely practical reasons: for the same reason, for instance, that you are not in the habit of taking poison, for you know it will poison you. And then, there are some very slow poisons taken by people (they think, with impunity, because the effect is so slow that they cannot discern it easily), but if one wants to succeed in becoming entirely master of one's physical activities and capable of putting the light into the reflexes of one's body, then one must abstain from these things — but not for moral reasons: for altogether practical reasons, from the point of view of the realisation of the yoga. One must not do this with the idea of gaining merit, or the idea that because you will gain merit God will be very pleased and come and manifest within you! It is not at all that, not at all! Perhaps even, He feels closer to him who has made mistakes, who is conscious of his faults and has the sense of his weakness, and aspires sincerely to come out of it all — He feels perhaps closer to him than to one who has never made a mistake and is satisfied with his external superiority over other human beings. In any case, that does not make a great difference. What does make a lot of difference is the sincerity, the spontaneity, the intensity of the aspiration — the need, that need which seizes you and which is so powerful that nothing else in the world counts.

CWM 5: 348-349

The Mother

How To Become Absolutely Sincere

Becoming integrally sincere

Yoga is the way to become sincere in all parts of the being.

CWM 13: 268

If earnestly you say to the Divine, 'I want only Thee', the Divine will arrange the circumstances in such a way that you are compelled to be sincere.

CWM 14: 66

Q: How can one hasten the day when the whole being will be able to say, 'I am Yours — Yours alone'?

There are two actions which in practice merge into one.

(1) *Never forget* the goal that one wants to attain.

(2) Never allow any part of the being or any of its movements to contradict one's aspiration.

This also makes it necessary to become conscious of one's nights, because the activities of the night often contradict the aspiration of the day and undo its work.

Vigilance, sincerity, continuity of effort, and the Grace will do the rest.

CWM 16: 378

Telling the Mother everything

Note that if one has done something bad, if one has done something one knows very well should not be done; for instance, if one tells oneself, 'Mother knows about it, I don't need to tell her', then one takes that in. One carefully shuts a door upon it and then keeps it in one's heart, or elsewhere. While if one doesn't think of all that... one feels uneasy, something turns there inside, it is not pleasant... 'Well, I am going to tell Mother about it.' When you set out you have to make a great effort, eh? There's a lump in

the throat, the tongue goes dry, and then it is so difficult to find your words — truly, one doesn't know how to go about it, eh! But now you have resolved, you make a big effort: you draw out the words one by one, like that, with much effort and finally speak, and you try to say it as exactly as possible. My child, that opens a door as wide as this, and I can enter straight into the psychic being, just through this effort of sincerity that you have made. And then, when I enter, I pour in all the light, all the force, the will, the consciousness, all the resolution necessary, so that you cannot repeat what you have done; much... as when too much is poured into a cup, it overflows — there is much that overflows, but all the same a little remains and this little works. And if you repeat this effort once again, until you feel — well, that you have nothing more to say, for there is now nothing more to hide — then that's very fine, you have made great progress.

CWM 6: 198–199

Method of progressing

Q: Sweet Mother, Just as there is a methodical progression of exercises for mental and physical education, isn't there a similar method to progress towards Sri Aurobindo's yoga? It should vary with each individual. Could you make a step-by-step programme for me to follow daily?

The mechanical regularity of a fixed programme is indispensable for physical, mental and vital development; but this mechanical rigidity has little or no effect on spiritual development where the spontaneity of an absolute sincerity is indispensable.

Sri Aurobindo has written very clearly on this subject. And what he has written on it has appeared in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

However, as an initial help to set you on the path, I can tell you:

(1) that on getting up, before starting the day, it is good to

make an offering of this day to the Divine, an offering of all that one thinks, all that one is, all that one will do;

(2) and at night, before going to sleep, it is good to review the day, taking note of all the times one has forgotten or neglected to make an offering of one's self or one's action, and to aspire or pray that these lapses do not recur.

This is a minimum, a very small beginning — and it should increase with the sincerity of your consecration.

CWM 16: 315–316

Live in harmony with the highest ideal

When you are absolutely sincere, you make a constant effort to live in harmony with the highest ideal of your being, the truth of your being. At every moment, in all that you think, all that you feel and all that you do, you try as perfectly as possible, as completely as possible, to put yourself in harmony with the highest ideal or, if you are conscious of it, with the truth of your being—then you have reached true sincerity. And if you are like that, if truly you do not act from egoistic motives or for personal reasons, if you act guided by your inner truth, that is, if you are perfectly sincere, it is absolutely the same to you whether the whole world judges you in one way or another. In this state of perfect sincerity you do not need to appear good or to be approved by others, for the first thing you experience when you are in harmony with your true consciousness is that you do not care what you look like. Whether you look like this or like that, whether you seem indifferent, cold, distant, proud, all this is of no importance; provided, I repeat this, you are absolutely sincere, that is, you never forget that you live in order to realise your inner, central truth.

CWM 4: 16–17

The Mother

One cannot become altogether this [entirely sincere] at once, but if one aspires at all times to it and calls in always the aid of the Divine Shakti with a true heart and straightforward will, one grows more and more into this consciousness.

CWSA 29: 51

The opposition in certain parts of the being exists in every sadhak and can be very obstinate. Sincerity comes by having first the constant central aspiration or will, next, the honesty to see and avow the refusal in parts of the being, finally, the intention of seeing it through even there, however difficult it may be.

CWSA 31: 646

Sri Aurobindo

***I need not appear to be good if
my sincerity is perfect.
It is better to be than to seem.***

*

***I need not seem if I am.
It is better to be than to seem.
No need of seeming when one is.***

CWM 15: 189; 14: 69

The Mother

There is nothing unintelligible in what I say about strength and Grace. Strength has a value for spiritual realisation, but to say that it can be done by strength only and by no other means is a violent exaggeration. Grace is not an invention, it is a fact of spiritual experience. Many who would be considered as mere nothings by the wise and strong have attained by Grace; illiterate, without mental power or training, without 'strength' of character or will, they have yet aspired and suddenly or rapidly grown into spiritual realisation, because they had faith or because they were sincere. I do not see why these facts which are facts of spiritual history and of quite ordinary spiritual experience should be discussed and denied and argued as if they were mere matters of speculation. Strength, if it is spiritual, is a power for spiritual realisation; a greater power is sincerity; the greatest power of all is Grace. I have said times without number that if a man is sincere, he will go through in spite of long delay and overwhelming difficulties. I have repeatedly spoken of the Divine Grace. I have referred any number of times to the line of the Gita:

AhaW tvD sarvapaDpebhyo mokI ayI yami mD QucaU
'I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve.'

CWSA 29: 172

Sri Aurobindo

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*Without sincerity
nothing can be done.
With total sincerity everything is possible.*

The Mother



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