What Is the Truth and How to Serve It

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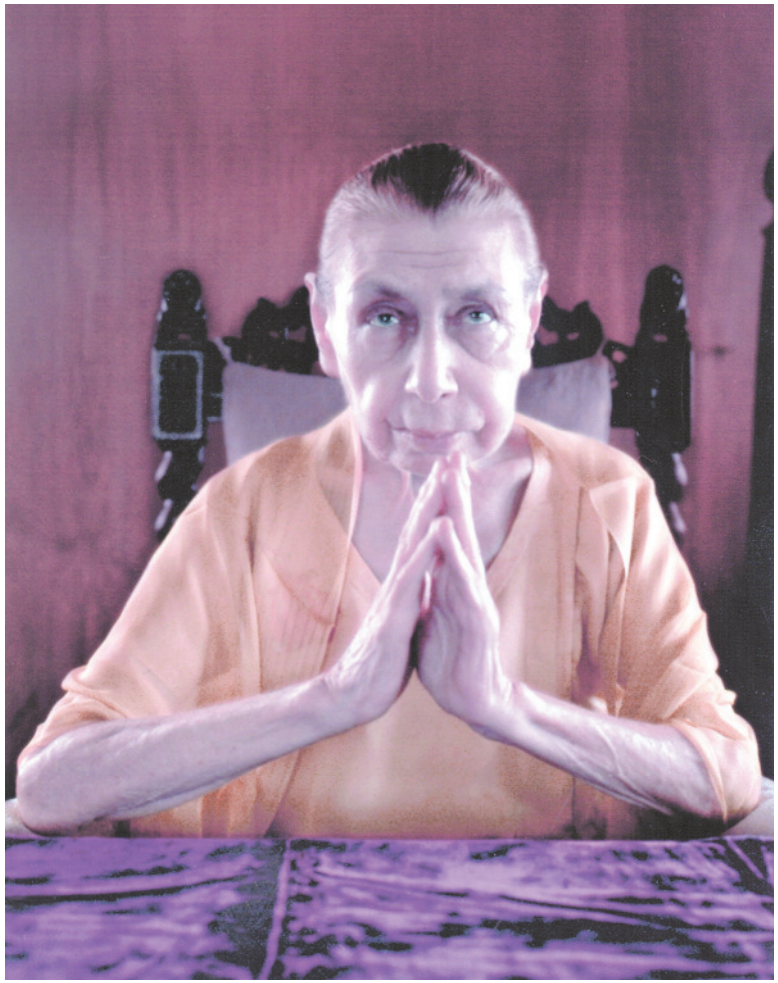
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Salute to the advent of the Truth

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The Certitude of Truth's Final Victory

No human will can finally prevail against the Divine's Will.
Let us put ourselves deliberately and exclusively on the side of the Divine,
and the Victory is ultimately certain.

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*

Truth is stronger than falsehood. There is an immortal Power that governs the world. Its decisions always prevail. Join with it and you are sure of the final victory.

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Before dying, falsehood rises in full swing.

Still people understand only the lesson of catastrophe. Will it have to come before they open their eyes to the Truth?

I ask an effort from all so that it has not to be.

It is only the Truth that can save us, truth in words, truth in action, truth in will, truth in feelings. It is a choice between serving the Truth or being destroyed.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, it is said that always the good and the true triumph, but we see that often in life it is otherwise. The wicked win, seem somehow to be protected from suffering.

(*Mother laughs, then remains silent.*) People always confuse two ideas. It is from the universal and spiritual point of view that, not positively the "good" as men understand it, but the True, the Truth, will have the last word; it goes without saying. That is to say, finally the Divine will be victorious. That is what is said, what all who have lived a spiritual life have said — it is an absolute fact. Men, in translating it, say, "I am a good boy, I live in accordance with what I think to be true, therefore, all existence should be good for me." *(Mother laughs)* First of all, one's own appreciation of oneself is always doubtful, and then, in the world as it is now, all is mixed, it is not the Law of Truth that openly manifests itself to the half-blind human consciousness — it will not even understand it. I mean, to be more exact, that it is the supreme vision that is realising itself constantly, but its realisation in the mixed material world does not appear to the ignorant human sight as the triumph of good, what men call good and true. But (to say it in a joking way) it is not the fault of the Lord, it is the fault of men! That is to say, the Lord knows what he is doing, and men do not understand it. ...

The world is perpetually changing, perpetually; not for a second is it like itself, and the general harmony expresses itself more and more perfectly; therefore nothing can remain as it is and in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the whole is always constantly progressing; the harmony is becoming more and more harmonious, the truth becoming more and more true in the Manifestation. But to see that, one must see the whole, and man sees only... not even the

human domain, but only his personal domain, quite small, quite small, microscopic — he cannot understand.

It is a double thing that is going on completing itself (*gesture of intermixture)* and with a mutual action: as the Manifestation becomes more conscious of itself, its expression perfects itself, becomes also more true. The two movements go together. ...

All these so-called problems — all the while one receives, in this way, questions and questions and problems of the mind (all problems in the Ignorance, is it not so?) — problems for the earth-worm. As soon as you emerge up there, such problems do not exist any more. There are no more contradictions. Contradictions always come from the inadequacy of vision and the incapacity to see a thing from all points of view at the same time.

In any case, to bring the question down to earth, no sage at any time, I think, has ever said: "Be good, and all will go well with you externally"— because it is a stupidity. In a world of disorder, in a world of falsehood, to hope for that is not reasonable. But you can have, if you are sufficiently sincere and whole and entire in your way of being, you can have the inner joy, the full satisfaction, whatever the circumstances, and that nobody and nothing has the power to touch.

*

Q: You say that one should have "the certitude of Truth's final victory". But doesn't this certitude seem very different from, and often the very opposite of, what one teaches in ordinary life?

Yes. Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a

lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation — the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of their human individuality.

*

In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the universal life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 15: 177; Vol. 14: 195 ; Vol .13: 217; Vol. 11: 75-77; Vol. 4: 22-23.

All references in this book refer to the second edition of CWM.

What Is Ignorance

Ignorance means Avidya, the separative consciousness and the egoistic mind and life that flow from it and all that is natural to the separative consciousness and the egoistic mind and life.

This Ignorance is the result of a movement by which the cosmic Intelligence separated itself from the light of the supermind (the divine Gnosis) and lost the Truth, — truth of being, truth of divine consciousness, truth of force and action, truth of Ananda.

As a result, instead of a world of integral truth and divine harmony created in the light of the divine Gnosis, we have a world founded on the part truths of an inferior cosmic Intelligence in which all is half-truth, half-error.

It is this that some of the ancient thinkers like Shankara, not perceiving the greater Truth-Force behind, stigmatised as Maya and thought to be the highest creative power of the Divine.

All in the consciousness of this creation is either limited or else perverted by separation from the integral Light; even the Truth it perceives is only a half-knowledge.

Therefore it is called the Ignorance.

*

But the Ignorance is only a portion of this world-Nature; it is not the whole of it, not the original power or creator: it is in its higher origin a self-limiting Knowledge and even in its lower origin, its emergence out of the sheer material Inconscience, it is a suppressed Consciousness labouring to find, to recover itself, to manifest Knowledge, which is its true character, as the foundation of existence.

SABCL Vol. 23: 381; Vol. 19: 845 (CWSA 22: 878) **Sri Aurobindo**

Sevenfold Ignorance

If we look at this Ignorance in which ordinarily we live by the very circumstance of our separative existence in a material, in a spatial and temporal universe, we see that on its obscurer side it reduces itself, from whatever direction we look at or approach it, into the fact of a many-sided self-ignorance.

The first, the original ignorance*

We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence, — that is the first, the original ignorance.

