

HUMILITY

in SADHANA

Second Edition

A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla



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Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**



Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

HUMILITY in SADHANA

Second Edition

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The photograph of the flower on the cover is the flower where the Mother has given the significance of this flower: 'Humility'.

The botanical name of the flower is *Agrostis nebulosa*.

(*The Spiritual Significance of Flowers*, Part I, page 118)

Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

All over the world, there is a growing interest in spirituality and Yoga. There is a search for the true meaning and purpose of life, for deeper solutions to the problems that confront us all, and for ways in which we can contribute to evolutionary change and progress.

In this search, more and more people are turning to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guidance and enlightenment. But in their voluminous writings, they do not know where to find the answers they are looking for.

In this regard the Mother has said,

"It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc."

(CWM 12: 206)

On another occasion She said:

"If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement

I—In Yoga Humility Is ...

one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis."

(CWM 16: 309–310)

While several compilations are now available, many sincere spiritual seekers have felt the need for Comprehensive Compilations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on specific subjects, in which the contents are further organised into sub-topics, so that one can find everything one is looking for in one place.

This compilation is an effort to fulfil this need and thus help spiritual seekers in their journey and sadhana. We hope that this compilation will help us gain greater mental clarity about a subject so that we can channel our efforts in the right direction. For Sri Aurobindo has written:

"It is always better to make an effort in the right direction; even if one fails the effort bears some result and is never lost."

(CWSA 29: 87)

We will be glad to receive suggestions and feedback from the readers.

Vijay

Preface

The second book in the series of comprehensive compilations on virtues and qualities prescribed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as necessary for doing Yoga is *HUMILITY in SADHANA*.

The Mother emphasizes that, if one wishes always to progress, one must understand more completely what one already knows.

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

- (1) To widen the field of one’s consciousness.
- (2) To understand ever better and more completely what one knows.
- (3) To find the Divine and surrender more and more to His Will.” (CWM 16: 435–436)

The purpose of this comprehensive compilation is to help the reader gain an understanding of the virtue of humility. The headings are intended to guide the reader towards a clearer and deeper understanding. However, it is important to read the quotations themselves, for the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are infused with a consciousness infinitely higher than our own. Therefore, reading these quotations will also help the reader elevate their consciousness.

The quotations in this compilation are taken from the volumes of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition. Each quotation is followed by the title of the book, the volume number, and the page number from which it has been taken.

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, by its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to remain faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Those who would like to read the fuller text are advised to consult *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition.

The section headings have been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—In Yoga Humility Is ...

1.

"As I have often been questioned about it, I shall touch briefly on the meaning of true humility, ... Humility is that state of consciousness in which, whatever the realisation, you know the infinite is still in front of you. The rare quality of selfless admiration about which I have spoken to you is but another aspect of true humility; for it is sheer arrogance that refuses to admire and is complacent about its own petty achievements, forgetting the infinite which is always ahead of it. However, you need to be humble not only when you have nothing substantial or divine in you but even when you are on the path of transformation." (CWM 3: 175)

2.

"True humility consists in knowing that the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Will alone exists and that the I *is not*." (CWM 14: 152)

3.

"Humility is indeed one thing and depression quite another, the former a divine movement and the latter a very crude expression of the dark forces." (CWM 3: 139)

4.

"Full trust with humility and devotion, that is the psychic poise ..." (CWSA 32: 391)

5.

"Therefore the mind, the vital, and the body must learn and feel, once and for all, that they are wholly incapable of understanding and judging the Divine, not only in his essence but also in his action and manifestation.

This is the only true humility ..." (CWM 14: 153)

6.

"Perhaps one could say that it [*spiritual humility*] is to be aware of the relativity of what has been done compared with what is still to be done—and also to be conscious of one's being nothing without the Divine Grace." (CWSA 28: 432)

7.

"The first indispensable condition to prepare ourselves to receive the new consciousness is a true and spontaneous humility which makes us feel deeply that we know nothing and are nothing in the face of the marvellous things we have to acquire." (CWM 15: 108)

8.

"An excessive depreciation is no better than an excessive praise. True humility lies in not judging oneself and in

letting the Divine determine our real worth.” (CWM 16: 176)

9.

“I think it is the physical consciousness that is active now and finding fault with You. The disturbance is still there—I don’t know how to shake it off.

The only way to save yourself from these disturbances is through true humility—the humility that consists in knowing that at the moment you are utterly incapable of understanding me and that it is presumptuous stupidity to try to judge me.” (CWM 17: 81)

10.

“Humility: adorable in its simplicity.” (CWM 14: 151)

11.

“To be humble means for the mind, the vital and the body never to forget that without the Divine they know nothing, are nothing and can do nothing; *without the Divine* they are nothing but ignorance, chaos and impotence. The Divine alone is Truth, Life, Power, Love, Felicity.” (CWM 14: 152)

II—Humility Is the First Necessity for Doing Yoga

1.

“Of course you can [*do Yoga without being great*]*—there is no need of being great. On the contrary humility is the first necessity, for one who has ego and pride cannot realise the Highest.*” (CWSA 28: 505)

2.

