

## Spirituality and Prosperity - IV

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## Introduction

### What is the Spirit in Life?

Spirituality is related to other life or moksha, not to Prosperity. **The idea that Spirit can play a role in life and bring in Prosperity is alien to our tradition, Indian or Hindu.** People in domestic life are wary of yoga, Spirit, etc. as they smack of sannyasa. This is meticulously shunned and children are taught accordingly. They are right.

A family in 1934 had a thousand acres of lands in seven villages and the six brothers of the family occupied the entire main street of the village. Suddenly they found an ochre clad samiyar in their house. They were glad of his visit and all of them paid their respects to the saint. He showed an inclination to stay there at night. Everyone felt as if they had received an electric shock.

Each of the brothers, under the impression that the sannyasi had been invited there by one of the other brothers, exercised a self-restraint of an

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extraordinary kind and kept quiet. The sannyasi stayed there that night to the utter dismay of everyone. And he stayed on for thirty days. Finally, it came to light that he had not been invited by anyone. He left the house. It is our true belief that if a sannyasi stays in a house overnight, that family will be ruined. This family soon lost their all. Our traditional belief is valid.

Our being – the embodied being – has a body, a life (vital), a mind and a Spirit. This is one of the four parts of our being which when released from its embodiment by tapas seeks moksha. This is the Spirit which shuns life and is therefore inimical to householders.

The Upanishads have declared, ‘Sarvam Brahman’ — all is Brahman. So our bodies, lives and minds, too are Brahman or Spirit. Our Spirit is known as jivatma, the Sakshi Purusha. It has its parts in each of our parts. Thus our minds, lives and bodies too have a Spirit, Purusha. They are called respectively Manomaya Purusha, Pranamaya Purusha and Annamaya Purusha. These too share the characteristic of the jivatma. All of them are immutable, changeless.

### **There is Prakriti. She too has a soul, Spirit or Purusha.**

It is the evolving Purusha, called the Psychic Being. It carries the essence of the experiences of Prakriti. That too has its representatives in our different parts. They are called mental psychic, vital psychic, and physical psychic.

Our tradition knew of the Psychic Being but never considered it as an evolving being. The evolving psychic being is the Spirit I speak of. It is this I ask to be evoked. As the mind is more powerful than the body, Spirit is more powerful than the mind. This is a benevolent Spirit which enriches the mind or life or body. This is a new concept in yoga, introduced by Sri Aurobindo. At the end of the following hundred articles as an appendix there is an article “How to Invoke the Spirit”, where the method of invocation is described in detail. It is this Spirit that

- ✧ can overcome Karma;
- ✧ respond readily to one’s deep call;
- ✧ solve your daily problems;

☆ give an Inner Fullness that is richly Spiritual;  
and

☆ make life on earth one of marvel.

In the New Indian Express column I am raising various aspects of this Spirit briefly with examples of devotees' experiences. The entire theory of karma or even punctuality cannot be discussed there. Readers write to me raising several questions that need longer treatment. I refer them to the original sources giving in my brief reply the essence of the originals.

In the Express articles I confine myself to the issues of daily life that can be readily solved by the Power of the Spirit. I rarely speak of availing of the opportunities the Spirit brings the readers because of the Invocation. Though the articles in this booklet are of the original unedited version, the modifications are very little and of no significance to the content.

Pondicherry

20.3.2003

**Karmayogi**

Spirituality and Prosperity - IV

## 1. One Week's Work in One Day

Work is done by several people in several fashions. People working in a sluggish organisation visiting alert companies often find that there the work is done quicker. What they do in a month gets done here in a day or two. They are all appreciation but make **no attempt to know how the work was done quickly**. You may have seen less educated people trying to write down the monthly accounts. They take a whole day to do the work of a half hour. While doing it, they perspire. A graduate in an office was trying to draft a reply to a routine letter of ten sentences. He wrote it down ten times and spent a full hour on it. Obviously he had no skill and language was a bother.

Still, **is it humanly possible to do seven days of work in one day?** The value of a programme can be best appreciated by the CEOs of companies. They attend seminars paying a fee of Rs. 25,000. There are two parts in the scheme. The first is elimination of waste, alertness, memory, presence of mind, unruffled temper, organised

work, etc. One who is unorganised and sluggish will double or treble his efficiency by doing all these. That is the smaller part of it. A Dutch girl was in tears when she was given a 50-hour work to do in a 40-hour week. A colleague consoled and tried to help her. He asked her to write down each step of the work and post the shortest time required for each. It totalled 27 hours. She was all smiles. **Our work is not time consuming. Our way of doing it is.** CEO's are efficient. They do not commit such lapses.

The second part of the programme is to upgrade the idea behind the organisation of work. Here we can only mention the principle, not offer a detailed explanation or striking example. The secret lies in the fact that we **LOVE** what we do as we are efficient in doing it. Instead of attending to the details, one should take care of its essence. **Capacity to move away from the love of details to the significance of the essence enables one to do in one day the work of seven days.** The basic contradiction lies in the fact that efficiency is attention to details. It is possible for us to take care of the essence without losing hold of the details. Learning to do it requires the discussion of an actual work. No question need be raised as to its possibility, as the people above us are already doing it. It is not a knotty problem, but a subtle tangle one needs to undo with penetration.



## 2. The Solution Lies in the Problem

Resourceful employers who suspect a manager of pilfering will put him in charge of theft prevention. This is an age-old wisdom. Behind this lies a truth of the great Indian philosophy of ever-present dualities. The moment light is created, darkness arises. So also for high and low; ignorance and knowledge; pain and pleasure, etc. As the opposites are simultaneously created, the solution of the one lies in the other. Suppose one has failed in a venture, how can he use this philosophical knowledge to solve his problem? **The solution is in-built into the problem.** A man received a big gift of prosperity for a public cause. There was not enough money to meet the registration expenses. He resorted to an analysis of the above kind and went into the origin of the gift. Life revealed to him that such transfers were exempted from stamp duty.

When you go to law to seek justice in a tangled case, the lawyer compels you to speak the history of the case. While narrating it, the lawyer gets the right clue. Sometimes

the client too lights on it. Problem solving is helpful. Knowing the philosophy enables one to acquire a greater knowledge. **The presence of that higher knowledge prevents the emergence of such a problem.** We call such knowledge wisdom. The Wisdom of Indian culture reached its human acme even in its heydays – a couple of thousand years ago. The West has work values in a striking measure. There are hundreds of such values we can learn from them. In the field of higher values of human life, the West has nothing to offer to the Asian nations. Such a knowledge has come down to us through the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, *Panchatantra* and other ancient literature.

When recollecting our past experience, we may see this truth in a few cases. **Whether we see it or not, in whatever way a solution is arrived at, the basic philosophical truth is that the solution is already in the problem.** Several of our proverbs reveal this truth to us. One such proverb is, ‘The groom for my daughter is there somewhere. He is not to be born hereafter. We have to find him.’ The truth is not fully revealed here but it is there, just as we do not see the Brahman in objects, though he is always there. We do not see the truth in all the proverbs. Such a statement is attributed to many a great man across the globe. It is much more true for us who are steeped in the culture of the Spirit.

### 3. Oblivious Selfishness

If **MAN** is totally ignorant of anything, it is that he is selfish. Men are selfish and mean, says Sri Aurobindo. **The only thing we can do about it is to cure it in ourselves.** There is an index for being extremely selfish. That person will ceaselessly complain about every other person that they are selfish. There are affectionate families that are utterly selfless. In such families men and women never mention what they own, or how useful they are to others. Property, jewels, money, things will be used by anyone without reference to the individual rights. Occasionally an utterly selfish person will be born there. He will spread his empire without anyone standing in his way. Shamelessly he will expect everyone to serve his own purpose. His expectation will be abundantly fulfilled. Selfishness is dynamic, and can reach proportions of the infinite. **A time will come when such men accuse all the others of selfishness.** It happens when he has crossed his limits at all points of functioning.

Selfish members of a selfless family will rule the roost, as no one in the family will bring themselves to speak about it. His friends will constantly caution him and warn him of its consequences, of its unfairness, of the injustice. His one reply will be that he is serving the family to his utmost capacity. No amount of explanation will make him see the truth, as he is vital and the arguments are mental. His one grievance will be that no one around him knows his own needs and no one is selfless enough to meet them. What is blatant to every other person will not be seen by him. He will be oblivious of it. There are persons who are not selfish; nor does anyone else perceive them to be selfish. They are unselfish and in some areas they are self-giving. Suppose such a person begins to examine himself from the point of view of selfishness, he can find several areas where he is fully selfish and many other acts where he can legitimately be accused of being selfish. **It is so because selfishness is all-pervasive. The very human being is created around a self, an ego.** The Rishi who takes to tapas moves from his human self to the divine Self within him. Modern life in the urban areas frowns upon the ego-trips of individuals. It is a great, good sign. **Active psychological Self-giving practised as an article of faith brings one's Spirit to the surface of his life.**

#### 4. A More than Human Effort

Human effort has human limits. Spiritual efforts have no such limits. Humans receiving spiritual gifts that call for spiritual effort are overwhelmed. Such occasions arise in the lives of rare souls. Spirit knows no failures. Human beings are daunted when faced with an occasion that needs spiritual efforts. Most give up. Some try. Success is rare in great projects. **When great efforts of great souls in great projects are rewarded with great success, life will permit one flaw there.** For that to be flawless one needs to be a realised soul. Effort that ends in success yields relief. That is normal, human. Relief felt will lead to the repetition of the same problem. Effort that ends in success generates gratitude in devout souls. **Gratitude felt is capable of converting the problem into an opportunity, effort into enjoyment.**

A devotee's experience is as follows.

Faced with the intensities of human smallness, a devotee took another man's point of view and rose to the divine

occasion. The other man was pleased. One may take great efforts prompted by a mental ideal. This man did so. But his nerves were raw, the body was sour. What he did – to please the other man – was revolting to his swabhava. It was on fire, revolted all the time violently. It was an imperfect consecration. Still, Life rewarded him in an unheard of fashion. As he acted to please the other man, his rival, Life acted to over-please him. Life gave an abundant opulent response. **There was a flaw in it. It was an essential flaw.**

He had no heart to go back to his original consecration to neutralize this important defect. After a little while, he again tried through consecration to fully neutralize this flaw. What he could have done originally in a few days, now months of effort were not enough to set it right. To his consecration of several months, he added a **TOKEN ACT** of high discipline. If the earlier original effort was burning his whole being, the present one was nerve racking. After 51 days of strenuous practical consecration, the resistance broke. Life began to reward copiously. **What he should have got through responsibility he now got without responsibility fixed on him. It came seven-fold.** A more than human effort receives a more than divine recognition.

## 5. The Successive Coils of Personality

An information by itself is of small value. One who has experience receiving an additional information has the capacity to give a greater value to that information. We often are sorry that the rich becomes richer. The rich are more organised and are capable of benefiting more from a fresh opportunity. For one who has an opinion already, an additional information becomes far more valuable. **Music can be better appreciated by lovers of music than by laymen.** Information, opinion, attitude, motive are graded instruments of Personality. So the argument is the greater the opinion, attitude, and motive are, the greater is the ability of Personality to benefit by new information, fresh energy or greater physical strength. **The family, the school, the wider society all feed the Personality with which the boy is born.**

The school gives education. It can give better education or give the same education by a better method. Family gives the boy survival values. School gives academic

values. Also the school trains the boy in social values. When he is an adult, the society in which he lives gives him career values. **In whichever school he studies, in whatever superior society he lives, however cultured his family is, what he receives from any of them is limited by the amplitude of his personality.** A school of great ideals can upgrade a pupil's personality too. Spirit emerging in one's life can raise the organisation of one's personality, which means it will be raised in quality or standard. Spirit does it naturally. Rather the Spirit cannot but do it.

Families and schools can take to it – to raise the level of the child's Personality. In a school experienced educationists can even devise a curriculum and a syllabus that consciously aims at this goal. At home, culturally sensitive parents of high education can very well attempt it. **The first rule of raising the Personality is NOT to try to give it to the child.** It has to be done at the level of information, knowledge, skill, capacity and especially values. That parent who is endowed with all this will naturally pass it on to the child. But the passing on is the strategy of strategies. Their peak is utter Freedom to the child in all avenues of life. It will be a great project of one's life, if any parent or school attempts it, to participate in their endeavour. Gandhiji followed that method when he made men, picking them out of the dust.

## 6. The Twelve Crores

I know by experience that the talents of Indians are consummate. **I am more than sure they cannot be bettered.** Whether it is equally true of other countries or not, I have no personal knowledge. Indians are not organised; they won't honour a queue. Punctuality is an unknown virtue in Indian life. A long list of missing virtues can be made. All this is true, very true. But all this, **in my opinion, is not due to incapacity, only unwillingness.** I am unable to recollect any statement endorsing this idea from Sri Aurobindo or The Mother. Behind all this utter clumsiness there lies a well-marked organisation of Personality which is at its acme.

A well-known industrial house was making two crore profits from a 40 crore turnover. That was the one establishment which was making the lowest percentage of profits in their various establishments. Some 15 years ago they engaged consultants whose central faith is the Spirit. The management considered this unit an unwise investment and had been considering closing it for the

last ten years. We told them they need not close it but could double their profits. Reluctantly they engaged us to write a report after studying their facilities. The report came upon **CONCRETE** pockets where cash was hidden. About Rs.1.5 crores could be listed thus. The leader of the team was reluctant to propose a goal for raising profits beyond the Rs.1.5 crores potential that had been identified. Finally he agreed to include in the report what appeared as an imaginary goal of Rs.2 crores.

At this stage I intervened to say the profits could touch the six crore mark if the management could change some of their basic attitudes. The leader of the team would have nothing to do with such an idea. **I went further to say the profits could be twelve crores if the management would come forward to change ALL their fundamental attitudes.** The leader left us angrily. In cooler moments he compromised and incorporated all my **IDEAS** in the report. It was presented to the management by the leader with disbelief. The Managing Director said, "It is very good you see Rs.12 crores potential in our company. If you can see it, we can find it." They did not engage us to find out the fabulous profit. Recently we learned that the 40 crores turnover rose to 500 crores, making excellent profits. **Indians have extraordinary talents, but do not themselves know them. Once they know them, they will plunge into action like a cyclone. India can become a prosperous nation, if we are able to KNOW our strengths.**

## 7. The Act Repeats

Every time it is used the rubber stamp faithfully repeats its original words. The **ACT** is a structure very much like the composed words in the press or on the rubber stamp. It can only repeat. It can repeat only when the occasion arises. A rubber stamp does not reproduce its words unless someone cares to use it. **The act is the form – rupa – of the swabhava.** It varies its details to suit the changed circumstances but the character of the act remains.

A student was selected for his professional course. He left his place the day before. There was only one train each day. It was over-crowded. He decided to jump into an upper class compartment, though the door was locked. It is then he remembered that twelve years earlier when he went to his interview to join the university, there was such a crowd before the Vice-Chancellor's Office and he gained entry along with a dozen others bribing the peon with one rupee through a window.

Someone writing about how Pakistan sent her raiders into Kashmir said the tribals came from the very place from which Mohammed Ghazni, famed for his tenacity, raided 17 times. **The Act repeats.** One can multiply instances from one's own life, but what is the use of this knowledge? Knowledge is valuable by itself. It is worth knowing something. Of course knowledge becomes power when it is usable. **The very fact one knows this rule relaxes the power of previous acts to repeat.** When one is determined to overcome the nature of this physicality and get rid of this power of repetition, this knowledge helps.

Buying the very first property in his career, someone paid Rs.5,850 for a property which had no bidders when auctioned for Rs.1,200, because he wanted a property unencumbered. Eight years later this act exactly repeated its character when he bought a second property. He was alerted. Five years later when he bought his biggest property, no trace of earlier debts was there. His knowledge helped him to overcome the irresistible power of repetition of an act. Not only acts repeat. Names also repeat. The character of the act – *rasi* – repeats. Occasionally the exact spot repeats; the fixed hour repeats. **Repetition is the character of physicality. The earlier one gets rid of it the better.**

## 8. The Native Generosity of the Human Heart

The human heart is selfish, mean, perverse, etc. **There is another side. It is generous, benevolent, compassionate, magnanimous, capable of the highest affection and love, and can exhibit a vast sense of responsibility.** Only that we rarely see the right side and too often the wrong side. When we hear of the greatness of a great soul we admire him, but it will not touch our emotions. To see the same high qualities in ordinary people is a revelation of the human nature to us. I have referred to the behaviour of farm workers who, in response to a spiritual approach, came hours earlier and worked later than usual. The gain in work is secondary. To see that the Spirit evoked in the manager can bring about that result in the behaviour of labourers is of value.

People on the industrial front can report any number of instances of irrational behaviour. Once a manager

offered an incentive to a worker who doubled his productivity. He soon found himself in trouble. All the workers joined together and demanded the same wage for their work. **There was no arguing with them.** That manager forgot once and for all any scheme of incentive to the workers. Customers order for Rs.50,000 and send an advance of Rs.3,000. The factory produces it and he cancels the order. In one case the products were custom made. They could not be sold to others. The customer demanded the return of advance, forgetting the loss he created for the factory.

There was a small factory of five workers which was doing well. For various reasons money became SCARCE. All the five workers offered to resign. The manager did not know why, as their salaries were paid regularly. They explained, “If we resign, our PF amount will be about Rs.1 lakh or a little more. We all wish the company to utilize that amount to tide over the crisis.” The manager could not conceive of such generous emotion and was moved to tears. He was not sure whether he was capable of that. **I am not sure whether he saw the truth behind their good will. His invoking the Spirit had not moved many other things he wanted to move. It moved their hearts, the GOOD WILL in their hearts.** The Spirit’s ways are many. They are beyond our conception.

## 9. The Honesty of Servants

When we go to new places or another country, we notice many things that are striking. A young man who returned from a tour of Kerala said that what was striking to him was the cleanliness. A French lady described the streets of Pondicherry as a public urinal. Kerala is always known for her cleanliness. People from Kerala personally keep themselves very clean. A Malayalee family came to Pondicherry for employment. The lady one day came out of the bathroom and found her watch missing, and her purse too was not found. Everyone to whom she complained said, “No, no, it is not permissible that you leave them on the table. There are servants at home.” She replied, “That is how we are back in Kerala.” There the servants do not steal. Here to find trustworthy servants is an exception, not the rule.

**A cultural value seeps down to the least of men.**  
For instance every one takes bath here in India whereas

that may not be a widespread practice in all countries. Americans visiting Holland were surprised that most people they met with were not graduates. The percentage of college going population in USA is at least 20% higher than in Holland. An American professor said during a conversation that on the day of his father’s death he left the body at home and went to college to take his classes. Such a thing is inconceivable in India or in many other countries. There are certain communities where you will not find a single poor man. If one falls low, the entire community comes forward to help him rise. **The values found in the least of men and women can be considered the values of a nation or a place or a community.**

A few hundred years ago travellers declared that they had never met anyone in India who lied. That was a *GOLDEN AGE*. How are we different now than two hundred years ago? Can we not go back to that laudable state? The Indian SPIRIT will emerge in full splendour to saturate the population with abundance and opulence, throw up GENIUSES by the dozen, and allow India to hold her head aloft if we, as a nation, go back to truthfulness, honesty, etc. Is it too much for us to train our children in utter truthfulness? Can we not espouse TRUTH in all its versions and variations as the ONE desirable value of life?



## 10. Receptivity — Initial and Long Lasting

There are occasions when newcomers to a spiritual organisation see the Spirit constantly at work. What others find difficult to come by, the newcomer gets by simply calling **MOTHER**. His face acquires a shine that no inmate has. Life rises continuously, occasionally even more than the seniors in the organisation. **Seniority is not a rule Spirituality honours**. Most people who rise fast also level off after sometime. Often a question, a doubt arises in the minds of the inmate, whether the Spirit we once adored is really not a Spirit? Very rarely one man continues to rise on the ladder of Spirituality.

The factors involved here are many, but not unknown to common humanity. **They are not able to accept a rule that hurts them. No man is that rational**. The newcomer's new-found enthusiasm gives an opening to the Spirit and it does act. As soon as life rises, all the lower urges — competition, jealousy, self-assertion, demand, desire, etc. — rise up. That is the end of receptivity.

Some people, pressed by hard circumstances, again open up to the Spirit. Again Life rises. If you take most great men, their contemporaries will say, "He is not exceptional, many were his equal, and sometimes they excelled him. It is luck that favoured him." This is what they believe. When you read the **CHOICES** the great man had made at every step of his crucial life, it will be clear all those who had equal abilities did not choose as the great man chose. **Greatness always chooses the RIGHT side, which every other person shirks.**

Whether it was a decision to defend England by one's fists or a decision to ask Roosevelt for more arms, Churchill always made the hard choice. That is the rising ladder. **Choice makes the man**. When a dull friend wants to call on you for a couple of hours of monologue, one can excuse himself or put himself through the mill of unrelenting boredom. It is a hard choice. Should we, for the sake of Truth, suffer every fool and knave, when the inner quiet is truly patient, you will see, life does not give that punishment for long. Success is for the most enduring, not for the one who takes the line of least resistance. When you persist in your right decision without any violence in outer behaviour as well as no violence to your inner self, you will see all those troubling circumstances move away from you. **Mother says when your decision is true, SHE will not give you anymore of that experience!**

## 11. Spiritual Experience

He was a young Christian student. His family met with untold hardship. His father lost his job, and his reputation. **The family lost its status and was nowhere.** A close friend of the boy belonged to a family who entirely relied on the Spirit. Neither the Christian boy nor his friend had heard of the Spirit. Hardship and privation roused the boy. He worked hard, day and night led by one single determination – to rise in life. He succeeded. He became more than rich. The moment he hit the zenith of his worldly success, his doctor said he had to have a bypass surgery. He was unwilling. He had a confidant in the Church. ‘Prayer can take care of the ailment of the heart,’ said the man. The young man prayed with intensity. **The surgery became superfluous.** Now real spiritual FAITH sprouted in him.

Life was smooth for him for a short while. Somewhere in the work spot, he lost his temper and it created a

poisonous enmity. That man belonged to a terrorist group. Anonymous warning reached him that his days were numbered. Again he ran to the priest–confidant. He again advised prayer. It so happened that the terrorist belonged to the same denomination in his distant native place. The priest could reach the clergyman at the other place and diffuse the threat. The FAITH that originally blossomed in the young Christian aspirant now became a SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE in such a measure that the surfacing Spirit began to preside over his young life. **He took to evangelism and it took him all over the world.**

The Spirit in us is buried deep. God gives us crises through life so that we may awake to the inner Spirit. Many solve the problems thus. This young man experienced an inner spiritual transformation that led him to the service of Jesus. To all men the Spirit is the same. It is there not only in the moments of crisis but in all moments of life. The endeavour to discover that Spirit is the aspiration for true living. **The smaller the event, the greater is the discovery.** One who can do so in the opportunities he meets with will do away with problems. Discovery of the Spirit in mundane daily events such as buying a pen, can lead to the discovery of the SPIRIT which is the SELF of the world. A spiritual life is one where we withdraw the mind and let the spirit rule our life.

## 12. A Movement for Indian Prosperity

The divine Mother has said that **this is the hour when man will be vastly rewarded for a tiny effort, as this is the Hour of God.** She also said that a small error equally brings a great loss. The atmosphere of the earth is no longer what it was but has become Spiritual. Penderel Moon, an ICS officer in 1947, perceived this truth in his administrative fashion and pronounced then that the human slaughter could have been largely avoided by a timely right action. In his own jurisdiction he did so. That was an opportunity to avoid catastrophes. Now is the occasion to raise the entire nation far more than what the government can do or is doing.

Vinay Rai is a dynamic idealist. His idealism touches more than one field. He recently decided that India needs not so much engineers but entrepreneurs who are engineers. He started an engineering college in Delhi so that the graduates from there will stand on their own legs. A

parent raised the question of government recognition. He told him, “This is not the place for those who rely on anyone else or anything else, much less the government.” He has founded a chain of educational institutions. In a recent conference on technology a speaker said India is producing 5000 PhDs. Foreign companies are looking to invest heavily here in R&D and 25,000 PhDs are needed to meet the requirement. Another man in Delhi has buried a computer in a wall so that street children can learn computer. **He found that without instructions, illiterate children learn to operate the computer faster.**

Arindam Chaudhuri speaks of India catching up with the US level of prosperity in 2025. Maybe there are a great many sporadic individual successful efforts at releasing the energies of the nation. **It would be highly desirable to coordinate all such efforts and centralize them.** We presented the idea of a National Prosperity Movement to Abdul Kalam. Such a centralized leadership is best fitted to call for a Prosperity Movement which seems to be already afoot on its own. The distance between the unorganised enthusiasm and organised constructive work is not a gap but a gulf. *This certainly is the Hour of India where a small right effort can yield vast desirable results.* India is awake or trying to awake below the surface. She can emerge as an emerging leader of Asian nations.

