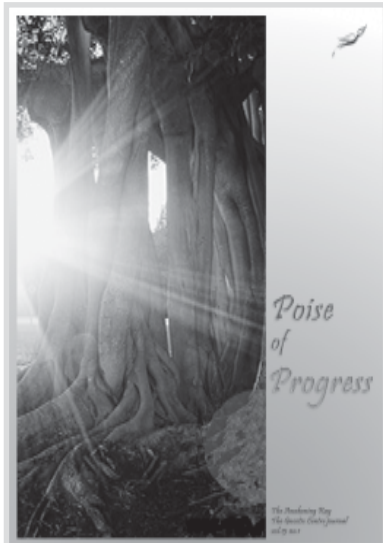




Poise  
of  
Progress

*The Awakening Ray*  
*The Gnostic Centre journal*  
*vol.15 no.1*





THE AWAKENING RAY  
vol.15 issue 1

THE TEAM

EDITOR  
Ameeta Mehra  
CO-EDITOR  
Anuradha  
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY  
Anuradha Agrawal  
OWNER  
Ameeta Mehra  
on behalf of The Gnostic Centre  
PRINTING PRESS  
Gokul Offset Private Limited  
D-159A, Okhla Phase 1  
New Delhi-20  
PLACE OF PUBLICATION  
The Gnostic Centre  
H-401 Som Vihar Apts.  
Sangam Marg, New Delhi-22

The views & thoughts expressed in the articles are those of the authors and therefore the editor shall bear no responsibility for them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry:  
\* All quotations from  
Sri Aurobindo and The Mother  
\* Material (including photographs)  
from the Ashram publications  
\* The Awakening Ray image  
(artist: Krishnalal)

the awakening ray  
v.15, issue 1 : jan-feb'2011

• Editorial	<i>Ameeta Mehra</i>	4
• The Awakening Ray	<i>The Mother</i>	5
• A Settled Poise of Progress	<i>introduction and extracts from The Mother</i>	<i>compilation: Anuradha</i> 7
• My Life - A Journey...	<i>Roohi Kapur</i>	15
• On the Road to Self-discovery	<i>Seema Agrawal</i>	23
• A Poem	<i>Monica Gupta</i>	29
• A Meditation for Progress	<i>The Mother</i>	30
• How to help a Child Progress?	<i>The Mother</i>	31
• Upcoming Events		32
• Human Progress	<i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	33
• The Sweet Song of the Second Fiddle (a story)	<i>Max Lucado</i>	39
• Events: Dec'2010		41
Picture Credits		32
Advertisements		42



---

# Editorial

Dear Reader,

There are two kinds of progress - the progress of our inner life and consciousness and the progress of our outer life and society. Both have distinctly different aims and processes, yet are interlinked. Inner Progress often paves the way for outer progress and sometimes a certain outer progress in society and work, gives an impetus to the inner growth of consciousness in the individual and society.

Today we are all witnessing the degradations in society..... rampant corruption, a rape every 18 minutes of the day; a breakdown in our institutions for ethical governance, plundering and wastage of our national resources and wealth... the list goes on!

Why has the moral fibre of our society decayed and eroded..... what are the ways we can bring about a culture of moral rectitude and discipline?

In this climate of society.... how can we progress? What is progress? How do we conduct our life? What is the poise of Progress? And what powers do we have to enable collective change?

Individuals make a society, is it not the individuals then, in society, that have to progress in consciousness so that society progresses?

In fact, some of these questions will form the basis of a seminar being held at the Gnostic Centre on the 27th and 28th of March for which our readers are invited to share and participate. This issue of the journal brings some insights into the concept and idea of progress.

Let us reflect deeply on these issues.... I welcome your response.

 Ameeta Mehra



IT is not the number of years you have lived that makes you grow old. You become old when you stop progressing.

As soon as you feel you have done what you had to do, as soon as you think you know what you ought to know, as soon as you want to sit and enjoy the results of your effort, with the feeling you have worked enough in life, then at once you become old and begin to decline.

When, on the contrary, you are convinced that what you know is nothing compared to all which remains to be known, when you feel that what you have done is just the starting-point of what remains to be done, when you see the future like an attractive sun shining with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved, then you are young, however many are the years you have passed upon earth, young and rich with all the realizations of tomorrow.

And if you do not want your body to fail you, avoid wasting your energies in useless agitation. Whatever you do, do it in a quiet and composed poise. In peace and silence is the greatest strength.<sup>1</sup>

✍ The Mother

<sup>1</sup> The Mother. *Collected Works of the Mother vol. 12*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



## *Progress*

*“This is why we are on earth.”*

*“The thirst for progress, the thirst to know, the thirst to transform yourself, and above all the thirst for Love and Truth - if you keep that, you go faster. Truly a thirst, a need, you know, a need. All the rest has no importance, what you need is that.*

*No more bonds - free, free, free, free! Always ready to change everything, except one thing: to aspire. That thirst.*

*The “Something” we need, the Perfection we need, the Light we need, the Love we need, the Truth we need, the supreme Perfection we need - and that’s all. The formulas - the fewer the formulas, the better. A need, a need, a need ... which only the Thing can satisfy, nothing else, no half measure. Only That. And then, move on, move on! Your path will be your path, it doesn’t matter; any path, any path whatever.”*

- The Mother

---

# *A Settled Poise of Progress*



I would like us to make the resolution to raise ourselves each day, in all sincerity and goodwill, in an ardent aspiration towards the Sun of Truth, towards the Supreme Light, the source and intellectual life of the universe, so that it may pervade us entirely and illumine with its great brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.<sup>1</sup>

**THE** New Year began with this message from The Mother – Progress one step at a time, unrelenting.

What is Progress? It implies movement – to go further, to rise higher. Though often interpreted as acquiring more skills, information, assets, position, power – it is essentially a movement of exceeding oneself, raising the bar of excellence. In the words of the Mother, “...to progress is to make constantly more perfect the capacities that one already possesses.”<sup>2</sup>

In another conversation, the Mother refers to Progress as a ‘liberating action of the Divine Grace’–

“The dynamic all-powerful progress that liberates from fetters, bondages and inertia.”<sup>3</sup>

The Mother refers to it in conjunction with Peace, thereby highlighting the inherent connection between Peace and Progress. As there is a poise of Peace that one can establish in one’s being, there is also a poise of Progress that once established can guide us naturally and spontaneously to seek and collaborate with all opportunities for progress...

The journey is not very simple. As the Mother points out,

“The peace is universally appreciated and recognized as divine, but the progress is welcomed only by those whose aspiration is intense and courageous.”<sup>3</sup>

Intense aspiration and courage – these are the two foremost qualities the Mother highlights here. The aspiration calls forth the divine response, but then courage has to step in to follow the path indicated – and most often, it is courage against oneself, one’s own limitations.

The following extracts touch upon some of the obstacles that one experiences in this journey of Progress, and also the attitudes that can help... ..



---

*A settled poise of progress*

*In the being*

*Intrinsic*

*Deep within*

*An unfolding*

*Impelled*

*By something unexpressed*

*Unthinking*

*Unplanned*

*Sun-drawn naturally*

*Taking wings*





---

## *What is the Goal of Life?*

In the world as it is now the goal of life is not to secure personal happiness, but to awaken the individual progressively to the Truth-consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

\*

We are on earth in order to progress and to perfect ourselves in the course of many successive lives. What we cannot do this time, we shall do next time; and every progress we make this time will help us then.<sup>5</sup>

\*

If the growth of consciousness were considered as the principal goal of life, many difficulties would find their solution. The best way of not becoming old is to make progress the goal of our life.<sup>6</sup>



## *How to make all Life a Field for Progress?*

### *How can I make my work a means for my progress?*

Whatever occupation or task falls to your lot, you must do it with a will to progress; whatever one does, one must not only do it as best one can but strive to do it better and better in a constant effort for perfection.<sup>7</sup>

\*

From the moment one has decided and accepted to do something, it must be done as well as one can.

One can find in everything a chance to progress in consciousness and self-mastery. And this effort for progress immediately makes the thing interesting, no matter what it is.<sup>8</sup>

\*

To do with care all that one does is the basis of all progress.<sup>9</sup>



### *What should I do when faced with Difficulties?*

Remain perfectly calm in the face of all circumstances. And yet be always alert to discover what progress you still have to make and lose no time in making it.<sup>10</sup>

\*



---

If something extremely painful happens to you, never try to deaden yourself; you must not forget, you must not sink into unconsciousness. Go right to the heart of the pain and there you will find the light, the truth, the strength and the joy which are hidden behind this pain. But for that you must be firm and refuse to let yourself slide. In this way every event in life, great or small, can be an opportunity for progress. Even the most insignificant details can lead to revelations if you know how to profit from them.<sup>11</sup>

\*

If you truly want peace and happiness, your constant preoccupation should be:

“What progress must I make to be able to know and serve the Divine?”

“Am I what I ought to be?”

“Am I doing what I ought to be doing?”

“Am I progressing as much as I should?”

Then it becomes interesting.

