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

A Special Number to Mark the Centenary of
the Mother's First Arrival in Pondicherry and Her
Meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March 1914

"In silence they exchanged the depths of
their souls and thoughts,
in silence they spoke of the greatness of the work
to be done and of the splendour of the victory to
come, of which the dazzling radiance about him
seemed a glorious pledge."

(The Mother's Vision, Bulletin, Aug. 1984, p. 19)

It inaugurated a New Era of Dynamic Spirituality and
will culminate in a Supramental Creation upon the Earth.
"A divine life in a divine body is the formula of
the ideal that we envisage." — Sri Aurobindo

In March 1914, Douce Mère [The Mother] left Paris to come to Pondicherry and meet Sri Aurobindo. ...

Douce Mère arrived at Colombo and took the train to Pondicherry. She went to the Rue Francois Martin, went up the little staircase of the house which is now the Guest House at the corner of the Playground, and for the first time saw Him whom in her childhood visions she used to call "Krishna". Sri Aurobindo was waiting for her, it was 29th of March 1914.

She rented a house close by — now it has become the Archives office. From its roof-terrace she could see Sri Aurobindo in the evenings during sunset, walking in the veranda of his house. During the day she would come to meet him; and while the others talked to Sri Aurobindo, she remained quiet, fully concentrated on the peace emanating from him. "I'd tell myself. 'This is something absolutely marvellous' and I'd keep concentrating in order to preserve this precious gift carefully inside me. Since then it has always remained."

Recounted by Pournaprema *(The Mother's grand daughter) in February 1978 to children, 8 to 12 years old of the Ashram School. Reproduced from "A Unique Little Girl", published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram.*

Sri Ramakrishna gave birth to the neo-spirituality in India by freeing it from all external forms and stressing "experience" as the acid test. On the basis of his experience — call it realization — he declared the unity of all religions. Sri Aurobindo gives the link between the past and the future and asks humanity to build its life on the basis of the Omni-present Reality; to him Life and God are absolutely compatible; earth is worthy of the divine manifestation. Separation of the human spirit from the Divine is the cause of the prevailing human ignorance which is a transitory or passing phase in cosmic unfoldment — the growth of the human soul towards the Truth. He assures us that the Universe and the Reality are not static, but dynamic and that evolution is the process of unfoldment of the Divine that is involved in the Inconscient. "The animal is the living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the God. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God?" [Sri Aurobindo]

Reproduced from A. B. Purani's book: *Sri Aurobindo — Some Aspects of His Vision — Dawn of a New Age: Bhavan's Book University.*

The Mother's meeting with the Master (on 29 March 1914) was of an immeasurable spiritual significance. It was an epochal event, a landmark in the spiritual culture of man. It inaugurated a new era of dynamic spirituality. It initiated a movement unknown to history and humanity. It led to an unwearied collaboration in their mission of raising man from the troubled twilight of his mind into the infinite splendour of the Supramental Light-Force. The age-old propensity to ascetic withdrawal from the world of action was stripped of its customary mask, exposed to the light of an integral spirituality and tossed into the limbo of the past. Life was affirmed and accepted as the field of divine Manifestation, and a deadly grapple with the entrenched powers of the Ignorance and the Inconscience began its fateful career. The Supramental Light-Force that alone can overthrow the sovereignty of darkness and suffering and death with which earthly life is ever afflicted, was brought down and set to fashion the future and realise the divine destiny of mankind. Earth prepared to receive Heaven. Spirit descended to embrace Matter.

Rishabhchand

(Sri Aurobindo — His Life Unique, 1981 ed., p. 378)

Dynamic Spirituality

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Static Spirituality & the Dynamic Spirituality

Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world or to have limited beliefs in order to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything, and if He is hidden... it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him.

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life...