### 13. Self-Respect

The more prosperous the nation, the greater is the self-respect of the Individual. In poorer nations, the population is ignorant, illiterate, docile, submissive, and abject. People do not value themselves as something to be counted upon. Poor people are satisfied with poor meals, poor clothes, poor housing, etc. **Times change. No longer is man content with one meal, one dhoti and no schooling for his children.** The middle class man now aspires for a good education for his children. An MBA course costs Rs. 95,000 per year in the best of colleges. All this cannot be met from the salaries prevalent in the market, including the government, where pay scales are higher than the private sector. Good food, good clothes and good shelter for the whole family is self-respect at the physical level. Higher education is partly mental self-respect, partly vital self-respect.

Self-respect in the Individual is a welcome sign. When the whole population comes to assert their self-respect,

a huge demand for clothes, paper, pens, food grains, etc. is created as if the population had been doubled or trebled. The population since 1947 has trebled by itself and man is coming into his own. That creates a new market of extensive services apart from consumer goods. **This market produces MONEY, as land and factories produce money.** The newfound prosperity seen in the metros and somewhat in all other places is one expression of Man coming into his own. This aspect of the Indian economy has done more for the development of India than the Five Year Plans of the government. *Self-respect creates Prosperity; Prosperity generates self-respect.* Thus it becomes the opposite of a vicious cycle – a virtuous cycle.

If India should hold its head high in the comity of nations, the lone Individual at home must respect himself. **He must be Prosperous.** The world does not respect poverty or poor men. It may take pity on them and offer charity. The age-old ideal of not being money-minded will not hold good now in a money economy. **That ideal was fashioned in the days when life could go on for months or years without man handling money.** It was a non-money economy where people lived hand to mouth and stayed in the village. There was no money and there was no need for money. *To uphold the ideal of 1920 in 2003 is at best not wise.*

## 14. Academic Excellence

In the late 50's, newspapers began to publish news of 100% passes in SSLC. The headmaster of a famous school in Mayiladuthurai (then known as Mayavaram) said, "My school never got less than 100% for long. Now a days it gets into the news. In my school no student secures less than 60% in any subject. It is a different story with the schools that barely enter into the 100% pass qualification." Students graduating from famous colleges used to speak of their professors who attained fame even outside the country. They were the star performers. Institutions that excelled others, apart from enjoying the services of men of high academic attainments, took care to see the lowest member of the faculty met certain high criteria. Once there was an English scholar in Oxford, Spooner, who used to mix up his words. Instead of a 'well-oiled bicycle' he used to say 'well boiled icicle'. Of course it was not a deficiency of scholarship, but a lisp in speech.

Toynbee was an historian known to have studied the philosophy of history. Students of honours sometimes used to study his works as classics. There was a Reader in History of a famous university who had taught that course for ten years. At the end he complained to his professor, "Sir, I fail to comprehend what Arnold J. Toynbee writes." The professor was an authority on South Indian history. He smiled and asked, "What were you doing in the class for ten years?" This was in the early sixties. Indian scholarship of yore had set a very high minimum for its scholars. It was exacting and rigorous. No guru will pass the sishya if he has not risen to the occasion. *It is true that the Indian scholar rose to dizzy heights. It was equally true that the entire profession maintained a very high minimum as a hallmark of scholarship.*

Those were the days when the select few that could be counted on the fingers took to education. Standards can be maintained when you select your candidates, not when education is open to all. Quantitative expansion rules out the possibility of qualitative achievements. When the energizing force is the spirit and not the mind, the highest possible attainment becomes the lowest standard. **This is so because the Spirit is equal all over its territory.** It is an excellence not yet tried in any field in any country, but it is there as a goal for one to aim at.

## 15. Stiff Thumb

People with stiff thumbs will be self-willed people. There was a person whose thumb was supple. He used to bend his thumb backwards until the tip of the nail touched his wrist. *He was one absolutely devoid of anything resembling a will.* Every part of the body, including the nails or hair, signifies something of a man's character. Prominent cheek bones indicates independent decisions not easily influenced by others. A squint means unreliability. So also a crooked neck. Bushy eyebrows stand for intense analysis in the mind. Horizontal lines in the forehead show achievement. A vertical line in the middle of the forehead known as the 'suspended needle' indicates one's rising in power. Palmistry and physiognomy are a wide *sastra*. They are the aspects of *swarupa* expressing *swabhava*.

These *sastras* were not written by external mental observation that collects data and organises it statistically. When the subtle vision in a Rishi opens, he 'sees' the

whole *sastra* and codifies it. Such a subtle vision can be spiritual or mental or below the mental – the vital. Before mind was born in the world in the period of the Upanishads, all civilizations were SUBTLE of various levels. The Rishi's dark complexion grew fair when the light was born inside. Sri Aurobindo's body acquired a golden tint when the Supramental Golden Light took birth in him. After He attained *Samadhi* on Dec. 5, 1950, the Golden Light of the Supramental world descended into his very body and stayed there for three days. When the inner *swabhava* changes out of education or yoga, the external lines disappear or lines that were not there appear.

*A stiff thumb can grow flexible when the man loses something of his obstinacy.* A soft thumb can grow stiff as the non-existent will takes shape inside. Our tradition says *swabhava* cannot change. Sri Aurobindo says when someone surrenders his *swabhava* to the inner Divine, it begins to transform itself into the Divine *Swabhava*. Even there, Sri Aurobindo cautions that one should work to get the better of *swabhava* along its own lines, not against them. Sri Aurobindo's yoga is called Integral Yoga or Purna Yoga. It is known as the Yoga of Transformation. The best description of His yoga is the Yoga of Self-Perfection.

## 16. Affluent House; Affectionate Home

**One works himself to death to fill the house with affluence and opulence so that it will flower into an affectionate home.** This ideal is shipwrecked by the fact that there is a generation gap. The son often stands for exactly the opposite values as those on which his father built an empire. Either he walks out or loses interest in maintaining it. The wife is a factor, a central factor. She is unable to accept the line on which her husband grows. Friction spoils the affection at home. Separation puts an end to the man's hope. Blessed are those who are born into a family nurtured into affection and love. Culture, wealth, ideals and tradition do not always go together. If they do, it is great. It is God's GRACE.

We wish to get rid of poverty in the country. Is there nothing that could be done to make a family of strife into one of affection? *It is possible if one relies on the Spirit and is willing to work inwardly on himself to let the Spirit express in life.* The principle here is that the

husband and wife are one WHOLE. He must come forward to accept her defects as a reflection of his own inner defects. It is a spiritual principle. The same is true of the wife. **A fundamental psychological truth about the husband-wife relationship is that there can be no quarrel between them.** The desire to maintain the appearance of a quarrel is deep-seated. This is human perversity. One is willing to ruin his or her life for the fulfillment of this 'ideal'. At such moments, it is the astrologer one consults. When he says in certain cases that it is karma, the hope of reunion is lost forever.

Very rarely do benevolent circumstances prove the horoscope wrong. If one does not believe in karma and believes in the superior power of the spirit to neutralize karma, a distant dawn is sighted. Flower of harmony offered to God restores *harmony*. The psychological acceptance that the other person's defects are only the reflection of one's own inner insufficiency opens the first door to the Spirit to enter. Once there is a breakthrough and a first rapprochement is seen, then an enduring patience is called for. Shortly a new home will be born, **sweeter than the one before the break. Its one characteristic is its sweetness will continue to grow until human affection changes into love divine.** Even the highly developed individuality of man is fulfilled only in the home of which the wife is the centre.

## 17. The Legend of Brahman

One becomes a Rishi on attaining Brahmic consciousness. Sri Aurobindo said that there were about half a dozen in the Ashram who had attained it. **One whose consciousness has risen to the Akshara Brahman attains Brahmic consciousness.** Akshara Brahman is the Timeless aspect of Brahman, the other being kshara Brahman. The Brahman Sri Aurobindo speaks of is the Fullness of Brahman. An American devotee who came here took to consecration. He could meditate for hours on end. Once he sat in meditation for seven hours. He rarely had visions, but when he had them they were of spiritual fullness. **Once while he was at work, he saw the golden Supramental Purusha – Sri Aurobindo in Golden Light.**

His meditations were accompanied by serious study of *The Life Divine* for the last five years. The Brahmic Consciousness he was endowed with urged for expression. He then wrote a story in fifteen days at one spell, going

through several drafts. It is a story of the future, cast in the mould of science fiction. In the story, American schools of the future have introduced the study of Brahman and certain accompanying experiments. A sixteen-year-old boy responds to Brahman and goes into prolonged meditation. He not only realises Brahman based on previous study but also develops mechanisms to communicate it to many others simultaneously. His perfection is achieved by the help of a lady in the USA and a monk in India almost in silence. He succeeds in communicating his experience to a vast mass of people who have gathered to know what his attainment is.

The devotee gave his story the title, ‘The Legend of Brahman’. A few months ago we published that as a book. Brahman became a legend in America, evoked interest at various levels, signifying the response of a material civilisation to the spiritual core of life. What became a symbol to his own self he called a ‘legend’ in the story. Faith is a great power, especially in the physical. So great an attainment as Brahmic consciousness is not capable of generating FAITH in the mind, not to speak of the body. *Nirvikalpasamadhi* did not give Swami Vivekananda faith in his guru. Indians who have innate Faith in the Spirit have it as a spiritual inheritance. To draw on that faith is great. To create that faith in oneself is greater still.



## 18. Complete Folly

We all heartily laugh at folly. It provides hilarious episodes. Folly is common. No one can escape its touch in one aspect of his life or another. But, complete folly is as rare as it is delightful. In innocent people, when folly reaches its completeness, their faith in their foolish ways will be delightfully sweet. In repeating a foolish thing for the tenth or nth time, unmindful of their personal experience, you can find them as inspired as they were in their first achievement. The urge of folly will possess them and compel them to instant action. **Compelling folly is complete folly.**

Their impatience is proverbial. One man withdrew his investment of Rs. 20,000 that yielded an annual profit of Rs. 27,000 and invested it in another venture where a great expense gave 1/3 of it as results. Another man worked in a place for ten years and never knew that he alone was the subject of discussion in his absence. To

crown his behaviour, he confided in a 'friend' who was the source of all such organised gossip. In his epic poem 'Savitri', Sri Aurobindo has a line, "We make of our own enemies our guests." People brought up in an atmosphere of organised falsehood come to believe in the effectivity of lies. When they move to another place where there is a fair amount of general truthfulness, they are unable to give up their ways of falsehood and are soon exposed. The atmosphere in its kindness labels their untruth a folly or complete folly, while it is deceit and organised untruth.

A professor's questionable behaviour irked the students who went on a prolonged strike to secure his dismissal. He at last resigned. The management after some years, in the hope that public memory would be short, appointed the same professor as the head of that institution temporarily. **They hoped a formal elevation would absolve the culprit of his crime.** Public life, particularly politics, is a copious recipient of such benefits. Sri Aurobindo says Ignorance is the greatest achievement of God in creation, as it issues out of knowledge. We can have the privilege of laughing at others' folly. But its spiritual significance reveals itself only when we discover it in ourselves. *Complete folly is really COMPLETE when one comes to enjoy it.*

## 19. The Power of Low Consciousness

I have referred to a water diviner more than once. As he had a versatile personality with many facets, each time I dwell on one of them. The endowment he had was a subconscious sensation. His subconscious responded to a movement of water underground. That vibration makes a neem twig – a forked one – in his hand move, denoting the presence of water underground. Once he was invited by an admirer of his to discover streams of water underground. His admirer had a few rich friends living in the same neighbourhood. As agreed, the water diviner and the customer met at the bus stand. *The water diviner was a snob, in spite of his external spiritual life.*

The water diviner was more interested in demonstrating his skill to the rich friends of his customer than discovering the spots where wells were to be dug. Those rich people, in spite of innate goodness, were people given to dissipation, one expression of low consciousness. The water diviner insisted with his customer on bringing

his rich friends. His customer complied with the desire so insistently expressed. Sometime earlier the two of them had walked over the spots intended for the wells, and streams were located. The present visit was only to confirm and precisely peg mark the locations. All the members of the team reached the spot, the water diviner armed with a neem twig. Standing right over the spot of the stream, the twig of the diviner did not move. To test the fact, the diviner went to a nearby well and tried. His twig did not move. What happened? Had he lost his water divining endowment temporarily, or was it a permanent loss? **What the diviner did not know is the low consciousness of those rich men had cancelled a life-long endowment which was his bread winner.**

The customer was a devotee of the Spirit. He retired to another spot and prayed. Out of the blue, two government officers came and took away the rich men. The diviner was lost. The customer gently suggested to the diviner to pray and moved to the intended spot again. The twig moved vigorously. The stream underground was located and the diviner regained his lost tool. *The higher consciousness is capable of restoring a lost subconscious endowment even as low consciousness can destroy it.* In spite of the tragic loss and miraculous recovery of his ability, the veneration of the diviner for the very same people who destroyed it did not grow less. In fact, it grew more.

## 20. I Can Accept What I Understand

An important issue came up between friends. One was an industrialist and junior. The other was an elderly retired teacher. The teacher had taken a radical decision in his life. The industrialist, being bound to him by loyalty, wanted to go with him. He never knew the facts. **The teacher could not bring himself to reveal all the facts, as any argument after the event would sound like self-justification.** Faith blossoms unspoken. Faith does not discover its form in words. “Well, how can I accept without knowing what happened?” is the question. The answer is, “It is not faith that believes KNOWN facts. To believe what you do not know is faith.” When a convincing explanation is given, what does the listener accept? He accepts his own conviction or understanding. That is not faith. **To accept another man without trying to know the details of the situation is Faith.**

To believe in what is behind the curtain is faith. To say, ‘I can accept what I understand’ is to believe yourself, not the other person. All great achievements in history

or literature happened because of faith, especially when the achievements were new to the society. Duryodhana asked for the army of Krishna because there were many men in it who could fight. Arjuna asked for one man, believing the Force behind Krishna, which he did not see. Take a look at an industrial estate where out of a hundred new units, 65 are functioning, and the rest are closed. There will be a great many reasons behind each story. But, as a rule that has no exception, the silver lining of Faith will run behind the 65 units while it will be conspicuously missing in the other 35 units.

Faith is something with which one is born. One may say ‘I do not have it.’ Mother says perseverance creates faith. They say faith moves mountains. One can embark on an experiment. One who was earning 6,000 rupees a few years ago brought himself to believe that he could earn a lakh of rupees a month. He worked hard, took every possible risk, understood every value of the Spirit, followed them to the best of his ability. He could see commensurate results for his insistent endeavours, but the goal seemed to be far away. **He hit his target in October this year. The goal was overwhelmingly fulfilled.** He did reach the coveted goal for one month in double measure. To maintain it in all months from the few months of his present achievement is there hereafter. **Values of the Spirit achieve the unachievable.**

## 21. Success is Determined, Organised Effort

When democracy was ushered into national life, a great many hearts aspired for the crown. When aspiration rises as ambition, it still retains the fire. It is fire that knows no dying. There are others who have not worked for one full day. Hard work is anathema to them. Their undying aspiration for the unattainable – maybe it is empty unpardonable ambition – has a meaning. **It is the subtle imaginary extension in unformed people of the real aspiration of those who are going to reach the goal.** For one man to get the gold medal in the Olympics, the activity goes on all over the world. Because so many aspire, one achieves.

Socially questionable people who do not pay their taxes avail of every loophole in the social fabric. They are determined and organised. Some of them have a photographic memory. Every one of them is dynamic. Most of them are ruthless. All of them are focused. They are not my interest. My theme is determination coupled

with organisation accomplishes. I dwell only on achievement by truth, values, and goodness. As I exclude dishonesty, so I exclude laziness of all varieties. One type that is dangerous to deal with is found in those who are really dynamic but never choose to work for their organisation. Instead, they pretend to be most efficient and often pronounce that they are the most useful members in the organisation. They are the overgrowth of the organisation. **To their own personal interest, they are venomous.** They are the adepts of every kind of deceit.

We see in life a boy who struggled to pass SSLC standing first in the university, receiving a PhD from abroad just by HARD work. Such hard work needs determination. A rice mill owner rising high enough to purchase a textile mill is no ordinary achievement. Suppose there is a book about such people, it will be of great use to others. Accomplishment needs industry, organisation. This flows out of determination. It does not need intelligence, status, money, luck, influence, etc. though it can use all these with advantage. People with inferiority complexes grow dynamic, achieve early in life, build an empire of a few hundred crores. That complex urges them to achieve. **What is common to all achievers is industry, unfailing hard work. It is indispensable.** The lazy man's dream, the hypocrite's ambition will remain dreams. Often it rewards them with the opposite of what they dreamt of all their lives.

## 22. Half an Hour with The Mother

Every day before you go out, if you stand or sit before The Mother and tell Her all that you are going to do that day, the day will be smooth, and most of the works, perhaps all, will be completed successfully. *It is an unfailing method for a long time to come.* Most people who are overwhelmingly successful, by the very process of their success, end up with a lot of problems that crop up every day. They preside over a vast empire but are imprisoned within a long chain of tangles. Such people enjoy solving even one of their problems. This method is greatly helpful to them. Those who have taken to this method are amazed at the relief it offers. After some time, they forget to give that half an hour to the Mother. The day is a disaster. The value of the method emerges.

Several people have taken this method from the man who devised it. This method has given one access to inaccessible people and their fat purse. Another person could become popular with a lot of politicians. A man

who had been rejected by all the sections of his organisation at last discovered the value of this method which helped him to build his own organisation bigger than all those who had frowned on him earlier. This is a powerful, useful method. It can offer a person every kind of social success he desires. Because it is a method, it begins to lose its power after some years. One forgets it. When speaking to Mother, the speech has no force or power. Frustration develops. For several reasons, we lose it.

What has given the power to this method? Why has it become dry after a while, even if it is a long while? **Its power issues out of our desire to relate to Mother. It loses its momentum because our attitude is one of seeking a benefit; it is mercenary.** Go beyond the method to its essence. The essence will be nebulous. Its results will be feeble. Yet continue to seek the essence. Build on it. Rest on it. Wait on it to acquire momentum. Put your sincerity to work. Ask for nothing. Don't think of the results. Concentrate on the inner essence. The essence is the real relationship with the Mother. Wait till your senses perceive it. Once you perceive it, value it for its own sake. Do not commit the sacrilege of mixing it with mundane benefits. **Be pure, offer sincerity. Utter Truthfulness is the ultimate significance. Delight in the seeking of it.**

## 23. Self-Awareness is Soul-Awareness

When man awoke from his slumber in the physical consciousness, **he became aware of himself. That is how selfishness is born.** We are usually sorry that people are not aware of their defects. **Mother says that we are not aware of spiritual prerogative.** In Her terminology it is called unconsciousness. Here I revert to my usual theme that today man in India is not aware of the enormous social potentials the country has. I would go further and say we are not aware of our rights, our privileges as a student, as a lawyer, or as an officer. Let me cite a few glaring examples.

A Director of Public Education after retirement became a vice-chancellor. From there he went to another university as a vice-chancellor. Universities are NOT government departments, nor are they under the direction or jurisdiction of the government. In his second posting, he wanted to found a medical college. **He applied to the government for permission, little knowing that he was his own**

**decision-maker.** Perhaps his long service in the government and his loyalty to government prompted him to do so.

An American importer of Indian goods got into trouble with the Indian exporter with respect to some gifts he promised, as the exporter had cancelled the agency of the importer. The importer paid the hundis – there were several – and instructed the bank in India how to allocate his payment. The bank colluded with its client and appropriated the payment as its client desired. Now the importer was being asked by the exporter to pay the gift amount through the court. When we pay money into a bank, the money is ours. *The bank has no authority over the money. The bank offers a paid service.* Our view is that the bank has the authority and power. In the above case, the bank was lying in the court saying it had received no instructions for three years. At last the importer was advised to ask for his money back from his bank. The next day the bank in India ‘received the instructions’.

We do not know our right, our privileges, our potentials – *we are not aware of our soul.* Those who are awake in their souls will know all this. If not, life will knock at their doors in several fashions to disclose the rights, privileges, possibilities and potentials. **One who is fully aware of all his social potentialities, if not possibilities in life, will be ushered into abundance and opulence.**

## 24. Significance of a Word

The whole creation is from one word OM. Each word we speak has that significance in its own world. **Each important event of our life is a world of its own. In each such world, there is a WORD that determines its course.** Man, out of ignorance, unconsciousness, selfishness, and secretiveness neglects that word. It leads to other results. The other man's point of view, a spiritual view of life or wisdom enables one to know such a word. It avoids a tragic course or opens up a possibility.

"American Rhapsody" is a film about fugitives from Hungary during the Russian occupation. An aristocratic family escaped from Hungary, crossing the border with their six year old daughter, leaving behind a baby girl. The family landed in the USA, the father secured a job and settled down. The baby girl, left in the care of peasants back in Hungary, grew to the age of six. The relentless efforts of her mother at last bore fruit. The Red Cross arranged for the girl to leave Hungary and travel to the USA. Her foster parents were very attached to the child and she was devoted to them. Landing in the USA, her real parents passionately received her and brought her

up affectionately. *But the one thing the child wanted was to return to her foster parents.* She constantly ran away from home. Once her father found her in a park and offered her a deal. "When you grow up, if you still want to return to Hungary, I shall buy you a ticket." At the age of 16, the girl fell in love and the mother, being a European, could not stand the American ways and locked her daughter in her room. The unhappy girl reminded the father of his deal and finally was allowed to travel back to Hungary.

At Budapest, the girl learned more of the circumstances surrounding her parents' escape from Hungary. Her real mother had left Hungary because her own father had been shot dead by a Russian soldier in a restaurant, when the father was trying to protect his daughter from the soldier. When the girl heard this story about her mother, she said, "My mother never told me this. I want to return to her in the USA." From that moment, the child understood what her mother had suffered and why she had run away from her native land. The mother rose in the child's affectionate esteem. What the mother had hidden from the child was important to her. The daughter who had cried to her mother, "I hate you" and run away, now turned around when that one incident was known to her. Our affection sometimes becomes affectionate folly. We never know what is important for another, be it a child. **What we do not know, our Spirit knows. When the Spirit is on the surface, the word that matters catches its ears.**

## 25. The Aristocracy of India

Nobility, high-mindedness, largeness of Spirit, and magnanimity are the qualities that go to adorn the aristocrat. In Europe there was the landed aristocracy. The base of character is a capacity for accomplishment. Social accomplishment is mostly wealth and status. In the earlier centuries, wealth was in the form of land. In India life was permeated and saturated by Spirit. **Aristocracy in India was of the Spirit. We may as well call it Spiritual Aristocracy.** In an article written in 1907, Sri Aurobindo describes at length the various facets of that Personality. The heart exults to know what the cream of India was in the period that was prior to 1857. One can write what Sri Aurobindo had described but to capture the spirit of His writing is not given to us mortals.

His English prose rose in height higher than the masters of English Prose, as the thought that he expressed was spiritual. Maybe one whose spiritual attainments are of

that level can do justice in such reporting if his mastery of the English language is also of those Masters. He calls the spirit of ancient India aristocratic. Thought of a high and proud nobility shaped life. To attain this very best in life man was willing to sacrifice the very best in thought, action and character. Pursuit of knowledge demanded wiping out every impulse of desire. To do so, the Jnani had to devote himself to poverty. That was the role the Brahmin chose for himself. Chivalrous battle was the field of the Kshatriya. All the charms of life were to him mere dust in comparison with his honour. His honour lay in the protection of the weak. It was the noble fulfillment of his princely duty. His was an epic inspiration, a world-defying enthusiasm.

