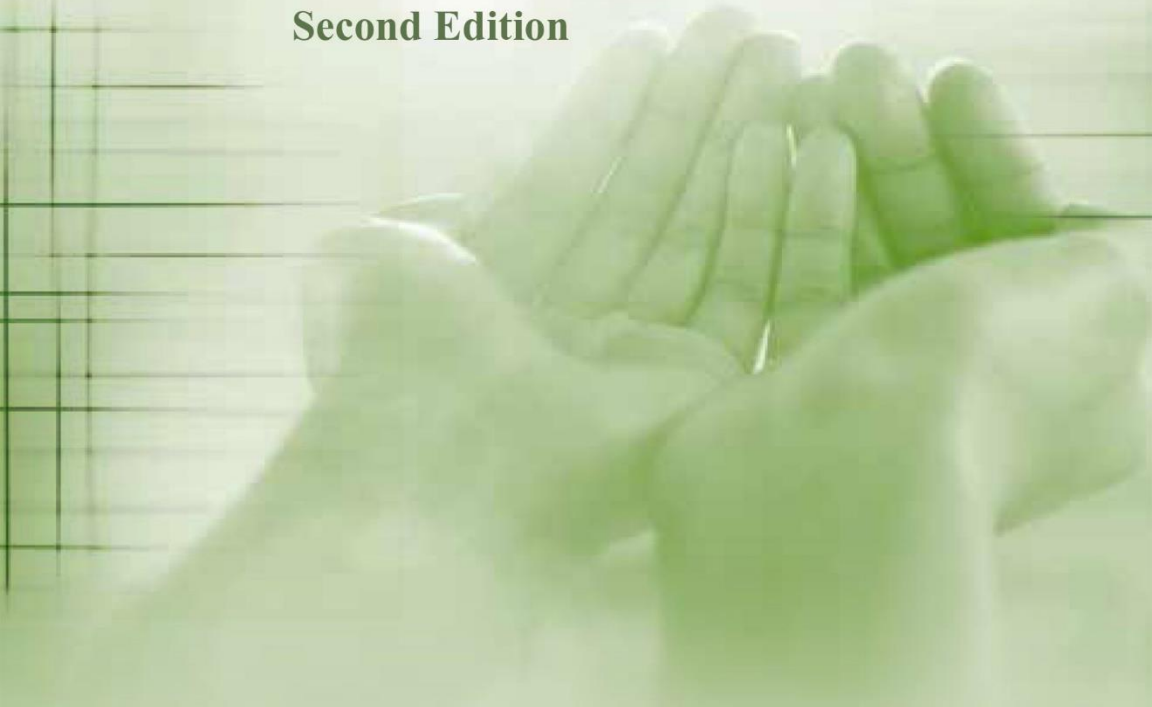
gratitude

towards the Divine

Second Edition



A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

Gratitude towards the Divine

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Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Gratitude towards the Divine

Second Edition

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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*

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

As part of the series of comprehensive compilations on the virtues and qualities prescribed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as necessary for the practice of Integral Yoga, we present in this book another virtue, 'Gratitude', under the title *Gratitude towards the Divine*.

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 readers understand the importance of gratitude in sadhana. 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.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—Our Gratitude Should Be towards the Divine

1.

"Q: Sweet Mother,

What is the best way of expressing one's gratitude towards man and towards the Divine?

A: Why do you put man and the Divine together?

It is true that man is essentially divine, but at present, apart from a few very rare exceptions, man is quite unconscious of the Divine he carries within him; and it is just this unconsciousness which constitutes the falsehood of the material world.

I have already written to you that our gratitude should go to the Divine and that as for men what is required is an attitude of goodwill, understanding and mutual help. To feel deeply, intensely and constantly a total gratitude towards the Divine is the best way to be happy and peaceful." (CWM 16: 313–314)

2.

"Gratitude

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)

3.

"Integral gratitude: the whole being offers itself to the Lord in absolute trust." (CWM 14: 154)

II—Gratitude, a Virtue Indispensable for the Ashramite

1.

"By definition the Ashramite has resolved to consecrate his life to the realisation and service of the Divine.

For this four virtues are indispensable, without which progress is uncertain and subject to interruptions and troublesome falls at the first opportunity:

Sincerity, faithfulness, modesty and gratitude." (CWM 13: 113)

2.

"The nobility of a being is measured by its capacity of gratitude." (CWM 14: 155)

3.

"A sannyasi who makes demands is not sincere. To be sincere a sannyasi must be perfectly satisfied with what is given to him and ask for nothing more. In all that happens to him, he must see the Divine's Grace and be at once happy and grateful for it.

