

LIFE ENRICHMENT

**Text Book for Post Graduate Courses
of
Humanities and Social Sciences**

Volume I



**Sardar Patel University
Vallabh Vidyanagar
Gujarat
India**

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Life Enrichment : Volume I

Text Book for a short term Credit Course in
Post Graduate Studies of
Humanities and Social Sciences,
Sardar Patel University.

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FOREWORD

It is a matter of great pleasure for Sardar Patel University that it has introduced a credit course of “Life Enrichment” commencing from 2nd Semester of the Academic Year 2010-11 for post graduate students of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The unique feature of the course is to help students to appreciate and understand the integral approach to living and education. In addition, it should, inspire them to feel the essence of the harmony of the spirituality of the east and the philosophy of life of the west.

The course content is so developed that the outgoing youth from the University will be equipped to attain competence to experience the terrestrial (worldly) living and the spiritual knowledge as well as to feel purpose of life and ways to live it through.

The course content of the studies is designed broadly to include the units as:-

- (a) Integral Living
 - Science of Living
 - Development of Personality
 - Prayer
 - A Call to Young India
 - Message of Sri Aurobindo
- (b) Integral Education
 - The Human Mind

- Philosophy of Education
- The Found Austerities and Four Liberations
- Psychic Education and Spiritual Education

(c) Integral Health (Volume II of the Text Book)

It is at the initiation of Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies of Sardar Patel University that the course was contemplated to be introduced as a credit course under CBCS for the Post Graduate students of Humanities at the Sardar Patel University.

The course content and the detailed syllabus were prepared jointly by Dr. Bhalendu S Vaishnav (Chairperson, Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies), Dr. D. S. Mishra (Professor Emeritus, P.G. Department of English, Sardar Patel University) and Dr. Param R. Pathak (Professor, P.G Department of Gujarati, Sardar Patel University).

I congratulate all of them and other teachers who have volunteered to teach, for their endeavor to introduce new dimension and perspective in our academic pursuits at the University.

I am sure Life Enrichment Course will benefit the students to achieve true mode of development of personality and character which will go a long way to establish harmony and happiness in their life.

Date : 1st January, 2011
Place : Vallabh Vidyanagar

Harish Padh
Vice Chancellor,
Sardar Patel University

PREFACE

We are happy to publish this Text Book for the course entitled “Life Enrichment”, designed for the Post Graduate Students of Humanities and Social Sciences of Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar.

This text book has been prepared with an aim to offer to the students an Integral perspective of Life, Education and Health, and enable them to apply the same through a process of self-exploration in real life when they step out from the realm of higher education.

Such was the idea behind introduction of Choice Based Credit System in the Universities of Gujarat and the Life Enrichment Course is commensurate with its vision.

Today there is an acute need to incorporate dynamic spirituality in curriculum which will not deny the materialism but show and lead it to its just place, that is, an expression of the Divinity on the material plane.

There is also an acute need to rediscover and reaffirm that body, mind and emotions do not make up a whole human being; there is, within him, a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in body and mind, which should be made a true captain for integral human development. This alone would offer a pure and enduring motive for individual and collective growth.

The course contents have been compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore and are meant to

awaken the students about Spiritual evolution of mankind – a next step in preparing the ascending species after Man. Important aspects of Nationalistic Education, Holistic Living and Integral Health, based on the Indian culture too have been covered.

The editorial board consisted of Dr. D. S. Mishra, (Professor, Emeritus, Post Graduate Department of English), Dr. Param Pathak (Professor, Post Graduate Department of Gujarati) and myself.

I express my thanks and gratitude to the Hon. Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Harish Padh who has provided useful guidance and inspiration for preparation of the course content.

The whole hearted support, cooperation and help offered by Dr. Param Pathak and Dr. D. S. Mishra have formed the nucleus for introducing this course at the post graduate level.

It is sincerely hoped that the learning experience will go a long way in enriching life and building a better nation and the world.

Finally, invoking a gift of aspiration for our young students, with deep gratitude and profound humility we owe all to The Divine.

Date : 1st January, 2011

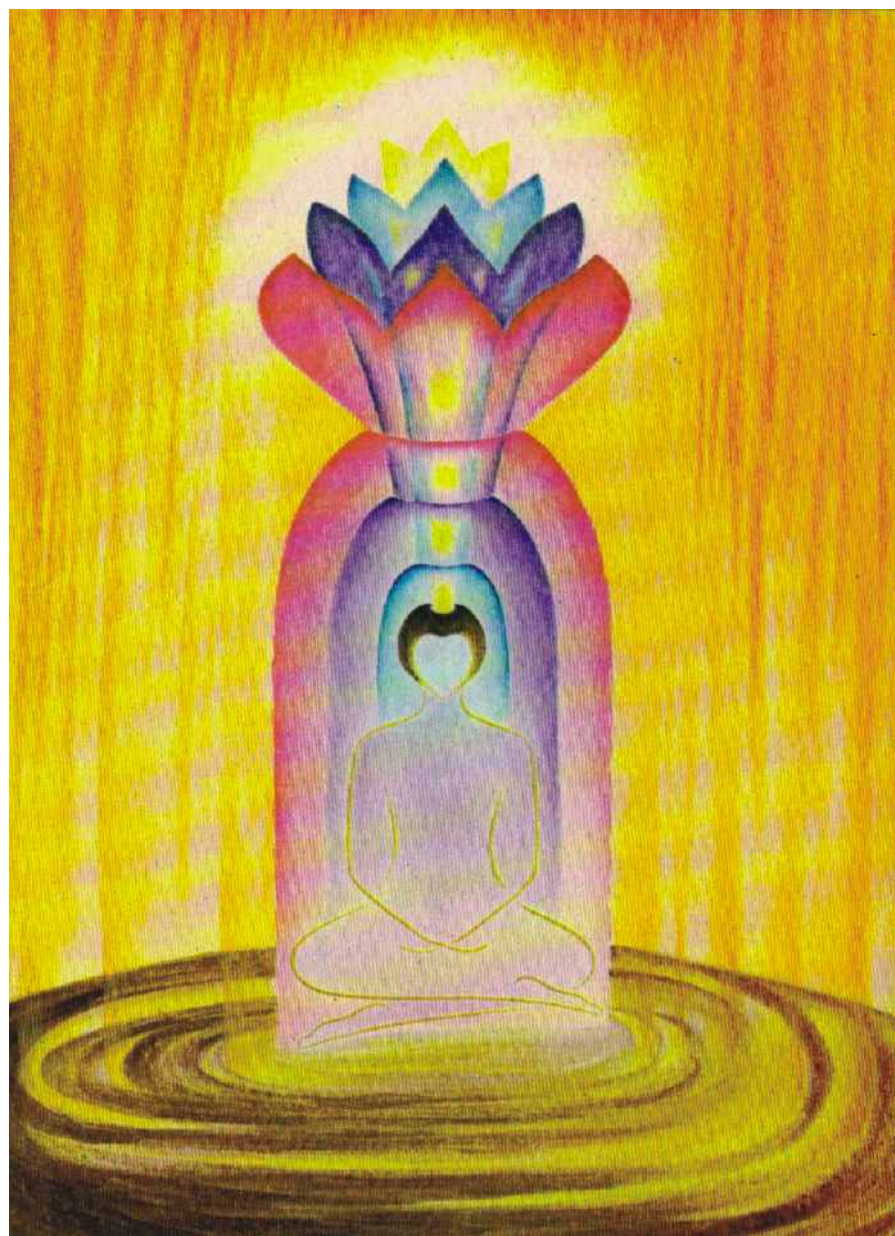
Bhalendu Vaishnav

Chairperson,
Sri Aurobindo Chair of Integral Studies
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Vallabh Vidyanagar

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Unit I: Integral Life

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन मुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद् धनम् ॥

All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

*

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man.

*

असूर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥

Sunless are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom whereto all they in their passing hence resort who are slayers of their souls.



Chapter 1

The Aim of Life

1.1 The Science of Living

To know oneself and to control oneself

An aimless life is always a miserable life.

Every one of you should have an aim. But do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.

Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

But whatever your ideal, it cannot be perfectly realised unless you have realised perfection in yourself.

The First Step: Become Conscious of yourself

To work for your perfection, the first step is to **become conscious of yourself**, of the different parts of your being and their respective activities. You must learn to distinguish these different parts one from another, so that you may become clearly aware of the origin of the movements that occur in you, the many impulses, reactions and conflicting wills that drive you to action. It is an assiduous study which demands much perseverance and sincerity. For man's nature, especially his mental nature, has a

spontaneous tendency to give a favourable explanation for everything he thinks, feels, says and does. It is only by observing these movements with great care, by bringing them, as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to form in ourselves a discernment that never errs. For if we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity of knowing the truth of our being, that is to say, what we are truly created for, what we can call our mission upon earth, then we must, in a very regular and constant manner, reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, whatever is opposed to it. In this way, little by little, all the parts, all the elements of our being can be **organised into a homogeneous whole around our psychic centre.**

This work of unification requires much time to be brought to some degree of perfection. Therefore, in order to accomplish it, we must arm ourselves with patience and endurance, with a determination to prolong our life as long as necessary for the success of our endeavour. As you pursue this labour of purification and unification, you must at the same time take great care to perfect the external and instrumental part of your being. When the higher truth manifests, it must find in you a mind that is supple and rich enough to be able to give the idea that seeks to express itself a form of thought which preserves its force and clarity. This thought, again, when it seeks to clothe itself in words, must find in you a sufficient power of expression so that the words reveal the thought and do not deform it. And the formula in which you embody the truth should be manifested in all your feelings, all your acts of will, all your actions, in all the movements of your being. Finally, these movements themselves should, by constant effort, attain their highest perfection.

Fourfold Discipline: Psychic, Mental, Vital and Physical

All this can be realised by means of a fourfold discipline, the general outline of which is given here. The four aspects of the

discipline do not exclude each other, and can be followed at the same time; indeed, this is preferable.

□ **Psychic Discipline**

The starting-point is what can be called the psychic discipline. We give the name “psychic” to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within us of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know this truth and set it in movement. It is therefore of capital importance to become conscious of its presence in us, to concentrate on this presence until it becomes a living fact for us and we can identify ourselves with it.

In various times and places many methods have been prescribed for attaining this perception and ultimately achieving this identification. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical. In reality, everyone has to find the one which suits him best, and if one has an ardent and steadfast **aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet**, in one way or another—outwardly through reading and study, inwardly through concentration, meditation, revelation and experience—the help one needs to reach the goal. Only one thing is absolutely indispensable: the will to discover and to realise. This discovery and realisation should be the primary preoccupation of our being, the pearl of great price which we must acquire at any cost. Whatever you do, whatever your occupations and activities, the will to find the truth of your being and to unite with it must be always living and present behind all that you do, all that you feel, all that you think.

□ **Mental Discipline**

To complement this movement of inner discovery, it would be good not to neglect the development of the mind. For the mental instrument can equally be a great help or a great hindrance. In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its

conceptions, and a constant effort is therefore needed to widen it, to make it more supple and profound. So it is very necessary to consider everything from as many points of view as possible. Towards this end, there is an exercise which gives great suppleness and elevation to the thought. It is as follows: a clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed its antithesis, formulated with the same precision. Then by careful reflection the problem must be widened or transcended until a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.

Many other exercises of the same kind can be undertaken; some have a beneficial effect on the character and so possess a double advantage: that of educating the mind and that of establishing control over the feelings and their consequences. For example, you must never allow your mind to judge things and people, for the mind is not an instrument of knowledge; it is incapable of finding knowledge, but it must be moved by knowledge. Knowledge belongs to a much higher domain than that of the human mind, far above the region of pure ideas. The mind has to be silent and attentive to receive knowledge from above and manifest it. For it is an instrument of formation, of organisation and action, and it is in these functions that it attains its full value and real usefulness.

There is another practice which can be very helpful to the progress of the consciousness. Whenever there is a disagreement on any matter, such as a decision to be taken, or an action to be carried out, one must never remain closed up in one's own conception or point of view. On the contrary, one must make an effort to understand the other's point of view, to put oneself in his place and, instead of quarrelling or even fighting, find the solution which can reasonably satisfy both parties; there always is one for men of goodwill.

□ **Vital Discipline**

Here we must mention the discipline of the vital. The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depressions, of passions and revolts. It can set everything in motion, build and realise; but it can also destroy and mar everything. Thus it may be the most difficult part to discipline in the human being. It is a long and exacting labour requiring great patience and perfect sincerity, for without sincerity you will deceive yourself from the very outset, and all endeavor for progress will be in vain. With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. But the difficulty lies in securing this constant collaboration. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At such moments it is good to remain quiet and refuse to act; for these are the times when one does stupid things and in a few moments one can destroy or spoil the progress that has been made during months of regular effort. These crises are shorter and less dangerous for those who have established a contact with their psychic being which is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a rebellious child, with patience and perseverance, showing it the truth and light, endeavoring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which has been veiled for a time. By means of such patient intervention each crisis can be turned into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. Progress may be slow, relapses may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained, one is sure to triumph one day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiance of the truth-consciousness.

□ **Physical Discipline**

Lastly, by means of a rational and discerning physical education, we must make our body strong and supple enough to become a fit instrument in the material world for the truth-force which wants to manifest through us.