The second, the cosmic ignorance

We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; we take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence, — that is the second, the cosmic ignorance.

The third, the egoistic ignorance

We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self, — that is the third, the egoistic ignorance.

The fourth, the temporal ignorance

We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end, — that is the fourth, the temporal ignorance.

The fifth, the psychological ignorance

Even within this brief temporal becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is superconscient, subconscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence, — that is the fifth, the psychological ignorance.

The sixth, the constitutional ignorance

We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occult presence and is meant to determine sovereignly by its emergence their operations,— that is the sixth, the constitutional ignorance.

The seventh, the practical ignorance

As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal, — that is the seventh, the practical ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL Vol. 19: 654-55 (CWSA 22: 680-81)

* Paragraph-breaks and sub-titles added. – ed.

Cancelling of the Sevenfold Ignorance

Our conception of the Ignorance will necessarily determine our conception of the Knowledge and determine, therefore, since our life is the Ignorance at once denying and seeking after the Knowledge, the goal of human effort and the aim of the cosmic endeavour. Integral knowledge will then mean the cancelling of the sevenfold Ignorance by the discovery of what it misses and ignores, a sevenfold self-revelation within our consciousness:— it will mean the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things; the knowledge of the Self, the Spirit, the Being and of the cosmos as the Self's becoming, the becoming of the Being, a manifestation of the Spirit; the knowledge of the world as one with us in the consciousness of our true self, thus cancelling our division from it by the separative idea and life of ego; the knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth-existence; the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface; the knowledge of our mind, life and body in its true relation to the self within and the superconscient spiritual and supramental being above them; the knowledge, finally, of the true harmony and true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit, the Self, the Divinity, the integral spiritual Reality.

But this is not an intellectual knowledge which can be learned and completed in our present mould of consciousness; it must be an experience, a becoming, a change of consciousness, a change of being. This brings in the evolutionary character of the Becoming and the fact that our mental ignorance is only a stage in our evolution.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL Vol. 19: 655 (CWSA 22: 681-82)

What Is Falsehood

Once consciousnesses separated from the one consciousness, they fell inevitably into Ignorance and the last result of Ignorance was Inconscience; from a dark immense Inconscient this material world arises and out of it a soul that by evolution is struggling into consciousness, attracted towards the hidden Light, ascending but still blindly towards the lost Divinity from which it came.

*

Falsehood, on the other hand, is not this Avidya, but an extreme result of it. It is created by an Asuric power which intervenes in this creation and is not only separated from the Truth and therefore limited in knowledge and open to error, but in revolt against the Truth or in the habit of seizing the Truth only to pervert it. This Power, the dark Asuric Shakti or Rakshasic Maya, puts forward its own perverted consciousness as true knowledge and its wilful distortions or reversals of the Truth as the verity of things. It is the powers and personalities of this perverted and perverting consciousness that we call hostile beings, hostile forces. Whenever these perversions created by them out of the stuff of the Ignorance are put forward as the Truth of things, that is the Falsehood, in the yogic sense, *mithyā, moha.*

*

What is knowledge

A concentration which culminates in a living realisation and the constant sense of the presence of the One in ourselves and in all of which we are aware, is what we mean in Yoga by knowledge and the effort after knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL Vol. 22 : 27; 381-82; Vol. 20: 75 (CWSA 23: 81)

Victory Over Falsehood

Indeed the very act of bringing it [falsehood] out and showing it to the Light would be in itself a momentous conversion and pave the way to the final victory. For the laying bare of each falsehood is in itself a victory — each acknowledgment of error is the demolition of one of the lords of Darkness. It may be an acknowledgment to oneself, provided it is absolutely honest and is no subtle regret apt to be forgotten the next moment and without the strength to make an unbreakable resolution not to repeat the mistake. Or it may be the acknowledgment to the Divine embodied in the Guru. As a result of direct personal confession to the Guru, your resolution remains no longer your own, because, if you are sincere, the Divine's fiat goes forth in your favour.

*

Q: Does Sri Aurobindo mean that there is no absolute falsehood, no absolute untruth? [in aphorism number 62]

There can be no absolute untruth. In actual fact it is not possible, because the Divine is behind all things.

It is like people who ask whether certain elements will disappear from the universe. What could "the destruction of a universe" mean? If we come out of our folly, what can we call "destruction"? Only the form, the appearance is destroyed — and indeed, all appearances are destroyed, one after another. It is also said—it is written everywhere, so many things are — that the adverse forces will either be converted, that is to say, they will become conscious of the Divinity within them and become divine, or they will be destroyed. But what does "destroyed" mean? Their form? Their form of consciousness can be dissolved, but that "something" which makes them exist, which makes all things exist — how could that be destroyed? The universe is an objectivisation, an objective self-discovery of That which is from all eternity. So? How can the All cease to be? The infinite and eternal All, that is to say, That which has no limits of any kind — what can go outside That? There is no place to go! Go where? There is nothing but *That*.

Furthermore, when we say, "There is only That", we are locating it somewhere, which is absolutely stupid. So, what can be taken away from there?

One can conceive of a universe being projected outside the present manifestation. One can conceive of universes having succeeded each other and that which was in the earlier ones would no longer be in the later ones — that is even obvious. One can conceive that a whole mass of falsehood and untruth — things which are falsehood and untruth for us *now* — will no longer belong to the world as it will be in its unfolding; all this one can understand — but "destroy"? Where can it go to be destroyed? When we speak of destroying, we think only of the destruction of a form — it may be a form of consciousness or a material form, but it is always a form. But how could what is without form be destroyed?

So to speak of an absolute falsehood that will disappear would simply mean that a whole set of things will live eternally in the past but will not belong to future manifestations, that is all.

One cannot go outside *That*!

CWM Vol. 3: 141; Vol. 10: 98-99 **The Mother**

Effort towards the truth should exist in every man of goodwill.
CWM 14: 190 *The Mother*

How to Attain the Truth

Truth is an infinitely complex reality and he has the best chance of arriving nearest to it who most recognises but is not daunted by its infinite complexity. We must look at the whole thought-tangle, fact, emotion, idea, truth beyond idea, conclusion, contradiction, modification, ideal, practice, possibility, impossibility (which must be yet attempted,) and keeping the soul calm and the eye clear in this mighty flux and gurge of the world, seek everywhere for some word of harmony, not forgetting immediate in ultimate truth, nor ultimate in immediate, but giving each its due place and portion in the Infinite Purpose. ...

Some men seek to find the truth by imaginative perception. It is a good instrument like logic, but like logic it breaks down before it reaches the goal. Neither ought to be allowed to do more than take us some way and then leave us. Others think that a fine judgment can arrive at the true balance. It does, for a time; but the next generation upsets that fine balancing, consenting to a coarser test or demanding a finer. The religious prefer inspiration, but inspiration is like the lightning, brilliantly illuminating only a given reach of country and leaving the rest in darkness intensified by the sharpness of that light. Vast is our error if we mistake that bit of country for the whole universe. Is there then no instrument of knowledge that can give us the heart of truth and provide us with the key word of existence? I think there is, but the evolution of mankind at large yet falls far short of it; their highest tread only on the border of that illumination. After all pure intellect carries us very high. But neither the scorner of pure intellectual ideation, nor its fanatic and devotee can attain to the knowledge in which not only the senses reflect or the mind thinks about things, but the ideal faculty directly knows them.

*

Because man is a mental being, he naturally imagines that mind is the one great leader and actor and creator or the indispensable agent in the universe. But this is an error; even for knowledge mind is not the only or the greatest possible instrument, the one aspirant and discoverer. Mind is a clumsy interlude between Nature's vast and precise subconscient action and the vaster infallible superconscient action of the Godhead.

There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.

