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# Editorial

Silence... nirvana, shunya, nihil, extinction, cessation... the ultimate liberation, mukti – these have been the connotations since centuries. However, poise of silence does not refer to these. It refers to a settled poise in the being that is calm, in-gathered, collected – awaiting the Word, the right action.

Is poise of silence sufficient by itself? The Mother refers to a double action of Divine Grace:

There are two complementary aspects of the liberating action of the Divine Grace upon earth among men. These two aspects are equally indispensable, but are not equally appreciated.

The sovereign immutable peace that liberates from anxiety, tension and suffering.

The dynamic all-powerful progress that liberates from fetters, bondages and inertia.

The peace is universally appreciated and recognized as divine, but the progress is welcomed only by those whose aspiration is intense and courageous.<sup>1</sup>

Poise of Progress is as important as poise of silence. It completes the cycle. When the Divine Grace acts, one may feel blessed, inspired, elevated, blissful, at peace... but one may also feel exposed, miserable, victimized, helpless, agitated – for, the Grace might reveal the weaknesses in the being, or might organize circumstances that force one to change, to rise above oneself, to come closer to one's inner self and the Divine. To experience that too as Divine Grace needs courage and intensity of aspiration.

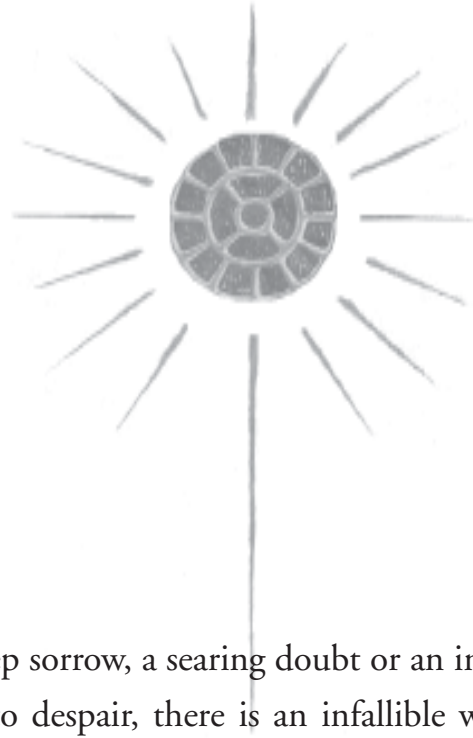
This issue of *The Awakening Ray* dips into this vast ocean of Silence to bring forth a few gems that illuminate pathways of calm, peace, action, surrender, aspiration, faith, stillness, wideness... pathways to progress.

Another aspect it explores is that of Intuition – a faculty of the future – a step beyond the mind, very important for cultivating Action that emanates from Silence.

~ Anuradha

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<sup>1</sup> The Mother. [Collected Works of the Mother](#) vol.15. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



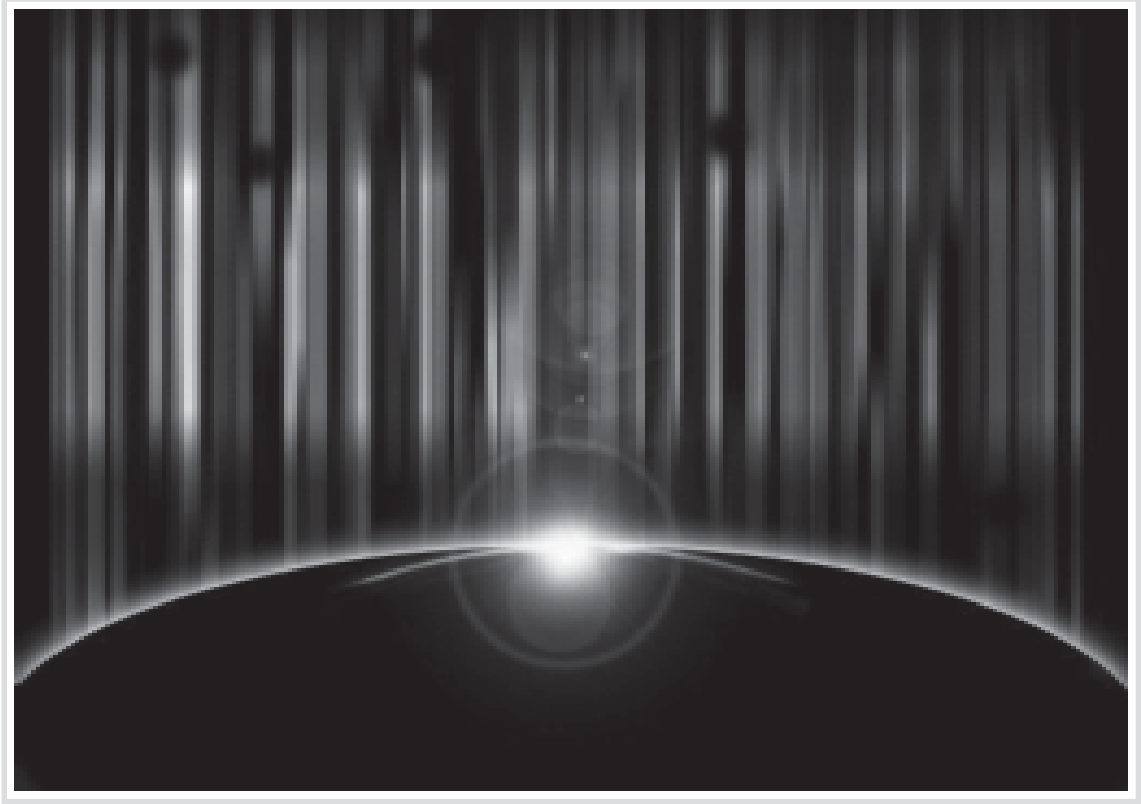
**I**F at any time a deep sorrow, a searing doubt or an intense pain overwhelms you and drives you to despair, there is an infallible way to regain calm and peace.

In the depths of our being there shines a light whose brilliance is equalled only by its purity; a light, a living and conscious portion of a universal godhead who animates and nourishes and illumines Matter, a powerful and unfailing guide for those who are willing to heed his law, a helper full of solace and loving forbearance towards all who aspire to see and hear and obey him. No sincere and lasting aspiration towards him can be in vain; no strong and respectful trust can be disappointed, no expectation ever deceived.<sup>1</sup>

~ The Mother

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<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Message given out on 17 November 2010. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



In the perfect silence of the contemplation all widens to infinity,  
and in the perfect peace of that silence the Divine appears in the  
resplendent glory of His light.

*- The Mother  
27 October 1954*



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# Silence

*With words one can at times understand,  
but only in silence one knows.<sup>1</sup>*

A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration.<sup>2</sup>

\*

*Why does one always go in for useless talking? Why do we speak uselessly?*

Why do people speak uselessly? Yes, that's probably because man is instinctively very proud of being able to formulate words. .... You know, I also said that some people could begin to think only when they talked.... When they do not speak, they do not even think! They are not able to think in silence, so they get into the habit of speaking. But the more developed one is, the more intelligent one is and the less need one has to express oneself. It is always at a lower level that one needs to talk. And truly, a being who is very conscious, who is mentally, intellectually, very developed, talks only when it is necessary. ...<sup>3</sup>

\*

*What should be done to refrain from talking?*

Think! You have only to reflect a little more. If only you make it a habit to think before speaking, that saves you at least half of what you say. To think before speaking and to say only what seems absolutely indispensable to you—then you very quickly become aware that very few words are indispensable, except from the practical point of view, in work, when one is working with somebody and is obliged to use words: “Do this”, “Give me that”, or “Like this”, or “Like that”. And even so, this can be reduced to a minimum. Otherwise, you see...<sup>4</sup>

\*

*How to stop discussions in the mind?*

The first condition is to talk as little as possible. The second is to think just of what you are doing at the moment and not of what you have to do or of what you have done before. Never regret what is past or imagine what will be. Check pessimism in your thoughts as much as you can and become a voluntary optimist.<sup>5</sup>

\*

If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and others; you will then be able to communicate among



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yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all. This outer silence is most favourable to inner peace, and with goodwill and a steadfast aspiration, you will be able to create a harmonious atmosphere which is very conducive to progress.<sup>6</sup>

\*

*Sweet Mother, why do men take pleasure in making a lot of noise?*

In making a noise? Because they like to deaden themselves. In silence they have to face their own difficulties, they are in front of themselves, and usually they don't like that. In the noise they forget everything, they become stupefied. So they are happy. Constantly man rushes into external action in order not to have time to observe himself and how he lives. For him this is expressed by the desire to escape from boredom. Indeed, for some people it is much more tiresome to remain quiet—seated, or to be still. So for them it represents an escape from boredom: to make a lot of noise, to commit many stupidities, and become terribly restless; it is their way of escaping boredom. And when they sit quietly and look at themselves, they are bored. Perhaps because they are boring. That's very likely. The more boring one is, the more one is bored. Very interesting people usually are not bored.<sup>7</sup>

\*

In social life, in addition to the words that concern material life and occupations, there will be those that express sensations, feelings and emotions. Here the habit of outer silence proves of valuable help. For when one is assailed by a wave of sensations or feelings, this habitual silence gives you time to reflect and, if necessary, to regain possession of yourself before projecting the sensation or feeling in words. How many quarrels can be avoided in this way; how many times one will be saved from one of those psychological catastrophes which are only too often the result of uncontrolled speech. Without going to this extreme, one should always control the words one speaks and never allow one's tongue to be prompted by a movement of anger, violence or temper. It is not only the quarrel that is bad in its results, but the fact of allowing one's tongue to be used to project bad vibrations into the atmosphere; for nothing is more contagious than the vibrations of sound, and by giving these movements a chance to express themselves, one perpetuates them in oneself and in others.<sup>8</sup>

