

TRUTH

Compiled by Vijay from the writings of
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother



Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Yoga in Everyday Life – Booklet Series

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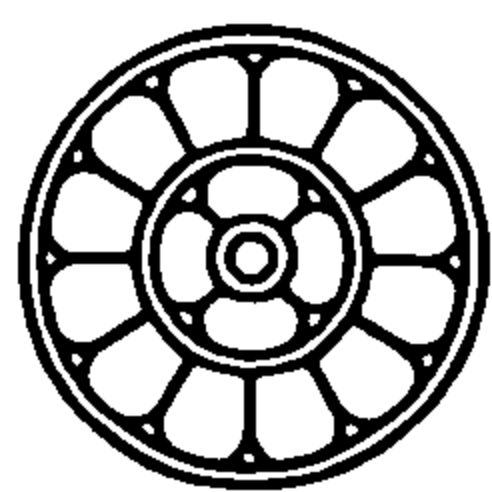
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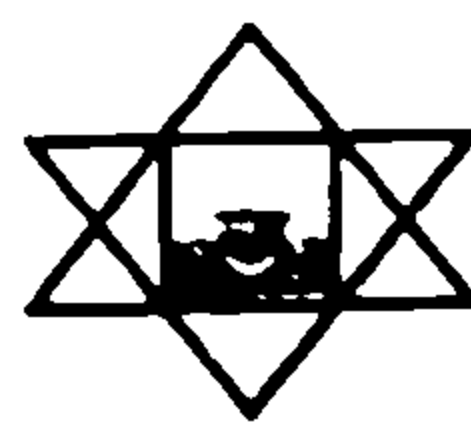
This is one in a series of thirty booklets published by the Sri Aurobindo Society under the title "Yoga in Everyday Life." Our effort is to bring together, from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, simple passages with a practical orientation on specific subjects, so that everyone may feel free to choose a book according to his inner need. The topics cover the whole field of human activity, because true spirituality is not the rejection of life but the art of perfecting life.

While the passages from Sri Aurobindo are in the original English, most of the passages from the Mother (selections from her talks and writings) are translations from the original French. We must also bear in mind that the excerpts have been taken out of their original context and that a compilation, in its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to be faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

We hope these booklets will inspire the readers to go to the complete works and will help them to mould their lives and their environments towards an ever greater perfection. The quotations from Sri Aurobindo are prefaced by his symbol and those from the Mother by her symbol.



The Mother's



Sri Aurobindo's

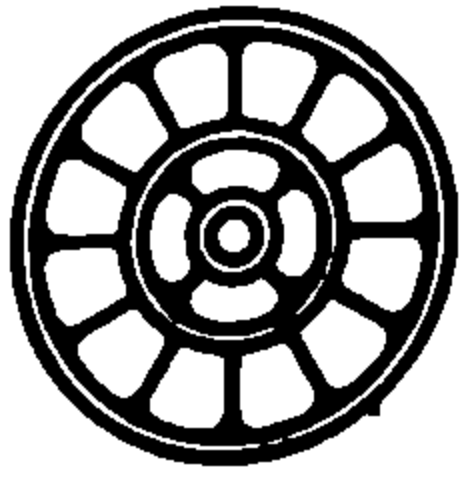
"O TRUTH, COME, MANIFEST."

“आयाहि सत्य आविर्भव”

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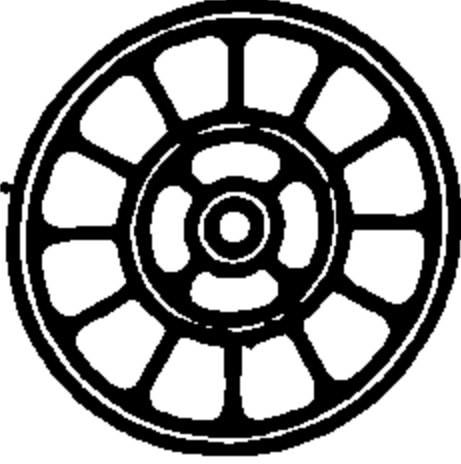
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WHAT IS THE TRUTH



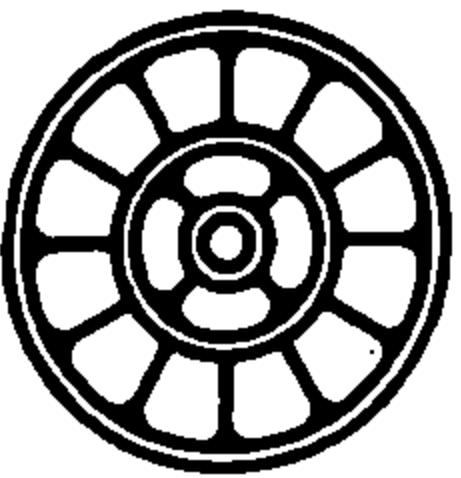
He who sincerely wants to serve the Truth will know the Truth.

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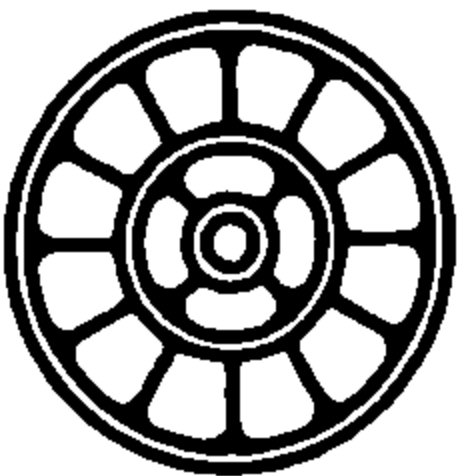
There is only one Truth as there is only one Divine.

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The Truth is not linear but global; it is not successive but simultaneous. Therefore it cannot be expressed in words: it has to be lived.

★



What is the Truth? What do you mean when you speak of "the Truth"?

You want a mental definition of the Truth. The Truth cannot be expressed in mental terms. Yes, it is so. And all the questions put are mental questions.

The Truth cannot be formulated, it cannot be defined – it is to be *lived*.

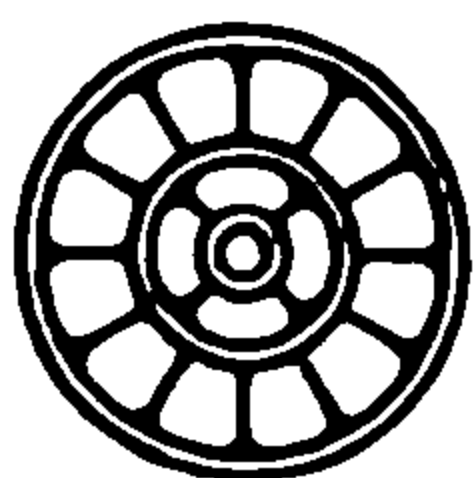
And one who is wholly consecrated to the Truth, who wants to live the Truth, serve the Truth, will know at each moment what must be done: it will be a kind of intuition or revelation (most often without words, but sometimes also expressed in words) which will make you know at every minute what is the truth of that minute. And it is this that is so interesting. You want to know "the Truth" as a thing well defined, well classified, well established, and after that you are at rest: there is no need to seek any more! You take it up, you say: "Here, this is the truth" and then it is fixed. This is what all the religions have done. They

have established their truth as a dogma. But it is not the Truth any more.

The Truth is something living, moving, expressing itself at each second, and it is *one* way of approaching the Supreme. Each one has his way of approaching the Supreme. There are perhaps some who are able to approach him from all sides at the same time, but there are those who approach through Love, those who approach through Power, those who approach through Consciousness and those who approach through Truth. But each of these aspects is as absolute, imperative and undefinable as the supreme Lord himself is. The supreme Lord is absolute, imperative and undefinable, unseizable in his action, and his attributes have this same quality.

Once one knows this, he who puts himself at the service of one of these aspects will know (it is expressed in life, in time, in the movement of time), will know at each moment what Truth is, and will know at each moment what Consciousness is, and will know at each minute what Power is, and he will know at each minute what Love is. And it is a multiform Power, Love, Consciousness, Truth that expresses itself innumerably in the manifestation, even as the Lord expresses himself innumerably in the manifestation.

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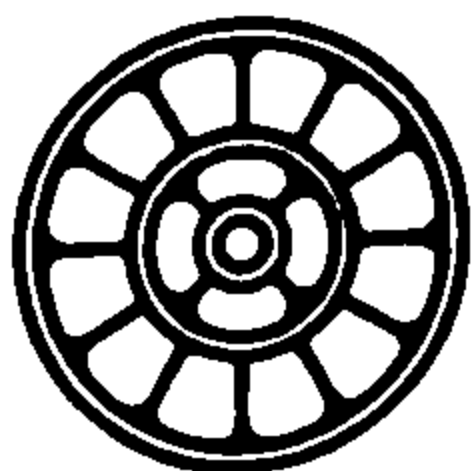


Intellectually, the Truth is the point where all the opposites meet and join to make a unity.

