
Swadharma

The Aim of Your Life

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Facilitators Note

This course has been evolved keeping in focus, young seekers 16-21 year olds, who are at crossroads of their lives, shaping it and giving it a direction.

It is to assist them in following the Divine Path.

Fixing a time frame for such an unfolding and discovery is difficult but necessary. Therefore a period of one month is suggested, there could be four sessions of two hours each with six days between each session. But these six days are periods of self-study and experience where the theory read and discussed in the collective session is put into action, on oneself for a deeper and fuller understanding.

CONTENTS

• Why have an aim?	4
• Think Sheet	6
• Who am I?	8
• Exercise 1	8
• Know Thyself: Parts of the being, subdivisions of the parts	9
• How to Seek the Psychic	14
• Exercise 2: Discovery of the Real You	16
• To be individualised in a collectivity	17
• Window to your inner self	18
Self observation and self control	
• Exercise 3: Maintain a Light and Shadow Diary	19
• Role of meditation	20
Getting in touch with your inner self for it to guide you to that special reason for which you have been born.	
• How to meditate	20
• Exercise 4: Visualisation for Discovering One's Being	21
• Exercise 5: Mind Mapping	23
• Happiness as an aim of life	24
• Think Sheet	25
• What or Who is the Divine?	26
• Paths to the Divine	28
• Exercise 6	29
• Offer yourself to the Divine	30
• Surrender yourself to the Divine	31
• Think Sheet	32
• How does the Divine manifest itself	33
• How can we manifest the Divine	34
References	35
Further recommended reading	36

Why have an aim?

We are born. We go through many milestones. We go through school, higher education and a good job. Outwardly we have achieved all we aimed for – education, money, a family life and good friends. Yet inwardly something remains dissatisfied. When we are alone, with ourselves, emptiness creeps in.

Why?

What is that something that remains dissatisfied? We have not lead an aimless life. Or have we? What is it you need to examine, the lack of aim or the quality of your aim?

The Mother says “An aimless life is always a miserable life.

Every one of you should have an aim. But do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.

Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

But whatever your ideal, it cannot be perfectly realised unless you have realised perfection in yourself.”

Facilitators Notes

The Mother would speak to the students and ashram members in her Wednesday class, held weekly at the Ashram Playground. After reading a passage from one of her essays, the Mother would generally comment on it and then answer any questions. Quoted below are some of her answers to questions relating to ‘the aim of ones life.’

“An aimless life is always a miserable life”

Why?

If one has an aim, one can follow quietly the way, which leads to the goal.

It is not necessary to have a goal in order to follow the way quietly. So many men who have no goal follow quite calmly the course of their daily round without making any effort!

An aim gives joy.

Sometimes it takes an entire lifetime to attain one’s aim; one would then find joy only at the end of one’s life!

An aim is an ideal and an ideal is enrichment.

Yes, but one may have an altogether material ideal, it is not the ideal which gives joy.

An aim gives a meaning, a purpose to life and this purpose implies an effort; and it is in effort that one finds joy.

Exactly. It is the effort, which gives joy; a human being who does not know how to make an effort will never find joy. Those who are essentially lazy will never find joy – they do not have the strength to be joyful! It is effort, which gives joy. Effort makes the being vibrate at a certain degree of tension, which makes it possible for you to feel the joy. ₂

Think Sheet

- 1. Looking back and reflecting on your life, so far, what would you say have been your three major 'achievements'. These 'achievements' could be in any sphere of your life, your education, your relationship with others, your work, your dream, development of any talent in yourself or anything else not mentioned above.**
- 2. Was the path a relatively simple and easy one or did you face any obstacles on the way?**
- 3. When faced with obstacles what kept you going? Was it outside support and encouragement or something inside you?**
- 4. Close your eyes and reflecting back, discover – what was it that kept you going? What inner quality/attitude helped you achieve your aim?**
- 5. Now list three targets you were unable to reach.**
- 6. What do you think were the reasons you could not reach these targets? What were the reasons within your self that were a deterrent?**

Facilitators Note

Learning Outcome *This exercise is a self-reflective exercise for the participant to discover and realise-:*

- 1. What was it within themselves that helped them achieve an aim, a goal?*
- 2. Have they had any aim so far? Or have they lead a relatively aimless life?*
- 3. It would make them discover inner qualities an INNER RESOURCE which they can in the future tap to reach their goal.*

Learning Environment *Inwardised, quiet. To be created by lighting incense and playing New-Years Music.*

Who am I?