“Whatever is your personal value or even your individual realisation, the first quality required in yoga is *humility*.” (CWM 14: 153)

3.

“Humility before the Divine is also a *sine qua non* [indispensable condition] of the spiritual life, and spiritual pride, arrogance, or vanity and self-assurance press always downward.” (CWSA 29: 42)

4.

“You have answered the trustful welcome given to you by an arrogant and uncomprehending attitude, judging everything from the viewpoint of an ignorant and presumptuous morality which could only alienate from you the sympathy so spontaneously extended to you as to all those who come here in quest of the spiritual life. But in order to profit by one’s stay here, a minimum of mental

humility and generosity of soul is indispensable.” (CWM 13: 126)

5.

“The integral yoga consists of an uninterrupted series of examinations that one has to undergo without any previous warning, thus obliging you to be constantly on the alert and attentive. ...

The three types of examination are: those set by the forces of Nature, those set by spiritual and divine forces, and those set by hostile forces. These last are the most deceptive in their appearance and to avoid being caught unawares and unprepared requires a state of constant watchfulness, sincerity and humility.” (CWM 14: 42)

6.

“Endurance and plasticity, cheerfulness and fearlessness are the qualities specially needed for the examinations of physical nature.

Aspiration, trust, idealism, enthusiasm and generous self-giving, for spiritual examinations.

Vigilance, sincerity and humility for the examinations from hostile forces.” (CWM 14: 43)

III—One Cannot Enter the Path of God If Elementary Humility Is Lacking

1.

"It is very difficult for a virtuous man to enter the path of God; this has been said very often, but it is altogether true, for he is *most* self-satisfied, he thinks he has realised what he ought to have realised, he no longer has either the aspiration or even that elementary humility which makes one want to progress. You see, one who is known here as a sattwic man is usually very comfortably settled in his own virtue and never thinks of coming out of it. So, that puts you a million leagues away from the divine realisation." (CWM 8: 142)

2.

"Yet usually the people whom I have found most difficult to convert are very respectable people. I am sorry, but I have had much more difficulty with respectable people than with those who were not so, for they had such a good opinion of themselves that it was impossible to open them. But the true thing is difficult. That is to say, one must be very vigilant and very self-controlled, very patient, and have a never-failing goodwill. One must not neglect having a small dose of humility, a sufficient one, and one must never be satisfied with the sincerity one has. One must always want more." (CWM 6: 440)

III—One Cannot Enter the Path of God If Elementary Humility Is
Lacking

3.

“There is something very beautiful in both, I shall speak to you about it one day, I shall tell you what there is in aspiration and what in prayer and why both of them are beautiful.... Some dislike prayer; if they entered deep into their heart, they would find it was pride—worse than that, vanity. And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one’s Karma.

Voila, au revoir, my children.” (CWM 5: 92)

4.

“I was irritated with X because her ideas were so lacking in humility.

Ignorance always lacks humility—the more ignorant the mind, the more it judges and the more it revolts.” (CWM 17: 128)

IV—How to Develop Humility

- 1. When people are told to be humble, they think immediately of being humble before other men, and that humility is wrong**
- 2. True humility is humility before the Divine**
- 3. True humility before the Divine is a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, can do nothing, and understand nothing without the Divine**
- 4. Even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness**
- 5. If one has humility before the Divine then one always has the true attitude of receptivity**

“What is the right and the wrong way of being humble?”

It is very simple, when people are told ‘be humble’, they think immediately of ‘being humble before other men’ and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of

receptivity—a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.” (CWM 5: 45)

6. It is towards the Divine that you must be humble, with an absolute and integral humility

“It is towards the Divine that you must be humble, an absolute and integral humility.” (CWM 17: 142)

7. The method of substitution is to replace pride whenever it rises with the opposite quality, thoughts of humility

8. This method of Rajayoga is difficult, slow and uncertain

9. The experience of Yoga shows that men who had attained the highest self-mastery for many years have been suddenly surprised by a violent return of the thing they thought dead

10. It is largely by this method of substitution, often used unconsciously or half-consciously, that the character of a man changes and develops

11. This method of substitution does not destroy things in their seed, which, unless reduced to ashes by Yoga, can sprout again and grow into the complete and mighty tree

“There are only two ways by which we can effectively get the better of the passion which seeks to enslave us. One is by substitution, replacing it whenever it rises by the opposite quality, anger by thoughts of forgiveness, love or forbearance, lust by meditation on purity, pride by thoughts of humility and our own defects or nothingness; this is the method of Rajayoga, but it is a difficult, slow and uncertain method; for both the ancient traditions and the modern experience of Yoga show that men who had attained for long years the highest self-mastery have been suddenly surprised by a violent return of the thing they thought dead or for ever subject. Still this substitution, slow though it be, is one of the commonest methods of Nature and it is largely by this means, often unconsciously or half-consciously used, that the character of a man changes and develops from life to life or even in the bounds of a single lifetime. It does not destroy things in their seed and the seed which is not reduced to ashes by Yoga is always capable of sprouting again and growing into the complete and mighty tree.” (CWSA 13: 34)

12. Pride and impudence are always ridiculous; only stupid and ignorant people are arrogant

- 13. As soon as a human being is enlightened enough to have contact with the all-pervading mystery of the universe, he necessarily becomes humble**

“LET US first take for granted that pride and impudence are always ridiculous: only stupid and ignorant people are arrogant. As soon as a human being is sufficiently enlightened to have a contact, however slight, with the all-pervading mystery of the universe, he becomes necessarily humble.

