

# The Science of Living

A Short Course, 6th March to 10th April, 1999  
Course Guide: Ameeta Mehra



*“An aimless life is always a miserable life.  
... on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.”<sup>1</sup>*

An atmosphere of silence marked each session of this course, which began with a concentration on the Aim of One's Life through meditation. Each time the students met (after a week's gap), the course guide invited them to re-contact the silence in their depths and continue the discovery of the Aim of their life.

The students were asked to Keep their Consciousness Inwardised throughout the session, and to attempt it even while getting through their daily chores such as eating, bathing, going for a walk, etc.

The group comprised of 10 people - a Consultant, 2 Students (graduate/post-graduate levels), a Business Manager, a Jeweller, a Rehabilitator, a Development Worker, a Businessman, a Dramatics teacher and director, an Estate Manager.

The course proceeded through an understanding of the fourfold discipline to perfect oneself - the Psychic, the Mental, the Vital and the Physical discipline, as outlined by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The following are some of the exercises undertaken during the course, to begin a practice of this discipline:

- Meditation on the Aim of One's Life
- How to Keep the Consciousness Inwardised
- Meditation on Lighting the Psychic Fire
- Putting the Stress of the Consciousness in Different Parts of Oneself
- Meditation on Making the Mind Quiet
- Exercise to Widen the Mind: Formulating a Thesis-Antithesis and Synthesis
- Candid Trust and Smiling Confidence
- Outlining a Physical Routine

Gaining from the basic foundation provided through the 5 collective and 2 individual sessions, and through the practice of self-observation and self-reflection on a daily basis, each student identified a particular area of study/research and application to bring about a qualitative change in their own lives and to take the next step ahead in their urge to progress. The following were some of the topics taken up as areas of research, culminating in an oral presentation to the rest of the group and a written monograph (a 3000 word essay):

- Understanding the Ego - A Process Towards Its Dissolution
- The Aim of My Life
- Consciousness - Search for the Psychic Being
- The Journey to Love
- The Three Modes of Nature

The common points that emerged from the assessment of the Course by the students were:

“The collective sessions also had an interesting array of participants who brought out through interaction, different viewpoints.”

“The individual sessions were a great help in dealing with tricky subjects.”

“The course content was quite interesting and for the period during which the course had to be completed, the approach was about right.”

“More time was needed to understand these subjects.”

“I found peer contact very useful, especially because of the diversity of people, age, profession, etc.”

<sup>1</sup> The Mother



*Sharings from the Course.....*



**A SELF-AWARENESS WORKSHEET**

1. What is your own personal understanding of The Science of Living, both as a concept and as you experience it in your own life?
2. What is the fourfold discipline in the Science of Living? Do you think this could be useful for you to practise? Why?
3. In your pre-course readings so far, what has struck you the most, and has left the deepest impression upon you?
4. Which *guna* do you pre-dominantly operate from?
5. Explain in your own words, based on your reading, with examples if possible, the following:
  - a) What is consciousness?
  - b) What is the psychic being?
  - c) What are the four austerities? How could these be beneficial for you?
6. In which area (mental, vital, physical, psychic) do you feel the need to especially concentrate to work upon?

**HOME ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

1. IN YOUR REFLECTIVE JOURNAL, RECORD YOUR PRACTICE AND PROGRESS OF KEEPING YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS INWARDISED DAILY DURING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- a) While speaking
- b) While working
- c) While bathing
- d) While eating
- e) While walking

Attempt as far as possible to do these activities with the stress of your consciousness inwards. Do not throw yourself out into words or actions. Instead remain quiet for a few moments before speaking, for example, or before doing something. In everything first check that you are inwardly focused before attempting to act or speak. You may find in the beginning that you have to slow yourself down a bit, but after sometime you will begin to reap the benefits of this slowing and find instead that it actually helps you to accomplish more and to be more effective in your speech and action.

2. Summarise the passages given to you from the Letters on Yoga (by Sri Aurobindo). While writing the summary, please ensure that you first understand the concept clearly, and have internalised it. Then try to write it, without consulting the sheet, point-wise. After you have written the points, check back with the sheet to see if you have included the main ideas presented there. Try and relate what you are reading to the above practice of keeping your consciousness inwardised.
3. Evaluate yourself each day to see what progress you have made towards the fulfilment of the AIM of your life.
4. Practise and record your observation of 'Lighting the Inner Fire' meditation each day.
5. Record your observation on The Practice of the Mental Discipline of considering everything from as many points of view as possible (Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis).

**“Personally, identifying the various selves, studying their natures and understanding ways of disciplining them have been the single biggest learning for me in a long time.**

- a student's feedback ”