To realise your Swadharma, that one special thing that you have been created for, to have an aim, an aim higher than yourself – you must first know ‘yourself’. Who are you?

Are you the clothes you wear? Are you your body? Are you your thoughts, your likes, dislikes? Why do you ‘like’ some subjects and ‘dislike’ some other subjects? Why are you comfortable with some people and not with some? Why do you feel what you feel? Where do your thoughts come from? Can you control these thoughts?

Who are you?

Exercise I

Facilitators Note

*Have a discussion with the group putting this question before them.
‘Who are you?’*

Aim

- 1. For each one to think and reflect on this question.*
- 2. By their responses the facilitator will know the level the group is on and then can take them deeper.*
- 3. The facilitator can highlight broadly the physical, mental, vital, picking up clues from the group, before going in depth into these areas.*

Know Thyself

Our being is a complex amalgam of many different elements. We are vaguely conscious of only the more superficial ones. Apart from the body and the sensations, we are to some extent conscious of various psychological elements, such as thoughts, feelings, desires, impulses, etc. All of which are lumped together and generally referred to as the 'mind'.

As Sri Aurobindo remarks "The 'Mind' in the ordinary use of the word covers indiscriminately the whole consciousness, for man is a mental being and mentalises everything..."

"Each plane of our being – mental, vital, physical has its own consciousness, separate though interconnected and interacting, but to our outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together." ³

The three parts of the being referred to above – mental, vital, physical – constitute the outer being. Each part has its own distinct nature and characteristics.

MENTAL (MIND)

Part of the nature, which has to do with

1. Cognition and intelligence
2. Ideas
3. Thought perceptions
4. Reaction of thought to things
5. Mental vision and will
6. Conceptualisation

Subdivisions of the Mind

VITAL MIND

Influenced by vital forces

- To dream and imagine about success/failure, enjoyment/suffering, good fortune/ill fortune

PHYSICAL MIND

Characteristics of the physical consciousness

- Inertia
- Repetitiveness
- Doubt, obscurity, confusion, mechanical reactions to things, habitual modes of thinking (constriction and chaotic activity) it acts like a machine that goes on turning round and round whatever thoughts occur in it.
- Whims
- Habit or inclination to be tamasic.

VITAL

Life nature made up of

1. Desires
2. Sensations
3. Feelings
4. Passions
5. Energies of action
6. Will of desire
7. Possessiveness
8. Anger
9. Lust, Greed

Subdivisions of the Vital

MENTAL VITAL

Gives a mental expression by thought, speech and otherwise to the emotions, desires, passions, sensations and other movements of the vital being.

EMOTIONAL VITAL

Seat of

- Love
- Joy
- Sorrow
- Hatred

CENTRAL VITAL

Seat of stronger vital longings and reactions

- Ambition
- Pride
- Fear
- Love of Fame
- Attractions and repulsions
- Desires and passions of various kinds

LOWER VITAL

Seat of small desires and feelings, which occupies our daily life

- Desire for food
- Sexual desire
- Vanity
- Love of praise
- Anger at blame
- Small likings, dislikings

PHYSICAL

The body... has its own consciousness and acts from it, even without any mental will of our own or even against that will...⁴

Subdivisions of the Physical

PHYSICAL MIND

As given on the previous page

VITAL PHYSICAL

Intermixed with vital consciousness

- Reaction of the nerves and reflexive sensations and feelings
- Agent of pain

PSYCHIC

Facilitators Note

The Psychic. This may be a new word for many and if not so the meaning and understanding of what it is, may be limited or misunderstood from the Aurobindonian understanding. So ask the group what they understand or think this word means. And acknowledging all but choosing only the words which come closest to the meaning – highlight them and then go on ...stress on the psychic being the key to knowing/discovering your Swadharma.