*

There was a time, not so long ago, when the spiritual aspiration of man was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all worldly things, a flight from life, precisely to avoid battle, to rise above the struggle, escape all effort; it was a spiritual peace in which, along with the cessation of all tension, struggle, effort, there ceased also suffering in all its forms, and this was considered to be the true and only expression of a spiritual and divine life. It was considered to be the divine grace, the divine help, the divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension, hypertension, this sovereign peace is the best received aid of all, the most welcome, the solace people ask and hope for. For many it is still the true sign of a divine intervention, of divine grace.

In fact, no matter what one wants to realise, one must begin by establishing this perfect and immutable peace; it is the basis from which one must work; but unless one is dreaming of an exclusive, personal and egoistic liberation, one cannot stop there. There is another aspect of the divine grace, the aspect of progress which will be victorious over

all obstacles, the aspect which will propel humanity to a new realisation, which will open the doors of a new world and make it possible not only for a chosen few to benefit by the divine realisation but for their influence, their example, their power to bring to the rest of mankind new and better conditions.

This opens up roads of realisation into the future, possibilities which are already foreseen, when an entire part of humanity, the one which has opened consciously or unconsciously to the new forces, is lifted up, as it were, into a higher, more harmonious, more perfect life.... Even if individual transformation is not always permissible or possible, there will be a kind of general uplifting, a harmonisation of the whole, which will make it possible for a new order, a new harmony to be established and for the anguish of the present disorder and struggle to disappear and be replaced by an order which will allow a harmonious functioning of the whole.

There will be other consequences which will tend to eliminate in an opposite way what the intervention of the mind in life has created, the perversions, the ugliness, the whole mass of distortions which have increased suffering, misery, moral poverty, an entire area of sordid and repulsive misery which makes a whole part of human life into something so frightful. That must disappear.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, what is "dynamic realisation"?

It is the realisation which is expressed in action. There is a realisation in inaction like that of those who enter into contemplations from which they don't come out, and who don't move; and then there is a dynamic realisation which transforms all your action, all your movements, all your way of

being, your character. In the first case one's outer being remains the same, nothing changes, and usually it destroys all possibility of action, one can no longer do anything, one remains seated... In the second case, it changes everything, your character, your way of being, your way of acting, all your actions and even your surroundings, and finally all your existence, your total being: this is dynamic realisation, with the transformation of the body as its culmination.

Some people try to transform their body before even having transformed their intelligence, and this produces a complete displacement, it unbalances them totally. One must first transform his thought, all his mind, all his mental activity, organise it with higher knowledge; and at the same time one must transform his character, all the movements of the vital, all impulses, all reactions. And finally, when these two things are done, in any case up to a certain point, one can begin to think of transforming the cells of his body, but not begin at the end; one must begin at the beginning. ...

Q: Sweet Mother, what is "the dynamic side"?

It is the same thing. It is this side of the yoga.

There are two aspects: an aspect which is static and a preparation, and a dynamic aspect which is an aspect of transformation, of action. **Dynamic means energetic; it means propulsion, action.**

The Mother

(CWM, 2nd ed., Vol. **9**: pp. 374, 298-99; Vol. **7**, pp. 201-02)

To be spiritual only is not enough; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was.

(CWSA 13: 210) *Sri Aurobindo*

Dynamic Spirituality — One Step More Towards Eternity

The spiritual aspiration is innate in man; for he is, unlike the animal, aware of imperfection and limitation and feels that there is something to be attained beyond what he now is: this urge towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race.

Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine,* SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 842 – 43

It is obvious that what especially characterises man is this mental capacity of watching himself live. The animal lives spontaneously, automatically, and if it watches itself live, it must be to a very minute and insignificant degree, and that is why it is peaceful and does not worry. Even if an animal is suffering because of an accident or an illness, this suffering is reduced to a minimum by the fact that it does not observe it, does not project it in its consciousness and into the future, does not imagine things about its illness or its accident.