Woman, by the very fact of her passivity, having more easily than man the intuition of the Supreme Power at work in the world, is more often, more naturally humble.” (CWM 2: 151)

- 14. Pull out of yourself this weed called vanity**

- 15. You cannot do a thing well, cannot have a fine idea, cannot have a right movement, cannot make a little progress without getting puffed up inside, even without being aware of it, with a self-satisfaction full of vanity**

16. One must work the whole of one's life to uproot this weed that springs up again and again and again

"But there is one thing: if you can pull out from yourself this weed called vanity, then indeed you will have done something. But if you knew how difficult it is! You cannot do a thing well, cannot have a fine idea, cannot have a right movement, cannot make a little progress without getting puffed up inside (even without being aware of it), with a self-satisfaction full of vanity. And you are obliged then to hammer it hard to break it. And still broken bits remain and these begin to germinate. One must work the whole of one's life and never forget to work in order to uproot this weed that springs up again and again and again so insidiously that you believe it is gone and you feel very modest and say: 'It is not I who have done it, I feel it is the Divine, I am nothing if He is not there', and then the next minute, you are so satisfied with yourself simply for having thought that!" (CWM 5: 44–45)

17. To impose a discipline to become humble, if it isn't too stupid, may help

18. **All disciplines, tapasyas, are, as ordinarily practised, the best means of making you proud, from which you will never, never be converted**
19. **Pride will have to be broken down with hammer-strokes**
20. **The first condition is a healthy humility which makes you realise that unless you are sustained, nourished, helped, enlightened, and guided by the Divine, you are nothing at all**
21. **One has not only to understand it with our mind, but to feel it down to our very body**

“But doesn’t some outer discipline [to become humble] help?”

If you impose a discipline upon yourself and if it isn’t too stupid, it may help you. A discipline, I tell you—disciplines, tapasyas, all ascetic disciplines are, as ordinarily practised, the best means of making you proud, of building up in you such a terrific pride that never, never will you be converted. It will have to be broken down with hammer-strokes.

The first condition is a healthy humility which makes you realise that unless you are sustained, nourished, helped, enlightened, guided by the Divine, you are *nothing at all*. There now. When you have felt that, not only understood it with your mind, but felt it down to your

very body, then you will begin to be wise, but not before.”
(CWM 6: 302)

22. Inner humility makes you aware that without the Grace, you are incomplete and powerless

23. When one finds oneself in difficult circumstances, one aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do

“What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?”

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless. This, to begin with, is the first thing. It is an experience one can very well have. When, you see, even people who know nothing find themselves in quite difficult circumstances or facing a problem which must be solved or, as I just told you, an impulse which must be overcome or something that has disturbed them... and then they realise they are lost, they don't know what to do—neither their mind nor their will nor their feelings help—they don't know what to do, then it happens; there is within them something like a kind of call, a call to something which can do what one cannot. One aspires to

something which is capable of doing what one can't do.”
(CWM 6: 322)

- 24. The true attitude of humility is a silent respect before what one does not know and an inner aspiration to come out of one's ignorance**
- 25. The true attitude of humility is to acknowledge willingly that one does not know and is therefore unable to judge**
- 26. We constantly do just the opposite; we pass final judgments on things of which we have no knowledge whatsoever**

“It applies to all judgments of the critical mind and to all scientific methods when they would judge any but purely material phenomena.

The conclusion is always the same: the only true attitude is one of humility, of silent respect before what one does not know, and of inner aspiration to come out of one's ignorance. One of the things which would make humanity progress most would be for it to respect what it does not know, to acknowledge willingly that it does not know and is therefore unable to judge. We constantly do just the opposite. We pass final judgments on things of which we have no knowledge whatsoever, and say in a peremptory manner, ‘This is possible. That is impossible’,

when we do not even know what it is we are speaking of. And we put on superior airs because we doubt things of which we have never had any knowledge.” (CWM 10: 26–27)

27. The first thing you must do is to learn a little humility and to recognise that you know nothing

“The first thing you must do is to learn a little humility and to recognise that you know *nothing*—you read words, you read prayers, and you repeat the words, you copy the prayers, but *you do not understand them*; you mix up all these ideas and notions in a brain that is still like a child’s, and then you have the illusion of understanding!” (CWM 17: 70)

28. One is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument which of itself is nothing and knows nothing but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything

“One knows what must be known, one sees what must be seen, and since what must be known and seen comes directly from the Supreme, it is Truth itself; and it completely eludes all notions of reason or folly. What is true is true—that is all. And one has to sink very low to wonder whether it is folly or reason.

Silence and a modest, humble, attentive receptivity; no concern for appearances or even any anxiety to be—one is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument which of itself is nothing and knows nothing, but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything.