To give up what was held precious and dear, to remain calm and true to one's faith when tortured, to tear one's own body with a smile for the joy of making a gift, and a leonine stature are some of the cardinal aspects of that noble breed of aristocracy. Today, even under the blanket of poverty and humiliation *that Spirit is evolving to greater magnificence. When Invoking the Spirit in life succeeds in the maximum, it will let that Indian walk over the globe as a colossus, a colossus of Spirit.* It is not the Indian Spirit, but the Spirit of the earth.



## 26. The Mystery of Accomplishment

Birth is the first mystery of life while death is the second mystery, says Sri Aurobindo. What does not explain itself to us is a mystery. Sri Aurobindo says that for any act to come to pass, two things are necessary. The first thing is the consent of Jivatma and the second is the consent of Paramatma. **Sri Aurobindo often in answer to questions about someone's death has said that one cannot die without his willing it.** He may have consciously – in the surface mind – desired to live, but his subliminal would have opted to go.

By accomplishment, I mean the accomplishment of any act. To us the first employment, wedding, and foreign travel are important acts. But going to the office, getting drenched in rain, writing a letter are to us simple acts without significance. *Theoretically, considering accomplishment, all these are of equal significance.* A public speaker excels himself on a particular day. A singer reaches her climax in a certain performance. One gets

selected as the only candidate out of 1200. In the life of each of these individuals, these are landmarks. After the act is over, they may know, or they may think they know, how it was performed. **None of us really know how.** His knowledge, however perfect it is, cannot help him to repeat that performance. If it does, it means he knows. Can a man not know it? Mostly it is not given to man to know it.

An act is completed when Jivatma and Paramatma give their consent. For him to know it, *he must know his Jivatma and know it as Paramatma.* This siddhi is rare, even among Rishis. Those who so perform always say, “I do not know how it happened. Somehow it has come to pass.” The Spirit we invoke in our life, the evolving Soul in us, the Psychic Being, knows how the act came to pass. When we evoke the Spirit, at the first stage the work for which we call it will be completed. At that point we relax our effort, and lapse into our unconsciousness. For the Psychic to emerge, one has to persist through all the stages, maybe three or five stages. It is a rigorous yoga, generally not attempted by the householder, the devotee. **The scientist who is searching for the Mystery of creation can persist in invoking the Spirit. If he succeeds, he will not merely know the success of a small act, but he will know the Mystery of creation as both are the same.**

## 27. Maximum Effort

To shift oneself from the old ways of life to new ways of Spirit, one needs to make the maximum effort. **At its highest pitch, it reverses into the ways of higher life.** In World War II, England was fighting Hitler with a few hundred bombers, while Germany had a few thousand. Normally, at such a point, one gives up. The Americans who came to help England were no better in the supply of bombers. A time came in one of the divisions when all of the pilots were overworked. Their Colonel Keith sympathized with them and refused to push them further. The commander-in-chief relieved him from his command and asked Savage, one of the generals, whether he could take over. Savage agreed and exhorted the pilots to a greater effort.

The pilots all opted for transfer. Savage had confidence in one of them named Bishop, and sent for him. He came, but as the spokesman of the pilots to announce their decision to quit. **The general said, “You can get a transfer, but not out of an obligation.”** Bishop slowly responded, and withdrew his application for transfer.

All of the pilots followed his move and withdrew their transfers. A new enthusiasm surged through the division. Even office managers and drivers smuggled themselves into the planes, breaking the discipline, and helped gun down the enemy. News arrived about the location of a strategic factory. Another mission was undertaken. Savage collapsed. He sat motionless in shock. Twenty bombers went on the mission. One was lost. The prime target was devastated. This turn of events slowly revived Savage.

This story is fiction and was made into a film. It is true to life. It illustrates *how a right leadership that dexterously combines freedom and discipline can exhort the troops for a work far too difficult on any consideration.*

Military life has such experiences. In daily life too, these things are NOT unknown. Unless one courts it, it does not present itself. Here lies the secret mystery that you can ask of life anything and attain it, if you really seek it. Your seeking a higher effort gives you higher energy, higher consciousness. That is essential, but so many other things too are necessary. Your own life is your life. Here you have to inspire yourself. **Your success is indicated by how eager you are to meet the danger you invite. It is an adventure.** Do you love adventure? Is danger inviting to you? Then you are the one who can ask of life the utmost as you are anxious to give your very best to the MISSION, the mission of life that is yoga.

## 28. Human Helplessness

Man lives because he has self-confidence. There are times in our lives when one cannot rely on anything or anyone. **That is the hour one is naked before his God.** It happens because of circumstances or because of human unreliability. Either way, Man is his own utter self. One is frightened to think of such a possibility in his life. It is a moment of despair. **Mother says that moment is the very best moment for man to call Her.** Calls of such nature are instantly answered and more fully than one can bring himself to believe.

Tourists sometimes lose their purse or passport. One who was in that desperate position had his call answered, much to his relief. Why is that the best moment? Always we believe in ourselves, our experience, our capacity, our understanding, our unique personality, etc. *These are all effective bars between us and the Divine.* In a desperate hour, we know our experience is of no use, as

in a refugee camp. Our own capacities will not be rewarded in situations where our capacity finds no play. Hence we are on our own. To the timid it is an occasion to shudder. To the brave, it is an inviting opportunity. To the devotee it is a rare occasion to call the Mother, as there will be nothing of his that can stand between him and Her as an obstacle.

Our past is collected in us as our present capacities. Our past is our karma. As long as we believe in karma, Grace cannot act. The moment we move away from our karma, our being is no longer occupied in any fashion. It is fresh. Grace acts at once and allows us to reap the rewards of our own endowments unhindered by the past or karma.

There is a further progress open to Man. It is his ability to give up his faith in his own endowments. Man is not constituted to withdraw from his endowments because he is his own endowment. His identification with his endowments is total. Should he do that, **grace at that moment turns into Super Grace.** Grace permits you to work unhindered by karma. Super Grace brings the end results in the beginning, as it is not our own endowments that are at work, but Her endowments that do the work.

## 29. How Men Sometimes Receive Grace

Bernie, a homeless man in USA whose wife had left him, had a 10 year old son who was very fond of his father. He drove in an old car, lived on pick-pocketing and was once arrested. After getting released on bail, one day his car got stuck and a plane crashed nearby. Bernie, though homeless and a pilferer, had a warm human heart. The escape door in the plane could not be opened from inside. There was a hue and cry from the passengers. Bernie opened the door with great difficulty so some could get out. Others remained trapped until he helped them escape too. Among them was a lady reporter trapped under a seat. After saving her, Bernie stole her credit cards.

Most of the people were rescued just before the Fire Service arrived and the plane exploded. Without reflecting on his humanitarian act, Bernie hitch-hiked from the crash scene. He narrated his story to another homeless person, John. A few days later, Bernie was again arrested. As soon as the passengers came out of

the hospital, they looked for the hero who had saved them. A million dollar award was announced if the hero of the crash would step forward and identify himself. Bernie never cared about what he had done. The other homeless man, John, a Vietnam war veteran, was truly a war hero who had saved many of his fellow soldiers years ago. He now decided to claim the award. He became a celebrity. But after he had become famous, he had compunctions about being a fake. This conflict led him to think of jumping off a high building. In the meantime, Bernie came out of jail on bail. He heard about John's attempted suicide and rushed to the scene. John was poised on the window ledge. John asked Bernie to take over the award, as it was really his. Bernie was overwhelmed by the fanfare of publicity and asked John to continue his impersonation. He made a deal with John. All that he wanted was an allowance for his maintenance and his son's education.

Life rewards even thieves for the GOOD they are capable of. They often miss it and rarely enjoy it. Grace recognizes in us what the world does not and rewards it. Mostly it goes to the persons around us. I know at least five persons who missed the vice-chancellorships thrust on them and who 'passed' it on to the man nearby.

Grace gives more than we can receive and possess.

### 30. *Business Week* on India

The Britisher came to India for spices and established an Empire. This is not a century when powerful nations can look for colonies. Nixon befriended Communist China because he wanted to open the Chinese market to USA. **Business looks for market. In pursuit of it they will go anywhere.** The studies done by McKinsey have more information about the market potential of India than any government department. Recently the chairman of Unilever said that **India will soon be on the MOVE, as she has developed self-confidence.** A 22-year old software engineer in Bangalore, for different reasons, says they will soon abolish poverty in India.

People below 40 or even 50 are born on FREE Indian soil. They know no slavery as the earlier generation did. They are more educated than the earlier generations. **Education develops self-respect as well as self-confidence.** Many of them are in the fast moving field

of software technology. *Business Week* sees the brainpower of India playing a positive role in US business. China made manufactured goods on the American market cheap and made the American business competitive. Should the USA handle this transition brought about by the brainpower of India, *Business Week* says, India about whom no one cared 15 years earlier has a good chance of becoming a major economic partner of USA in business.

If this had been a revelation to an Indian organization, it would be a matter for congratulations. Brainpower is the distant shadow of the emerging power of Indian Spirituality. While Western nations have only 2% or 4% of their population in agriculture, India has 60%. It does not matter. If the younger generation can take to education and modern technology such as Internet, India can be straightway ushered into Prosperity bypassing the agricultural phase and partly even the economics of manufacture. The planners are fifty years behind in thinking. Society is awake. It is enough the government does not create obstacles. The social, economic awakening is there. If organised, the world can witness spiritual prosperity overtaking conventional economic theses.

### 31. Social Consciousness

Society is a collective unit, as man is a gregarious animal. Men live in groups and move in groups. So, the group has a physical authority over the individual. **Either the individual obeys the collective or he will be liquidated.** Before the physical man moves to the mind, there is an intermediate level. It is of the nerves. It is called vital level. With the first progress in civilisation, the collective gives up the threat of murder, but continues to compel the individual to conform. Otherwise he is browbeaten by all others — ostracized. This is the phenomenon of the collective imposing its will on the individual.

There is another phenomenon of **man being eager to adopt the social opinion**. At one level it is man's love of the group. At another level it is out of fear. Man feels safe when he is with the group, inside it physically under its protection. Out of such an attitude man loses his self-respect and becomes squeamish. *The snob is born there.* He is detestable, even disgusting. He looks

up to the rich man, the man in power. In the company of an important politician, his body involuntarily shrinks in size, hands fold on the breast, a smile lights his face announcing his adoration of the great man. When he talks of rich people, his voice drops, his movements become as if he is in the presence of those men. His adoration is complete. It is really submissiveness. He announces his total absence of personality.

In an office one such man had a rich colleague. When the snob made an uncultured remark, the rich man mistook it and offence rose in him. He shouted, "I shall crush you under my boot heels." The snob dissolved in the atmosphere, frightened by the turn of events. A little later the rich colleague resigned his job and started a tiny industrial unit. **This snob was anxious to pay his obeisance to his object of veneration.** Together with a friend of his he entered the premises of the newly started unit, grinned from ear to ear, and expressed his total admiration for the rich man.

Self-respect was lost in the Indians when the Britisher arrived. Even before that, in autocratic regimes self-respect was not safe. A foreigner who had spent a few years in India returned. While stopping in London, he admired the native self-respect of the porters there at the terminals of travel.

### 32. The Handicapped Wife

Idealists become so because an Idea arises in their minds and possesses them. **The only lasting ideal is the Spiritual ideal, an ideal that emerges in man from the Spirit in him.** Most ideals are social. The generation that is in their 70s or 80s is sorry that people are becoming unidealistic. Surely there is a large element of truth in it. It is easy to forget that our children and grandchildren are following the ideals of their times, their society, as we, who are in our old age, followed the ideals of our time. The forties and fifties demanded sacrifice, demanded that one should be patriotic, simple, austere, and pure. Even integrity was espoused by the youth of the day as the fashion of the hour. Barring exceptions, the general run of humanity **is social and follows the social ideal. Even purity in public life, to many, can become an ideal of the society.**

Others follow the ways of their families and believe they are idealists in doing so. Some come under the spell of a leader or a teacher or a dominant friend. In these nondescript areas, the permutations and combinations are very many, each providing a hilarious outcome. There was a college teacher whose wife was crippled. He was devoted to his wife and served her with true dedication. This factual situation in life spurred his otherwise inactive imagination. Thus he came to see the real emotional need of a handicapped person. In him what appeared as a virtue of necessity, became an ideal. He was inspired by what he underwent and felt that if a young man needs an ideal, it is the ideal of choosing a handicapped girl and marrying her so that all his life he can be serving her with devotion.

A boy in his class was fired by his enthusiasm and insisted to his family that he marry a handicapped girl. It was too much for the family. As it was an affectionate family, they could not go against his wishes. They submitted to it. Just then an alliance came. The girl was extremely handsome. The boy agreed to see the girl to oblige others. **On seeing the girl, he expanded in youthful admiration, agreed to it, and married her.** His deep devotion and dedication to his teacher's ideal was, to say the least, forgotten and vanished into thin air.

### 33. Housemaid's Assertion

She was a retarded village girl of 25. She was brought in as a housemaid by her aunt who was a cook. This is not a girl whom anyone would employ at home in any capacity. After much resistance from so many sides, this maid was permitted for the sake of the aunt, the cook. The girl was slow, very slow. She would take three times longer than anyone else to sweep a room or wash clothes or utensils. **She was completely harmless.** She excelled in a few items of work such as making coffee. She made delicious coffee, but she was impossible in any other work. Whatever she did or did not do, one could not explain anything to her as she met such efforts with dumb, dull resistance. Nor could we ask her to hasten any work.

She was constitutionally incapable of comprehension or changing her ways. No one knew what her thoughts were. Someone was interested in knowing what she thought, especially what she considered about her own self. The

enquiry revealed something more than a wonder. **The housemaid considered herself intelligent and capable. More than that, it was her considered opinion that no one in the house could match her intelligence or capacity.** It was a revelation to the person who discovered it. She could not communicate her findings to anyone else. Everyone laughed at her 'discovery'. No one could bring himself to believe that this stupid idiot could harbour such notions.

The maid reached the age of thirty. Marriage was not discussed as a possibility for her. The person who 'discovered' her took pity on her and tried to persuade her to change her attitudes and be qualified to be a maid in town. It was a great moment in the life of the person who tried to persuade the maid. She discovered how proud the girl was of her rural life. Outraged at her outburst, the lady told the girl, "If you are stubborn, you have to go back to your village and be carrying straw bundles from the field." A finer instalment of the girl's rural edition came out, "Well, I am not ashamed of it. I am proud of it, in fact." The lady was speechless. **Those who have stood at the frontiers of human mind will know that this is the same language of mental arrogance which cherishes its Ignorance and looks down upon the Divine Grace and its benevolence.**



### 34. Generosity and Vanity

Generosity in man rises to benevolence. It ennobles the human heart. Its opposite, meanness, is described as asking another man to do what one cannot do. **Generosity is to give the other man what he by his best efforts cannot reach. To do so by exerting yourself to the utmost is desirable. Its cultured expression emerges when it is given to the other man before he asks for it.**

In another sense, Vanity is its opposite. We do not come across pure generosity or pure vanity. We meet with generous vanity or vain generosity. Timon of Athens was too generous. He learnt his lesson that it was not true generosity but was only vanity when he had to declare that he be buried where no man walks. Goldsmith was generous to a fault and ended up in debtor's prison.

Generosity is natural to the Spirit. Spiritual generosity, though informed of the same weakness to some little extent, is strong enough not to be offended by life

circumstances. Spirit is naturally generous as Spirit emerges into existence by an expansive movement. The pure Spirit is all expansiveness and knows no failure of weakness. The weak person trying to be generous becomes vain because the generosity of the weak arises out of a desire to give what it does not have. These human traits were taken note of two thousand years ago and their wisdom is enshrined in poems. One such poem says the rich man's generosity is like the golden flower having natural fragrance. The poor man's flower wilts. The rich man's golden flower has no perfume. Both can be combined, the poem says, in a metaphor that does not exist.

Vanity belongs to the ego. **Spirit gives generosity to a man. Generous behaviour brings the Spirit to the surface.** While vanity cannot survive without generosity, generosity can survive without vanity. Shade needs light; light is not dependent on shade. Sri Aurobindo said the higher consciousness does not need the lower human consciousness, while the lower cannot exist without the higher. We can move to the higher and be rid of the lower. Generosity is a pleasant feeling and hurts no one. Vanity offends everyone who comes into contact with it. Vanity does good to others while it destroys the person. In a philosophical sense, vanity too does good to a person as its urge for expansion dissolves all the other weaknesses in him.

### 35. Feb. 29th, 1956 – The Day of the Lord

While Sri Aurobindo was in jail, Swami Vivekananda appeared before Him, gave Him the Gita and showed Him the Supermind. He did not tell Him how to reach the Supermind. It took Sri Aurobindo ten years to discover it. Like Buddha and Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo refused to accept moksha for himself while all the other souls languished in the darkness of the earth. One should reach Supermind and bring it down so that it would transform the earth – abolish Ignorance, suffering, evil and death. Sri Aurobindo said that if twelve or a hundred yogis reached the Supermind, it would descend on earth. He could not find anyone, other than the Mother. So, He decided to leave the body and work from the subtle plane.

In 1956 on February 29<sup>th</sup>, while Mother was in meditation at the playground with all the sadhaks, She saw a golden door and a golden hammer. She broke that door with the hammer. A Golden Light, the Supramental Light, flooded the earth. Up rose the earth's tamas and

swallowed the descending Force. Mother said, "Henceforth, February 29<sup>th</sup> will be the Day of the Lord." It is known as Supramental day and celebrated once in four years. Auroville was founded a day prior to that day. The Mother was watching that Force organise Itself on earth. She began to meet Sri Aurobindo in the subtle plane from 1959 and converse with Him. He told Her that the governments would come under the influence of that Force from 1967. The date 4-5-67 was thus chosen to be celebrated.

She saw the Force organising itself as a person, the Consciousness of a Person, on the New Year day of 1969. Until 1973, She was speaking to a sadhak about that Force organising Itself for action. When strange events were brought to Her notice, She commented how the Force expressed Itself through those events. Sri Aurobindo was always golden in the subtle plane, but after the descent, many sadhaks had visions of the Golden Purusha. **Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have not left us. They are very much there in the subtle plane.** Devotees with subtle vision see them in their dreams or dhyana. One thing all those who have lived before the descent know is, any prayer now is more quickly answered, and more fully too. Mother was sorry that no one was aware of the descent. Even now, every four years we celebrate the descent. It is a pity we are so dense and unconscious. We do not see the Force. Of course, many feel it in the atmosphere as a powerful Presence.

### 36. Loss of Speech

A lady devoted to Lord Nataraja of Chidamabaram was a model of devotion. She worshipped at the temple more than once a day. Her whole life was centred around her devotion. She heard of The Mother. The richness and the rich fullness, the ever-increasing devotion she now felt was unknown to her before. **She was gifted in many ways.** *Now she became a gifted storyteller. Her stories have fully brought out the fullness, richness and sweetness she constantly felt.* She has met many people in her life. Unassuming as she is, she never found evangelism her attitude. Nor was she secretive by nature or by choice. Recently she told someone, “People who meet me are engrossed in Mother’s overflowing consciousness. When they go, they carry an indescribable fullness.”

Someone who came to Mother in 1962 saw his simple family buying a bus route every year. That experience made him an ardent devotee. His closest friend’s son of eleven years suddenly lost his speech. The friend was a seller of rice who had come into sudden wealth after

his friend’s introduction. The rice shop owner had not heard of Mother from his friend. The loss of speech is something serious. Several remedies suggested to them proved to be vain. In such circumstances, a plethora of suggestions suddenly crops up. **The devotee knew for certain the speech would be restored if the boy’s parents would pray.** In that period, no one in Tamil Nadu had heard of Mother. The devotee knew the parents would laugh at him if he ever suggested to them to pray to Mother. A suggestion laughed at may permanently cancel the chance of a cure. He came all the way from Kancheepuram to Cuddalore to consult me on his friend’s plight and ask if anything could be done. The boy would not pray. The parents had no faith. They might even pour scorn on the suggestion. The prayer of the devotee could restore the speech, but it might result in a loss of speech for him.

I dismissed it from my mind. After waiting for five hours, the devotee started to leave. Again he raised the issue. His interest in his friend was abiding. I said, “Simply think of Mother every time the issue comes to mind,” and sent him away. A week later, the devotee came back, saying, “The whole family went to a doctor in Madras whose house was locked. We waited for a long time. After 1½ hours, the afflicted boy spoke out, ‘Appa, let us go home.’ We all returned home in unbelieving incredulity.” The incident raised the devotee’s faith. In later years he forgot it. I could not, as it had made an indelible impression on me.

### 37. The Smile on the Face

Friendship is a rich human relationship. Sometimes one is able to confide in a friend what he cannot speak to a family member. When companionship matures into friendship, sensation ripens into emotion. Sensation is primary, is of the animal. Emotion is of the heart, is born only in the human being. **Mother gives friendship Her Touch and makes it noble, magnanimous and divine.** Friendship does not permit calculations, mercenary conditions, profit or loss. Friendship is friendship. It knows no other consideration.

There were two boyhood friends. Between them subsisted an intense intimacy. Both took to Mother. Both were of different moulds. One was a born leader. The other loved to submit. They never pursued higher studies. For a long time the submissive one was conscious of something in himself. He was not proud of what he saw; actually he was frightened of it. Certain undesirable thoughts used to arise in him. Invariably that led to

undesirable consequences. It was his lifelong effort to get the better of it, get rid of it. Suddenly he noticed affairs of his friend were going wrong. He thought maybe he was behind it. Quietly he left his friend and pursued another career. All his wishes were for his friend's welfare and well-being. Years passed. He did see some change in himself for the better. But he was unwilling to risk a visit to his old friend.

After ten full years, one day a phone call came from the friend. It was on a work in which both related with each other. It was a pleasant moment in the lives of both. Soon the old friendship revived. On his face a SMILE appeared involuntarily. **It was the Smile of the revived friendship.** All along he knew there had been no complaint in his own heart. He also knew that his dominant friend could not or would not harbour a grievance in his heart. Now, he saw and felt and sensed in his nerves that his own friendship, their friendship was true. "I have not been given up. My friendship has been accepted. It has life." That blossomed as a SMILE on his face. It refused to go. At work, on the road, while at a meeting, the Smile found its way to his lips. Sometimes he was shy, sometimes embarrassed. There were times when he was proud. **He could not take the Smile off his face, nor did he want to.**

### 38. Consciousness Responsibility

In order for a meeting of ten people to commence punctually, all ten of them should turn up on time. **One man's presence does not depend upon another man.** No man can hold himself responsible for another man's punctuality. The heads of the departments, especially Ministers, hold themselves responsible for what their departments do. It is called constitutional responsibility. When Lal Bahadur Sastri was Railway Minister, a train derailed and fell into a river. He took upon himself the responsibility and resigned.

In the life of the Spirit, a similar phenomenon exists. In a work done by several people, if there is a devotee – one who invokes the Spirit or the Mother – he assumes such a responsibility. He need not be the head of the group. It is enough he is a member. Suppose a dozen people go on a tour of which a devotee too is a member. *The devotee is of higher consciousness than others. Therefore, all that he does will find a reflection in his*

*own work.* The perfection of his work will exercise a control over their work. The Mother said that until the Ashram outgrew the strength of 150 members, She held all the sadhaks in Her control. She said they could not think without Her permission or knowledge. It was so because She identified Herself with them so totally. Also, it was possible for Her to do so because they submitted to Her happily, surrendered their life, work, wealth and soul to Her. It was a spiritual union, called communion. It is best seen when a work that went wrong is corrected.

Someone applied for a visa to Canada to attend a conference. Another person escorted him. He had to go for an interview in Delhi at the Canadian embassy. The visa was refused. Both returned. There were a few people intimately connected with the procurement of the visa. One of them understood that he could take that responsibility and he decided to discover any defect on his own part. He did discover a hesitation on his part and tried his best to remove it. It got removed. That evening, an industrialist holding a five year visa visited them. On hearing what happened, he was sorry that such a genuine case had gone wrong. He knew the Deputy Chief of the Canadian Mission. He asked the applicant to reappear. This time the visa was sanctioned. He who invokes the Spirit holds the consciousness of all others he relates to. **It is Consciousness Responsibility.**

### 39. Unself-Consciousness

We are rarely self-conscious. When we have to make a public appearance and that makes us uncomfortable, we are self-conscious while we are on the dais. We call it shyness. In our own house, we act naturally. In another house, we are conscious of everything we do. That is described as being self-conscious. Here I should like to use this phrase to explain a certain type of *saturated selfishness that assumes that no one else knows about his selfishness and feels he could go scot-free as well as be the unquestioned boss*. It is not a rare sight, but also not commonly met with. This type of person is a man who wants the world or family to reward him for exploiting others. It may not be possible for anyone to make him see what he really is, that he is not even self-conscious of his deficiency.