With man there has begun this perpetual worrying about what is going to happen, and this worry is the principal, if not the sole cause of his torment. With this objectivising consciousness there has begun anxiety, painful imaginations, worry, torment, anticipation of future catastrophes, with the result that most men — and not the least conscious, the most conscious — live in perpetual torment. Man is too conscious to be indifferent, he is not conscious enough to know what will happen. Truly it could be said without fear of making a mistake that of all earth's creatures he is the most miserable. The human being is used to being like that because it is an atavistic state which he has inherited from his ancestors, but it is truly a miserable condition. And it is only with this spiritual capacity of rising to a higher level

and replacing the animal's unconsciousness by a spiritual super-consciousness that there comes into the being not only the capacity to see the goal of existence and to foresee the culmination of the effort but also a clear-sighted trust in a higher spiritual power to which one can surrender one's whole being, entrust oneself, give the responsibility for one's life and future and so abandon all worries.

Of course, it is impossible for man to fall back to the level of the animal and lose the consciousness he has acquired; therefore, for him there is only one means, one way to get out of this condition he is in, which I call a miserable one, and to emerge into a higher state where worry is replaced by a trusting surrender and the certitude of a luminous culmination — this way is to change the consciousness.

Truly speaking there is no condition more miserable than being responsible for an existence to which one doesn't have the key, that is, of which one doesn't have the threads that can guide and solve the problems. The animal sets itself no problems: it just lives. Its instinct drives it, it relies on a collective consciousness which has an innate knowledge and is higher than itself, but it is automatic, spontaneous, it has no need to will something and make an effort to bring it about, it is quite naturally like that, and as it is not responsible for its life, it does not worry. With man is born the sense of having to depend on himself, and as he does not have the necessary knowledge the result is a perpetual torment. This torment can come to an end only with a total surrender to a higher consciousness than his own to which he can totally entrust himself, hand over his worries and leave the care of guiding his life and organising everything.

How can a problem be solved when one doesn't have the necessary knowledge? And the unfortunate thing is that man believes that he has to resolve all the problems of his

life, and he does not have the knowledge needed to do it. That is the source, the origin of all his troubles—that perpetual question, "What should I do?..." which is followed by another one still more acute, "What is going to happen?" and at the same time, more or less, the inability to answer.

That is why all spiritual disciplines begin with the necessity of surrendering all responsibility and relying on a higher principle. Otherwise peace is impossible.

And yet, consciousness has been given to man so that he can progress, can discover what he doesn't know, develop into what he has not yet become; and so it may be said that there is a higher state than that of an immobile and static peace: it is a trust total enough for one to keep the will to progress, to preserve the effort for progress while ridding it of all anxiety, all care for results and consequences. This is **one step ahead** of the methods which may be called "quietist", which are founded on the rejection of all activity and a plunging into an immobility and inner silence, which forsake all life because it has been suddenly felt that without peace one can't have any inner realisation and, quite naturally, one thought that one couldn't have peace so long as one was living in outer conditions, in the state of anxiety in which problems are set and cannot be solved, for one does not have the knowledge to do so.

The next step is to face the problem, but with the calm and certitude of an absolute trust in the supreme Power which knows, and can make you act. And then, instead of abandoning action, one can act in a higher peace that is strong and dynamic.

This is what could be called a new aspect of the divine intervention in life, a new form of intervention of the divine forces in existence, a new aspect of spiritual realisation.

(CWM 9: 303-05) **The Mother**

What is Spirituality?

* Spirituality has meant....
a recognition of something greater than mind and life,
the aspiration to a consciousness pure, great, divine
beyond our normal mental and vital nature,
a surge and rising of the soul in man out of
the littleness and bondage of our lower parts
towards a greater thing secret within him.

*

It is spirituality when you begin to become aware of
another consciousness than the ego
and begin to live in it or under its influence
more and more.
It is that consciousness
wide, infinite, self-existent, pure of ego
etc. which is called Spirit (Self, Brahman, Divine)

*

We... 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...