The first condition is self-forgetfulness, a total self-giving, the absence of ego.” (CWM 10: 10)

29. You will become humble once you recognise your mistake

“O Mother, when will I become humble?”

It will come soon, I think, since you have recognised your mistake.” (CWM 17: 82)

30. You can become humble if your will to become humble is persistent

“Let me become like a child, simple, flexible, humble, trusting. O Mother, when will I be like that?”

Soon, if your will to become like that is persistent.” (CWM 17: 120)

31. You must insist on the removal of self-righteousness, self-justification, the wish to impose yourself, and the tendency to judge others

“This time you must insist on a complete truthfulness in the whole being which will refuse to accept any denial of what the psychic discrimination sees or any affirmation or consent anywhere to what it disapproves, spiritual humility and the removal of self-righteousness, self-justification and the wish to impose yourself, the tendency to judge others etc. All these defects you know are in you; to cast them out may take time, but if the will to be true to the inner self in all ways is strong and persistent and vigilant and always calls in the Mother’s force, it can be done sooner than now seems possible.” (CWSA 31: 711)

32. To talk about Yoga gives the illusion that one has something to teach, and that does not foster humility

“Is it desirable to talk with Y about Yoga?”

I do not think that it is good for you to talk to people about Yoga in this way—it gives you the illusion that you have something to teach them and it does not foster humility in you.” (CWM 17: 82)

V—The Wrong Way of Cultivating Humility

1.

“There is one thing that has always been said, but always misunderstood, it is the necessity of humility. It is taken in the wrong way, wrongly understood and wrongly used. Be humble, if you can be so in the right way; above all, do not be so in the wrong way, for that leads you nowhere.” (CWM 5: 44)

2.

“It [*to feel like doing namaskar to everyone*] is a feeling which some have who either want to cultivate humility (X used to do it, but I never saw that it got rid of his innate self-esteem) or who have or are trying to have the realisation of Narayan in all with a Vaishnava turn in it. To feel the One in all is right, but to bow down to the individual who lives still in his ego is good neither for him nor for the one who does it. Especially in this Yoga it tends to diffuse what should be concentrated and turned towards a higher realisation than that of the cosmic feeling which is only a step on the way.” (CWSA 28: 429)

3.

“A spiritual humility within is very necessary, but I do not think an outward one is very advisable (absence of pride or arrogance or vanity is indispensable of course in one’s outer dealings with others)—it often creates pride,

becomes formal or becomes ineffective after a time. I have seen people doing it to cure their pride, but I have not found it producing a lasting result.” (CWSA 28: 429)

4.

“It is only this habit of the nature—self-worrying and harping on the sense of deficiency—that prevents you from being quiet. If you threw that out, it would be easy to be quiet. Humility is needful, but constant self-depreciation does not help; excessive self-esteem and self-depreciation are both wrong attitudes. To recognise any defects without exaggerating them is useful but, once recognised, it is no good dwelling on them always; you must have the confidence that the Divine Force can change everything and you must let the Force work.” (CWSA 28: 429)

5.

“... there are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves, ‘Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing for me is to give up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!’” (CWM 8: 39)

“The view taken by the Mahatma in these matters [*of caste*] is Christian rather than Hindu—for the Christian, self-abasement, humility, the acceptance of a low status to

serve humanity or the Divine are things which are highly spiritual and the noblest privilege of the soul.” (CWSA 28:429–430)

6.

“But that [*pride of the ego*] is the case with all human beings. All the action is shot through with ego, acts, feelings, thoughts, everything, big or small, good or bad. Even humility and what is called altruism is with most people only a form of ego. It does not depend on having something to be proud of.” (CWSA 31: 217)

7.

“Pride is only one form of ego—there are ten thousand others. Every action of man is full of ego—the good ones as well as the bad, his humility as much as his pride, his virtues as much as his vices.

To get the ego out of the human nature is not so simple as that. If one is free from ego, does nothing with reference to himself or for his own sake but only for the Divine and all his thoughts and feelings are for the Divine, then he is Jivanmukta and a Siddha Yogi.” (CWSA 31: 241)

“Perhaps my vanity was better than this humility which so casts me down.

You must avoid the one as carefully as the other.”
(CWM 16: 176)

VI—How Humility Helps in Sadhana

- 1. Humility before the Divine liberates from egoism and the pride of the mind and the vital**
 - a. The pride imposes its own reasoning on the ways of the spirit**
 - b. The pride refuses or is unable to surrender**
 - c. The pride refuses reliance on the Grace above**

“As for the way out of the impasse, I know only of the quieting of the mind which makes meditation effective, purification of the heart which brings the divine touch and in time the divine presence, humility before the Divine which liberates from egoism and the pride of the mind and of the vital, the pride that imposes its own reasonings on the ways of the spirit and the pride that refuses or is unable to surrender, sustained persistence in the call within and reliance on the Grace above.” (CWSA 29: 47) (CWSA 35: 619)

- 2. If humility and the will to surrender grow in us then all can be done by the Divine**

“All can be done by the Divine, the heart and nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed, if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and

confidence—and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance comes and the contact and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow in you, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone.” (CWSA 29: 69)

3. The first step towards progress is a sincere humility

“I feel that I am drifting further and further away from You. I also feel that I have become duller, more insensitive, more ordinary. In calm I pray to you: show me the path I must follow.