Hence I have called it ‘unself-consciousness’. In a family of ten children, the eldest daughter was married. There was no property nor income but abundant family support kept the family above want. **In everyone there**

**was constant total insecurity but life went on.** The second child was more than grown up. He had not passed SSLC, nor qualified for any job. Nor had he any inclination for employment. The rest of the boys – all others are boys – grew up and dropped out of school anywhere between 3rd and 8th standard. One crossed SSLC and was a clerk in the government. The eldest boy had a very rich cousin who was a loafer. Both were chums and seldom were found locally.

By a combination of various favourable circumstances – the initiative of the boys, the interest of the elders, concern of the mother, general good will, etc. – one after the other every one of them became ‘settled’ in life in petty trades or sundry employment. The energy of the boys made their small vocations boom. One of them heaved a sigh of relief and said to his friend, “What a relief. All of us have found a vocation. Only the eldest is unsettled.” The friend who knew the eldest said, “Maybe he has another view that *he* has settled all the boys somewhere.” The other person was intrigued and incensed. During one of the brief visits, the eldest boy came home and announced with pride, “Now that I have taken care of all of my brothers, they must have sense to maintain what is given.” Everyone who heard him was outraged, but kept silent. **It is a parade of selfishness that parades its shameless exploitation.**

## 40. Hasten Slowly

We can go slow or we can hasten. Hasten slowly is a contradiction. Some people reason and others act on faith. Sri Aurobindo's yoga demands we reconcile reason and faith, power and love, silence and action. In all major occasions of life, the principle of **hasten slowly** arises. Mostly we miss them. Some boys were walking over a railway bridge. A train was coming behind. It was a small bridge. The boys were already near its end. The first two boys were unaware of the coming train and were gaily walking over the sleepers. The third boy knew. But now if he hurried the others, they might get panicky and trip into the stream below. He could not afford to be slow. In the struggle, he had to hasten his sensations slowly. Luckily they all came out of the bridge before the engine's cowcatcher had caught them up in its fatal grip.

Sri Aurobindo writes about the attitude one can have towards life. It is wrong to be impatient. It is equally

wrong to be lethargic. Patience does not mean passivity. **Quiet Patience has in it enormous energy, as Silence, through the energy it holds, calmly energises activities outside.** There was a tricky registration whose expiry date was January 7th. The document, by a set of perverse circumstances, was in the hands of a moneylender unconnected with the registration. The buyer brought the money to be paid to the moneylender who refused a cheque or DD. He was fifteen miles away from the Registrar's office, far off the main road in a hamlet. In those days, banks were not flush with money. The DD for Rs 25,000 could not be honoured by the bank without borrowing from three other banks. **The money was all in small denominations.** No registrar's office would receive a document after 1 pm. The bank gave the money at 4 pm.

An old man whose hands were shaking started counting. At 4:30 pm he grew sympathetic and accepted the rest of the money without counting! The buyer of the land had to *patiently wait for the bank to give the cash and wait for the old man to count.* He had to hasten. He could not but hasten slowly. This is a phrase from one of the European classical languages. It seems there is a website under this head. Human wisdom has several barbs and this is one.

## 41. Observer, Thinker, Censor

For any yogic experience of value, the first possession is Silence. Vishnu Lele asked Sri Aurobindo to sit down, close his eyes and see thoughts entering the mind from outside. Lele asked him to throw out the thoughts. It is a yogic method of seeking Silence. To chant OM 1½ crores of times is another method. Silence is of several levels. There are running thoughts in the mind. They have no relevance to us. Those thoughts are of random nature. **They stop during meditation.** If they do not stop, no meditation will set in. In the minds of undeveloped people there will be no such thoughts. They are the blessed souls untormented by unwanted thoughts. Mind acquires a clarity when random thoughts cease. At this stage, what is known as the mental observer can be seen. **It just observes, does not think.** During a deep meditation, the observer falls silent. It is a valuable moment.

Clarity of mind is greater when the observer too is silent. One can think now clearly. To take two or more facts and relate them in the mind is the process of thinking. There is a Silence appropriate to each level, when the random thoughts stop, the observer falls quiet, when thinking ceases. A deeper silence gathers. It is in grades. The richness of Silence grows as we proceed. Not to speak is a discipline of Silence, *mouna vrta*. It is not to express the thoughts that arise. **Mouna is a state when no thought arises in the mind.** Even after that, there will be someone in the mind passing comments constantly. Sri Aurobindo calls it the 'censor'.

Perhaps when the Silence behind the Silence is attained, the censor will fall quiet. When Sri Aurobindo was talking to Richard, the husband of Mother, He gave both of them Silence, a boon one gets from several lives of tapas. It remained with Mother to the end. Richard shouted that he was becoming an idiot. It left him. The exalted yogic state of Silence is to the European mind a state of stupidity. Silence is the basis of any yogic realisation. For those who desire to invoke the Spirit, Silence is a great help. Silence can also be cultivated, as any other faculty can. His figure in the Mind brings in a cascade of Silence.



## 42. Goodness

Goodness is one of the three aspects of Sat – Sat Purusha. Each aspect of Sachchidananda splits itself into some aspects. Sat becomes Unity, Truth and goodness. Chit becomes knowledge and will. Ananda resolves itself into Beauty, joy and Love. **When Truth acquires knowledge, Goodness is born.** Some people are naturally good. Mother easily comes to them. They are pleasant, expansive, and ready to oblige, anticipating another person's needs. Generally good people are more interested in being good than in Mother, even when they are devotees. To them, goodness is a way of life, an instinct, an article of faith. They cannot refrain from being good.

Such goodness is found in people irrespective of education, status or other positive endowments. It exists by itself. Good people are in their elements when they express their innate GOODNESS. Ancient Tamil culture was an ethical culture. Thirukural is an ethical treatise, not a spiritual one. The purity of that ancient tradition

remains unsullied in Jaffna. People there are frank, open, self-giving in the extreme. The normal human consideration of self-interest we call selfishness is not part of their schemes. To outsiders, they may appear credulous and gullible. **Really, they are innocent of guile.** Love thy neighbour is a live unspoken maxim in their lives.

There was a good girl born in a family not so good as she. They were NOT trying to marry her even at an advanced age. The members of the family conceived of a plan to dump her into a disadvantage in marriage. The girl preferred to remain unwed. Though she was working in Mother's atmosphere, she had no particular faith in Mother. She married into great advantage a citizen of Canada who was from Sri Lanka. It was a family that lived in affection, showering attention on all members. **She was smothered in affectionate attention.** It is a family where excess savings are used to buy properties for those who have none. To them, it is an affectionate custom, a long ingrained usage in the family. The girl is unable to juxtapose her own family with her in-laws even in her imagination. They are poles apart. Mother has taken her to a family where every member exceeds her in native goodness. This is Mother's transformation of her atmosphere.

### 43. Ardent Devotees

Man generally thinks of work to be done. If he prays, he prays in the time allotted to prayer. To think of God often or always is not a normal human behaviour. “God will save me” is a phrase commonly heard. It means man often faces problems and his faith in God will see him through. There are devout people. For them, God is not the idol in the temple but a reality to their feelings. To relate to God on the merest pretext is a way of life to them. It is a source of joy to them. Such people will hear Krishna’s flute, *venuganam*, if they take to some yogic discipline or even ordinary worship seriously. To go within and feel joy and a security in His clasp is an emotional activity they cherish. These are rare souls. Society does not take notice of them or their endowment. Nor do they generally speak of that side of their life.

At the other end, there are very clever people. To them, normal function is not known. They would have told different stories to different people about themselves.

Their memory will be alert and resourceful in the extreme. No difficult situation finds them wanting in resources. A story will readily spring to their lips. Whether it will pass through their minds, one does not know. These are people who rely entirely on their resourcefulness. They rarely trust another person. They scrupulously avoid worship of any God. They believe that if they pray to God, God will punish them for their wickedness. They too resort to prayer at times of crisis – an illness in the family, an intractable partner who asks for all the proceeds, etc. **If any such prayer is answered, for any reason, they gradually become ardent devotees.** They have their right sides. Their prayer is reserved for the activities of their right sides.

Their prayer will be intense and particularly non-stop. On seeing some of them, one is tempted to say absolute rogues are ardent devotees. As they have too many irons in their evil fire, they constantly need protection. **Their constant need of protection makes constant remembrance possible.** For whatever reason they think of God, their intensity as well as constancy one day transform them. If they are with a Guru, they succeed him. As life works through good as well as evil, God too does not discriminate. He is above good and evil and receives human souls through good as well as evil.

#### 44. Kalyana Sraddha

Sraddha is faith. The purest of faith is the child's faith in the mother. The child is innocent. Its psychic being is on the surface. In our minds, many temperaments and opinions find play. They warp our faith. We can never have a child's simple faith unless the psychic emerges in the mind. In the third standard there was a chess tournament. There was a boy who was a wizard. He was considered the best player in the school. This year a girl was playing against him in the finals. Her father had taught her chess and she used some CD for practising the game. She learned a lot. But the boy was so good that no one was a match for him. At the tournament, the girl hesitated a while, was lost in thought and then started to play. She won the tournament!

When she reached home, she told her father about winning the match. He asked her to explain how she had done it. He was happy that her practice on the computer

had borne fruit. He was all admiration for the chess CD. He never expected the child to win. She also said she never expected to win. He asked her what she had actually done to win the game. She had no specific answer. "Have you used the knowledge from the CD?" he asked. She said she had not. "Have you used what I taught you?" he asked. She again said no. "In fact, what did you do?" he asked. "I prayed to Mother," was her answer. **In any situation, Mother gives us the required skill or capacity against any expert.** We do not believe in the Mother in that sense.

When faith fails, we are dejected. If it continues to fail, sometimes our faith cracks. When faith fails to produce results, those who have faith in the faith know "It is not the end. There is no result I look for because another greater result awaits." The faith that Faith can never fail is *kalyana sraddha, a working faith*. Faith is no faculty of a part whose efficiency varies. It is the faculty of the SOUL which is a whole. The question of the soul failing does not arise. If results do not come, it means they could not issue out of the method we have employed. Great results do not arise through known methods. As a rule, striking results elude the methods we employ. Such results often avoid any *method*.

## 45. Brahma Jananam

Brahman is the origin. It is the Eternal and Infinite. It is immutable. It is never born, nor does it grow. It knows no end. This is the description we know. This is the description of Mind's Infinity. Infinity is the opposite of Finite. Mind always sees anything as two opposites, light and darkness; pain and pleasure. Mind does not know, or cannot know light without darkness. Darkness cannot exist without light as it depends on it. There will be no shadow if light is not there. Shadow needs light for its existence. Light does not need shade or darkness for its existence. **It is self-existent light. The higher world has self-existent Ananda, self-existent knowledge, etc. So its infinity too is self-existent.** It is not the opposite of finite, but the Self-Existent.

We cannot deny any attribute to Brahman if Brahman is omnipotent. As we cannot attribute any quality to Brahman, we cannot also deny any attribute to Brahman,

is Sri Aurobindo's explanation of the Brahman He realised. **Brahman seen by the Mind is incomplete. We can say it has no birth or death. Brahman seen by the Supermind is complete Brahman.** It can be born if it chooses or die if it chooses. Brahman is covered by Ignorance in our world. Brahman is of knowledge in the higher world. The complete Brahman emerging in our world from the ignorance is what is called Brahma Jananam. *Its world is a world of MARVEL where there is no suffering, pain or death.* It is the Supramental world which Sri Aurobindo worked to create on earth.

When you pray, your prayer touches this world. That is why prayers so far unanswered are now answered. Prayers to this Force never fail. All prayers, without fail, are answered. Often prayers grant more than we asked for, grant what we have not asked for. This Force sometimes grants what we do not know to be in existence. These are not the characteristics of the Brahman seen by the Mind. It was one aspect of Brahman – the immutable aspect. It is not the whole of Brahman. Sri Aurobindo says many in the past had achieved this in their inner life. No one has achieved it in the outer life also. Ramalinga Swamikal was one who achieved it inwardly.

## 46. Sri Ramalinga Swamigal

The Mother said Sri Ramalinga Swamigal had what was described to Her as Grace Light. A poem of the Swami was read out to Her in translation. She said, “When I heard the poem, I felt he was in contact with the Supramental light.” Sri Aurobindo also mentioned the same. Supermind was known to the Vedic Rishis. As a matter of fact, the phrase ‘Supermind’ is what Sri Aurobindo had taken from the Vedas. He was not satisfied by the word. Supermind was never a goal for the yoga in India. Moksha was the goal. Sri Aurobindo had the goal of reaching the Supermind. In speaking about it, He said that once some yogis reached the Supermind, it would descend on earth. It happened six years after his life, on Feb. 29, 1956.

In a letter to a sadhak, Sri Aurobindo said that Supermind had been reached by many before Him. But it was an inner yogic realisation, not a realisation for the earth. ‘Someone living in these parts’ had that

realisation, said Sri Aurobindo in that letter. It was obviously Sri Ramalinga Swamigal. Legend has it that his body was transparent. His body never cast a shadow. It was believed that his body was transformed into camphor. What we know of him is his body turned into light and disappeared. It is said that he could not be photographed. A study of his poems reveals parallel ideas to those of Sri Aurobindo. His life and activities speak of the characteristics of the Psychic Being, especially his mission of compassion to animals.

The psychic was born in Krishna. Before Krishna, the cult of Bhakti was not there. Brindavan was the play of Divine Love. There are those who dismiss it as pure imagination. Sri Aurobindo said that, if it were pure imagination, he offers gratitude to that Imagination. In the history of the earth, Sri Aurobindo enumerates four major landmarks. They were the Trojan war, the birth of Jesus, Brindavan and Kurukshetra. We may say that Sri Aurobindo’s birth adds the fifth landmark to the history of the earth. It is His idea that Man need no longer worship God, but can become God Himself. Worship belongs to religion, a person following the realised ONE. Religion is many following the footsteps of ONE, whereas Spirituality is each one discovering the Spirit himself. There is no following a human guru. The inner Jagat Guru is the only GUIDE.

## 47. Ego, Purusha, Psychic Being

Man lives in his ego. The Rishi withdraws into the Purusha, during meditation. The Psychic being is a new spiritual concept to the world. When Churchill joined the British Cabinet, his aunt wrote him with the advice to run his department and not the entire Cabinet. *Ego has the philosophy that what it is is sacred, and everyone should worship it.* An egoistic corrupt official does not expect his family and department to condone his guilt. He insists that they proclaim him to be a personification of integrity. That is the rationality of ego. USA exterminated the American Indian population but now champions the cause of human rights, and does not allow parents to discipline their own children. The change is welcome, but it has come as a reversal of the earlier barbarism. **Instead, USA insists on being hailed as the hero of human rights.** It is said of them that they want to be the first anywhere, even in a wedding, claiming precedence over the groom.

We can call Purusha as Manomaya Purusha, Jivatma, Soul, witness Purusha, etc. The Jnani withdraws into it, into its Timeless aspect during meditation. When he emerges out of meditation, his ego resumes its rule with

an added intensity to make up for the loss of its reign during the meditation. Hence, the ferocity of his curse if his path is crossed. Still his meditation can take him to Samadhi and to moksha. His moksha is a realisation of his ego. Purusha is the immutable, changeless Soul, but in the domain of Nature it is powerless. It remains a witness. However, Nature cannot exist without a soul. The deputy of Jivatma in Nature is the Psychic Being. As Nature works, the psychic Being evolves. Tradition does not have this concept, though they know of the Psychic Being. It was born on earth when Lord Krishna came on earth. In all Bhakti cults, the soul that leads is the Psychic Being.

One major characteristic of the Psychic Being is, it cannot curse. As it refuses to curse, the world tries to destroy it, just as Rana, the husband of Mirabai, tried to kill her by poisoning. It exudes Love, compassion, and sweetness. It has been there in our tradition, but our tradition honoured the Purusha as it sought moksha. The Psychic can transform the human being or offer moksha if the devotee desires. Sri Aurobindo denied Himself moksha, sought transformation in human life so that the entire earth consciousness – all of humanity – would be transformed, shedding disease, pain and death. As long as one clings to his ego, he cannot enter the realms of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. One single LIE will wipe off the entire yoga done up to that point, as a lie strengthens the ego. Sri Aurobindo's yoga demands the surrender of ego by the soul to the Divine. **Invocation of the Spirit demands an egoless Soul.**

## 48. Comprehensiveness of Accomplishment

Manners are of the surface. It means nothing to us, except a pleasant exterior for the social occasion. **Behaviour is to believe in the valid truth of manners.** A man of really false consciousness inside always speaks the truth on social occasions, because he believes truth must be spoken to others. In our society, such a person is a rare specimen. It will raise him sky high. But, in all serious affairs of life, life will reward him for what he is inside – falsehood, and not for his external truthfulness. This phenomenon baffles people who ignore what he is inside in his true character. Such a one may rise to be the head of his nation, but even his exalted position cannot get his son a Vice-Chancellor's post. He has to retire as a professor. Behaviour is to believe in the truth of external behaviour. Still, behaviour is on the surface of one's being.

Character is in the depths, swabhava. Whatever you are in your character, life rewards accordingly. My theme here is the effectivity of accomplishment. **What a man**

**of good manners accomplishes in a lifetime, a man of character accomplishes in the beginning of his career.** One who wants to receive now the rewards of life that would normally come at the end of his career can shift his work from good manners to good character. A young boy with an MA was enamoured of a clerk's post in a bank. His three attempts in three banks did not get him a pass in the entrance exam. He met a graduate who was the son of a domestic maid preparing for IAS. "I am an MA, I am unable to get a clerk's job. He is a BA. He is aiming at IAS. Is there a secret of life here that I have missed?" he thought. He too started preparing for IAS. In an implicit subtle manner, the boy had a glimpse of the above truth. He passed the exam, but was not selected. Soon he was selected as a Manager of State Bank. **In our human life, shifting our work from manners to character will bring the results that would come at retirement.**

Beyond this lies a spiritual reward for seekers of the Spirit. Spiritual realisation available at the end of ten or twenty births is available NOW if one shifts his work from character to its origin, consciousness. Character, however noble it is, is still human character. Consciousness is always divine consciousness. Instead of seeking good character, one should seek consciousness that is above character, neither good character nor bad character. Character is a structure. Consciousness has no structure. It is. It has no past, no future. It is in the Ever-Present.

## 49. Linguistic Capacity of Memory

Memory is often identified with intelligence. They are two different faculties, as the ink and the ballpoint pen are materially different. Memory acts on the basis of the context and previous experience, not necessarily aided by intelligence. We often assume that ineffective memory is dull intelligence. Give two items to your clerk, he will do the first and forget the second. It makes us furious. Watch next time yourself, you will do exactly the same thing. It is not neglect or wilful disobedience. It is lack of experience. Very highly experienced people, experienced in their own work, act like this, forgetting the second item. **There is a further phenomenon of an inexperienced memory trying to be more exact than it can be.** That creates a hilarious confusion.

A classical example is there in Trollope. Mr. Septimus Harding is the warden in Hiram Hospital in charge of eight retired wool carders, people who comb wool with a card. He goes to Chapter Hotel in London. He meets the clerk of the Attorney-General as a client to fix an

appointment for himself with the lawyer. The clerk is dull, but very obliging. He writes down what Mr. Harding has said. He addresses him, “Mr. Septimus Hiram...” Mr. Harding corrects him, “Septimus *Harding*. There are eight words in all – Septimus, Harding, Hiram, Hospital, wool, carder, Chapter, hotel. This is too much for the clerk. In reply to the clerk’s question about where he comes from, Mr. Harding says, “Barchester”. This adds one more word. The clerk is very smart or trying to be so. He knows of wool gathering, but has not heard of wool carding. So he replies, “I have noted down the case of the wool gatherers...” The warden feels crushed and gently stops him, saying, “wool *carders*”. The clerk replies, “I shall send word to Barchester Hotel...” Mr. Harding is dismayed, looks at him and says, “*Chapter* Hotel”.

Again the clerk musters courage and says, “Yes, Mr. Barchester.” The warden gives up in utter despair. The clerk tries here to bring back to his mind the eight words in four combinations, not knowing how to manage even four words in two combinations. It is too much. **I have seen lawyers and judges jumbling ‘Mother Estates’ and ‘Beauty Land’ into Mother Land and Beauty Estates.** When your whole property hangs on the memory of your lawyer or judge, how can you ever survive? There is no human faculty that can serve grave situations. Invoke the Spirit, call in Mother, be quiet, practise Silent Will, resort to Faith, give up all reliance on capacity, things will go smoothly.



## 50. Levels of Reading

Reading a serious philosophical BOOK certainly has different levels of appreciation. *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, is NOT a book for reading in any sense of the word. Now that He has written it as a book, of course, it is to be read. He addresses the book to the European intellect. At that level, the book is logical, reasonable, and intelligible. Many Westerners are able to read it with appreciation, if not with commensurate comprehension. The mental energy the pages demand is exhausted in the first few pages, then sleep overtakes. For those who persevere, all the intellectual arguments are there, especially if one is as painstaking as a translator to arrange the arguments. It is a feat for us.

He who has successfully completed this course would see behind each intellectual argument an insight opens, where logic mysteriously opens into an experience. Whether it is an intellectual mental experience or an experience in Silence, it is a gateway into the higher

reaches of the Book. *Having mastered the Book intellectually, if one is patient enough to avail of each spiritual experience that each argument offers, certainly he can congratulate himself on the achievement.* The partial mental world of ours will give way to a fuller world, a world that informs us of its fullness. At the next stage, one is ushered into a spiritual atmosphere that is more than that of Silence, perhaps a world of creative Silence. Persisting there, one enters into the cosmic consciousness, a realisation given to those who chant OM with the right spiritual attitude, not mechanically.

At this stage, the reader will have completely crossed the first inversion of life where he realises obstacles are opportunities and partially crossed the second inversion of Pain is Ananda. The final stage of appreciation of the Book is when the reading reveals **the Golden Purusha Sri Aurobindo is, in His supramental Form.** Then he has glimpses of the MARVEL He speaks of – the world of Delight Mother spoke of. From another line of thought, intellectuality is a bar, Faith and Devotion are keys. To such people all the arguments come fully through life analogies and the vision of His Supramental Form reveals even in the beginning, if they are endowed with subtle vision. **One argument of His yields to concentration and consecration a flash of all these splendours at once.** It is a rare spiritual realisation to hold all the arguments of the Book simultaneously in the head, if not in the Soul.

## 51. Body is a Rock of Offence

In our tradition, the body is described as a repository of darkness. Psychologically, the body is the subconscious. Sri Aurobindo says several religious traditions believe that **the Body is a Rock of Offence**. To Him, the body is the crown of creation. All of us believe we are GOOD. It is a universal truth. Occasionally we meet with someone who believes himself to be not good or reliable. *He is one who is aware of his body or the subconscious*. Such people will have a penetrating insight. Their judgement of men will be unfailing. If you are one who in your inmost recess believes you are truly pious, good, benevolent, pure and unsullied and if you want to know whether your belief is true or to what extent it is true, it is easy to know it. You must be ready for a small experiment in observation.

We often slip in talk. **Really, there is no such slip. It is the subconscious peeping out into the surface consciousness.** In delirium or drunken state the subconscious spreads its ware. When full freedom is sensed, one's greed appears. There are excellent

circumstances for one to commit any type of felony as no one can know. If you have been in any of these circumstances, recollect your urges. If your urges were good, you really are good. That moment offers an acid test. Try to catch yourself when your tongue slips in important affairs. It throws light on dark recesses. You can safely judge yourself by those standards.

There was a young man who endeared himself to everyone and earned the name of a 'Perfect Gentleman'. He could never go against his father who was an important man in the community. This boy became engaged to a 14 year old girl, twelve years younger to him, attracted by her bloom. He did so without consulting his father. The father frowned on it, wanted his son to scrap the engagement in the Church, describing it as a promise made in infatuation. Everyone who knew the boy expected him to honour the alliance. When several of his friends gathered to discuss his situation, he took a cigarette packet from a friend, and pulled a single cigarette out of the packet from the bottom side. His friend, who noticed it, knew he wanted to escape the alliance. His act expressed his subconscious intention to get out of the commitment through the back door. **He did give it up and married another girl.**

The body harbours our dark side and reveals it by notations. Man is Good on the surface. Down below is a cannibal and a brute. Sri Aurobindo's yoga has set itself the task of transforming the *body*.