\*\*\*

*In concentration and silence  
we must gather strength for the right action.<sup>9</sup>*

A very, very quiet head is indispensable for a clear understanding and vision and a right action.<sup>10</sup>

\*

There is a place in the inner being where one can always remain calm and from there look with poise and judgment on the perturbations of the surface consciousness and act upon it to change it. If you can learn to live in that calm of the inner being, you will have found your stable basis.<sup>11</sup>

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... if you open to the higher regions of consciousness and the force descends from above, quite naturally it establishes a silence in the lower regions, for they are governed by this higher power which descends. This comes from higher regions of the mind or from beyond, even from the supermind. So when this force and consciousness come down and enter into the consciousness of a lower plane, this consciousness becomes naturally quiet, for it is as though invaded, flooded by that higher light which transforms it. In fact, this is even the only way of establishing a constant silence in one's mind. It is to open oneself to higher regions and let this higher consciousness, force, light descend constantly into the lower mind and take possession of it. And here, when this happens, this lower mind can remain constantly quiet and silent, because it is this one which acts and fills the whole being. One can act, write and speak without the mind being active, with this force which comes from above penetrating the mind and using it; and the mind itself becomes just a passive instrument. And in fact, this is the only way of establishing silence; for once this is established, the silence is established, the mind does not stir any longer, it acts only under the impulsion of this force when it manifests in it. It is like a very quiet, very silent field and the force when it comes puts the elements into movement and uses them, and it finds expression through the mind without the mind's being agitated. It remains very quiet.<sup>12</sup>

\*

At the hour of danger a perfect quietness is required.<sup>13</sup>

\*

Be very careful to remain always calm and peaceful and let an integral equanimity establish itself more and more completely in your being. Do not allow your mind to be too active and to live in a turmoil, do not jump to conclusions from a superficial view of things; always take your time, concentrate and decide only in quietness.<sup>14</sup>

\*

When one remains perfectly quiet and without fear, nothing serious can happen.<sup>15</sup>

\*

It is only in quietness and peace that one can know what is the best thing to do.<sup>16</sup>

\*

All speech and action comes prepared out of the eternal Silence.<sup>17</sup>

\* \* \*

*In peace and silence the Eternal manifests.*

*Let nothing trouble you and the Eternal will manifest.<sup>18</sup>*

We read, we try to understand, we explain, we try to know. But a single minute of true experience teaches us more than millions of words and hundreds of explanations. So the first question is: "How to have the experience?" To go within yourself, that is the first step. And then, once you have succeeded in going within yourself deeply enough to feel the reality of that which is within, to widen yourself progressively, systematically, to become as vast as the universe and lose the sense of limitation. These are the first two preparatory movements. And



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these two things must be done in the greatest possible calm, peace and tranquillity. This peace, this tranquillity brings about silence in the mind and stillness in the vital. This effort, this attempt must be renewed very regularly, persistently. And after a certain lapse of time, which may be longer or shorter, you begin to perceive a reality that is different from the reality perceived in the ordinary, external consciousness. Naturally, by the action of Grace, the veil may suddenly be rent from within, and at once you can enter the true truth; but even when that happens, in order to obtain the full value and full effect of the experience, you must maintain yourself in a state of inner receptivity, and to do that, it is indispensable for you to go within each day.<sup>19</sup>

\*

This feeling of something so still—but not closed, still but open, still but receptive—is something which becomes established through repeated experiences. There is a great difference between a silence that is dead, dull, unresponsive and the receptive silence of a quietened mind. That makes a great difference.<sup>20</sup>

\*

Unless one has gone beyond the mind and into altogether higher regions, so long as one remains in the human consciousness, the mental, vital, physical consciousness, one must concentrate in order to find the psychic. It is only if you have soared up out of the human consciousness and entered consciously the higher regions above the mind, far above the mind, that you no longer need to concentrate in the psychic because you will naturally find it. But to rise above the mental consciousness, not into a higher speculative mind, but far beyond all mental movements is not an easy thing. To begin with, the mind must be absolutely silent and quiet, otherwise one can't do it. It is only when the mind enters into a complete silence, a perfect quietude, that it becomes just a mirror for reflecting what is above; then one can rise above. But so long as *that* goes on, there's no hope.<sup>21</sup>

\*

It is obviously in the silence of the mind that it is possible to perceive the Divine Command. The true way of knowing is above words and thoughts.<sup>22</sup>

\*

*I am not a Jnani,\* for I have no knowledge except what God gives me for His work. How am I to know whether what I see be reason or folly? Nay, it is neither; for the thing seen is simply true and neither folly nor reason.* (Sri Aurobindo: 'Thoughts and Aphorisms')

“I am not a Jnani...” The Jnani is one who follows the path of Knowledge, one who wants to realise Yoga exclusively through Knowledge, and who follows a purely intellectual path with the will to go beyond it and attain Knowledge, which is no longer intellectual, but spiritual. And Sri Aurobindo says: I am not a Jnani.... I do not seek knowledge. I have given myself to the Divine to accomplish His work and, by the divine Grace, at every moment I know what must be known in order to accomplish this work.

It is an admirable state; it is perfect peace of mind. There is no longer any need to accumulate acquired knowledge, received ideas which have to be memorised; it is no longer

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\* One who follows the path of Knowledge (*jnana*) as opposed to the path of Love (*bhakti*), or the path of Works (*karma*).



necessary to clutter one's brain with thousands and thousands of things in order to have at one's command, when the time comes, the knowledge that is needed to perform an action, to impart a teaching, to solve a problem. The mind is silent, the brain is still, everything is clear, quiet, calm; and at the right moment, by divine Grace a drop of light falls into the consciousness and what needs to be known is known. Why should one care to remember—why try to retain that knowledge? On the day or at the moment that it is needed one will have it again. At each second one is a blank page on which what must be known will be inscribed—in the peace, the repose, the silence of a perfect receptivity.

One knows what must be known, one sees what must be seen, and since what must be known and seen comes directly from the Supreme, it is Truth itself; and it completely eludes all notions of reason or folly. What is true is true—that is all. And one has to sink very low to wonder whether it is folly or reason. Silence and a modest, humble, attentive receptivity; no concern for appearances or even any anxiety to be—one is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument which of itself is nothing and knows nothing, but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything.

The first condition is self-forgetfulness, a total self-giving, the absence of ego. And the body says to the Supreme Lord: “What You want me to be, I shall be; what You want me to know, I shall know; what You want me to do, I shall do.”<sup>23</sup>

\*

Supreme Lord, teach us to be silent,  
that in the silence we may receive Your force  
and understand Your will.<sup>24</sup>

\* \* \*

~ Extracts from Sri Aurobindo & The Mother  
compiled by Anuradha

<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.14. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> ---, vol.12

<sup>3</sup> ---, vol.6

<sup>4</sup> ---,

<sup>5</sup> ---, vol.12

<sup>6</sup> ---,

<sup>7</sup> ---, vol.7

<sup>8</sup> ---, vol.12

<sup>9</sup> ---, vol.14

<sup>10</sup> ---, vol.12

<sup>11</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Letters on Yoga. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>12</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.6

<sup>13</sup> ---, vol.16

<sup>14</sup> ---, vol.14

<sup>15</sup> ---, vol.16

<sup>16</sup> ---,

<sup>17</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Thoughts and Aphorisms. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>18</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.14

<sup>19</sup> ---, vol.10

<sup>20</sup> ---,

<sup>21</sup> ---, vol.7

<sup>22</sup> ---, vol.10

<sup>23</sup> ---,

<sup>24</sup> ---, vol.16



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# Intuition

## a faculty of the future

AT present, man governs his life through reason; all the activities of the mind are of common use for him; his means of knowledge are observation and deduction; it is by and through reasoning that he takes his decision and chooses his way – or believes he does – in life.

The new race shall be governed by intuition, that is to say, direct perception of the divine law within. Some human beings actually know and experience intuition – as, undoubtedly, certain big gorillas of the forests have glimpses of reasoning.

In mankind, the very few who have cultivated their inner self, who have concentrated their energies on the discovery of the true law of their being, possess more or less the faculty of intuition. When the mind is perfectly silent, pure like a well-polished mirror, immobile as a pond on a breezeless day, then, from above, as the light of the stars drops in the motionless waters, so the light of the supermind, of the Truth within, shines in the quieted mind and gives birth to intuition. Those who are accustomed to listen to this voice out of the Silence, take it more and more as the instigating motive of their actions; and where others, the average men, wander along the intricate paths of reasoning, they go straight their way, guided through the windings of life by intuition, this superior instinct, as by a strong and unfailing hand.

This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quite common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man, this ability to deceive himself and others.

Thus, man's road to supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, is now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within, shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its power into our human existence. And this discovery is that of our real, because our highest self and nature.<sup>1</sup>

*Mother, how can the faculty of intuition be developed?*

There are different kinds of intuition, and we carry these capacities within us. They are always active to some extent but we don't notice them because we don't pay enough attention to what is going on in us.



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Behind the emotions, deep within the being, in a consciousness seated somewhere near the level of the solar plexus, there is a sort of prescience, a kind of capacity for foresight, but not in the form of ideas: rather in the form of feelings, almost a perception of sensations. For instance, when one is going to decide to do something, there is sometimes a kind of uneasiness or inner refusal, and usually, if one listens to this deeper indication, one realises that it was justified.