Practically, the Truth is the surrender of the ego, to make possible the birth and manifestation of the Divine.

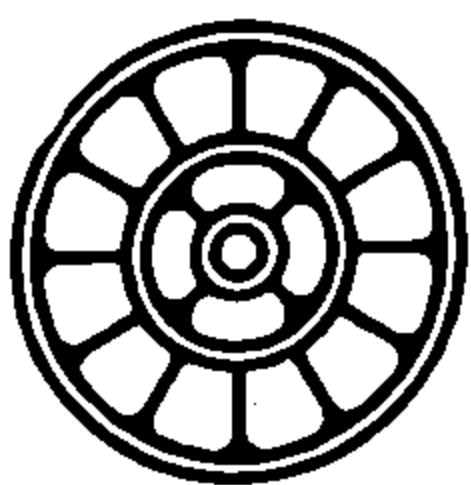
Doubt is the best arm used by the ego to protect itself from extinction.

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To be able to know the Truth you should be without preferences and without desires, and when you aspire for the Truth your mind must be silent.

THE TRUTH OF EACH BEING



“The absolute of every being is its unique relation with the Divine and its unique manner of expressing the Divine in the manifestation.”

This is what is called here in India the truth of the being or the law of the being, the *dharma* of the being: the centre and the cause of the individuality.

Everyone carries his truth within himself, a truth which is unique, which is altogether his own and which he must express in his life. Now what is this truth? This is the question I have been asked:

“What is this truth of the being, and how is it expressed externally in physical life?”

It is expressed in this way: each individual being has a direct and unique relation with the Supreme, the Origin, That which is beyond all creation. It is this unique relation which must be expressed in one's life, through a unique mode of being in relation with the Divine. Therefore, each one is directly and exclusively in relation with the Divine – the relation one has with the Divine is unique and exclusive; so that you receive from the Divine, when you are in a receptive state, the *totality* of the relation it is possible for you to have, and this is neither a sharing nor a part nor a repetition, but exclusively and uniquely the relation which each one can have with the Divine. So, from the

psychological point of view, one is *all alone* in having this direct relation with the Divine.

One is all alone with the Supreme.

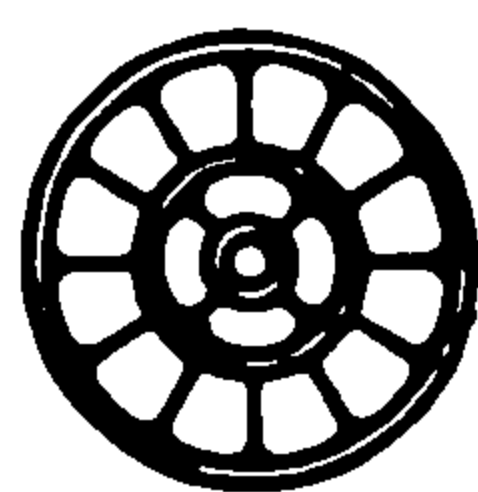
The relation one has with Him will never have an equal, will never be exactly the same as another's. No two are the same and therefore *nothing* can be taken away from you to be given to another, *nothing* can be withdrawn from you to be given to another. And if this relation disappeared from the creation, it would really disappear – which is impossible.

And this means that if one lives in the truth of one's being, one is an indispensable part of the creation. Naturally, I don't mean if one lives what one *believes* one should be, I am saying if one lives the truth of one's being; if, by a development, one is able to enter into contact with the truth of one's being, one is immediately in a unique and exclusive relation with the Divine, which hasn't its equal.

There, now.

And naturally, because it is the truth of your being, that is what you should express in your life.

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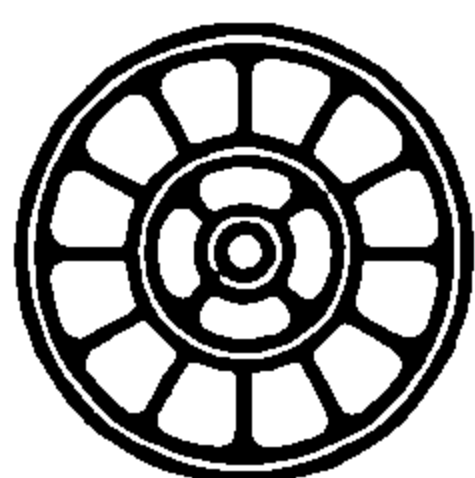
As soon as one is convinced that there is a living and real Truth seeking to express itself in a objective universe, the only thing that seems to have any importance or value is to come into contact with this Truth, to identify oneself with it as perfectly as possible, and to no longer be anything but a means of expressing it, making it more and more living and tangible so that it may be manifested more and more perfectly. All theories, all principles, all methods

are more or less good according to their capacity to express that Truth; and as one goes forward on this path, if one goes beyond all the limits of the Ignorance, one becomes aware that the *totality* of this manifestation, its wholeness, its integrality is necessary for the expression of that Truth, that *nothing* can be left out, and perhaps that there is nothing more important or less important. The one thing that seems necessary is a harmonisation of everything which puts each thing in its place, in its true relation with all the rest, so that the total Unity may manifest harmoniously....

One feels that a single movement, however small it may be, however insignificant it may seem, which is in harmony with that Truth, is of more value than the most wonderful arguments.

Let one single drop of light shine in you and it will be more effective in dissolving the darkness than the most beautiful speeches in the world on what light is or on what it can do.

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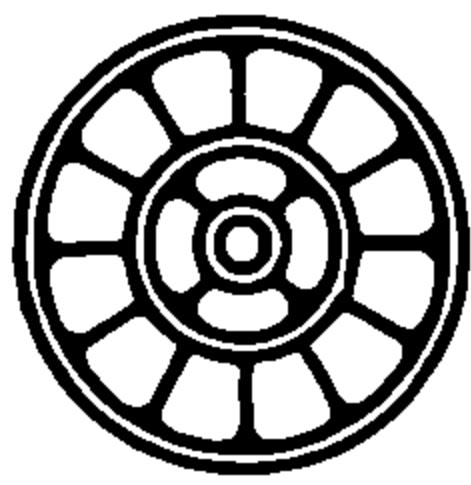
Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought – there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic – it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious.

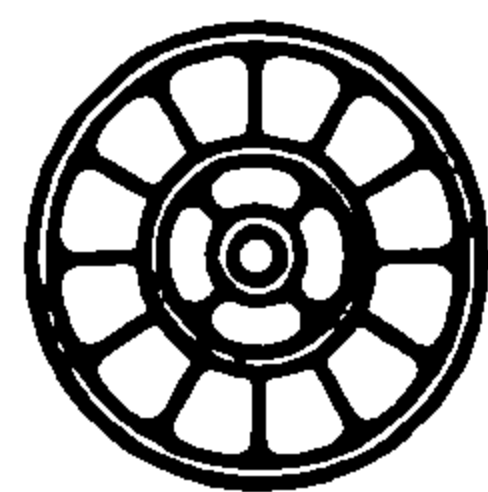
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There is the idea that everyone belongs to a certain type, that, for example, the pine will never become the oak and the palm never become wheat. This is obvious. But that is something else: it means that the truth of your being is not the truth of your neighbour's. But in the truth of your being, according to your own formation, your progress is almost unlimited. It is limited only by your own conviction that it is limited and by your ignorance of the true process, otherwise...

There is nothing one cannot do, if one knows how to do it.

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If one finds the truth in things, does it mean that one has found the Divine?

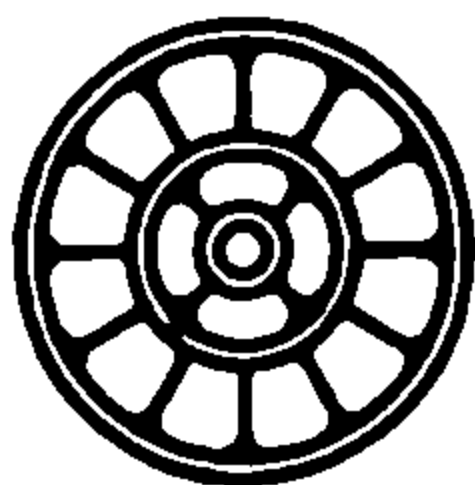
Surely! in everything, whatever it is, that is the only way. There is not a thing that does not carry in itself an eternal truth, otherwise it could not exist. The universe could not exist for even a thousandth part of a second if it did not contain a truth in itself....

The most remarkable thing is that if you are sincere you will find out why they [the things] are so and how they are so: the cause, the origin and the process. For it is one single thing. There is what we call the Truth, the basis of everything; because if this were not there, there would be nothing. Once you have found the Truth, you find the origin, you find the means of changing the

cause – how it is so, why it is so and the means of changing it. If you are in contact with the Divine, you have the key to everything. You know the how, the why and the process to change.

There is something to do: to work, it is so interesting. You represent a small agglomerated mass of substance that makes up yourself. Enter within and find the key. You have only to go down inside there. You cannot say: "That is beyond me, it is too big for me." Go within your little person and you will find the key which opens all the doors.