When mind is still, then Truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

Truth cannot be attained by the mind's thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate.

Thought in the mind can at most be Truth's brilliant and transparent garment; it is not even her body. Look through the robe, not at it, and you may see some hint of her form. There can be a thought-body of Truth, but that is the spontaneous supramental Thought and Word that leap fully formed out of the Light, not any difficult mental counterfeit and patchwork. The supramental Thought is not a means of arriving at Truth, for Truth in the supermind is self-found or self-existent, but a way of expressing her. It is an arrow from the Light, not a bridge to reach it.

Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will

Truth dawn on you from above and flow in on you from all around you.

But only if the mind is no less intense in its purity than its silence. For in an impure mind the silence will soon fill with misleading lights and false voices, the echo or sublimation of its own vain conceits and opinions or the response to its secret pride, vanity, ambition, lust, greed or desire. The Titans and the Demons will speak to it more readily than the divine Voices.

Silence is indispensable, but also there is needed wideness. If the mind is not silent, it cannot receive the lights and voices of the supernal Truth or receiving mixes with them its own flickering tongues and blind pretentious babble. Active, arrogant, noisy, it distorts and disfigures what it receives. If it is not wide, it cannot house the effective power and creative force of the Truth. Some light may play there but it becomes narrow, confined and sterile. Or the force that is descending is cabined and thwarted and withdraws again from this rebellious foreign plane to its vast native heights. Or even if something comes down and remains, it is a pearl in the mire; for no change takes place in the nature or else there is formed only a thin intensity that points narrowly upward to the summits but can hold little and diffuse less upon the world around it.

Sri Aurobindo

CWSA Vol. 12: 12-13, 255-56

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best) form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the Truth.

SABCL 26: 603 *Sri Aurobindo*

The Truth of the Being

There is something I was asked some time ago to which I have not yet replied. It is this. I have written somewhere:

> *"The absolute of every being is its unique relation with the Divine and its unique manner of expressing the Divine in the manifestation."*

This is what is called here in India the truth of the being or the law of the being, the *dharma* of the being: the centre and the cause of the individuality.

Everyone carries his truth within himself, a truth which is unique, which is altogether his own and which he must express in his life. Now what is this truth? This is the question I have been asked:

> *"What is this truth of the being, and how is it expressed externally in physical life?"*

It is expressed in this way: each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme, the Origin, That which is beyond all creation. It is this unique relation which must be expressed in one's life, through a unique mode of being in relation with the Divine. Therefore, each one is directly and exclusively in relation with the Divine — the relation one has with the Divine is unique and exclusive; so that you receive from the Divine, when you are in a receptive state, the *totality* of the relation it is *possible* for you to have, and this is neither a sharing nor a part nor a repetition, but exclusively and uniquely *the* relation which each one can have with the Divine. So, from the psychological point of view, one is *all alone* in having this direct relation with the Divine.

One is all alone with the Supreme.

The relation one has with Him will never have an equal, will never be exactly the same as another's. No two are the same and therefore *nothing* can be taken away from you to be given to another, *nothing* can be withdrawn from you to be given to another. And if this relation disappeared from the creation, it would really disappear — which is impossible.

And this means that if one lives in the truth of one's being, one is an indispensable part of the creation. Naturally, I don't mean if one lives what one *believes* one should be, I am saying if one lives the truth of one's being; if, by a development, one is able to enter into contact with the truth of one's being, one is immediately in a unique and exclusive relation with the Divine, which hasn't its equal.

There, now.

And naturally, because it is the truth of your being, that is what you should express in your life.

*

Q: If one finds the truth in things, does it mean that one has found the Divine?

Surely! In everything, whatever it is that is the only way. There is not a thing that does not carry in itself an eternal truth, otherwise it could not exist. The universe could not exist for even a thousandth part of a second if it did not contain a truth in itself....

The most remarkable thing is that if you are sincere you will find out why they [the things] are so and how they are so: the cause, the origin and the process. For it is one single thing. There is what we call the Truth, the basis of everything; because if this were not there, there would be nothing. Once you have found the Truth, you find the origin, you find the means of changing the cause — how it is so, why it is so and the means of changing it. If you are in contact with the Divine, you have the key to everything. You know the how, the why and the process to change.

There is something to do: to work, it is so interesting. You represent a small agglomerated mass of substance that makes up yourself. Enter within and find the key. You have only to go down inside there. You cannot say: "That is beyond me, it is too big for me." Go within your little person and you will find the key which opens all the doors.

*

... if you are a normal person, well, provided you take the trouble and know the method, your capacity for growth is almost unlimited.

There is the idea that everyone belongs to a certain type, that, for example, the pine will never become the oak and the palm never become wheat. This is obvious. But that is something else: it means that the truth of your being is not the truth of your neighbour's. But in the truth of your being, according to your own formation, your progress is almost unlimited. It is limited only by your own conviction that it is limited and by your ignorance of the true process, otherwise...

There is nothing one cannot do, if one knows how to do it.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 8: 279-80; Vol. 5 : 39-40; Vol. 8 : 387

The Truth is in you — but you must want it, in order to realise it.

CWM Vol. 14 : 191 *The Mother*



Sri Aurobindo

The One Fundamental Truth

The world is the form, the reality is the Divine. One must see the presence in the form.

*

For all here is God, is the Spirit or Self-existence, is Brahman, *ekamevādvitīyam*, — there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be nothing else, can be nothing other and different from it; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection, that assumption. Far from the world being a mechanism of law with no soul or spirit intervening in the movement of its forces or the action of its minds and bodies, — only some original indifferent Spirit passively existing somewhere outside or above it, — the whole world and every particle of it is on the contrary nothing but the divine force in action and that divine force determines and governs its every movement, inhabits its every form, possesses here every soul and mind; all is in God and in him moves and has its being, in all he is, acts and displays his being; every creature is the disguised Narayana.

Far from the unborn being unable to assume birth, all beings are even in their individuality unborn spirits, eternal

without beginning or end, and in their essential existence and their universality all are the one unborn Spirit of whom birth and death are only a phenomenon of the assumption and change of forms. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe; but the imperfection appears in the form and action of the mind or body assumed, subsists in the phenomenon,—in that which assumes it there is no imperfection, even as in the Sun which illumines all there is no defect of light or of vision, but only in the capacities of the individual organ of vision. Nor does God rule the world from some remote heaven, but by his intimate omnipresence; each finite working of force is an act of infinite Force and not of a limited separate self-existent energy labouring in its own underived strength; in every finite working of will and knowledge we can discover, supporting it, an act of the infinite all-will and all-knowledge. God's rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government; he governs all because he exceeds all, but also because he dwells within all movements and is their absolute soul and spirit.

*

Let us ... start... from the old Vedantic beginnings OM Tat Sat, That (Brahman) is the thing that Is, and *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*, Verily, *all this*, everything of which we are aware, is Brahman. ...

In this we arrive at the one fundamental truth of all, and a little consideration will show that if we really & rightly know that, the rest ought and probably will reveal themselves at once and fall into their places. *Tasmin vijnate sarvam vijnatam,* That being known, all is known.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 23: 1081; SABCL 13: 143-44 (CWSA 19: 151-52); SABCL 17: 165 (CWSA 12: 77)

Thought and Truth; How to Progress

You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from the truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself, "Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress." But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth.

... one of Sri Aurobindo's short reflections, ... is wonderful ... in which he says that any teaching, however great it may be, however pure, noble, true it may be, is only one aspect of the Truth and not the Truth itself (I am commenting, the text is not exactly this), it is not the entire Truth. Well, that is it. Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what extent a thing is so relatively important! For the moment it may be capital, it may lead you to life or to death — I am not speaking of physical life and death, I am speaking of the life and death of the spirit — but this is for the moment; and when you

have made a certain progress, when you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one's fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant. Here we are.