To discover one’s weaknesses and imperfections is already a great progress. The first step towards progress is a sincere humility.” (CWM 17: 160)

4. One of the conditions to be able to grow through all experiences with security is spiritual humility before the Divine

“It is necessary to lay stress on three things—(1) an entire quietness and calm of the mind and the whole being, (2) a continuance of the movement of purification so that the

psychic being (the soul) may govern the whole nature, (3) the maintenance in all conditions and through all experiences of the attitude of adoration and bhakti for the Mother. These are the conditions in which one can grow through all experiences with security and have the right development of the complete realisation without disturbance to the system or being carried away by the intensity of the experiences. Calm, psychic purity, bhakti and spiritual humility before the Divine are the three conditions.” (CWSA 30: 45–46)

a. A fundamental humility also saves from much danger and trouble

“This is a zone which many sadhaks have to cross, in which many wander for a long time and out of which a great many never emerge. Especially if their sadhana is mainly in the mental and vital, they have to meet here many difficulties and much danger; only those who follow scrupulously a strict guidance or have the psychic being prominent in their nature pass easily as if on a sure and clearly marked road across this intermediate region. A central sincerity, a fundamental humility also save from much danger and trouble. One can then pass quickly beyond into a clearer Light where if there is still much mixture, incertitude and struggle, yet the orientation is towards the cosmic Truth and not to a half-illuminated

prolongation of Maya and Ignorance.” (CWSA 30: 299–300)

- b. Real spiritual humility is one of the many things that can be a safeguard against any chance of eventual downfall**
- c. If one has the safeguard of real spiritual humility then slips, stumbles, and difficulties are transitory and help the nature to learn and are followed by better progress**

“But there is the fact also that nobody need keep himself in this danger. One-mindedness (*ekanistha*), surrender to the Divine, faith, true love for the Divine, complete sincerity in the will, spiritual humility (real, not formal)—there are so many things that can be a safeguard against any chance of eventual downfall. Slips, stumbles, difficulties, upsettings everyone has; one can’t be insured against these things, but if one has the safeguards, they are transitory, help the nature to learn and are followed by a better progress.” (CWSA 31: 674–675)

- d. A sincere self-giving, a sincere humility, and one is sheltered from all danger**

“It is never to lose the idea of the total self-giving to the Grace which is the expression of the Supreme. When one

gives oneself, when one surrenders, entrusts oneself entirely to That which is above, beyond all creation, and when, instead of seeking any personal advantage from the experience, one makes an offering of it to the divine Grace and knows that it is from This that the experience comes and that it is to This that the result of the experience must be given back, then one is quite safe.

In other words: no ambition, no vanity, no pride. A sincere self-giving, a sincere humility, and one is sheltered from all danger. There you are, this is what I call being greater than one's experience." (CWM 8: 278)

e. It is only absolute sincerity and unmixed humility that can be your safeguard

"The western mind always finds it difficult to submit totally to a Guru and without total and unquestioning surrender to the Guru his help to you is paralysed. That is why generally I advise westerners to find the guidance and the Presence within themselves; it is true that this process is very often open to uncertainty and self-deception, mistaking some voice of the ego in disguise for the Divine's guidance.

In both cases, it is only an absolute sincerity and an unmixed humility that can be your safeguard.

With my blessings." (CWM 14: 60)

5. The removal of the difficulty of giving up intellectual convictions can come through spiritual and mental humility which is rare in human nature

“You are surely mistaken in thinking that the difficulty of giving up intellectual convictions is a special stumbling-block in you more than in others. The attachment to one’s own ideas and convictions, the insistence on them is a common characteristic and here it seems to manifest itself with an especial vehemence. It can be removed by a light of knowledge from above which gives one the direct touch of Truth or the luminous experience of it and takes away all value from mere intellectual opinion, ideas or conviction and removes the necessity for it, or by a right consciousness which brings with it right ideas, right feeling, right action and right everything else. Or else it must come by a spiritual and mental humility which is rare in human nature—especially the mental, for the mind is always apt to think its own ideas, true or false, are the right ideas. Eventually it is the psychic growth that makes this surrender too possible and that again comes most easily by bhakti. In any case, the existence of this difficulty is not in itself a good cause for forecasting failure in Yoga.” (CWSA 30: 57–58)

6. Humility of the mental being helps you to discover your mind's entire ignorance

"You were nearer the supramental when you discovered your mind's entire ignorance and accepted that salutary knowledge. That humility of the mental being and the clear perception of its own incompetence is the first step towards a sound approach to the supramental Truth." (CWSA 36: 403)

7. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence are necessary for the direct opening of the psychic centre

"The direct opening of the psychic centre is easy only when the ego-centricity is greatly diminished and also if there is a strong bhakti for the Mother. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence is necessary." (CWSA 30: 352–353) (CWSA 32: 163)