*

Spirituality is not a high intellectuality,
not idealism,
not an ethical turn of mind
or moral purity and austerity,

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* On this and next two pages the sentences of the text are broken down into phrases and printed in separate lines in order to add emphasis to each phrase.

not religiosity
    or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour,
not even a compound of all these excellent things...

These things are of considerable value to mind and life;
they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself
    as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying
        or giving a suitable form to the nature;
but they still belong to the mental evolution,
    — the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience,
    change is not yet there.

Spirituality is in its essence
an awakening to the inner reality of our being,
    to a spirit, self, soul
    which is other than our mind, life and body,
an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that,
    to enter into contact with the greater Reality
        beyond and pervading the universe
        which inhabits also our own being,
    to be in communion with It and union with It,
and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of
    our whole being as a result of
            the aspiration, the contact, the union,
        a growth or waking into a new becoming
            or new being, a new self, a new nature.

*

The meaning of spirituality is
a new and greater inner life of man
    founded in the consciousness of his true,
    his inmost, highest and largest self and spirit
by which he receives the whole of existence as
    a progressive manifestation of the self in the universe

and his own life as a field of
a possible transformation in which
its divine sense will be found,
its potentialities highly evolved,
the now imperfect forms changed into
an image of the divine perfection,
and an effort not only to see but to live out
these greater possibilities of his being.

*

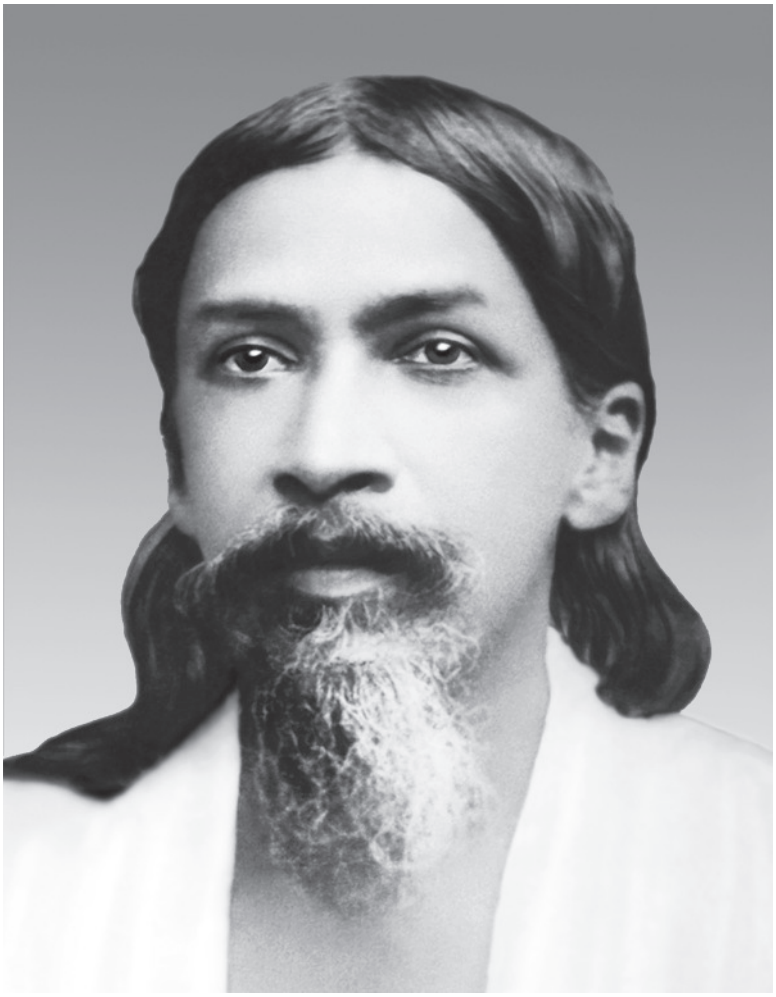
The divine perfection is always there above us;
but for man to become divine in consciousness and act
and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life
is what is meant by spirituality;
all lesser meanings given to the word are
inadequate fumblings or impostures.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA **20**: 121; SABCL **23**: 877-78; CWSA **20**: 39; **22**: 889-90; **26**: 270; **25**: 262-63)

The spiritual life (adhyātma-jīvana), the religious life (dharma-jīvana) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three quite different things and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together.