## 52. How Man Adores the Woman

In the picture called 'American President', the President falls in love with a lady who had come to a committee meeting. After returning home, her former boyfriend Richard calls her. She abuses him and asks him not to call her anymore. He calls again and she virulently abuses him. He jokes that he is the President of the US and promises to call her again. Just then the real President calls her. She mistakes him to be Richard and abuses him on the phone, asking him if he thinks he is the President himself. The President is unnerved, **but he still wants her**. He insists he is the President and asks her to verify by calling the White House switchboard number. Later they become friends. Over a particular political issue in which she is involved, the President is unable to keep his promise to her. Again her tirade is unleashed, this time in the White House itself. **Still, he says he wants her. He will go to her house, sit outside and conduct a satyagraha until she accepts him.** That is the Spirit in which man adores a woman and needs her before the marriage.

Man seeking God as this President sought this woman is sure to realise God. Man's seeking the woman romantically ends in marriage. If he continues to seek her response even after marriage, **he will realise God; he will discover God in his wife.** When man adores a woman, he is blind, blind to her failings. Therefore, he wins her. The woman represents Life and Life represents God. God, Life or woman disclose the marvel as long as man seeks them as if he is blind. His blindness to their failings reveals their wonder. That is the Spirit of scientific inquiry, yogic discipline or the demands of domestic life. The surest way to realise God in life is to shut our eyes to the evils in life created by God. That Spirit will ultimately disclose the evil to be not evil, but pure GOODNESS.

This way, discipline becomes desirable, punishment grace. It is only to the ego that there is punishment or discipline. To the non-ego, discipline is a condition of work, and punishment is an intense discipline. Sometimes, if not always, we do adore a leader or a father or a son like this. It turns out to be an illusion. At other times, it turns out gloriously. These are the distant hints of life of the future MARVEL that is to come. The Spiritual truth is life is a wonder. Only the ego finds it differently. At times Man sees good and at other times he sees Evil. Sri Aurobindo says it is due to the partial vision of the ego. In fact, the vision of the ego is a distorted vision.

### 53. Understanding Our Own Personality

**Luck is the prized possession of human life, entirely not in our hands. This is our longstanding belief.** As we choose an academic course, take a degree, pursue a profession and shine there, we can plan to acquire luck and succeed in it. Such a procedure has three stages in it. 1) Understand your Personality, 2) Acquire humility, and 3) Learn to convert humility into *luck*. It means luck is a product of Personality. Luck is a material result outside. The most common event considered to be lucky is a prize in the lottery. The Americans consider striking oil lucky. In India, winning a lucrative contract with the government or getting elected to a high office is considered lucky. **Man who meets with sixty percent failure in life considers sixty percent success as lucky.** The Luck I am presenting is almost 100% success. When the two preceding conditions are fulfilled, **LUCK** responds.

By Personality I mean the deepest Person we are. Our pleasant exterior to our friends, we know, is not ourselves. It is for the outer social occasion. In spite of the good words uttered, we harbour different thoughts

inside. Such inner thoughts vary from people to people. Our social friends do not enter our inner psychological fabric. Only our close members of the family and other intimate friends belong to that fabric. **Even with them, even inside that psychological fabric, there are two levels – one expressed and the other unexpressed.** The unexpressed is our true Person. It may be so out of polite sensitivity or a desire to be secretive. Even behind that Person lies a continent of inner emotions which is our Personality. Most of the time we know it. There are times when we see we act differently from that Personality. Let us consider this stage of our Personality.

What we see there requires no explanations. If they are good, we understand and accept it. If they are **NOT** good, **we must come forward to change them into GOOD aspects. The dark aspects of Personality are incapable of creating luck.** Understanding the aspects of our Personality is for the purpose of making our Personality entirely GOOD. A Personality that is GOOD in toto has the innate dynamism to create luck when it fulfils another condition also. We shall consider that process next. Its essence is to be Non-egoistic. When the ego is dissolved or denied scope for expression or assertion, humility develops. *A good Personality is capable of creating luck through the attitude of humility.* The Mother said She knew only one humble person and it was Sri Aurobindo. If humility is that exalted, can we ever attain it?

## 54. Acquiring Humility

“Humility is not acquired. One must be born with it,” may be the first response to the above title. There is a truth in that belief. But we may know that several such statements – a leader is born, intelligence does not grow, the throne is not for us, you must be born into the royal family – are giving way to the modern realities. In modern times, all kinds of people are becoming heads of state, PhD is awarded to people not innately intelligent, based on training. **It means leadership and intelligence are acquired. Humility too can be acquired if one is very serious about it.** Obedience and humility have a lot in common. One can be mistaken for the other. Obedience is physical submissiveness. Humility is the inner knowledge that MAN is a trifle before the world, Nature or God. Obedience can be called physical humility; humility can be described as spiritual obedience.

As we invoke the Spirit, so we can acquire humility. Aggressive expressions of the ego such as arrogance,

abuse, pride, assertion, and superiority complex are no longer tolerated in public life. **Public life, especially at very high levels, demands civilised behaviour. One is compelled to be humble in public.** One may pretend to be humble, but that is necessary. One who puts up that good behaviour in public will ordinarily compensate it at home or in private, because the public behaviour is not true. If he does try to be as humble in private as he appears to be in public, real humility arises in him. This is essential, but not enough. More than half the complaints in politics and public life are because people are assertive and egoistic. What has come to be known as office politics is half full of this vulgar exhibition of one’s ego that protrudes.

Life rewards not your behaviour, but what you are inwardly. It is not enough you are humble in public or private, because it is only a behaviour. **Humility must be acquired as inner character for it to be of value in Spirit.** It is not enough it is exhibited as outer behaviour. The moment one becomes truly humble inside, life with its abundance rushes towards him. That is the point of transition from a life of misfortune to one of good fortune. If fortune smiles on him, it means he has grown humble inwardly. This is luck, but not organised luck. Man is more than satisfied in luck engulfing him in life, though it is unconscious.

## 55. Life of Organised Luck

Luck is elusive. How to organise it? Mexican immigrants enter USA illegally and feel they have entered heaven. To them, the new life is lucky. In the USA they belong to the poorest section of the population. Once they are there, there are innumerable opportunities which they can avail of and make a success of their lives. Entry into USA is to be lucky. Becoming a citizen and making the most of those opportunities is *to organise luck*. Very poor relatives of very rich industrialists generally do not have access into their family lives. Sometimes such access into their functions and families is accorded to them graciously. People rush to avail of such opportunities. What do they get? They feel the privilege. Maybe they attend their sumptuous dinners. Suppose the rich relatives, as a policy, patronize the poor relations and help them establish at a higher level of life. That is to organise luck.

In independent India, society is trying its best at many points to raise people and establish them at a higher

level of affluence. When a boy distinguishes himself at school or sports, sometimes the school and even the outside society come forward to consciously raise the boy to great heights and establish him there. The government does it to backward areas, backward industries or sectors of life. Such phenomena were not there anywhere in the world, on such a scale, before the advent of the Supramental Force. Certainly it was not there before Sri Aurobindo's birth.

Families have always organised the lives of its members. Now the society does it in some good measure. Communism contemplated organising the entire society into affluence and justice. As it took to state violence, there entered a deviation that was distortion. **Mother ORGANISES luck in the lives of devotees who fully take to Her.** Her Force aims at organising luck in life. In the measure of wisdom or modesty man is capable of, life endeavours to organise luck in his life. The instrument is humility which is made possible by a total knowledge of one's own Personality. To be lucky is great. It is to be swamped by the floods of lucky waves that descend on one. To organise luck in one's life is to raise that minimum to its maximum possibilities. Life today is unforgiving, ruthless. When the atmosphere changes, life will practise Self-giving. Man's true humility attracts that aspect of life which is organised LUCK.

## 56. Mental Nature

Those who take to Sri Aurobindo's yoga first meet with the word '*vital*' and ask what it is. In our vernacular conversation we use two words — 'buddhi' and 'manas'. Buddhi is intelligence; manas is feelings. In English 'mind' and 'heart' are equally clear concepts. In spite of such clarity that exists in the language, a good number of devotees raise the above question, "What is the vital?" *To them, the distinction comes almost as a revelation.* Vital simply represents the nervous centre whose subtle chakra resides in the stomach. It is known as the solar plexus.

I have sometimes met with a question in discussions addressed to people who raise fresh issues. "Where do you get all these questions from? **Are you always thinking?**" When it was recurring more regularly, I began to think about it. I myself was asked that question once or twice. Suddenly one day, it struck me, "Perhaps thinking is not a common faculty found in all minds." The simple

answer that not all people think dawned on me after considerable analysis. It is said of Vivekananda that he used to see a light between his brows when his eyes were shut. In the beginning, he assumed everyone saw similar light. He was a Vibhuti. In his forehead a light resided.

The question for me was if people do not think, how do they act? They act out of habit, unguided by thought. **That is how the vital functions.** People working in offices, especially in government offices, readily refer to the rules. They are trained to go by the rules. Their bosses will restrain them if they apply their minds originally to the issue on hand. Their duty is to implement the rules, not to exercise their brains. That way, the mind remains unexercised. If one has to exercise his mind at all, it is to implement the rule. He is permitted to think for the purposes of upholding the rule, not to analyse its validity.

The Spirit is above the Mind. The Spirit we invoke is of a further stage, the Spirit in Life or Mind. **Still, that Spirit, the Psychic Being, listens to our call and responds to it in its benevolence.** Hence the vast power it unleashes. One is lucky to be able to call it. When its Touch descends on us, it gives a heavenly sweetness that is new to the human experience.

## 57. The French Revolution

Revolutions are landmarks in history. From the point of view of Spiritual evolution, revolutions *are critical stages in the evolution of the earth*. Mother says Sri Aurobindo was present on earth at every such critical stage. She too was with Him invariably. He says the French Revolution originated in the Himalayas. **Anything fundamental anywhere in the world should originate in the Spirit**, just as any new product of technology should originate in scientific research. Our science is called experimental science. Some people think it is material science, as it is the science of the material world. The phrase ‘life science’ has come to stay. *What the world needs is the Science of Life, a branch of knowledge that studies how life behaves*. It may not be just psychology, but will include psychology. Psychology studies the behaviour of the Mind. Should a subject called ‘Science of Spirit’ come into existence, the occurrence of revolutions as the unfolding of the earth’s evolution will be seen.

Sri Aurobindo has remarked on India’s evolution that it is a nation destined to lead the world spiritually. Apparently they are stray remarks inserted in various places. Only he who has the spiritual vision of what Sri Aurobindo stands for can know the significance of those statements and **how they all go together around a central vision**. The following are some of those statements that I can recollect now:

1. Nature resorted to foreign invasion to unite India geographically, as all her previous efforts had failed.
2. India became FREE in the subtle plane in 1910.
3. Indian FREEDOM would lead to the freedom of Asia.
4. World union will come into existence.
- 5. India will become the Guru of the world.**
6. Mother has said that France will collaborate with India in this mission.
7. Indian bodies carry Spiritual light.
8. America is in the vanguard of the earth’s evolution. The Americans exhibit a curiosity to know of the evolutionary possibilities.
9. Sri Aurobindo said that he has played a role in the world wars, particularly in Ireland and Turkey. He also had a little to do with the Russian Revolution.



## 58. Concentration and Distraction

**Concentration is helped by distraction is a contradiction.** There is power in concentration whether it is for reading or working. Spiritual concentration is uncompromising. There are several disciplines that demand concentration must be unbroken. If broken, one has to start over again. No perfect work, especially spiritual work, can ever be done when there is a distraction from the central concentration. Then how can we say distraction helps concentration? There was a railway driver who could not clearly hear. But when he went near his engine or got into the engine, he could hear perfectly in the background of that roaring noise.

There are people who read with the radio on. When the radio is turned off, they lose their concentration. This is a known phenomenon. If there is such a concentration, how do we understand it? Is that a valid concentration that can be of value? No argument is necessary as such a concentration exists. It is a fact.

Our being has a surface which we understand as ourselves. It has a depth but we do not know all about it. We do have knowledge that our surface is not all. Some may mistake our surface to be our all. **Concentration on the surface is possible only when the surface is not disturbed by the depth.** Spiritual disciplines impose a very serious concentration on the surface so that the depth falls quiet, allowing the surface to pursue its path. All the yogas so far done have been done on the surface.

For that reason, yogic realisation is partial, and admits of dualities like good and evil. Integral yoga is done in the depths, the subliminal. This requires a concentration in the depths. Those who attempt it pass through an intermediate stage before reaching the required depth. So, during that period, the depth needs an occupation. When some distraction is offered, the strong depth gets engaged allowing the surface to concentrate. As the concentration develops, it reaches the depth, when there are no more rumblings in any quarters. The radio that engages the reader, the roar of the railway engine that makes our voice audible to the driver are minor versions of that major phenomenon. Life has major determinants, minor intensities and in between other versions too. An integral yoga cannot neglect the minor or major or other versions. **To be able to see the spiritual truths in daily activities makes the yoga full, Purna Yoga.**

## 59. Mathematical Precision in Life

The science of Astrology has reduced all the secrets of life to communicable details. **It has found numbers an excellent vehicle.** Mathematics is called the Queen of Sciences. Mathematics has reduced the laws of Nature to formulas, often to Numbers. The universe revealed to Einstein as a formula. **Formulation is understanding codified.** Sri Aurobindo calls Napoleon a vibhuti. He ranks among Shankara and Shivaji. Historians often call Napoleon a mathematician.

A sound company is losing money for various reasons, say one crore a month. A finance manager who is interviewed for that post in the company studied the balance sheet and concludes, "This company is a losing concern not because of any inherent weakness, but because the cash flow needed is not there." When he tells the proprietor, "Give me two months expenses as cash, I shall wipe off the losses," the proprietor may or may not believe it. On the other hand, if he takes a paper and writes down the old and new expenses for the next two months, the proprietor can see the truth of what the

candidate claims. *That is the power of numbers, in fact, the Power of Mathematics. Mathematics is the form of Spirit in NUMBERS.*

In India we have further knowledge. If the proprietor believes what the candidate has worked out on paper, the Indian wisdom knows that that amount of money will come to him. Even in that belief, there are lower and higher sides. Life enables the proprietor to secure that much money as loan if the belief is of the lower order. When his belief is of the higher order, the same amount is generated from inside the company as profits.

Napoleon was good at seeing military campaigns in terms of numbers. He did so ahead of time. He calculated the time needed for the movement of supplies to the last detail, the requirement of ammunitions to the last shot. **As he did it ahead of time and not after the problem precipitated, and believed it in the higher side, all those calculations came true. He became an Emperor.** The higher side of belief is a belief based on knowledge, an idealistic belief. The lower side of belief is to believe in the benefits. It is mercenary. The Indian wisdom is spiritual wisdom. It is like the brilliance of a thousand suns of the Gita. Mathematical precision in life is one ray of that wisdom. To train ourselves in our ancient wisdom, not in the American lifestyle, is the path to Prosperity. One must give up rituals as well as falsehood.

## 60. Egoistic Assertion

Companies, organisations, and government administrations do not allow much scope for assertion. **Man is resourceful enough to innovate ways of assertion in spite of a tight structure.** The wrong side of life is more resourceful. It carries tales to the boss. Often the boss pulls up the asserting member. Often, for various reasons, he does not. A balance is arrived at between the asserting members and the effectivity of talebearers. **That balance has acquired the dignified name of office politics.** The word **POLITICS** thus has come to mean the equilibrium arrived at by the fighting forces inside a family or a company.

One who is spiritually inclined should not assert. What will he do when in his organisation, one man below him asserts vulgarly just because the boss is cultured? Bosses are not that cultured. Still such occasions do arise. In one such situation, the person who was in charge

of distributing drinks in an organisation was having a field day by diluting the drinks of all but his own friends. Complaints mounted over the years and came to a point of bursting. The boss has before him a few issues: 1) It is wrong for the manager to dilute the drinks, 2) The invidious distinction shown between friends and foes is unsavoury, 3) The culprit must be pulled up, 4) Those who suffer should have the culture not to complain, 5) The boss has a principle of not restraining those who work under him, 6) *Now, even the critical time has passed and action cannot be postponed.*

Fresh arrangements were made for the distribution of drinks and one who was vehemently complaining was put in charge. There was jubilation in the atmosphere. “Let us serve him a glass of crystal clear hot water,” was the slogan in everyone’s mouth about the culprit. After the new arrangements were made, the boss called the culprit and said, “You can continue the present arrangements for yourself and all your friends. The others can go to the new dispensation.” The bubble of the inflated jubilation was pricked. **If you are spiritual, you should not punish others. You should consider their shortcomings as your own.** To protect their defects until they come forward on their own to change themselves is a spiritual requirement.

## 61. Every Truth has its Opposite Truth

This is a statement of Sri Aurobindo. Though it is a truth of life, it sounds somewhat strange to us. How this can be is a question that arises in the mind. Most rules have exceptions. Some are absolute rules. They have no exception. We believe we must be good. It is true. But, there is a desire to extend it. We say next that if you are good, you will prosper. This is not always true. We see that people of bad character also prosper. Maybe they prosper more than good people. **When a rule is not absolute, its opposite is also true.** The very first step in creation is Sat emerging out of Brahman. As soon as Sat emerged, Asat came into existence. Asat is as much true as Sat is true. The entire creation is out of Sat-Existence. Therefore, each valid truth has an opposite truth that is valid.

Let us consider some such statements. One who reads voraciously becomes wise. Its opposite is also true. Some of the wise men were illiterate. God is just. The world

knows of innumerable injustices which God permits. Great souls are adored by the society. Great souls were persecuted often. A rich man is generous. There are misers among rich men. A poor man is debt ridden and America is the richest country. Therefore many nations have invested their money with America **with the result that America owes money to a lot of nations.** Truth wins. The Truth of Jesus was defeated. Education enhances one's income. Uneducated people often earn more than educated persons. We see spirituality goes with cleanliness. We also very often see the opposite. The most spiritual nation in the world, India, is also a dirty nation.

Tradition says Paramatma is final. Others say Jivatma is final. **Brahman includes Paramatma and Jivatma, and therefore Brahman is final, says Sri Aurobindo.** There are times when a very just man is punished. Sometimes we receive such a punishment. To know that that punishment is of higher *justice* is a spiritual view of life. It is here the above rule or principle is valid. There is a story about Vigneshwara and Vasishta. Someone who was carrying food to Vigneshwara was stopped and questioned where he was going. He answered, "I am carrying food to Vigneshwara who is on eternal fasting. He sits on the other side of the river bank where Vasishta, the eternal brahmachari with a hundred children, resides."

## 62. Obesity is Poverty Consciousness

A rule in life is equilibrium. It is also the rule in Nature. Cyclone is Nature's restoring the equilibrium in atmospheric pressure. What we call health is an equilibrium of physical, vital and mental energies. Life constantly disturbs the equilibrium of the bodily health. Body and mind constantly restore that equilibrium. Our problems of life and problems of health – disease – are the process of that equilibrium being disturbed and restored. **Obesity is one such expression.** Its expressions are many. But, its most pronounced form is the body overcompensating a prolonged period of starvation. Poverty consciousness becoming Prosperity consciousness has one generation of obese individuals in between.

Sri Aurobindo is not for fasting or keeping awake as we do on *sivaratri*, *ekadasi*, etc. He says fasting does not serve any purpose as the body compensates as soon as fasting is over. **In fact, it overcompensates.** When Lal Bahadur Sastri requested the nation to forego one

meal a week, he asked people not to eat on Monday evenings. Eating establishments were closed all over the country on Monday night. Mother did not agree with him. She said the body has a way of adjusting. It eats more before and after. There is no real savings of food. To miss a meal without that compensation is possible for yoga. Sri Aurobindo tried that experiment of fasting for 23 days. During that period he never experienced lack of energy. He walked as usual. His writing work continued. At the end of it, he resumed eating abruptly with a full meal.

His experiment was successful. Fasting entailed no loss of energy, and there was no compensation. Still, He said the body drew its strength from the bone marrows. In that measure, his experiment was not a success. Sleep missed for over prolonged periods, He said, is compensated by the body. Therefore, in His formula, there is no use of fasting or keeping awake. Generations that have missed food, compensate the loss when food is available. It is not the only rule. When the mind is fully developed, to that extent that compensation is less. They say a third of the US population today is obese, according to a national standard. **Mental and spiritual development can mitigate obesity to the extent there is development in those higher planes.**

### 63. Integrity

Integrity is an inner value unconditioned by outer circumstances. To be good to a person who is good to us is not difficult. *To be good to a person who is evil to us is not easily possible. It may not be necessary for the outer life.* However, it is necessary for inner integrity. There is a film called *Finding Forrester*. A famous writer goes into seclusion for years. His first book had become famous, but he stopped writing. Near his apartment is a public basketball court where Black youth play. All the boys take an unhealthy interest in the writer in seclusion, not knowing who he is. One day they challenge one boy to enter his apartment to find out. This boy is 16, and a writer himself. After meeting the writer, they become friends. The writer finds in the boy original talent and wishes to foster it.

The writer initiates the boy into writing, giving him the title and opening paragraph of one of his old essays. The boy writes very well and submits his essay for a class competition. The teacher discovers that the title and first paragraph are not the boy's own. The boy is bound by an oath to the writer to keep their relationship

confidential. When the teacher confronts the boy, accusing him of using another person's passages, the boy denies it. The teacher shows the original to the boy, proving him wrong. Still the boy keeps silent. In the class, the boy had been found to be resourceful, intelligent and more informed than the teacher who takes it as an affront to him. He now suspends the boy's scholarship and removes his essay from the competition. On the day when the competition is to be held, the writer, who has heard all about the boy's situation, comes out of his seclusion for the first time in years, enters the class and asks permission to speak. His appearance after prolonged seclusion is a pleasant surprise to the audience. He tells them what has transpired between him and the boy. The teacher is all appreciation of the writer, but does not relax the punishment of the boy. The famous writer says, "This youth risked his career to protect me, who did not come forward to protect him in the hour of need. That is integrity." The Chairman of the Board overrules the teacher and exonerates the youth, praising him for his integrity.

**Integrity is a spiritual value.** As soon as the boy got into trouble because of his promise to the writer, the writer should have taken up the matter with the authorities and saved the boy's scholarship. *Life is not that GOOD, even in a famous writer in seclusion. Because he honoured a spiritual value, the Spirit in the boy compelled the writer to come to his rescue.*

## 64. Lawrence of Arabia

Colonel Lawrence was an officer in the British Army who sympathized with the Arabs and fought to win Damascus for them. The British government did not honour his promise to the Arabs. It was a disappointment in his life. He died in a motorbike accident. **There is an incident in his life which highlights human nature.** Man has so many illusions. In the words of Adi Sankarachariar, Man lives in a web of illusions. He called it *maya*. He called upon man to shed *maya* and seek God. Without going into the spiritual truths of *maya*, we can safely say that Man lives by several illusions and he is passionately proud of some of them.

Lawrence, who came to be called 'Lawrence of Arabia', met in his own inner life one such illusion. It made him bitter. **Man is fond of believing himself to be good.** It is true he is good in his view, a selfish view. Even that apparent shallow goodness is on the surface. Lawrence was adored and revered by the Arabs as a god. They

found him different from other British officers. Lawrence was humane. The Arabs would do anything if only Lawrence wanted it. They trusted him. They found him not taking advantage of them. He would not exercise his authority for his own personal benefit. In military campaigns, often questionable occasions arise. They are moments when one exhibits one's true character. One can selfishly go away from another who needs help or go out of one's way to help him. For the victim, that little help is a matter of life or death. Lawrence risked his own life to save the life of an Arab thus.

After a while, the same Arab soldier was caught in a crime and was supposed to be shot. Lawrence had to do it. He shot the soldier and the soldier died. Seconds before Lawrence pulled the trigger, he saw in himself a trigger-happy soldier! It was the nature of the soldier. **The weapon has the power to compel the man to use it. It also makes the man feel happy in using it as an instrument.** Lawrence became sad, recognizing in himself the brute that enjoys killing. He was honest enough to speak it out. Under his shirt, Man is a brute. That is the naked truth of creation. He is made so. The Rishis who saw several such truths of human nature gave up life and retired to the forest. Sri Aurobindo desired to transform the brute in man. Mother saw the brute rearing its head and said, "I won't recommend this yoga to anyone."