In other cases there is something that urges, indicates, insists—I am not speaking of impulses, you understand, of all the movements which come from the vital and much lower still—indications which are behind the feelings, which come from the affective part of the being; there too one can receive a fairly sure indication of the thing to be done. These are forms of intuition or of a higher instinct which can be cultivated by observation and also by studying the results. Naturally, it must be done very sincerely, objectively, without prejudice. If one wants to see things in a particular way and at the same time practice this observation, it is all useless. One must do it as if one were looking at what is happening from outside oneself, in someone else.

It is one form of intuition and perhaps the first one that usually manifests.

There is also another form but that one is much more difficult to observe because for those who are accustomed to think, to act by reason—not by impulse but by reason—to reflect before doing anything, there is an extremely swift process from cause to effect in the half-conscious thought which prevents you from seeing the line, the whole line of reasoning and so you don't think that it is a chain of reasoning, and that is quite deceptive. You have the impression of an intuition but it is not an intuition, it is an extremely rapid subconscious reasoning, which takes up a problem and goes straight to the conclusions. This must not be mistaken for intuition. In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence one's mind, hold it still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form—at the top of the head and a little further above if possible—a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can—perhaps not immediately—but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the



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rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a “mirror”, still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.

Naturally, first these two faculties must be developed; then, as soon as there is any result, one must observe the result, as I said, and see the connection with what is happening, the consequences: see, observe very attentively what has come in, what may have caused a distortion, what one has added by way of more or less conscious reasoning or the intervention of a lower will, also more or less conscious; and it is by a very deep study—indeed, almost of every moment, in any case daily and very frequent—that one succeeds in developing one’s intuition. It takes a long time. It takes a long time and there are ambushes: one can deceive oneself, take for intuitions subconscious wills which try to manifest, indications given by impulses one has refused to receive openly, indeed all sorts of difficulties. One must be prepared for that. But if one persists, one is sure to succeed.

And there comes a time when one feels a kind of inner guidance, something which is leading one very perceptibly in all that one does. But then, for the guidance to have its maximum power, one must naturally add to it a conscious surrender: one must be sincerely determined to follow the indication given by the higher force. If one does that, then... one saves years of study, one can seize the result extremely rapidly. If one also does that, the result comes very rapidly. But for that, it must be done with sincerity and... a kind of inner spontaneity. If one wants to try without this surrender, one may succeed—as one can also succeed in developing one’s personal will and making it into a very considerable power—but that takes a very long time and one meets many obstacles and the result is very precarious; one must be very persistent, obstinate, persevering, and one is sure to succeed, but only after a great labour.

Make your surrender with a sincere, complete self-giving, and you will go ahead at full speed, you will go much faster— but you must not do this calculatingly, for that spoils everything!

(*Silence*)

Moreover, whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it—whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing —that’s not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate. And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention. And from the spiritual



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point of view it is still more important. There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration—but one must learn how to do it.

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key. You can be the best athlete, you can be the best student, you can be an artistic, literary or scientific genius, you can be the greatest saint with that faculty. And everyone has in himself a tiny little beginning of it—it is given to everybody, but people do not cultivate it.<sup>2</sup>

~ The Mother

## The Word of the Silence

A bare impersonal hush is now my mind,  
A world of sight clear and inimitable,  
A volume of silence by a Godhead signed,  
A greatness pure of thought, virgin of will.  
Once on its pages Ignorance could write  
In a scribble of intellect the blind guess of Time  
And cast gleam-messages of ephemeral light,  
A food for souls that wander on Nature's rim.  
But now I listen to a greater Word  
Born from the mute unseen omniscient Ray:  
The Voice that only Silence' ear has heard  
Leaps missioned from an eternal glory of Day.  
All turns from a wideness and unbroken peace  
To a tumult of joy in a sea of wide release.

~ Sri Aurobindo

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<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Extract from the talk: 'To the Women of Japan'. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> ---, Collected Works of The Mother vol.9. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.





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# Developing Surrender, Faith & Aspiration for Yoga

## a personal journey

### INTRODUCTION

*The more complete your faith, sincerity [in aspiration] and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you.* - Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.25, pp.9-10

This paper is the outcome of an intense personal journey and my introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga over the last three years. It examines the importance, basic processes, and blocks in developing the three main attitudes of Surrender, Faith and Aspiration on the path of Yoga.

Through this paper I offer a perspective of looking at these three attitudes not just in themselves but as a mutually strengthening cycle which feeds into each other. A total Surrender is made possible only for those with an utmost Faith in the Divine, and this deep faith is granted us by Grace only when we aspire sincerely for it. The flame of Aspiration in turn is stoked and strengthened by a greater and greater surrender of the ego and surface nature. This cyclic process gradually becomes self reinforcing and moves the *sadhak* forward on the path.

Stumbling through light & dark, in my own search for Truth, the ideas presented are my personal lived story. And the most gratifying aspect is that my personal realizations are borne out by the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In their writings I was able to find evocative expression to comprehensively describe my experiences. They also helped me broaden my *swadhyaya* by outlining the goal of the Divine Life and helped me anticipate and understand crucial signposts along the way.

Structure of the paper: I first offer my personal experiences and learnings followed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's words that elucidate and corroborate those experiences. The paper attempts to define each of the three attitudes of Surrender, Faith and Aspiration from the point of view of Integral Yoga, examine the various types of possibilities under each, and caution against the blocks/ difficulties on the way. It then builds and offers the self reinforcing circular effect of Surrender, Faith, and Aspiration which were a huge epiphany for me personally. Finally, it ends with applying this concept to a larger social issue of bringing up children in today's world.



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## MY PERSONAL JOURNEY - BACKGROUND

My spiritual journey formally started on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007, a few days after I had quit my corporate job and a few days before my world tilted on its axis, like a rug being pulled from under one's feet. I guess, in hindsight, it was all due to the Divine Grace.

*Q. In the case of some persons who turn to the Divine it happens that every material prop or everything they are fond of is removed from their life. And if they love someone, he also is taken away.*

*A. It is a thing that does not happen to all. It happens to those that are called.*

- The Mother, 'Conversations on Yoga', p.12

To recognise the grace behind adversity needs a courage and conviction far greater than what I had at the time. Nevertheless, starting with this 'blessing' as my basis, I embarked upon a completely new and unfamiliar journey of piecing together my identity, my integrity, my sincerity and honesty, my meaning and purpose in life.

The first step I made on this journey was the desire to cultivate patience. I had suffered and continued to suffer the consequences of my actions born of impatience and a sense of superiority. I had always learnt to be the Actor in my universe, to be the centre of my world and to control and influence the outcomes in my actions. To be the Director and the Actor of my life movie! So when I realised that these were not working out anymore, I began to search for something else that would bring peace.

*In the path of works action is the knot we have first to loosen...*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'The Synthesis of Yoga', p.94

Over the course of 2008, studying Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's Integral Yoga I understood that this knot was due to Ego. The Ego is a structure that we use as a centralizing principle to hold together our personality across the various planes and parts of our being. However, this is at the surface level to create an individuation of the self from other men in the outer consciousness. Ego is like the scaffolding we put around a building under construction. A necessary support and initial structure to build on, but once the building is ready, we do not allow the scaffolding to remain as a façade. We need to take it off to unveil the real edifice.

Similarly, Sri Aurobindo says, the ego is the helper, the ego is the bar. While it is imperative for us to develop a well defined ego & strong sense of individualised self, continuing to feed the ego beyond a point becomes not only useless but also harmful. As we rise higher, a new truth emerges, that of the soul.

*The ego is the greatest obstacle on your path towards truth.* - Mata Amritanandmayi

To search for something more permanent, absolute and eternal than ego satisfaction became my objective. But to go beyond one had to let go of all attachment to the ego and surface identities. When pushed against a wall one learns there is nothing else to do but Surrender. So simple, yet so difficult to do.



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Starting with self observation as the first tool available, I noticed the conflicting planes and parts of being. The Mind had grasped the yogic ideal of merging with the Divine, but the Vital and the Physical were simply not interested. They wanted satisfaction of their needs and desires and simply stood in the way of true letting go. Then how to proceed? This intense disturbance within brought me to the door of Faith and Aspiration.

*The sadhana of this yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, Mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us... It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come...*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.505 (emphasis added)

## SURRENDER

*Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break  
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,  
His slow inertia as of living stone.  
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,  
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,  
And never thought to exceed the human start  
And never learned to climb towards the Sun.*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'Savitri', Book VI, Canto II

## MY JOURNEY

The above lines from 'Savitri' express perfectly my inner state as I set off on the path looking for some way to ease the pain and find peace. Life as I knew it had changed forever and though on the surface everything was even better and all I could ask for, there was an inner turmoil, dissatisfaction, and frustration at feeling pushed in certain corners not of my choosing. Very often we feel we are simply trying our best and others are not cooperating. However, with some searching I had to admit that what we are really trying is to satisfy our own vital needs and desires and feel disappointed and frustrated when that gets blocked.

I trained myself to develop self observation, to simply watch my action, behaviours, choices, needs, motivations, intentions without judging or beating myself up for them. With this process little by little I uncovered my personal composition to be highly Rajasic in content and hence driven by dynamic energy, passions, desires, and vital impulses. And backing all these impulses was the ego, the sense of "I", the sense of being somebody and of being capable to govern my life, and of directing and influencing the course of action. While this had worked beautifully for me for the first quarter of my life, now these very ways seemed to be hindering my ability to create results smoothly. I seemed to be brushing people off the wrong side, coming across as unreasonable and over demanding, igniting resistance, and basically becoming emotionally weakened, confused and despairing.