“What should I learn in order to make my next progress? What infirmity must I cure? What shortcoming must I overcome? What weakness must I get rid of?”

And then, naturally, the next moment: “How can I become capable of understanding and serving the Divine?”<sup>12</sup>



*How can I know if it is the Divine Will  
or my own Desire behind my action?*

How are we to know, you will ask, when it is the Divine Will that makes us act? The Divine Will is not difficult to recognise. It is unmistakable. You can know it without being very far on the path. Only you must listen to its voice, the small voice that is here in the heart. Once you are accustomed to listen, if you do anything that is contrary to the Divine Will, you feel an uneasiness. If you persist on the wrong track, you get very much disturbed. If, however, you give some material excuse as the cause of your uneasiness and proceed on your way, you gradually lose the faculty of perception and finally you may go on doing all kinds of wrong and feel no uneasiness. But if, when once you feel the least disturbance, you stop and ask of your inner self, “What is the cause of this?” then you do get the real answer and the whole thing becomes quite clear. Do not try to give a material excuse when you feel a little depression or a slight uneasiness. When you stop and look about for the reason, be absolutely straight and sincere. At first your mind will construct a very plausible and beautiful explanation. Do not accept it, but look beyond and ask, “What is it that is behind this movement? Why am I doing this?” Finally you will discover, hidden in a corner, the little ripple—a slight wrong turn or twist in your attitude that is causing the trouble or disturbance.

You can easily know when a thing comes from the Divine. You feel free, you are at ease, you are in peace. But when something presents itself to you and you jump at it and cry out,

---

“Oh, at last I have it”, then you can know for certain that it does not come from the Divine. Equanimity is the essential condition of union and communion with the Divine.<sup>13</sup>



✱

Communications from the psychic do not come in a mental form. They are not ideas or reasonings. They have their own character quite distinct from the mind, something like a feeling that comprehends itself and acts.

By its very nature, the psychic is calm, quiet and luminous, understanding and generous, wide and progressive. Its constant effort is to understand and progress.

The mind describes and explains.

The psychic sees and understands.<sup>14</sup>



### *What can I do when things are dull and boring?*

Sometimes, in certain circumstances, everything seems dull, boring, stupid; this means that you are as boring as the circumstances and it clearly shows that you are not in a state of progress. It is simply a passing wave of boredom, and nothing is more contrary to the purpose of existence. At such a moment you might make an effort and ask yourself, “This boredom shows that I have something to learn, some progress to make in myself, some inertia to conquer, some weakness to overcome.” Boredom is a dullness of the consciousness; and if you seek the cure within yourself, you will see that it immediately dissolves. Most people, when they feel bored, instead of making an effort to rise one step higher in their consciousness, come down one step lower; they come down even lower than they were before and do stupid things, they make themselves vulgar in the hope of amusing themselves. That is why men intoxicate themselves, spoil their health, deaden their brains. If they had risen instead of falling, they would have made use of this opportunity to progress.<sup>15</sup>

✱

There is not a single minute in life, not one circumstance that is not an opportunity for progress. So [ask yourself] what progress am I going to make today?<sup>16</sup>



### *At times all progress seems to stop... what then?*

...the first contact with the force gives the psychic being the power to dominate the consciousness and govern the being. But gradually the other parts (mental, vital and physical) revert to their old activities and the good condition gets veiled. You must have a persistent will to regain it.<sup>17</sup>

✱



---

It is always preferable not to try to assess the progress one is making because it does not help one to make it—on the contrary. Aspiration for progress, if it is SINCERE, is sure to have an effect. But whatever the progress made, individually or collectively, the progress still remaining to be made is so considerable that there is no reason to stop on the way to assess the ground one has covered.

The perception that some progress has been made should come spontaneously, by the sudden and unexpected awareness of what one is in comparison with what one was some time before. That is all—but that in itself requires a fairly high degree of development of the consciousness.<sup>18</sup>



## *What can bring about maximum Progress?*

The first condition is not to have one's own personal interest as a goal.

The first qualities needed are boldness, courage and perseverance.

And then to be conscious that one knows nothing compared to what one ought to know, that one can do nothing compared to what one ought to do, that one is nothing compared to what one ought to be.

One must have an invariable will to acquire what is lacking in one's nature, to know what one does not yet know, to be able to do what one is not yet able to do.

One must constantly progress in the light and peace that come from the absence of personal desires.

One could take as a programme:

“Always better. Forward!”

And to have only one goal: to know the Divine in order to be able to manifest Him.

Persevere, and what you cannot do today you will be able to do tomorrow.<sup>19</sup>

\*

For those who want always to progress, there are three major ways of progressing:

- (1) To widen the field of one's consciousness.
- (2) To understand ever better and more completely what one knows.
- (3) To find the Divine and surrender more and more to his Will.

In other words, this means:

- (1) To constantly enrich the possibilities of the instrument.
- (2) To ceaselessly perfect the functioning of this instrument.
- (3) To make this instrument increasingly receptive and obedient to the Divine.



---

To learn to understand and do more and more things. To purify oneself of all that prevents one from being totally surrendered to the Divine. To make one's consciousness more and more receptive to the Divine Influence.

One could say: to widen oneself more and more, to deepen oneself more and more, to surrender oneself more and more completely.<sup>20</sup>

\*

Be only a burning fire for progress, take whatever comes to you as an aid to your progress and immediately make whatever progress is required.<sup>21</sup>

\*

There is a sacred fire that burns in the heart and envelops the whole being: it is Agni, who illumines and purifies all. I kindle that fire in you each time that you ask me for some progress; but it destroys nothing except falsehood and obscurity.<sup>22</sup>



### *In what does a psychic being's progress consist?*

Individualisation, the capacity to take up all experiences and organise them around the divine centre.

The aim of the psychic being is to form an individual being, individualised, "personalised" around the divine centre. Normally, all the experiences of the external life (unless one does yoga and becomes conscious) pass without organising the inner being, while the psychic being organises these experiences serially. It wants to realise a particular attitude towards the Divine. Hence it looks for all favourable experiences in order to have the complete series of opportunities, so to say, which will allow it to realise this attitude towards the Divine.<sup>23</sup>



### *The Litmus Test - the Joy of Progress*

The joy of progress imagines that even if you have realised the goal you have put before you—take the goal we have in view: if we realise the supramental life, the supramental consciousness—well, this joy of progress says, "Oh! but this will be only a stage in the eternity of time. After this there will be something else, and then after that another and yet another, and always one will have to go further." And that is what fills you with joy. While the idea, "Ah! now I can sit down, it is finished, I have realized my goal, I am going to enjoy what I have done", Oh, how dull it is! Immediately one becomes old and stunted.<sup>24</sup>

✍ Introduction and Compilation: Anuradha



## *Surrender*

*“To will what the Divine wills is the supreme wisdom.”*

*“Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine.”*

*“... a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving.”*

*“True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself.”*

- The Mother

---

# *My Life - A Journey...*



**I**T happened just like that, on a day that I let my thoughts carry me away...Sitting by myself it was as though I were watching my own life on a screen. I saw patterns emerge that I had until now ignored. Certain tragedies happen and then later we realize how much we learned from them. We can let certain experiences bring us down, or we can use them as levers to turn our world around.

By the tranquil lake I sat,  
Pensive and dark  
Had life dealt me a good hand,  
Or was I just hard on myself?

Despite everything  
I had got all and more  
I had never expected a life as good,  
I had only wished...

Just as trees give each other space  
We carve a niche for ourselves  
I do feel fortunate for this space  
But live in constant fear – I dread being cut off!!!

Death I realized is so sudden and final  
Breaking that bond is slow and painful  
In death, there are no choices –  
It is a journey with 'No comebacks'.

I now see the way things took shape,  
There is a pattern in all our lives,  
Mostly we choose to ignore it.  
If you look deeper – your past helps you cope with the future.

By the dark outline of the shimmering lake,  
I sit and contemplate,  
Does the lotus as it unfolds itself,  
Know the sorrows that we sometimes face?  
Or does it simply exemplify beauty  
And never ponder questions that we seek?



---

Dusk turns slowly to light,  
I fold my arms and shiver,  
When the light fades and darkness falls,  
We get the feeling that life has gone,  
And until dawn the living lie still,  
To be awakened once again to beauty –  
Fresh and eternal,  
And then I think –  
Does this ever end?