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At times moral notions also intermix and falsify the judgment but we must throw far away from us all moral notions; for morality and Truth are very far from each other (if I am shocking anybody by saying this, I am sorry, but it is like that).

*

Q: When one speaks to others, one rarely comes to an agreement, for people do not see things in the same way. Or if I see the other's point of view, I cannot accept it.

That means you are not plastic. You may be sure that if you

find a person boring, he will also find you boring. You will never arrive at anything if you do not take the attitude of putting yourself in the place of the other, this is indispensable. When someone tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "He knows nothing", but you must try to understand. If you want to be quite sincere, even when a child comes and tells you something you do not understand, you must not say, "This child is stupid", but "It is I who am stupid, because I do not understand!"

There are a hundred ways of looking at a problem. If you want to find the solution, you must take up all the elements one after another, rise above them and see how they harmonise. There is a state of consciousness which may be called "gnostic", in which you are able to see *at the same time* all the theories, all the beliefs, all the ideas men have expressed in their highest consciousness — the most contradictory notions, like the Buddhistic, the Vedantic, the Christian theories, all the philosophical theories, all the expressions of the human mind when it has managed to catch a little corner of the Truth — and in that state, not only do you put each thing in its place, but everything appears to you marvellously true and quite indispensable in order to be able to understand anything at all about anything whatsoever. There is a state of consciousness... Oh, I was going to tell you things you cannot yet understand. I shall give you a simpler example. Anatole France said in one of his books: "So long as men did not try to make the world progress, all went well and everybody was satisfied — no worry about perfecting oneself or perfecting the world, consequently all went well. Therefore the worst thing is to want to make others progress; let them do what they like and don't bother about anything, that will be much more wise." On the contrary, others tell you: "There is a Truth to be attained; the

world is in a state of ignorance and one must at all costs, in spite of the difficulty of the way, enlighten man's conciousness and pull him out of his ignorance." But I tell you that there is a state of consciousness in which both the ways of seeing are absolutely equally true. Naturally, if you take only two aspects, it is difficult to see clearly; one must be able to see all the aspects of the truth glimpsed by the human intelligence and... something more. And then, in that state, nothing is absolutely false, nothing is absolutely bad. In that state one is free from all problems, all difficulties, all battles and everything appears to you wonderfully harmonious.

But if you try to imitate this condition mentally — do you understand? To make a mental imitation of it — you may be sure of doing stupid things; you will be one of those who have a chaos in their head and can say the most contradictory things without even being aware of it.

In that condition there is no contradiction—it is a totality and a totality in which one has the full knowledge of all the truths expressed (which are not sufficient to express the total Truth), in which one knows the respective places of all things, why and of what the universe is formed. Only—I hasten to tell you this — it is not by a personal effort that one reaches this condition; it is not because one tries to obtain it that one obtains it. You *become* that, spontaneously. It is, if you like, the crowning of an absolute mental sincerity, when you no longer have any partiality, any preference, any attachment to an idea, when you do not even try any longer to know the truth.

You are simply open in the Light, that's all.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 6: 358-59; Vol 4: 11; 157-58

Mind and the Vision of Truth

There are two allied powers in man: knowledge and Wisdom. Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; Wisdom what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit.

(Thoughts & Aphorisms, Sri Aurobindo)

... Sri Aurobindo says clearly enough — for those who understand — that one of these powers belongs to the mind and that the other belongs to the Spirit. This is precisely the profound truth that Sri Aurobindo wants to reveal in his aphorism: if the mind tries to obtain the second power, it is unable to do so, since it is a power that belongs to the Spirit and arises in the human being together with the spiritual consciousness.

Knowledge is something that the mind can obtain through much effort, although this is not the true knowledge, but only a mental aspect of knowledge; whereas Wisdom does not at all belong to the mind, which is altogether incapable of obtaining it, because, in fact, it doesn't even know what it is. I repeat, Wisdom is essentially a power of the Spirit and it can arise only with the spiritual consciousness.

... First of all, what is this "distorted medium", and what does the truth become in a "distorted medium"?

As always, what Sri Aurobindo says can have several levels of meaning — one is more specific, the other more general. In the most specific sense, the distorted medium is the mental medium which works in ignorance and which is therefore unable to express truth in its purity. But since life as a whole is lived in ignorance, the distorted medium is also the earth-atmosphere which, in its entirety, distorts the

truth seeking to express itself through it.

And here lies the most subtle point of this aphorism. What can the mind arrive at by groping? We know that it is always groping, seeking to know, erring, returning upon its previous attempts and trying again... Its progress is very, very halting. But what can it grasp of the truth? Is it a fragment, a piece, something which is still the truth, but only partially, incompletely, or is it something which is no longer the truth? That is the interesting point.

We are used to being told—perhaps we have also repeated many times—that one can only have partial, incomplete, fragmentary knowledge which therefore cannot be true knowledge. This point of view is rather trite: one need only to have studied a little in life to be aware of it. However, what Sri Aurobindo means by "the truth seen in a distorted medium" is far more interesting than that.

Truth itself takes on another aspect; in this medium it is no longer the truth, but a distortion of the truth. Consequently, what can be seized of it is not a fragment which would be true, but an aspect, the false appearance of a truth which has itself melted away.

I am going to give you an image to try to make myself understood; it is nothing more than an image, do not take it literally.

If we compare the essential truth to a sphere of immaculate, dazzling white light, we can say that in the mental medium, in the mental atmosphere, this integral white light is transformed into thousands and thousands of shades, each of which has its own distinct colour, because they are all separated from one another. The medium distorts the white light and makes it appear as innumerable different colours: red, green, yellow, blue, etc., which are sometimes very discordant. And the mind seizes, not a little fragment of the

white light of the white sphere, but a larger or smaller number of little lights of various colours, with which it cannot even reconstitute the white light. Therefore it cannot reach the truth. It does not possess fragments of truth, but a truth that is broken up. It is a state of decomposition.

The truth is a whole and everything is necessary. The distorted medium through which you see, the mental atmosphere, is unsuited for the manifestation or the expression or even the perception of all the elements — and one can say that the better part is lost. So it can no longer be called the truth, but rather something which in essence is true, and yet no longer so at all in the mental atmosphere — it is an ignorance.

So, to summarise, I shall say that knowledge, as it can be grasped by the human mind, is necessarily knowledge in ignorance, one could almost say an ignorant knowledge.

Wisdom is the vision of truth in its essence and of its application in the manifestation.

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> **A thought is an arrow shot at the truth; it can hit a point, but not cover the whole target. But the archer is too well satisfied with his success to ask anything farther.**
>
> (*Thoughts & Aphorisms,* Sri Aurobindo)

But it is obvious! It is so obvious for us.

Q: Yes, but what must we do to cover the whole target?

Stop being an archer!

It is a fine image. This is good for people who are in a state where they imagine they have discovered the Truth.

It is a good thing to say to those who think they have found the Truth because they have touched one point.

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It is an admirable state; it is perfect peace of mind. There is no longer any need to accumulate acquired knowledge, received ideas which have to be memorised; it is no longer necessary to clutter one's brain with thousands and thousands of things in order to have at one's command, when the time comes, the knowledge that is needed to perform an action, to impart a teaching, to solve a problem. The mind is silent, the brain is still, everything is clear, quiet, calm; and at the right moment, by divine Grace a drop of light falls into the consciousness and what needs to be known is known. Why should one care to remember—why try to retain that knowledge? On the day or at the moment that it is needed one will have it again. At each second one is a blank page on which what must be known will be inscribed—in the peace, the repose, the silence of a perfect receptivity.