Aim

- 1. As the understanding of this part is crucial to the aim of the study programme we must make the students think and interact.*
- 2. To subtly reflect to them where they are and then take them deeper.*

The psychic shows us ...the true motive of existence, the purpose of life on earth, the discovery to which this life must lead and the result of that discovery: the consecration of the individual to his eternal principle.

It is through this psychic presence that the truth of an individual being comes into contact with him and the circumstances of his life. Psychic centre: luminous and calm, it is made to govern the human being.

How to Seek the Psychic?

The starting point is to seek in yourself that which is independent of the body and the circumstances of life which is not born of the mental formation that you have been given, the language you speak, the habits and customs of the environment in which you live, the country where you are born or the age to which you belong. You must find, in the depths of your being, that which carries in it a sense of universality, limitless expansion, unbroken continuity. Then you decentralise, extend and widen yourself; you begin to live in all things and in all beings; the boundaries separating individuals from each other break down.

The path to that realisation is long and difficult strewn with snares and problems to be solved, which demand an unfailing determination.

The first and perhaps the most important point is that the mind is incapable of judging spiritual things... it is absolutely indispensable to abstain from all mental opinion and reaction.

Give up all personal seeking for comfort, satisfaction, enjoyment or happiness. 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.

Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure.

Never get excited, nervous or agitated. Remain perfectly calm in the face of all circumstances. And yet be always alert to discover what progress you still have to make and loose no time in making it.

Never take physical happenings to their face value. They are always a clumsy attempt to express something else, the true thing which escapes our superficial understanding.

Never complain of the behavior of anyone, unless you have the power to change in his nature what makes him act in this way; and if you have the power, change him instead of complaining.

Before your sleep, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the sleep may restore your fatigued nerves, bring calm and quietness to your brain so that on waking you may, with renewed vigour, begin again your journey on the path of the great discovery.

Before you eat, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the food you are about to eat may bring your body the substance it needs to serve as a solid basis for your effort towards the great discovery, and give it the energy for persistence and perseverance in the effort.

Before your act, concentrate in the will that your action may help or at least in no way hinder your march towards the great discovery.

When you speak, before the words come out of your mouth, concentrate long enough to check your words and allow only those that are absolutely necessary to pass.⁵

To be in touch with your psychic in day-to day life:- When we are busy and occupied with so many different activities, duties, roles, then too we can be in touch with our psychic and act from it by listening to our inner voice. When faced with decisions, difficulties if we remain inwardly quiet and unmoved by outer circumstances, we can hear an inner voice, which shows us the divine way. This inner voice is within each one of us, talking to us. Our mental and vital noise level is so high that we can't hear this inner voice. But to keep this inner voice alive we have to keep listening to it. If we fail to do so, it goes away and veils our pschic. This inner voice talks to us as a feeling of unease. This feeling of unease is not to be brushed away but given recognition and acted upon to keep our psychic flame alive.

Exercise II

Discovery of the Real You

Facilitators Note

Aim

1. *Experiential assimilation of “Who am I?”*
2. *Opening the door to the next part – self control*
3. *To be given as self work during the week to keep the students in touch with the course, to absorb and assimilate and practice what was studied and mentally understood and to take them to a deeper level of understanding of themselves.*
4. *Besides being given as self-work this exercise is also to be done at the study programme after an interactive reading of “Know Thyself”*

Maintain a Diary. Taking time out from your daily activities, sit down with yourself, close your eyes, relax and go through your entire day – from the time you opened your eyes to getting out of bed, your first thought, first action. Go through each action, thought, words like going through an album of photographs and ask yourself the question – Why? Why did I feel this way? From which part of me was the feeling coming? Why did I say what I did? Why did I do what I did? What was my aim in doing so? Was I focused? Do not listen to the outer reasons, try getting to the inner reason. From which apart of myself were these thoughts, feelings, actions coming from?