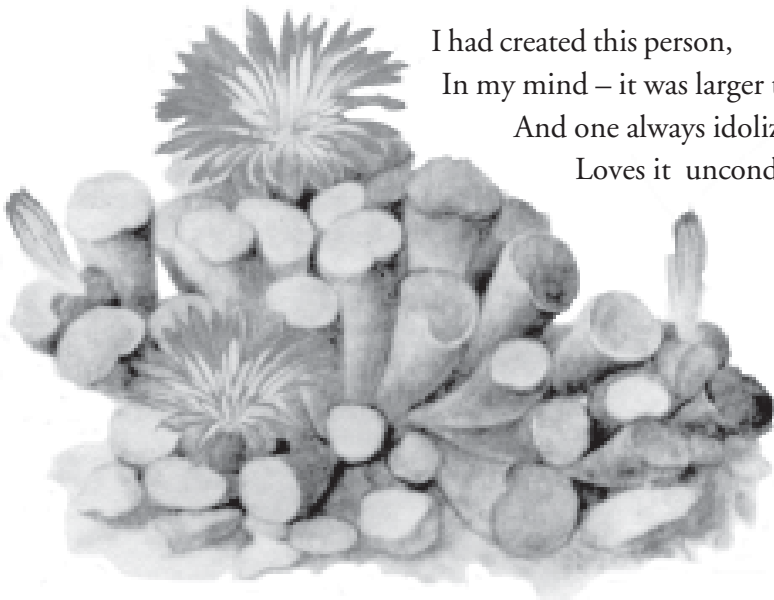
But as the enormity of life's truth began to shake me there were some decisions I had to make. There are habits I am sure we all live with, but once I realized that I had to break some to move on, the path suddenly became more difficult and dreary....

And then suddenly  
The sadness took over,  
Everything loomed dark  
There was nothing to look forward to.

I was physically tired,  
I was mentally exhausted,  
Life was making me take a difficult decision  
And all I wanted to do was crawl into bed and hide.

I was giving up a habit,  
It was like breaking a relationship –  
But then, this relationship lived in me,  
It was not really out there, with any one.

I had created this person,  
In my mind – it was larger than reality,  
And one always idolizes one's own creation –  
Loves it unconditionally.





---

But now in my life,  
There was no space even for dreams,  
I could no longer  
Live a life on two planes.

In my mind things would probably never change,  
But from within I felt this urge  
It was imperative if I was to grow  
I had to forgo a part of me for good.

I pulled my scattered being together  
Made a decision that was forever,  
Wiped the stray tear  
And decided to firmly get on with my life!!

The journey once undertaken was not easy. The initial state of inertia was hard to overcome. I knew there were rough roads ahead, but I was determined to battle the storm...

Like a small bird  
With clipped wings  
I felt helpless  
Very vulnerable.

I stared out at this world  
All seemed so meaningless  
No light in my dark tunnel  
No hope of a bright morning.

It seemed like a deathless night  
Endless hours of darkness  
Completely ensconced in this silence  
I lost all that I had found.

From the depths of this mindless struggle  
I awoke to a brilliant smile  
To the warmth of a loving hand  
It was a sparkle of The Divine.

And then all seemed to change  
By sheer miracle it seemed  
I shrugged off this dark and desolate cloak  
The folds within which I was taking refuge.





---

I looked up at the sky  
Reached to it with an aim  
I firmly shut the door on the past  
And worked single mindedly to my goal.

Relentless days and short nights  
I seemed to be caught in a feverish pitch  
I worked like one possessed  
And felt truly happy in moments thus lived.

And it was with deep faith in the Divine Will,  
I overcame a crippling experience,  
Just like a bright light piercing through the darkness  
The key to my truth was revealed.

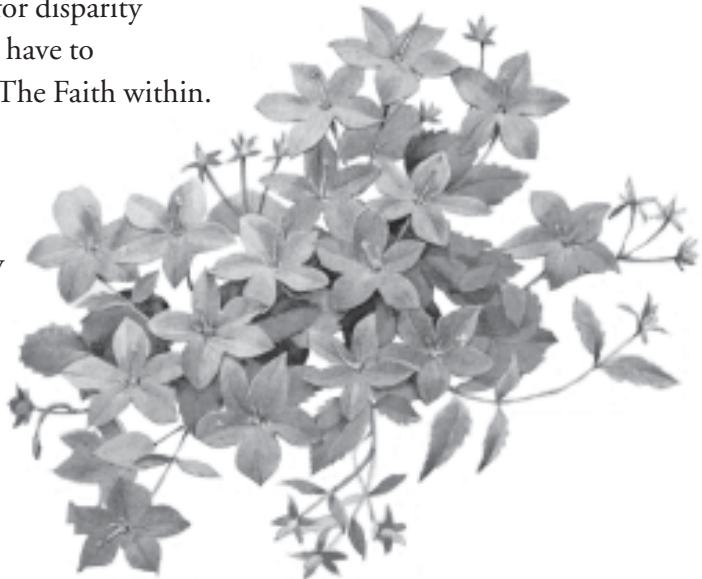
In my journey I began to slowly build new roads. I learned certain rules for myself, that would help me to navigate this route...

When circumstances do confound  
If I do not lose sight of my goal  
If I struggle and face each challenge  
Then alone is the path crystal clear.

When I give up –  
Lose faith  
Close down and crumble  
Then alone do I stumble.

By looking forth with clarity  
Giving no room for disparity  
I will achieve all I have to  
As long as I keep The Faith within.

Let it guide me  
From faltering  
Show me the way  
To my destiny.





---

But we all need inspiration, moments of dependence on an inherent power, which I found prevailed in nature, all things bright and wonderful, and I turned to it for inspiration and guidance. The flight of birds taught me –

Darting up and down,  
Meeting the wind head on,  
These birds knew challenge  
And were willing to break in its face.

Watching from my window,  
I felt my spirits soar,  
The brightness of the sky and nature  
The splendour of all things alive and free.

I too wanted to be like one,  
Walk tall, be proud,  
I wanted to feel success against my stride,  
And experience failures in my efforts.

I watched in awe as her wings bent backwards,  
And how she relentlessly moved forward,  
The pain, sorrow and then joys –  
They seemed to mould her very form.

I had known what it was to fall,  
To dwell in the darkness and lose heart,  
I have been waiting for inspiration to seep into my very core,  
Hadn't I waited too long?

Going for short breaks to the mountains, away from the dust and heat we called home. I would unwind but I kept searching for lessons that I could learn from all around me.

The song of the bird  
Mutes the rustle of trees,  
The whistle of the wind,  
Sang tunes to set you free

Your thoughts soared high,  
Your soul felt light,  
Sitting the book down with a sigh,  
What else could create so beautiful a sight.



---

When nature decides to paint  
She creates a hue,  
That makes you feel faint,  
So magnificent is the view.

Gathering shards of emotions torn,  
By the cities senseless pace,  
I heard the sound of a distant horn,  
I realized then how far I was from that race.

All your senses alive,  
Your emotions cleansed,  
You felt yourself revive,  
By feeling joys thus sensed.

The sudden shrill cry of a bird,  
Broke the momentous tranquility,  
Made you realize how absurd,  
And fragile are dreams and their futility.

Making trips to the Ganges. Meditating by the river – watching life flow by, I would sense the stillness of my being and then after a while I would feel my self merge with the sparkles of the water and flow as one – my life and all would go by before my very eyes. And all I would remember was the experience of that which was on the banks of this holy river...

The shimmering sparks of light's reflection on the fast flowing waters,  
The piercing sharp cries of darting birds,  
The fragrance of freshly bloomed flowers.  
The magnificence of tall trees  
That has stood the test of time.  
All this and more amazes me  
As I watch the night turn into morn.  
How powerful is the language of nature,  
Silent, resilient and omnipresent.  
You smell it, feel it and can,  
If you wish, become One with the ingenuity of its power.

But the most therapeutic of all were my children. Each time I felt I was lost, I had only to turn to them. I guess I would not be far from the truth if I said that this urge to change, to grow and mould myself began with them. And now it seems as though all the children I interact with are like small gifts, they each carry special messages and yes, they are my newly found inspirations, the firm blocks upon which I hope to build a future....



---

I can feel myself escape,  
I seem to move far away,  
To some inner recesses  
Away from the now,  
Away from the mundane,  
Secluded yet happy,  
I prevail into my own consciousness,  
Seek answers and ponder,  
Feel happy and contented.  
I get the urge to remain,  
Away, silent and untouched...  
And then a small hand,  
Two sparkling eyes,  
And gurgling giggles,  
Bring me right back.

I am the centre of their joys,  
I wish to always be there for them,  
I know that in them I shall always Be.  
They are the tomorrow,  
Which we might never see,  
And in making their today  
Joyous, fruitful and exemplary,  
We ensure that the future is a brighter day.



✍️ Roohi Kapur

Extract from -  
Inner Attitude Necessary to Maintain Poise in My Life  
a monograph submitted at the end of  
'Explorations towards a New Creation of the Self'  
an ICIS postgraduate certificate online course  
facilitated by Ameeta Mehra



## *Psychological Perfection*

*“There is not one psychological perfection but five, like the five petals of the flower:  
sincerity, faith, devotion, aspiration and surrender.”*

- The Mother

---

# *On the Road to Self-discovery*



## *Becoming Aware of the Contrary Pulls within Oneself*

I'm a being of conflicting emotions. I'm unable to follow my aim with sincerity and surrender. I forget and I get swayed. There are too many binding influences – of my past, of my upbringing, of circumstances, of people around, of my own desires and ambitions, of the limitations of my nature... To organise my life around my highest aspiration, I need to gather all my energies and be indrawn. Be focussed on my central aspiration and let it govern my life. But I'm unable to do so because I'm pulled in various directions. There are desires, at professional level and personal level, both. These are various road blocks I face and Mother stresses upon the importance of persevering will and persistent, regular effort to overcome the complexity of our personality and to harmonise different parts of our being. She says,

A person may have a great many personalities within him “ten or twenty, for example” and each one has its own destiny. In the physical world, an individuality means a human body; so, in a human body there are many individualities, each one with its own destiny. What happens then? Conflicts, friction, inner disorder created by these individualities which are unable to get on with one another. The strongest one gets the upper hand; it is not only dominant over the others but curbs them to stop them from rebelling. So, in the end, the unlucky ones, the repressed ones, go to sleep. They bide their time, and when that time comes, they suddenly jump up and turn everything upside down. If that happens very often, that person's life will be a very disorderly one. He will take up one thing today and go on with another tomorrow and so on.