TRUTH WILL TRIUMPH

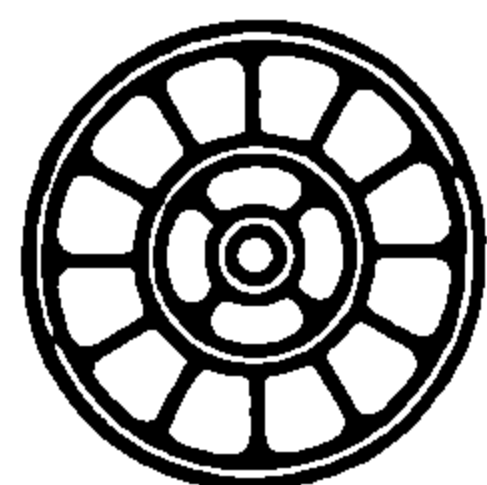


It is said that always the good and the true triumph, but we see that often in life it is otherwise. The wicked win, seem somehow to be protected from suffering.

People always confuse two ideas. It is from the universal and spiritual point of view that, not positively the "good" as men understand it, but the True, the Truth, will have the last word; it goes without saying. That is to say, finally the Divine will be victorious. That is what is said, what all who have lived a spiritual life have said – it is an absolute fact. Men, in translating it, say, "I am a good boy, I live in accordance with what I think to be true, therefore, all existence should be good for me." First of all, one's own appreciation of oneself is always doubtful, and then, in the world as it is now, all is mixed, it is not the Law of Truth that openly manifests itself to the half-blind human consciousness – it will not even understand it. I mean, to be more exact, that it is the supreme vision that is realising itself constantly, but its realisation in the mixed material world does not appear to the ignorant human sight as the triumph of good,

what men call good and true. But (to say it in a joking way) it is not the fault of the Lord, it is the fault of men! That is to say, the Lord knows what he is doing, and men do not understand it.

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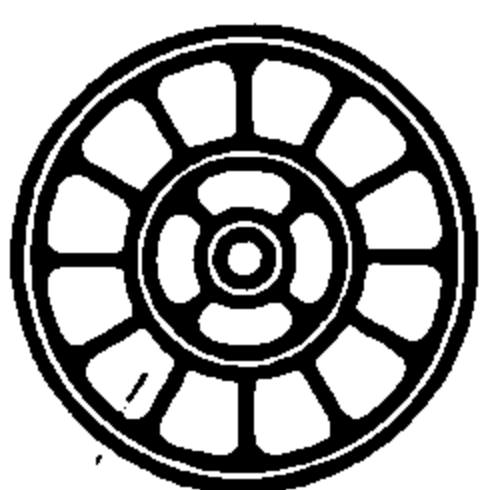
You say that one should have "the certitude of Truth's final victory". But doesn't this certitude seem very different from, and often the very opposite of, what one teaches in ordinary life?

Yes. Generally it is believed that things always end badly in Nature. Everyone knows the story of those who have met a lamentable end after having enjoyed great success in their life; of those who had extraordinary capacities and who finally lost them; of a nation which for a long period was the model of a marvellous civilisation – the civilisation vanishes and the nation is changed into something so deplorable that one can no longer recollect what it was. It seems that the story of the earth is a story of victories followed by defeats and not of defeats followed by victories.

But in fact, whenever it is a question of universal and divine things, what is needed is the universal vision and divine understanding of things in order to know how the truth expresses itself. There is a kind of general pessimism which says that even if things begin well they end badly, that it is weakness, hypocrisy, falsehood and wickedness which always seem to have the upper hand. That is why those who see the world in their own personal dimension have said that the world is bad and that we have only to finish with it and get out of it as soon as possible. Teachers have taught this but their teaching only proves that their vision is too narrow and in the dimension of the human individuality.

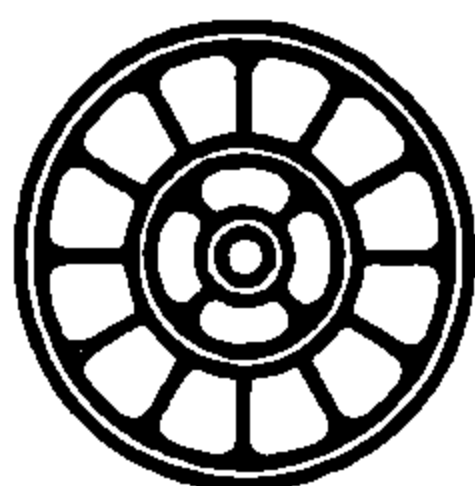
In truth, the movements of Nature are like those of the tides: they advance, they recede, advance and recede; in the universal life and even in terrestrial life, this means a progressive advance, though apparently it is cut up by withdrawals. But these withdrawals are only an appearance, as when one draws back to spring forward. You seem to be drawing back but it is simply in order to go much farther.

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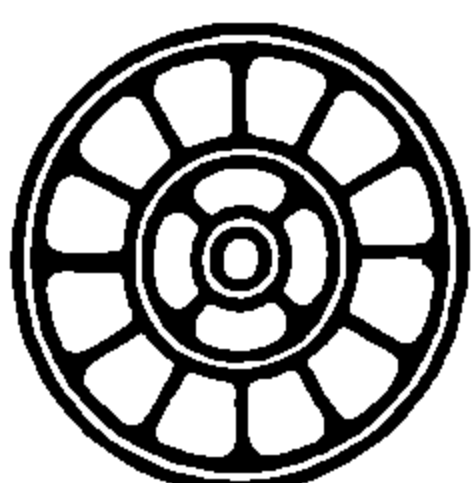
Sooner or later the Truth is bound to prevail.

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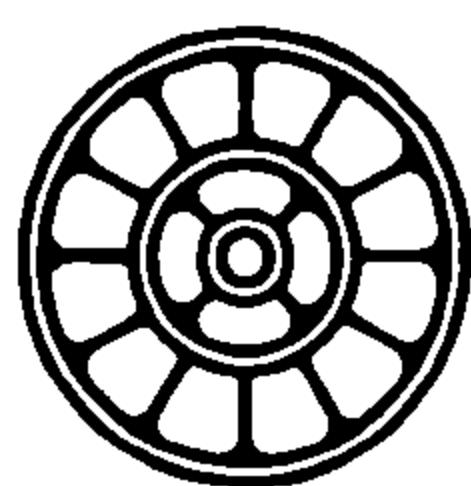
Nothing, not even the darkest falsehood can stop the ultimate triumph of Truth.

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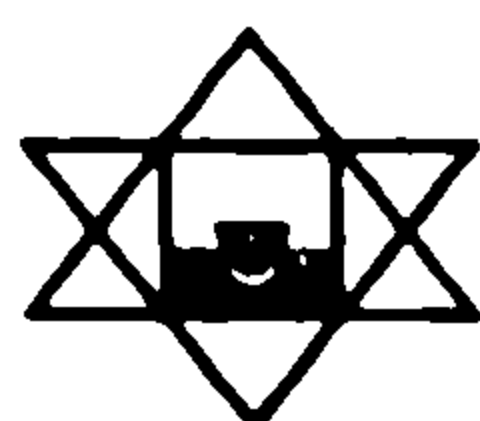
Truth is sure to conquer one day and the Grace is *always there* unfailing. Those who keep their faith steady are safe.

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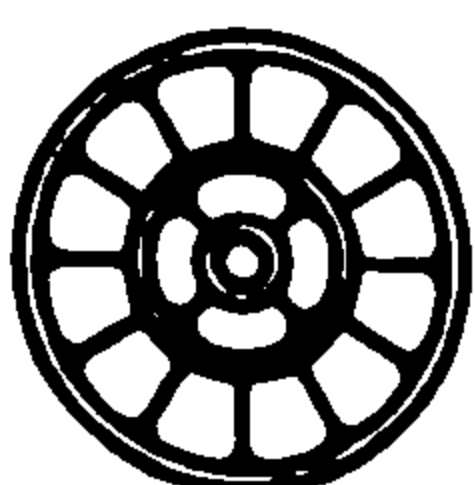
You are right – nothing can harm your soul and the Victory of the Truth is certain.

FALSEHOOD AND TRUTH



God is infinite Possibility. Therefore Truth is never at rest; therefore, also, Error is justified of her children.

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Some things may really appear to be errors.

For a moment.

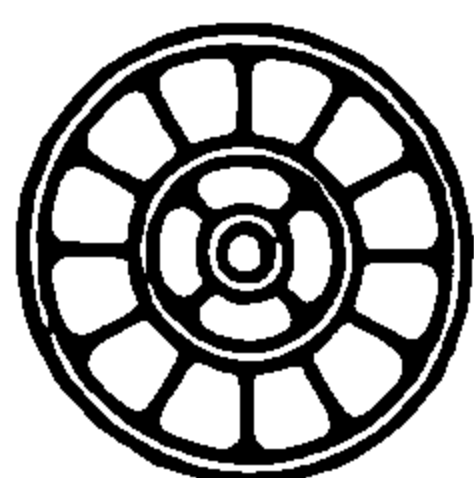
The impression is this: all our judgments are momentary. They are: one moment, it is like this; the next moment, it is no longer like this. And for us they are errors, because we see things one after another. But to the Divine they cannot appear like this, because everything is within Him.