One knows what must be known, one sees what must be seen, and since what must be known and seen comes directly from the Supreme, it is Truth itself; and it completely eludes all notions of reason or folly. What is true is true—that is all. And one has to sink very low to wonder whether it is folly or reason.

Silence and a modest, humble, attentive receptivity; no concern for appearances or even any anxiety to be—one is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument which of itself is nothing and knows nothing, but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything.

The first condition is self-forgetfulness, a total self-giving, the absence of ego.

And the body says to the Supreme Lord: "What You want me to be, I shall be; what You want me to know, I shall know; what You want me to do, I shall do."

The Mother

CWM Vol. 10: 1-3; 121; 9-10

Science and Yoga on the Ultimate Truth

One might ask whether Science itself has arrived at any ultimate truth; on the contrary, ultimate truth even on the physical plane seems to recede as Science advances. Science started on the assumption that the ultimate truth must be physical and objective — and the objective Ultimate (or even less than that) would explain all subjective phenomena. Yoga proceeds on the opposite view that the ultimate Truth is spiritual and subjective and it is in that ultimate Light that we must view objective phenomena. It is the two opposite poles and the gulf is as wide as it can be.

Yoga, however, is scientific to this extent that it proceeds by subjective experiment and bases all its findings on experience; mental intuitions are admitted only as a first step and are not considered as realisation — they must be confirmed by being translated into and justified by experience. As to the value of the experience itself, it is doubted by the physical mind because it is subjective, not objective. But has the distinction much value? Is not all knowledge and experience subjective at bottom? Objective external physical things are seen very much in the same way by human beings because of the construction of the mind and senses; with another construction of mind and sense quite another account of the physical world would be given — Science itself has made that very clear. But your friend's point is that the yoga experience is individual, coloured by the individuality of the seer. It may be true to a certain extent of the precise form or transcription given to the experience in certain domains; but even here the difference is superficial. It is a fact that yogic experience runs everywhere on the same lines. Certainly, there are, not one line, but many; for, admittedly, we are dealing with a many-sided Infinite

to which there are and must be many ways of approach; but yet the broad lines are the same everywhere and the intuitions, experiences, phenomena are the same in ages and countries far apart from each other and systems practised quite independently from each other. The experiences of the mediaeval European *bhakta* or mystic are precisely the same in substance, however differing in names, forms, religious colouring, etc., as those of the mediaeval Indian *bhakta* or mystic—yet these people were not corresponding with one another or aware of each other's experiences and results as are modern scientists from New York to Yokohama. That would seem to show that there is something there identical, universal and presumably true—however the colour of the translation may differ because of the difference of mental language.

As for ultimate Truth, I suppose both the Victorian agnostic and, let us say, the Indian Vedantin may agree that it is veiled but there. Both speak of it as the Unknowable; the only difference is that the Vedantin says it is unknowable by the mind and inexpressible by speech, but still attainable by something deeper or higher than the mental perception, while even mind can reflect and speech express the thousand aspects it presents to the mind's outward and inward experience. The Victorian agnostic would, I suppose, cancel this qualification; he would pronounce for the doubtful existence and, if existent, for the absolute unknowableness of this Unknowable.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 22: 189-90

The truth is in unity manifesting through diversity.

CWM 14: 198 *The Mother*

Intellectual Truths and Truths of the Spirit

To the Indian mind the least important part of religion is its dogma; the religious spirit matters, not the theological credo. On the contrary to the Western mind a fixed intellectual belief is the most important part of a cult; it is its core of meaning, it is the thing that distinguishes it from others. For it is its formulated beliefs that make it either a true or a false religion, according as it agrees or does not agree with the credo of its critic. This notion, however foolish and shallow, is a necessary consequence of the Western idea which falsely supposes that intellectual truth is the highest verity and, even, that there is no other. The Indian religious thinker knows that all the highest eternal verities are truths of the spirit. The supreme truths are neither the rigid conclusions of logical reasoning nor the affirmations of credal statement, but fruits of the soul's inner experience. Intellectual truth is only one of the doors to the outer precincts of the temple. And since intellectual truth turned towards the Infinite must be in its very nature many-sided and not narrowly one, the most varying intellectual beliefs can be equally true because they mirror different facets of the Infinite. However separated by intellectual distance, they still form so many side-entrances which admit the mind to some faint ray from a supreme Light. There are no true and false religions, but rather all religions are true in their own way and degree. Each is one of the thousand paths to the One Eternal.

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The progress of Life involves the development and interlocking of an immense number of things that are in conflict with each other and seem often to be absolute oppositions

and contraries. To find amid these oppositions some principle or standing-ground of unity, some workable lever of reconciliation which will make possible a larger and better development on a basis of harmony and not of conflict and struggle, must be increasingly the common aim of humanity in its active life evolution, if it at all means to rise out of life's more confused, painful and obscure movement, out of the compromises made by Nature with the ignorance of the Life-mind and the nescience of Matter. This can only be truly and satisfactorily done when the soul discovers itself in its highest and completest spiritual reality and effects a progressive upward transformation of its life-values into those of the spirit; for there they will all find their spiritual truth and in that truth their standing-ground of mutual recognition and reconciliation. The spiritual is the one truth of which all others are the veiled aspects, the brilliant disguises or the dark disfigurements, and in which they can find their own right form and true relation to each other. **This is a work the reason cannot do.** The business of the reason is intermediate: it is to observe and understand this life by the intelligence and discover for it the direction in which it is going and the laws of its self-development on the way. In order that it may do its office, it is obliged to adopt temporarily fixed view-points none of which is more than partially true and to create systems none of which can really stand as the final expression of the integral truth of things. The integral truth of things is truth not of the reason but of the spirit.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 14: 123-24 (CWSA 20: 180-81); SABCL 15: 200-201(CWSA 25: 213-14)

The Higher Lines of the Truth

... the higher mind of humanity is no more content with a utilitarian use of knowledge as its last word in the seeking of the intelligence than with a vitalistic and utilitarian turn and demand of the ethical being. As in the ethical, so in the intellectual being of man there emerges a necessity of knowledge which is no longer its utility for life, its need of knowing rightly in order to act rightly, to deal successfully and intelligently with the world around it, but a necessity of the soul, an imperative demand of the inner being. The pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is the true, the intrinsic dharma of the intellect and not for the sake primarily or even necessarily at all for the securing or the enlargement of the means of life and success in action.

It is in the third movement of highest mind when it is preparing to disengage itself, its pure self of will and intelligence, the radiant head of its endeavour from subjection to the vital motive that this imperative of nature, this intrinsic need that creates in the mind of man the urge towards knowledge, becomes something much greater, becomes instead more and more plainly the ideal absolute imperative of the soul emerging from the husks and sheaths of ignorance and pushing towards the truth, towards the light as the condition of its fulfilment and the very call of the Divine upon its being. T**he lure of an external utility ceases** to be at all needed as an incentive towards knowledge, just as the lure of a vital reward offered now or hereafter ceases on the same high level of our ascent to be needed as an incentive to virtue, and to attach importance to it under whatever specious colour is even felt to be a degradation of the disinterestedness, a fall from the high purity of the soul motive. Already even in the more outward forms of

intellectual seeking something of this absoluteness begins to be felt and to reign. **The scientist** pursues his discoveries in order that he may know the law and truth of the process of the universe and their practical results are only a secondary motive of the enquiring mind and no motive at all to the higher scientific intelligence. **The philosopher** is driven from within to search for the ultimate truth of things for the one sake of Truth only and all else but to see the very face of Truth becomes to him, to his absorbing mind and soul of knowledge, secondary or of no importance; nothing can be allowed to interfere with that one imperative. And there is the tendency to the same kind of exclusiveness in the interest and the process of this absolute. **The thinker** is concerned to seek out and enforce the truth on himself and the world regardless of any effect it may have in disturbing the established bases of life, religion, ethics, society, regardless of any other consideration whatsoever: he must express the word of the Truth whatever its dynamic results on life. And this absolute becomes most absolute, this imperative most imperative when the inner action surpasses the strong coldness of intellectual search and becomes a fiery striving for truth experience, a luminous inner truth living, a birth into a new truth consciousness. **The enamoured of light, the sage,** the Yogin of knowledge, the seer, the Rishi live for knowledge and in knowledge, because it is the absolute of light and truth that they seek after and its claim on them is single and absolute. ...