... a truly harmonious personality implies a conscious arrangement of the inner individualities. This arrangement may be effected spontaneously before birth, but that is rare. The arrangement is achieved later, by means of a discipline, a proper education. But to succeed in this one must consciously take the psychic being as the centre and arrange, harmonise the various individualities around it. True harmony, inner organisation is the result of such a persistent effort.<sup>1</sup>

So this requires a systematic observation of all my parts and to make the choice of the one that is going to dominate. At present, it is my vital that governs me but I want to, aspire to, change that. How do I make it collaborate? How shall I make it subservient to my psychic? Sri Aurobindo explains the personal effort that is required and says it can be done through offering which involves ...

The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender, - an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing - the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the



---

assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature; rejection of the movements of the lower nature - rejection of the mind's ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind, - rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being, - rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda may establish itself in a body growing always more divine; surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti.<sup>2</sup>

Mother emphasises on becoming conscious first, to observe all our movements, all that we are dispassionately, objectively, with vigilance so that we can surrender those. She says even to realise our aim perfectly, we need to become conscious and explains through an example,

... To perfect oneself, one must first become conscious of oneself. I am sure, for instance, that the following situation has arisen many times in your life: someone asks you suddenly, "Why have you done that?" Well, the spontaneous reply is, "I don't know." If someone asks you, "What are you thinking of?" You reply, "I don't know." "Why are you tired?" – "I don't know." "Why are you happy?" – "I don't know", and so on. I can take indeed fifty people and ask them suddenly, without preparation, "Why have you done that?" and if they are not inwardly "awake", they will all answer, "I don't know." (Of course I am not speaking here of those who have practised a discipline of self-knowledge and of following up their movements to the extreme limits; these people can, naturally, collect themselves, concentrate and give the right answer, but only after a little while.) You will see that it is like that if you look well at your whole day. You say something and you don't know why you say it – it is only after the words are out of your mouth that you notice that this was not quite what you wanted to say. For instance, you go to see someone, you prepare beforehand the words you are going to speak, but once you are in front of the person in question, you say nothing or it is other words which come from your mouth. Are you able to say to what extent the atmosphere of the other person has influenced you and stopped you from saying what you had prepared? How many people can say that? They do not even observe that the person was in such or such a state and that it was because of this that they could not tell him what they had prepared. Of course, there are very obvious instances when you find people in such a bad mood that you can ask nothing of them. I am not speaking of these. I am speaking of the clear perception of reciprocal influences: what acts and reacts on your nature; it is this one does not have. For example, one becomes suddenly uneasy or happy, but how many people can say, "It is this"? And it is difficult to know, it is not at all easy. One must be quite "awake"; one must be constantly in a very attentive state of observation...<sup>3</sup>

---

## *Freedom from the Movements of Lower Nature*



Then, as the second step, to practise renunciation and to reject the movements of the lower nature, to offer and surrender our character and our way of being to Her with faith, aspiration and sincerity so that it may change. She also says,

It is very important that the vital should agree to change: it must learn to accept conversion. The vital is not in itself anything to be decried: in fact, all energy, dynamism and push comes from it – without it you may be calm and wise and detached, but you will be absolutely immobile and uncreative. The body would be inert, just like a stone, without the force infused into it by the vital. If the vital is left out, you would be able to realise nothing. But like a spirited horse it is liable to be refractory and, therefore, requires good control. You have to keep your reins tight and your whip ready in order to keep the powerful beast in check. Of course, once the vital has consented to be transformed there is no need either of the tight reins or the ready whip: you proceed smoothly towards the goal, leaping lightly over each obstacle in the way. Otherwise, the vital will either stumble over the barriers or fight shy of jumping them. It is no use thinking that all would have been well if there had been no hurdles at all: they are a part of the game and if they are not faced and jumped in this life on earth you will have to surmount a hundred times greater ones on other planes and in other lives. The best thing is to make up your mind once for all and train your vital to run the race here while you are in the body and, if possible, win it. You are sure to win provided your physical mind reforms itself and helps the vital to change, instead of playing the role of a robber who holds down his victim while his accomplice makes a haul of the victim's property.<sup>4</sup>

And here, it is our sincerity of aspiration and offering that will make the vital collaborate. Mother talks about atavistic influences and says with patience, endurance, and with regular practice of self observation and discipline we can change our character and says,

...atavism may be expressed, that is, what comes from the father, the mother, from both together which may have a different result; from what has gone before them – the past history, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, etc., and then from the environment in which people have lived when they were very young and had no independence at all. That has a considerable effect on the character.....

...It has always been said that it is impossible to change one's nature; in all books of philosophy, even of yoga, you are told the same story: "You cannot change your character, you are born like that, you are like that." This is absolutely false, I guarantee it is false; but there is something very difficult to do to change your character, because it is not your character which must be changed, it is the character of your antecedents. In them you will not change it (because they have no such intention), but it is in you that it must be changed. It is what they have given you, all the little gifts made to you at your birth – nice gifts – it is this which must be changed. But if you succeed in getting hold of the thread of these things, the true thread, since you have worked upon this with perseverance and sincerity, one fine morning you will be free; all this will fall off from



---

you and you will be able to get a start in life without any burden. Then you will be a new man, living a new life, almost with a new nature. And if you look back you will say, “It is not possible, I was never like that.”<sup>5</sup>

Mother says not to despair and be disheartened and explains,

You must also understand that you are not separate individualities, that life is a constant exchange of forces, of consciousnesses, of vibrations, of movements of all kinds. It is as in a crowd, you see: when everyone pushes all go forward, and when all recede, everyone recedes. It is the same thing in the inner world, in your consciousness. There are all the time forces and influences acting and reacting upon you, it is like a gas in the atmosphere, and unless you are quite awake, these things enter into you, and it is only when they have gone well in and come out as if they came from you, that you become aware of them. How many times people meet those who are nervous, angry, in a bad mood, and themselves become nervous, angry, moody, just like that, without quite knowing why. Why is it that when you play against certain people you play very well, but when you play against others you cannot play? And those very quiet people, not at all wicked, who suddenly become furious when they are in a furious crowd! And no one knows who has started it: it is something that went past and swept off the consciousness. There are people who can let out vibrations like this and others respond without knowing why. Everything is like that, from the smallest to the biggest things.

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self? – the Self which is above all intermixture, that is, what I call the Truth of your being. And as long as you are not conscious of the Truth of your being, you are moved by all kinds of things, without taking any note of it at all. Collective thought, collective suggestions are a formidable influence which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it. One believes that one thinks “like that”, but in truth it is the collectivity which thinks “like that”. The mass is always inferior to the individual. Take individuals with similar qualities, of similar categories, well, when they are alone these individuals are at least two degrees better than people of the same category in a crowd. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness, and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there is but one means: to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive.<sup>6</sup>

She further says,

You want to become conscious, to have goodwill, you have understood, your aspiration is shining - all is brilliant, illuminated; but all of a sudden something happens, a useless conversation, some unfortunate reading, and that upsets everything. Then one thinks that it was an illusion one lived in, that all things were seen from a certain angle.

This is life. One stumbles and falls at the first occasion. One tells oneself: “Oh! One can’t always be so serious”, and when the other part returns, once again, one repents bitterly: “I was a fool, I have wasted my time, now I must begin again....” At times there



---

is one part that's ill-humoured, in revolt, full of worries, and another which is progressive, full of surrender. All that, one after the other.