In fact, the body must not rule, it must obey. By its very nature it is a docile and faithful servant. Unfortunately, it rarely has the capacity of discernment it ought to have with regard to its masters, the mind and the vital. It obeys them blindly, at the cost of its own well-being. The mind with its dogmas, its rigid and arbitrary principles, the vital with its passions, its excesses and dissipations soon destroy the natural balance of the body and create in it fatigue, exhaustion and disease. It must be freed from this tyranny and this can be done only through a constant union with the psychic centre of the being.

The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is able to do so many more things than one usually imagines. If, instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that now govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, you will be amazed at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quiet, strong and poised, at every minute it will be able to put forth the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action and to recuperate, through contact with the universal forces, the energies it expends consciously and usefully. In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions, which will give it perfect proportions and ideal beauty of form. And this harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static; it is a perpetual unfolding of a growing perfection that is more and more total and comprehensive. As soon as the body has learnt to follow this movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it to escape, through a continuous process of transformation, from the necessity of disintegration and

destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will no longer have any reason to exist.

□ **Perfection: Our Goal**

When we reach this degree of perfection which is our goal, we shall perceive that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects: Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty.

These four attributes of the Truth will express themselves spontaneously in our being.

The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind will be the vehicle of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and harmony.

The Mother

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.

Sri Aurobindo

1.2 This Bodily Appearance is Not All...

This bodily appearance is not all;

The form deceives, the person is a mask;

Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell.

His fragile ship conveys through the sea of years

An incognito of the Imperishable.

A spirit that is a flame of God abides,

A fiery portion of the Wonderful,

Artist of his own beauty and delight,

Immortal in our mortal poverty.

This sculptor of the forms of the Infinite,

This screened unrecognised Inhabitant,

Initiate of his own veiled mysteries,

Hides in a small dumb seed his cosmic thought.

In the mute strength of the occult Idea

Determining predestined shape and act,

Passenger from life to life, from scale to scale,

Changing his imaged self from form to form,

He regards the icon growing by his gaze

And in the worm foresees the coming god.

Sri Aurobindo



Chapter 2

Self Development

2.1 : Development of Personality

Personal magnetism

You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example: a man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour-but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well- around, ungrammatical perhaps; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-thirds of the influence in making an impression, the man, tow-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man-that is what goes out and impresses you.

□ **The great leaders....**

Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts have they thought? Take all the writings that have been left to us by the past leader of mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thought, new and genuine, that have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thought they have left to us. The authors do not appear to be giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the thought they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is their personality. As I have already remarked, the personality of the man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs thought us. Our actions are but the effect. Actions must come when the man is there; the effect is bound to follow the cause.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes: that personality put upon anything will make it work.

Now we see that though this is a fact, no physical laws that we know of will explain this. How can we explain it by chemical and physical knowledge? How much of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon-how many molecules in different positions, and how many cells, etc., etc., can explain this mysterious personality? And we still see, it is a fact, and not only that, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and moves and works,

it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-being and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most marvelous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved countries in their lifetime. The difference was made by personality. In the philosopher it is a faint personality that influences; in the great Prophets it is tremendous. In the former we touch the intellect; in the latter we touch life. In the one case, it is simply a chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together which may gradually combine and under proper circumstances bring out a flash of light or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch that goes round quickly, lighting others.

□ **Science of yoga....**

The sciences of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is one of the great practical things and this is the secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life of the house-holder, in the life of the poor, the rich, the man of business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, it is a great thing, the strengthening of this personality. They are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer; the finest is what we call spirit; the grosser, the body. And just as it is here, in the microcosm, it is exactly the same in macrocosm. This universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.

□ **Power in the fine...**

We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion, and we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something finer still—thought, and so on. So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power. Of course we can see the movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine, perhaps because the movement is so intense that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of these finer forces which are the cause of the expression; the expression itself will be under control. There is a little bubble coming from the bottom of a lake; we do not see it coming all time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so, we can perceive though only after they develop a great deal, or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thought. But how can we have it? If we can control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyze, investigate, understand and finally grapple with those finer powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every of mind. That is why purity and morality has been always the object of religion; a pure

moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same, different parts of one Mind. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.

□ **Quickening our growth....**

Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man-and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows. He passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing and shelter, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilization. We know also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means. We help the growth of trees. Do we not? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries? Because by these means we can hasten the growth of individuals? We can. Can we

put a limit to the hastening? We can not say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to perfection? So, what comes of it? That a perfect man, that is to say the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man can come today.

All great Incarnations and preheats are such men; they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently there was such a man who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end-even in this life. Even this hastening of the growth must be under laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secret and apply then to our own needs, it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real and.

The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait for ages, just a play-thing in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave, like a log of in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature and tossing about in the ocean and get beyond this little life.

Swami Vivekananda

2.2 : Powers of Mind

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life---think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success... If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper. (I.177)

All the great prophets, saints, and seers of the world --- what did they do? In one span of life, they lived the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time that it takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life, they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the power of assimilation, thus shortening the time. (I.157)

The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only method of acquiring knowledge. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. (II. 391)

How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind? The world is ready to give up its secrets, if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret. (I. 130–31)

No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore, we must learn to control the grand powers that are already in our hands, and by will power make them spiritual, instead of merely animal. Thus it is clearly seen that chastity is the cornerstone of all morality and of all religion. (V III. 46)

Free! We, who can not, for a moment, govern our own minds, nay, cannot hold our minds on a subject, and focus it on a point to the exclusion of everything else, for a moment ! Yet we call ourselves free. Think of it! ... The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, for ever – rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us. (VI. 30)

The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. All success in any line of work is the result of this ... The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. (VI.37)

Ninety per cent of thought – force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore, he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake. (VI. 123-24))

What work do you expect from men of little hearts? Nothing in the world! You must have an iron will if you would cross the ocean. You must be strong enough to pierce mountains. (VI. 297)

Good and evil thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As vibration continues, so thought remains in the form of thought until translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are the heirs of good and evil thought. If we make ourselves pure and the instruments of good

thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul will not be receptive to evil thoughts. (VI.134)

In the history of mankind, you will find that there come the messengers and that from their very birth their mission is found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down; and you see them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a mission, they come with a message ... When they speak, each word is direct; it bursts like a bomb-shell. What is in the word, unless it has the power behind? What matters it what language you speak, and how you arrange your language? What matters it whether you speak correct grammar or with fine rhetoric? What matters it whether your language is ornamental or not? The question is: Whether or not you have anything to give? It is a question of giving and taking, and not listening. Have you anything to give? – That is the first question. If you have, then, give. (IV, 122-24)

Whatever you do, devote your whole mind, heart, and soul to it. I once met a great *sannyasin*, who cleansed his brass cooking utensils, making them shine like gold, with as much care and attention as he bestowed on his worship and meditation. (Life of Swami Vivekananda, p. 284)

How to attain purity living this life? Shall we all go to the forest caves? What good would it do? If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there. We will find twenty devils in the cave because the devils are in the mind. If the mind is under control, we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are.

It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us . Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light. (I. 440-41)

Swami Vivekananda

2.3 : Faith and Strength

He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in god. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself (II.301)

The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith, death comes. (VIII. 228)

Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God - this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty million of your mythological god, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. (III. 190)

Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak. (II. 308)

Whatever you think that you will be. If you think yourselves weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be. (III 130)

Be free; hope for nothing from any one. I am sure if you look back upon your lives, you will find that you were always vainly trying to get help from others, which never came. All the help that has come was from within yourselves. (II. 324)

Never say, 'No'; never say, 'I cannot', for you are infinite. Even time and space are as nothing compared with your nature. You can do anything and everything, you are almighty. (II.300)

Ye are the children of god, the sharers for immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are soul immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal. (I. 11)

Never mind the struggles, the mistakes. I never heard a cow tell a lie, but it is only a cow—never a man. So never mind these failures, these little backsliding; hold the ideal a thousand time; and if you fail a thousand times make the attempt once more. (II. 152)

The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them. (II. 300)

If there is one word that you find coming like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance it is the word, *fearlessness*. (III. 160)

If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the Upanishads, it is only that one idea *strength*. The quintessence of the Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word. (VIII. 267)

Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. These are bold words, but I have to say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience.

You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. (III. 242)

This is the one question I put to every man.... Are you strong? Do you feel strength? - For I know it is truth alone that gives strength....strength is the medicine for the world's disease. (II.201)

This is the great fact: Strength is life; weakness is death. Strength is facility, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery, weakness is death. (II. 3)

To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean, says the persevering soul, 'at my will, mountains will crumble up. Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard and you will reach the goal. (I.178)

Men, men, these are wanted: everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world become revolutionized. (III. 223-24)

Are not drums made in the country? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of these effeminate forms of music..., the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. (VII. 232)

Death is better than a vegetating ignorant life; it is better to die on the battle-field than to live a life of defeat. (II. 124)

Come, do something heroic. Brother, what if you do not attain mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue: 'There are some saints who, full of holiness in thought, word and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as mountain?

Can anything be done unless everybody exerts in self to his utmost? It is the main of action, the lionheart that the Goddess of Wealth resorts to. No need of looking behind. Forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, than only will great things be achieved. (VI. 383-84)

Be not in despair; the way is very difficult, like walking on the edge of a razor; yet despair not, arise, awake, and find the ideal, the goal. (II. 124)

Why weepst thou, brother? There is neither death nor disease for three why weepst thou, brother?

There is neither misery nor misfortune for thee. Why weepst thou, Brother? Neither change nor death predicated of thee. Thou art Existence Absolute.... Be your own self. (V. 275)

Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They say, 'Have faith in this fellow or that fellow,' but I say, 'Have faith in yourself- all power is in you- be conscious and bring it out. Say, 'I can do everything. Even the poison of a snake is powerless, if you can firmly deny it.' (VI. 274)

Once when I was in Varanasi, I was passing through a place where there was a large tank of water on one side and a high wall on the other. It was in the grounds where there were many monkeys. The monkeys of Varanasi are huge brutes and are sometimes surly. They now took it into their heads not to allow me to pass through their street, so they howled and shrieked and clutched at my feet as I passed. As they pressed closer, I began to run, but the faster I ran, the faster came the monkeys, and they began to bite at me. It seemed impossible to escape, but just then I met a stranger who called out to me, 'Face the brutes. I turned and faced the monkeys, and they fell back and finally fled. That is the lesson for all life-face the terrible, face it boldly. (I. 338)

Stand up and fight! Not one step back, that is the idea. Fight it out, whatever comes. Let the stars move from the sphere! Let the whole world stand against us! Death means only a change of garment. What of it? Thus fight! You gain nothing by becoming cowards. Taking a step backward, you do not avoid

any misfortune. You have cried to all the gods in the world. Has misery ceased? The gods come to help you when have succeeded. So what is the use? Die game. You are infinite, deathless, birth less. Because you are infinite spirit, it does not befit you to be a slave. Arise! Awake! Stand up and fight! (I. 461)

Swami Vivekananda

2.4 : Prayer: I

2.4.1: Prayer : The Core of Man's Life

...Prayer is the very core of man's life, as it is the most vital part of religion. Prayer is either petitional or in its wider sense is inward communion. In either case the ultimate result is the same. Even when it is petitional, the petition should be for the cleansing and purification of the soul, for freeing it from the layer of ignorance and darkness that envelop it. He therefore who hungers for the awakening of the divine in him must fall back on prayer. But prayer is no mere exercise of word or of the ears, it is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of Ramanama is futile if it fails to stir the soul. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul will relish a heartfelt prayer. And I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together but not a single moment of prayer. For without prayer there is no inward peace.

If that is the case, someone will say, we should be offering our prayers every minute of our lives. There is no doubt about it, but we erring mortals, who find it difficult to retire within ourselves for inward communion even for a single moment, will find it impossible to remain perpetually in communion without the divine. We therefore fix some hours when we make a serious effort to throw off the attachments of the world for a while, we make a serious endeavour to remain, so to say, out of the flesh. You have heard Surdas's hymn. It is the passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the divine. According to our standards he was a saint, but according to his own he was a proclaimed sinner. Spiritually he was miles ahead

of us, but he felt the separation from the divine so keenly that he has uttered that anguished cry* in loathing and disrepair.

I have talked of the necessity for prayer, and there through I have dealt with the essence of prayer. We are born to serve our fellowmen, and we cannot properly do so unless we are wide awake. There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon will be a victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. Apart therefore from its bearing on man's condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in this world of the living. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of the square, and the other angles will be automatically right.

Begin therefore your day with prayer, and make it so soulful that it may remain with you until the evening. Close the day with prayer so that you may have a peaceful night free from dreams and nightmares. Do not worry from the form of prayer. Let it be any form, it should be such as can put us into communion with the divine. Only, whatever be the form let not the spirit wander while the words of prayer run on out of your mouth.