Make a chart, mentioning each thought, feeling, action, also mention next to it the origin of it and discover planes in yourself you weren't even aware existed!

This may not be an easy exercise and may demand high concentration and insight, but the results will compensate the effort in equal if not higher proportion! Put a question mark against any doubts which may arise, any questions which may come up to be discussed when we meet again.

Facilitators Note

If the facilitator feels O.K. he/she may keep communication channels open during the week through telephone, e-mail as for first time ‘self discoveries’ there may be several questions, doubts, etc.

To be Individualised in Collectivity

To be individualised in a collectivity, one must be absolutely conscious of oneself. And of which self? – The self that 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 thoughts, 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. There is a mixture of obscurities, a mixture of unconsciousness and inevitably you slip into this unconsciousness. To escape this there but is one means: to become conscious of oneself, more and more conscious and more and more attentive.

Window to your Inner Self

Three Step Method To Self-realisation

1. To Know Thyself

The first step is to become conscious of your inner self, of the different parts of your being and the distinct nature of each part. You must learn to distinguish these parts one from the other so that you can move on to the second step, of self-observation.

2. To Observe Thyself

You must observe yourself so that you may find out clearly the origin of the movements that occur in you, the many impulses, reactions and conflicting wills that drive you to action. You must know why you do this, why you do that, you must know your thoughts, know your feelings, all your activities, all your movements of what you are capable, etc.

3. To Control and Master Thyself

To know oneself is not enough; this knowledge must bring a conscious control. To know oneself perfectly is to control oneself perfectly. It is an assiduous study that which demands much perseverance and sincerity. For mans nature, specially his mental nature, has a spontaneous tendency to give a favorable explanation for whatever he thinks, feels, says and does. It is only by observing these movements with great care, by bringing them as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to educate in us a discernment which does not err. For if we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity of knowing the truth of our being, that is to say the one thing for which we have really been created, that which we can call our mission upon earth, then we must in a very regular and constant manner reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence whatever is in opposition to it.₆

Exercise III

Maintain a LIGHT AND SHADOW Diary

1. Sit in a quiet place. Fix a time each day when you would give yourself time to maintain this diary.
2. Listen to music and meditate for 10-15 minutes, relaxing all the parts of your body, your mind, your thoughts.
3. Make two columns- LIGHT and SHADOW.
4. Pass each activity of your day, each movement, reaction, thought through a screen in your mind. Note those that pass the screen in the LIGHT column and those that leave a shadow in the SHADOW column.
5. Now ask yourself why has this left a shadow? What is the highest ideal in this situation? What will help me to achieve this 'ideal'?
6. Maintain this diary with diligence and sincerity. Do not get disheartened by the 'shadows'. See them as an opportunity to progress, to perfect your self. As you see yourself change and progress, that it self will give you incentive to carry on in spite of the shadows.

Facilitators Note

Do this exercise with the group and then assign it as self-work to be done each day and submitted to facilitator. Reading it the facilitator can

- 1. Evaluate the students progress*
- 2. Give individual input to the student to encourage, hasten his/her learning process.*

Role of Meditation in Discovering Your Swadharma

There are two words in English used to express the Indian idea of dhyana, 'meditation' and 'contemplation'. Meditation means propelling the concentration of the mind in a single train of ideas, which work out a single subject.

Contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of the concentration.

Both these things are forms of dhyana, for the principle of dhyana is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge.

There are other forms of dhyana. There is a passage in which Vivekananda advises you to stand back from your thoughts, let them occur in your mind as they will and simply observe them and see what they are. This may be called concentration in self-observation.⁸

...The individual being has to find himself, his true existence; he can only do this by going inward, by living within and from within; for the external or outer consciousness or life separated from the inner spirit is the field of ignorance; it can only exceed itself and exceed the ignorance by opening into the largeness of an inner self and life.⁹

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation is more difficult, but greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use them all; each in its own place and for its own subject; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of will in the self-application to the yoga.