It is that growth, a divine birth or spiritual self-exceeding its supreme reward, which for the Eastern mind has been always the highest gain,—the growth out of human ignorance into divine self-knowledge.

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... Mind does not exhaust the possibilities of consciousness and therefore cannot be its last and highest expression. Mind tries to arrive at Truth and succeeds only in touching it imperfectly with a veil between; there must be in the nature of things a faculty or principle which sees the Truth unveiled, an eternal faculty of knowledge which corresponds to the eternal fact of the Truth. There is, says the Veda, such a principle; it is the **Truth-Consciousness** which sees the truth directly and is in possession of it spontaneously. Mind labours to effect the will in it and succeeds only in accomplishing partially, with difficulty and insecurely the potentiality at which it works; there must be a faculty or principle of conscious effective force which corresponds to the unconscious automatic principle of self-fulfilment in Nature, and this principle must be sought for in the form of consciousness that exceeds Mind. Mind, finally, aspires to seize and enjoy the essential delight-giving quality, the rasa of things, but it succeeds only in attaining to it indirectly, holding it in an imperfect grasp and enjoying it externally and fragmentarily; there must be a principle which can attain directly, hold rightly, enjoy intimately and securely. There is, says the Veda, an eternal **Bliss-consciousness** which corresponds to the eternal rasa or essential delight-giving quality of all experience and is not limited by the insecure approximations of the sense in Mind.

If, then, such a deeper principle of consciousness exists, it must be that and not mind which is the original and fundamental intention concealed in Nature and which eventually and somewhere must emerge.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 16: 216-20 (CWSA 13: 422-26); SABCL 12: 177-78 (CWSA 18: 38-39)

Isha Upanishad on the Truth

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ।। १५।।

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.

Isha Upanishad

Analysis by Sri Aurobindo:

The face of this* Truth is covered as with a brilliant shield, as with a golden lid; covered, that is to say, from the view of our human consciousness. For we are mental beings and our highest ordinary mental sight is composed of the concepts and percepts of the mind, which are indeed a means of knowledge, rays of the Truth, but not in their nature truth of existence, only truth of form. By them we arrange our knowledge of the appearances of things and try to infer the truth behind. The true knowledge is truth of existence, *satyam*, not mere truth of form or appearance.

We can only arrive at the true Truth, if Surya works in us to remove this brilliant formation of concepts and percepts and replaces them by the self-vision and all-vision.

For this it is necessary that the law and action of the Truth should be manifested in us. We must learn to see things as they are, see ourselves as we are. Our present action is one in which self-knowledge and will are divided. We start with a fundamental falsehood, that we have a separate existence from others and we try to know the relations of separate beings in their separateness and act on the knowledge so formed for an individual utility. **The law of the Truth would work in us if we** saw the totality of our existence containing all others, its forms created by the action of the totality, its powers working in and by the action of the totality. Our internal and external action would then well naturally and directly out of our self-existence, out of the very truth of things and not in obedience to an intermediate principle which is in its nature a falsifying reflection.

Nevertheless even in our ordinary action there is the beginning or at least the seed of the Truth which must liberate us. Behind every act and perception there is an intuition, a truth which, if it is continually falsified in the form, yet preserves itself in the essence and works to lead us by increasing light and largeness to truth in the manifestation. Behind all this travail of differentiation and division there is an insistent unifying tendency which is also continually falsified in the separate result, but yet leads persistently towards our eventual integrality in knowledge, in being and in will.

Surya is Pushan, fosterer or increaser. His work must be to effect this enlargement of the divided self-perception and action of will into the integral will and knowledge. He is sole seer and replacing other forms of knowledge by his unifying vision enables us to arrive finally at oneness. That intuitive vision of the totality, of one in All and All in one, becomes the ordainer of the right law of action in us, the law of the Truth.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 12: 67, 124-25 (CWSA 17: 9, 72-73)

* ... pure intuitional or gnostic Idea sees itself in the Being as well as in the Becoming. It is one with the existence which throws out the form as a symbol of itself and it therefore carries with it always the knowledge of the Truth behind the form. (CWSA 12: 72)

Conception of the Truth in Rig-veda

Agni and the Truth

In the early Vedantic teaching of the Upanishads we come across a conception of the Truth which is often expressed by formulas taken from the hymns of the Veda, such as the expression already quoted, *satyam ṛtaṁ bṛhat*, — the truth, the right, the vast. This Truth is spoken of in the Veda as a path leading to felicity, leading to immortality. In the Upanishads also it is by the path of the Truth that the sage or seer, Rishi or Kavi, passes beyond. He passes out of the falsehood, out of the mortal state into an immortal existence. We have the right therefore to assume that the same conception is in question in both Veda and Vedanta.

This psychological conception is that of a truth which is truth of divine essence, not truth of mortal sensation and appearance. It is *satyam*, truth of being; it is in its action *ṛtam*, right, — truth of divine being regulating right activity both of mind and body; it is *bṛhat*, the universal truth proceeding direct and undeformed out of the Infinite. The consciousness that corresponds to it is also infinite, *bṛhat*, large as opposed to the consciousness of the sense-mind which is founded upon limitation. The one is described as *bhūmā* , the large, the other as *alpa*, the little. Another name for this supramental or truth consciousness is Mahas which also means the great, the vast. And as for the facts of sensation and appearance which are full of falsehoods (*anṛtam*, not-truth or wrong application of the *satyam* in mental and bodily activity), we have for instruments the senses, the sense-mind (*manas*) and the intellect working upon their evidence, so for the truth-consciousness there are corresponding faculties,—*dṛṣṭi, śruti, viveka*, the direct vision of the truth, the direct hearing of its word, the direct discrimination of the right. Whoever is in possession of this truth-consciousness or open to the action of these faculties, is the Rishi or Kavi, sage or seer. It is these conceptions of the truth, *satyam* and *ṛtam*, that we have to apply in this opening hymn of the Veda. ...

The state of immortality thus attained is conceived as a state of felicity or bliss founded on a perfect Truth and Right, *satyam ṛtam*. We must, I think, understand in this sense the verse that follows. "The good (happiness) which thou wilt create for the giver, that is that truth of thee, O Agni." In other words, the essence of this truth, which is the nature of Agni, is the freedom from evil, the state of perfect good and happiness which the Ritam carries in itself and which is sure to be created in the mortal when he offers the sacrifice by the action of Agni as the divine priest. ...

Thus in these four verses of the opening hymn of the Veda we get the first indications of the principal ideas of the Vedic Rishis,—the conception of a Truth-consciousness supramental and divine, the invocation of the gods as powers of the Truth to raise man out of the falsehoods of the mortal mind, the attainment in and by this Truth of an immortal state of perfect good and felicity and the inner sacrifice and offering of what one has and is by the mortal to the Immortal as the means of the divine consummation. All the rest of Vedic thought in its spiritual aspects is grouped around these central conceptions.