Moreover, he who wants to do 'intensive sadhana' must be able to isolate himself from his surroundings and, if necessary, to sit in deep meditation even on a battlefield in the midst of the roaring guns." (CWM 14: 47)

III—Gratitude Is a Psychic Virtue

1.

"Compassion and gratitude are essentially psychic virtues. They appear in the consciousness only when the psychic being takes part in active life." (CWM 15: 277)

2.

"That [*feeling the Mother's Presence, Love, Joy, Beauty*] is one part of the psychic experience—the other is a complete self-giving, absence of demand, a prominence of the psychic being by which all that is false, wrong, egoistic, contrary to the Divine Truth, Divine Will, Divine Purity and Light is shown, falls away, cannot prevail in the nature. With all that the increase of the psychic qualities, gratitude, obedience, unselfishness, fidelity to the true perception, true impulse etc. that comes from the Mother or leads to the Mother. When this side grows, then the other, the Presence, Love, Joy, Beauty, can develop and be permanently there." (CWSA 30: 338–339)

3.

"Of course, people with a developed psychic element are by nature grateful and do not behave in this way." (CWSA 31: 250)

4.

"There are in the vital itself two kinds of love,—one full of joy and confidence and abandon, generous, unbargaining, ungrudging and very absolute in its dedication and this is akin to the psychic and well-fitted to be its complement and a means of expression of the divine love. And neither does the psychic love or the divine love despise a physical means of expression wherever that is pure and right and possible: it [psychic love or the divine love] does not depend upon that [physical means of expression], it does not diminish, revolt or go out like a snuffed candle when it is deprived of any such means; but when it [psychic love or the divine love] can use it [physical means of expression], it does so with joy and gratitude." (CWSA 29: 342)

5.

"*Which path must I take then? What is the right and true way of making the effort?*

Do what I explained to you yesterday—make your brain work by studying regularly and systematically; then during the hours when you are not studying, your brain, having worked enough, will be able to rest and it will be possible for you to concentrate in the depths of your heart and find there the psychic source; with it you will become conscious of both gratitude and true happiness." (CWM 12: 134)

6.

"The Ananda you describe is evidently that of the inner vital when it is full of the psychic influence and floods with it the external vital also. It is the true Ananda and there is nothing in it of the old vital nature. When the psychic thus uses the vital to express itself, this kind of intense ecstasy is the natural form it takes. This intensity and the old vital excitement are two quite different things and must not be confused together. Where there is the intensity with a pure and full satisfaction, contentment and gratitude leaving no room for claim, demand or depressing reaction, that is the true vital movement." (CWSA 31: 121–122)

7.

"The ego thinks of what it wants and has not. This is its constant preoccupation.

The soul is aware of what it is given and lives in endless gratitude." (CWM 14: 257)

IV—Gratitude to the Divine Comes as the Soul Opens to the Light and Truth

1.

"Q: *I saw in a vision a basket full of the flower 'Gratitude'. What does it symbolise?*

A: It is the gratitude to the Divine that it indicates—which will come as the soul opens to the Light and Truth and gets the experience and the joy of union with the Mother." (CWSA 32: 191)

V—How to Express Our Gratitude to the Divine

1.
"And the only true way of expressing one's gratitude to the Divine is to identify with Him." (CWM 16: 314)

2.
"The best thing we can do to express our gratitude is to overcome all egoism in ourselves and make a constant effort towards this transformation. Human egoism refuses to abdicate on the grounds that others are not transformed. But that is the stronghold of bad will, for each one's duty is to transform himself regardless of what others may do." (CWM 16: 428)

3.
"There is no better way to show one's gratefulness to the Divine than to be quietly happy." (CWM 14: 155)

4.
"The best way to express one's gratitude to the Divine is to feel simply happy." (CWM 14: 154)

5.
"In the physical the joy of being is the best expression of gratitude towards the Divine." (CWM 14: 359)

6.

"For all those whom the Divine Grace has kept far from the horrible conflict [of war and violence] which is tearing men apart, the only way to express their gratitude is by a complete consecration of their whole being to the divine work." (CWM 15: 43)

VI—The Need to Be Grateful Even When We Are Well

1.

"But never are they aware that if, for instance, a journey or anything whatever, passes without any accident, it is an infinitely higher Grace. That is, the harmony is established in such a way that nothing can happen. But that seems to them quite natural. When people are ill and get well quickly, they are full of gratitude; but never do they think of being grateful when they are well; and yet that is a much greater miracle! In collective accidents, what is interesting is exactly the proportion, the sort of balance or disequilibrium, the combination made by the different atmospheres of people." (CWM 5: 406)

2.