How to Meditate

There are no essential external conditions, but solitude and seclusion at the time of meditation as well as stillness of the body is helpful, sometimes most necessary to the beginner. But one should not be bound by external conditions. Once the habit of meditation is formed, it should be made possible to do it in all circumstances, lying, sitting, walking alone, in company, in silence or in the midst of noise. The first internal condition necessary is concentration of the will against the obstacles to meditation that is wandering of the mind, forgetfulness, sleep, physical and nervous impatience and restlessness, etc.

The second is a increasing purity and calm of the inner consciousness (citta) out of which thought and emotion arise, that is a freedom from all disturbing reactions, such as anger, grief, depression, anxiety about worldly happenings, etc. Mental perfection and moral are always closely allied to each other.

Facilitators Note

If the student asks - how to deal with these obstacles when they arise – Then the facilitator may answer from one's self knowledge and/or quote Sri Aurobindo from the booklet-- Meditation, pag 8-10 – Difficulties in Meditation.

Exercise IV
Visualisation for discovering One's Being

Facilitators Note

This is to be a guided meditation. Play Mothers New-Year music (only music no shloka which may distract the concentration). Light agarbattis to create a suitable environment.

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Relax your body/mind. Concentrate on each part of your body and relax your toes, your ankles, your calves, and your thighs. Relax your lower abdomen, your upper abdomen, your lower back, upper back, your shoulders, and your neck. Relax your chin, your jaws, if your teeth are clenched together relax them, relax your eyes, your forehead, your mind, your brain. (These instructions are to be given keeping in mind the pace required to relax each part.)

Now call peace into yourself.

Peace. Peace. Peace.

Let peace impenetrate every part of your being.

Peace. Peace. Peace.

Feel the peace infuse you.

Once you are in peace with yourself you can come in touch with your inner being.

Go deep within yourself. Concentrating on the part behind your heart center go deeper and deeper.

Feel the atmosphere within your depths. The colour, the things it contains, the sensation. Do you feel yourself going down a deep well, entering a room, facing a door, feeling a sensation. Go still deeper.

With your will open the door, go from one room to another, open doors and go into deeper and deeper rooms.

Each room will have its own character. Its own atmosphere. Tell and observe this atmosphere, the colour, the feeling it creates, the images. You may come to a door which has a special kind of solidity or solemnity, with will and concentration open this door... and you suddenly enter a hall of clarity, of light and beauty and you have the experience of contact with your soul, your psychic.

When you feel ready, slowly open your eyes.₁₀

Facilitators Note

After this exercise ask for a feedback and sharing of what they saw and felt.

Aim of this exercise

- 1. To introduce to the group a means of meditation, which they can use to get in touch with their psychic. Because it is the psychic which leads us to our Swadharma*
- 2. Providing the group with a practical tool to get in touch with their psychic*

Exercise V

Mind Mapping

Make a Map of your life. Complete with roads and pathways. At the center of the map is the place where we are to reach – the highest aim, highest aspiration. The roads are the various ways we can get there. On the map the starting point is, the place where you are right now, the present. What are you busy with now? What are some of the past important experience that helped you realize your aspiration, your aim? What are the things helping you? What is the problem? How will you overcome these problems? What needs to be changed? What do you need to develop in yourself? What needs to be focused on? Is your future in line with your aim? What helps you to be more in touch with the inner, unchanging self?

This Map is a very helpful guide, keeping you on your path. If done with honesty it will be a true guide showing you the way with clarity and focus. This is your inner guide. A resource, which can be tapped at any time and no one, can show you, in such a brief time, with such clarity, the path. Now the effort is yours to walk on the path. Every few days refer to this, Map and ask yourself if you are following it with sincerity. Putting in your will and effort. For without effort and exercising your will you cannot realize your aim.

Happiness as the Aim of Life

Two ideas, which are very widespread, especially in the West, contribute towards making its (vitals) domination more sovereign. One is that the chief aim life is to be happy; the other is that one is born with a certain character and that it is impossible to change it.