## 65. Minor Injustices of Life

*Minor injustices of life are major incidences of grace* is a statement that raises an outrage even in a saint. Man is normal when such indignities are not meted out to him. **One is most pleased when life offers complete justice in minor matters.** Spiritually it is at those points God is trying to enter our being. We put up a furious resistance and proclaim to the world, “This is an unjust world. People are bad. No one is reliable, not even the kith and kin. I am afraid I shall grow cynical and selfish. Maybe I shall lose my faith in God Almighty.”

For one who has taken to invoking the Spirit, the opposite occurs. Life changes, and the very atmosphere of family is transformed. Of a sudden, children seem to need you more affectionately. The boss who usually frowns, suddenly SMILES, the wife after a long break of dry years becomes intimate, handsomely acknowledges your worth, reviving the earlier days of romance when her looks were flattering. One seems to be floating on the crest of psychological admiration. The Spirit, thus, gives

what the surface being was unsuccessfully craving for all these days.

Next comes another phase in which your depth, called the subliminal, wants the Spiritual reward. Being aware of its innate impatience, the depth asks the Spirit for Patience. The deep personality knows the surface does not like patience at all. The depths – the subliminal – compel the surface to seek work by which it can learn Patience. The surface mind foolishly but eagerly joins a club attracted by the eloquence of its president who admires you. Very soon you find out the president is unpardonably slow. On the day of your office inspection, the club president delays you when your nerves are on fire. A quarrel issues, nerves breakdown. You feel you cannot meet him any more.

It scarcely occurs to you that after that provocative meeting with the president, you are a whit less impatient. After all, you are free to disoblige the club president on the day of inspection. You are your own master of this situation. Still you honoured his invitation and he mortally offended you. It is a **minor injustice having major consequences in your official life.** Behind the president’s outrageous behaviour lies the Hand of God, known as grace, that responded to the urge of your deeper personality. **Minor offences are Mother’s caressing embrace is a bitter pill now.** When we offer a smiling welcome to the touch of such destabilizing approaches of life, **WISDOM** dawns on us. It is God’s embrace.



## 66. 'I Cannot Accept What I Have Not Earned'

Man yearns for luck which is an undeserved reward. It never comes. When it sails towards him he is a foot off the ground. 'I cannot accept what I have not earned' is an oft-heard remark in the life of the Western individual. People not aware of their cultural moorings offend Westerners by offering gifts they do not seek. **There is no greater hallmark of self-respect or individuality.** It is exceedingly good. As usual it is not the only truth. There is the other side to it. Ours is a different culture. It is our privilege to support needy members of the family without their soliciting it. We understand it is an expansive act of right attitude. We are offended when our friends do not come to our help at a crucial moment. When your rivals set a bully on you and he confronts you on the road, abuses you and threatens you, how would you feel if your friend moves out of earshot because it is your personal affair and he cannot interfere? We are not brought up that way.

There is the other side to it also. When you are helped each time a help is required, you lose the capacity to stand on your own legs. Thus no individuality is formed. You remain forever a dependent, a useless member of a useless community. This too sounds true. If so, what is the Truth? Both are true, and both are not true because both are partial truths. **One way of solving the problem is to understand that there are no eternal values valid in all cultures but cultural values valid locally.** So, what is valid for others is not valid for us. That is common sense. It will serve us well. There is more than meets the eyes. Behind different cultural values lies a lasting value, valid in all cultures and at all times. **It is a spiritual value.** The Spirit desires to help the needy who seek help on their own initiative.

Man exercising physically learns that when he accepts help – what he has not earned – he becomes weak and inefficient. Such wisdom rightly denies help from outside. Having come out of the physical, Man lives a vital social life where everyone needs to help another. That fortifies his collective life that is far superior to his individual efficiency. It reduces to the attitude of receiving help or offering help. Mercenary expectation is unhealthy even as vain generosity that offends. True generosity is noble and should be accepted with gratitude. **Capacity to receive help magnanimously is of greater value than helping others.** It needs a sweeter temperament to pleasantly receive what is offered with affection than to offer help to others.

## 67. “I am Lost in the Work”

He is blessed who is lost in the work. Such people are efficient as their concentration is total. **Whatever they are or not, their efficiency is par excellence.** Such people are a matter for envy. “He won’t notice you for hours when he is immersed in work” is the comment they evoke. Invocation of Spirit is something that is commendable. Anyone drawn to Spirit can invoke the Spirit when they go in. The response will be instantaneous and magnificent. There are times when we face problems too big for our personality. At such times we feel ‘it is not for me’. We exclaim, “I cannot handle it.” The Spirit can handle what we cannot handle. **It demands a concentration more intense than the one that makes us lost in the work.**

Indira Gandhi was pleased by the driver of a Chief Minister. She asked him to come to Delhi. After that, he was incapable of thinking of anything else. It would never occur to a man in that situation to invoke the Spirit so that it may fulfil the opportunity of Indira’s invitation.

There are equally dangerous situations in life suddenly precipitating. A lady was called at her desk in the office and told her brother was in an accident. How can she think of the Spirit, Mother or anything else? **That lady did. She did not panic. She forgot the news and called Mother.** Phone calls regarding her brother came from several sides. She was unmoved and was centred in the Mother. Ten minutes later the brother appeared and explained how the misinformation had come. Mind must go to MOTHER.

At a crucial moment like this, to wean the Mind from the issue and direct it to the Mother inside is very difficult. We say the Mind goes to work and is lost there. When we know that it is not the Mind that does the work, but it is the Spirit, that knowledge enables the Mind to detach itself from the work and direct it to the Mother inside. The knowledge that Mother does the work and not the mind makes it possible. **It is consecration.** When news comes that a child is lost, who can think of the Mother? He who thinks of the Mother will get his child back. Consecration is for the householder. Surrender is the next higher step. There we go inside, lose ourselves in Mother and let **HER** do the work. It is yoga. The rule is consecration is for the householder and surrender is for the yogi. The householder is not prevented from surrender. As it is too exacting, it is not demanded of him to solve his domestic problems.

## 68. What is Life?

I know I have a life. Each man has a life. We say social life, human life. What is it? The lives of all people in the society together is social life. But there is more. I breathe, everyone breathes. Air is inhaled and exhaled. **The atmosphere of earth is covered by air.** We don't see it, but feel it. We speak of the atmosphere of the earth. The atmosphere is different from the air. There is light all over the earth. We feel the heat or cold. Gravitation is a force. Electricity is in the atmosphere. We see it as lightning. As magnetism, air, light, heat, moisture, electricity, and gravitation are in the atmosphere, they are all in life and all of life together. **Life is a plane of force enveloping earth.** Life has a personality. It is not inert. It is alive and acts.

At the railway station someone steps on your foot. We quarrel with him, feel hurt, protest. As he is timid, the hero in us rears its head. We assert a little more than necessary. The pride in us pricks up. Something in us is pleased. It is an occasion to feel fulfilled. We go

home. There is a news waiting for us. Our son arrived by a taxi. The taxi driver was a rough fellow. He demanded more than the meter reading. The boy protested. Raising his voice, we are told, the driver threatened him vulgarly. The family gave the money unreasonably asked by him and sent him away. **The driver and all of us are part of life. What we did at the railway station is reflected at home.** Life is ever present. Its personality is all-pervasive. It has standards, rules, etc.

It requires a subtle sense to know of life, to feel its presence and respect its power. Life **is not moral, but it is sensitive.** Man is one formation of life. As the waves on the sea are a formation of seawater, Man is one formation of life, and the animal is another formation of life. Matter itself is a hard formation dense to our touch. It is life that created man; or God has created Man in the plane of life, through the force of life. It is usual that people who come to the Ashram hear the word *consciousness* very often. Any book they read employs that word copiously. It is part of their vocabulary. A senior engineer with an arts and engineering degree came here and took to Mother with zest and enthusiasm. After about a year he raised the question. "What is consciousness?" Life that we live often escapes our comprehension when we set about thinking seriously. It is necessary to know it, as we have to live it.

## 69. Undeserved Luck

A reader writes that she was the recipient of undeserved Luck. She has not said whether it is because of the Spirit she invoked or by what circumstances. Those who feel they deserve luck do not get it. **Luck seeks those who feel that they do not deserve it.** Feeling that they do not deserve it is a kind of true inner humility. It attracts luck. As air rushes to a point of low pressure, Luck looks for a human point that is not self-sufficient. This is a rule of Nature in the widest sense. Nature works at different points at different times guided by her own Purpose. Towards that end Nature employs the attitudes exhibited by different faculties. Science was developed in Europe which was proud of its scientific culture. Pride stands in the way of further development. So, Nature moved away from the self-sufficient Europe to develop further. The next step is not so much Science as scientific technology. Nature chose a humble population of the USA for that purpose.

Spirit developed in India. It reached its acme, rather its penultimate peak. Nature, for her own purposes, did

not want to complete the further development of the Spirit in India. She moved away. She set about developing Mind, Vital, Science, Organisation, Technology in other parts of the world. Now she has finished one round working in various parts of the world. It is time Nature comes back to India and completes her work in the development of Spirit. So far, Spirit developed to seek its own fulfillment in moksha. That is not God's original intention in creation. God who became Sat and Spirit converted that Spirit into Supermind, Mind, Life and Matter. All of them – Mind, Life, Matter – are really Spirit disguised.

God's delight lies in the original delight of the Spirit. It comes out when the original Spirit hidden in Mind, Life and Matter emerges on the surface. In that case the Bliss of *moksha* comes to earthly life, *Bhuloga Swargam*. Nature will start that phase only when the self-sufficient pride of the Spirit in its superiority gives way. **Nature needs humility to continue its progress.** India was humbled by foreign rule, poverty and low status. Though practically humbled, even humiliated, the inherent pride of the spiritual possession is abundantly present here. The feeling that we deserve greater luck or better treatment is there in many ways. One is expectation. For Nature to raise India's spiritual stature to that of the Guru of the world, India should part with spiritual ego and acquire spiritual humility.

## 70. Attention Matures into Affection

Affectionate husbands, when the intensity of affection comes down for any reason, never slacken their attention. As attention matures into affection, affection dilutes itself into attention. It is never so with an affectionate mother. **Her affection is unvarying. Over the years it only grows richer, knows no dryness or bleak void.** It is mostly expressed in an expressive tone or engaging looks. Affection grows in intensity to acquire the shades of love. It is said that love is the one of the three ways in which divine Ananda of Sachchidananda reveals to the human personality. Ananda being what it is, the human mind, vital and soul try to get a glimpse of it. Nerves catch Him as joy, while to the mind it reveals as beauty. **The lines of Ananda in the mental eye assume the form of Beauty.** The man who yearns for a beautiful face really aspires for the Ananda of Sachchidananda. Love is the form in which the soul touches Ananda.

Life experience is frustrating for many people. A few of them are disillusioned. They may say in ripe age,

“There is no love or affection. It is all the illusion of the youth whose passion carries one over the brink of the precipice.” If you really know any person deeply affectionate and if she or he is willing to take you into confidence, he will reveal his heart saturated with affection and love. **He who has loved once has not learned to cease loving.** It may be received or not or different people may receive it. Maybe no one receives it. But the heart that knows love is always in love. It needs to give. There is no need to receive any return though such a return enriches the hour of that experience. Love, as every other thing, has several versions.

An affectionate person crushed by the burden of life may seem to others less expressive of that infectious richness of emotion. When he or she takes to the Spirit, the old fires will revive with the enthusiasm of the Spirit transporting him to the climax of human fulfillment. Friendship is sacred. Wise people never allow their temperament or *swabhava* to interfere with that sacred relationship. People anchored in Spirit keep their friendship untrammelled by the vicissitudes of circumstances. Affection is above circumstances, even as it is above the vitiating vibrations of unstable temperament. **A relationship where affection has cooled off to attention is inspired by a revival of it by the Touch of Spirit in any part of its expression.**

## 71. Spirituality is Equality

Religion has a gradation. The **ONE** is the illumined one whom all look up to, which is right. Mother says the days of religion are over, **the future is for Spirituality**. The Spirit is Brahman. It creates the solar system and an anthill. Brahman is a whole. It can only be a whole. It can give itself only as a whole. It cannot give itself as a part. Brahman cannot give a part of Himself. The character of Brahman being a whole can never be parted for a moment. I am a man. My body is a whole. My body cannot move in parts. It can move itself only as a whole. I go to buy a fruit. It is a small work. I go to buy a house. One is small and the other is greater. To both works, I can go only as a whole man; I cannot send a small part of mine to do a small work. In creation Brahman gives Himself equally fully to the solar system and the anthill. The solar system is of infinite proportion; the anthill is insignificant in its appearance. In essence both are equal.

A father gives his children an equal portion of his wealth. One builds a house, buys a car, lives grandly. The other keeps the money safe and lives poorly. In appearance one is small and the other is great. In essence both are equal. Two voters are equal. One enters politics and becomes the head of the nation; the other is in a humble situation. The difference is great in their appearance, not in their spiritual essence. The humble man acquires experience in his humble position. Looking into his humble experience with spiritual penetration, we see the **same spiritual growth in both**. That is why Sri Aurobindo said the Westerner has discovered Brahman in Matter.

The whole of humanity will find all its members one fine morning **REALLY** equal if Spiritual Equality is realised. The Indian has the spiritual light in his body. The Westerner knows the Spirit in his work. The Indian's prosperity will rise equal to the Westerner's prosperity when he draws upon the Spiritual Truth within him. The Westerner will discover his inner spirit when he sees his material accomplishment is a spiritual result. Looking at it as material results, he is prevented from rising to his spiritual heights. The Indian will be stuck in his poverty if he sticks to his rituals. **Rituals become false when divorced from knowledge.**

## 72. The Rewards of Life

That a good man must be rewarded with success of all descriptions is an ingrained ideal in us. **Looking at several successful people, we discover little goodness is there.** Whatever goodness is there is by chance or mistake, not by the law that goodness is rewarded. We also witness the phenomenon that extremely successful people are false, mean, wicked, evil and corrupt. This fact has baffled the conscience of humanity. **It is noteworthy that all of them will certainly have one major point of goodness, usually a pleasant exterior.** It is true these people are false, etc. It is equally true that to maintain that one external appearance of goodness, they have to deny themselves the expression of several wicked urges.

All such people are, without exception, alert in the extreme. Alertness is to keep the whole being open. Though they keep their whole being open so that they may accomplish their design, **that opening is rare in the**

**human individual.** The Force enters his being through that opening. Good people sure of their goodness and their belief that it must be rewarded remain unalert, closed. They do not resort to this **OPENING**, which is a necessary door for the Spirit or Force to enter. Put in other words, the false man is always organising himself for action, as he knows a little slackening on his part will lead to his total loss. The good man is under no such threat and he keeps quiet. **The constant organisation of the evil man makes him dynamic. Dynamism results in success.**

Life is organised, full of energy, constantly on the move. Spirit is much more so. Life and Spirit seek brisk, alert, open, dynamic, energetic beings. For one reason or another, those we know to be false meet the requirements of life as well as Spirit. Life is amoral too. Spirit is above morality. Life does not discard the evil man, as she can work through evil just as she can through good. Because Spirit is above morality, it disregards the evil in the man when it finds him full of energy. **We often hear good people say, “All my life I have worked, but at last this evil man came and robbed me of the rewards of a lifetime.”** Evil may succeed exceptionally but not forever. Good rarely succeeds, but when it is a success, it remains a success forever. **Spirit invoked offers GOOD unfailing success that is everlasting.**

### 73. Best School

A school is rated by the results it produces. The best results come more out of a paying school than a free school. Exceptions are always there. **It was a great moment in the educational history of Tamilnadu when Kamaraj made education free upto SSLC.** It is a truism of life that nothing valuable can be given free. Service minded people whose lifeblood is self-giving do not like to hear such truths. The truth behind is subtle and spiritual. And yet all spiritual treasures are to be given free and not to be charged. That is why, Sri Aurobindo says, every truth has its opposite truth.

The cost of education continues to rise. Better results, best results usually are found among schools when the fees are high. Academic results are the least a school can produce. Character is the highest a school can give the pupil. Without producing 100% academic results, a school cannot hope to give the pupils anything higher, much less character. A good school teaches good manners.

Most of them teach good manners by punishment. What is learnt by punishment is of no value and soon forgotten. **Only what is learnt in freedom lasts.** No school attempts to give freedom. Freedom at once leads to indiscipline. In the Guru–sishtya tradition, the guru is not a loved member of his community. Usually the guru is a nightmare. Sometimes he is a disciplinarian. One can instruct the value of love. It is not easy to love.

Schools that have attained 100% pass sometimes attempt 100% first class. If such schools come forward to examine their fundamental beliefs and are desirous of exploring the basic spiritual values as a vehicle of higher and finer education, India will launch herself on the path of glory. It is rare to produce excellent teachers, rarer to create an excellent administrator. Still, in many institutions we find them. **It is impossible to produce a fine human being in a teacher. To raise one to the level of a fine administrator without losing his fine human qualities is a sine qua non for such a goal.** We see pockets of prosperity in the country and parents are willing to pay high fees for good education. And therefore such a possibility is there on the horizon. It is a venturesome task few will be willing to undertake. Whatever they do or do not do, they cannot hope for great success if they wish to imitate the West. It is an area where the West should find inspiration from India.



## 74. Water Supply

All-out efforts are made to meet the water scarcity in the coming summer months. It is commendable that forethought is evinced instead of waking up late in the day. It is likely that these serious efforts are rewarded by the skies in a subsequent season. The Divine begins where Man ends is the rule. But the Divine has the very bad habit of waiting for Man to exhaust the very last drop of energy and effort. While there is maximum effort on securing water physically to the city, there seems to be a complacency in another way. Faith is reposed in physical effort. It is good, but there is more. What is the reason for water shortage? One may say the poor monsoon. Or more population is exploiting depleting water resources. Both are true. There is a greater truth. **Water spiritually represents emotion, especially spiritual emotion – gratitude.**

The very first thing man does when he is educated or becomes prosperous is to move away from God. Education should take man away from superstition, not

God. Prosperity makes man forget God. Wealth is accompanied by problems. When problems rear their heads, the wealthy man tries to solve them by money. A time comes when Life presents him problems that cannot be solved by money. Still he struggles. A greater moment arrives when his wealth is itself a problem and he sees he may lose all his wealth acquired over decades or centuries in one day. Then he rushes to God and often evokes no response. But he sees the crisis blows over. Now crises have become permanent in his life. His prayers are rarely answered. He resorts to all kinds of rituals, and develops sophisticated superstitions. No devotion wells up from inside.

Water is not scarce in Tamil Nadu or India or even in Madras. Our rainfall is 40"-60". Even when the monsoon fails, we get over 20" or 25". Countries with 11" of rainfall do not speak of water scarcity. Our use of water is casual, not one of discrimination. One who takes up that thread can physically solve the water crisis. Our cities are more prosperous than thirty years ago. The first development is the drying up of emotions. At home money becomes of greater value than human affection. In his inner psychological makeup, man shifts from God to himself. The spiritual emotion of **GRATITUDE** to **GOD** dries up. Religious rituals cannot raise that emotion. Devotion, piety, truth and sincerity can regenerate Gratitude. There lies a permanent solution to the water scarcity.

## 75. Yoga of Self-Giving

Sri Aurobindo discarded the usual methods of yoga and advocated Surrender as the only desirable method. Surrender is all-inclusive. The main strand of surrender is **Self-giving**. It is interesting to know the ways of Self-giving. **Its ways are peculiar. One of them is when someone wants to deprive you of something, he presses the key of Self-giving in the atmosphere.** The atmosphere gives you the same thing in a greater measure. This is a kind of transformation of evil into good. In the life of devotees, such instances are legion. Apart from giving some examples, I wish I could communicate to the reader the logic of life forces or the mechanism through which this force works.

Education is a discipline and exams are bitter pills. When you tell a story which can educate the child, the child avidly listens. It is easy for us to understand that the child is eager to listen to a story and a little education

comes through that. How to understand that one man's ill will ends up in my life as another man's good will? What happens, where, how? He who invokes the Spirit is enveloped in an atmosphere of **GOOD** will. Good will can only do good. Your boss activates that atmosphere by being angry at you, and desires to punish you. The atmosphere around you is activated. **It moves only in one way. It can do good. It does. The punishment the boss wants to give changes into a present.**

A mean boss deprived his subordinate the use of the office cycle to go home and return. It was a facility the subordinate had enjoyed for a long time. Now the boss decided to deprive him of it. The subordinate's neighbour offered to take him to the office and back on his motorbike. Everyone in the office offered the man their two-wheeler. It so happened that on a few days he was brought to the office in somebody's car. In ordinary life, this does happen, but very rarely. When it does happen, it happens once. In the lives of the devotees, this is a permanent feature. It will be a rich yogic knowledge if we can disregard the convenience and **SEE** how the Force works. It is a Force of Self-giving. It can only be benevolent even when the intention of the prime mover is evil. A further understanding awaits us. It is the exact means by which the atmosphere changes evil into good.

## 76. What is Education?

Some twenty children in the third standard were asked this question. There were twenty different answers. 'In education we learn a lot', 'I can become a doctor by education', 'We get information', 'We can know many things and fool others', 'By education I can get a job', etc. **Only one child answered, "I can become intelligent."** This is not a question for third standard. If twenty adults are asked this question, will the answer be far different?

I used to call education the yoga of the society. Next to yoga, it is the most powerful force in the society. Education helps an individual to do better than his parents in the society. This, education does, by giving him a **KNOWLEDGE**. Westerners have an education that makes them individuals. It gives them an individuality. A Westerner knows he alone can take care of himself and he depends on no one. He goes to extreme lengths to fully refuse any help from any quarter.

We in India know that our families take care of us. Our values are family values. The family educates us, gets us married, gets us a job. **Our education is not only from the school. We must be loyal to the family; family first, anything next.** Which is better is not my question. Each culture gives the individual its own education and it stands him in good stead. If the Westerner's individuality has made him prosper, should we not follow him? No. Should we accept the 'education' given by our culture? Our Spirit is high, very high and noble. In our culture the Spirit is for moksha. It is not for life. Sri Aurobindo says the Spirit can emerge in your life and make it one of pleasant sensation of plentiful abundance.

This education – Spirit in life – should be our goal for the future. In practice, it is spiritual values in life. Honesty, loyalty, integrity, cleanliness, Self-giving are the spiritual values. **They all sum up in a life of utter Truthfulness.** If we can give our children an education that gives them an experience in life that Truth is of value, and it is the only thing of value, we will have discharged our spiritual duty to the next generation. **Education is ORIGINAL understanding based on one's own life experience.** Can we devise our educational system in such a fashion that the pupil will get this understanding on his own personal experience?

## 77. Levels of Faith

Faith is considered blind and is called blind faith. We see the evidence of such faith everywhere, especially when the masses place their faith in politicians. This is a fertile ground of superstition, **but, for the faithful it pays rich dividends.** By such faith one passes an examination in which he has answered very poorly. His faith gets him even a second class in M.A. Literature. It is true this is superstitious. It is equally true it brings startling results up to a point, beyond which it breaks. Nehru's faith in Gandhiji was not based on his own understanding of the power of Satyagraha, but it was **based on his pure faith in the Mahatma.** Sardar Patel too believed in Gandhiji like Nehru. Their faith built a great Freedom Movement. When Independence approached, both refused to listen to Gandhiji. They listened to Lord Mountbatten instead.

The next level of faith is based on intelligent understanding. Instead of being blind, the follower tries to understand clearly and precisely the ideas. He does not believe unless what he believes in is clear to him. A scientist believes a theory like this. It is based on his

own understanding of the theory as proved by his own experiments, not as a dogma given to him by a great soul. **The scientist's faith is in the theory, not the one who discovered it.** In fact, the scientist ultimately believes in himself, in his own understanding. This is better described as understanding, not faith.

There is a still higher level of faith. The Divine Mother makes a statement. We understand Her explanation. The explanation gives a clear understanding. Now we believe not the understanding, but The Mother. **I accept this statement not because I understand it, but because Mother has made it.** The value of the statement issues from the fact it is made by Mother and not because I understand it. I will have equal faith even if I do not understand it.