Now just try to imagine that you are the Divine, for a moment! Everything is within you; you simply amuse yourself by bringing it out in a certain order. But for you, in your consciousness, everything is there at the same time: there is no time – neither past nor future nor present – everything is together. And every possible combination. He amuses Himself by bringing out first one thing and then another, like that. So the poor fellows down below who can see only a tiny part – they can see only so much of it – say, “Oh, that is an error!” In what way is it an error? Simply because they can only see a tiny part.

This is clear, isn't it? It is easy to understand. This concept of error is a concept that belongs to time and space.

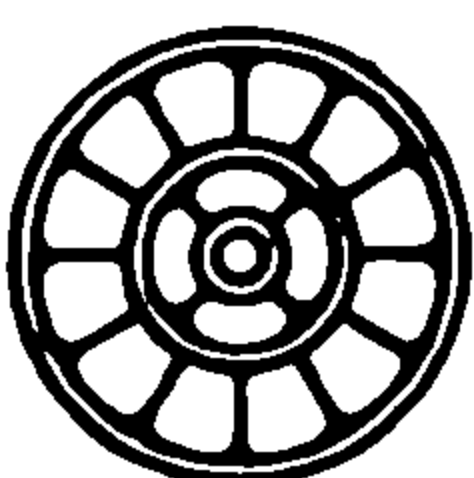
It is like the feeling that something cannot *be* and *not be* at the same time. And yet this is true, it is and it is not. It is the concept of time which introduces the concept of error – of time and space.

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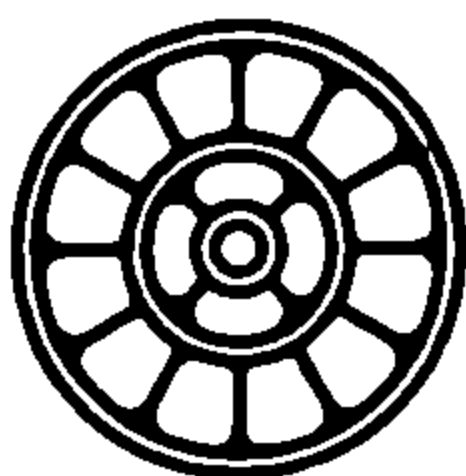
But very few are those who are conscious of the Lord, and it is this unconsciousness that constitutes the Falsehood of the world.

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...in the Presence of the Lord's Peace the Falsehood runs away in shame!

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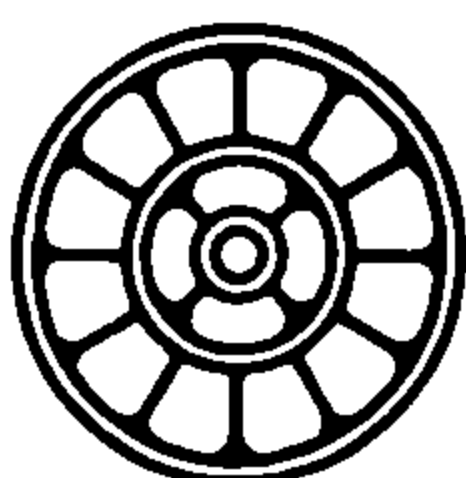
For those who are eager to get rid of falsehood, here is the way:

Do not try to please yourself, do not try either to please others. Try only to please the Lord.

Because He alone is the Truth. Each and every one of us, human beings in our physical body, is a coat of falsehood put on the Lord and hiding Him.

As He alone is true to Himself, it is on Him that we must concentrate and not on the coats of falsehood.

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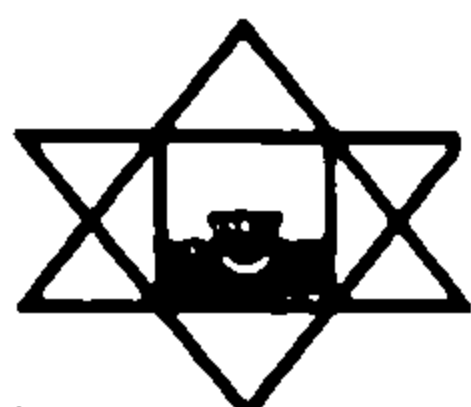


Does Sri Aurobindo mean that there is no absolute falsehood, no absolute untruth?

There can be no absolute untruth. In actual fact it is not possible, because the Divine is behind all things....

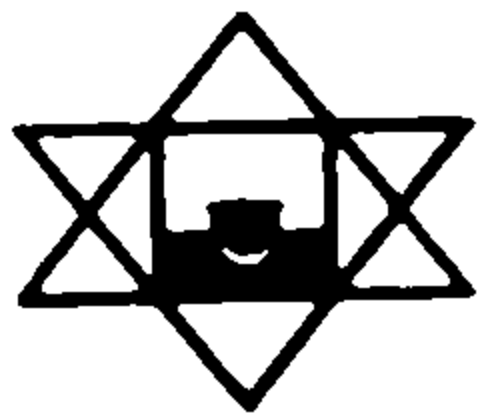
So to speak of an absolute falsehood that will disappear would simply mean that a whole set of things will live eternally in the past but will not belong to future manifestations, that is all.

CHOOSING THE TRUTH



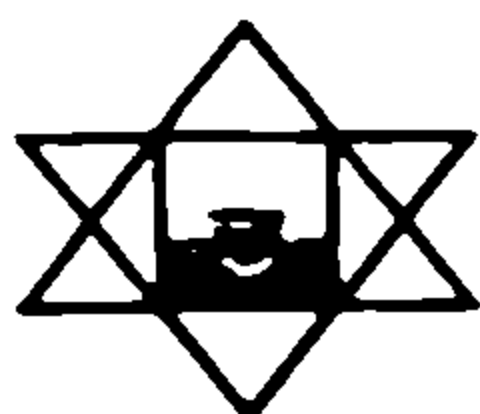
To see the Truth does not depend on a big intellect or a small intellect. It depends on being in contact with the Truth and the mind silent and quiet to receive it. The biggest intellects can make errors of the worst kind and confuse Truth and Falsehood, if they have not the contact with the Truth or the direct experience.

★



It is not by "thinking out" the entire reality, but by a change of consciousness that one can pass from the ignorance to the Knowledge – the Knowledge by which we become what we know. To pass from the external to a direct and intimate inner consciousness; to widen consciousness out of the limits of the ego and the body; to heighten it by an inner will and aspiration and opening to the Light till it passes in its ascent beyond Mind; to bring down a descent of the supramental Divine through self-giving and surrender with a consequent transformation of mind, life and body – this is the *integral* way to the Truth. It is this that we call the Truth here and aim at in our Yoga.

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

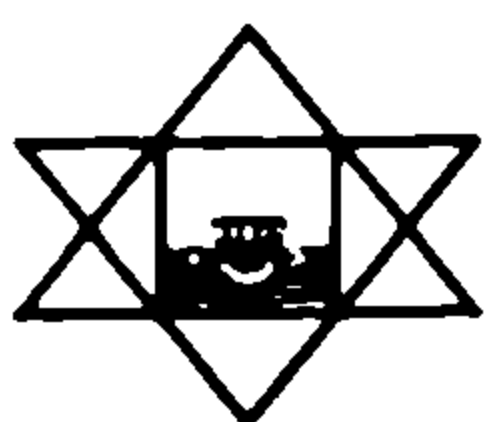
Truth cannot be attained by the Mind's thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate.

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

Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic

consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in you from all around you.

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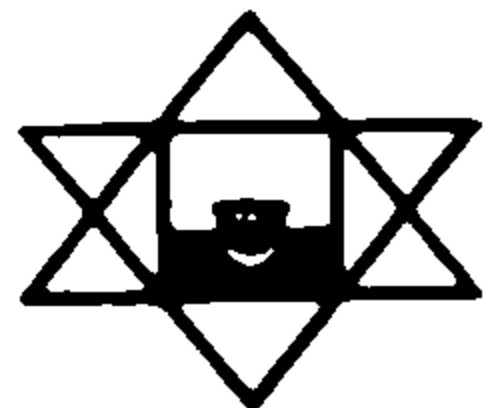


....As long as we remain in the domain of the intellect only, an impartial pondering over all that has been thought and sought after, a constant throwing up of ideas, of all the possible ideas, and the formation of this or that philosophical belief, opinion or conclusion is all that can be done. This kind of disinterested search after Truth would be the only possible attitude for any wide and plastic intelligence. But any conclusion so arrived at would be only speculative; it could have no spiritual value; it would not give the decisive experience or the spiritual certitude for which the soul is seeking. If the intellect is our highest possible instrument and there is no other means of arriving at supraphysical Truth, then a wise and large Agnosticism must be our ultimate attitude. Things in the manifestation may be known to some degree, but the Supreme and all that is beyond the Mind must remain forever unknowable .