There is but one remedy: that signpost must always be there, a mirror well placed in one's feelings, impulses, all one's sensations. One sees them in this mirror. There are some which are not very beautiful or pleasant to look at; there are others which are beautiful, pleasant, and must be kept. This one does a hundred times a day if necessary. And it is very interesting. One draws a kind of big circle around the psychic mirror and arranges all the elements around it. If there is something that is not all right, it casts a sort of grey shadow upon the mirror: this element must be shifted, organised. It must be spoken to, made to understand, one must come out of that darkness...<sup>7</sup>

## *The Disciplined Practice towards Self-discovery*

The fulfilment of our aim as both Mother and Sri Aurobindo point out, depends upon our sincerity and our aspiration. And to give force to our aspiration we need to follow it with practice, a regular, disciplined practice that involves a conscious effort to remove all obstacles from the path that leads to the fulfilment of our aim. This does not mean that I force myself to become other than I am but it is simply a shift in the inner attitude. Instead of choosing to give in to depression or excited restlessness, I choose to become conscious and more in control. These other movements will co-exist till they're transformed and that is what my task is, I do not have to identify myself with these or get involved in their play, rather, I've to slowly detach myself and get attached to the inner light and guidance of the psychic part in me. It is important to follow a discipline to train the vital. On discipline, Mother says,

It can be said that all discipline whatsoever, if it is followed strictly, sincerely, deliberately, is of considerable help, for it makes the earthly life reach its goal more rapidly and prepares it to receive the new life. To discipline oneself is to hasten the arrival of this new life and the contact with the supramental reality.<sup>8</sup>

Without discipline it is impossible to realise anything on the physical plane. If your heart were not willing to submit to the strict discipline of beating regularly and constantly, you would not be able to live upon earth. The great realisers have always been the great disciplined men.<sup>9</sup>

As my aspiration is to reveal the psychic within, I need to do the following with regularity and persevering will –

1. To become more and more conscious and to observe all the movements within.
2. To reject the lower movements of my nature and not to give in to their demands.
3. To offer these for purification and transformation.
4. To act from my highest keeping my ideal of beauty as the central focus.
5. To learn to endure, to cultivate patience.
6. To develop faith, to intensify aspiration and to learn to surrender.



And the way to follow this practice is through –

1. Regular meditation, prayer and offering
2. Maintaining daily journal
3. Reading
4. Constant stepping back through introspection and self reflection

This means to mould my lifestyle in such a way that I take considerable time out to practice this with sincerity, especially, to begin and to end the day consciously, with prayer and meditation. And, in between, to try and keep the connection with my central aspiration. I've not been doing this regularly. I slip often. And regularity too is indispensable for a constructive result. Through observing the pattern of my progress and failure, I feel I need to take small steps and make short term goals to begin with. Make daily plans like, today I'm going to be quiet and practise endurance and not get angry at anyone, no matter what... and then increase the time duration gradually. I would like to end with the words of Sri Aurobindo, who guides us and tells us the way to go about it and says,

Get the psychic being in front and keep it there, putting its power on the mind, vital and physical, so that it shall communicate to them its force of single-minded aspiration, trust, faith, surrender, direct and immediate detection of whatever is wrong in the nature and turned towards ego and error, away from Light and Truth.<sup>10</sup>

✍ Seema Agrawal

Extract from - On the Road to Self-discovery  
a monograph submitted at the end of 'Explorations towards a New Creation of the Self'  
an ICIS postgraduate certificate online course facilitated by Ameeta Mehra

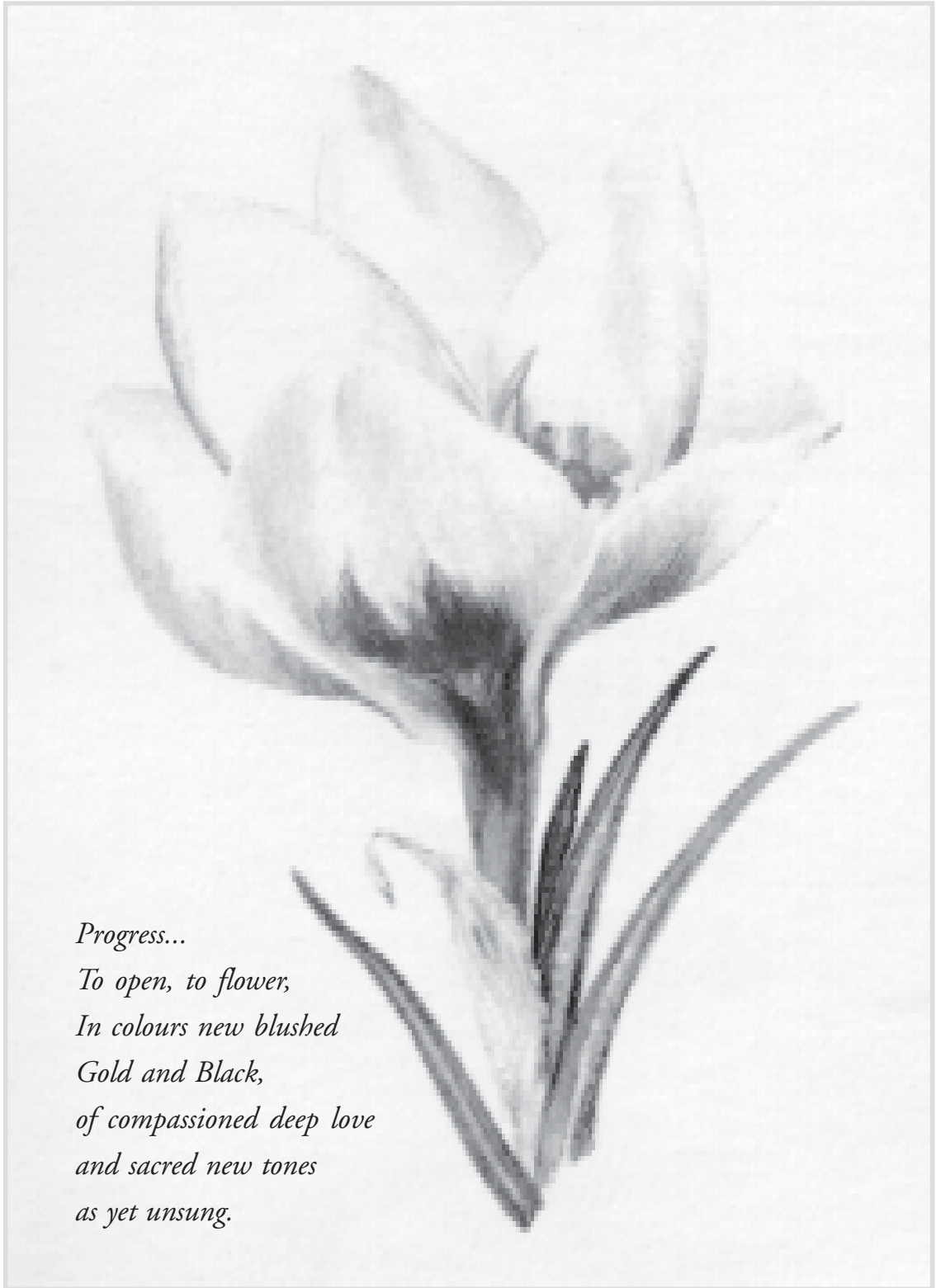
<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.15 conversation dated 30 December 1950. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.  
<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo. The Mother pp.6-7. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.  
<sup>3</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of The Mother vol.4 conversation dated 13 January 1951.  
<sup>4</sup> ---. vol.3 'Vital Conversion'

<sup>5</sup> ---. vol.6 conversation dated 27 January 1954.  
<sup>6</sup> ---. vol.4 conversation dated 13 January 1951.  
<sup>7</sup> ---. vol.5 conversation dated 1 April 1953.  
<sup>8</sup> ---. vol.14 'Tapasya'.  
<sup>9</sup> ---. vol.16 Series 6.  
<sup>10</sup> Sri Aurobindo. Letters on Yoga p.554. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

References for 'A Settled Poise of Progress' pp.5-11:

<sup>1</sup> The Mother. Cited in: New Year Message given out on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2011, by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.  
<sup>2</sup> The Mother. Collected Works of the Mother vol.12. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.  
<sup>3</sup> ---. vol.15  
 "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>4</sup> ---. vol.12 'Vital Education'  
<sup>5</sup> ---. vol.17

<sup>6</sup> ---. vol.12  
<sup>7</sup> ---.  
<sup>8</sup> ---. vol.16  
<sup>9</sup> ---. vol.12  
<sup>10</sup> ---.  
<sup>11</sup> ---.  
<sup>12</sup> ---.  
<sup>13</sup> ---. vol.3 conversation dated 14 April 1929  
<sup>14</sup> ---. vol.16  
<sup>15</sup> ---. vol.12  
<sup>16</sup> ---.  
<sup>17</sup> ---. vol.17  
<sup>18</sup> ---. vol.16  
<sup>19</sup> ---. vol.16  
<sup>20</sup> ---.  
<sup>21</sup> ---. vol.8  
<sup>22</sup> ---. vol.17  
<sup>23</sup> ---. vol.12  
<sup>24</sup> ---. vol.8



*Progress...  
To open, to flower,  
In colours new blushed  
Gold and Black,  
of compassion deep love  
and sacred new tones  
as yet unsung.*

✍️ Monica Gupta



---

# A Meditation for Progress

*Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: "A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it."*

Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol.20, p.155

*Isn't the psychic fire always lit?*

It is not always lit.