This way, one refrains from being superstitious. Also he prefers to have faith in the Guru, not in himself. This is Faith for Faith's sake devoid of unintelligent superstition. **Faith of any description yields results. A superior faith brings superior results.** A boy having superstitious faith passes his M.A. in second class and becomes a lecturer in the university. One whose faith is based on understanding becomes an educationist of national eminence. **He who has the simple pure faith in the Divine, disregarding his crystal clear understanding that is precise, rises to become an original thinker who contributes to his subject attaining international eminence winning the Noble Prize.**

## 78. Sarva Arambha Parithyagi

Man thinks and acts, sometimes acts on impulse. In either case, he initiates an act. To allow the Spirit to act through him, he has to sacrifice his capacity for initiation – *arambha*. One who sacrifices – *thyagi* – all his initiatives – *Sarva arambha* – is a yogi. The Rishis sought moksha, the most arduous work man knows. Living in the forest, starving for days, protecting himself from poisonous reptiles and ferocious animals, the Rishi had to concentrate on his Spirit which is tapas. Nowhere has Man discovered a more dangerous adventure. Literally thousands after thousands of Rishis attained their goal of moksha. Hence their spiritual light is in our bodies. **Those heroes saw it would be a greater hazard to transform the body or even life.**

Our lives are lives of involuntary impulses. We do not initiate these acts. They initiate themselves. How can you sacrifice thirst or hunger or any impulse for that matter? Sri Aurobindo's yoga requires it *in toto* and

in full perfection. As I am addressing the *grahasta*, let me confine myself to mental impulses. The life and body are for the yogi. We know the mental urge to interrupt another's speech. To sacrifice that urge is to be civilised. Should one achieve it, he will be popular overnight at home and at the office. **A good listener is a successful executive.** This capacity is one of fifty mental urges. I wish our householder who invokes the Spirit sacrifices all those fifty urges. Should he succeed, he will become a national celebrity in his profession or maybe an international celebrity.

Immediately if the reader seriously tries to sacrifice – *thyaga* – half a dozen mental impulses, he will be catapulted into permanent **LUCK**. Each urge, to be explained, needs two or three articles of this length. If the **URGE** to dominate children, wife, subordinates, submissive friends is sacrificed to perfection, one's inner life will be one of spiritual Peace, and his outer life will be saturated with what may be termed **Spiritual opulence**. One version of it will be the rise in income ten-fold. As long as you get it, do two things: 1. Don't argue how it was possible, and 2. Discover your own mental state that brought about that **LUCK**. If you discover it, please write to me. It will be self-explanatory and will enable you to make it a permanent faculty. With that individual, I consider, any relationship is a privilege.

## 79. Revolution of Rising Expectations

Harlan Cleveland is a well-known American writer. While he was in government service in Taiwan, he noticed among the population their growing expectation from life. Its revolutionary potential made him coin the phrase which is the title of this article. It is a truism in the field of development that a society will really develop when its members take it into their own hands. Any work of the government or other agencies may do the initial spade work, but it is not capable of consummating the process of development – a high degree of Prosperity. **It reduces to man wanting more and more as days pass by.** It is now known as consumerism, the wrong side of healthy development of ever-increasing Prosperity. This movement is an unconscious urge to grow or, sometimes, a progress in superstition.

Education makes this unconscious urge into a conscious aspiration. Once the boy is educated he refuses a daily wage of Rs. 100 as a labourer and prefers to travel fifty

miles for a non-manual employment with a Rs. 1000 monthly salary. Drivers and domestic servants straining every nerve to put their children into expensive private schools is a common occurrence now. **Education makes the society conscious and awakened. The healthiest symptom in India today is that people are education-conscious.** I would happily say that anyone, at any age, acquiring a further degree is a patriotic service to Mother India. One's career prospects brighten that way. Taking a look at countries that top the list of rich countries, one sees all of them have made universal education compulsory between 1900 and 2000. Some of them achieved it earlier.

In our society wanting more – consumerism – is rightly frowned upon. It is not wrong in the economic sense, but it is undesirable in the spiritual sense. In the least of men wanting more is a silly superstition. In the enlightened man, wanting more of education, skills, and comforts is national aspiration, not to be frowned upon. **This wanting more is the growing market of the expanding national economy.** When we want more and more modern comforts at home and in the office, and rightly, we expand the national economy and the growth rate looks up. **As everywhere, the wrong or right resides in the mind, not in the act. Particularly here, the very act of wanting more is a patriotic ACT.**

## 80. Consecration in the Subtle Plane

Consecration means to transfer the work to the Divine. Instead of doing a work for ourselves, we do it for the Divine. In a work so consecrated, we can see it takes place more smoothly than usual. It will come to a pleasant conclusion. One can see the normal obstacles are absent. Sometimes the usual troublemakers will cooperate. Consecration makes a protracted work encumbered by several obstacles smooth, pleasant, and quick. This is the experience of devotees.

What then is the consecration in the subtle plane? Whether it is the physical plane or subtle plane, the procedure of work remains the same. In the subtle plane, work is very swift, and the procedure will be smooth beyond expectation.

A college admission has its procedures. When you seek the help of someone in the college office, it becomes easier. How easy it is depends on the status of your friend in the office. The Principal too cannot dispense with the procedures. When the Principal wants to oblige you with the admission, work moves from the top down. Its

character is different. Consecration in the subtle plane is of that character. Our personality is in grades. At the lowest is the physical personality. At the top is the spiritual personality. Each plane – physical, vital, mental – has its subtle extension.

We were invited by a Cabinet Minister for some advice on matters agricultural. The Minister was impressed by our programme. He called his secretary and entrusted him with the work. The work passed through 25 meetings and one and a half years. We didn't know the status of the programme. Our member was wondering about the inordinate delay. Then we considered consecration and consecration in the subtle plane. Within one week someone who came for a professional work spoke about agriculture. Seeing a copy of the programme, he said he had a hundred acres at his disposal. Next week he brought the news that his friend was willing to invest Rs.1.5 crores. The foreign consultant was in India on another work. We called an experienced farmer to consult him about a candidate for managing the farm. On his own, he offered to manage it. What could not be done in one and a half years, happened in two weeks.

Our personality exists from physical to the Spiritual. Taking up consecration, it will be successfully completed in due time by physical consecration. At the level of Spiritual consecration, it is capable of abridging the time to one tenth. The higher the consecration, the better the result. **Supramental consecration is capable of yielding instantaneous results.**

## 81. The Westernised Indian

The more prosperous people are, the less they believe in God. It is true with education too. Prof. S. Chandrasekaran, who won the Nobel Prize in physics, could not see any reality in the concept of God. **His education weaned his mind away from God.** God was not even a permissible concept for him. Confronted with a problem of life, the Westerner will rarely think of God. Instead, he will try harder each time. When his best efforts fail, he will grow stoical and masculine to muster courage to silently suffer it without sharing his woes with another. Resort to God is the ready impulse of an Indian. These are the responses of lesser mortals.

In India the most respected man is the one who seeks God. In the West that high pedestal goes to the scientist and the intellectual, not the God-lover. The West developed Mind. Mind developed individuality. The growing success of individuality alienated him from God. By a strange turn of events, the Westerner chose not to take bath. Toynbee speaks of the stench on the Westerner which

gives a faint to those who do not eat meat. To us, bath is called daily bath. Often it is more than once. Any ritual is preceded by a bath. God does not descend on dirty surroundings. The Jews in all cold countries are meticulously clean. Of course, when you are freezing, bath is not inviting. Biographers speak of leading intellectuals like Karl Marx and Hemingway rarely taking bath.

**Any capacity of man increasing makes man forget God.** To lose faith in the Divine and shift that faith to oneself is in essence Westernisation of the Mind. All the values that issue from that mind-set are values that can make the human personality dry, even rotten. Man is man because God dwells in him. Man cut off from those springs of Spirit is a bundle of flesh and a basket of skills worth throwing away. The Mother said the Britisher stayed here too long and those who have accepted the British values in mind – 30% – have become rotten. The light of the Rishis is there in the bodies of the others. A Westernised mind, a Westernised life prides in its Western values in every facet of life. Such a man is lost. He is a statue not consecrated. When Sri Aurobindo visited a Kali temple, Kali came out of the statue and gave him Darsan. No Kali will emerge from an unconsecrated statue, however exquisite it is. **Education is good. Technology is good, but beware of Westernisation, especially Westernisation of mental values.**



## 82. The GOOD Man

A good person is born good. It is his *swabhava*. By a good upbringing many people remain good. When people suddenly come into wealth, the good in them often comes to the surface. Success, wealth, education, etc. have been known to bring out the innate good in man. **A man is GOOD if he is treated as a good man. You are how you are treated.**

In Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Prof. Higgins supported by Col. Pickering makes the flower girl Eliza appear as a duchess. That was the power of phonetics and training. On the day she successfully completed it, she broke down and quarreled with the Professor for the unpardonable neglect she had suffered at his hands. Higgins protested, saying, 'I have made you a lady'. The illiterate Eliza replied to the learned Professor, "One does not become a lady learning the rules of the game. The Colonel treated me as a lady. He calls me 'Miss Doolittle'. He won't take off his socks in my presence. It is he who made me behave as a lady, and not all your phonetics."

**This is a powerful truth of life.** When you see **ONLY** the good side of a man and refuse to see the other side, you will witness that he begins to behave like a good man. Persisting in your attitude, there is a good chance of his becoming a good man. **It is a great result which may issue out of your kindly attitude towards him. Surely, he will be good towards you.** If your own innate goodness is real, really spiritual, his changing into a good person has a greater chance. To be good in the society is something anyone can do. It must be done. To be innately **GOOD** in one's *swabhava* is something one is born with.

Should such a person recognise his inner darkness and want to be good, he will find life, our rituals, *stotras*, *slokas*, *pujas*, *mantras*, *japas*, etc. are powerless to achieve it. He must take to tapas. **If only his desire to change is true, his invoking the Spirit can launch him on that path.** Even here, one strong invocation totally dissolves the evil in him. That is possible. But most people like their previous personality. One thought is enough to call it back. A Tamil proverb speaks of man calling back the evil being to visit him at least once. To be **GOOD** and pleasant to others is a civilised privilege. We must hasten to exercise that right.

### 83. The Words that Ring True

Life is submerged in an ocean of words. Words emanate from us endlessly and impinge on us forever. They all dissolve and disappear. Of course, several words remain in our memory ever fresh. **But we also know the phenomenon of some casual words remaining in our memory and constantly repeating with a vigour.** On closer examination, we see they are words spoken to us at a crucial moment of our lives. Still, these are words and phrases apparently frivolous such as, “This is not the way of doing it,” “Whatever you do, you do with grace,” “I shall never accept your idea.” Further analysis shows that memory retains compliments.

Still utterly meaningless words often ring in our ears and defy our understanding. **They are the words of other descriptions of our insistent character which we try in vain to change.** You may be one who constantly projects your views on others and you have now come to realise this has to be given up. So the words “I shall never accept

your idea” stick to the memory. One may see a dozen or two dozen words that remain in the mind and refuse to disappear. **They are the points of character where one needs inner change.** To accept them as a subconscious guidance is valuable in life, and essential in yoga. If you are argumentative, you will see several arguments of old constantly rearing their heads. Each argument will come from a certain person or his words. You may be thinking you are being bothered by an old event. Truly it is not so. That argument represents a thought which you have not understood. Stop there. Try to fully understand that argument. When the understanding is emotionally accepted, that argument will cease to appear in the memory.

**Man is what he understands. As long as a certain understanding defies the mind, it will be appearing in the Mind.** Suppose you were unable to help a friend several years ago and the event recurs in your mind, it means you wish to acquire the capacity to help another. It will suddenly disappear when you acquire the capacity. In this case, the recurring words are symbolic of your endeavour at progress. We always say, “Those words are ringing in my Mind.” They are the frontiers of our personality where we strain our utmost to widen our inner domain.

## 84. Moral Attitude to Work

The ordinary man is often an adored member of the society. He is hailed as a model man. Such a man will follow all the social rules, and never transgress the social boundaries. He will conform to the norms of the society, honour his own conscience and **be held up as a perfect gentleman. Such men during their school days win all the GOOD BOY prizes.** This is all right; but this is not all. Some children are gifted, while others are unruly. The precocious children will always be found **NOT** to fit into the society at one point or the other. Should one be born a prodigy, the rule is his life will be miserable. The genius has always suffered at the hands of the family, society, government, etc.

The rule of the moral man is, 'He who is not a friend is an enemy'. This is not true. Society consists of both friends and enemies but also a great mass of people outside that. **To consider one who is not a friend as an enemy is a dangerous attitude.** I am not concerned about the

rare individual who is born a genius. Now that India is free and education more widespread, more and more children are born with a **WILL** of their own, and are less eager to conform. They suffer at the hands of parents who have a well-defined **MORAL** attitude. "My child does not obey. He is a bad boy." A parent must have a sense of whether the child is evil or good. Out of ten rough children, only **ONE** will be bad. Even there it is the violence of the ununderstanding parent that makes him bad. **There are occasions where the parent needs to congratulate himself as his child is out of the ordinary, if not outstanding.**

Reading about the lives of many achievers who are not geniuses, one sees how much the child suffered because of lack of understanding in the parent. Churchill was at the 30<sup>th</sup> rank in a class of 30 not because he was dull — he was a genius — but because his mother cruelly neglected him, thinking his poor performance in the school revealed he was dull. Churchill was considered a bully at school. Is it a sin for the child to be born with a broader mind than his parents? Now-a-days, that is more the rule than the exception. **A very rigid MORAL attitude to work is likely to inflict an undue punishment on the child.** Personally I am a sad witness of many such children whose suffering is avoidable.

## 85. The Power of Co-ordination

Co-operation is to offer direct help in a work. Co-ordination is to alter our work in such a way that another person's work will be facilitated. The sugar mill's scheduling its crushing operation in time with the farmers' cutting the cane is co-ordination. Such co-ordination is vital for many functions. Where it is not vital for its survival, such co-ordination creates a new opportunity that spreads to the end of the world. **Families that know this truth in some fashion rise sky-high.** For personal progress one can coordinate his various faculties or talents. An industry which tries to consciously coordinate with the different wings of the society will soon spread all over the state or the nation.

A hundred crore organisation that tried to coordinate its activities with a tiny organisation gave birth to a new lease of life in both companies. The Boy Scouts is a service organisation. A newspaper serves as a media. They do not think in terms of one another. The fact is the Scouts need media coverage. The newspaper never

thinks in terms of how much expansion its circulation can have when they organisationally relate to each other. **Co-ordination is a great powerful principle. For that to yield results, an equally great strategy is needed on both sides.** Some decades ago universities in America tried to consciously relate to their social environment. One result was the birth of the Community College. Thoughtful coordination generates new institutions all over.

The Internet is the latest miracle organisation. The world has been singing its praises for nearly a decade. One well-known writer classified it as a result of the marriage between telecommunication and computer. If a family of five or six people fully understands and appreciates this principle of co-ordination and practises it religiously, after a few decades that family will be spread all over the map, while their compeers will be local luminaries. To locate one's faculties – Memory, Intelligence, Imagination, Patience, Capacity, etc. – and intelligently co-ordinate them will raise one in his career to the position he would normally achieve at the time of retirement. The power of punctuality is famous. It is hailed as the manners of Princes. **The power of co-ordination is a Himalaya compared with efficient punctuality. It is based on Harmony. Mother sorely felt its absence in Her work.**

## 86. How Consecration Accomplishes Itself

Consecration accomplishes. To consecrate means to make sacred. Doing a work for ourselves is human. **To do it for the Divine is consecration.** When you protect the weak from the cruelty of the strong, you protect that individual. It is a personal help to him. It is an individual act benefiting a single individual. Suppose you consecrate that act of protection, consecration accomplishes that act. A magistrate punishing the offender upholds the law and announces to all cruel persons that they would be punished. The magistrate protects all possible victims by punishing one of them. As you are consecrating, **instead of trying to protect your friend, if you feel the cruelty to weak people, your protecting one man will, through consecration, offer protection to all weak people.**

As the character of consecration becomes deeper, the results will be wider. Also the results will be quicker. There is a beyond. It is not merely to protect the weak. It is to prevent the strong from being cruel. Consecration

at that level will be comprehensive and instantaneous. This whole thing sounds merely theoretical. How can we practise this principle? In our own personality there are various levels. The same work can be consecrated from various levels with varying results. Take the issue of a man losing his job. It may be due to a punishment or retrenchment. Even when he gets the job back, he will see it takes a few weeks or some months after an administrative ordeal. Consecration makes things positive and possible, but it acts according to the depth from which it is consecrated.

In one case, it comes back to him after a few months. In another, he gets it in a week. Standing on the extreme borders of his personality, had he consecrated the loss of job as soon as he received the orders, **he would have witnessed the miracle of the tide changing in his favour and the next day or the day after his orders being cancelled. It will not go on record at all.** Consecration always accomplishes. The deeper you are centred in your personality, the quicker is the result. One is generally on the surface of his personality. He has to go to the depths. In doing so, he walks into the various planes of subtlety. The more subtle, the more powerful. **To be able to consecrate in the most powerful way and get the greatest result, one should catch the thought as soon as it enters us.** To do so, we must be constantly thinking of The Mother.

## 87. Flourishing Evil in the Country

After an intense wave of atheism immediately following the war, we now witness a surge of religious worship in Tamil Nadu. Perhaps it is an All-India phenomenon. Hundreds of temples have been consecrated and renovated. Thousands throng the erstwhile deserted temples. As a rule, the income of temples from devotee visitors has been steadily increasing. House construction is being presided over by *vaastu*. **Alongside we see the deterioration of moral standards all over the country.** Why does evil flourish while everywhere people turn to God? When it rains copiously, crops grow abundantly. Simultaneously weeds also grow in over abundance. To God, man-made crops and the jungle growth are of equal importance. Perhaps God works through Truth as well as evil. At least that is what Sri Aurobindo says.

How then do we meet the growing evil in life? It is inescapable. It will meet you at many points in life. The

rapid growth of good at some time or other overcomes the growing evil. Or the evil is weeded out in time. Maybe the growth of evil will be stunted. These are the ways Nature has been functioning all along. Is there no better alternative than what Nature offers us? **Evil flourishes only as long as EGO survives.** If man comes forward to shed his ego, it will end the existence of evil. Sri Aurobindo says there is no evil created. It is only ego that sees **GOOD** as evil. This is a philosophy the world has not heard of so far. How do we understand it and accept it? My answer is we must understand it as we understand a new technology and accept it as we assimilate the new technology.

The world has always been skeptical of new inventions and sometimes stiffly opposed them. But finally no new technology has ever been rejected. Evil does not exist even as karma does not exist. They have power over us only when we believe in them. When we withdraw our support to them, they cannot survive. **In our daily practice, when we invoke the Spirit, the evil moves away from its path. Once we invoke the Spirit we no longer meet with evil as we do now.** Invocation of the Spirit can solve the problem of evil for the Individual. For the collective we have first to deal with it philosophically before we devise our method in practice.

## 88. Insight and Intuition

Sherlock Holmes has captured the imagination of the world. When a crime is committed, we find ourselves taking almost the same view as the police. Several others in the story also take that view. **It is a view taken by us dictated by the circumstances.** That view never solves the mystery of any Sherlock Holmes story. Holmes goes to the root of the mystery disregarding the popular view, detects the criminal, solves the mystery. He says he does so by insight and intuition. Though he was a detective, there is a profound truth in his belief. What is this insight or intuition? Is it possible for us to understand it or acquire it?

Sometimes the evidence against a man will be compelling but he may give a feeling of innocence. In such cases, it is best to give the benefit of doubt to him and explore those possibilities. That way one may be led to an insight. **Such an insight comes to one who has a broader view of life, a knowledge of the ways**

**of life known as wisdom.** When a man is accused of murder, if you find his looks innocent, better explore the avenues of his innocence. You will stumble upon very valuable evidence. To a trained eye or to a sensitive eye, the looks reveal the truth. He who has that sensitivity can develop insight. **Insight is the capacity to place the event in its original psychological context and not in its social appearance.** One law of life is that true innocence will not attract any punishment.

Believing in that truth of life, and examining the circumstance of the act or behind the act, one will be rewarded with the **FACTS** of the case. The capacity to believe in innocence is the capacity to respect the Spirit. It acts as a mild invocation of the Spirit and changes the course of the enquiry. The activated mind thinks as everyone else's. The silent mind refuses to bring in the popular prejudices. That invites the Silence of the Spirit. The Spirit by its atmosphere enables us to have the insight into the circumstances which others are denied. When five people have been searching for a lost object for some time in vain, your silent mind will give you the capacity to catch sight of the object. It is the insight of vision. Insight generally comes as a thought, but can arise through any of the senses. Alert senses avail of insight. Intuition is a greater and more powerful faculty than insight. Insight serves as a door that opens on Intuition.

## 89. The Wisdom of Superstition

When patients or clients have to choose a doctor or lawyer, they look for the most qualified and popular. **The perceptive population will raise the question, is the man known for *RASI*?** It is actually known as *kairasi*. What the client desires to know is not how experienced the lawyer is, but whether he wins the cases. It is consummate wisdom popularly considered rank superstition. The wonder of life is when the rational, sophisticated, superior clients discover their lawyers or doctors have miserably failed, they do go to these *rasi* professionals and have themselves cured. A greater wonder is that the next time they need a doctor, they will avoid the *rasi* doctor.

There was a town with a good foreign population. There were very highly qualified experienced doctors. One man got jaundice. He went to the best of doctors. It did not pay. Profoundly sophisticated arguments accumulated. There was no cure. Another man was afflicted. He went to another doctor. The same story repeated.

Almost all the foreigners were infected by jaundice. No one was cured. At last American woman developed the symptoms of jaundice and was diagnosed with it by a leading physician in the town. In spite of their being foreigners, they had faith in someone. He directed her to a diploma holder who had served in the military and was known for his rough treatment. That doctor asked, “Are you eating papaya?” “Yes,” was the answer. “You are not suffering from jaundice. Stop eating papaya and the symptoms will disappear. There is no harm in eating them. The jaundice symptoms will reappear. Don’t be alarmed.” **There was a great relief in the foreign population.**

*Kairasi* expresses through common sense. Often when a professional has *kairasi*, he is not endowed with simple common sense, but the *rasi*, in spite of his stupidity, manages to bring out the right result. **What is known as *RASI* is the spiritual force and wisdom which acts best through intelligence and common sense. Even in their absence, it manages through a circuitous erroneous route to bring about the most excellent results.** Invocation of the Spirit, calling Mother, inner calm, poise, incapacity to react, the sheet anchor of spiritual Peace, the wisdom that sees vulgar abuse as God’s choice gift, in short the quintessence of Indian spiritual culture that makes a brute of a man into an ethical, moral, civilised, spiritual individual of desirable manners can give one that **RASI** in an ever-increasing abundance.



## 90. Flawless Perfection

Work is done well or not. Its result is in proportion to the efficiency. When it is not done well, there will be no result. Whatever the work, **it requires an energy, interest, skill, attention, concentration, experience and perfection.** If all of them are there, the work gives good results. If it is food, it tastes good. If it is a wedding function, it ends with a note of all-round satisfaction. When a tailor makes a pair of shorts in the above description, the customer finds it fits well. If any of the above elements are lacking, it results in a shabby product and starts a quarrel.

We gave Bharat Vidya Bhavan a 100 page booklet containing the findings of the International Commission on Peace and Food, intending to submit it in a personal meeting with the Prime Minister. It was printed partly at our cost. The pages were altered, the tabular column was in a different place, and errors abounded. On being questioned, the press manager said that we must learn to live with them. It was done at the insistence of the Chairman of Bhavans. To say the least, they should have

properly reprinted it or returned our contribution. It was the height of irresponsible callousness. We never made any claim. That was the standard of a premier organisation in 1995. They are a species who will sooner or later be extinct. In a competitive market of increasing quality, they cannot survive long. **Work, especially work taken as a token experiment of discovering the Infinite out of the finite, MUST be perfect, flawlessly perfect.** We often hear of several people who rise meteorically. In them you will find at least one element of flawless perfection. That is why they rise.