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*...it was necessary for all pride to be broken, crushed, trampled down definitively so that I could at last understand, see and feel things as they are.*

- The Mother, 'Prayers and Meditations', October 7, 1913

After one very enlightening talk by Dr. Alok Pandey at Pondicherry, I asked him how one could change the *guna* constitution of one's nature. He asked if I wanted to know the longer or the shorter route. Of course the shorter I said. "Then don't do anything. Just surrender and offer. If you want the longer route then try to purify your nature." I was shocked. Do nothing but surrender? Then who would make things happen? How would change come about if I did nothing? Didn't I have to be in charge actively to make progress?

*There are two possibilities, one of purification by personal effort, which takes a long time, another by a direct intervention of the Divine Grace which is usually rapid in its action. For the latter there must be a complete surrender and self-giving... Those who are accustomed to a very active movement of their thought and will in all they do, find it difficult to still the activity and adopt the quietude of mental self-giving.*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.591

## WHAT IS SURRENDER?

*Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine.* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.3, p.126

This is the path of the baby cat described by Ramakrishna Paramhansa. The baby cat simply waits for its mother to carry it around by the neck, doing nothing and trusting fully the mother will protect it. The other is the way of the baby monkey who has to cling onto the mother in order to ensure it does not fall off or get lost.

True surrender is when we give ourselves totally to the Divine, in an unconditioned way, without any bargaining, giving everything to the Divine including our likes, dislikes, wishes, desires, wants, preferences, indeed our very character. It must be an opening of ourselves to the light and force to descend from above and shape us in the way it sees fit. This then leads to a progress where we arrive at a much surer way of being happy, by achieving an eternal, lasting peace which is far better than any desire fulfilment. A good illustration the Mother gives of surrender is that of a water droplet that falls into the ocean. Were it to maintain its separate identity it would be simply crushed by the immensity around. But by surrendering, it merges with the ocean and acquires the vastness and power of the whole sea.<sup>1</sup>

Mother says one can surrender either through knowledge or through devotion. Many of us do not have the spontaneous faith in the Divine which makes the surrender so much easier. So a questioning mind seeks knowledge and with gaining knowledge comes again the possibility of the Ego rearing its head. One starts to feel one is the doer of the sadhana and feel self satisfied with one's efforts. However, if the grace has taken you up for the transformation, a blow or knock to the pride will come in a way that one is humbled and can truly surrender. Gradually I started to learn that there is an unseen hand guiding our lives and life runs much better if things are left to Him.



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This also means one has to accept whatever circumstances arise in life. Perhaps you have a notion that it would be better if it happened in a certain way, but if it happens differently, you find that this is also alright.<sup>2</sup> If we pursue the Divine for our own sake, i.e. to make our lives more comfortable, more joyful or happy, then we are in a sense holding out conditionality that the Divine must fulfil – satisfy my desires only then I will believe in you and surrender. But this never works.

*Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine – to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one's own, to obey only the Divine will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego.* - Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.585

Personally I found that each time I would act from an energy of love and trust in the universe without expectation or clinging to a particular outcome, the task would happen very smoothly and beyond expectations. However, each time I became fearful and unsure of the outcome, an energy of doubt and fear pervaded my actions/ words and the situation worsened. I experimented with consciously shifting the energy of doubt and fear to one of love and trust and got miraculous results.

*Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important.* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.4, p.372

Thus, it is important that our surrender not be partial or conditional or a cloak for satisfying our ego needs and vital movements. The surrender must be to the Divine/ Higher consciousness in us and not surrender to our ego or desires.

## NATURE OF SURRENDER

### Active or Passive

Sri Aurobindo cautions us from falling into a passivity or *tamas* in the name of surrender.<sup>3</sup> If we make surrender an excuse for inertia, without making a shadow of effort, without willing or aspiring for the Divine, but expecting the Divine to do all the work for us – in practice this becomes surrender to the lower nature under pretext of surrendering to the Divine. One becomes a shirker and gives up all ownership and responsibility for one's sadhana.

By contrast, an active surrender is when one gives oneself entirely to the Divine. One must associate one's will with the Divine will, making the mind and vital very calm and quiet (inner surrender), accept anything that comes from the Divine and reject everything else (outer surrender). Mother elaborates different steps in making the surrender complete as it cannot happen all at once.<sup>4</sup> True Surrender is a very difficult thing and must be done slowly, part by part *bringing light into the dark corners*.

1. Make an offering of the self in a general way.
2. Remember Him at every moment and make a more detailed offering. One brings the Divine into the details of daily existence, even into ordinary tasks like eating etc., feeling Him as a constant presence.
3. Self offering by offering up all the light and dark parts of oneself to the Divine to do whatever He likes with them.



4. This leads to unifying the various parts of being around a central psychic will; all jarring elements of the nature are harmonized.
5. Greater harmony brings a more complete self giving.
6. Self-Consecration follows.

*A complete surrender is not possible in so short a time, - for a complete surrender means to cut the knot of the ego in each part of the being and offer it, free and whole, to the Divine.* - Sri Aurobindo, 'Bases of Yoga', Faith-Aspiration-Surrender, p.27

And this requires a complete trust and faith in the Divine.

## FAITH

*Happy are men anchored on fixed belief  
In this uncertain and ambiguous world,  
Or who have planted in the heart's rich soil  
One small grain of spiritual certitude.  
Happiest who stand on faith as on a rock.*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'Savitri', Book VII, Canto III

## MY JOURNEY

How few of us have the faith as firm as rock. Our faith gets severely tested when our desires, hopes, and wishes are unfulfilled; our dreams dashed. At that moment to remain in gratitude to the universe with an implicit faith that all that has passed is for one's own good, seems like a tall order. Yet, as I found, that faith is precisely what enables one to see the toughest situations through and to recover one's joy and happiness in life. Sri Aurobindo talks of *a faith which is there even when the mind doubts, the vital despairs, and the physical wants to collapse.*<sup>5</sup>

We often hear the advice 'This too shall pass,' yet seldom heed it. The time when the global financial crisis hit the world and newspapers cried out their doomsday prophecies, I remember thinking that morning that the sun will still rise and the rivers will still be flowing tomorrow. So why despair? And the beauty is what seems to be absolute adversity, somehow in hindsight always turns out to be a blessing in disguise. This teaches us an important lesson in maintaining the faith when the world seems to be falling apart. And that was the message of hope of US President Barack Obama, "Yes we can!"

In the Integral Yoga we are called upon to have faith not just in our ability to rise above situations, but an integral and absolute faith in the Divine.

*...we must know that it is always what is best for us which happens. This is an absolute fact. To the extent to which you surrender, the best happens to you. This may not be in conformity with what you would like, your preference or desire, because these things are blind: it is the best from the spiritual point of view, the best for your progress, your development, your spiritual growth, your true life. It is always that.*

- The Mother, CWM, Vol.6, p.349



Happiest who stand on faith as on a rock.

- Sri Aurobindo



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In November 2007, while attending a workshop at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi, Dr. Bijlani from the Ashram said to me, “Mother’s grace is upon you.” I thought they were simply kind words and did not fully understand. Today after almost two years I can see how perceptive he had been and how grateful I am for all the apparent ‘difficulties’ that I experienced. Gratitude, endurance, inner silence, and trust in the Divine plan were important lessons. Had I not faced them, life may have gone on more ‘smoothly’ but never attained the depth and dedication to the path of Yoga that I have today. *The Divine holds our hand through all and if he seems to let us fall, it is only to raise us higher.*<sup>6</sup>

### WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is a kind of unshakeable certitude in the existence of god and the divine grace which seizes the whole being. Mother says *faith is a certitude without any proof.*<sup>7</sup> Sri Aurobindo says that faith is not something arrived at after gaining knowledge, but precedes knowledge, a feeling of a certain truth that is not yet manifest. Even when the whole world denies and brings thousands of proofs to the contrary, one knows through inner knowledge and direct perception something to be true. It is inherent in the soul that the Divine exists and is the one thing worth following and nothing else matters in comparison.

*Faith is the soul’s witness to something not yet manifested, achieved or realised, but which yet the Knower within us, even in the absence of all indications, feels to be true or supremely worth following or achieving. ... - that if the Divine exists and has called you to the Path, (as is evident), then there must be a Divine Guidance behind and through and in spite of all difficulties you will arrive. - Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.573*

The path of Yoga is fraught with difficulties and unless we have an absolute and abiding faith in the Divine and the success of our effort, we may be overcome by despair and despondency, especially when the mind questions and agitates, vital desires fail to be satisfied, and body gets wearied. However, the strength and hold of the soul will not waver once it *knows* the Divine to be supreme and true.

### Mental or Integral Faith

Since faith comes from the inner quality of the soul it must come straight from the heart in order to be true. Mother emphasized to her disciples not to have just a mental faith; it must come from the heart, then it is real faith. Mental faith is not sufficient; it must be enforced by a vital and physical faith. A faith felt in the entire body makes it an integral faith; permeates our whole being, not just the mental, psychic or vital. Such faith leads straight to experience. Experiences come with an intense aspiration and a quiet being. The more the faith the more rapid the results are likely to be.

### NATURE OF FAITH

#### Faith in Self; Faith in the Divine

Sri Aurobindo outlines the nature and development of faith in man in his work ‘The Synthesis of Yoga’. First man needs faith in himself, *his ideas and his powers that he may work and create and rise to greater things and in the end bring his strength as a worthy offering to the altar of the*



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*Spirit.*<sup>8</sup> This faith in oneself is essential to prevent us from falling into a kind of impotence caused by self doubt etc.