It is only if there is a greater consciousness beyond Mind and that consciousness is accessible to us that we can know and enter into the ultimate Reality. Intellectual speculation, logical reasoning as to whether there is or is not such a greater consciousness cannot carry us very far. What we need is a way to get the experience of it, to reach it, enter into it, live in it. If we can get that, intellectual speculation and reasoning must fall necessarily into a very secondary place and even lose their reason for existence. Philosophy, intellectual expression of the Truth may remain, but mainly as a means of expressing this greater discovery and as much of its contents as can at all be

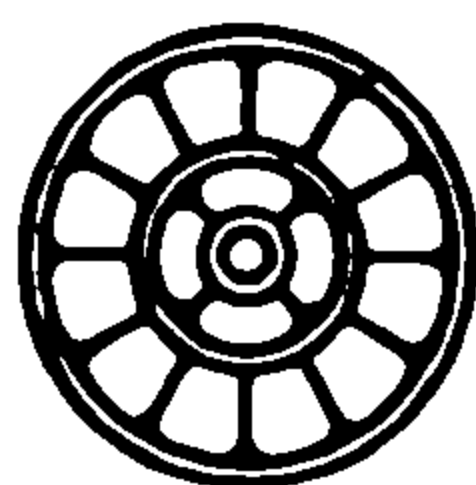
expressed in mental terms to those who still live in the mental intelligence.

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The mind can think and doubt and question and accept and withdraw its acceptance, make formations and unmake them, pass decisions and revoke them, judging always on the surface and by surface indications and therefore never coming to any deep and firm experience of Truth, but by itself it can do no more. There are only three ways by which it can make itself a channel or instrument of Truth. Either it must fall silent in the Self and give room for a wider and greater consciousness; or it must make itself passive to an inner Light and allow that Light to use it as a means of expression; or else, it must itself change from the questioning intellectual superficial mind it now is to an intuitive intelligence, a mind of vision fit for the direct perception of the divine Truth.

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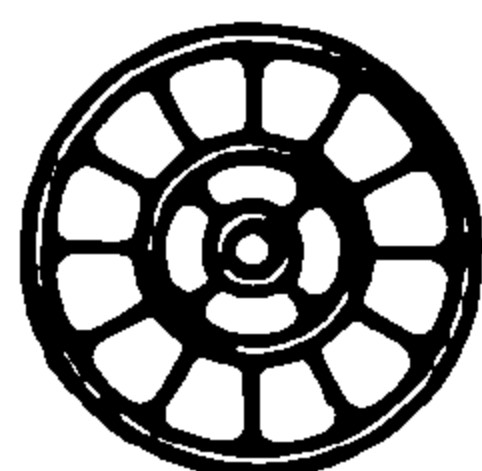
The true purpose of life –

To live for the Divine, to live for the Truth, or at least to live for one's soul.

And the true sincerity –

To live for the Divine without expecting any benefit from Him in return.

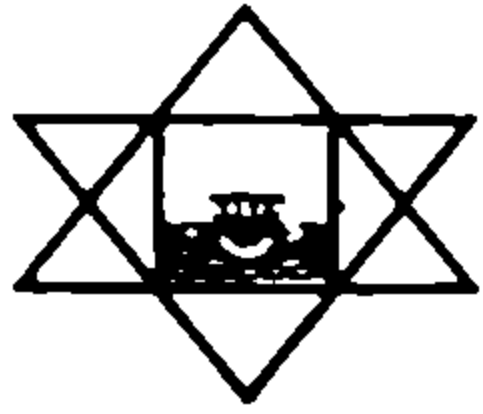
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While you are asking for the greatest thing of all, the most difficult, the *Truth* – and to receive the Truth one must be prepared for it, capable of seeing and feeling it – and this demands a big preparation. In

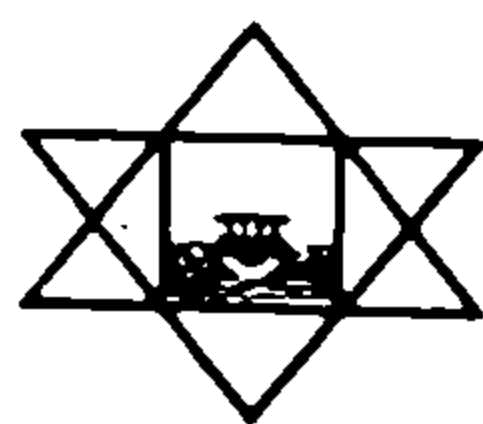
fact, the Truth is *always with us*. And if we do not see It and feel It, it is because we are not capable of seeing and feeling It – This is the reason of the delay.

GRADATIONS OF TRUTH



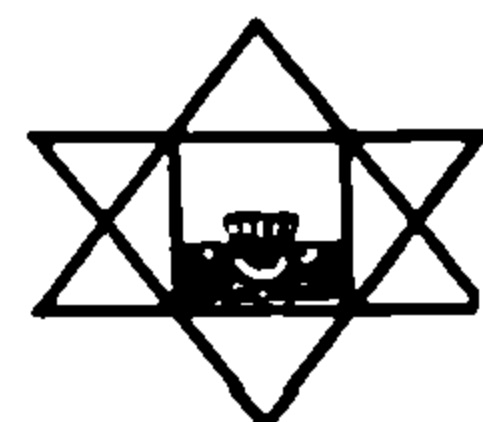
There all the truths unite in a single truth,
And all ideas rejoin Reality.

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The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or
creed or scripture or idea or philosophy – so you
must not tie yourself to any of these things.

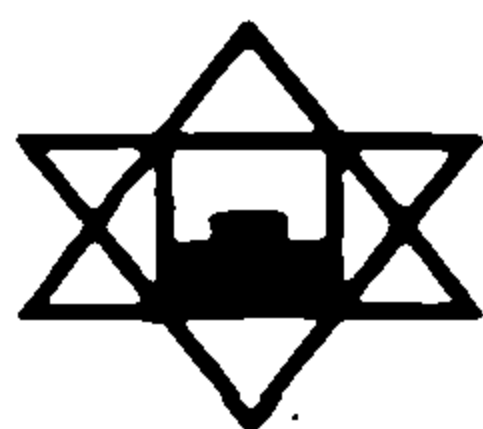
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As there is a category of facts to which our senses
are our best available but very imperfect guides, as
there is a category of truths which we seek by the
keen but still imperfect light of our reason, so
according to the mystic, there is a category of more subtle truths
which surpass the reach both of the senses and the reason but
can be ascertained by an inner direct knowledge and direct
experience. These truths are supersensuous, but not the less
real for that: they have immense results upon the conscious-
ness changing its substance and movement, bringing especially
deep peace and abiding joy, a great light of vision and knowl-
edge, a possibility of the overcoming of the lower animal nature,
vistas of a spiritual self-development which without them do not
exist. A new outlook on things arises which brings with it, if fully
pursued into its consequences, a great liberation, inner har-
mony, unification – many other possibilities besides. These
things have been experienced, it is true, by a small minority of
the human race, but still there has been a host of independent
witnesses to them in all times, climes and conditions and

numbered among them are some of the greatest intelligences of the past, some of the world's most remarkable figures. Must these possibilities be immediately condemned as chimeras because they are not only beyond the average man in the street but also not easily seizable even by many cultivated intellects or because their method is more difficult than that of the ordinary sense or reason? If there is any truth in them, is not this possibility opened by them worth pursuing as disclosing a highest range of self-discovery and world-discovery by the human soul? At its best, taken as true, it must be that – at its lowest, taken as only a possibility, as all things attained by man have been only a possibility in their earlier stages, it is a great and may well be a most fruitful adventure.

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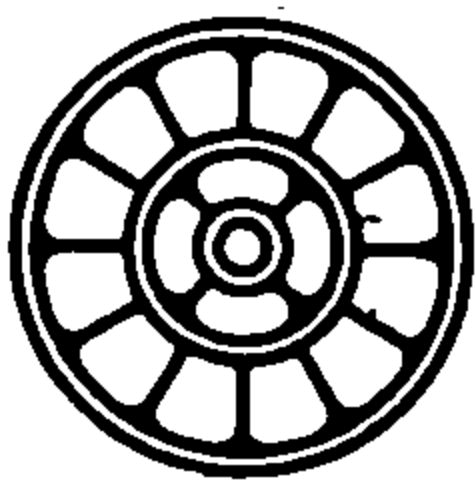


In the first place, there is a great difference between uttering as truth what one believes or knows to be false and uttering as truth what one conscientiously believes to be true, but is not in fact true. The first is obviously going against the spirit of truth, the second does homage to it. The first is deliberate falsehood, the second is only error at worst or ignorance.