*Then how to light it?*

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make—if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.<sup>1</sup>



☞ The Mother

---

# How to help a Child progress?



*All parents want the best for their child. 'The best' is relative - even one's own definition changes with time, culture, climate. The following extract emphasises the nurturing of that in a child that has the power to ensure 'the best' no matter what the circumstances - a quality of the Eternal, the surest guide.*

**THERE** is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoiled by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will



feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

For, if you want to find one teaching, one doctrine upon which to base your progress, you will never find anything—or, to be more exact, you will find something else, for in accordance with the climate, the age, the civilisation, the teaching given is quite conflicting. When one person says, “This is good”, another will say, “No, this is bad”, and with the same logic, the same persuasive force. Consequently, it is not upon this that one can build. Religion has always tried to establish a dogma, and it will tell you that if you conform to the dogma you are in the truth and if you don't you are in the falsehood. But all this has never led to anything and has only created confusion.

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.



Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality—within themselves, within the earth, within the universe—and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.<sup>1</sup>

✍ The Mother

## Upcoming Events jan-feb'2011

*Post-graduate Online Courses (masters / diploma / certificate) : 8 February onwards*

- Sanskrit Language & Linguistics
- Paradigms of Psychological Knowledge
- Study of the Bhagawad Gita
- Introduction to Vedas
- Integral Education
- Introduction to Integral Studies

*Special Meditations*

- 21 February: The Mother's birthday

---

#### PICTURE CREDITS

- pp.31, 41: The Gnostic Centre, New Delhi, India
- Cover, all other images: from Internet and The Gnostic Centre archives
- 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

---

<sup>1</sup> The Mother. *Collected Works of the Mother vol.4*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

---

# Human Progress



*Is material progress the be all and end all of human possibility? How far has the human being advanced in his thinking, his nature, and his consciousness? This article, written in mid-20th century, reviews the stages of human progress in the evolutionary cycle and indicates the further step that Nature is preparing for humanity.*

**CREATION** has evolved. That is to say, there has been a growth and unfoldment and progress. From nebulae to humanity the march cannot but be called an advance, a progress, in more senses than one. But the question is about man. Has man advanced, progressed since his advent upon earth? If so, in what manner, to what extent? Man has been upon earth for the last two million years, they say. From what has happened before him in the course of Nature's evolution, it is legitimate to infer that man too, in his turn, has moved forward in the line towards growth and development. In fact, if we admit that man started life as a savage or jungle-man or ape-man, and look at him as he is today, we have perforce to acknowledge that he has not merely changed but progressed too. The question to be answered is in what sense this progress has been made.

Modern knowledge has taught us that what marks the growth of man is his use of tools. An animal has nothing else than its own limbs as its all-serving tool. Man emerged as man the day he knew how to use tools as an extension of his limbs. And the cycles of human growth have, in consequence, been marked off by the type of tools used. As we all know, anthropologists tell us, there have been four such cycles or ages: (1) the Old Stone Age, (2) the New Stone Age, (3) the Bronze Age and (4) the Iron Age.

In the first age, which is by far the longest period, a period of slow and difficult preparation, man had his first lessons in a conscious and victorious dealing with Nature. The day when he first started chipping a stone was a red-letter day for him; for, by that very gesture he began shredding his purely animal vesture. And when he not only chipped but succeeded in grinding and polishing a piece of stone, he moved up one step further and acquired definitely his humanity. Again, ages afterwards when his hand could wield and manipulate as it liked not only a stone but a metal, his skill and dexterity showed a development unique in its kind, establishing and fixing man's manhood as a new emergent factor. In this phase also there was a first period of training and experiment, the period of craftsmanship in bronze; with the age of iron, man's arms and fingers attained a special deftness and a conscious control directed from a cranium centre which has become by now a model of rich growth and complex structure and marvellous organisation. The impetus towards more and more efficiency in the making and handling of tools has not ceased: the craftsmanship in iron soon led to the discovery of steel and steel industry. The temper and structure of steel are symbolic and symptomatic of the temper and structure of the brain that commands the weapon - strong, supple, resistant, resilient, capable of fineness and sharpness and trenchancy to an extraordinary degree.



---

This growing fineness and efficiency of the tool has served naturally to develop and enrich man's external possession and dominion. But this increasing power and dominion over Nature is not the most important consequence involved; it is only indicative of still greater values, something momentous, something subjective, pregnant with far-reaching possibilities. For the physical change is nothing compared with the psychological change, the change in the consciousness. In taking up his tool to chip a stone man has started hewing out and moulding entire Nature: he has become endowed with the sense of independence and agency. An animal is a part and parcel of Nature, has no life and movement apart from the life and movement of Nature – even like Wordsworth's child of Nature –

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees.<sup>1</sup>

An animal does not separate itself from Nature, exteriorise it and then seek to fashion it as he wants, try to make it yield things he requires. Man is precisely man because he has just this sense of self and of not-self and his whole life is the conquest of the not-self by the self: this is the whole story of his evolution. In the early stages his sense of agency and selfhood is at its minimum. The rough-hewn flint instruments are symbolic of the first attempts of the brain to set its impress upon crude and brute nature. The history of man's artisanship, which is the history of his civilisation, is also the history of his growing self-consciousness. The consciousness in its attempt to react upon nature separated itself from Nature, and at first stood over against it and then sought to stand over and above it. In this process of extricating itself from the sheath in which it was involved and fused, it came back upon itself, became more and more aware of its freedom and individual identity and agency.

The question is now asked how far this self-consciousness – given to man by his progress from stone to steel – has advanced and what is its future. The crucial problem is whether man has progressed in historical times. Granted that man with an iron tool is a more advanced type of humanity than man with a chipped stone tool, it may still be enquired whether he has made any real advance since the day he learnt to manipulate metal. If by advance or progress we mean efficiency and multiplication of tools, then surely there can be no doubt that Germany of today (perhaps now we have to say Germany of yesterday and America of today) is the most advanced type of humanity – indeed they do make the claim in that country.

So it is argued that man may have built up more and more efficient organisation in his outer life, he may have learnt to wield a greater variety and wealth of tools and instruments in an increasing degree of refinement and power; but this does not mean that his character, his nature or even the broad mould of his intelligence has changed or progressed. The records and remains of Pre-dynastic Egypt or of Proto-Aryan Indus valley go to show that those were creations of civilised men, as civilised as any modern people. The mind that produced the Rig Veda or the Book of the Dead or conceived the first pyramid is, in essential power of intelligence, no whit inferior to any modern scientific brain. Hence a distinction is sometimes made between culture and civilisation; what the moderns have achieved is progress with regard to civilisation, that is to say, the outer paraphernalia; but as regards culture a Plato, a Lao-tse, a Yajnavalkya are names to which we still bow down.

---

<sup>1</sup> "A slumber did my spirit seal", *Miscellaneous Poems*



---

One can answer, however, that even if in the last eight or ten thousand years which, they say, is the extent of the present cycle, the civilised or cultural life of humanity has not changed much, this does not mean that it cannot, will not change. The paleolithic age, it appears, covered a period of thirty to forty thousand years; the neolithic age also must have lasted some fifteen thousand years. The metal age is now not more than ten thousand years. So it does not seem to be too late; perhaps it is just time for another radical and crucial change to come as the chronological scheme would seem to demand.

We propose, however, to reopen the question and enquire if there has not been some kind of radical change or progress in the make-up of human nature and civilisation even within the span of historical times. This reminds us of the remarkable conclusion or discovery made by the much maligned and much adulated Psycho-analysts.

Jung speaks of two kinds or grades of thinking: (1) the directed thinking and (2) the wishful thinking; one conscious and objective, the other automatic and subjective. The first is the modern or scientific thinking, the second the old-world mythopoeic thinking. These two lines of mental movement mark off two definite stages in the cultural history of man. Down to the Middle Ages man's mental life was moved and coloured by his *libido* – desire soul; it is with the Renaissance that he began to free his mind from the libido and transfer and transform the libido into non-egoistic and realistic thinking. In simpler psychological terms we can say that man's mentality was coloured and modulated by his biological make-up out of which it had emerged; the age of modernism and scientism began with the development of a rigorous rationalism which means a severance and transcendence of the biological antecedent.

In other words, it can be said that the older humanity was intuitive and instinctive, while modern humanity is rationalistic. Now it has been questioned whether this change or re-orientation is a sign of progress, whether it has not been at the most a mixed blessing. Many idealists and reformers frankly view the metamorphosis with anxiety. Gerald Heard vehemently declares that the rationalism of the modern age is a narrowing down of the consciousness to a superficial movement, a foreshortening, and a top-heavy specialisation which means stagnation, decay and death. He would rather release the tension in the strangulation of consciousness, even if it means a slight coming down to the anterior level of instinct and intuition, but of more plasticity and less specialisation: it is, he says, only in conditions of suppleness and variability, of life organised yet sufficiently free that the forces of evolution can act fruitfully. It has also been pointed out that *homo sapiens* is not a direct descendant of *homo neanderthalis* who was already a far too specialised being, but of a stock anterior to it which was still uncertain, wavering, groping towards a definite emergence.