SABCL 10: 60-64 (CWSA 15: 64-69)

Saraswati & Her Consorts and the Truth

We may note also that these three goddesses [Bharathi, Saraswati, Ila] are said to bring to birth for man the Bliss, Mayas. I have already insisted on the constant relation, as conceived by the Vedic seers, between the Truth and the

Bliss or Ananda. It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss, the happy state variously described in Veda by the words *bhadram, mayas* (love and bliss), *svasti* (the good state of existence, right being) and by others less technically used such as *vāryam, rayiḥ, rāyaḥ*. For the Vedic Rishi Truth is the passage and the antechamber, the Bliss of the divine existence is the goal, or else Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result.

SABCL 10: 91-92 (CWSA 15: 96-97)

Dawn and the Truth

... illumining dawn of the higher or undivided Consciousness is always the dawn of the Truth; if Usha is that illumining dawn, then we are bound to find her advent frequently associated in the verses of the Rig Veda with the idea of the Truth, the Ritam. And such association we do repeatedly find. For, first of all, Usha is described as "following effectively the path of the Truth," *ṛtasya panthām anveti sādhu.* Here neither the ritualistic nor the naturalistic sense suggested for *ṛtam* can at all apply; there would be no meaning in a constant affirmation that Dawn follows the path of the sacrifice or follows the path of the water. We can only escape from the obvious significance if we choose to understand by *panthā ṛtasya* the path, not of the Truth, but of the Sun. But the Veda describes rather the Sun as following the path of Usha and this would be the natural image suggested to an observer of the physical Dawn. Moreover, even if the phrase did not clearly in other passages mean the path of the Truth, the psychological significance would still intervene; for the sense would then be that the dawn of illumination follows the path of the True or the Lord of the Truth, Surya Savitri.

We have precisely the same idea repeated but with still clearer and fuller psychological indications in I. 124. 3; *ṛtasya pāntham anveti sādhu, prajānatīva na diśo mināti*: "She moves according to the path of the Truth and, as one that knows, she limits not the regions."

SABCL 10: 126-27 (CWSA 15: 131-32)

Constantly the idea of the Truth is associated with this luminous goddess Usha. She awakens full of the Truth by the illuminations of heaven; she comes uttering words of truth; her dawns are luminous in their entering in because they are true as being born from the Truth; it is from the seat of the Truth that the dawns awake. She is the shining leader of perfect truths who awakens in perception to things of varied light and opens all doors. Agni, the mighty one, enters into a great wideness of our heaven and earth receiving his impulsion in the foundation of the Truth which is the foundation of the Dawns; for the outshining of this Dawn is "the vast knowledge of Mitra and Varuna and like a thing of delight it orders the light everywhere in many forms."

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 10: 432 (CWSA 15: 484)

Truth seems a simple thing and is yet most difficult. Truth was the master-word of the Vedic teaching, truth in the soul, truth in vision, truth in the intention, truth in the act. Practical truth, ārjava, an inner candour and a strong sincerity, clearness and open honour in the word and deed, was the temperament of the old Aryan morals. It is the secret of a pure unspoilt energy, the sign that a man has not travelled far from Nature.

SABCL 17: 335 (CWSA 1: 665) *Sri Aurobindo*

Section IV: How to Serve the Truth

The Truth Is to be Lived

The Truth cannot be formulated, it cannot be defined — it is to be *lived*.

And one who is wholly consecrated to the Truth, who wants to live the Truth, serve the Truth, will know at each moment what must be done: it will be a kind of intuition or revelation (most often without words, but sometimes also expressed in words) which will make you know at every minute what is the truth of that minute. And it is this that is so interesting. You want to know "the Truth" as a thing well defined, well classified, well established, and after that you are at rest: there is no need to seek any more! You take it up, you say: "Here, this is the Truth" and then it is fixed. This is what all the religions have done. They have established their truth as a dogma. But it is not the Truth any more.

The Truth is something living, moving, expressing itself at each second, and it is *one* way of approaching the Supreme. Each one has his way of approaching the Supreme. There are perhaps some who are able to approach him from all sides at the same time, but there are those who approach through Love, those who approach through Power, those who approach through Consciousness and those who approach through Truth. But each of these aspects is as absolute, imperative and undefinable as the supreme Lord himself is. The supreme Lord is absolute, imperative and undefinable, unseizable in his action, and his attributes have this same quality.

Once one knows this, he who puts himself at the service of one of these aspects will know (it is expressed in life, in time, in the movement of time), will know at each moment what Truth is, and will know at each moment what Consciousness is, and will know at each minute what Power is, and he will know at each minute what Love is. And it is a multiform Power, Love, Consciousness, Truth that expresses itself innumerably in the manifestation, even as the Lord expresses himself innumerably in the manifestation.

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Integrality is necessary in expressing the real Truth

As soon as one is convinced that there is a living and real Truth seeking to express itself in an objective universe, the only thing that seems to have any importance or value is to come into contact with this Truth, to identify oneself with it as perfectly as possible, and to no longer be anything but a means of expressing it, making it more and more living and tangible so that it may be manifested more and more perfectly. All theories, all principles, all methods are more or less good according to their capacity to express that Truth; and as one goes forward on this path, if one goes beyond all the limits of the Ignorance, one becomes aware that the *totality* of this manifestation, its wholeness, its integrality is necessary for the expression of that Truth, that *nothing* can be left out, and perhaps that there is nothing more important or less important. The one thing that seems necessary is a harmonisation of everything which puts each thing in its place, in its true relation with all the rest, so that the total Unity may manifest harmoniously.

If one comes down from this level, according to me one no longer understands anything and all arguments are of equal worth in the narrowness and limitation which take away all their real value.

Each thing in its place, in harmony with all the rest, and then one can begin to understand and to live.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 15: 396-97; Vol. 9 : 257

If We Are to be Subject Only to the Truth

... if we are to be subject only to the supreme Truth, we must discard the idea that our mental or moral laws are binding on the Infinite or that there can be anything sacrosanct, absolute or eternal even in the highest of our existing standards of conduct. To form higher and higher temporary standards as long as they are needed is to serve the Divine in his world march; to erect rigidly an absolute standard is to attempt the erection of a barrier against the eternal waters in their on flow. Once the nature-bound soul realises this truth, it is delivered from the duality of good and evil. For good is all that helps the individual and the world towards their divine fullness, and evil is all that retards or breaks up that increasing perfection. But since the perfection is progressive, evolutive in Time, good and evil are also shifting quantities and change from time to time their meaning and value. This thing which is evil now and in its present shape must be abandoned was once helpful and necessary to the general and individual progress. That other thing which we now regard as evil may well become in another form and arrangement an element in some future perfection. And on the spiritual level we transcend even this distinction; for we discover the purpose and divine utility of all these things that we call good and evil. Then have we to reject the falsehood in them and all that is distorted, ignorant and obscure in that which is called good no less than in that which is called evil. For we have then to accept only the true and the divine, but to make no other distinction in the eternal processes.

To those who can act only on a rigid standard, to those who can feel only the human and not the divine values, this truth may seem to be a dangerous concession which is likely to destroy the very foundation of morality, confuse all conduct and establish only chaos. Certainly, if the choice must be between an eternal and unchanging ethics and no ethics at all, it would have that result for man in his ignorance. But even on the human level if we have light enough and flexibility enough to recognise that a standard of conduct may be temporary and yet necessary for its time and to observe it faithfully until it can be replaced by a better, then we suffer no such loss, but lose only the fanaticism of an imperfect and intolerant virtue. In its place we gain openness and a power of continual moral progression, charity, the capacity to enter into an understanding sympathy with all this world of struggling and stumbling creatures and by that charity a better right and a greater strength to help it upon its way. In the end where the human closes and the divine commences, where the mental disappears into the supramental consciousness and the finite precipitates itself into the infinite, all evil disappears into a transcendent divine Good which becomes universal on every plane of consciousness that it touches.