However, this faith and confidence in our capacity should not be coloured by ‘rajasic egoism’ or ‘spiritual pride’. One must remain humble in the knowledge that it is the realization of the Divine Shakti within which makes all possible.

Our faith in our own energy, power, and spiritual will must be transcended to a faith in *God and the Shakti, in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world, a faith that all in the world is the working of one divine Shakti.*<sup>9</sup> A faith that moves us successfully closer towards unity and freedom and perfection.

Moreover we must have faith not only in the fundamental principle, ideas, way of the Yoga, but also a day-to-day working faith. Sri Aurobindo describes this day-to-day working faith as faith in the *power in us to achieve, in the steps we have taken on the way, in the spiritual experiences that come to us, in the intuitions, the guiding movements of will and impulsion, the moved intensities of the heart and aspirations and fulfilments of the life...the steps of the soul's evolution.*<sup>10</sup>

As we move from ignorance and imperfection into the light our faith too must move into freedom from attachment to our endeavour and the successive stages of our realization. In today's age of reason and our proclivity to question the why of everything, with an eye on the “*what's in it for me*”, having an integral faith as described above doesn't come easily. We want to know the results that will be achieved and if our goal will be attained before we are willing to trust and have faith.

*...faith does not question anything, it does not ask what the consequence of its self-giving will be—it gives itself, and—that's all; while confidence can come and say, “That's what the result will be.”* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.6, p.123

I feel as yet my main difficulty is in cultivating such a rock like abiding faith in the Divine. Many a time the ego and vital wish to drive their own agenda and use the mind to question or justify their actions. We cannot have a conditional or bargaining faith. Good results may happen as a function of a deep faith, but one does not have faith with an eye on the outcomes.

Very few are born with a spontaneous kind of faith. Most of us need to develop it from the tiny bit given to us. This we can do through a sincere aspiration and a quiet mind.

## ASPIRATION

*At last climbing a long and narrow stair  
He stood alone on the high roof of things  
And saw the light of a spiritual sun.  
Aspiring he transcends his earthly self;  
He stands in the largeness of his soul new-born, ...*

- Sri Aurobindo, ‘Savitri’, Book VII, Canto II

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## MY JOURNEY

Interestingly my aspiration for the spiritual life began at the moment of my greatest happiness, and I felt my heart bursting full of love. It was in sheer gratitude of the bounty of life and the Grace of the Divine that I began my active seeking for the Higher consciousness.

And I guess in answer to my ardent call, within days life seemed to fall apart in an unbelievable way. In hindsight, of course, one recognises that it was the Divine's way to foster a higher and deeper aspiration.

During the initial phase, the call was always out of a wounded and despairing vital, asking for deliverance from pain or uncertainty. But gradually as I read about Integral Yoga, endurance and courage increased, faith was strengthened, and the quality of the aspiration changed from a vital call to a will for progress toward the Highest possibility in oneself. It became an aspiration for a self-opening and for surrender.

Through the self observation of the various planes and parts of the being, I was able to distinguish the layers of body, vital, mind on the surface from the inner *purusha* within. And I was able to connect my difficulties with an over identification with the surface nature. From hereon rose up a fervent prayer to become an instrument of the Divine manifestation. I formulated it as follows: *'I surrender this day to you O Lord, I surrender all my thoughts, words, and deeds. Please cleanse this body, mind, vital and fill the being with your divine love, light, and peace so that this surface instrument may become a fit and willing servitor for your divine purpose.'*

Of course in prayer we try to reach the Divine to ask for something. So it is a form of aspiration. But it is often a cloak for vital desires. A pure aspiration is an inward turn toward the Divine and a flame to become one with the Divine alone. It wants nothing else and calls for nothing else. Despite the above daily prayer, I felt my rajasic energy and vital impulses still





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kept surfacing and getting in the way of a true aspiration and surrender. I worried about how to purify this rajasic element.

*This [a true upward aspiration] may come to the rajasic man as well as to the sattwic. If it does, he can rise by it above his failings and desires and passions, just as the other can rise beyond his virtues, to the Divine Purity and Light and Love.*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.552

Mother reassures us that even if we are born with a very small aspiration we can develop it into a very great thing. There is hope.

### WHAT IS ASPIRATION?

Aspiration is the fixed and unfailing call from below to open the being to the Divine influence and to allow the Divine consciousness to take over the being. It is the will for progress, the *intensity of the turning of the human soul away from outward appearances to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it.*<sup>11</sup> There is no need for words as it is not formulated in the head but springs up from the heart like a ready flame.

Mother described it as an arrow rising, rising, rising straight upwards and seeks to call down an answer or force from the Divine. It is a need for the light, a kind of luminous enthusiasm that seizes the being. It is an irresistible urge to melt away, to exist only in the Divine; an inner impulse to give ourselves wholly to the Divine and to no one else.

The first step is a turning inwards, with a sensation that there is something more true and beautiful worth knowing. Mother also expounds that two powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine in one's psychic being are the *capacity for enthusiasm* that takes us out of our little ego and a *generous gratitude*. This creates an opening.<sup>12</sup>

The second step is a desire *to find and to know the Divine and to live it.*<sup>13</sup> A sincere call and aspiration arise from the heart and become effective only when we turn inwards, not remain outward-going. A mental striving toward an ideal is insufficient in giving the necessary intensity needed to pull down the force. What matters is the intensity of the turning, the force which directs the soul inward.

Often people are visited by great misfortunes/difficult circumstances and feel completely lost. When their own efforts – mind and feelings – fail to help, they realise that they cannot solve the problem. It is only when they become aware of their powerlessness that they begin to be a little open and plastic. A spontaneous call arises within them; a call to something which can do what they can't do. This faith that the Grace *alone* can help and solve this problem, leads to a sincere and intense aspiration that helps make one open and ready to receive.

Intensity of aspiration - One must want it very earnestly, be very persistent, very stubborn to understand, to know the truth, to learn, to be; not be distracted here and there wanting things other than the Divine. Also, one must be very serious and aspire constantly. We can't aspire for 5 minutes in the day and forget about it the rest of the time. A unified will gives life and strength to the aspiration. Each movement of a sincere and confident aspiration calls down the intervention of the Grace.



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However, intensity must not be confused with impatience and a restless striving to attain the Divine. Sri Aurobindo says that the impatience and restless disquietude come from the vital and often bring this even into the aspiration. True aspiration must be intense, calm and strong, not restless or impatient. Else even the knowledge, power and Ananda that come will not have a firm foundation and will have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace are not permanently there.

*Aspiration should not be a form of desire, but the feeling of an inner soul's need, and a quiet settled will to turn towards the Divine and seek the Divine.*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.567

Aspiration differs from desire in that there is an unselfish call/flame, whereas in desire there is a grasping, craving and calling down by force. Aspiration is a self giving. In desire we ask as much as possible, give as little as possible, pull things to ourselves and make demands. If unfulfilled we are filled with frustration, anger, disappointment and despair. Aspiration has no excitement in it. It gives a sense of plenitude and calm, not the joy in terms of excitement.

### TYPES OF ASPIRATION

Aspiration should be intense but always calm and steady. An intense aspiration can bring about intense experiences, and intense experiences bring about change.

1. Mental Aspiration - A mental aspiration means that the thought-power aspires to have knowledge, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for all the faculties and capacities of the mind to be developed and placed at the service of the Divine.
2. Vital Aspiration - Or one may have an aspiration in the vital; if one has desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, one may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal.
3. Physical Aspiration - The body may seek a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being are well balanced, and one has the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily. An aspiration that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health.
4. Spiritual Aspiration - A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be everything for one, and one feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that one does, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being.

*To live within in a constant aspiration for the Divine enables us to look at life with a smile and to remain peaceful whatever the outer circumstances may be.*

- The Mother, CWM, Vol.10, p.266



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## BLOCKS ON THE WAY

*None of us are here to “do as we like”, or to create a world in which we shall at last be able to do as we like; we are here to do what the Divine wills and to create a world in which the Divine Will can manifest its truth no longer deformed by human ignorance or perverted and mistranslated by vital desire.* - Sri Aurobindo, 'Lights on Yoga', p.2

Most of the blocks we stumble upon on the path to self knowledge arise out of our over identification with our surface nature. We live so much of our lives externalised, as though *projected out of our bodies*, says the Mother, that we start to think of ourselves only as the surface personality. This puts us at the mercy of turbulence and uncertainty and anguish like the metaphor of the little boat buffeted by winds on the surface of the ocean. However, despite countless ripples on the surface, the ocean itself remains calm and immovable in its depths.

I experienced several of the blocks described by Mother and Sri Aurobindo during this process of surrender. Some of the most challenging ones I found were:

### 1. Vital Demands and desires –

The principal form in which the vital nature resists is through *desire and attachment to the objects of desire!*<sup>14</sup> Be it to material objects, personal relationships, power, ambition, esteem, recognition, or so on, we all have our own pet attachments and find it very difficult to let go.

Attachment can be defined as having Love + Expectations. Non-fulfilment of our whims and fancies leads first to impatience, then frustration, then depression, then anger or rage, and finally pain. This is a repeated cycle I have observed in every area where I had a desire or expectation that arose for vital satisfaction rather than needed for the spiritual life. *Desire often leads to either excess of effort, meaning often much labour and a limited fruit with strain, exhaustion and in case of difficulty or failure, despondence, disbelief or revolt.* These damaging and negative emotions rob us of our ability to stay centered, calm, peaceful and silent.