Now, these two positions – of Jung and of Heard – offer us a good basis upon which we can try to estimate the nature of man's progress in historical times. Both refer to a crucial change in human consciousness, a far-reaching change having no parallel since it invented the metal tool. The change means the appearance of pure intelligence in man, a change, as we may say, in modern terms, in the system of reference, from biological co-ordinates to those of pure reason. Only Jung thinks that the reorganisation of the human consciousness is to happen precisely round the focus of pure reason, while Gerald Heard is doubtful about the efficacy of this faculty – of “directive thinking”, as Jung puts it – if it is to lead to overspecialisation, which means the swelling of one member and atrophy of the rest; a greater and supreme



---

direction he seeks elsewhere in a transcendence of intelligence and reason which, besides, is bound to happen in the course of evolution.

We characterise the change as a special degree or order of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, we have seen, is the *sine qua non* of humanity. It is the faculty or power by and with which man appears on earth and maintains himself as such, as a distinct species. Thanks to this faculty man has become the tool-making animal, the artisan – *homo faber*. But on emerging from the original mythopoeic to the scientific status man has become doubly self-conscious. Self-consciousness means to be aware of oneself as standing separate from and against the environment and the world and acting upon it as a free agent, exercising one's deliberate will. Now the first degree of self-consciousness displayed itself in a creative activity by which consciousness remained no longer a suffering organon, but became a growing and directing, a reacting and new-creating agent. Man gained the power to shape the order of Nature according to the order of his inner will and consciousness. This creative activity, the activity of the artisan, developed along two lines: first, artisanship with regard to one's own self, one's inner nature and character, and secondly, with regard to the external nature, the not-self. The former gave rise to mysticism and Yoga and was especially cultivated in India, while the second has led us to Science, man's physical mastery, which is the especial field of European culture.

Now the second degree of self-consciousness to which we referred is the scientific consciousness *par excellence*. It can be described also as the spirit and power of experimentation, or more precisely, of scientific experimentation: it involves generically the process with which we are familiar in the domain of industry and is termed "synthetic", that is to say, it means the skill and capacity to create the conditions under which a given phenomenon can be repeated at will. Hence it means a perfect knowledge of the process of things – which again is a dual knowledge: (1) the knowledge of the steps gradually leading to the result and (2) the knowledge that has the power to resolve the result into its antecedent conditions. Thus the knowledge of the *mechanism*, the detailed working of things, is scientific knowledge, and therefore scientific knowledge can be truly said to be mechanistic knowledge, in the best sense of the term. Now the knowledge of the ends and the knowledge of the means (to use a phrase of Aldous Huxley) and the conscious control over either have given humanity a new degree of self-consciousness. It can be mentioned here that there can be a knowledge of ends without a corresponding knowledge of means, even there can be a control over ends without a preliminary control over means – perhaps not to perfection, but to a sufficient degree of practical utility. Much of the knowledge – especially secular and scientific – in ancient times was of this order; what we mean to say is that the knowledge was more instinctive or intuitive than rational or intellectual. In that knowledge the result only, the end that is to say, was the chief aim and concern, the means for attaining the end was, one cannot perhaps say, ignored, but slurred or slipped over as it were: the process was thus involved or understood, not expressed or detailed out. Thus we know of some mathematical problems to which correct solutions were given of which the process is not extant or lost as some say. Our suggestion is that there was in fact very little of the process as we know it now – the solution was reached *per saltum*, that is to say, somehow, in the same manner as we find it happening even today in child prodigies.



---

One can point out however that even before the modern scientific age, there was an epoch of pure intellectual activity, as represented, for example, by scholasticism. The formal intellectualism which was the gift of the Greek sophists or the Mimamsakas and grammarians in ancient India has to be recognised as a pure mental movement, freed from all life value or biological bias. What then is the difference? What is the new characteristic element brought in by the modern scientific intellectualism?

The old intellectualism generally and on the whole, was truly formal and even to a great extent verbal. In other words, it sought to find norms and categories in the mind itself and impose them upon objects, objects of experience, external or internal. The first discovery of the pure mind, the joy of indulging in its own free formations led to an abstraction that brought about a cleavage between mind and nature, and when a harmony was again attempted between the two, it meant an imposition of one (the Mind) upon another (Matter), a subsumption of the latter under the former. Such scholastic formalism, although it has the appearance of a movement of pure intellect, free from the influence of instinctive or emotive reactions, cannot but be, at bottom, a mythopoeic operation, in the Jungian phraseology; it is not truly objective in the scientific sense. The scientific procedure is to find Nature's own categories – the constants, as they are called – and link up mind and intellect with that reality. This is the Copernican revolution that Science brought about in the modern outlook. Philosophers like Kant or Berkeley may say another thing and even science itself just nowadays may appear hesitant in its bearings. But that is another story which it is not our purpose to consider here and which does not change the fundamental position. We say then that the objectivity of the scientific outlook, as distinguished from the abstract formalism of old-world intellectualism, has given a new degree of mental growth and is the basis of the “mechanistic” methodology of which we have been speaking.

Indeed, what we lay stress upon is the methodology of modern scientific knowledge – the apparatus of criticism and experimentation.

We have said that this “methodologism” – the knowledge of means and the consequent control over means – the hall-mark of modern scientific knowledge – is a new degree of self-consciousness which is the special characteristic of the human consciousness. Put philosophically, we can say that the discovery of the *subject* and its growing affirmation as an independent factor in a subject-object relation marks the evolutionary course of the human consciousness.

A still further unveiling seems to be in progress now. The subject has discovered itself as separate from the observed object and still embracing it: but a given subject-object relationship in its turn again is being viewed as itself an object to another subject consciousness, a super-subject. That way lie the ever widening horizons of consciousness opened up by Yoga and spiritual discipline.

In other words, the self-consciousness which marks off man as the highest of living beings as yet evolved by Nature is still not her highest possible instrumentation. As has been experienced and foreseen by Yogins in all ages and climes and as it is being borne in upon the modern mind more and more imperatively, this self-consciousness has to be consciously transcended, lifted, transmuted – worked out into the superconsciousness. Such is Nature's



---

evolutionary *nisus* and such is the truth and fact man is being driven to face in his inner individual consciousness as well as outer collective life.

We can thus note, broadly speaking, three stages in the human cycle of Nature's evolution. The first was the period of emergence of self-consciousness and the trials and experiments it went through to establish and confirm itself. The ancient civilisations represented this character of the human spirit. The subject freeing itself more and more from its environmental tegument, still living and moving within it and dynamically reacting upon it – this was the character we speak of. Next came the period when the free and dynamic subject feeling itself no more tied down to its natural objective sphere sought lines of development and adventure on its own account. This was the age of speculation and of scholasticism in philosophy and intellectual inquiry and of alchemy in natural science – a period roughly equated with the Middle Ages. The Scientific Age coming last seeks to re-establish a junction and co-ordination between the free and dynamic self-consciousness and the mode and pattern of its objective field, involving a greater enrichment on one side – the subjective consciousness – and on the other, the objective environment, a corresponding change and effective reorganisation.

The present age which ushers a fourth stage – significantly called *turiya* or the transcendent, in Indian terminology – is pregnant with a fateful crisis. The stage of self-consciousness to which scientific development has arrived seems to land in a cul-de-sac, a blind alley: Science also is faced, almost helplessly, with the antinomies of reason that Kant discovered long ago in the domain of speculative philosophy. The way out, for a further growth and development and evolution, lies in a supersession of the self-consciousness, an elevation into a superconsciousness – as already envisaged by Yogis and Mystics everywhere – which will give a new potential and harmony to the human consciousness.

This super consciousness is based upon a double movement of sublimation and integration which are precisely the two things basically aimed at by present-day psychology to meet the demands of new facts of consciousness. The rationalisation, specialisation or foreshortening of consciousness, mentioned above, is really an attempt at sublimation of the consciousness, its purification and ascension from baser – animal and vegetal – confines: only, ascension does not mean alienation, it must mean a gathering up of the lower elements also into their higher modes. Integration thus involves a descent, but it has to be pointed out, not merely or exclusively that, as Jung and his school seem to say. Certainly one has to see and recognise the aboriginal, the infra-rational elements imbedded in our nature and consciousness, the roots and foundations that lie buried under the super-structure that Evolution has erected. But that recognition must be accompanied by an upward look and sense: indeed it is healthy and fruitful only on condition that it occurs in a consciousness open to an infiltration of light coming from summits not only of the mind but above the mind. If we go back, it must be with a light that *is* ahead of us; that is the sense of evolution.