The first idea is a childish deformation of a very profound truth : that all existence is based upon delight of being and without delight of being there would be no life. But this delight of being, which is a quality of the true Divine and therefore unconditional, must not be confused with the pursuit of pleasure in life, which depends largely on circumstances. The conviction that one has the right to be happy leads, as a matter of course, to the will to 'live ones own life' at any cost. This attitude, by its obscure and aggressive egoism, leads to every kind of conflict and misery, disappointment, and very often ends in catastrophe.

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.

Is the aim of life to be happy?

This is just putting things topsy-turvy.

The aim of human life is to discover the Divine and to manifest it. Naturally this discovery leads to happiness; but this happiness is a consequence, not an aim in itself. And it is this mistake of taking a mere consequence for aim of life that has been the cause of most of miseries which are afflicting human life.¹¹

THINK-SHEET

- 1. What was your perception of the aim of one's life?**
- 2. Has there been any change in that perception after the completion of this course? What is that change?**
- 3. Thinking back and reflecting on your life, what would you say has made you truly happy? Make a list.**
- 4. What can you do to increase this happiness in your life?**
- 5. What would be the obstacles, deterrents (if any) – outer and within yourself, which would come in your way of seeking true happiness.**
- 6. How can you do away with these obstacles?**

What or Who is the Divine

Generally it is believed that the divine is someone above us, someone looking down upon our lives, our thoughts, our behavior, our actions. Offer a 'fear' of the divine, of his or her wrath keeps a control on us. She or he is to be approached for help in times of trouble. Or sometimes love and faith may be just a 'habit' learnt from our environment, our family, or a result of 'fear' of 'displeasing the divine'.

It is believed that the divine is separate from us, outside us, a separate entity. Mother and Sri Aurobindo have made a paradigm shift in this focus from a 'separateness' to 'oneness'. Like some of the other Indian seers like Shri Ramana Maharishi and Shri Ramakrishna – that the Divine is within you and in all things. And further that the aim of our life is to become conscious, to find and to realize the divine in each of us and in all we do

“The true aim of life is to find the Divine’s Presence deep inside oneself and to surrender to it so that, it takes the lead of the life, all the feelings and all the actions of the body.

This gives a true and harmonious aim to existence.

*

“Life has a purpose.

This purpose is to find and to serve the divine. The Divine is not far, He is in ourselves, deep inside and above, the feelings and the thoughts. With the divine is peace and certitude and even the solution of all difficulties.

Hand over your problems to the Divine and he will pull you out of all difficulties.

*

There is a purpose in life – and it is the only true and lasting one –

The Divine

Turn to Him and the emptiness will go.

Blessings

*

You are here to contact your soul, and that is why you live. Aspire persistently and try to silence your mind. The aspiration must come from the heart.

*

It is not in order to be happy that we are upon the earth, for in the present condition of terrestrial life happiness is an impossibility.. We are upon earth to find and realise the divine, for the Divine Consciousness alone can give true happiness.

So who is the Divine?

“This is what we mean by “Divine” :all the knowledge we have to acquire, all the power we have obtain, all the love we have to become, all the perfection we have to achieve,all the harmonious and progressive poise we have to manifest in light and joy, all the new and unknown splendours that have to be realised.”

*

What is God?

God is the perfection that we must aspire to realise.

*

Our worth lies only in the measure of our effort to exceed ourselves, and to exceed ourselves is to attain the Divine.

*

Human mediocrity is intolerable. We aspire for a knowledge truly knowing, for power truly powerful, for a love that truly loves.

*

Who am I?

The Divine under many disguises.

How can one understand the Divine?

By becoming him, my child. And that is the only way :by identity. As Sri Aurobindo says, “We know the divine and become the Divine because we are already that in our secret nature.”

It is because he is the very essence of our being that we can become him and consequently understand Him; otherwise it would be quite impossible.”

Paths to the Divine

How can you seek the Divine?