All things in the universe, including the sun and the moon and the stars, obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws the world would not go on for a single moment. You, whose mission in life is service of your fellowmen, will go to pieces if do not impose on yourselves

* मो सम कौन कुटिल खल कामी ।

'Who is so corrupt, wicked and lustful as I !'

some sort of discipline, and prayer is necessary spiritually discipline. It is discipline and restraint that separates us from the brute. If we will be men walking with our heads erect and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint. *Young India*, 23-1-1930

2.4.2: Why Pray□

Why pray at all? Does not God, if there be one, know what has happened? Does He stand in need of prayer to enable Him to do His duty?

No, God needs no reminder. He is within everyone. Nothing happens without His permission. Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer, without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect if it has not God's blessing behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification, to inward search. *Harijan* 8-6-'35

In my opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahurmazda, God or Krishna are all attempts on the part of man to name that invisible force which is the greatest of all forces. It is inherent in man, imperfect though he be, ceaselessly to strive after perfection. In the attempt he falls into reverie. And, just as child tries to stand, falls down again and again and ultimately learns how to walk, even so man, with all his intelligence, is a mere infant as compared to the infinite and ageless God. This may appear to be an exaggeration but is not. Man can only describe God in his own poor language. The power we call God defies description. Nor does that power stand in need of any human effort to describe Him. It is man who requires the means where he can describe that power which is vaster than the ocean. If this premise is accepted, there is no need to ask why we pray. Man

can only conceive God within the limitation of his own mind. If God is vast and boundless as the ocean, how can a tiny drop like human imagine what He is? He can only experience what the ocean is like, if he falls into and is merged in it. This realization is beyond description. In Madame Blavatsky's language man, in praying, worships his own glorified self. He can truly pray, who has the conviction that God is within him. He, who has not, needs to pray. God will not be offended, but I can say from experience that he does not pray is certainly a loser. What matters then whether one man worships God as a Person and another as Force? Both do right according to their lights. None knows and perhaps never will know what is absolutely proper way to pray. The ideal must always remain the ideal. One need only remember that God is the Force among all the forces. All other forces are material. But God is the vital force or spirit which is all-pervading, all-embracing and therefore beyond human ken. *Harijan, 18-8-'46*

□ **A Dialogue with a Buddhist**

Dr. Fabri, a follower of Buddha, called on Gandhiji at Abbottabad, and enquired :

“Could the Divine Mind be changed by prayer? Could one find it out by prayer?”

“It is a difficult thing to explain fully what I do when I pray,” said Gandhiji. “But I must try to answer your question. The divine mind is unchangeable, but the divinity is in everyone and everything – animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that I want to evoke that Divinity within me. Now I may have that intellectual conviction, but not a living touch. And so when I pray for Swaraj or Independence for India I pray or wish for a adequate power to gain that Swaraj or to make the largest contribution I can towards winning it, and I maintain that I can get power in answer to prayer.”

“Then you are not justified in calling it prayer; to pray means to beg or demand,” said Dr. Fabri.

“Yes, indeed. You may say I may beg it of myself, of my Higher self, the Real self with which I have not yet achieved complete identification. You may, therefore, describe it as a continual longing to lose oneself in the divinity which comprises all.”

“What about the people who cannot pray?” asked Dr. Fabri.

“Be humble,” said Gandhiji, “I would say to them, and do not limit even the real Buddha by your own conception of Buddha. He could not have ruled the lives of millions of men that he did and does today if he was not humble enough to pray. There is something infinitely higher than intellect that rules us and even the sceptics. Their scepticism and philosophy does not help them in critical period of their lives. They need something better, something outside them that can sustain them. And so if someone puts a conundrum before me, I say to him, 'You are not going to know the meaning of God or prayer unless you reduce yourself to a cipher. You must be humble enough to see that in spite of your greatness and gigantic intellect you are but a speck in the universe. A merely intellectual conception of the things of the life is not enough. It is the spiritual conception which eludes the intellect, and which alone can give one satisfaction. Even moneyed men have critical periods in their lives. Though they are surrounded by everything that money can buy and affection can give, they find themselves at certain moments in their lives utterly distracted. It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding every one of our steps in life. It is prayer.’”

“You mean what we might call a true religious experience which is stronger than intellectual conception,” said

Dr. Fabri. "Twice in life I had experience, but I have since lost it. But I now find great comfort in one or two saying of Buddha: 'Selfishness is the cause of sorrow', and 'Remember, monks, everything is fleeting'. To think of these takes almost the place of belief."

"That is prayer," repeated Gandhiji with an insistence that could not but have gone home. *Harijan, 19-8-'39*

2.4.3.: How, To Whom and When to Pray

'Often, Sir, do you ask us to worship God, to pray but never tell us how to and to whom to do so. Will you kindly enlighten me?' asks a reader of the Navajivan. Worshipping God is singing the praise of God. Prayer is a confession of one's unworthiness and weakness. God has thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, other call Him Rahim, and yet others call Him God. All worship the same spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations, and He being our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer, by the ignorant and the stupid. And the prayers of those whose tongues are nectared but whose hearts are full of poison are never heard. He, therefore, who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart. Rama was not only on the lips of Hanuman, He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanuman exhaustless strength. It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wideawake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved

that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased he is spiritually healthy, physically pure, he rolls in spiritual riches.

'But how is the heart to be cleansed to this extent?' one might well ask. The language of the lips is easily taught; but who can teach the language of heart? Only the *bhakta* – the true devotee – knows it and can teach it. The Gita has defined the *bhakta* in three places and talked of him generally everywhere. But knowledge of the definition of a *bhakta* is hardly sufficient guide. They are rare on this earth. I have therefore suggested the Religion of Service as the means. God of Himself seeks for His seat of heart of him who serves his fellowmen. That is why Narsinha Mehta who 'saw and knew' sang 'He is a true Vaishnava who knows to melt at other's woe.' Such was Abu Ben Adhem. He served his fellowmen, and therefore his name topped the list of those who served God. *Young India*, 24-9-'25

There can be no fixed rule laid down to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us and enable us to realize that nothing happens without His will and that we are but 'clay in the hands of the Potter'. These are moments when one reviews one's immediate past, confesses one's weaknesses, asks for forgiveness, and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some; twenty-four hours may be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer or act or worship. For those who act only to sin, to indulge themselves, and live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they fill the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be

living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have now-a-days become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer in the sense of asking God for something, it should certainly be in one's own tongue. Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives. *Young India, 10-6-'26*

M. K. Gandhi

2.5 : Prayer :II

અખિલ બ્રહ્માંડમાં...

અખિલ બ્રહ્માંડમાં એક તું શ્રીહરિ, જૂજવે રુપે અનંત ભાસે.
દેહમાં દેવ તું, તેજમાં તત્ત્વ તું, શૂન્યમાં શબ્દ થઈ વેદ વાસે.

પવન તું, પાણી તું, ભૂમિ તું, ભૂધરા, વૃક્ષ થઈ ફૂલી રહ્યો આકાશે;
વિવિધ રચના કરી અનેક રસ લેવાને, શિવ થકી જીવ થયો એ જ આશે.

વેદ તો એમ વદે; શ્રુતિ-સ્મૃતિ સાખ દે, કનક કુંડલ વિશે ભેદ નહોયે;
ઘાટ ઘડિયા પછી નામરૂપ જૂજવાં, અંતે તો હેમનું હેમ હોય.

ગ્રંથ ગરબડ કરી, વાત નવ કરી ખરી, જેહને જે ગમે તેને પૂજે,
મન કર્મ વચનથી આપ માની લહે, સત્ય છે એ જ મન એમ સૂઝે.

વૃક્ષમાં બીજ તું, બીજમાં વૃક્ષ તું, જોઉં પટંતરો એ જ પાસે,
ભાણે નરસૈયો એ મન તાણી શોધના, પ્રીત કરું પ્રેમથી પ્રગટ થાશે

નરસિંહ મહેતા

In the whole of Universe

Oh Lord ! you alone pervade the whole of voidless universe, but you appear innumerable through diverse manifestations. You are the governing soul in the body, and sound pervading the vedas.

O Sustainer of universe ! You are the wind, the water and the earth. Growing as a tree, You blossom forth in the sky. You have procreated diverse varieties just to relish manifold tastes. For this you have accepted to shine as an individual soul from your blissful eternal status.

"There is no difference between gold and golden earring", say the Vedas as well as Shruti and Smriti, After making different shapes from gold, different names are given to them, but really speaking all the ornaments are gold and gold alone.

Confusive books are written, wherein the hard fact remains untold. People are led to worship whatever they like, and they believe their self-willed path as final truth by themselves.

You are a seed in the tree, again a tree in the seed. What is hidden behind the aura, I can clearly perceive at hand, Narsimh says, "This is the result of deep mental search. Let me foster love for the Lord and by force of love. He would be visible."

Translation in English by Radheshyamji

Where the Mind is Without Fear...

Where the mind is without fear & the head is held high;

Where the knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up

into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches

its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee

into ever widening thought and

action into that heaven of freedom,

my father let my country awake.

This is my prayer to thee, my lord

strike at the root of penury in my heart.

Give me the strength to make

my love fruitful in service.

Give me the strength never to disown

the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.

Rabindranath Tagore

એક જ રટણા...

ઉચ્છવાસે નિઃશ્વાસ મારી એક જ રટણા હો
તું મુજમા તુજ ધામ રચી જા, એ શુભ ઘટના હો...

હે ઉન્નતગિરિ શૃંગ નિવાસી,
અમ ભૂતલનો તું બન વાસી;
અણુ-અણુમાં તું રહે હુલાસી,
મુજ તુજ બીચ હવે હે પ્રીતમ

અંતર પટ ના હો...

હે અજરા તેજોના રાશિ,
અમ અંધારા જા તું પ્રકાશી;
વખડાંજા ઘરતીના પ્રાશી;
અમ જ્યોતિના એ પંકજને

ઝાંખ ઝપટ ના હો...

હે આનંદ પરમના જલધિ,
અમ ઝરણાની સંહર અવધિ;
અમ કલશે સંભર નવ રસધિ
પંથ પંથ ભણકારા તારી

પદ આહટના હો...

સુન્દરમ્



Chapter 3

Collective Growth and Development

3.1 : A Call to The Young India

□ Our Ideal

Our endeavour shall be to prepare the path and to accomplish the beginning of a great and high change which we believe to be and aim at making the future of the race and the future of India. Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation.

□ True Spirit of Our Country

A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God's mighty creation.

Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga.

□ **The East and The West**

The West has made the growth of the intellectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence. Its highest standards are ideals of progress, of liberty, equality and fraternity, of reason and science, of efficiency of all kinds, of a better political, social and economical state, of the unity and earthly happiness of the race. These are great endeavours, but experiment after experiment has shown that they cannot be realised in their truth by the power of the idea and the sentiment alone: their real truth and practice can only be founded in the spirit. The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change, but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth.

The time has now come to heal the division and to unite life and the spirit.

□ **The Rule of The Gita**

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita,

yogasthah. kuru karmani Its principle is to do all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhya* of the old *yuga* is the forerunner.

□ **True Service to Humanity**

This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life for the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order.

Our first object shall be to declare this ideal, insist on the spiritual change as the first necessity and group together all who accept it and are ready to strive sincerely to fulfil it: our second shall be to build up not only an individual but a communal life on this principle.

An outer activity as well as an inner change is needed and it must be at once a spiritual, cultural, educational, social and economical action. Its scope, too, will be at once individual and communal, regional and national, and eventually a work not only for the nation but for the whole human people. The immediate object of this action will be a new creation, a spiritual education and culture, an enlarged social spirit founded not on division but on unity, on the perfect growth and freedom of the individual, but also on his unity with others and his dedication to a larger self in the people and in humanity, and the beginning of

an endeavour towards the solution of the economic problem founded not on any Western model but on the communal principle native to India.

Our call is to young India.

It is the young who must be the builders of the new world,—not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India's future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a great tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amidst the chaos of a world in dissolution and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to rejuvenate the mighty outworn body of the ancient Mother.

Sri Aurobindo

3.2 : Application of Spirituality in Life

□ What do We Mean By Spirituality □

...We are sometimes asked what on earth we mean by spirituality in art and poetry or in political and social life,—a confession of ignorance strange enough in any Indian mouth at this stage of our national history,—or how art and poetry will be any the better when they have got into them what I have recently seen described as the “twang of spirituality”, and how the practical problems either of society or of politics are going at all to profit by this element. We have here really an echo of the European idea, now of sufficiently long standing, that religion and spirituality on the one side and intellectual activity and practical life on the other are two entirely different things and have each to be pursued on its own entirely separate lines and in obedience to its own entirely separate principles. Again we may be met also by the suspicion that in holding up this ideal rule before India we are pointing her to the metaphysical and away from the dynamic and pragmatic or inculcating some obscurantist reactionary principle of mystical or irrational religiosity and diverting her from the paths of reason and modernity which she must follow if she is to be an efficient and a well-organised nation able to survive in the shocks of the modern world.

We must therefore try to make clear what it is we mean by a renaissance governed by the principle of spirituality.

□ What Do We Not Mean By Spirituality □

But first let us say what we *do not* mean by this ideal.