"There are degrees, many degrees. Human intelligence is such that unless there is a contrast it does not understand. You know, I have received hundreds of letters from people thanking me because they had been saved; but it is very, very rarely that someone writes to thank me because nothing has happened, you understand!" (CWM 5: 405)

VII—A Prayer to Thank the Divine Is Decidedly the Highest Prayer

1.

"You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer." (CWM 5: 141)

2.

"For, the majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle [a hymn or chant], and these are very good." (CWM 5: 142)

3.

"… very few people, very few, an insignificant number, go to church or temple with a true religious feeling, that is, not to pray and beg for something from God but to offer

themselves, give thanks, aspire, give themselves. There is hardly one in a million who does that. So they do not have the power of changing the atmosphere." (CWM 6: 194–195)

4.

"From the beginning of human history, it is known that certain groups of people would meet to express a certain common state of soul: some to sing together the praise of God, hymns, thanksgiving, to express adoration, thankfulness, gratitude, and to praise God; others—and there are historical examples of this—a certain number of people gathered together for a common invocation, for instance, to ask God for something, and this was done all together, united, in the hope that this invocation, this prayer, this asking would carry more weight." (CWM 9: 37)

VIII—Prayers of Thanksgiving When One Has an Experience

1.

November 26, 1912*

"WHAT a hymn of thanksgiving should I not be raising at each moment unto Thee! Everywhere and in everything around me Thou revealest Thyself and in me Thy Will and Consciousness express themselves always more and more clearly even to the point of my having almost entirely lost the gross illusion of 'me' and 'mine'. If a few shadows, a few flaws can be seen in the great Light which manifests Thee, how shall they bear for long the marvellous brightness of Thy resplendent Love? This morning, the consciousness that I had of the way Thou art fashioning this being which was 'I' can be roughly represented by a great diamond cut with regular geometrical facets, a diamond in its cohesion, firmness, pure limpidity, transparency, but a brilliant and radiant flame in its intense ever-progressive life. But it was something more, something better than all that, for nearly all sensation inner and outer was exceeded and that image only presented itself to my mind as I returned to conscious contact with the outer world." (CWM 1:5)

2.

"Thank You, Lord, You respond miraculously to every sincere aspiration." (CWM 17: 373)

3.

March 7, 1914

"THOU wert with us yesterday as the most marvelous of protections; Thou didst permit Thy law to triumph even in the most external manifestation. Violence was answered by calm, brutality by the strength of sweetness; and where an irreparable disaster would have occurred, Thy power was glorified. O Lord, with what fervent gratitude did I greet Thy Presence. It was for me the sure sign that we would have the strength to act, to think, to live in Thy name and for Thee; not only in intention and will, but effectively in an integral realisation." (CWM 1: 91)

4.

April 3, 1914

"...

I know that I must now definitively give myself up and be like an absolutely blank page on which Thy thought, Thy will, O Lord, can be inscribed freely without danger of any deformation.

An immense gratitude rises from my heart, it seems to me that I have at last reached the threshold I sought so much." (CWM 1: 116)

5.

April 10, 1914*

"SUDDENLY the veil was rent, the horizon was disclosed—and before the clear vision my whole being threw itself at Thy feet in a great outburst of gratitude. Yet in spite of this deep and integral joy all was calm, all was peaceful with the peace of eternity." (CWM 1: 123)

6.

August 24, 1914

"LORD, it is in a heart-felt gratitude that I draw near to Thee. Thou hast given me the first words of the knowledge I so longed for, and with this knowledge has come effectivity, the true power in each field of realisation." (CWM 1: 229)

7.

August 24, 1914

"Thy grace is with us, Lord, and it never leaves us, even when appearances are dark; night is sometimes necessary to prepare more perfect dawns. But perhaps this time Thou hast placed us in the presence of the Dawn that does not pass away. …

Receive the offerings of our ardent gratitude and our integral surrender." (CWM 1: 229)

8.

"O Supreme Reality, O Supramental Truth, this body is totally vibrant with an intense gratitude. Thou hast given

to it, one after another, all the experiences that can lead it most certainly towards Thee. It has come to the point where identification with Thee is not merely the one thing desirable, but the only thing possible and natural." (CWM 15: 282)

9.

"Divine Grace, Thy goodness is infinite. We bow before Thee in gratitude." (CWM 14: 84)

10.

"The Victory has come, Thy Victory, O Lord, for which we render to Thee infinite thanks-giving.

But now our ardent prayer rises towards Thee. It is with Thy force and by Thy force that the victors have conquered. Grant that they do not forget it in their success and that they keep the promises which they have made to Thee in the hours of danger and anguish. They have taken Thy name to make war, may they not forget Thy grace when they have to make the peace." (CWM 15: 44)

11.