(SABCL 22: 137) *Sri Aurobindo*



All spiritual life is in its principle
a growth into divine living.

(CWSA 22: 1054) *Sri Aurobindo*

Dynamic Spirituality — A Growth into Divine Living

All the difficulty in dealing spiritually with the works of Life arises because the Will-in-Life for its purposes in the Ignorance has created a false soul of desire and substituted it for that spark of the Divine which is the true psyche. All or most of the works of life are at present or seem to be actuated and vitiated by this soul of desire; even those that are ethical or religious, even those that wear the guise of altruism, philanthropy, self-sacrifice, self-denial, are shot through and through with the threads of its making. This soul of desire is a separative soul of ego and all its instincts are for separative self-affirmation; it pushes always, openly or under more or less shining masks, for its own growth, for possession, for enjoyment, for conquest and empire. If the curse of disquiet and disharmony and perversion is to be lifted from Life, the true soul, the psychic being, must be given its leading place and there must be a dissolution of the false soul of desire and ego. But this does not mean that life itself must be coerced and denied its native line of fulfilment; for behind this outer life soul of desire there is in us an inner and true vital being which has not to be dissolved but brought out into prominence and released to its true working as a power of the Divine Nature. The prominence of this true vital being under the lead of the true inmost soul within us is the condition for the divine fulfilment of the objects of the Life-Force. Those objects will even remain the same in essence, but transformed in their inner motive and outer character. The Divine Life-Power too will be a will for growth, a force of self-affirmation, but affirmation of the Divine within us, not of the little temporary personality on the surface,— growth into the true divine Individual, the central being, the secret imperishable Person who can

emerge only by the subordination and disappearance of the ego. This is life's true object: growth, but a growth of the spirit in Nature, affirming and developing itself in mind, life and body; possession, but a possession by the Divine of the Divine in all things, and not of things for their own sake by the desire of the ego; enjoyment, but an enjoyment of the divine Ananda in the universe; battle and conquest and empire in the shape of a victorious conflict with the Powers of Darkness, an entire spiritual self-rule and mastery over inward and outward Nature, a conquest by Knowledge, Love and Divine Will over the domains of the Ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA 23: 175-76)

Nirvana — Only a Step Towards Divine Life

What then is Nirvana? In orthodox Buddhism it does mean a disintegration, not of the soul—for that does not exist—but of a mental compound or stream of associations or *saṁskāras* which we mistake for ourself. In illusionist Vedanta it means, not a disintegration but a disappearance of a false and unreal individual self into the one real Self or Brahman; it is the idea and experience of individuality that so disappears and ceases,— we may say a false light that is extinguished (*nirvāṇa*) in the true Light. In spiritual experience it is sometimes the loss of all sense of individuality in a boundless cosmic consciousness; what was the individual remains only as a centre or a channel for the flow of a cosmic consciousness and a cosmic force and action. Or it may be the experience of the loss of individuality in a transcendent being and consciousness in which the sense of cosmos as well as the individual disappears. Or again, it may be in

a transcendence which is aware of and supports the cosmic action. But what do we mean by the individual? What we usually call by that name is a natural ego, a device of Nature which holds together her action in the mind and body. This ego has to be extinguished, otherwise there is no complete liberation possible; but the individual self or soul is not this ego. The individual soul is the spiritual being which is sometimes described as an eternal portion of the Divine, but can also be described as the Divine himself supporting his manifestation as the Many. This is the true spiritual individual which appears in its complete truth when we get rid of the ego and our false separative sense of individuality, realise our oneness with the transcendent and cosmic Divine and with all beings. It is this which makes possible the Divine Life. Nirvana is a step towards it; the disappearance of the false separative individuality is a necessary condition for our realising and living in our true eternal being, living divinely in the Divine. But this we can do in the world and in life.