Clearly it does not signify that we shall regard earthly life as a temporal vanity, try to become all of us as soon as

possible monastic ascetics, frame our social life into a preparation for the monastery or cavern or mountain-top or make of it a static life without any great progressive ideals but only some aim which has nothing to do with earth or the collective advance of the human race. That may have been for some time a tendency of the Indian mind, but it was never the whole tendency. Nor does spirituality mean the molding of the whole type of the national being to suit the limited dogmas, forms, tenets of a particular religion, as was often enough attempted by the old societies, an idea which still persists in many minds by the power of old mental habit and association; clearly such an attempt would be impossible, even if it were desirable, in a country full of the most diverse religious opinions and harboring too three such distinct general forms as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, to say nothing of the numerous special forms to which each of these has given birth. Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion, and in the larger ideas of it that are now coming on us even the greatest religion becomes no more than a broad sect or branch of the one universal religion, by which we shall understand in the future man's seeking for the eternal, the divine, the greater self, the source of unity and his attempt to arrive at some equation, some increasing approximation of the values of human life with the eternal and the divine values.

Nor do we mean the exclusion of anything whatsoever from our scope, of any of the great aims of human life, any of the great problems of our modern world, any form of human activity, any general or inherent impulse or characteristic means of the desire of the soul of man for development, expansion, increasing vigour and joy, light, power, perfection. Spirit without mind, spirit without body is not the type of man, therefore a human spirituality must not belittle the mind, life or body or hold them of small account: it will rather hold them of

high account, of immense importance, precisely because they are the conditions and instruments of the life of the spirit in man. The ancient Indian culture attached quite as much value to the soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body as the old Hellenic or the modern scientific thought, although for a different end and a greater motive. Therefore to everything that serves and belongs to the healthy fullness of these things, it gave free play, to the activity of the reason, to science and philosophy, to the satisfaction of the aesthetic being and to all the many arts great or small, to the health and strength of the body, to the physical and economical well-being, ease, opulence of the race,—there was never a national ideal of poverty in India as some would have us believe, nor was bareness or squalor the essential setting of her spirituality,—and to its general military, political and social strength and efficiency. Their aim was high, but firm and wide too was the base they sought to establish and great the care bestowed on these first instruments. Necessarily the new India will seek the same end in new ways under the vivid impulse of fresh and large ideas and by an instrumentality suited to more complex conditions; but the scope of her effort and action and the suppleness and variety of her mind will not be less, but greater than of old. Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can be and in its fullness must be all-inclusive.

But still there is a great difference between the spiritual and the purely material and mental view of existence. The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind man and the

world, but within man and the world, and this soul, self, divine thing in man it holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express, and this soul, self, divine presence in the world it holds to be that which man has ever to try to see and recognise through all appearances, to unite his thought and life with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows. This alters necessarily our whole normal view of things; even in preserving all the aims of human life, it will give them a different sense and direction.

□ Why Health □

We aim at the health and vigour of the body; but with what object? For its own sake, will be the ordinary reply, because it is worth having; or else that we may have long life and a sound basis for our intellectual, vital, emotional satisfactions. Yes, for its own sake, in a way, but in this sense that the physical too is an expression of the spirit and its perfection is worth having, is part of the dharma of the complete human living; but still more as a basis for all that higher activity which ends in the discovery and expression of the divine self in man. *S'arīram khalu dharmas ādhanam*, runs the old Sanskrit saying, the body too is our means for fulfilling the dharma, the Godward law of our being.

The mental, the emotional, the aesthetic parts of us have to be developed, is the ordinary view, so that they may have a greater satisfaction, or because that is man's finer nature, because so he feels himself more alive and fulfilled. This, but not this only; rather because these things too are the expressions of the spirit, things which are seeking in him for their divine values and by their growth, subtlety, flexibility, power, intensity he is able to come nearer to the divine Reality in the world, to lay hold on it variously, to tune eventually his whole life into unity and

conformity with it. Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational, temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead.

Spirituality Gives a Better Sense for Our Actions, Attitudes and Accomplishments

So with all our aims and activities; spirituality takes them all and gives them a greater, diviner, more intimate sense. Philosophy is in the Western way of dealing with it a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts science places at our disposal or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realisation and the growing of the human being into his divine self and divine nature. Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and his way in things. Nor will it confine itself to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of

mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. **This and nothing more but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.**

Those who distrust this ideal or who cannot understand it, are still under the sway of the European conception of life which for a time threatened to swamp entirely the Indian spirit.

But let us remember that Europe itself is labouring to outgrow the limitations of its own conceptions and precisely by a rapid infusion of the ideas of the East,—naturally, essential ideas and not the mere forms,—which have been first infiltrating and are now more freely streaming into Western thought, poetry, art, ideas of life, not to overturn its culture, but to transform, enlighten and aggrandise its best values and to add new elements which have too long been ignored or forgotten. It will be singular if while Europe is thus intelligently enlarging herself in the new light she has been able to seize and admitting the truths of the spirit and the aim at a divine change in man and his life, we

in India are to take up the cast-off clothes of European thought and life and to straggle along in the old rut of her wheels, always taking up today what she had cast off yesterday. We should not allow our cultural independence to be paralysed by the accident that at the moment Europe came in upon us, we were in a state of ebb and weakness, such as comes some day upon all civilisations....

We have both made mistakes, faltered in the true application of our ideals, been misled into unhealthy exaggerations. Europe has understood the lesson, she is striving to correct herself; but she does not for this reason for swear science, democracy, progress, but purposes to complete and perfect them, to use them better, to give them a sounder direction. She is admitting the light of the East, but on the basis of her own way of thinking and living, opening herself to truth of the spirit, but not abandoning her own truth of life and science and social ideals. We should be as faithful, as free in our dealings with the Indian spirit and modern influences; correct what went wrong with us; apply our spirituality on broader and freer lines, be if possible not less but more spiritual than were our forefathers; admit Western science, reason, progressiveness, the essential modern ideas, but on the basis of our own way of life and assimilated to our spiritual aim and ideal; open ourselves to the throb of life, the pragmatic activity, the great modern endeavour, but not therefore abandon our fundamental view of God and man and Nature. There is no real quarrel between them; for rather these two things need each other to fill themselves in, to discover all their own implications, to awaken to their own richest and completest significances.

India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature.

This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the

stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible, and above all unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create. Religion has been a central preoccupation of the Indian mind; some have told us that too much religion ruined India, precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life, we have failed in life and gone under. I will not answer, adopting the language used by the poet in a slightly different connection, that our fall does not matter and that the dust in which India lies is sacred. The fall, the failure does matter, and to lie in the dust is no sound position for man or nation. But the reason assigned is not the true one. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking, materialistic that they fell. It is possible, that on one side we deviated too much into an excessive religiosity, that is to say, an excessive externalism of ceremony, rule, routine, mechanical worship, on the other into a too world-shunning asceticism which drew away the best minds who were thus lost to society instead of standing like the ancient Rishis as its spiritual support and its illuminating life-givers. But the root of the matter was the dwindling of the spiritual impulse in its generality and broadness, the decline of intellectual activity and freedom, the waning of great ideals, the loss of the gust of life.

Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense; the word is English, smacks too much of things external such as creeds, rites, an external piety; there is no one Indian equivalent.

But if we give rather to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest self, the divine, the all embracing unity and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it—and in what there was, a too one-sided and therefore an insufficiently ample tendency.

The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the age long ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high spiritual sense. This is the direction in which the philosophy, poetry, art of the West is, still more or less obscurely, but with an increasing light, beginning to turn, and even some faint glints of the truth are beginning now to fall across political and sociological ideals. India has the key to the knowledge and conscious application of the ideal; what was dark to her before in its application, she can now, with a new light, illumine; what was wrong and wry in her old methods she can now rectify; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion and farther application, she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can, if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo

3.3 : Sri Aurobindo's Message: 15th August, 1947

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest.

But fortunately it now seems probable that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure.

But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has arisen; large parts are now quite free or are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here too India has begun to

play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual

perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.

Sri Aurobindo

Unit II : Integral Education

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥

*Into a blind darkness they enter who follow
after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater
darkness who devote themselves
to the Knowledge alone.*

*

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्यया अन्यदाहुरविद्यया ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद् विचचक्षिरे ॥

*Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the
Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance;
this is the lore we have received from the wise who
revealed That to our understanding.*

*

विद्याञ्च अविद्याञ्च यस्तद् वेदोभयं सह ।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययामृतमश्नुते ॥

*He who knows That as both in one,
the Knowledge and the Ignorance,
by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and
by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.*



Chapter 4

The Framework of Education

4.1 : True and Living Education

It follows that alone will be a true and living education ...

which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member.

It is by considering the whole question in the light of this large and entire principle that we can best arrive at a clear idea of what we would have our education to be and what we shall strive to accomplish by a national education. Most is this largeness of view and foundation needed here and now in India, the whole energy of whose life purpose must be at this critical turning of her destinies directed to her one great need, to find and rebuild her true self in individual and in people and to take again, thus repossessed of her inner greatness, her due and natural portion and station in the life of the human race.

There are however very different conceptions possible of man and his life, of the nation and its life and of humanity and the life of the human race, and our idea and endeavour in education may well vary considerably according to that difference.

India has always had her own peculiar conception and vision of these things and we must see whether it is not really, as it is likely to be, that which will be or ought to be at the very root of our education and the one thing that will give it its truly national character.

Man has not been seen by the thought of India as a living body developed by physical Nature which has evolved certain vital propensities, an ego, a mind and a reason, an animal of the genus homo and in our case of the species *homo indicus*, whose whole life and education must be turned towards a satisfaction of these propensities under the government of a trained mind and reason and for the best advantage of the personal and the national ego.

It has not been either the turn of her mind to regard man preeminently as a reasoning animal, or let us say, widening the familiar definition, a thinking, feeling and willing natural existence, a mental son of physical Nature, and his education as a culture of the mental capacities, or to define him as a political, social and economic being and his education as a training that will fit him to be an efficient, productive and well disciplined member of the society and the State. All these are no doubt aspects of the human being and she has given them a considerable prominence subject to her larger vision, but they are outward things, parts of the instrumentation of his mind, life and action, not the whole or the real man.

India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind and body, a

conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit.

Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic, a vital and physical being, but all these have been seen as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth, and yet they are not all the soul, because at the summit of its ascent it arises to something greater than them all, into a spiritual being, and it is in this that she has found the supreme manifestation of the soul of man and his ultimate divine manhood, his *param.artha* and highest *purus*. .
Artha.

And similarly India has not understood by the nation or people an organised State or an armed and efficient community well prepared for the struggle of life and putting all at the service of the national ego,—that is only the disguise of iron armour which masks and encumbers the national Purusha,—but a great communal soul and life that has appeared in the whole and has manifested a nature of its own and a law of that nature, a Swabhava and Swadharma, and embodied it in its intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, dynamic, social and political forms and culture.

And equally then our cultural conception of humanity must be in accordance with her ancient vision of the universal manifesting in the human race, evolving through life and mind but with a high ultimate spiritual aim,—it must be the idea of the spirit, the soul of humanity advancing through struggle and concert towards oneness, increasing its experience and maintaining a needed diversity through the varied culture and life motives of its many peoples, searching for perfection through the development of the powers of the individual and his progress towards a diviner being and life, but feeling out too

though more slowly after a similar perfectibility in the life of the race. It may be disputed whether this is a true account of the human or the national being, but if it is once admitted as a true description, then it should be clear that the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation.

That is the principle on which we must build, that the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being....

Sri Aurobindo



Chapter 5

The Basis and Method of Education

5.1 : The Human Mind

The true basis of education is the study of the human mind, infant, adolescent and adult. Any system of education founded on theories of academical perfection, which ignores the instrument of study, is more likely to hamper and impair intellectual growth than to produce a perfect and perfectly equipped mind. For the educationist has to do, not with dead material like the artist or sculptor, but with an infinitely subtle and sensitive organism. He cannot shape an educational masterpiece out of human wood or stone; he has to work in the elusive substance of mind and respect the limits imposed by the fragile human body.

There can be no doubt that the current educational system of Europe is a great advance on many of the methods of antiquity, but its defects are also palpable. It is based on an insufficient knowledge of human psychology, and it is only safeguarded in Europe from disastrous results by the refusal of the ordinary student to subject himself to the processes it involves, his habit of studying only so much as he must to avoid punishment or to pass an immediate test, his resort to active

habits and vigorous physical exercise. In India the disastrous effects of the system on body, mind and character are only too apparent. The first problem in a national system of education is to give an education as comprehensive as the European and more thorough, without the evils of strain and cramming. This can only be done by studying the instruments of knowledge and finding a system of teaching which shall be natural, easy and effective. It is only by strengthening and sharpening these instruments to their utmost capacity that they can be made effective for the increased work which modern conditions require. The muscles of the mind must be thoroughly trained by simple and easy means; then, and not till then, great feats of intellectual strength can be required of them.

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster, he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose.

He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself.

He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface. The distinction that reserves this principle for the teaching of adolescent and adult minds and denies its application to the child, is a conservative and unintelligent doctrine. Child or man, boy or girl, there is only one sound principle of good teaching. Difference of age only serves to diminish or increase the amount of help and guidance necessary; it does not change its nature.

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth.

The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a prearranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own *dharma* is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common. Every man has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of strength and perfection in however small a sphere, which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it, use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be.