8. If the humility and resignation are firmly founded in the heart, other things like trust come naturally afterwards

9. The psychic light and happiness are born of humility and resignation

"I am glad the cloud is lifting and hope to find it lifted altogether soon. It is the usual experience that if the

humility and resignation are firmly founded in the heart, other things like trust come naturally afterwards. If once the psychic light and happiness which is born of these things is founded, it is not easy for other forces to cloud that state and not possible for them to destroy it. That is the common experience.” (CWSA 31: 184)

10. For improved quality of the recipient consciousness one of the things required is psychic humility

“Do not be over-eager for experience,—for experiences you can always get, having once broken the barrier between the physical mind and the subtle planes. What you have to aspire for most is the improved quality of the recipient consciousness in you—discrimination in the mind, the unattached impersonal Witness look on all that goes on in you and around you, purity in the vital, calm equanimity, enduring patience, absence of pride and the sense of greatness—and more especially, the development of the psychic being in you—surrender, self-giving, psychic humility, devotion. It is a consciousness made up of these things, cast in this mould that can bear without breaking, stumbling or deviation into error the rush of lights, powers and experiences from the supraphysical planes.” (CWSA 30: 33)

11. For a happy and effective life, one of the essentials is humility

“For a happy and effective life, the essentials are sincerity, humility, perseverance and an insatiable thirst for progress. Above all, one must be convinced of a limitless possibility of progress. Progress is youth; at a hundred years of age one can be young.” (CWM 12: 123)

12. You must be very humble if you want to become conscious of the Divine force

13. The reason is that usually either the vital being or the mental being or the physical being is very anxious to play a part, so takes up a lot of place, and one can't become aware of the presence of the divine Force

“But if it is your sole preoccupation, if truly, with all your being, you want to become conscious of the divine Force, you will be able to. You can't, simply because you think about it from time to time; when the subject comes up, you ask yourself, ‘Why, it is true, how can I do it?’ And then, the next minute you don't think about it any more. So, how do you expect this to happen? You must be very attentive, you must be very silent, must observe yourself very clearly. And you must be very humble; that is, be willing not to play a great part in all this story. The

misfortune is that usually either the vital being or the mental being or even the physical being is very anxious to play a part, very anxious. So it swells up, takes up a lot of place, covers the rest; and it covers it so well that one can't even become aware of the presence of the divine Force because the personal movement of the physical, the body, the vital, the mind, covers everything with its own importance." (CWM 6: 399)

14. With true humility come quiet and peace

15. True humility is also the surest shield against all hostile attacks

16. The Adversary knocks at the door of pride, for it is this door which opens to let him enter

"This is the only true humility and with it come quiet and peace.

This is also the surest shield against all hostile attack. Indeed, in the human being it is always the door of pride at which the Adversary knocks, for it is this door which opens to let him enter." (CWM 14: 153)

17. A true and sincere humility is the surest way to the dissolution of the ego

“A true and sincere humility is our safeguard—it is the surest way to the indispensable dissolution of the ego.”
(CWM 14: 153)

18. With humility and sincerity the victory is certain

“Humility and sincerity are the best safeguards. Without them each step is a danger; with them the victory is certain.” (CWM 13: 153)

19. It is only a true, sincere humility in the mind, allowing the psychic to rule the being, that can save human beings from ignorance and obscurity

“It is only love that can understand and get at the secrets of the Divine Working. The mind, the physical mind especially, is incapable of seeing correctly and yet it always wants to judge. It is only a true, sincere humility in the mind, allowing the psychic to rule the being, that can save human beings from ignorance and obscurity.” (CWM 14: 343)

20. Humility before the Divine in the physical nature is the first attitude needed for transformation

“Humility before the Divine in the physical nature: first attitude needed for transformation.” (CWM 15: 89)

21. To receive the divine grace, not only must one have a great aspiration, but one must also have a sincere humility and an absolute trust

“Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo tells us: ‘God’s grace is more difficult to have or to keep than the nectar of the Immortals.’ What does this mean? Doesn’t the Divine Grace always pour down on us, depending only on our receptivity?

The Grace is always there, eternally present and active, but Sri Aurobindo says that it is extremely difficult for us to be in a condition to receive it, keep it and make use of what it gives us.

Sri Aurobindo even says that it is more difficult than to drink from the cup of the gods who are immortal.

To receive the divine grace, not only must one have a great aspiration, but also a sincere humility and an absolute trust.” (CWM 16: 250)

22. If we know how to accept these spiritual blows with due humility, we are sure to cover a great distance at a single bound

“Shocks and trials always come as a divine grace to show us the points in our being where we fall short and the movements in which we turn our back on our soul by listening to the clamour of our mental being and vital being.

If we know how to accept these spiritual blows with due humility, we are sure to cover a great distance at a single bound.” (CWM 14: 219)

23. Humility towards the Guru tends to increase the receptivity

“What the Guru can do for the sadhak depends upon the latter’s Receptivity—not upon any method or rule of sadhana. Certain psychological conditions or attitudes of the consciousness tend to increase the receptivity—e.g., humility towards the Guru, devotion, obedience, trust, a certain receptive passivity to his influence. The opposite things—independence, a critical attitude, questionings—go the other way and make it necessary for the Guru to help only indirectly or behind the veil. (CWSA 29: 191)

24. Receptivity to the Divine Force depends on sincerity and humility

a. Vanity closes one to receiving Divine Force

- b. When you are self-satisfied, you have that kind of vanity of not wanting to admit that you lack something, that you make mistakes, that you are incomplete, that you are imperfect**
- c. It is this which prevents you from receiving the Divine Force**

“Mother, on what does receptivity depend?”