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My truth is one that rejects ignorance and falsehood and moves to the knowledge, rejects darkness and moves to the light, rejects egoism and moves to the Divine Self, rejects imperfections and moves to perfection. My truth is not only the truth of Bhakti or of psychic development but also of knowledge, purity, divine strength and calm and of the raising of all these things from their mental, emotional and vital forms to their supramental reality.

Sri Aurobindo

(SABCL **20**: 46-47; **24**: 1049)

Establish Divine Consciousness in Place of the Ego

I would say: may the world become aware that the Divine is manifesting.

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When humanity was first created, the ego was the unifying element. It was around the ego that the different states of being were grouped; but now that the birth of superhumanity is being prepared, the ego has to disappear and give way to the psychic being, **which has slowly been formed** by divine intervention in order to manifest the Divine in the human being.

It is under the psychic influence that the Divine manifests in man and thus prepares the coming of super-humanity.

The psychic is immortal and it is through the psychic that immortality can be manifested on earth.

So the important thing now is to find one's psychic, unite with it and allow it to replace the ego, which will be compelled either to get converted or disappear.

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You are here at this moment, that is to say upon earth, because you chose it at one time — you do not remember it any more, but I know it — that is why you are here. Well, you must rise to the height of the task. You must strive, you must conquer all weaknesses and limitations; above all you must tell your ego: "Your hour is gone." We want a race that has no ego, that has in place of the ego the Divine Consciousness. It is that which we want: the Divine Consciousness which will allow the race to develop itself and the supramental being to take birth.

(CWM **15**: 7; **16**: 434; **11**: 307) **The Mother**

God is only waiting to be known, while man seeks for him everywhere and creates images of the Divine, but all the while truly finds, effectively erects and worships images only of his own mind-ego and life-ego. When this ego pivot is abandoned and this ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality in his inner and outer life. It will not be enough, but it will be a commencement, a true gate and not a blind entrance. ...

What the spiritual man seeks is to find by the loss of the ego the self which is one in all and perfect and complete in each and by living in that to grow into the image of its perfection,— individually, be it noted, though with an all-embracing universality of his nature and its conscious circumference.

*

The formation of a mental and vital ego tied to the body-sense was the first great labour of the cosmic Life in its progressive evolution; for this was the means it found for creating out of matter a conscious individual. The dissolution of this limiting ego is the one condition, the necessary means for this very same Life to arrive at its divine fruition: for only so can the conscious individual find either his transcendent self or his true Person.

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When we have passed beyond individualising, then we shall be real Persons. Ego was the helper; Ego is the bar.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA **25**: 255; **23**: 356; **13**: 199)

Application of Dynamic Spirituality to Life

... 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.

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

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* Emphasis is added at several places in this article by use of bold typeface.

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 moulding 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 harbouring 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.

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. *Śarīram khalu dharmasādhanam,* 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.

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.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA 20: 32-37)

Whatever one does, it becomes useful if one puts a spark of true consciousness into it.

(CWM 14: 37) *The Mother*

Answer to All Problems of Mankind

(Thoughts & Glimpses)

All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature mental and vital and physical is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfections.

The Spirit is the truth of our being; mind and life and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way of salvation.

The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.

If the triple change could coincide in a perfect correspondence, a faultless work would be done; but the mind and body of mankind cannot hold perfectly a strong spiritual inrush: most is spilt, much of the rest is corrupted. Many intellectual and physical upturnings of our soil are needed to work out a little result from a large spiritual sowing.

Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer, Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God; Hinduism has opened to him the

largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other;* but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.

All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.

The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretation of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA 13: 210-11)

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* The Mother clarifies: It is not in the mental consciousness that these things can be harmonised and synthesised. For this it is necessary to rise above and find the idea behind the thought. Sri Aurobindo shows here, for example, what each of these religions represents in human effort, aspiration and realisation. Instead of taking these religions in their outward forms which are precisely dogmas and intellectual conceptions, if we take them in their spirit, in the principle they represent, there is no difficulty in unifying them. They are simply different aspects of human progress which complete each other perfectly well...

(CWM 9: 76)

What is the Integral Yoga?

What is the integral Yoga?

It is the way of a complete God-realisation, a complete Self-realisation, a complete fulfilment of our being and consciousness, a complete transformation of our nature — and this implies a complete perfection of life here and not only a return to an eternal perfection elsewhere.

This is the object, but in the method also there is the same integrality, for the entirety of the object cannot be accomplished without an entirety in the method, a complete turning, opening, self-giving of our being and nature in all its parts, ways, movements to that which we realise.

Our mind, will, heart, life, body, our outer and inner and inmost existence, our superconscious and subconscious as well as our conscious parts, must all be thus given, must all become a means, a field of this realisation and transformation and participate in the illumination and the change from a human into a divine consciousness and nature.

This is the character of the integral Yoga.

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The integral Yoga is a single but many-sided way of the growth of our spirit and development of our nature. A total experience and a single and all embracing realisation of the integral Divine Reality is its consequence. There is too implied in it a radical change and transformation of the whole being and of every part of the nature. Our being is a nexus of the human mental-vital-physical nature of Ignorance, it is transmuted into a spiritual and supramental consciousness: it becomes a divine unity in a harmony of the infinite and universal and integrated will, love, bliss and knowledge.

*

In my explanation of the universe I have put forward this cardinal fact of a spiritual evolution as the meaning of our existence here. It is a series of ascents from the physical being and consciousness to the vital, the being dominated by the life-self, thence to the mental being realised in the fully developed man and thence into the perfect consciousness which is beyond the mental, into the supramental Consciousness and the supramental being, the Truth-Consciousness which is the integral consciousness of the spiritual being. Mind cannot be our last conscious expression because mind is fundamentally an ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is only the supramental Truth-Consciousness that can bring us the true and whole Self-Knowledge and world-Knowledge; it is through that only that we can get to our true being and the fulfilment of our spiritual evolution.

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I have never said that my yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old yogas — its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method. ...

I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain sadhaks so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is the natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

It is new as compared with the old yogas:

1. Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as

a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent — the ascent is the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.

2. Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supracosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

3. Because a method has been preconised for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out a road and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public.

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA **12**: 358, 358; SABCL **22**: 47; CWSA **35**: 154-56)

How to Live the Spiritual Life

... to live the spiritual life is to open to another world within oneself. It is to reverse one's consciousness, as it were. The ordinary human consciousness, even in the most developed, even in men of great talent and great realisation, is a movement turned outwards — all the energies are directed outwards, the whole consciousness is spread outwards; and if anything is turned inwards, it is very little, very rare, very fragmentary, it happens only under the pressure of very special circumstances, violent shocks, the shocks life gives precisely with the intention of slightly reversing this movement of exteriorisation of the consciousness.

... all who have lived a spiritual life have had the same experience: all of a sudden something in their being has been reversed, so to speak, has been turned suddenly and sometimes completely inwards, and also at the same time upwards, from within upwards—but it is not an external "above", it is within, deep, something other than the heights as they are physically conceived. Something has literally been turned over. ...

When the reversal of the being has taken place, all that is finished. One no longer seeks, one sees. One no longer deduces, one knows. One no longer gropes, one walks straight to the goal. And when one has gone farther—only a little farther — one knows, feels, lives the supreme truth that the Supreme Truth *alone* acts, the Supreme Lord *alone* wills, knows and does through human beings. How could there be any possibility of error there? What He does, He does because He wills to do it.