The basis of a man's nature is almost always, in addition to his soul's past, his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil from which he draws sustenance, the air which he breathes, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is accustomed. They mould him not the less powerfully because insensibly. From that then we must begin. We must not take up the nature by the roots from the earth in which it must grow or surround the mind with images and ideas of a life which is alien to that in which it must physically move. If anything has to be brought in from outside, it must be offered, not forced on the mind. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development.

There are souls which naturally revolt from their surroundings and seem to belong to another age and clime. Let them be free to follow their bent; but the majority languish, become empty, become artificial, if artificially moulded into an alien form.

It is God's arrangement for mankind that they should belong to a particular nation, age, society, that they should be children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education

Sri Aurobindo

5.2 : Philosophy of Education

Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man.

□ **Knowing is unveiling**

Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is inside. What we say a man 'Knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple or in anything in the centre of the earth.

□ **All knowledge is within**

All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say 'we are learning', and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all knowing, omniscient. Like fire a piece of flint, knowledge exist in the mind; suggestion is the friction which

brings it out.³ All knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature, and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing, through eternity.⁴

□ **Infinite power is in the soul**

No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which arouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall realize them in our souls.⁵ The whole of the big banyan tree which covers acres of ground was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed. All that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell. It may seem like a paradox, but it is true.

Each of one has come out of one protoplasmic cell, and all the powers we possess were coiled up there. You cannot say they came from food, for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was there, potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the soul of man whether he knows it or Not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it.⁶

□ **The cask of glass**

The Light divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron: no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass. Shri Ramakrishna was like the iron cask transformed into a glass cask, through which can be seen the inner light as it is.⁷

□ **Self education**

You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature.⁸ The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not a positive nature but negative. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything.⁹ You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature.¹⁰ So with the education of the child. A child educates itself.¹¹ The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have only to do so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears and eyes.¹²

□ **Free growth**

That system which aims at educating boys in the same manner as that of the men who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse, should be abolished.¹³ Owing to undue domination exercised by the parents, our boys do not get free scope for growth. In every one there are infinite tendencies which require proper scope for satisfaction.¹⁴ Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform. If you do not allow one to become a lion, one will become a fox.¹⁵

□ **Positive ideas**

We should give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them that they will never learn anything and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak

kind words to them and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better.¹⁶ The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, and so give to the pupil according to his tendencies. Take every one where he stands and push him forward.¹⁷ We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage even those whom we considered worthless and change the very course of their lives thereby! He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up.

□ **Service as worship**

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child.' Hands off! They will solve their own know everything? How dare you think that you have the right over God? For, don't you know that every soul is the soul of God? Look upon every one as God. You can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord if you have the privilege. If the lord grants that you can help any one of His children, blessed you are. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when other had it not. Do it only as worship.¹⁸

□ **Assimilation of ideas**

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man making, character making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. **If education**

were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopedias the rishis.¹⁹

□ **Wrong education**

Getting by heart the thought of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. In this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship— isn't that all? What good will it do you or to the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, this proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil want?²⁰ The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion--- is it worth the name?²¹

□ **The needed education**

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.²² What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy say.²³

□ **The goal of man making**

The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.²⁴ The training by which the current and expansion of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called

education.²⁵ What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face²⁶. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.

Swami Vivekananda

5.3 : The Only Method of Education

□ **Concentration**

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called **concentration**.¹ The very essence of education is concentration of mind.² From the lowest man to the highest *yogi*; all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in laboratory concentrate all the power of his mind brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the power of his mind and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on to object through his telescope; and start and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case: with the professor in his chair, the student which his book, with every man who is working to know.³

□ **Its power**

The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoebblack, if the gives more concentration will back shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money or worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better that thing will done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of Nature and out floods of light.⁴

□ **Difference in degree**

Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being and therefore he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never make mistakes. The main difference between men and animals is their powers of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration.

Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long times. Herein the difference between man and the animals. This difference in the power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration.⁶

□ **Results**

All success in any life of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music, etc. are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. The Greek applied their concentration to the external world and the result was perfection in art, literature, etc. The Hindu concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of *yoga*.⁸ The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and the force of the blow come through concentration.⁹

□ **Only key to knowledge**

The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present of our body we are discarded, and mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain; thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in *Raja yoga*. The practice of mediation leads to mental concentration.

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once

again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with perfect instrument, collect facts at will.¹²

□ **Brahmacharya necessary for concentration**

Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for the period of twelve years.¹³ Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. Controlled desire leads to the highest result. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.¹⁵ It is owing to want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. By observance of strict Brahmacharya all learning can be mastered in a very short time; one acquires an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leader of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.¹⁷

Every boy should be trained to practice Brahmacharya and then, and then alone faith and Shraddha will come.¹⁸ Chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called Brahmacharya.¹⁹ Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.²⁰ The Brahmacharya must be pure in thought, word and deed.²¹

The idea of true Shraddha must be bought back once more to us. The faith in us must be reawakened and then only all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.²²

What we want is this Shraddha. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference between Shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man great and

another so weak and low is this Shraddha. My master used to say: he who thinks himself weak will become weak; and that is true. This Shraddha must enter in to you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the western races is the outcome of this Shraddha, because they believe in their muscles; and if you believe in spirit how much more will it work ! ²³

I beg you to understand this one fact; no good comes out of the man who day and night thinks that he is nobody. If a man thinks day and night that he is miserable, low and nothing; nothing he becomes. If you say 'I am, I am', so shall you be. That is the great fact you ought to remember. We are children of the almighty, we are sparks of the infinite, divine fire? How can we be nothing? We are everything, ready to do everything; we can do everything. The faith in them was in the heart of the ancestors; this faith in them was the movie power that pushes them forward in the march of civilization. If there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost faith in themselves.²⁴

□ **One becomes what one thinks**

To preach the doctrine of Shraddha or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat that this faith is one of the most potent factor of humanity. First have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may be a little bubble and another may be mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.²⁵ The infinite ocean is the background of me as well as you. Mine also is that another may be mountain-high wave, there are the infinite oceans. The infinite ocean of life, of the power, of the spirituality as well as yours. Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children even from their very birth.²⁶

Swami Vivekananda



Chapter 6

True Education

6.1 : The Four Austerities and the Four Liberations

To pursue an integral education that leads to the supramental realisation, four austerities are necessary, and with them four liberations. Austerity is usually confused with self-mortification, and when someone speaks of austerities, we think of the discipline of the ascetic who, in order to avoid the arduous task of spiritualising the physical, vital and mental life, declares it incapable of transformation and casts it away ruthlessly as a useless encumbrance, as a bondage and an impediment to all spiritual progress, in any case as something incorrigible, as a load that has to be borne more or less cheerfully until Nature, or divine Grace, delivers you from it by death. At best, life on earth is a field for progress and one should take advantage of it as best one can in order to reach as soon as possible the degree of perfection which will put an end to the ordeal by making it unnecessary. For us the problem is quite different.

Life on earth is not a passage or a means; by transformation it must become a goal and a realisation.

□ **Austerities : A Different Perspective**

Consequently, when we speak of austerities, it is not out of contempt for the body nor to detach ourselves from it, but because of the need for control and mastery. For there is an austerity which is far greater, far more complete and far more difficult than all the austerities of the ascetic: it is the austerity which is necessary for the integral transformation, the fourfold austerity which prepares the individual for the manifestation of the supramental truth. For example, one can say that few austerities are as strict as those which physical culture demands for the perfection of the body. But we shall return to this point in due time.

Before starting to describe the four kinds of austerity required, it is necessary to clarify one question which is a source of much misunderstanding and confusion in the minds of most people. It is the question of ascetic practices, which they mistake for spiritual disciplines. These practices, which consist of ill treating the body in order, so they say, to liberate the spirit from it, are in fact a sensuous distortion of spiritual discipline; it is a kind of perverse need for suffering which drives the ascetic to self-mortification. The sadhu's recourse to the bed of nails or the Christian anchorite's resort to the whip and the hair-shirt are the result of a more or less veiled sadistic tendency, unavowed and unavowable; it is an unhealthy seeking or a subconscious need for violent sensations. In reality, these things are very far removed from all spiritual life, for they are ugly and base, dark and diseased; whereas spiritual life, on the contrary, is a life of light and balance, beauty and joy. They are invented and extolled by a sort of mental and vital cruelty towards the body. But cruelty, even with regard to one's own body, is nonetheless cruelty, and all cruelty is a sign of great unconsciousness. Unconscious natures need very strong sensations, for without them they can feel nothing; and cruelty, which is one form of

sadism, brings very strong sensations. The avowed purpose of such practices is to abolish all sensation so that the body may no longer stand in the way of one's flight towards the spirit; but the effectiveness of this method is open to doubt. It is a recognised fact that in order to progress rapidly, one must not be afraid of difficulties; on the contrary, by choosing to do the difficult thing at every opportunity, one increases the will-power and strengthens the nerves. Now, it is much more difficult to lead a life of moderation and balance, in equanimity and serenity, than to try to contend with over-indulgence in pleasure and the obscuration it entails, by over-indulgence in asceticism and the disintegration it causes. It is much more difficult to achieve the harmonious and progressive development of one's physical being in calm and simplicity than to ill-treat it to the point of annihilation.

It is much more difficult to live soberly and without desire than to deprive the body of its indispensable nourishment and cleanliness and boast proudly of one's abstinence. It is much more difficult to avoid or to surmount and conquer illness by an inner and outer harmony, purity and balance, than to disregard and ignore it and leave it free to do its work of destruction. And the most difficult thing of all is to maintain the consciousness constantly at the height of its capacity, never allowing the body to act under the influence of a lower impulse. This is why we shall have recourse to the four austerities which will result in four liberations within us. The practice of these austerities will constitute a fourfold discipline or tapasya which can be defined as follows: **(1) Tapasya of love (2) Tapasya of knowledge (3) Tapasya of power (4) Tapasya of beauty**

These terms have been listed from top to bottom, so to say, but their order should not be taken to indicate anything superior or inferior, or more or less difficult, or the order in which these disciplines can and ought to be practised. The order,

importance and difficulty vary with each individual and no absolute rule can be formulated. Each one must find and work out his own system according to his personal needs and capacities. Accordingly, only an overall view will be given here, presenting an ideal procedure that is as complete as possible. Each one will then have to apply as much of it as he can in the best possible way.

The tapasya or discipline of beauty will lead us, through austerity in physical life, to freedom in action. Its basic programme will be to build a body that is beautiful in form, harmonious in posture, supple and agile in its movements, powerful in its activities and robust in its health and organic functioning. To achieve these results, it will be good, as a general rule, to make use of habit as a help in organising one's material life, for the body functions more easily within the framework of a regular routine. But one must know how to avoid becoming a slave to one's habits, however good they may be; the greatest flexibility must be maintained so that one may change them each time it becomes necessary to do so. One must build up nerves of steel in powerful and elastic muscles in order to be able to endure anything whenever it is indispensable. But at the same time great care must be taken not to demand more from the body than the effort which is strictly necessary, the expenditure of energy that fosters growth and progress, while categorically excluding everything that causes exhaustion and leads in the end to physical decline and disintegration.

□ **Physical Culture**

A physical culture which aims at building a body capable of serving as a fit instrument for a higher consciousness demands very austere habits: a great regularity in sleep, food, exercise and every activity. By a scrupulous study of one's own bodily needs—for they vary with each individual—a general

programme will be established; and once this has been done well, it must be followed rigorously, without any fantasy or slackness.

□ **No Excuses**

There must be no little exceptions to the rule that are indulged in “just for once” but which are repeated very often—for as soon as one yields to temptation, even “just for once”, one lessens the resistance of the will-power and opens the door to every failure. One must therefore forgo all weakness: no more nightly escapades from which one comes back exhausted, no more feasting and carousing which upset the normal functioning of the stomach, no more distractions, amusements and pleasures that only waste energy and leave one without the strength to do the daily practice. One must submit to the austerity of a sensible and regular life, concentrating all one's physical attention on building a body that comes as close to perfection as possible. To reach this ideal goal, one must strictly shun all excess and every vice, great or small; one must deny oneself the use of such slow poisons as tobacco, alcohol, etc., which men have a habit of developing into indispensable needs that gradually destroy the will and the memory.

□ **Food**

The all-absorbing interest which nearly all human beings, even the most intellectual, have in food, its preparation and its consumption, should be replaced by an almost chemical knowledge of the needs of the body and a very scientific austerity in satisfying them.

□ **Sleep**

Another austerity must be added to that of food, the austerity of sleep. It does not consist in going without sleep but in knowing how to sleep. Sleep must not be a fall into

unconsciousness which makes the body heavy instead of refreshing it. Eating with moderation and abstaining from all excess greatly reduces the need to spend many hours in sleep; however, the quality of sleep is much more important than its quantity. In order to have a truly effective rest and relaxation during sleep, it is good as a rule to drink something before going to bed, a cup of milk or soup or fruit-juice, for instance. Light food brings a quiet sleep. One should, however, abstain from all copious meals, for then the sleep becomes agitated and is disturbed by nightmares, or else is dense, heavy and dulling. But the most important thing of all is to make the mind clear, to quieten the emotions and calm the effervescence of desires and the preoccupations which accompany them. If before retiring to bed one has talked a lot or had a lively discussion, if one has read an exciting or intensely interesting book, one should rest a little without sleeping in order to quieten the mental activity, so that the brain does not engage in disorderly movements while the other parts of the body alone are asleep.