This is from the practical point of view of truth-speaking. From the point of view of higher Truth, it must not be forgotten that each plane of consciousness has its own standard – what is truth to mind, may be only partial truth to a higher consciousness, but it is through the partial truth that the mind has to go in order to reach the wider more perfect truth beyond. All that is necessary for it is to be open and plastic, to be ready to recognise the higher when it comes, not to cling to the lower because it is its own, not to allow the desires and passions of the vital to blind it to the Light or to twist and pervert things. When once the higher consciousness begins to act, the difficulty

diminishes and there is a clear progress from truth to greater truth.

★



You see, thought is so approximate a thing, it is so far from the truth... it is only a kind of vague, incomplete, confused reflection, full of falsehood, even at its best. So, in truth, it is the moment to be practical and tell yourself, "Well, I shall adopt this thought if it helps me to progress." But if you think that it is the absolute truth, you are sure to go wrong, for there is not a single thought which is the absolute truth.

Ah, yes, we are going to put into the books of the lending library of the University one of Sri Aurobindo's short reflections, which is wonderful – I had it printed today – in which he says that any teaching, however great it may be, however pure, noble, true it may be, is only one aspect of the Truth and not the Truth itself (I am commenting, the text¹ is not exactly this). It is not the entire Truth. Well, that is it. Whatever your thought may be, even if it is very high, very pure, very noble, very true, it is only a very tiny microscopic aspect of the Truth, and consequently it is not entirely true. So in that field one must be practical, as I said, adopt the thought for the time being, the one which will help you to make progress when you have it. Sometimes it comes as an illumination and this helps you to progress. So long as it helps you to make progress, keep it; when it begins to crumble, not to act any longer, well, drop it, and try to get another which will lead you a little farther.

Many miseries and misfortunes in the world would disappear if people knew the relativity of knowledge, the relativity of faith, the

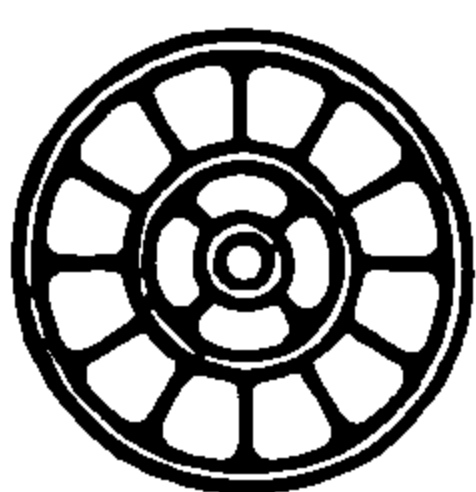
1. "But thought nor word can seize eternal truth." – Sri Aurobindo

relativity of the teachings and also the relativity of circumstances... to what extent a thing is so relatively important! For the moment it may be capital, it may lead you to life or to death – I am not speaking of physical life and death, I am speaking of the life and death of the spirit – but this is for the moment; and when you have made a certain progress, when you have grown a few years older from the spiritual point of view, and you look back on this thing, this circumstance or idea which perhaps has decided your life, it will seem so relative, so insignificant to you... and you will need something much higher to make new progress.

If one could always remember this, well, one would avoid much sectarianism, much intolerance, and annul all quarrels immediately, because a quarrel means just this, that one thinks in one way and the other in another, that one has taken one attitude and the other another, and that instead of trying to bring them together and find out how they could be harmonised, one puts them over against each other as one fights with one's fists. It is nothing else.

But if you become aware of the complete relativity of your point of view, your thought, your conviction of what is good, to what an extent it is relative in the march of the universe, then you will be less violent in your reactions and more tolerant. Here we are.

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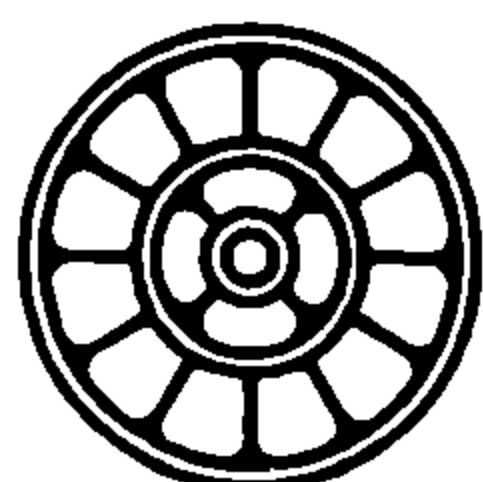


What is "the lesser truth permissible on the way"?

One cannot at the first shot, immediately, attain the supreme Truth. There are things on the way which are more true than those you know but which are not *the* Truth, and these things are like discoveries one makes: suddenly one has a kind of illumination, one discovers a law, finds a lever, sees a road opening before one; it is not the supreme Truth, not

the supreme experience, it is not what comes when one is identified with the Divine, but it is like something which has fallen from there and entered you, and gives you a partial illumination. These partial illuminations are just what he calls "lesser truths".

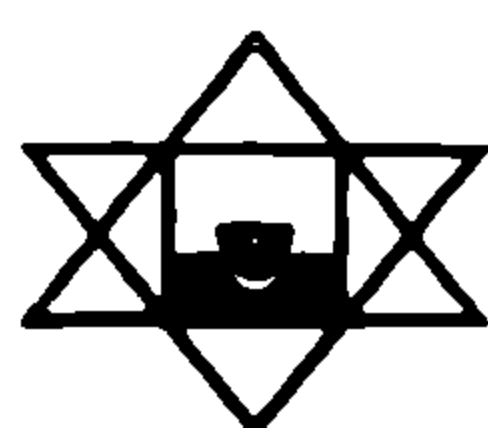
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In a world of truth, all would be just as it is now perhaps, but it would be seen differently.

Both. There would be a difference. It is the present ignorance and obscurity in the world that give a deforming appearance to the Divine Action; and that naturally must tend to disappear; but it is also true that there is a way of seeing things which... one might say, which gives another meaning to their appearance...

LET US SERVE THE TRUTH

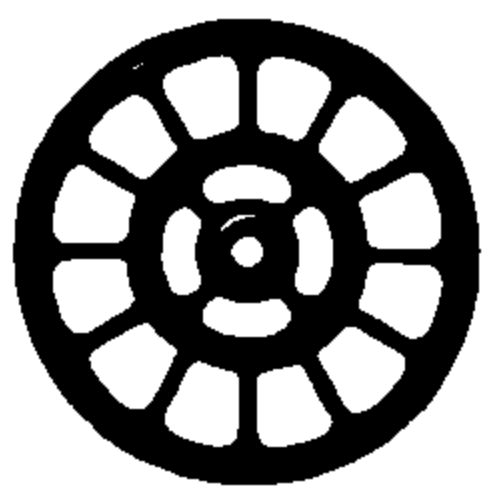


Truth is an infinitely complex reality and he has the best chance of arriving nearest to it who most recognises but is not daunted by its infinite complexity. We must look at the whole thought-tangle, fact, emotion, idea, truth beyond idea, conclusion, contradiction, modification, ideal, practice, possibility, impossibility (which must be yet attempted,) and keeping the soul calm and the eye clear in this mighty flux and surge of the world, seek everywhere for some word of harmony, not forgetting immediate in ultimate truth, nor ultimate in immediate, but giving each its due place and portion in the Infinite Purpose. Some minds, like Plato, like Vivekananda, feel more than others this mighty complexity and give voice to it. They pour out thought in torrents or in rich and majestic streams. They are not logically careful of consistency. They cannot build up any coherent, yet comprehensive systems, but they quicken men's minds and liberate them from

religious, philosophic and scientific dogma and tradition. They leave the world not surer, but freer than when they entered it.

Some men seek to find the truth by imaginative perception. It is a good instrument like logic, but like logic it breaks down before it reaches the goal. Neither ought to be allowed to do more than take us some way and then leave us. Others think that a fine judgment can arrive at the true balance. It does, for a time; but the next generation upsets that fine balancing, consenting to a coarser test or demanding a finer. The religious prefer inspiration, but inspiration is like the lightning, brilliantly illuminating only a given reach of country and leaving the rest in darkness intensified by the sharpness of that light. Vast is our error if we mistake that bit of country for the whole universe. Is there then no instrument of knowledge that can give us the heart of truth and provide us with the key word of existence? I think there is, but the evolution of mankind at large yet falls far short of it; their highest tread only on the border of that illumination. After all pure intellect carries us very high. But neither the scorner of pure intellectual ideation, nor its fanatic and devotee can attain to the knowledge in which not only the senses reflect or the mind thinks about things, but the ideal faculty directly knows them.

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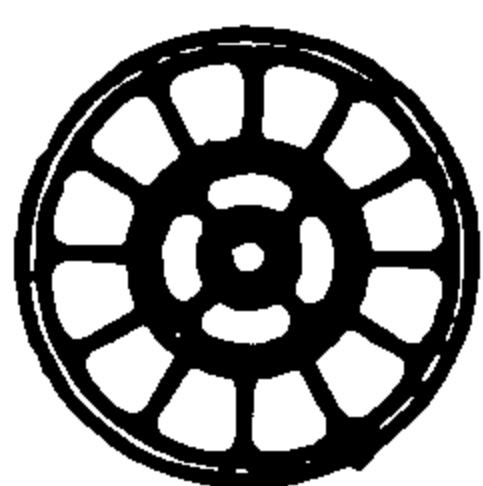


Truth is self-evident and has not to be imposed upon the world. It does not feel the need of being accepted by men. For it is self-existent; it does not live by what people say of it or on their adherence.