"The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: 'I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material

need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me.' Or else: 'You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention.' It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional." (CWM 5: 143)

12.

"There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration." (CWM 5: 140)

IX—Be Grateful to Those Who Show You Your Faults

1.

"In all Scriptures meant to help mankind to progress, it is always said that you must be very grateful to those who show you your faults and so you must seek their company; but the form used here is particularly felicitous: if a fault is shown to you it is as if a treasure were shown to you; that is to say, each time that you discover in yourself a fault, incapacity, lack of understanding, weakness, insincerity, all that prevents you from making a progress, it is as if you discovered a wonderful treasure." (CWM 3: 220–221)

2.

"Therefore, if anyone sneers at you or says something that is not very charitable, the first thing you should do is to look within yourself for whatever weakness or imperfection has allowed such a thing to happen and not to be disconsolate, indignant or aggrieved, because people do not appreciate you at what you think to be your true value; on the contrary, you must be thankful to the divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you must correct." (CWM 3: 282)

3.

"Therefore, if someone laughs at you, or says something which is not kind, the first thing to do is to look within

yourself and see what is the weakness or imperfection which has allowed such a thing to happen, and not to be disconsolate or indignant or sad because people do not appreciate you for what you consider to be your proper value; on the contrary, you should thank the divine Grace for having pointed out to you the weakness or imperfection or deformation that you have to rectify." (CWM 15: 377)

X—Accept Grace with Gratitude

1.

"It is quite true that it is a grace sent [A great wave of calm and the constant consciousness of a vast and luminous Reality] and the only return needed for such a grace is acceptance, gratitude and to allow the Power that has touched the consciousness to develop what has to be developed in the being—by keeping oneself open to it." (CWSA 30: 392)

2.

"The best possible way [*to 'repay' the Divine Grace*] is to allow the Divine Grace to work in you, never to oppose it, never to be ungrateful and turn against it—but to follow it always to the goal of Light and Peace and unity and Ananda." (CWSA 29: 174)

3.

"Q: *What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?*

A: 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.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later—you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips*)—the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it

is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, 'After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well.'

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity." (CWM 6: 322–323)

4.

"One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has

happened, and they tell themselves, 'Yes, naturally it had to be like that.' So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be." (CWM 7: 239)

5.

"Detailed gratitude: the gratitude that awakens in us all the details of the Divine Grace." (CWM 14: 154)

6.

"Gratitude: it is you who open all the closed doors and let the Grace which saves penetrate deeply." (CWM 14: 154)

XI—Those Who Have an Innate Faculty of Gratitude

1.

"There are two principal things. This, the capacity for enthusiasm which makes one come out of his greater or lesser inertia in order to throw himself more or less totally into the thing which rouses him. As for instance, the artist for his art, the scientist for his science. And in general, every person who creates or builds has an opening, the opening of a special faculty, a special possibility, creating an enthusiasm in him. When this is active, something in the being awakens, and there is a participation of almost the whole being in the thing done.

There is this. And then there are those who have an innate faculty of gratitude, those who have an ardent need to respond, respond with warmth, devotion, joy, to something which they feel like a marvel hidden behind the whole of life, behind the tiniest little element, the least little event of life, who feel this sovereign beauty or infinite Grace which is behind all things.

I knew people who had no knowledge, so to say, of anything, who were hardly educated, whose minds were altogether of the ordinary kind, and who had in them this capacity of gratitude, of warmth, which gives itself, understands and is thankful.

Well, for them, the contact with the psychic was very frequent, almost constant and, to the extent that they were

capable of it, conscious—not very conscious but a little—in the sense that they felt that they were carried, helped, uplifted above themselves.

These two things prepare people the most. They are born with one or the other; and if they take the trouble, it develops gradually, it increases.

We say: the capacity for enthusiasm, something which throws you out of your miserable and mean little ego; and the generous gratitude, the generosity of the gratitude which also flings itself in thanksgiving out of the little ego. These are the two most powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine in one's psychic being. This serves as a link with the psychic being—the surest link." (CWM 7: 418–419)

XII—Devotion without Gratitude Is Incomplete

1.

"But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion.... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvelling thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just the monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And each time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvelous a joy, such a gratitude as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion—indeed so deep, so intense—that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, gratitude must come with devotion." (CWM 8: 40)

2.

"So here's my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said—that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency
Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)
Devotion or Gratitude
Courage or Aspiration
Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*, faithfulness to one's resolution—being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one's resolution. This is endurance." (CWM 8: 42)

XIII—Gratitude in Sadhana

1.