Those who practise meditation will do well to concentrate for a few minutes on a lofty and restful idea, in an aspiration towards a higher and vaster consciousness. Their sleep will benefit greatly from this and they will largely be spared the risk of falling into unconsciousness while they sleep.

□ **Exercises**

After the austerity of a night spent wholly in resting in a calm and peaceful sleep comes the austerity of a day which is sensibly organised; its activities will be divided between the progressive and skilfully graded exercises required for the culture of the body, and work of some kind or other. For both can and ought to form part of the physical tapasya. With regard to exercises, each one will choose the ones best suited to his body and, if possible, take guidance from an expert on the subject,

who knows how to combine and grade the exercises to obtain a maximum effect.

Neither the choice nor the execution of these exercises should be governed by fancy. One must not do this or that because it seems easier or more amusing; there should be no change of training until the instructor considers it necessary. The self-perfection or even simply the self-improvement of each individual body is a problem to be solved, and its solution demands much patience, perseverance and regularity. In spite of what many people think, the athlete's life is not a life of amusement or distraction; on the contrary, it is a life of methodical efforts and austere habits, which leave no room for useless fancies that go against the result one wants to achieve.

□ **Work**

In work too there is an austerity. It consists in not having any preferences and in doing everything one does with interest.

For one who wants to grow in self-perfection, there are no great or small tasks, none that are important or unimportant; all are equally useful for one who aspires for progress and self-mastery.

It is said that one only does well what one is interested in doing.

This is true, but it is truer still that one can learn to find interest in everything one does, even in what appear to be the most insignificant chores. The secret of this attainment lies in the urge towards self-perfection. Whatever occupation or task falls to your lot, you must do it with a will to progress; whatever one does, one must not only do it as best one can but strive to do it better and better in a constant effort for perfection.

In this way everything without exception becomes interesting, from the most material chore to the most artistic and

intellectual work. The scope for progress is infinite and can be applied to the smallest thing.

This leads us quite naturally to liberation in action. For, in one's action, one must be free from all social conventions, all moral prejudices. However, this does not mean that one should lead a life of licence and dissoluteness. On the contrary, one imposes on oneself a rule that is far stricter than all social rules, for it tolerates no hypocrisy and demands a perfect sincerity.

One's entire physical activity should be organised to help the body to grow in balance and strength and beauty. For this purpose, one must abstain from all pleasure-seeking, including sexual pleasure. For every sexual act is a step towards death.

That is why from the most ancient times, in the most sacred and secret schools, this act was prohibited to every aspirant towards immortality. The sexual act is always followed by a longer or shorter period of unconsciousness that opens the door to all kinds of influences and causes a fall in consciousness.

But if one wants to prepare oneself for the supramental life, one must never allow one's consciousness to slip into laxity and inconstancy under the pretext of pleasure or even of rest and relaxation. One should find relaxation in force and light, not in darkness and weakness. Continence is therefore the rule for all those who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by a total abstinence, achieved not by coercion and suppression but by a kind of inner alchemy, as a result of which the energies that are normally used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation. It is obvious that for the result to be total and truly beneficial, all sexual impulses and desires must be eliminated from the mental and vital consciousness as well as from the physical will. All radical and durable transformation

proceeds from within outwards, so that the external transformation is the normal, almost inevitable result of this process.

A decisive choice has to be made between lending the body to Nature's ends in obedience to her demand to perpetuate the race as it is, and preparing this same body to become a step towards the creation of the new race. For it is not possible to do both at the same time; at every moment one has to decide whether one wants to remain part of the humanity of yesterday or to belong to the superhumanity of tomorrow.

One must renounce being adapted to life as it is and succeeding in it if one wants to prepare for life as it will be and to become an active and efficient part of it.

One must refuse pleasure if one wants to open to the delight of existence, in a total beauty and harmony.

□ **Tapasya of Power**

This brings us quite naturally to vital austerity, the austerity of the sensations, the tapasya of power. For the vital being is the seat of power, of effective enthusiasm. It is in the vital that thought is transformed into will and becomes a dynamism for action. It is also true that the vital is the seat of desires and passions, of violent impulses and equally violent reactions, of revolt and depression. The normal remedy is to strangle and starve the vital by depriving it of all sensation; sensations are indeed its main sustenance and without them it falls asleep, grows sluggish and starves to death.

In fact, the vital has three sources of subsistence. The one most easily accessible to it comes from below, from the physical energies through the sensations.

The second is on its own plane, when it is sufficiently vast and receptive, by contact with the universal vital forces.

The third, to which it usually opens only in a great aspiration for progress, comes to it from above by the infusion and absorption of spiritual forces and inspiration.

To these sources men always strive more or less to add another, which is for them at the same time the source of most of their torments and misfortunes. It is the interchange of vital forces with their fellows, usually in groups of two, which they most often mistake for love, but which is only the attraction between two forces that take pleasure in mutual interchange.

Thus, if we do not wish to starve our vital, sensations must not be rejected or diminished in number and intensity. Neither should we avoid them; rather we must make use of them with wisdom and discernment. Sensations are an excellent instrument of knowledge and education, but to make them serve these ends, they must not be used egoistically for the sake of enjoyment, in a blind and ignorant search for pleasure and self-satisfaction.

The senses should be capable of enduring everything without disgust or displeasure, but at the same time they must acquire and develop more and more the power of discerning the quality, origin and effect of the various vital vibrations in order to know whether they are favourable to harmony, beauty and good health or whether they are harmful to the balance and progress of the physical being and the vital. Moreover, the senses should be used as instruments to approach and study the physical and vital worlds in all their complexity; in this way they will take their true place in the great endeavour towards transformation.

It is by enlightening, strengthening and purifying the vital, and not by weakening it, that one can contribute to the true progress of the being. To deprive oneself of sensations is therefore as harmful as depriving oneself of food. But just as the

choice of food must be made wisely and solely for the growth and proper functioning of the body, so too the choice of sensations and their control should be made with a very scientific austerity and solely for the growth and perfection of the vital, of this highly dynamic instrument, which is as essential for progress as all the other parts of the being.

It is by educating the vital, by making it more refined, more sensitive, more subtle and, one should almost say, more elegant, in the best sense of the word, that one can overcome its violence and brutality, which are in fact a form of crudity and ignorance, of lack of taste.

In truth, a cultivated and illumined vital can be as noble and heroic and disinterested as it is now spontaneously vulgar, egoistic and perverted when it is left to itself without education.

It is enough for each one to know how to transform in himself the search for pleasure into an aspiration for the supramental plenitude. If the education of the vital is carried far enough, with perseverance and sincerity, there comes a time when, convinced of the greatness and beauty of the goal, the vital gives up petty and illusory sensorial satisfactions in order to win the divine delight.

□ **Tapasya of Knowledge**

The question of mental austerity immediately brings to mind long meditations leading to control of thought and culminating in inner silence. This aspect of yogic discipline is too well known to need dwelling upon. But there is another aspect of the subject which is usually given less attention, and that is control of speech. Apart from a very few exceptions, only absolute silence is set in opposition to loose talk. And yet it is a far greater and far more fruitful austerity to control one's speech than to abolish it altogether.

Man is the first animal on earth to be able to use articulate sounds. Indeed, he is very proud of this capacity and exercises it without moderation or discernment. The world is deafened with the sound of his words and sometimes one almost misses the harmonious silence of the plant kingdom.

Besides, it is a well-known fact that the weaker the mental power, the greater is the need to use speech. Thus there are primitive and uneducated people who cannot think at all unless they speak, and they can be heard muttering sounds more or less loudly to themselves, because this is the only way they can follow a train of thought, which would not be formulated in them but for the spoken word.

There are also a great many people, even among those who are educated but whose mental power is weak, who do not know what they want to say until they say it. This makes their speech interminable and tedious. For as they speak, their thought becomes clearer and more precise, and so they have to repeat the same thing several times in order to say it more and more exactly.

Some need to prepare beforehand what they have to say, and splutter when they are obliged to improvise, because they have not had time to elaborate step by step the exact terms of what they want to say.

Lastly, there are born orators who are masters of the spoken word; they spontaneously find all the words they need to say what they want to say and say it well.

None of this, however, from the point of view of mental austerity, goes beyond the category of idle talk. For by idle talk I mean every word that is spoken without being absolutely indispensable. One may ask, how can one judge? For this, one must first make a general classification of the various categories of spoken words.

First, in the physical domain, we have all the words that are spoken for material reasons. They are by far the most numerous and most probably also the most useful in ordinary life.

A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration.

If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and others; you will then be able to communicate among yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all. This outer silence is most favourable to inner peace, and with goodwill and a steadfast aspiration, you will be able to create a harmonious atmosphere which is very conducive to progress.

In social life, in addition to the words that concern material life and occupations, there will be those that express sensations, feelings and emotions. Here the habit of outer silence proves of valuable help. For when one is assailed by a wave of sensations or feelings, this habitual silence gives you time to reflect and, if necessary, to regain possession of yourself before projecting the sensation or feeling in words. How many quarrels can be avoided in this way; how many times one will be saved from one of those psychological catastrophes which are only too often the result of uncontrolled speech.

Without going to this extreme, one should always control the words one speaks and never allow one's tongue to be prompted by a movement of anger, violence or temper. It is not only the quarrel that is bad in its results, but the fact of allowing

one's tongue to be used to project bad vibrations into the atmosphere; for nothing is more contagious than the vibrations of sound, and by giving these movements a chance to express themselves, one perpetuates them in oneself and in others.

Among the most undesirable kinds of idle talk must also be included everything that is said about others.

Unless you are responsible for certain people, as a guardian, a teacher or a departmental head, what others do or do not do is no concern of yours and you must refrain from talking about them, from giving your opinion about them and what they do, and from repeating what others may think or say about them.

It may happen that the very nature of your occupation makes it your duty to report what is taking place in a particular department, undertaking or communal work. But then the report should be confined to the work alone and not touch upon private matters. And as an absolute rule, it must be wholly objective. You should not allow any personal reaction, any preference, any like or dislike to creep in. And above all, never introduce your own petty personal grudges into the work that is assigned to you.

In all cases and as a general rule, the less one speaks of others, even to praise them, the better. It is already so difficult to know exactly what is happening in oneself—how can one know with certainty what is happening in others? So you must totally abstain from pronouncing upon anybody one of those final judgments which cannot but be foolish if not spiteful.

When a thought is expressed in speech, the vibration of the sound has a considerable power to bring the most material substance into contact with the thought, thus giving it a concrete and effective reality. That is why one must never speak ill of people or things or say things which go against the progress of the divine realisation in the world. This is an absolute general rule. And yet it has one exception. You should not criticise

anything unless at the same time you have the conscious power and active will to dissolve or transform the movements or things you criticise. For this conscious power and active will have the capacity of infusing Matter with the possibility to react and refuse the bad vibration and ultimately to correct it so that it becomes impossible for it to go on expressing itself on the physical plane.

This can be done without risk or danger only by one who moves in the gnostic realms and possesses in his mental faculties the light of the spirit and the power of the truth. He, the divine worker, is free from all preference and all attachment; he has broken down the limits of his ego and is now only a perfectly pure and impersonal instrument of the supramental action upon earth.

There are also all the words that are uttered to express ideas, opinions, the results of reflection or study. Here we are in an intellectual domain and we might think that in this domain men are more reasonable, more self-controlled, and that the practice of rigorous austerity is less indispensable. It is nothing of the kind, however, for even here, into this abode of ideas and knowledge, man has brought the violence of his convictions, the intolerance of his sectarianism, the passion of his preferences.

Thus, here too, one must resort to mental austerity and carefully avoid any exchange of ideas that leads to controversies which are all too often bitter and nearly always unnecessary, or any clash of opinion which ends in heated discussions and even quarrels, which are always the result of some mental narrowness that can easily be cured when one rises high enough in the mental domain.

For sectarianism becomes impossible when one knows that any formulated thought is only one way of saying something which eludes all expression. Every idea contains a

little of the truth or one aspect of the truth. But no idea is absolutely true in itself.

This sense of the relativity of things is a powerful help in keeping one's balance and preserving a serene moderation in one's speech. I once heard an old occultist of some wisdom say, "Nothing is essentially bad; there are only things which are not in their place. Put each thing in its true place and you will have a harmonious world."

And yet, from the point of view of action, the value of an idea is in proportion to its pragmatic power. It is true that this power varies a great deal according to the individual on whom it acts. An idea that has great impelling force in one individual may have none whatsoever in another. But the power itself is contagious. Certain ideas are capable of transforming the world. They are the ones that ought to be expressed; they are the ruling stars in the firmament of the spirit that will guide the earth towards its supreme realisation.

Lastly, we have all the words that are spoken for the purpose of teaching. This category ranges from the kindergarten to the university course, not forgetting all the artistic and literary creations of mankind that seek to entertain or instruct. In this domain, everything depends on the worth of the creation, and the subject is too vast to be dealt with here. It is a fact that concern about education is very much in vogue at present and praiseworthy attempts are being made to make use of new scientific discoveries in the service of education. But even in this matter, austerity is demanded from the aspirant towards truth.