But one who is founding a religion needs to have many followers. The strength and greatness of a religion is adjudged by men according to the number of those that follow it, although the real greatness is not there. The greatness of spiritual truth is not in numbers. I knew the head of a new religion, the son of its founder, and heard him say once that such and such a religion

took so many hundreds of years to be built up, and such another so many hundreds of years, but they within fifty years had already over four million followers "And so you see", he added, "what a great religion is ours!" Religions may reckon their greatness by the number of their believers, but Truth would still be Truth if it had not even a single follower. The average man is drawn towards those who make great pretensions; he does not go where Truth is quietly manifesting. Those who make great pretensions need to proclaim loudly and to advertise; for otherwise they would not attract great numbers of people. The work that is done with no care for what people think of it is not so well known, does not so easily draw multitudes. But Truth requires no advertisement; it does not hide itself but it does not proclaim itself either. It is content to manifest, regardless of results, not seeking approbation or shunning disapprobation, not attracted or troubled by the world's acceptance or denial.

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Those who wish to help the Light of Truth to prevail over the forces of darkness and falsehood, can do so by carefully observing the initiating impulses of their movements and actions, and discriminate between those that come from the Truth and those that come from the falsehood, in order to obey the first and to refuse or reject the others.

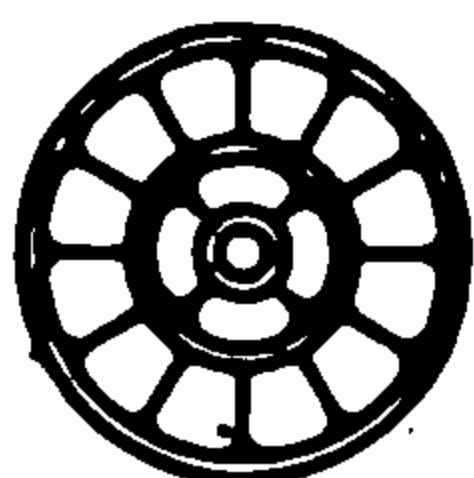
This power of discrimination is one of the first effects of the Advent of the Truth's Light in the earth's atmosphere.

Indeed it is very difficult to discriminate the impulses of Truth from the impulses of falsehood, unless one has received this special gift of discrimination that the Light of Truth has brought.

However, to help at the beginning, one can take as a guiding

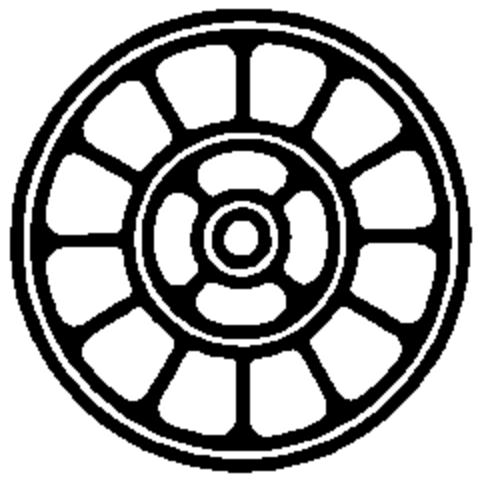
rule that all that brings with it or creates peace, faith, joy, harmony, wideness, unity and ascending growth comes from the Truth; while all that carries with it restlessness, doubt, scepticism, sorrow, discord, selfish narrowness, inertia, discouragement and despair comes straight from the Falsehood.

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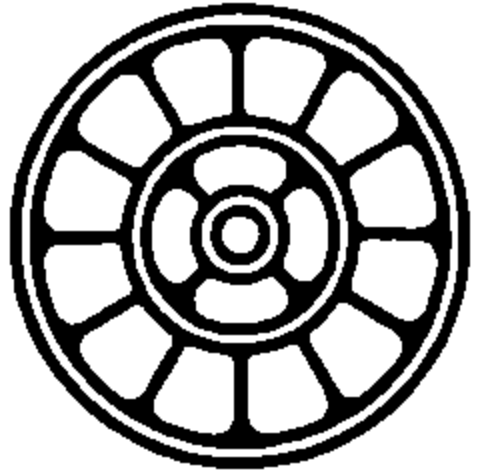
What, however, is of genuine worth is the opinion of the Truth. When there is somebody who is in contact with the Divine Truth and can express it, then the opinions given out are no mere compliments or criticisms but what the Divine thinks of you, the value it sets on your qualities, its unerring stamp on your efforts. It must be your desire to hold nothing in esteem except the word of the Truth; and in order thus to raise your standard you must keep Agni, the soul's flame of transformation, burning in you. It is noteworthy how, when Agni flares up, you immediately develop a loathing for the cheap praise which formerly used to gratify you so much, and understand clearly that your love of praise was a low movement of the untransformed nature. Agni makes you see what a vast vista of possible improvement stretches in front of you, by filling you with a keen sense of your present insufficiency. The encomium lavished on you by others so disgusts you that you feel almost bitter towards those whom you would have once considered your friends; whereas all criticism comes as a welcome fuel to your humble aspiration towards the Truth. No longer do you feel depressed or slighted by the hostility of others. For, at least, you are able to ignore it with the greatest ease; at the most, you appreciate it as one more testimony to your present unregenerate state, inciting you to surpass yourself by surrendering to the Divine.

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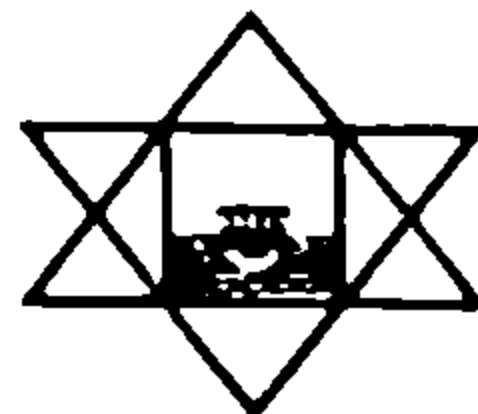
The time has come for the rule of falsehood to end.
In the Truth alone is salvation.

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The moment approaches when the Truth will
govern the world. Will you work to hasten its
coming?

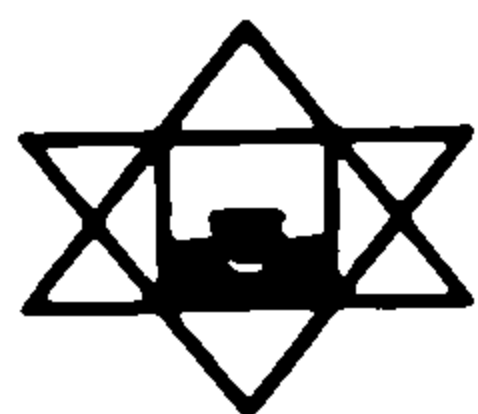
TRUTH IN SPEECH



Complete truth of speech is very important for the
sadhak and a great help for bringing Truth into the
consciousness. It is at the same time difficult to
bring the speech under control; for people are
accustomed to speak what comes to them and not to supervise
and control what they say. There is something mechanical
about speech and to bring it to the level of the highest part of the
consciousness is never easy. That is one reason why to be
sparing in speech is helpful. It helps to a more deliberate control
and prevents the tongue from running away with one and doing
whatever it likes.

To stand back means to become a witness of one's own mind
and speech, to see them as something separate from oneself
and not identify oneself with them. Watching them as a witness,
separate from them, one gets to know what they are, how they
act and then put a control over them, reject what one does not
approve and think and speak only what one feels to be true. This
cannot, of course, be done all at once. It takes time to establish
this attitude of separateness, still more time to establish the
control. But it can be done by practice and persistence.

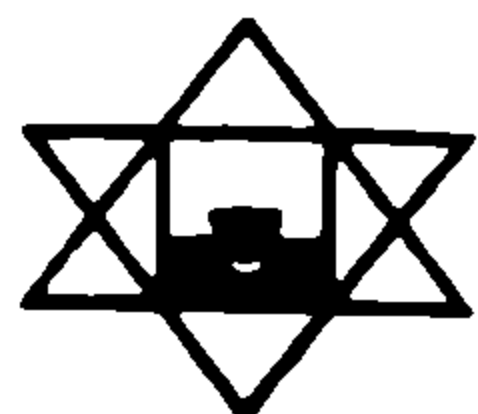
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The fault of character of which you speak is common and almost universal in human nature. The impulse to speak what is untrue or at least to exaggerate or understate or twist the truth so as to flatter one's own vanity, preferences, wishes or to get some advantage or secure something desired is very general. But one must learn to speak the truth alone if one is to succeed truly in changing the nature.