The vital is even shrewd enough to use the mind and body for serving its own ends! It often masquerades as the Psychic or higher and true vital. And cunningly makes our surrender conditional, our faith a bargaining kind, and causes personal ambition to creep into our aspiration.

### 2. Ego –

One is unable to break the bonds of attachment easily as one feels as though one's very identity comes from these relationships and what would one be without these? Over identification with our surface personality keeps us caught in the web of the external world and the ego refuses to be dissolved. “...*But naturally, as it has taken so much trouble to build you, it does not give up its work so easily, and it asks for the reward of its efforts, that is, to enjoy the individuality.*”<sup>15</sup>

I recall a dream where I felt as if everywhere I went people were trying to kill me using different weapons ranging from a gun and knife to a water pistol. A friend silently



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accompanied me but did nothing to protect me. Each time I was attacked I was unharmed but very perplexed as to why people wanted to kill me. Later a friend helped me see how this dream represented my ego which was feeling attacked by my various efforts at surrender and spiritual sadhana. The silent companion in the dream was likely the soul or psychic simply watching from behind.

Another form in which the Ego hinders us on the path is through vanity. Every initial effort in the sadhana requires personal endeavour and likely to be ego-centric. This is okay as it helps us get out of inertia. However, in due course these should be surrendered to the perfection and the sadhana too turned over to the Force. *Every self effort runs the risk of becoming self satisfied and boastful and that in turn spoils everything.*<sup>16</sup> I noticed several times there was a moment of true surrender or aspiration, then the ego would rear its head, puffing up with pride at its success. And immediately I would experience a blow and fall flat on the nose! Thanks to the Grace.

3. Doubt –

I find myself often assailed with doubts as to whether I am making progress, whether this path will really lead to true happiness, whether it is really worth it, am I too young to follow this study, etc. etc. The mind accepts the Divine or the Yogic ideal, but the vital is unconvinced and refuses to surrender and wants to go obstinately on its way of desire, passion and attraction to the ordinary life. This conflict is the source of acute difficulty says Sri Aurobindo. We need to be guided by the soul, but we are so often weak and lacking in our faith! *In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument and scepticism.*

4. Depression –

I experienced dissatisfaction or helplessness at either having my rajasic intentions unmet or at not making speedy enough progress to overcome these desires. We mostly seek out the Divine for our own purpose. Either way the rajasic impulses slow down the progress in their hurry. Impatience and despair can discourage and demoralise us as we find the same behaviour patterns repeatedly coming up despite trying to clean them.

5. Fear –

I found that letting go (surrender) is hard to do because we lack a deep faith and are constantly gripped by fear of the future outcomes. I noticed many fears assail us. Fears of: losing one's identity, pleasures, passions, comforts, way of thinking and doing things, loss of control, social ridicule, greater difficulties, of being alone, of losing the familiar; simply of surrendering the Ego. Sri Aurobindo says fear and yoga do not go together. Fear must be overcome on this path.

6. Intellectualization & Inertia –

Reading and acquiring knowledge on the self is not a substitute for experiencing the Divine and realising the true self within. A mental surrender, faith or aspiration is not sufficient. I notice inertia and lack of cooperation in various parts to truly turn inward and change.



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## OVERCOMING BLOCKS

*...in Yoga it is out of the inner victory that there comes the outer conquest.*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'Bases of Yoga', Faith-Aspiration-Surrender, p.28

- Sri Aurobindo says the difficulty in the nature always rises again and again till you can overcome it and only strength and patience in the face of these difficulties can help. The important thing is to keep the faith.
- Depression lowers the consciousness and must be avoided at all costs. Patience and faith.
- Seeing the surface instruments for what they are without identifying with them and hence remaining separate and not affected by the difficulties in the surface nature. My daily prayer of surrender and aspiration helped me to conceptualize my body, vital, mind etc. as an instrument of the Divine. Thus, one takes ownership of purifying the instrument like a machinery to be repaired without rejection or asceticism. At the same time, one reminds oneself that our true nature is not this surface instrument but the Divine within.
- Self observation without attachment, judgment or self persecution. Not worrying about how much progress one is making. *"The Divine is there to see that in due time all will be done."*<sup>17</sup>
- A cheerful and positive attitude. The sunlit path. Inner joy, Not to expect difficulties but remain unfazed and to persist when they arise.
- When adverse forces attack, call down the peace and a deeper, inner quietness. Mother says we must continue to aspire when we hit a wall like drops of water falling continuously are able to beat a path even through rock.
- Rejecting the vital mixture each time it arises in the being.

## SELF REINFORCING CYCLE OF

## SURRENDER, FAITH, AND ASPIRATION

*The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust in the Divine Grace at every step [faith], to direct the thought continually to the Divine [aspiration] and to offer oneself till the being opens [surrender] and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhar.*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'Bases of Yoga', Faith-Aspiration-Surrender, p.32

## MY JOURNEY

As I worked with myself, I began to realize the need to rise above the ego as the guiding principle and to find a higher truth which would help one make choices and live life without the attendant negative consequences. To get into contact with Divine guidance I realised it was essential to surrender and accept this guidance. As they say we need to first empty out our cup in order to fill it with something new. However, surrender was easier said than done. As the Mother points out, we need to surrender our very character and way of being and that takes a very long time.



*...for a complete surrender means to cut the knot of the ego in each part of the being and offer it, free and whole, to the Divine. The mind, the vital, the physical consciousness... have one after the other to surrender separately, to give up their own way and to accept the way of the Divine. - Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, pp.591-92*

As I searched for ways to make various parts of me become open more easily, I started to be confronted by the numerous blocks and difficulties described in the previous sections of the paper. Many times one felt one was taking one step forward and two steps back! This was the time my studies of the Integral Yoga helped me to understand what was happening and to anchor myself in a deep Faith in the Divine and a steady Aspiration for the spiritual life.

One day I received this simple yet very powerfully thought provoking e-mail:

*To: YOU*

*Date: TODAY*

*From: GOD*

*Subject: YOURSELF*

*Reference: LIFE*

*This is God. Today I will be handling All of your problems for you. I do Not need your help. So, have a nice day.*

*I love you.*

*P.S:*

*And, remember...*

*If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do Not attempt to resolve it yourself!! Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box. I will get to it in MY TIME. All situations will be resolved, but in My time, not yours.*

*Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.*

And I could see the action of all the three attitudes of Surrender, Faith, and Aspiration illustrated in this note. The action of these three on each other in cyclic, self feeding, reinforcing pattern also became apparent to me.



We are able to surrender only when we have a deep faith in the one we are surrendering to. Since few of us have a spontaneous faith in the Divine, we need to develop and strengthen it through a sincere and intense aspiration and call for the Grace. Once this grace from above answers, our opening and self giving becomes larger and larger and the Force works upon us to make us more plastic and ready for the Divine purpose. Thus, aspiration leads to faith leads to surrender which in turn further

stokes the flame of aspiration higher and higher. The cycle also feeds itself in reverse.



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## ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SRI AUROBINDO AND MOTHER'S WRITINGS

*I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and trust him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving [surrender] and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done. [faith]*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.587 (emphasis added)

This is the attitude into which one must grow.

### Faith & Surrender:

*Faith is the expression of a trust in the Divine and the full self-giving you make to the Divine.* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.6, p.349

### Surrender

*...cannot be absolutely complete, but it can be true if there is faith and Bhakti...*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, p.592

*Last night I had the experience of the effectivity of confident surrender to Thy guidance; when it is needful that something should be known, one knows it... To know that at each instant what must be surely is, as perfectly as is possible, for all those who know how to see Thee in everything and everywhere! No more fear, no more uneasiness, no more anguish; nothing but a perfect Serenity, an absolute Confidence, a supreme unwavering Peace.* - The Mother, 'Prayers & Meditations', December 3, 1912

### Faith & Aspiration:

*...if one has faith in the Grace and an aspiration and if one does what a little child would when it runs to its mother and says: "Mamma, give me this", if one calls with that simplicity, if one turns to the Grace and says "Give me this", I believe it listens. Unless one asks for something that is not good for one, then it does not listen.*

- The Mother, CWM, Vol.5, p.366

*Faith through aspiration? I think so, because it is rare to have it spontaneously, to be born with it. Very few people have this good luck to have a spontaneous faith. But if one is very sincere in one's aspiration, one gets it. Aspiration can bring everything, provided it is sincere and constant.* - CWM, Vol.6, p.394

### Aspiration & Surrender:

*I aspire for the day when I can no longer say "I", for I shall be Thou.*

- The Mother, 'Prayers & Meditations', November 2, 1912

*When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past*



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*self and its clings together, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future.* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.3, pp.83-84

## APPLICATION IN FAMILY LIFE

As a life stage, I am at a point where a lot of my friends are having children. Faced with the responsibility of producing and nurturing good offspring, I set about thinking how this worldly duty can become a spiritual work.

Gone is the time when children were the natural and main purpose of a marriage. As our socio-economic realities are changing, couples are making a conscious decision about when and why to have children. The several motivations behind this act ranged as follows:

- Societal norms – role fulfilment
- Pleasure – desire to experience parenthood
- Distraction – something to fill time and emptiness in life
- Expectation – old age support and dream fulfilment
- Posterity – leaving behind a legacy
- Expanded concept of self – I live not just for myself but another human being
- Sacred Action – Service to the Divine

Similarly one is faced with many dilemmas in the process of raising the child in the best possible manner:

- To earn lots of money to provide all “creature” comforts or spend more time, attention, and love? Are material comforts enough? If one quits one’s job to give more time to the child then the fear of giving/ having less resources/ exposure for the child.
- To live in big city for more opportunities or small city with simplicity, closeness to nature? Each influences childhood experiences and character development in different ways.
- To send the child to the best school readying for a competitive world or free progress or home school?
- To mould the child in our own image & likeness or give him nurturance to find his/her own voice? We often judge others’ behaviour from own past experiences/ values/ beliefs/ world views; find it difficult to give unconditional acceptance and freedom.