It depends first of all upon sincerity— on whether one really wants to receive—and then... yes, I believe the principal factors are sincerity and humility. There is nothing that closes you up more than vanity. When you are self-satisfied, you have that kind of vanity of not wanting to admit that you lack something, that you make mistakes, that you are incomplete, that you are imperfect, that you are... There is something in the nature, you know, which grows stiff in this way, which does not want to admit—it is this which prevents you from receiving.” (CWM 6: 117)

25. To prostrate oneself at the Divine’s feet, giving up all pride in perfect humility is one mode of total self-giving to the Divine

“Three typical modes of total self-giving to the Divine:

VI—How Humility Helps in Sadhana

- (1) To prostrate oneself at His feet, giving up all pride in perfect humility.
- (2) To unfold one's being before Him, open one's whole body from head to foot, as one opens a book, exposing one's centres so as to make all their movements visible in a complete sincerity that allows nothing to remain hidden.
- (3) To nestle in His arms, to merge in Him in a loving and absolute trust." (CWM 14: 102)

VII—The Divine Who Is Absolutely Perfect Is at the Same Time Absolutely Humble

1.

“Paradoxical though it may sound, the Divine who is absolutely perfect is at the same time absolutely humble—humble as nothing else can ever be. He is not occupied in admiring Himself: though He is the All, He ever seeks to find Himself in what is not-Himself—that is why He has created in His own being what seems to be a colossal not-Himself, this phenomenal world. He has passed into a form in which He has to discover endlessly in time the infinite contents of that which He possesses entirely in the eternal consciousness.

One of the greatest victories of this ineffable humility of God will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine.” (CWM 3: 175)

VIII—The Sense of Superiority When Greater Horizons Open

1.

“As for the sense of superiority, that too is a little difficult to avoid when greater horizons open before the consciousness, unless one is already of a saintly and humble disposition. There are men like Nag Mahashoy in whom spiritual experience creates more and more humility, there are others like Vivekananda in whom it erects a giant sense of strength and superiority—European critics have taxed him with it rather severely; there are others in whom it fixes a sense of superiority to men and humility to the Divine. Each position has its value. Take Vivekananda’s famous answer to the Madras Pundit who objected to one of his assertions, ‘But Shankara does not say so.’ To which Vivekananda replied, ‘No, Shankara does not say so, but I, Vivekananda, say so’, and the Pundit sank back amazed and speechless. That ‘I, Vivekananda’ stands up to the ordinary eye like a Himalaya of self-confident egoism. But there was nothing false or unsound in Vivekananda’s spiritual experience. This was not mere egoism, but the sense of what he stood for and the attitude of the fighter who, as the representative of something very great, could not allow himself to be put down or belittled. This is not to deny the necessity of non-egoism and of spiritual humility, but to show that the question is not so easy as it appears

VIII—The Sense of Superiority When Greater Horizons Open at first sight. For if I have to express my spiritual experiences, I must do it with truth—I must record them, their *bhava*, the thoughts, feelings, extensions of consciousness which accompany them. What can I do with the experience in which one feels the whole world in oneself or the force of the Divine flowing in one's being and nature or the certitude of one's faith against all doubts and doubters or one's oneness with the Divine or the smallness of human thought and life compared with this greater knowledge and existence? And I have to use the word 'I'—I cannot take refuge in saying 'this body' or 'this appearance',—especially as I am not a Mayavadin. Shall I not inevitably fall into expressions which will make X shake his head at my assertions as full of pride and ego? I imagine it would be difficult to avoid it." (CWSA 32: 113) (CWSA 28: 431)

2.

"I [the Mother] cannot yet say 'myself', because when I say 'myself' people think of my body, and my body is not yet truly *myself*, it is not yet transformed, and that produces a confusion in their minds. Besides, I have always felt that this attitude of my body perceiving its own imperfection was indispensable in order to keep a living and constant humility in the physical consciousness.

When the transformation is total, then I shall be able to speak, not before.” (CWM 13: 57)

3.

“Glory, if it comes to him [Karmayogin], he will veil in many folds of quiet and unobtrusive humility and use the influence it gives not for his own purposes but to help men more effectively in their needs or to lead them upward to the divine.” (CWSA 17: 191)

4.

“What value have our impulses and our desires, ... our sufferings and our struggles, ... what value do they have before this great, this sublime and divine love bending over us from the innermost depths of our being, bearing with our weaknesses, rectifying our errors, healing our wounds, bathing our whole being with its regenerating streams?

For the inner Godhead never imposes herself, she neither demands nor threatens; she offers and gives herself, conceals and forgets herself in the heart of all beings and things; ... she is the mother whose love bears fruit and nourishes, guards and protects, counsels and consoles; ... and because she reigns over all, she is the servant of all; that is why all, great and small, who want to be kings with her and gods in her, become, like her, not despots [tyrants] but servitors among their brethren.