This, then, stands fixed for us that all standards by which we may seek to govern our conduct are only our temporary, imperfect and evolutive attempts to represent to ourselves our stumbling mental progress in the universal self-realisation towards which Nature moves. But the divine manifestation cannot be bound by our little rules and fragile sanctities; for the consciousness behind it is too vast for these things.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 20: 180-81 (CWSA 23: 191-92)

The First Condition to Serve the Truth

[Most of the aspirants are] ego-centric and they do not realise their ego-centricity. Even in their sadhana the I is always there, — *my* sadhana, *my* progress, *my* everything. **The remedy** is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, to act, do sadhana for the Divine; not to consider how this or that affects *me* personally, not to claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly, but it is the proper way.

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...when the limits of the ordinary mind and vital are broken, one feels a far vaster and more powerful consciousness and unlimited possibilities, but if one ties all that to the tail of one's own ego, then one becomes a thousand times more egoistic than the ordinary man. The greatness of the Divine becomes an excuse and a support for one's own greatness and the big I swells itself to fill not only the earth but the heavens. That magnification of the ego is a thing to be guarded against with a watchful care.

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Avoid the imagination that the supramental life will be only a heightened satisfaction of the desires of the vital and the body; nothing can be a greater obstacle to the Truth in its descent than this hope of glorification of the animal in the human nature. Mind wants the supramental state to be a confirmation of its own cherished ideas and preconceptions; the vital wants it to be a glorification of its own desires; the physical wants it to be a rich prolongation of its own comforts and pleasures and habits. If it were to be that, it would be only an exaggerated and highly magnified consummation of the animal and the human nature, not a transition from the human into the Divine.

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Truth in Speech

[To a sadhak] If you get the English original from X, you will see that what is written is from the highest standpoint. If you want to be an instrument of the Truth, you must always speak the truth and not falsehood. But this does not mean that you must tell everything to everybody. To conceal the truth by silence or refusal to speak is permissible, because the truth may be misunderstood or misused by those who are not prepared for it or who are opposed to it — it may even be made a starting point for distortion or sheer falsehood. But to speak falsehood is another matter. Even in jest it should be avoided, because it tends to lower the consciousness. As for the last point [of your letter], it is again from the highest standpoint — the truth as one knows it in the mind is not enough, for the mind's idea may be erroneous or insufficient — it is necessary to have the true knowledge in the true consciousness.

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One is not bound to tell everything to everybody — it might often do more harm than good. One has only to say what is necessary. Of course what is said must be true and not false and there must never be any intention to deceive.

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In the first place, there is a great difference between uttering as truth what one believes or knows to be false and uttering as truth what one conscientiously believes to be true, but is not in fact true. The first is obviously going against the spirit

of truth, the second does homage to it. The first is deliberate falsehood, the second is only error at worst or ignorance.

This is from the practical point of view of truth-speaking. From the point of view of higher Truth, it must not be forgotten that each plane of consciousness has its own standard—what is truth to the mind, may be only partial truth to a higher consciousness, but it is through the partial truth that the mind has to go in order to reach the wider more perfect truth beyond. All that is necessary for it is to be open and plastic, to be ready to recognise the higher when it comes, not to cling to the lower because it is its own, not to allow the desires and passions of the vital to blind it to the Light or to twist and pervert things. When once the higher consciousness begins to act, the difficulty diminishes and there is a clear progress from truth to greater truth.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 24: 1372, 1385, 1509, 1559, 1559, 1560

Yes, of course, complete truth of speech is very important for the sadhak and a great help for bringing Truth into the consciousness. It is at the same time difficult to bring the speech under control; for people are accustomed to speak what comes to them and not to supervise and control what they say. There is something mechanical about speech and to bring it to the level of the highest part of the consciousness is never easy. That is one reason why to be sparing in speech is helpful. It helps to a more deliberate control and prevents the tongue from running away with one and doing whatever it likes.

Sri Aurobindo

SABCL 24: 1553

How to Discriminate Between Truth and Falsehood in the Impulses of Action

Those who wish to help the Light of Truth to prevail over the forces of darkness and falsehood, can do so by carefully observing the initiating impulses of their movements and actions, and discriminating between those that come from the Truth and those that come from the falsehood, in order to obey the first and to refuse or reject the others.

This power of discrimination is one of the first effects of the Advent of the Truth's Light in the earth's atmosphere.

Indeed it is very difficult to discriminate the impulses of Truth from the impulses of falsehood, unless one has received this special gift of discrimination that the Light of Truth has brought.

However, to help at the beginning, one can take as a guiding rule that all that brings with it or creates peace, faith, joy, harmony, wideness, unity and ascending growth comes from the Truth; while all that carries with it restlessness, doubt, scepticism, sorrow, discord, selfish narrowness, inertia, discouragement and despair comes straight from the falsehood.

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One must never make rules.

Every minute one must endeavour to apply the highest truth one can perceive. It is much more difficult, but it's the only solution.

Whatever you may do, don't make rules beforehand, because once you have made a rule you follow it more or less blindly, and then you are sure, ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred, to be mistaken.

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only

the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a comfortable tamas; one must be always awake—I am not speaking of physical sleep—one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill.

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Q: Why are indisputable dogmas the most dangerous ones?

The absolute, infinite, eternal Truth is unthinkable for the mind, which can conceive only what is spatial, temporal, fragmentary and limited.

Thus, on the mental plane the absolute Truth is divided into innumerable fragmentary and contradictory truths which, in their entirety, strive to reproduce, insofar as possible, the original Truth.

If one element of this totality is taken separately and affirmed as the only true one, however central or comprehensive it may be, it necessarily becomes a falsehood, since it denies all the rest of the Total Truth.

This is precisely how indisputable dogmas are created and this is why they are the most dangerous kind of falsehood — because each one asserts that it is the sole truth to the exclusion of all other truths which, in their innumerable and complementary totality, express progressively, in the becoming, the infinite, eternal, absolute Truth.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 12: 302; Vol. 7: 282-83; Vol. 10: 66-67

Guidance for Day-to-day Living

All the prophets, all the instructors who have come to bring the divine word to men, have, on one point at least, given an identical teaching.

All of them have taught us that the greatest truths are sterile unless they are transformed through us into useful actions. All have proclaimed the necessity of living their revelation in daily life. All have declared that they show us the path but that we must tread it ourselves; no being, however great, can do our work in our stead.

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Absolute truthfulness must govern life if one wants to be close to the Divine.

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Be more eager for truth than for success.

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Each lie uttered is a step taken towards disintegration.

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If we allow a falsehood, however small, to express itself through our mouth or our pen, how can we hope to become perfect messengers of Truth? A perfect servant of Truth should abstain even from the slightest inexactitude, exaggeration or deformation.

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For those who are eager to get rid of falsehood
here is the way

Do not try to please yourself, do not try either to please others. Try only to please the Lord.

Because He alone is the Truth. Each and every one of us,

human beings in our physical body, is a coat of falsehood put on the Lord and hiding Him.

As He alone is true to Himself, it is on Him that we must concentrate and not on the coats of falsehood.

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There is only one solution for falsehood:

It is to cure in ourselves all that contradicts in our consciousness the presence of the Divine.

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The supramental is not only Truth itself, but also the very negation of falsehood. The supramental will never come down, settle and manifest in a consciousness harbouring falsehood.

Naturally the first condition for conquering falsehood is to stop telling lies, though this is only a preliminary step. An absolute, integral sincerity must finally be established in the being and all its movements if the goal is at all to be attained.

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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.

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A fifteen-year-old girl asked: "What is Truth?"

I answered: "The Will of the Supreme Lord."

It is a subject for contemplative meditation.

The Mother

CWM Vol. 2: 109; 14: 190, 192, 202, 202, 196, 196; 15: 90; 12: 8; 16: 438