ASPIRE SURRENDER-OFFER

“The first thing necessary – aspiration for the divine”

The first movement of aspiration is this :you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe depends but which does not depend upon the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems to you to be behind all things... I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration – to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

“The next thing you have to do is to tend to this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living.”

Instead of telling yourself once in awhile, “Oh, yes! I am thinking of finding the Divine”, just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired... all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life.

“And for that what is required is concentration –concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose”.

This is the second step that is to say, you begin wanting to find and know the Divine and live it. You must feel at the same time that the thing is so precious, so important that your entire life is not sufficient for acquiring it. Then, the first movement is a self-giving; you tell yourself, “I do not want any longer to belong to myself, for the sake of my little personal satisfaction, I wish to belong to this marvelous thing which one must find, must know, must live and for which I aspire.”

“Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it; go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down.”

A fire is burning in the deep quietude of the heart. It is the divinity in you – you're true being. Hear its voice, follow its dictates."

Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ...but the psychological or psychic centre of the being.¹²

Exercise VI

Aim

To guide a meditation for the students to come in touch with their psychic –

Through meditation

Learning Environment -: Quiet, calm, to be created by lighting agarbattis, playing Mother's New-Year Music and by keeping the lighting dim.

Learning Outcome -: 1. Now the student is equipped with a tool he/she can use to come in touch with his/her psychic – Through meditation.

2. Some students may get a glimpse of a flame or feel a warmth, or a caving inwards.

Facilitators Note

To be spoken softly and calmly with suitable, required pauses. These pauses can be decided by sensing the mood of the group and by speaking as though one was actually doing the meditation oneself.

Close your eyes...

Take a deep slow breath...

Relax yourself completely...

Relax your feet... your legs... your lower abdomen... your upper abdomen... your shoulder... your arms... your fingers... your neck... your face... your jaws... your eyes... your forehead... your mind.

Now concentrate on your heart centre not on your heart but in the centre of your chest.

A deep centre...

Go within yourself...

Go deeper and deeper...

Put all your consciousness deep within yourself...

Feel the heat from the flame...

A fire is burning deep inside you...

See the flame within yourself...

It is the divine flame...

Offer yourself to the divine

In the beginning you start by making this offering (of yourself) in a general way, as though once and for all; you say, “I am the servant of the Divine; all my life is given absolutely to the divine; all my efforts are for the realisation of the Divine.”

But that is only the first step; for this is not sufficient... you have still at every moment to remember it... This is what you have to do to carry out your general offering in detailed offerings...

- Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do.
- Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling but even the most ordinary and external actions such as eating; when you eat you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you’
- You cannot say “When I am meditating, reading philosophy or listening to these conversations I will be in this condition of an opening towards Light and call for it, but when I go out to walk or see friends I can allow myself to forget all about it.” To persist in this attitude means that you will remain untransformed... always you will be divided; you will at have at best only glimpses of this greater life.

Surrender yourself to the Divine

Surrender is the decision to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine. This is done either through the mind or the emotion or the life-impulse or through all of them together. Without this decision nothing is at all possible...Everything else comes naturally after it, for the whole process starts with surrender. You can either surrender through knowledge or through devotion...

The most important surrender is the surrender of your character, your way of being, so that it may change... You have certain ways of understanding, certain ways of reacting, certain ways of feeling, almost certain ways of progressing, and above all, a special way of looking at life and expecting from it certain things – well, it is this you must surrender... offer by opening it, making it receptive as possible so that the divine consciousness which sees how you ought to be, may act directly, more in keeping with your real truth. This is infinitely more important than surrendering what one does...

It is not what one does that is the most important thing, but what one is. Whatever the activity, it is not quite the way of doing it but the state of consciousness in which it is done that is important... You must come to a point when everything is done because you feel within...that it is this, which must be done and in this particular way and that you do it only because of that. You do not do it because of any habit, attachment or preference nor even any conception, even a preference for the idea that it is the best thing to do – else your surrender is not total.