"If you can't as yet remember the Divine all the time you are working, it does not greatly matter. To remember and dedicate at the beginning and give thanks at the end ought to be enough for the present. Or at the most to remember too when there is a pause." (CWSA 29: 214)

2.

"As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it." (CWM 9: 316–317)

3.

"*Sweet Mother,*

We have a minute of concentration before and after group every day. What should we try to do during this concentration?

Before, make an offering to the Divine of what you are going to do, so that it may be done in a spirit of consecration.

Afterwards, ask the Divine to increase the will for progress in us, so that we may become instruments that are more and more capable of serving Him.

You may also, before starting, offer yourselves to the Divine in silence.

And at the end, give thanks to the Divine in silence.

I mean a movement of the *heart* without any words in the head." (CWM 12: 354–355)

4.

"It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste and at each step despair or murmur." (CWSA 29: 112)

5.

"When man becomes a little wiser, he will not complain about anything and will take the things the Divine sends him as a manifestation of His all-compassionate Grace.

The more surrendered we are, the more we shall understand.

The more grateful we are, the happier we shall be." (CWM 10: 342)

6.

"When a child wants to impress you by telling you stories of the wealth of his family, you must not keep quiet. You must explain to him that worldly wealth does not count here, only the wealth that has been offered to the Divine has some value; that you do not become big by living in big houses, travelling by first-class and spending money lavishly. You can increase in stature only by being truthful, sincere, obedient and grateful." (CWM 12: 158)

7.

"Those who have the immense privilege of being here quiet and in safety must at least show their gratitude by discarding all petty quarrels and silly grievances.

Everyone must do his or her work conscientiously and earnestly, and overcome all obscure selfish movements." (CWM 13: 157)

8.

"To accept gladly what I give is never selfish.

There is no better cure for egoism than a happy gratefulness." (CWM 14: 155)

9.

"But to be able to remain in peace you must keep in your heart gratitude towards the Divine for all the help He gives." (CWM 14: 247)

10.

"Since we have decided to reserve love in all its splendour for our personal relationship with the Divine, we shall replace it in our relations with others by a total, unvarying, constant and egoless kindness and goodwill that will not expect any reward or gratitude or even any recognition. However others may treat you, you will never allow yourself to be carried away by any resentment; and in your unmixed love for the Divine, you will leave him sole judge as to how he is to protect you and defend you against the misunderstanding and bad will of others.

You will await your joys and pleasures from the Divine alone. In him alone will you seek and find help and support. He will comfort you in all your sorrows, guide you on the path, lift you up if you stumble, and if there are moments of failure and exhaustion, he will take you up in his strong arms of love and enfold you in his soothing sweetness." (CWM 12: 70)

11.

"It might be better to clear up a few points.

First, it is always unwise to expect gratitude from people, especially from servants." (CWM 13: 139)

12.

"Be absolutely convinced that everything that happens, happens in order to give us precisely the lesson we needed,

and if we are sincere in the 'sadhana', the lesson should be accepted with joy and gratitude.

For one who aspires to the divine life, what can the actions of a blind and ignorant humanity matter to him?" (CWM 14: 219)

13.

"Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine." (CWM 14: 225)

14.

"My mother, who loved us—my brother and myself—very much, never allowed us to be bad-tempered or dissatisfied or lazy. If we went and complained to her about something or other and told her that we were not satisfied, she would laugh at us and scold us and say to us, 'What is this foolishness? Don't be ridiculous, off you go and work, and don't take any notice of your good or bad moods! That is not interesting at all.'

My mother was perfectly right and I have always been very grateful to her for having taught me discipline and the necessity of self-forgetfulness in concentration on what one is doing." (CWM 12: 130)

15.

"Mental gratitude: the gratefulness of the mind for what makes it progress." (CWM 14: 154)

16.

"Q: *About Mother's seriousness at Pranam, you wrote: 'The Mother's seriousness is due to some absorption in some work she is doing or, very often, to some strong attack of hostile forces in the atmosphere.' But I never felt any hostile attack before going to Pranam; rather the attack comes afterwards when my vital fails to endure her seriousness.*

A: It does not matter whether you feel any attack or not—the attack is there. In fact for the last several months the atmosphere is full of the most violent attacks threatening the very existence of the Yoga and the Asram and the sadhaks personally or the body of the Mother. If you are not touched that is a matter for which you ought to be grateful to the Mother instead of your vital getting upset because she is doing her work." (CWSA 32: 542–543)

17.

"It is only by giving ourselves entirely to the Divine in perfect trust and gratitude that the difficulties will be overcome." (CWM 16: 433)

18.