There are many more dilemmas on health, television, career choice and so on that plague parents today.

Keeping an attitude of surrender, faith and aspiration can help solve our entire difficulty. Right from the time of conception we need to see the child as a divine soul coming on earth through us as the medium. This ensures the highest possible consciousness at the time of conception and the best possible circumstances for the birth. Every decision when governed



To relieve tension, ten minutes of *real calm*, inner and outer, are more effective than all the remedies in the world. In silence lies the most effective help.

- *The Mother*



by a complete faith in the Divine's Will, an aspiration for the best possible from a Divine perspective, not our small ego, and a self giving and surrender to the Divine life will help parents be in touch with the Grace which alone can guide one to harmonious and ever beneficial outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

*A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe.*

- Sri Aurobindo, 'The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth', SABCL, Vol.16, p.5

Keeping this lofty aim in mind, we need to direct all our energies and capacities towards realising this goal. As our faith becomes deeper and our aspiration stronger, the self giving and surrender become more complete and with it the psychic voice which was hitherto hidden under layers of the surface personality comes forward and starts to organize and govern our life.

*It is not really on the capacity of the outer nature that success depends, (for the outer nature all self-exceeding seems impossibly difficult,) but on the inner being and to the inner being all is possible. One has only to get into contact with the inner being and change the outer view and consciousness from the inner; that is the work of the sadhana and it is sure to come with sincerity, aspiration and patience.*

- Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, Vol.23, pp.551-52

The emergence of the Psychic being to the forefront is necessary to be thoroughly established in the true self.

*...And once the self-giving is complete, consecration follows: it is the crown of the whole process of realization, the last step of the gradation, after which there is no more trouble and everything runs smoothly.* - The Mother, CWM, Vol.3, p.126

~ Meenakshi Krishnan

The above was presented as the end-of-course monograph for the online PG Certificate programme by ICIS: 'Explorations towards a New Creation of the Self' (IGNOU accredited), facilitated by Ameeta Mehra

<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.3, p.115. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> ---. vol.5 pp.53-54

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo SABCL vol.23 p.59. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>4</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.3, pp.23-24, 126-27

<sup>5</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo SABCL vol.23 pp.575-76

<sup>6</sup> ---. The Synthesis of Yoga p.775

<sup>7</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.6, p.120

<sup>8</sup> Sri Aurobindo. The Synthesis of Yoga p.778

<sup>9</sup> ---. p.771

<sup>10</sup> ---. p.775

<sup>11</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo SABCL vol.20 pp.51-52

<sup>12</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol. 7 pp.422-24

<sup>13</sup> ---. vol.4 pp.67-68

<sup>14</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo SABCL vol.24 pp.1616-17

<sup>15</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol. 7 pp.11-12

<sup>16</sup> ---. vol.6, p.40

<sup>17</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo SABCL vol.24 p.1345



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# Stillness & Wideness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Silence is indispensable, but also there is needed wideness. If the mind is not silent, it cannot receive the lights and voices of the supernal Truth or receiving mixes with them its own flickering tongues and blind pretentious babble. Active, arrogant, noisy, it distorts and disfigures what it receives. If it is not wide, it cannot house the effective power and creative force of the Truth. Some light may play there but it becomes narrow, confined and sterile. Or the force that is descending is cabined and thwarted and withdraws again from this rebellious foreign plane to its vast native heights. Or even if something comes down and remains, it is a pearl in the mire; for no change takes place in the nature or else there is formed only a thin intensity that points narrowly upward to the summits but can hold little and diffuse less upon the world around it.<sup>1</sup>



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## SILENCE & SPEECH

There are two great forces in the universe, silence and speech. Silence prepares, speech creates. Silence acts, speech gives the impulse to action. Silence compels, speech persuades. The immense and inscrutable processes of the world all perfect themselves within, in a deep and august silence, covered by a noisy and misleading surface of sound—the stir of innumerable waves above, the fathomless resistless mass of the ocean’s waters below. Men see the waves, they hear the rumour and the thousand voices and by these they judge the course of the future and the heart of God’s intention; but in nine cases out of ten they misjudge. Therefore it is said that in History it is always the unexpected that happens. But it would not be the unexpected if men could turn their eyes from superficialities and look into substance, if they accustomed themselves to put aside appearances and penetrate beyond them to the secret and disguised reality, if they ceased listening to the noise of life and listened rather to its silence.<sup>2</sup>

## THE SILENCE BEHIND LIFE

There is a silence behind life as well as within it and it is only in this more secret, sustaining silence that we can hear clearly the voice of God. In the noise of the world we hear only altered & disturbed echoes of it; for the Voice comes always – who else speaks to us on our journey? – but the gods of the heart, the gods of the mind, the gods of desire, the gods of sense take up the divine cry, intercept it and alter it for their purposes. Krishna calls to us, but the first note, even the opening power or sweetness, awakes a very brouhaha of these echoes. It is not the fault of these poor gods. The accent of power is so desirable, the note of sweetness is so captivating that they must seize it, they would be dull & soulless, there would be no hope of their redemption if they did not at once leap at it and make it their own. But in becoming their own, it ceases to be entirely his. How many who have the religious faith and the religious temperament, are following the impulses of their heart, the cravings of their desire, the urgency of their senses, the dictates of their opinion when they fully imagine that their God is leading them! And they do well, for God is leading them. It is the way He has chosen for them, & since He has chosen it, it is the best & wisest & most fruitful way for them. Still it is their God – not one they have made in their own image as the Atheist believes, but One who makes Himself in the image that they prefer, the image that best suits with their nature or their development. “In whatever way men come to me, in that way I love & cleave to them.” It is a saying of fathomless depth which contains the seed of the whole truth about God & religion. After all it is only in this way that the conditioned can meet the Absolute, that which has a nature or dharma of its own with that which is beyond all limit of nature or dharma. After the meeting of the soul with God, – well, that is a different matter. The secrets of His nuptial chamber cannot all be spoken.<sup>3</sup>

~ Sri Aurobindo

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<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Essays Divine and Human* ‘Man and Superman’ pp.255-56. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> ---, *Essays in Philosophy and Yoga* ‘The Strength of Stillness’ p.57.

<sup>3</sup> ---, *Essays Divine and Human* ‘The Silence behind Life’ pp.88-89.



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# Stepping Back

A Saturday in November... as usual we sat to review the planning for the elder group of L'avenir (3-4 yr olds). Rashmi, one of the facilitators, expressed a concern – the children do not focus before an activity, they just rush into it haphazardly; they should take at least a moment to connect before they begin anything.

It was a valid concern. As we discussed, it was clear that this kind of rushing into things haphazardly was common to most adults as well, and it contributed to a lot of angst in life. If children could learn to develop a poise of silence in their being right at this stage, and learn to deepen their actions, it would create a good foundation for their progress and future life.

Hence, we decided to deepen further and help them develop a sense of poise in their being by stepping back for a moment before engaging with anything.

Here are a few glimpses of what transpired... ..

## AIMING WITH CONCENTRATION

Out in the playground, we were practising how to throw the ball up till a certain distance. After some time the children's interest flagged. To bring in a greater challenge, we pointed at an apparatus made out of tyres and asked them to throw the ball through the row of tyres – right across. Initially, the children tried to throw anyhow – this was not too effective. At this point, I explained to them that if we concentrate the work goes faster and one gets what one wants. Let's try it out, I said. Then I demonstrated how to do it.



Till then almost all the children had been involved – even from the younger group. However, once a certain quietness came into the activity due to the conscious focusing, some children went away and only about half of them continued. The quantity reduced but the quality certainly increased! The children started figuring out which position was most suited to them, at what distance they should stand, and they continued to try out different variations till almost 45 minutes, without losing interest or focus. On their own they were able to go further and further, create greater challenges for themselves and have the joy of achievement after completing each step – an unusual feat for 3-year olds!



## FROM THE MAIN GATE TO MY ROOM

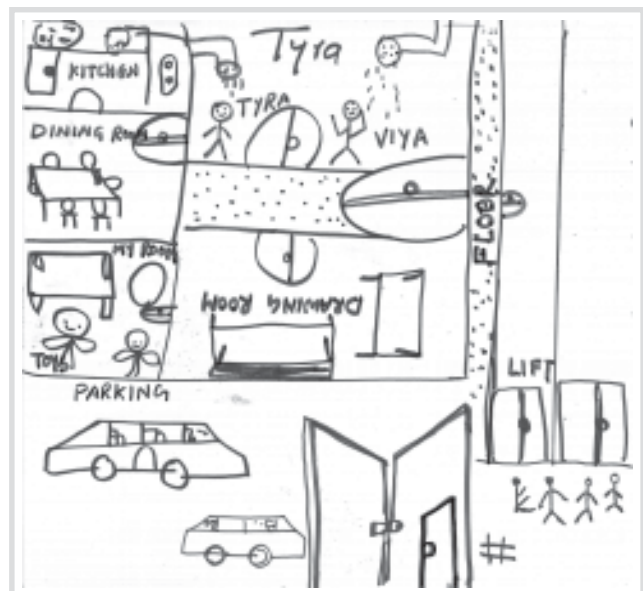
One day during the circle time in our casual sharing we asked the children, ‘If you are dropped at the main gate of your home, how will you reach till your own room?’ Most of the children replied, ‘*Main gate kholunga aur andar chala jaunga!*’ (I will open the gate and go inside!) 😊

As per the children’s level it was an appealing answer but we were looking for some descriptive answers. So we tried again differently. We prepared the children to become quiet and close their eyes. This time we helped them to take gradual steps to enter the gate of their home. We did a guided visualization exercise to reach till their room. To make it simpler for them, at every step we asked questions like –

- What is the colour of the gate to your house?
- Is there any specific pattern that has been made on the gate?
- Which hand (right or left) are you using to open the gate?
- How far is the main door of your house from the gate?
- Are there any trees around?
- Are there any steps that you have to climb?
- Or is there any ramp?
- How do you open your main door?
- Do you push it in or pull it out?
- What is the shape of your door?
- Is there any foot mat in front of your door?
- Which room comes first when you enter inside?
- Which side is your room from the main door?
- Etc.