For our mistaken vision these are perhaps incomprehensible actions, but they have a meaning and an aim and lead where they ought to lead.

*

... you can create your atmosphere by controlling your thoughts, turning them exclusively towards the sadhana, controlling your actions, turning them exclusively towards the sadhana, abolishing all desires and all useless, external, ordinary activities, living a more intense inner life, and separating yourself from ordinary things, ordinary thoughts, ordinary reactions, ordinary actions; then you create a kind of atmosphere around you.

For example, instead of reading any odd thing and chatting and doing anything whatever, if you read only what helps you to follow the path, if you act only in conformity with what can lead you to the divine realisation, if you abolish in yourself all desires and impulses turned towards external things, if you calm your mental being, appease your vital being, if you shut yourself against suggestions coming from outside and become immune to the action of people surrounding you, you create *such* a spiritual atmosphere that nothing can touch it, and it *no longer* depends *at all* on circumstances or on whom you live with or on the conditions you live in, because you are enclosed in your own spiritual atmosphere. And that is how one obtains it: by turning one's attention *solely* to the spiritual life, by reading only what can help in the spiritual life, by doing only what leads you to the spiritual life, and so on. Then you create your own atmosphere. But naturally, if you open all the doors, listen to what people tell you, follow the advice of this one and the inspirations of that one, and are full of desires for outside things, you cannot create a spiritual atmosphere for yourself. You will have an ordinary atmosphere like everybody else.

*

The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing

must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things, — or, as they say, "to escape from their bondage". But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you,— they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.

*

Q: Sweet Mother, where does our true spiritual life begin?

The true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine in the psychic, when one is conscious of the divine Presence in the psychic and in constant communion with the psychic. Then the spiritual life begins, not before. The *true* spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the divine Presence, and receives the impulses for one's action from this divine Presence, and when the will has become a conscious collaborator with the divine Will — that is the starting-point.

Before that, one may be an aspirant to the spiritual life, but one doesn't have a spiritual life.

The Mother

(CWM **9**: 413-15; **6**: 356-57; **3**: 54-55; **8**: 135)



The Mother's Guidance

Q: Mother, what is it that will help me always remember that I am living a spiritual life?

The Mother's Answer:

The awareness of the Divine Presence in
all things and always.

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A Prayer Given by the Mother

Supreme Lord... Grant that I may become conscious
of Your presence.

(CWM **16**: 155; **17**: 379)

Spiritual Rebirth

... spiritual rebirth — an utter casting away of all the ordinary past. For spiritual rebirth means the constant throwing away of our previous associations and circumstances and proceeding to live as if at each virgin moment we were starting life anew. It is to be free of what is called Karma, the stream of our past actions: in other words, a liberation from the bondage of Nature's common activity of cause and effect. When this cutting away of the past is triumphantly accomplished in the consciousness, all those mistakes, blunders, errors and follies which, still vivid in our recollection, cling to us like leeches sucking our life-blood, drop away, leaving us most joyfully free. This freedom is not a mere matter of thought; it is the most solid, practical, material fact. We really are free, nothing binds us, nothing affects us, there is no obsession of responsibility. If we want to counteract, annul or outgrow our past, we cannot do it by mere repentance or similar things, we must forget that the untransformed past has ever been and enter into an enlightened state of consciousness which breaks loose from all moorings. To be reborn means to enter, first of all, into our psychic consciousness where we are one with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of Karma. Without becoming aware of the psychic, it is not possible to do so; but once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins afresh, then the past no longer cleaves to us. To give you an idea of the final height of spiritual rebirth, I may say that there can be a constant experience of the whole universe actually disappearing at every instant and being at every instant newly created!

(CWM 3: 176-77) **The Mother**