"I am speaking of an inner attitude, of something within which is beautiful, noble, harmonious, unselfish. There Love has a chance to come and stay. But when, as soon as

it tries to manifest, it is immediately mixed with such low and ugly things, it does not remain, it goes away. This is what Sri Aurobindo says: it is 'reluctant to be born' —it could be said that it immediately regrets being born. Men always complain that love does not stay with them but it is entirely their fault. They give this love such a sordid life, mixed with a heap of horrors and such vulgarity, things so base, so selfish, so dirty, that the poor thing cannot stay. If they don't succeed in killing it altogether, they make it utterly sick. So the only thing it can do is to take flight. People always complain that love is impermanent and passing. To tell the truth, they should be very grateful that it [Love] manifested in them in spite of the sordidness of the house they gave it." (CWM 4: 402)

19.

"It is a great ignorance that makes a being answer to the suggestions of the forces of darkness and destruction. With a true sense of gratitude for the Divine's infinite mercy, one would be saved from such dangers." (CWM 15: 20)

20.

"Physically, materially, upon earth, it is in gratitude that one finds the source of the purest delight." (CWM 15: 192)

21.

"The third method [*to overcome the fear of death*] is for those who have faith in a God, their God, and who have given themselves to him. They belong to him integrally; all the events of their lives are an expression of the divine will and they accept them not merely with calm submission but with gratitude, for they are convinced that whatever happens to them is always for their own good. They have a mystic trust in their God and in their personal relationship with him. They have made an absolute surrender of their will to his and feel his unvarying love and protection, wholly independent of the accidents of life and death. They have the constant experience of lying at the feet of their Beloved in an absolute self surrender or of being cradled in his arms and enjoying a perfect security. There is no longer any room in their consciousness for fear, anxiety or torment; all that has been replaced by a calm and delightful bliss." (CWM 12: 84)

22.

[One of the methods of changing one's consciousness]

"Sometimes, when one sees a generous act, hears of something exceptional, when one witnesses heroism or generosity or greatness of soul, meets someone who shows a special talent or acts in an exceptional and beautiful way, there is a kind of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude which suddenly awakens in the being and

opens the door to a state, a new state of consciousness, a light, a warmth, a joy one did not know before. That too is a way of catching the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, one has only to be awake and to watch." (CWM 8: 405)

XIV—If Gratitude Is Veiled

1.

"But to be able to remain in peace you must keep in your heart gratitude towards the Divine for all the help He gives. If gratitude also is veiled, the obscure periods last much longer. There is, however, a swift and effective remedy: it is to keep always burning in your heart the flame of purification, the aspiration for progress, the intensity, the ardour of consecration. This flame is kindled in the heart of all who are sincere; you must not let ingratitude cover it up with its ashes." (CWM 14: 247)

2.

"Lord, Supreme Truth,

We aspire to know You and to serve You.

Help us to become Your worthy children.

And for this, make us conscious of Your constant blessings, so that gratitude may fill our hearts and govern our lives." (CWM 17: 370–371) (CWM 15: 217)

3.

"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)

XV—When Human Nature Is Not Grateful

1.

"Your surprise at your cousin X's behaviour shows that you do not yet know what kind of thing is the average human nature. Did you never hear of the answer of Vidyasagar when he was told that a certain man was abusing him: 'Why does he abuse me? I never did him a good turn (*upakara*).' The unregenerate vital is not grateful for a benefit, it resents being under an obligation. So long as the benefit continues, it is effusive and says sweet things, as soon as it expects nothing more it turns round and bites the hand that fed it. Sometimes it does that even before, when it thinks it can do it without the benefactor knowing the origin of the slander, fault-finding or abuse. In all these dealings of your uncles and cousins with you there is nothing unusual, nothing, as you think, peculiar to you. Most have this kind of experience, few escape it altogether." (CWSA 31: 250)

2.

"A self-willed man cannot be grateful—because when he gets what he wants he gives all the credit for it to his own will, and when he gets what he does not want he resents it badly and throws all the blame on whomever he considers responsible, God, man or Nature." (CWM 14: 155)

3.

"The vital and the physical experience them [Compassion and gratitude] as weaknesses, for they curb the free expression of their impulses, which are based on the power of strength.

As always, the mind, when insufficiently educated, is the accomplice of the vital being and the slave of the physical nature, whose laws, so overpowering in their half-conscious mechanism, it does not fully understand. When the mind awakens to the awareness of the first psychic movements, it distorts them in its ignorance and changes compassion into pity or at best into charity, and gratitude into the wish to repay, followed, little by little, by the capacity to recognise and admire.