The children were thoroughly concentrated. Once they were through with the visualization, each child described to us what he or she had seen. Rashmi and I sat individually with one child each, while the rest listened. We drew out what the children described. If one of them got influenced by hearing the other, we would say, ‘Okay, let’s see again how we can reach your room’ and the child would reconnect and describe. It was an unbelievable response and also lead us to wonder, ‘How can such young children have the ability to sustain their thoughts for such a long time?’ Here are some descriptions:

“Didi, I have one big gate and in the same gate I have a small gate. My mummy and papa use the big gate when they have to park the car. But I always go through the small gate. My house is very high and we do not have a staircase so my didi and I use a lift to go up. When I come out from the





lift I walk on the floor and reach my home. And my room is in my home. You know didi I like my room very much.” ☺

“Didi, I have got standing lines on my gate. My mummy, grandfather and papa can open it, because I am small. I have to climb a few steps to go into the room. My room is near my mummy’s. In my room there are lots of toys and books.” ☺



“Didi, the gate of my house is brown in colour. My home is on first floor. And I reach there after climbing many steps. There is also a foot mat in front of my door. I also have a big toy room in which I also play with my friends. My room is near my TV room.” ☺

The most significant experience for us was to see the children’s untiring patience. There was not a single sign of restlessness in them. The whole activity took 90 minutes, but these 3-year olds sat through the entire sharing and enjoyed visiting every one’s room happily. ☺

## RESPONDING TO ONE’S UNEASINESS

One day a child brought two books from her home called ‘Three little pigs’ and ‘Little Red Riding Hood’. During the free play time she wanted me to read those books for her. I started with the ‘Three little pigs’. Other children also joined the group. I read one and started the second one. As I was reading suddenly two children got up and asked me to stop reading saying they were not liking it. Upon my questioning further, they said the wolf was not good, he troubled everyone, that’s what they did not like. Seeing their discomfort, I stopped reading the story and threw in an idea saying, ‘Okay, today we will stop here and tomorrow onwards we are going to read one story every day and whenever you feel uncomfortable, you stop me. And then you will share with us what is it that you did not like.’

It has been a week since we started this journey and we are consciously devoting some time to help children become aware of their feelings, know the reason for it and also learn to discriminate.



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I feel that listening to one's uneasiness and responding to it also brings a sense of silence within. It lightens one's being and also strengthens our consciousness to come in touch with the inner self.

### STEPPING BACK: *an exercise by The Mother*

When we had initially discussed the need for inculcating a poise of silence this early on in young children, we had the following exercise by the Mother in our mind... and our experience showed that it was possible to adapt it even to such a young age group... ..

“Most of you live on the surface of your being, exposed to the touch of external influences. You live almost projected, as it were, outside your own body, and when you meet some unpleasant being similarly projected you get upset. The whole trouble arises out of your not being accustomed to stepping back. You must always step back into yourself—learn to go deep within—step back and you will be safe. Do not lend yourself to the superficial forces which move in the outside world. Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done. If



someone is angry with you, do not be caught in his vibrations but simply step back and his anger, finding no support or response, will vanish. Always keep your peace, resist all temptation to lose it. Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back. All that belongs to the ordinary world is impermanent and fugitive, so there is nothing in it worth getting upset about. What is lasting, eternal, immortal and infinite—that indeed is worth having, worth conquering, worth possessing. It is Divine Light, Divine Love, Divine Life—it is also Supreme Peace, Perfect Joy and All-Mastery upon earth with the Complete Manifestation as the crowning. When you get the sense of the relativity of things, then whatever happens you can step back and look; you can remain quiet and call on the Divine Force and wait for an answer. Then you will know exactly what to do. Remember, therefore, that you cannot receive the answer before you are very peaceful. Practise that inner peace, make at least a small beginning and go on in your practice until it becomes a habit with you.”<sup>1</sup>

~ Sunaina

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<sup>1</sup> The Mother. *Collected Works of The Mother* vol.3, p.160. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



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# The way Buddha answers

**BUDDHA** was once confronted by Maulingaputta, a great philosopher with an array of questions. The questions were subtle and complicated and surely revealed his knowledge on the subject. Buddha listened for an hour silently.

Maulingaputta said, "I have asked you my questions, but you have not answered any of them."

Buddha said, "My way of answering your questions is different. You will have to wait for two years. Now tell me, I am sure you have asked these questions to others as well."

Maulingaputta listed out the names of the others whom he had approached for the answers. He said, "They answered me immediately."

Buddha said, "Then why waste my time?"

Maulingaputta said, "I am not satisfied with the answers."

Buddha replied, "So would be the case if I answer you immediately."

Maulingaputta had no other go than to wait for two years with Buddha.

On hearing the conversation, Manjushree, Buddha's first disciple began to laugh. Maulingaputta thought he was mad. Manjushree then explained, "It seems history repeats itself. I came here with five hundred disciples of my own with questions to ask the Buddha. I was asked to stay for two years and now twenty years have elapsed. My questions have dropped."

Manjushree cautioned, "Gautama Buddha is tricky. If you want to ask Him your questions, do it now. Otherwise you will end up not asking them!"

Buddha assured, "What can I do if you don't ask me the questions? I keep up my word and will answer your questions at the end of two years."

Two years went by and Buddha urged Maulingaputta to ask the questions. Maulingaputta began to laugh. Buddha asked, "Why are you laughing like a mad man? Do you remember Manjushree's laughter?"

Maulingaputta replied, "I do not have anything to ask. Silence has taken over me. My questions have dropped. By not answering, you have answered!"

Where is time when one is with the timeless?

~ from the Internet  
living.oneindia.in



# Events

nov-dec 2010

**POISE OF SILENCE: A PARENTING WORKSHOP**  
For L'avenir Parents; 14 November;  
Facilitated by Anuradha

**ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES FOR 6-10 YEAR OLDS**  
14 November to 12 December - 4 Sundays;  
Facilitated by Durjee

**OVERNIGHT CAMP FOR 6-10 YEAR OLDS**  
27-28 November; Facilitated by Sunaina & Durjee

**MEDITATION SESSIONS  
WITH SCHOOL STUDENTS**  
Facilitated by Anuradha  
Under the Leadership training programme of  
TGELF; for students of classes VIII to X

- 25 November : Delhi Public School (Gurgaon)
- 26 November : Pragyam School (Greater Noida)
- 8 December : Rajkeya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya (Delhi)

**MEDITATION SESSION WITH DU LECTURERS**  
11 December; Facilitated by Ameeta Mehra  
Under the Refresher Course by CPDHE,  
University of Delhi; for Psychology lecturers

**TALKS BY RICHARD HARTZ**

- 13-17 December : Sri Aurobindo's own Yoga-sadhana as reflected in 'Record of Yoga', 'Savitri', 'The Synthesis of Yoga' and 'Life Divine'
- 18 December : Sadhana & Sahitya
- 19 December : Serenity, Courage and Wisdom
- 19 December : Intuition and the Limits of Reason

**SPECIAL MEDITATIONS**

- 5 November : Deepawali
- 17 November : The Mother's mahasamadhi
- 24 November : Siddhi Day (Darshan day)
- 5 December : Sri Aurobindo's mahasamadhi





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- p.4: Shibani Dara, New Delhi, India
- pp.39-42, 44: The Gnostic Centre, New Delhi, India
- All other images: from Internet
- The Awakening Ray logo, p.3: artist: Krishnalal, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India
- The Gnostic Centre bird: artist: Neera Goyal, New Delhi, India
- Back cover (The Gnostic Centre photo): Franz Fassbender, Auroville, India



For some, commitment comes from pride.  
For us, our commitment is our pride.



*A*t Vatika Group, our aim is not just to live up to our commitments, it is to create them. What we promise, we promise with our heart and soul. And our satisfaction lies in seeing it fulfilled to the letter. Which is why, we believe in building relationships that last a lifetime. We believe in bringing great things to life. And sharing your pleasure in enjoying them. In a short span of 18 years, the group has diversified into real estate and hospitality.

From country living to international knowledge like Vatika City in Gurgaon and Vatika Embassy City in Jaipur, corporate complexes like First India Place and Vatika Triangle to restaurants like Columbus Leaf and the Fox, to opening four new hotels such as The Vatika, the group has diversified interests with a market value of over Rs. 80000 crores, and has set benchmarks with each project. Today, our commitment to bring you the best stands strong. And our customer stays content. To reach better and to always live up to our word.

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