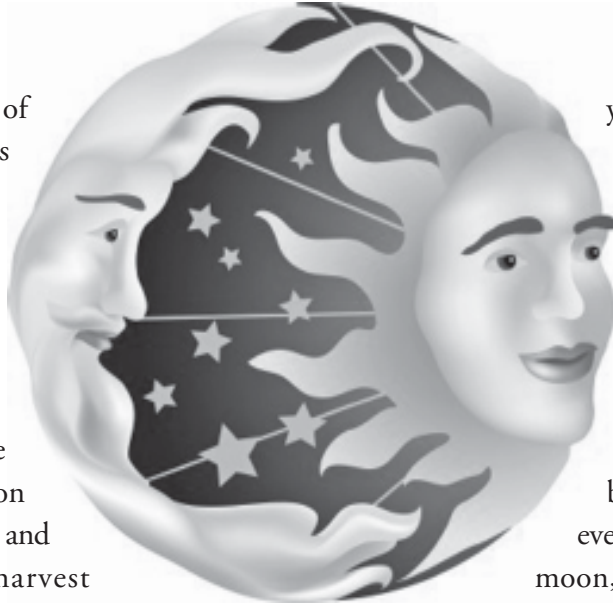
✍ Nolini Kanta Gupta



---

# The Sweet Song of the Second Fiddle

FOR thousands of years, the relationship had been perfect. As far back as anyone could remember, the moon had faithfully reflected the sun's rays into the dark night. It was the greatest duo in the universe. Other stars and planets marveled at the team. Generation after generation of earthlings were captivated by the reflection. The moon became the symbol of romance, high hopes, and



years, the relationship far back as anyone could remember, the moon had faithfully reflected the sun's rays into the dark night. It was the greatest duo in the universe. Other stars and planets marveled at the team. Generation after generation of earthlings were captivated by the reflection. The moon became the symbol of romance, high hopes, and

“Shine on, harvest moon,” the people would

sing. And he did. Well, in a way he did. You see, the moon didn't actually shine. He reflected. He took the light given to him by the sun and redirected it toward the earth. A simple task of receiving illumination and sharing it.

moon,” the people would

he did. You see, the moon didn't

You would think such a combo would last forever. It almost did. But one day, a nearby star planted a thought in the moon's core.

“It must be tough being a moon,” the star suggested.

“What do you mean? I love it! I've got an important job to do. When it gets dark, people look to me for help. And I look to the sun. He gives me what I need and I give the people what they need. People depend on me to light up their world. And I depend on the sun.”

“So, you and the sun must be pretty tight.”

“Tight? Why, we are like Huntley and Brinkley, Hope and Crosby, Benny and Day...”

“Or maybe Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy?”

“Who?”

“You know, the man and the dummy.”

“Well, I don't know about the dummy part.”

“That's exactly what I mean. You are the dummy. You don't have any light of your own. You depend on the sun. You're the sidekick. You don't have any name for yourself.”

“Name for yourself?”

“Yeah, you've been playing second fiddle for too long. You need to step out on your own.”

“What do you mean?”



---

“I mean stop reflecting and start generating. Do your own thing. Be your own boss. Get people to see you for who you really are.”

“Who am I?”

“Well, you are, uh, well, uh, well, that’s what you need to find out. You need to find out who you are.”

The moon paused and thought for a moment. What the star said made sense. Though he had never considered it, the moon was suddenly aware of all the inequities of the relationship.

Why should he have to work the night shift all the time? And why should he be the one the astronauts stepped on first? And why should he always be accused of making waves? And why don’t the dogs and wolves howl at the sun for a change? And why should it be such an outrage to “moon” while “sunning” is an accepted practice?

“You are right!” asserted the moon. “It’s high time we had a solar-lunar equity up here.”

“Now you’re talking,” prodded the star. “Go discover the real moon!”

Such was the beginning of the breakup. Rather than turning his attention toward the sun, the moon began turning his attention toward himself.

He set out on the course of self-enhancement. After all, his complexion was a disgrace, so full of craters and all. His wardrobe was sadly limited to three sizes; full-length, half-cast, and quarter-clad. And his coloring was an anemic yellow.

So, girded with determination, he set out to reach for the moon.

He ordered glacier packs for his complexion. He changed his appearance to include new shapes such as triangular and square. And for coloring he opted for a punk-rock orange. “No one is going to call me cheese-face anymore.”

The new moon was slimmed down and shaped up. His surface was as smooth as a baby’s bottom. Everything was fine for a while.

Initially, his new look left him basking in his own moonlight. Passing meteors would pause and visit. Distant stars would call and compliment. Fellow moons would invite him over to their orbits to watch “As the World Turns.”

He had friends. He had fame. He didn’t need the sun until the trends changed. Suddenly “punk” was out and “prep” was in. The compliments stopped and the giggles began as the moon was slow to realize that he was out of style. Just as he finally caught on and had his orange changed to pinstripe, the style went to “country.”

It was painful poking of the rhinestones into his surface that caused him to finally ask himself, “What’s this all for anyway? You’re on the cover of the magazine one day and forgotten the next. Living off the praise of others is an erratic diet.”

For the first time since he’d begun his campaign to find himself, the moon thought of the sun. He remembered the good ol’ millenniums when praise was not a concern. What people thought of him was immaterial since he wasn’t in the business of getting people to look at himself. Any praise that came his way was quickly passed on to the boss. The sun’s plan was beginning to dawn on the moon. “He may have been doing me a favor.”

He looked down upon the earth. The earthlings had been getting quite a show. They never knew what to expect: first punk, then preppie, now country. Odds-makers in Las Vegas were making bets as to whether the next style would be chic or macho. Rather than be the light of their world he was the butt of their jokes.



Even the cow refused to jump over him. But it was the cold that bothered him the most. Absence from the sunlight left him with a persistent chill. No warmth. No glow. His full-length overcoat didn't help. It couldn't help; the shiver was from the inside, an icy shiver from deep within his core that left him feeling cold and alone.

Which is exactly what he was.

One night as he looked down upon the people walking in the dark, he was struck by the futility of it all. He thought of the sun. He gave me everything I needed. I served a purpose. I was warm. I was content. I was...I was what I was made to be.

Suddenly, he felt the old familiar warmth. He turned and there was the sun. The sun had never moved. "I'm glad you're back," the sun said. "Let's get back to work."

"You bet!" agreed the moon.

The coat came off. The roundness returned, and a light was seen in the dark sky. A light even fuller was seen in the dark sky. A light even brighter.

And to this day whenever the sun shines and the moon reflects and the darkness is illuminated, the moon doesn't complain or get jealous. He does what he was intended to do all along.

The moon beams.

✍️ Max Lucado

## Events

### dec'2010



*Integral Education  
Residential Camp*  
26-30 December;  
Facilitated by Anuradha

### *Special Meditations*

- 25 December : Christmas
- 1 January : New Year





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



***V***atika Group, our aim is not just to live up to our commitments. It is to exceed them. What we promise, we promise with our heart and soul. And our satisfaction lies in seeing it fulfilled to the fullest. 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 Land 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 is being you the best always, strong. And our embrace stays constant. To reach better and to always live up to our word.

Corporate Office: 10th Floor, Vatika Triangle, Sector 13, Phase 2,  
Mahindra Group, Gurgaon, Haryana, India  
Tel: +91-124-4117777, +91 9010000000, +91 9010000000  
Email: info@vatikagroup.com www.vatikagroup.com

**vatika**  
creating lasting value

# *The Gnostic Centre*



## *an Introduction*

**A** research centre for the growth of consciousness, set up as a non-profit public charitable trust, in 1996 at New Delhi, The Gnostic Centre aims to make Integral Education a dynamic reality in the larger social context. The Centre has four wings: 1) Higher Education (International Centre for Integral Studies), 2) Research & Resources, 3) School (L'avenir), 4) Health, Culture & Arts.

### 1) *International Centre for Integral Studies (ICIS)*

The aim of ICIS is to open up a field of on-going higher education and research leading to the growth of consciousness in all areas of human development so as to generate the understanding, responsibility and skills to respond adequately to the opportunities and problems of modernity and to create a better global future.

It offers Courses in the following areas: 1) Sri Aurobindo Studies, 2) Indian Studies, 3) Philosophy, 4) Consciousness Studies, 5) Social Studies, 6) Culture Studies.

The formats of learning at ICIS include on-site (experiential workshops, intensives, etc.) and off-site (distance learning courses, teleconferencing, etc.) programs.

### 2) *Research & Resource*

The Centre provides research facilities for visiting scholars and faculty, in the ICIS course areas. It has a library and resource centre with specially selected resources. The Centre also creates printed and audiovisual resources: 1) Journal: *The Awakening Ray*, 2) Books & Booklets, 3) Multimedia Presentations, 4) Audiocassettes, 5) Research Monographs.

### 3) *School: L'avenir (the future)*

L'avenir is a playschool for 2-4 year olds based on an innovative free progress method of learning, encompassing an integral education of the mental, vital, physical and psychic capacities of the child.

### 4) *Health, Culture & Arts*

The Centre provides facilities for holistic health and offers hathayoga classes and gymnasium facilities. A rich fabric of music, culture and arts is under development.

## *An Invitation to Participate*

We invite all those who resonate with our aspiration, to participate in the following ways:

- a) Financially, through tax-exempt donations to any of our scholarship or infrastructural funds;
- b) Educationally, by enrolling as a student in one of our programs or approaching us with your research interests if you wish to join our faculty or as a research scholar;
- c) By referring your friends and families to be on our mailing list and e-group;
- d) By becoming a subscriber to our journal, *The Awakening Ray*;
- e) By working at the Centre (in any of the four wings).

All donations to The Gnostic Centre are exempt under section 80G.