I invite people to undertake any simple work and do it flawlessly to perfection. It may be printing a book, conducting a meeting, negotiating a deal, etc. **Should it qualify for flawless perfection, the next moment they will be catapulted to a high position.** It may be 99% successful. For that single flaw the result will be like the snake in “snakes and ladders”. That person will drop down. In life he may be utterly ruined. **In Mother, he will certainly not be ruined, but the loss will be great. Instead of the Chief Ministership that beckoned him through perfection, this flaw will make him the P.A. to the C. M.** Those who have absolutely no talents and understand themselves as **USELESS**, if they have faith in Mother and try along these lines, they will gradually receive all the above qualifications one after the other, so that they may attempt the flawless perfection in time.

## 91. Occult Victory

Mother says the greatest of victories are not announced by the beat of a drum. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo came into the world to announce the Hour of God, the Advent of the Supramental Being. **But their activities were legion. They rarely spoke of them.** The subtle world is invisible but it is exactly like our human world. The subtle world is **NOT** Spiritual. The occult world too is invisible, but it is of a different order, as the dealer of a product is different from the manufacturer. It can be said that one is the quasi government and the other the regular government. The Mother had learnt the occult science in Africa. Sri Aurobindo never paid attention to that branch of knowledge.

Once Mother went up and stood above the earth in the occult plane. It was, she said, pitch dark. She saw there a very tall dark figure. He was trying to create a storm to hit the earth with two shafts of force. Seeing

that, Mother clenched her fists to prevent it. The being could not do it. Still the shafts without power descended on earth and hit some nation. Mother thought it might have been Russia. The shafts were powerful enough to destroy a nation but Mother allowed the shafts, not their power. A week later she heard of the Chinese build-up on the Indian border. **SHE put there stability and safety. After some time, the Chinese withdrew, assigning no reason.** It was at the same time, November 20, 1962, when the USA blockaded Cuban waters and Khrushchev later withdrew the missiles he had sent there. Mother acted on Her own and never spoke of it.

The devotees see in their own lives two murderers confronting and being cowed down. A lady standing before a running bus cried out, “Mother” and she was physically lifted by what, Mother knows, and thrown outside the route of the bus. Mother acts, she always acts. We are blind and unconscious. Life has three minutes for you to decide whether it is life or death. Calling Mother saves. **To know Mother acts and how SHE acts is to be conscious. When one is conscious, that capacity to invoke the Force is permanent.** Dozens of such incidents have been reported by the devotees. Only that they know the results, not the process. Beyond the process lies the essence that is Brahman.

## 92. Good Will vs. Ill Will

People are self-centred. Some have extraordinary Good Will. Those who act on good will witness what they do expand in the lives of the recipient. Mother says every will in Man is ill will. Good will is rare. A man with a 5<sup>th</sup> class general qualification had become a Tamil Pandit. His management took a kindly interest in him and persuaded him to appear for the SSLC exam. He was very poor, as in those prewar days his salary was Rs.25. How could he afford to pay the exam fee of Rs.15, buy the text books and pay for his tuition? After several years of psychological endeavour of the higher type, he brought himself to memorise a few essays which luckily appeared as questions. He passed the exam. It pressed him to pass the intermediate exam. He who helped him to pass SSLC refused to help further. The Pandit persisted. It was pulling teeth. He memorised a few essays. They didn't appear as questions. **In one of his several attempts, luck favoured and he barely scraped through. Now the idea of B.A. possessed him as a devil.**

He was ashamed of asking for help. When he did, peals of laughter came as the answer. He forgot his wild

dream. Then he met someone who was a linguistic expert. He taught him to write correct English. That made him take the degree in three attempts. Here begins the impulse of Good will. Those were days when the Tamil Pandit's name would be entered in the attendance register at the end before the name of the peon. **Good will is of the Spirit. It does not stop at its goal.** It has the capacity to grow, self-multiply. This man who, after passing B.A., could not even write a leave letter, now passed B.T. and M.A. in Tamil and became a headmaster. The one who had helped him on the strength of his innate good will gave up teaching and came by a sizable property. As the rule is unfailing, the Pandit who received help turned against the benefactor and tried to ruin him utterly, of course, in vain.

A servant girl was good at heart. Hers was pure goodness. Her mother and brothers turned against her, teased her, punished her, tyrannised her, wanted to ruin her. The atmosphere of Grace where she worked effectively protected her against the ordeal of tyranny. Grace gave her a great marriage and wealth. Now the family woos her. One of her well-wishers advised her to help her family rise as a gesture of good will, little realising that **ill will served by Good will would ruin her completely. Not only that, the family would enjoy trampling her under their feet when she fell.** Family affection in the presence of active ill will is a sure self-poisoning. It is a dangerous experiment. Society lauds it. Spiritual experience warns against it.

### 93. Innate Goodness and its Limits

A German husband was mean and perverse. Also he was tyrannical. He fell ill and no cure was in sight. **The wife was a devotee and was fully devoted to him in spite of what he was to her.** Man or woman is social. Better men are moral and ethical. The desire to do **GOOD** takes possession of such souls at times of crises. Especially when a rival or enemy is in inextricable trouble, it is a sight to see such good persons straining every nerve to go all out to help the undeserving scoundrel of a man. Still the urge is insurmountable. Suppose one is saved from a gang of bandits in the forest by a robber. An emotion of gratitude for the robber emerges. What is the immediate outcome? If you happen to have a few valuables, the first impulse of the robber is to murder you so that he may rob you.

**Gratitude is divine. But one needs to have precise discrimination. Otherwise grateful emotions to robbers or bandits or even valueless men will kill you.** On our moral personality, this idea jars. Looking at the innumerable events of our scripture, history and fiction,

this will be found to be a **RULE** without exception. Basmasuran, having received a boon from Shiva, tried to kill him!

I have in my life of 75 years **NEVER** had a single trouble or problem. It was grace. But everyone who knows me knows of my life teeming with minor and major tragedies. **Every one of them came exactly out of my foolish impulse to help those whom I considered friends but who were those who harboured intense ill will.** Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri* says we invite our enemies as guests to our house. The German lady mentioned above intensely prayed. Her husband was saved. **AT ONCE** he started tyrannising her more than ever. She wrote to Mother. Mother replied, "A dying man can be saved, but blatant foolishness cannot be saved even by grace."

Grace is a pure neutral **FORCE**. It is powerful, capable of moving mountains. An intense unbearable stomach pain that persists after strong medication instantly disappears on invoking Grace. A huge debt collected over decades, several times the value of the property, **NOW** presented to Grace with a heart repenting of the erring past, vanishes in a trice. But it is powerless against wilful folly that enjoys its comprehensive perfection. This whole analysis will be found to be exact when we analyse the tyranny meted out to us by others. **Its real yogic use lies in discovering our own propensities of such nature to our parents, children, friends and benefactors. There lies the CLUE to spirituality.**

## 94. Duty is More Powerful than Grace

Grace is God choosing to act on his own, for his own reasons, unknowable by human reason. **Man too is God in his depths. Sri Aurobindo says that Jivatma is Paramatma, against the traditional belief that Jivatma has no innate reality and has to dissolve in Paramatma.** God, in his infinite wisdom, knows **MAN** is Himself and fully honours the freedom of choice of the Individual who chooses to act on his own. Often we ask why God did not save me, why did he let me down. It is so because in our depths we are **GOD** with the fullest freedom of Brahman. The Upanishads say *Sarvam Brahman*. Hence that extraordinary story of this exact **TRUTH**. Shiva, like an obliging husband, threw a gold bar on the path of a poor man prompted by Parvati and the **MAN** exercised his prerogative of freedom by closing his eyes till he had walked past the golden bar!

Very few people realise the full spiritual value of completely discharging their duties. **Man acts freely**

**as long as he is not checked by social pressure.** If you are spiritually perceptive, take a list of every one of your works that stalls, stalls for weeks or years. Exercise your memory painstakingly. You will come upon the exact act you have done to someone. Almost all the details will tally. Now regret having done it. At once the present block will be removed. Hundreds of devotees have this experience. **Only that they do not like it even after getting the result.** Acts have life. Wilful acts have virulent life. Mind, if it is understanding or good, has the capacity to reverse the old movement.

A family was ruined. They had a few hundred creditors. Imagine the daily harassment. Eight years ago they came to Mother. New comforts arise, but old tortures remain. It took them time to realise this rule of the effective past life. They understood, but were incapable of fully reversing in their minds the old acts. Vast opportunities arose on the horizon. But they stand outside the door. Much of their gruesome suffering is relieved. But creditors, their calls, their visits, their harassment are a nightmare. Mother has reduced the hundred events to ten. Even one is enough to shatter a man. Many good things happened in the family, but the little tortures remain unremoved. The boy got a job on a good salary. The family needs every rupee urgently. **But from his first salary, he voluntarily sent the bank an instalment of his educational loan.** It is spiritual wisdom.

## 95. Youth Versus Age

Youth is energetic, age is wilting; youth looks forward, age is one foot in the grave; youth is overflowing, age is shrinking; youth is shiny, age is dull; youth exudes hope, age is in despair; youth can support others, age needs the support of others. **This is true in life, not in Spirit. In Spirit, if age misses many attributes of youth, it has acquired several other attributes. Hence the being always has undiminished possibilities,** which means at no time is there a loss for the embodied being. This is a philosophy that will strike many as strange. The lives of men who have succeeded late in life will confirm this. If any such men share with you their experience, you will discover that they have lost nothing at all.

There is more. It belongs to Spirit as a special characteristic. Moving to the Spirit is moving to a world of wonder. It has the capacity to compensate the loss in youth. As it has the capacity to neutralize the earlier

loss, at a higher level the Spirit has the capacity to transform the loss into gain. Those who are failures in life will be happy to become a success, however late that success arrives. There are those who have missed a college degree. Others have been neglected children in youth. Many have entered government service as a clerk and retired as a senior clerk, not having been promoted as officer. **A good many have missed a good many meals.** Having been a neglected child, neglected by the parents is not an ordinary psychological loss. The rule is the same for all.

The one question is whether you are willing to invoke the Spirit. When you succeed, the very first thing you witness is your getting in abundance what you missed earlier. That everyone has experienced. What they may not have noticed is the FACT that those who were with you during the period of your neglect and who were not so neglected will not be so cheerful as you are now. Had you received your due in youth, it would not have been so rich as it is now, as NOW you are receiving these benefits in the rich experience of age when you can better appreciate them. The Spirit is different from life. **The Spirit in life is different from the Spirit, as the Prime Ministers now are different from the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.** Life gives leadership. Spirit in life makes the leader a Gandhiji.

## 96. The Power of Will

I was attending a student meeting conducted outside a god-forsaken house, as those were dangerous days to talk of freedom. At the age of 18 or 19 the heart longs for intense affection. Someone of my age standing close to me came near and asked who I was. I briefly replied. As both of us were students of the university, he asked why I should not shift my house next to his. **My heart jumped in joy as someone unknown till that moment could shower that physical affection.** Today is his birthday and my heart goes to him though I have not met him for twenty years due to my discipline. He whom I gave up lives in my emotions rich and full. **That is the power of emotional will.** One may have ideas, ideals, launch actions, but what achieves is the **STRENGTH** of his will, especially the Will of his emotions.

A prominent chin expresses the determined opinion that has no strength of personality. The stiff body with the stomach pushed slightly forward shows the pride of emptiness. Emptiness is the psychological expression of poverty. **What achieves is will, the strength of will,**

**the organisation of will, the knowledge of will, the clarity of the structure of will.** One who has it, enjoys it and uses it. What about those who do not have a will of their own? A flexible thumb is total absence of will. A stoop of the body is lack of energy. When energy is lacking, will does not form itself. Life has a process of forming the will and strengthening it. It puts him under a dominant person who orders him about, tyrannizes over him, and metes out cruel treatment. Often such people are starved but are awarded double the load of work. **To do double the work with an empty stomach, one needs a will stronger than others. It is physical will.**

If you are the best worker in an organisation, the boss in the presence of others ridicules you as inefficient. The vital revolts. Not to revolt but to nod assent requires enormous strength of vital will. The most intelligent man is classified as the dumbest of the lot. The mind is disgusted. Not to be disgusted or to continue the normal behaviour overcoming the mental disgust requires the Iron will of the Mind. This is the process of life to develop the will. **The process is inescapable. When the Spirit is invoked, the suffering of long years is abridged into short months.** If you go deep down into your personality, then you will see it is not the depth. Going down further, you will feel as if you are at the bottom of the ocean. Even this is not the depth. Cross it. **There will be a splendour of brilliant white light. That is the Spirit. If you call Mother from there, the will will become formidable.**

## 97. Simplicity, Austerity and Luxury

Simplicity is the unostentatious quiet strength of inner poise that is indifferent to outer appearance. Luxury is focused attention on the external appearance of splendour in utter disregard of inner content. **That which ineffectually seeks the non-existent inner strength, is incapable of any worthwhile external appearance, and violently refuses what it has not, is Austerity, *Vrta*.** Mother says austerity is for the child soul. A man was selected for the post of an MLA with bright chances of success. On the morning of polling he was missing. A search discovered him in his cow shed where boys were making balls of cow dung costing a rupee each. He was cautious not to miss anything there. He lost his election. In a sense, Austerity is of that type.

King Janaka was a great soul, greater than the Rishis of the time. Narada desired to discover the truth himself. Narada is a god. Gods have souls, not the psychic, the evolving soul. Man alone can have the psychic when

he wants to develop it. **Gods who live in timelessness cannot develop the Psychic even if they want it.** Should they seek it, they must be born on earth as men. Narada, not having the Psychic, saw the royal role of Janaka living in splendour and exercising authority. Narada declared that Janaka was no Rishi, while the fact is Janaka was greater than all the Rishis. It needs the psychic perception to see that the external luxury leaves the inner soul untouched.

In the last chapter of *The Life Divine* entitled 'Divine Life', Sri Aurobindo discusses Simplicity, Austerity and Luxury. There He says Divine Life can be simple or luxurious. There is no condition. It is the choice of the inner evolving soul. A scholar who seeks the ultimate knowledge can seek it from a sannyasi under a tree or a professor in a university. What matters is knowledge. Any stipulation generates superstition. Jawaharlal Nehru was educated in Cambridge, ended up in Sabarmathi Ashram, and moved to the commodious mansion of the commander-in-Chief some months after his becoming the Prime Minister. The need of the hour decides the externals, not the other way around. Have you ever seen a picture of God in rags? Those who have had a vision of God in their meditation have never found him in rags. The inner content matters, not the outer appearance.



## 98. “Count Your Chickens Before They are Hatched”

A management consultant is speaking this idea and has published a book with this title. It is directly counter to our traditional wisdom. I agree with the wisdom of the ages and with what this title says. Let me explain how both are true. **Sri Aurobindo says that each truth has its opposite which is also true.** What is the truth in each statement? A space shuttle was launched and was scheduled to land in a particular place and at a particular time. It did land in the earmarked place and at the expected minute. How does that happen? When you know **ALL** about a work as perfectly as it should be known, it happens at it is expected, down to the minute. When you plan a work in which your knowledge of the parts is incomplete, you cannot predict the results. **If the Mind is unexpectant, it loses the capacity to interfere. Absence of interference accomplishes.** The author of the above book advocates that India can equal the USA in income in 2025 A.D.

It is a laudable aim. I may not entirely agree with the process he suggests. But, **the great wisdom behind**

**the title is striking and fascinating.** We have hundreds of examples in life but we do not look at them that way, nor do we draw the lessons from them. There are many villages where you can leave the house unlocked, go out and return after a week. **Nothing will be missing.** It is so because there is culture in the place. In any office, the coming inspection introduces **PANIC**. There are a few offices where inspection is **NEVER** prepared for. It passes off like any other normal day, **because in that office on any given day the work is normally completed.** Haven't you known friends who for a long time have not uttered one bitter word to each other? These are rare but are true.

Where affection is saturated, work is routine, duty is respected, stealing has been forgotten for several generations, where friendship grows in richness with every passing month, i.e., **where MAN is civilised and cultured, the chickens can be counted before they are hatched.** A Tanjore farmer visited a coconut farm of salty soil and brackish water where 600 seedlings were planted. After a good initial growth, 480 died. The Tanjore farmer said, “In our place, if one seedling dies it will be a big question, probably because it will come as a surprise to the entire population.” **In Tanjore the soil is rich, and you can be sure of every seedling surviving. We can count the chickens earlier if our psychological makeup is rich.**

## 99. 800 Years of Slavery

Man is moral. To him the good man must be rewarded, the evil man must be destroyed. **Life is wider than morality. It is amoral.** Man's view is mystic. Life's vision spreads over the universe. Very often Life wantonly does things that Man abhors. Sri Aurobindo says that life works through good as well as evil. A parent gives greater, apparently unjust attention to a refractory child, much to the annoyance of the well-behaved child. To the parent what is important is the refractory child should become a normal child. **That annoys the good child.** Man is like a good child. The good child should appreciate the parents attending on the bad child much to the neglect of himself. It is too difficult to expect it. **That is the subtle secret of significance of Nature.**

Let us look at India's slave past. Eight hundred years ago the Muslims invaded India, and gradually united three-fourths of the country. It was a resort of Nature. Nature wants India to spiritually lead the world as she has reached the acme of the Spirit. But the foundation is physical. Our legends speak of 56 kingdoms of the

north. The truth was India was in hundreds of principalities, potentates, and fiefdoms. **The Guru of the world cannot be ruled by his servant, children, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brothers or wife.** To discharge the duty of the Guru, he must be a master of his household. India needed to be united geographically, if she is to offer spiritual leadership to the world. As the Muslims did not go beyond a certain limit, Nature brought in the Westerner who united India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Ceylon, etc. Spiritual short-sightedness, insisting on non-practical strategies, has again split India into three parts. What is the Truth?

**Man is not moral. Life is not moral. Nature is amoral.** Man who is exceedingly moral, when it comes to touch his deep seats of sensitivity, becomes immoral. This is what all of us know. Life rewards the scoundrel, the rogue. Why should we expect Nature to be moral? God is behind and beyond. It is man's wisdom to expect God to reward the good man and punish the evil one. **One who has realised God inwardly should see HIM act outside. It is his spiritual wisdom to SEE the right, good and morality in what God does, in what happens, instead of clamouring for silly ideas of 'human justice'.** That is why Shakespeare said marriages are made in heaven. He who sees his wife, whatever **SHE** is, as an angel, and who is able to see God in her face, is a God-realised soul.

## 100. Who is The Creator?

God is the creator, is the straight answer. Who created the government? The answer does not issue as readily. Informed people will offer an informed reply that we, the people, have created the government. **A good number of people will be tempted to say, “What question is this? Government means, it is there. Where is the question of someone creating it.” Some people may speak it out.** Man is divinely creative as he is himself the Divine inside. He also has the habit of becoming a slave of what he has created. The best example is Money. Money is what man has created, which many have forgotten. If **MAN** is a slave of anything today, he is an excellent slave of Money. All these behaviours issue out of Man’s spiritual philosophy.

Mind is our highest instrument. We know God is greater than Mind but we have conveniently forgotten it. We are very much identified with **OUR** highest instrument, Mind and some have come to the conclusion that Mind has created the world. There is an ocean of philosophical conviction that Mind has created the world. There are

others who see how compelling **TIME** is. They believe Time has created the world. These convictions have led to the creation of unreal philosophies. **What then is the real philosophy?** Who created the world? We often meet with failures. Sometimes we are rewarded with success. We do see that when we do things without a thought, our success is overwhelming. **It means when the MIND is out of the way, is fully forgotten, the work is a grand success.** If Mind were the creator, this would not be so. There are times where we are lost in work and the work emerges wonderfully. We think we are at it for an hour but it has really been several hours. **When we disregard Time, WORK is a wonder.**

This is a simplistic way of saying that neither **MIND** nor **TIME** has created the world. Suppose we want to get elected to a post managing a small margin, if we **CONCENTRATE** on the work, disinheriting Mind and disregarding Time, we see that by a strange set of circumstances we are unanimously elected to the same post. What I have been describing as invocation of the Spirit is in one sense transcending Mind and Time. Both are subject to Ego. To be utterly unegoistic is to invoke the **SPIRIT**. Someone who was denied a seat for the Lok Sabha felt wiped out. He became humble, because he was humiliated. Then he became a Central Minister. The world is not created by Mind or Time but by Supermind is the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

## Appendix 1

### How to Invoke the Spirit?

Indians trying to adopt punctuality find it extremely powerful and useful. Some miserably fail to institute punctuality as a value in their company. They ask how to be punctual? It does not mean they do not know it. It only means they are unable to do so as the general atmosphere in the company is not conducive to punctuality. What then is the remedy? The usual answer is to go about it with a greater determination in which again many fail.

Does it mean punctuality is impossible? **It only means our effort is not comprehensive, but summary.** Punctuality is preceded by general orderliness, that is again preceded by greater productivity. Productivity needs energy in copious measure, which is released by aspiration. So, begin at the beginning. Everyone in the company must have aspiration for the company's progress. One may ask, 'What shall I do if it is not there?' **The aspiration of workers is the aspiration of the employer.** Examine inside if you aspire for the company's progress. Begin

there, go step by step and when you finally arrive at orderliness and find no punctuality, your attempts to install punctuality will succeed.

Many will succeed in invoking the Spirit. For them the question is how to build it up. For those who are unable to do so, there is a method available. When a man often loses his temper, others advise him to retire to a solitary place and think. Much of the temper vanishes and he is able to think somewhat. Mind is the next higher level to temper. Spirit is the next higher level to mind. As one invokes the Spirit, his thoughts interfere and frustrate him. Thoughts interfere because man is identified with his thoughts. Realising this fact and trying **NOT** to think separates him from his thoughts and invocation of the Spirit will then become possible. Again, one may say this is not possible.

Let these people take some time every day and call 'Mother' into them. As time passes, thoughts will subside and a calm will emerge. Mother is more powerful than the Spirit. After a few days of calling Mother into oneself for sometime daily, he should do so for one full day of 12 hours. **Next, that one day should be extended to a**

**three-day sitting of 12 hours per day of calling MOTHER into oneself.**

Though this effort is taken to let the Spirit or The Mother emerge from out of his surface being, after the three days calling he will suddenly witness —

1. Most of his minor problems suddenly vanishing.
2. The atmosphere at home will be **POSITIVE** in the very best sense of the word.
3. If he had major problems unsolved, some solutions will appear on the horizon.
4. **All his difficulties in invoking the Spirit will vanish and he will feel the Spirit or The Mother is his constant companion in some substantial measure.**

He should resort to this everyday, either in the morning or evening for about a half hour. That will usher his life into a higher level of consciousness. Then he should,

1. Endeavour to speak **ONLY** truth.
2. Keep his house as clean as the cleanest place he ever knew.

3. Talk almost in a whisper, giving up shouting.
4. Take the other man's point of view in all transactions.
5. Cultivate patience in a large measure.
6. Before commencing any work, think of **THE MOTHER**.
7. Know his past errors and scrupulously avoid them in future.
8. Practise self-giving.

Once he sees the Spirit responds to his call, he must cultivate it and build up his life — **ORGANISE IT** — so that it progresses.

## Appendix 2

### Invocation of the Spirit

- ☆ Invocation of Spirit is powerful. Better still, if you call, “*Mother*”, it is all-inclusive.
- ☆ There are several methods to do so, though in essence all are the same.
  1. In our personality, there is a surface and a depth. As long as we are thinking of a problem, we are on the surface. To go away from the surface we must agree to forget the problem or NOT to actively think of it. Now the problem moves to the depth where it causes a worry that does not explain itself. One can call Mother or the Spirit if he moves away from the depth. If you cannot move away from the depth, start calling Mother and you will move away from the depth. Problems are solved by calling for an hour, for a few days. Three-day prayer is the maximum which solves any problem.
  2. Where man ends, Mother (Spirit) begins. Exhaust all that one can do. The Spirit will begin to

act at once. The last possible act must be so exhausted.

3. To do better than we now do amounts to calling Mother. E.g. to take interest in a dull work; to organise an unorganised work; to give thought to a work which we are doing unthinkingly.
4. To think of Mother once an hour for a few days.
5. To think of Mother on the stroke of the hour for a day or two.
6. To keep the house extra clean, to talk in a very low voice, to avoid all quarrels at home or at the office, to write precise accounts, etc.
7. To shift from the outside to inside which means what we do by hand can be done by thought.
8. To think of Mother before starting any work — consecration.
9. Prayer