It is generally admitted that in the process of education a certain kind of lighter, more frivolous, more entertaining productions are necessary to reduce the strain of effort and give some relaxation to the children and even to adults. From a certain point of view, this is true; but unfortunately this

concession has served as an excuse to justify a whole category of things which are nothing but the efflorescence of all that is vulgar, crude and base in human nature. Its coarsest instincts, its most depraved taste find in this concession a good excuse to display and impose themselves as an inevitable necessity. They are nothing of the kind, however; one can relax without being dissolute, take rest without being vulgar, enjoy oneself without allowing the grosser elements in the nature to rise to the surface.

But from the point of view of austerity, these needs themselves change their nature; relaxation is transformed into inner silence, rest into contemplation and enjoyment into bliss.

This generally recognised need for entertainment, slackening of effort and more or less long and total forgetfulness of the aim of life and the purpose of existence should not be considered as something altogether natural and indispensable, but as a weakness to which one yields because of lack of intensity in the aspiration, because of instability in the will, because of ignorance, unconsciousness and sloth. Do not justify these movements and you will soon realise that they are unnecessary; there will even come a time when they become repugnant and unacceptable to you. Then the greater part of human creation, which is ostensibly entertaining but in reality debasing, will lose its support and cease to be encouraged.

However, one should not think that the value of spoken words depends on the nature of the subject of conversation. One can talk idly on spiritual matters just as much as on any other, and this kind of idle talk may well be one of the most dangerous.

For example, the neophyte is always very eager to share with others the little he has learnt. But as he advances on the path, he becomes more and more aware that he does not know very much and that before trying to instruct others, he must be very sure of the value of what he knows, until he finally becomes

wise and realises that many hours of silent concentration are needed to be able to speak usefully for a few minutes. Moreover, where inner life and spiritual effort are concerned, the use of speech should be subjected to a still more stringent rule and nothing should be said unless it is absolutely indispensable.

It is a well-known fact that one must never speak of one's spiritual experiences if one does not want to see vanishing in a flash the energy accumulated in the experience, which was meant to hasten one's progress. The only exception which can be made to the rule is with regard to one's guru, when one wants to receive some explanation or teaching from him concerning the content and meaning of one's experience. Indeed, one can speak about these things without danger only to one's guru, for only the guru is able by his knowledge to use the elements of the experience for your own good, as steps towards new ascents.

It is true that the guru himself is subject to the same rule of silence with regard to what concerns him personally. In Nature everything is in movement; thus, whatever does not move forward is bound to fall back. The guru must progress even as his disciples do, although his progress may not be on the same plane. And for him too, to speak about his experiences is not favourable: the greater part of the dynamic force for progress contained in the experience evaporates if it is put into words.

But on the other hand, by explaining his experiences to his disciples, he greatly helps their understanding and consequently their progress. It is for him in his wisdom to know to what extent he can and ought to sacrifice the one to the other. It goes without saying that no boasting or vainglory should enter into his account, for the slightest vanity would make him no longer a guru but an imposter.

As for the disciple, I would tell him: "In all cases, be faithful to your guru whoever he is; he will lead you as far as you

can go. But if you have the good fortune to have the Divine as your guru, there will be no limit to your realisation.”

Nevertheless, even the Divine, when incarnate on earth, is subject to the same law of progress. His instrument of manifestation, the physical being he has assumed, should be in a constant state of progress, and the law of his personal self-expression is in a way linked to the general law of earthly progress. Thus, even the embodied god cannot be perfect on earth until men are ready to understand and accept perfection. That day will come when everything that is now done out of a sense of duty towards the Divine will be done out of love for Him. Progress will be a joy instead of being an effort and often even a struggle. Or, more exactly, progress will be made in joy, with the full adherence of the whole being, instead of by coercing the resistance of the ego, which entails great effort and sometimes even great suffering.

In conclusion, I would say this: if you want your speech to express the truth and thus acquire the power of the Word, never think out beforehand what you want to say, do not decide what is a good or bad thing to say, do not calculate the effect of what you are going to say. Be silent in mind and remain unwavering in the true attitude of constant aspiration towards the All-Wisdom, the All-Knowledge, the All-Consciousness. Then, if your aspiration is sincere, if it is not a veil for your ambition to do well and to succeed, if it is pure, spontaneous and integral, you will then be able to speak very simply, to say the words that ought to be said, neither more nor less, and they will have a creative power.

□ **Tapasya of Love**

Of all austerities the most difficult is the austerity of feelings and emotions, the tapasya of love.

Indeed, in the domain of feelings, more perhaps than in any other, man has the sense of the inevitable, the irresistible, of

a fatality that dominates him and which he cannot escape. Love (or at least what human beings call love) is particularly regarded as an imperious master whose caprice one cannot elude, who strikes you according to his fancy and forces you to obey him whether you will or not. In the name of love the worst crimes have been perpetrated, the greatest follies committed.

And yet men have invented all kinds of moral and social rules in the hope of controlling this force of love, of making it amenable and docile. But these rules seem to have been made only to be broken; and the restraint they impose on its free activity merely increases its explosive power. For it is not by rules that the movements of love can be disciplined. Only a greater, higher and truer power of love can subdue the uncontrollable impulses of love. Only love can rule over love by enlightening, transforming and exalting it. For here too, more than anywhere else, control does not consist of suppression and abolition but of transmutation—a sublime alchemy. This is because, of all the forces at work in the universe, love is the most powerful, the most irresistible. Without love the world would fall back into the chaos of inconscience.

Consciousness is indeed the creatrix of the universe, but love is its saviour. Conscious experience alone can give a glimpse of what love is, of its purpose and process. Any verbal transcription is necessarily a mental travesty of something which eludes all expression in every way. Philosophers, mystics, occultists, have all tried to define love, but in vain. I have no pretension of succeeding where they have failed. But I wish to state in the simplest possible terms what in their writings takes such an abstract and complicated form. My words will have no other aim than to lead towards the living experience, and I wish to be able to lead even a child to it.

Love is, in its essence, the joy of identity; it finds its

ultimate expression in the bliss of union. Between the two lie all the phases of its universal manifestation.

At the beginning of this manifestation, in the purity of its origin, love is composed of two movements, two complementary poles of the urge towards complete oneness. On one hand there is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need for absolute self-giving. No other movement could have better bridged the abyss that was created when in the individual being consciousness was separated from its origin and became unconsciousness.

What had been projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, annihilating the universe which had thus been created. That is why love burst forth, the irresistible power of union.

It brooded over the darkness and the inconscience; it was scattered and fragmented in the bosom of unfathomable night.

And then began the awakening and the ascent, the slow formation of Matter and its endless progression. It is indeed love, in a corrupted and darkened form, that is associated with all the impulses of physical and vital Nature, as the urge behind all movement and all grouping, which becomes quite perceptible in the plant kingdom. In trees and plants, it is the need to grow in order to obtain more light, more air, more space; in flowers, it is the offering of their beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. Then, in animals, it is love that lies behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in short, behind every desire, whether conscious or not. And among the higher species, it is in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female to her young. This brings us quite naturally to the human race in which, with the triumphant advent of mental activity, this association reaches its climax, for it has become conscious and deliberate. Indeed, as soon as terrestrial

development made it possible, Nature took up this sublime force of love and put it at the service of her creative work by linking and mixing it with her movement of procreation. This association has even become so close, so intimate, that very few human beings are illumined enough in their consciousness to be able to dissociate these movements from each other and experience them separately. In this way, love has suffered every degradation; it has been debased to the level of the beast.

From then on, too, there clearly appears in Nature's works the will to rebuild, by steps and stages and through ever more numerous and complex groupings, the primordial oneness. Having made use of the power of love to bring two human beings together to form the biune group, the origin of the family, after having broken the narrow limits of personal egoism, changing it into a dual egoism, Nature, with the appearance of children, brought forth a more complex unit, the family. And in course of time, with multifarious associations between families, individual interchanges and mingling of blood, larger groupings were formed: clans, tribes, castes, classes, leading to the creation of nations. This work of group formation proceeded simultaneously in the various parts of the world, crystallising in the different races. And little by little, Nature will fuse these races too in her endeavour to build a real and material foundation for human unity.

In the consciousness of most men, all this is the outcome of chance; they are not aware of the existence of a global plan and take circumstances as they come, for better or for worse according to their temperament: some are satisfied, others discontented.

Among the contented, there is a certain category of people who are perfectly adapted to Nature's ways: these are the optimists.

For them the days are brighter because of the nights, colours are vivid because of the shadows, joy is more intense because of suffering, pain gives a greater charm to pleasure, illness gives health all its value; I have even heard some of them say that they are glad to have enemies because it made them appreciate their friends all the more. In any case, for all these people, sexual activity is one of the most enjoyable of occupations, satisfaction of the palate is a delight of life that they cannot go without; and it is quite normal to die since one is born: death puts an end to a journey which would become tedious if it were to last too long.

In short, they find life quite all right as it is and do not care to know whether it has a purpose or a goal; they do not worry about the miseries of others and do not see any need for progress.

Never try to “convert” these people; it would be a serious mistake. If they were unfortunate enough to listen to you, they would lose the balance they have without being able to find a new one. They are not ready to have an inner life, but they are Nature's favourites; they have a very close alliance with her, and this realisation should not be needlessly disturbed.

To a lesser degree, and above all, in a less durable way, there are other contented people in the world whose contentment is due to the magic effect of love. Each time an individual breaks the narrow limitations in which he is imprisoned by his ego and emerges into the open air, through self-giving, whether for the sake of another human being or his family, his country or his faith, he finds in this self-forgetfulness a foretaste of the marvellous delight of love, and this gives him the impression that he has come into contact with the Divine. But most often it is only a fleeting contact, for in the human being love is immediately mixed with lower egoistic movements which

debase it and rob it of its power of purity. But even if it remained pure, this contact with the divine existence could not last for ever, for love is only one aspect of the Divine, an aspect which here on earth has suffered the same distortions as the others.

Besides, all these experiences are very good and useful for the ordinary man who follows the normal way of Nature in her stumbling march towards the future unity. But they cannot satisfy those who want to hasten the movement, or rather, who aspire to belong to another line of more direct and rapid movement, to an exceptional movement that will liberate them from ordinary mankind and its interminable march, so that they may take part in the spiritual advance which will lead them along the swiftest paths towards the creation of the new race, the race that will express the supramental truth upon earth. These rare souls must reject all forms of love between human beings, for however beautiful and pure they may be, they cause a kind of short-circuit and cut off the direct connection with the Divine.

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

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

This is the marvellous state we want to realise on earth; it

is this which will have the power to transform the world and make it a habitation worthy of the Divine Presence. Then will pure and true love be able to incarnate in a body that will no longer be a disguise and a veil for it. Many a time, in order to make the discipline easier and to create a closer and more easily perceptible intimacy, the Divine has sought, in his highest form of love, to assume a physical body similar in appearance to the human body; but each time, imprisoned within the gross forms of Matter, he was able to express only a caricature of himself.

And in order to manifest in the fullness of his perfection he waits only for human beings to have made some indispensable progress in their consciousness and in their bodies; for the vulgarity of man's vanity and the stupidity of his conceit mistake The sublime divine love, when it expresses itself in a human form, for a sign of weakness and dependence and need.

And yet man already knows, at first obscurely, but more and more clearly as he draws nearer to perfection, that love alone can put an end to the suffering of the world; only the ineffable joy of love in its essence can sweep away from the universe the burning pain of separation. For only in the ecstasy of the supreme union will creation discover its purpose and its fulfilment.

That is why no effort is too arduous, no austerity too rigorous if it can illumine, purify, perfect and transform the physical substance so that it may no longer conceal the Divine when he takes on an outer form in Matter. For then this marvellous tenderness will be able to express itself freely in the world, the divine love which has the power of changing life into a paradise of sweet joy.

This, you will say, is the culmination, the crown of the effort, the final victory; but what must be done in order to

achieve it? What is the path to be followed and what are the first steps on the way?

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

You will await your joys and pleasures from the Divine alone. In him alone will you seek and find help and support. He will comfort you in all your sorrows, guide you on the path, lift you up if you stumble, and if there are moments of failure and exhaustion, he will take you up in his strong arms of love and enfold you in his soothing sweetness.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I must point out here that because of the exigencies of the language in which I am expressing myself, I am obliged to use the masculine gender whenever I mention the Divine. But in fact the reality of love I speak of is above and beyond all gender, masculine or feminine; and when it incarnates in a human body, it does so indifferently in the body of a man or a woman according to the needs of the work to be done.

In summary, austerity in feelings consists then of giving up all emotional attachment, of whatever nature, whether for a person, for the family, for the country or anything else, in order to concentrate on an exclusive attachment for the Divine Reality.

This concentration will culminate in an integral identification and will be instrumental to the supramental realisation upon earth.

This leads us quite naturally to the four liberations which will be the concrete forms of this achievement. The liberation of the feelings will be at the same time the liberation from suffering, in a total realisation of the supramental oneness.

The mental liberation or liberation from ignorance will establish in the being the mind of light or gnostic consciousness, whose expression will have the creative power of the Word.