VIII—The Sense of Superiority When Greater Horizons Open

How beautiful is this humble role of servant, the role of all who have been revealers and heralds [messengers] of the God who is within all, of the Divine Love that animates all things....” (CWM 2: 42–43)

IX—Once One Achieves Humility

1.

“It is noteworthy how, when Agni [the soul’s flame of transformation, burning in you] 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 [praise] 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.” (CWM 3: 138)

X—Pray with Humility

1.

Sri Aurobindo says in one letter:

'All prayer rightly offered brings us closer to the Divine and establishes right relation with him.'

What is meant by 'rightly offered' in this letter? Will You please elucidate?

With humility and sincerity.

It goes without saying that all bargaining spirit is an insincerity that takes away all value from the prayer."
(CWM 15: 209)

2.

"My Lord, deliver me from all vanity; make me humble and sincere." (CWM 15: 211)

3.

This quotation is from the Mother's Play 'The Great Secret'

THE UNKNOWN MAN

"No, it is not too late, it is never too late.

Let us unite our wills in a great aspiration; let us pray for an intervention of the Grace. A miracle can always happen. Faith has a sovereign power. And if indeed we are to take part in the great work to be done, then an

intervention will come and prolong our lives. Let us pray with the humility of the wise and the candid faith of a child; let us invoke with sincerity this new Consciousness, this new Force, Truth and Beauty which must manifest, so that the earth may be transformed and the supramental life realised in the material world.” (CWM 12: 495–496)

4.

“SALUTATION of my silent and humble adoration. ...

I bow down before Thy glory, for it dominates me with all its splendour. ...

Oh, let me dissolve at Thy feet, melt into Thee!” (CWM 1: 203)

5.

“This ignorance and obscurity it comes now to lay at Thy feet as the most humble of ordeals. I shall not ask Thee to bestow upon me continuously the Consciousness Thou grantest me in these moments of peaceful and pure communion.” (CWM 1: 321)

6.

“O SOVEREIGN Force, O victorious Power, Purity, Beauty, supreme Love, grant that this being in its integrality, this body in all its totality may draw near to Thee solemnly and offer to Thee in a complete and humble surrender this

means of manifestation abandoned perfectly to Thy Will, if not perfectly ready for this realisation.” (CWM 1: 192)

7.

Prayers for a Sadhak

“Deliver me from anger, ingratitude and foolish pride. Make me calm, humble and gentle. Let me feel your divine control in my work and in all my action.” (CWSA 35: 843)

“A loving recognition of the Grace received from the Divine.

A humble recognition of all that the Divine has done and is doing for you.

The spontaneous feeling of obligation to the Divine, which makes you do your best to become less unworthy of what the Divine is doing for you.” (CWM 14: 154)

“The progress in sadhana comes from the rectification of the inner and outer attitude, not from the nature of the work one does—any work, even the most humble, can lead to the Divine if it is done with the right attitude.” (CWM 14: 300)

XI—To Think of Being Supramental Is an Arrogant Absurdity

1.

“To talk about the supramental and think of bringing it down in yourself is the most dangerous of all. It may bring an entire megalomania and loss of balance. What the sadhak has to seek is the full opening to the Divine, the psychic change of his consciousness, the spiritual change. Of that change of consciousness, selflessness, desirelessness, humility, bhakti, surrender, calm, equality, peace, quiet, sincerity are necessary constituents. Until he has the psychic and spiritual change, to think of being supramental is an absurdity and an arrogant absurdity.”
(CWSA 29: 22)

2.

“It is very unwise for anyone to claim prematurely to have possession of the supermind or even a taste of it. The claim is usually accompanied by an outburst of superegoism, some radical blunder of perception or a gross fall into wrong condition and wrong movement. A certain spiritual humility, a serious un-arrogant look at oneself and quiet perception of the imperfections of one’s present nature and, instead of self-esteem and self-assertion, a sense of the necessity of exceeding one’s present self, not from egoistic ambition, but from an urge towards the Divine

XI—To Think of Being Superamental Is an Arrogant Absurdity
would be, it seems to me, for this frail terrestrial and
human composition far better conditions for proceeding
towards its supramental change.” (CWSA 28: 303)

XII—Other Quotations on Humility

(Significance of the twelve underground rooms which will radiate from the Matrimandir foundation)

Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality, Peace.” (CWM 13: 226)

RELATIONS WITH LOCAL VILLAGERS

“Mother Divine,

A few points on which Thy divine guidance is required.

There is resistance from the villagers in selling their lands. This may be because we have done nothing to integrate them with Auroville. They feel it is a foreign imposition on them which will do them no good but will drive them from their hearths and homes.

Should we not demonstrate to them our real intentions by providing them with facilities such as a dispensary, a school, clean drinking water, etc.? This would be money well spent if it is done with love and humility and not as charity.

This is indispensable.” (CWM 13: 241–242)

“I am not sure whether a direct psychic opening could have been done in my case without any difficulty.

The direct opening of the psychic centre is easy only when the ego-centricity is greatly diminished and also if there is a strong bhakti for the Mother. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence is necessary." (CWSA 32: 163)

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