It is only when the psychic consciousness is all-powerful in the being that compassion for all that needs help, in whatever domain, and gratitude for all that manifests the divine presence and grace, in whatever form, are expressed in all their original and luminous purity, without mixing compassion with any trace of condescension or gratitude with any sense of inferiority." (CWM 15: 277)

4.

"It is very difficult to keep up your gratitude; for a time it comes very strongly and again it goes back. The Divine can go on tolerating everything in spite of your ingratitude

because He knows fully the how and why and wherefore of everything. He knows why you are doing a certain thing. He knows the full working and that is why He can tolerate it." (CWM 14: 155)

5.

"Now I know why the darkness always returns to you, even after I have driven it away. It is because the sense of gratitude has not yet awakened in you." (CWM 17: 98)

6.

"Q: *I think that some element in me does not believe in the divine Grace: that is what prevents the gratitude.*

A: Obviously." (CWM 17: 98)

7.

"But I mean charity which is performed because one finds pleasure in it and which is still subject to all kinds of likes or dislikes, attractions or repulsions.

That kind of charity is very rarely completely free from the desire to meet with gratitude, and such a desire always atrophies the impartial clear-sightedness which is necessary to any action if it is to have its full value." (CWM 2: 105)

8.

"Do good for the love of good and not in hope of a reward. Be good for the joy of being good and not for the gratefulness of others." (CWM 15: 225)

XVI—Our Gratitude to Sri Aurobindo

1.

"To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee." 9 December 1950 (CWM 13: 7)

2.

1972 BONNE ANNEE

"This year is consecrated to Sri Aurobindo.

To understand his teaching better and try to put it into practice, is certainly the best way of showing our gratitude to him for all the light, knowledge and force which he has so generously brought to the earth.

May his teaching enlighten and guide us, and what we cannot do today, we shall do tomorrow.

Let us take the right attitude in all sincerity, and it will truly be a BONNE ANNEE." 31 December 1971 (CWM 13: 16)

3.

(Message for the Durga Puja of 1957)

"To express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo we can do nothing better than to be a living demonstration of his teaching." 30 September 1957 (CWM 13: 28) (CWM 15: 193)

4.

14 August 1957

"This evening, instead of answering questions, I would like us to meditate on the remembrance of Sri Aurobindo, on the way to keep it alive in us and on the gratitude we owe him for all that he has done and is still doing in his ever luminous, living and active consciousness for this great realisation which he came not only to announce to the Earth but also to realise, and which he continues to realise.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of his birth, an eternal birth in the history of the universe." (CWM 9: 172)

5.

"If the sense of unworthiness fills you with overflowing gratitude and throws you at Sri Aurobindo's feet in an ecstasy of joy, then you can know that it comes from a true source; if, on the contrary, it makes you miserable and brings an impulse to hide or to run away, then you can be sure that its origin is hostile. To the first you can open freely; the second must be rejected." (CWM 14: 235)

XVII—Nature's Gratitude

1.

"Then from the supreme Reality came this order, 'Awake, O Nature, to the joy of collaboration.' And the whole of Nature suddenly rushed forward in a great surge of joy, saying, 'I accept, I shall collaborate.' And at the same time, there came a calm, an absolute tranquillity so that the bodily vessel could receive and contain, without breaking, without losing anything, the mighty flood of this Joy of Nature which rushed forward as in a movement of gratitude. She accepted, she saw with all eternity before her that this supramental consciousness was going to fulfil her more perfectly, give a still greater strength to her movement, a greater amplitude, more possibilities to her play." (CWM 9: 248)

XVIII—Animals Feel a Spontaneous Gratitude

"Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you." (CWM 5: 239)

XIX—If Mahalakshmi Finds Ingratitude in Men's Hearts, She Will Not Linger

1.

"If she [MAHALAKSHMI] finds herself in men's hearts surrounded with selfishness and hatred and jealousy and malignance and envy and strife, if treachery and greed and ingratitude are mixed in the sacred chalice, if grossness of passion and unrefined desire degrade devotion, in such hearts the gracious and beautiful Goddess will not linger." (CWSA 32: 21)

XX—Prayers of Gratitude

1.

February 8, 1913*

"Thou art supreme Peace, unalloyed Joy, perfect Serenity. My whole being prostrates before Thee in a gratitude beyond measure and a ceaseless worship; and that worship goes up from my heart and my mind towards Thee like the pure smoke of incense of the perfumes of India." (CWM 1: 15)

2.

January 1, 1914

"I bow down in deep devotion and in boundless gratitude before Thy beneficent splendour; in the name of the earth I give Thee thanks for manifesting Thyself; in its name I implore Thee to manifest Thyself ever more fully, in an uninterrupted growth of Light and Love." (CWM 1: 43)

3.