The vital liberation or liberation from desire gives the individual will the power to identify itself perfectly and consciously with the divine will and brings constant peace and serenity as well as the power which results from them.

Finally, crowning all the others, comes the physical liberation or liberation from the law of material cause and effect.

By a total self-mastery, one is no longer a slave of Nature's laws which make men act according to subconscious or semiconscious impulses and maintain them in the rut of ordinary life. With this liberation one can decide in full knowledge the path to be taken, choose the action to be accomplished and free oneself from all blind determinism, so that nothing is allowed to intervene in the course of one's life but the highest will, the truest knowledge, the supramental consciousness

The Mother

6.2 : Psychic Education and Spiritual Education

Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness which goes beyond the bounds of his present life and enables him to share in a higher and a vaster life. Indeed, in all exceptional beings it is always this consciousness that governs their lives and organises both the circumstances of their existence and their individual reaction to these circumstances. What the human mental consciousness does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the centre of the being, radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness. Some have a vague intimation of its presence; a good many children are under its influence, which shows itself very distinctly at times in their spontaneous actions and even in their words. Unfortunately, since parents most often do not know what it is and do not understand what is happening in their child, their reaction to these phenomena is not a good one and all their education consists in making the child as unconscious as possible in this domain and concentrating all his attention on external things, thus accustoming him to think that they are the only ones that matter. It is true that this concentration on external things is very useful, provided that it is done in the proper way. The three lines of education—physical, vital and mental—deal with that and could be defined as the means of building up the personality, raising the individual out of the amorphous subconscious mass and making him a well-defined self-conscious entity. With psychic education we come to the problem of the true motive of existence, the purpose of life on earth, the discovery to which this life must lead and the

result of that discovery: the consecration of the individual to his eternal principle. Normally this discovery is associated with a mystic feeling, a religious life, because it is mainly the religions that have concerned themselves with this aspect of life. But it need not necessarily be so: the mystic notion of God may be replaced by the more philosophical notion of truth and still the discovery will remain essentially the same, but the road leading to it may be taken even by the most intransigent positivist. For mental notions and ideas have only a very secondary importance in preparing one for the psychic life. The important thing is to live the experience; that carries with it its own reality and force apart from any theory that may precede or accompany or follow it, for most often theories are no more than explanations that one gives to oneself in order to have, more or less, the illusion of knowledge. Man clothes the ideal or the absolute he seeks to attain with different names according to the environment in which he is born and the education he has received. The experience is essentially the same, if it is sincere; it is only the words and phrases in which it is formulated that differ according to the belief and the mental education of the one who has the experience. All formulation is thus only an approximation that should be progressive and grow in precision as the experience itself becomes more and more precise and coordinated. Still, to sketch a general outline of psychic education, we must give some idea, however relative it may be, of what we mean by the psychic being. One could say, for example, that the creation of an individual being is the result of the projection, in time and space, of one of the countless possibilities latent in the supreme origin of all manifestation which, through the medium of the one and universal consciousness, takes concrete form in the law or the truth of an individual and so, by a progressive development, becomes his soul or psychic being.

I must emphasise that what is stated briefly here does not claim to be a complete exposition of the reality and does not **exhaust the subject—far from it. It is only a very summary** explanation for a practical purpose, to serve as a basis for the education which we intend to consider now.

It is through this psychic presence that the truth of an individual being comes into contact with him and the circumstances of his life. In most cases the presence acts, so to say, from behind the veil, unrecognised and unknown; but in some, it is perceptible and its action recognisable and even, in a very few, the presence becomes tangible and its action fully effective. These go forward in lifewith an assurance and a certitude all their own; they are masters of their destiny. It is for the purpose of obtaining this mastery and becoming conscious of the psychic presence that psychic education should be practised. But for that there is need of a special factor, the personal will. For till now, the discovery of the psychic being and identification with it have not been among the recognised subjects of education, and although one can find in special treatises useful and practical hints on the subject, and although in exceptional cases one may have the good fortune of meeting someone who is capable of showing the way and giving the help that is needed to follow it, most often the attempt is left to one's own personal initiative. The discovery is a personal matter and a great determination, a strong will and an untiring perseverance are indispensable to reach the goal. Each one must, so to say, trace out his own path through his own difficulties.

- The goal is known to some extent, for most of those who have reached it have described it more or less clearly. But the supreme value of the discovery lies in its spontaneity, its ingenuousness, and that escapes all ordinary mental laws. And that is why anyone wanting to take up the adventure

usually first seeks out some person who has successfully undertaken it and is able to sustain him and enlighten him on his way. Yet there are some solitary travellers and for them a few general indications may be useful.

- The starting-point is to seek in yourself that which is independent of the body and the circumstances of life, which is not born of the mental formation that you have been given, the language you speak, the habits and customs of the environment in which you live, the country where you are born or the age to which you belong. You must find, in the depths of your being, that which carries in it a sense of universality, limitless expansion, unbroken continuity. Then you decentralise, extend and widen yourself; you begin to live in all things and in all beings; the barriers separating individuals from each other break down.
- You think in their thoughts, vibrate in their sensations, feel in their feelings, live in the life of all. What seemed inert suddenly becomes full of life, stones quicken, plants feel and will and suffer, animals speak in a language more or less inarticulate, but clear and expressive; everything is animated by a marvellous consciousness without time or limit. And this is only one aspect of the psychic realisation; there are others, many others. All help you to go beyond the barriers of your egoism, the walls of your external personality, the impotence of your reactions and the incapacity of your will.
- But, as I have already said, the path to that realisation is long and difficult, strewn with snares and problems to be solved, which demand an unfailing determination. It is like the explorer's trek through virgin forest in quest of an unknown land, of some great discovery. The psychic being

is also a great discovery which requires at least as much fortitude and endurance as the discovery of new continents. A few simple words of advice may be useful to one who has resolved to undertake it.

- The first and perhaps the most important point is that the mind is incapable of judging spiritual things. All those who have written on this subject have said so; but very few are those who have put it into practice. And yet, in order to proceed on the path, it is absolutely indispensable to abstain from all mental opinion and reaction.
- Give up all personal seeking for comfort, satisfaction, enjoyment or happiness. Be only a burning fire for progress, take whatever comes to you as an aid to your progress and immediately make whatever progress is required.
- Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure.
- Never get excited, nervous or agitated. Remain perfectly calm in the face of all circumstances. And yet be always alert to discover what progress you still have to make and lose no time in making it.
- Never take physical happenings at their face value. They are always a clumsy attempt to express something else, the true thing which escapes our superficial understanding.
- Never complain of the behaviour of anyone, unless you have the power to change in his nature what makes him act in this way; and if you have the power, change him instead of complaining.
- Whatever you do, never forget the goal which you have set

before you. There is nothing great or small once you have set out on this great discovery; all things are equally important and can either hasten or delay its success. Thus before you eat, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the food you are about to eat may bring your body the substance it needs to serve as a solid basis for your effort towards the great discovery, and give it the energy for persistence and perseverance in the effort.

- Before you go to sleep, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the sleep may restore your fatigued nerves, bring calm and quietness to your brain so that on waking you may, with renewed vigour, begin again your journey on the path of the great discovery.
- Before you act, concentrate in the will that your action may help or at least in no way hinder your march forward towards the great discovery.
- When you speak, before the words come out of your mouth, concentrate just long enough to check your words and allow only those that are absolutely necessary to pass, only those that are not in any way harmful to your progress on the path of the great discovery.
- To sum up, never forget the purpose and goal of your life. The will for the great discovery should be always there above you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being.

Before the untiring persistence of your effort, an inner door will suddenly open and you will emerge into a dazzling splendour that will bring you the certitude of immortality, the concrete experience that you have always lived and always shall live, that external forms alone perish and that these forms are, in relation to what you are in

reality, like clothes that are thrown away when worn out. Then you will stand erect, freed from all chains, and instead of advancing laboriously under the weight of circumstances imposed upon you by Nature, which you had to endure and bear if you did not want to be crushed by them, you will be able to walk on, straight and firm, conscious of your destiny, master of your life.

And yet this release from all slavery to the flesh, this liberation from all personal attachment is not the supreme fulfilment.

There are other steps to climb before you reach the summit. And even these steps can and should be followed by others which will open the doors to the future. These following steps will form the object of what I call spiritual education.

But before we enter on this new stage and deal with the question in detail, an explanation is necessary. Why is a distinction made between the psychic education of which we have just spoken and the spiritual education of which we are about to speak now? Because the two are usually confused under the general term of “yogic discipline”, although the goals they aim at are very different: for one it is a higher realisation upon earth, for the other an escape from all earthly manifestation, even from the whole universe, a return to the unmanifest.

So one can say that the psychic life is immortal life, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change, unbroken continuity in the universe of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and the eternal, to be projected beyond all creation, beyond time and space. To become conscious of your psychic being and to live a psychic life you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life you must no longer have an ego.

Here also, in spiritual education, the goal you set before you will assume, in the mind's formulation of it, different names according to the environment in which you have been brought up, the path you have followed and the affinities of your temperament.

Those who have a religious tendency will call it God and their spiritual effort will be towards identification with the transcendent God beyond all forms, as opposed to the immanent God dwelling in each form. Others will call it the Absolute, the Supreme Origin, others Nirvana; yet others, who view the world as an unreal illusion, will name it the Only Reality and to those who regard all manifestation as falsehood it will be the Sole Truth. And every one of these expressions contains an element of truth, but all are incomplete, expressing only one aspect of that which is. Here too, however, the mental formulation has no great importance and once you have passed through the intermediate stages, the experience is identical. In any case, the most effective starting-point, the swiftest method is total selfgiving.

Besides, no joy is more perfect than the joy of a total self-giving to whatever is the summit of your conception: for some it is the notion of God, for others that of Perfection. If this self-giving is made with persistence and ardour, a moment comes when you pass beyond the concept and arrive at an experience that escapes all description, but which is almost always identical in its effects. And as your self-giving becomes more and more perfect and integral, it will be accompanied by the aspiration for identification, a total fusion with That to which you have given yourself, and little by little this aspiration will overcome all differences and all resistances, especially if with the aspiration there is an intense and spontaneous love, for then nothing can stand in the way of its victorious drive.

There is an essential difference between this identification and the identification with the psychic being. The latter can be made more and more lasting and, in certain cases, it becomes permanent and never leaves the person who has realised it, whatever his outer activities may be. In other words, the identification is no longer realised only in meditation and concentration, but its effects are felt at every moment of one's life, in sleep as well as in waking.

On the other hand, liberation from all form and the identification with that which is beyond form cannot last in an absolute manner; for it would automatically bring about the dissolution of the material form. Certain traditions say that this dissolution happens inevitably within twenty days of the total identification.

Yet it is not necessarily so; and even if the experience is only momentary, it produces in the consciousness results that are never obliterated and have repercussions on all states of the being, both internal and external. Moreover, once the identification has been realised, it can be renewed at will, provided that you know how to put yourself in the same conditions.

This merging into the formless is the supreme liberation sought by those who want to escape from an existence which no longer holds any attraction for them. It is not surprising that they are dissatisfied with the world in its present form.

But a liberation that leaves the world as it is and in no way affects the conditions of life from which others suffer, cannot satisfy those who refuse to enjoy a boon which they are the only ones, or almost the only ones, to possess, those who dream of a world more worthy of the splendours that lie hidden behind its apparent disorder and wide-spread misery. They

dream of sharing with others the wonders they have discovered in their inner exploration. And the means to do so is within their reach, now that they have arrived at the summit of their ascent.

From beyond the frontiers of form a new force can be evoked, a power of consciousness which is as yet unexpressed and which, by its emergence, will be able to change the course of things and give birth to a new world. For the true solution to the problem of suffering, ignorance and death is not an individual escape from earthly miseries by self-annihilation into the unmanifest, nor a problematical collective flight from universal suffering by an integral and final return of the creation to its creator, thus curing the universe by abolishing it, but a transformation, a total transfiguration of matter brought about by the logical continuation of Nature's ascending march in her progress towards perfection, by the creation of a new species that will be to man what man is to the animal and that will manifest upon earth a new force, a new consciousness and a new power. And so will begin a new education which can be called the supramental education; it will, by its all-powerful action, work not only upon the consciousness of individual beings, but upon the very substance of which they are built and upon the environment in which they live.

In contrast with the types of education we have mentioned previously, which progress from below upwards by an ascending movement of the various parts of the being, the supramental education will progress from above downwards, its influence spreading from one state of being to another until at last the physical is reached. This last transformation will only occur visibly when the inner states of being have already been considerably transformed. It is therefore quite unreasonable to try to recognise the presence of the supramental by physical appearances.

For these will be the last to change and the supramental force can be at work in an individual long before anything of it becomes perceptible in his bodily life.

To sum up, one can say that the supramental education will result no longer in a progressive formation of human nature and an increasing development of its latent faculties, but in a transformation of the nature itself, a transfiguration of the being in its entirety, a new ascent of the species above and beyond man towards superman, leading in the end to the appearance of a divine race upon earth.

The Mother

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

*The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant
golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer,
for the law of the Truth, for sight.*

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तेजस्विनौ अधीतम् अस्तु ॥

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