It is rare that somebody can surrender entirely to the Divine's will without having to face one or another of the difficulties. Surrender does not ensure a smooth and unruffled and continuous progression. The reason is that your being is not yet one, nor your surrender absolute and complete. Only a part of you surrenders; and today it is one part and the next day it is another. The whole purpose of Yoga is to gather all the divergent parts together and to forge them into an undivided unity. Till then you cannot hope to be without difficulties – for example like doubt or depression or hesitation.

What is required of you is not a passive surrender, in which you become like a block, but to put your will at the disposal of the Divine Will. If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all will action. On the contrary, you can hasten the realisation by lending your will to the Divine Will. That too is surrender in another form.¹³

Think Sheet

- 1. Before this workshop what was your understanding of the Divine? Has this understanding changed now? If so, in what way?**
- 2. Given your field of study/work/life, how do you think you can seek the Divine? Give a detailed, practical, action plan, which can be implemented by you in your life?**
- 3. Are there any obstacles in your path to the Divine? What are these obstacles? How will you deal with them?**

Facilitators Note

Aim

- 1. A deeper assimilation of the theory read and discussed.*
- Application of the theory read, in real life, by its implementation and drawing up an*
- 1. action plan*
 - 2. To focus the information on one's own life and improve the quality of one's life by its implementation.*

How does the Divine manifest itself?

The whole universe is the manifestation of the Divine, but a manifestation which begins with a total unconsciousness of its origin and rises little by little towards this consciousness.

*

On the physical plane the Divine expresses himself through beauty, on the mental plane through knowledge, on the vital plane through power and on the psychic plane through love.

When we rise high enough, we discover that these four aspects unite with each other in a single consciousness, full of love, luminous, powerful, beautiful, containing all, pervading all.

*It is only to satisfy the universal play that this consciousness divides itself into several lines or aspects of manifestation.*¹⁴

*

How can we manifest the Divine?

There are three principal Paths of Yoga

1. Path of Knowledge
2. Path of Devotion
3. Path of Action (Work)

...Sri Aurobindo says that it depends on each case and person. Some people follow more easily the path of knowledge, others follow more easily the path of devotion, and others follow the path of works. He says that for the integral yoga the three must be combined and with them something else, but that everybody can't do everything at the same time and that there are people who need to be exclusive and to choose one of the three paths first in order to be able to combine them later...in integral yoga it is in life that the Divine must be found, not outside life. There are those, for instance who consider life and the world and illusion and think it is necessary to leave them behind in order to find the Divine, whose nature, they say is the opposite of that of existence. Sri Aurobindo says...it is the divine who is manifested in life and whom one can find again through life.

The path of knowledge is the well known path of Raja Yoga, in which one practises detachment from one's physical being, saying, "I am not the body", then detachment from one's sensations, "I am not my sensations", then from one's feelings, saying, "I am not my feelings", and so on. One detaches oneself from thought and goes more and more within until one finds something which is the Eternal and Infinite.

...the path of devotion and love, like that of Chaitanya or Ramakrishna...is the path of meditation, concentration, of withdrawal from life and action. This was the one most practised in the old yogas.

...the yoga of works, of action, that is to say the finding of union with the Divine in action and work, and in the consecration of one's work to the Divine...the first step is to...create in itself complete detachment from the fruit of action, to act because this is what must be done, to do it in the best possible way, and not to be anxious about the consequences, to leave the consequences to a Will higher than his own...it is much more difficult to feel that the human personality does not exist and that only that only the divine Force works.¹⁴

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2. The Mother, Education part one pg 66.
3. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, Living Within pg x.
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5. The Mother, Education part one pg 30-35.
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7. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, On Education pg 89.
8. Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga, pg 721.
9. Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, pg 1027.
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12. The Mother, Words of the Mother Part I pg 3.
13. Questions and Answers 1929-31, 1950-51
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FURTHER READING

1. Letters on Yoga Part I – Parts of the being
2. Words of The Mother Part I – The True aim of life
3. Collected works of The Mother
4. Dhyana – Meditation for Inner Growth
5. Conversations On Yoga
6. Search for the Soul