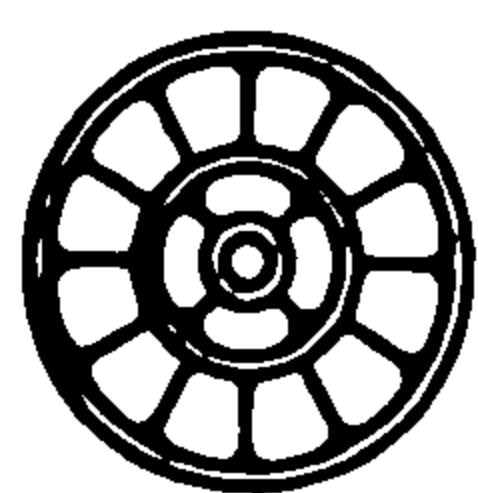
To become conscious of what is to be changed in the nature is the first step towards changing it. But one must observe these things without being despondent or thinking "it is hopeless" or "I cannot change". You do right to be confident that the change will come. For nothing is impossible in the nature if the psychic being is awake and leading you with the Mother's consciousness and force behind it and working in you. This is now happening. Be sure that all will be done.

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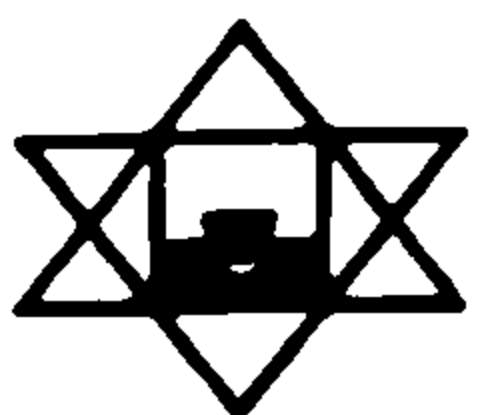
Useless or not, untruth should be avoided.

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If we allow a falsehood, however small, to express itself through our mouth or our pen, how can we hope to become perfect messengers of Truth? A perfect servant of Truth should abstain even from the slightest inexactitude, exaggeration or deformation.

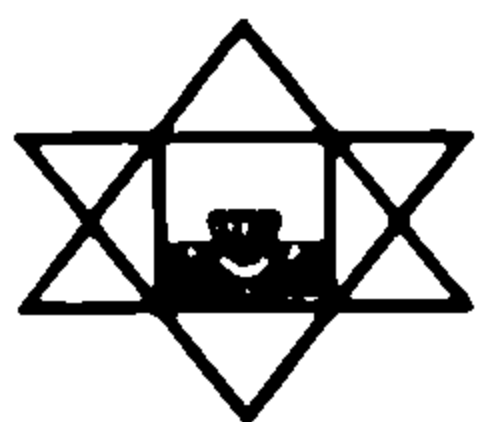
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If you want to be an instrument of the Truth, you must always speak the truth and not falsehood. But this does not mean that you must tell everything to everybody. To conceal the truth by silence or refusal to speak is permissible, because the truth may be

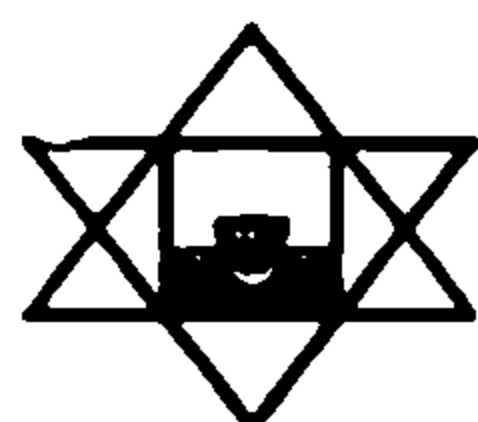
misunderstood or misused by those who are not prepared for it or who are opposed to it – it may even be made a starting-point for distortion or sheer falsehood. But to speak falsehood is another matter. Even in jest it should be avoided, because it tends to lower the consciousness. As for the last point, it is again from the highest standpoint – the truth as one knows it in the mind is not enough, for the mind's idea may be erroneous or insufficient – it is necessary to have the true knowledge in the true consciousness.

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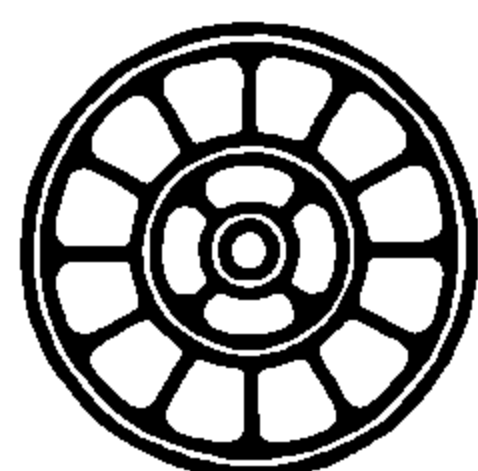
Why should it be lying? One is not bound to tell everything to everybody – it might often do more harm than good. One has only to say what is necessary. Of course what is said must be true and not false and there must never be any intention to deceive.

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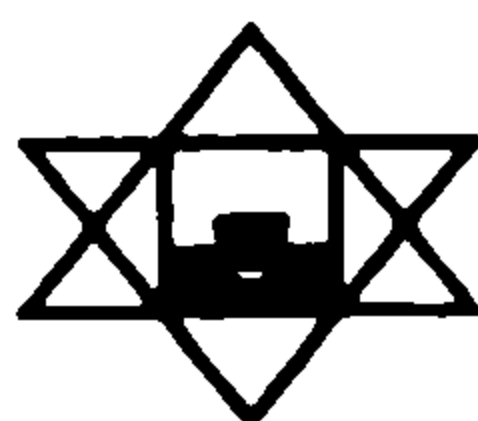
It is not the fact that if a man is truthful (in the sense of not lying), all he says happens. For that he must know the Truth – be in touch with the truth of things, not merely speak the truth as his mind knows it.

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To speak always the truth is the highest title of nobility.

TRUTH IN SCIENCE AND YOGA



One might ask whether Science itself has arrived at any ultimate truth; on the contrary, ultimate truth even on the physical plane seems to recede as Science advances. Science started on the assumption that the ultimate truth must be physical and objective – and

the objective Ultimate (or even less than that) would explain all subjective phenomena. Yoga proceeds on the opposite view that the ultimate Truth is spiritual and subjective and it is in that ultimate Light that we must view objective phenomena. It is the two opposite poles and the gulf is as wide as it can be.

Yoga, however, is scientific to this extent that it proceeds by subjective experiment and bases all its findings on experience; mental intuitions are admitted only as a first step and are not considered as realisation – they must be confirmed by being translated into and justified by experience. As to the value of the experience itself, it is doubted by the physical mind because it is subjective, not objective. But has the distinction much value? Is not all knowledge and experience subjective at bottom? Objective external physical things are seen very much in the same way by human beings because of the construction of the mind and senses; with another construction of mind and sense quite another account of the physical world would be given – Science itself has made that very clear. But your friend's point is that the yoga experience is individual, coloured by the individuality of the seer. It may be true to a certain extent of the precise form or transcription given to the experience in certain domains; but even here the difference is superficial. It is a fact that yogic experience runs everywhere on the same lines. Certainly, there are, not one line, but many; for, admittedly, we are dealing with a many-sided Infinite to which there are and must be many ways of approach; but yet the broad lines are the same everywhere and the intuitions, experiences, phenomena are the same in ages and countries far apart from each other and systems practised quite independently from each other. The experiences of the mediaeval European *bhakta* or mystic are precisely the same in substance, however differing in names, forms, religious colouring, etc., as those of the mediaeval Indian *bhakta* or mystic – yet these people were not corresponding with one

another or aware of each other's experiences and results as are modern scientists from New York to Yokohama. That would seem to show that there is something there identical, universal and presumably true – however the colour of the translation may differ because of the difference of mental language.

As for ultimate Truth, I suppose both the Victorian agnostic and, let us say, the Indian Vedantin may agree that it is veiled but there. Both speak of it as the Unknowable; the only difference is that the Vedantin says it is unknowable by the mind and inexpressible by speech, but still attainable by something deeper or higher than the mental perception, while even mind can reflect and speech express the thousand aspects it presents to the mind's outward and inward experience. The Victorian agnostic would, I suppose, cancel this qualification; he would pronounce for the doubtful existence and, if existent, for the absolute unknowableness of this Unknowable.

REFERENCES – TRUTH

Booklet

Page

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|---|---|
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| c CWM Vol. 15, pp. 298-99 | 13 SABCL Vol. 22, p. 158 |
| d CWM Vol. 15, pp. 417-18 | 14a SABCL Vol. 22, p. 161 |
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| | 25a SABCL Vol. 24, p. 1559 |
| | b SABCL Vol. 24, p. 1560 |
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N.B. Abbreviations: SABCL – Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library
CWM – Collected Works of the Mother

The quotation in the last line of the introduction is from 'White Roses'.