March 13, 1914

"...

O divine Master, eternal Teacher, Thou livest in all things, in all beings, and Thy love bursts upon the sight of even the most ignorant. Grant that all may become aware of it in the depths of their being and that hatred may disappear for ever from their hearts.

My ardent gratitude rises to Thee like a tireless chant.” (CWM 1: 98)

4.

March 25, 1914*

“...

O Lord, an ardent thanksgiving mounts from me towards Thee expressing the gratitude of this sorrowing humanity which Thou illuminest, transformest and glorifiest and givest to it the peace of Knowledge.” (CWM 1: 110)

5.

March 30, 1914

“...

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds.

My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.” (CWM 1: 113)

6.

October 7, 1914*

"And with the infinite gratitude of the individual being to whom Thou hast accorded this surpassing grace, I implore Thee, O Lord, that under cover of the present turmoil, in the very heart of this extreme confusion the miracle may be accomplished and Thy law of supreme serenity and pure unchanging light become visible to the perception of all and govern the earth in a humanity at last awakened to Thy divine consciousness." (CWM 1:258)

7.

January 4, 1917

"O LORD, Thou showerest upon me all Thy boons. Now that this being expects nothing, desires nothing from life any longer, life brings it its most precious treasures, those coveted by all men. In all the domains of my individual being Thou showerest Thy boons, in the mind, the psychic and even the physical. Thou hast placed me amidst abundance, and abundance seems to me as natural as scarcity and does not bring me a greater joy, for often in poverty the spiritual life was more intense and conscious for me; but I see this abundance very clearly, and my individual being on whom Thou heapest Thy boons thus, prostrates itself before Thee in inexpressible gratitude.

Thy goodness is unequalled and Thy mercy infinite." (CWM 1: 344)

8.

October 10, 1918

"What peace, what tranquillity, what supreme delight come with the feeling and perception of this! For it is enough to be docile, plastic, surrendered, attentive, in order to let Thee act freely; no longer then are any errors or faults, any lack or insufficiency possible, for what Thou hast willed Thou doest and Thou doest it even as Thou hast willed it. …

Accept the ardent flame of my gratitude and my joyous and fully confident adherence." (CWM 1: 371)

9.

October 23, 1937*

"Grant that we may never forget to own towards Thee a deep, an intense gratitude." (CWM 1: 382)

10.

February 10, 1913*

"MY being goes up to Thee in thanksgiving, not because Thou usest this weak and imperfect body to manifest Thyself, but because *Thou dost manifest Thyself*, and that is the Splendour of splendours, the Joy of joys, the Marvel of marvels. All who seek Thee with ardour should understand that Thou art there whenever there is need of Thee; and if they could have the supreme faith to give up seeking Thee, but rather to await Thee, at each moment

putting themselves integrally at Thy service, Thou wouldst be there whenever there was need of Thee; and is there not always need of Thee with us, whatever may be the different, and often unexpected, forms of Thy manifestation? (CWM 1:16)

11.

March 3, 1914

"AS the day of departure draws near, I enter into a kind of self-communion; I turn with a fond solemnity towards all those thousand little nothings around us which have silently, for so many years, played their role of faithful friends; I thank them gratefully for all the charm they were able to give to the outer side of our life; I wish that if they are destined to pass into other hands than ours for any length of time, these hands may be gentle to them and know all the respect that is due to what Thy divine Love, O Lord, has brought out from the dark inconscience of chaos." (CWM 1: 87)

12.

June 2, 1914

"In a silent contemplation, in a mute adoration, uniting myself with all this dark and painful substance, I hail Thee, O Lord, as the divine saviour; I bless Thy love as the supreme liberator, I offer thanks for its countless boons,

and I give myself fully to Thee so that Thou mayst complete Thy work of perfectioning." (CWM 1: 164)

13.

December 4, 1914

"...

And before this immense night full of promise, I feel, more than I have ever felt before, free and vast, infinitely.

. . .

And in a supreme beatitude I offer Thee thanks, O Lord, for the marvellous favour Thou hast bestowed upon me: that of being before Thee like a new-born child." (CWM 1: 280)

14.

March 10, 1914

"IN the silence of the night Thy Peace reigned over all things, in the silence of my heart Thy Peace reigns always; and when these two silences were united, Thy Peace was so powerful that no disturbance of any kind could resist it. Then I thought of all those who were watching over the boat to safeguard and protect our course, and in gratefulness I wanted to make Thy Peace spring up and live in their hearts; then I thought of all those who, confident and free from care, slept the sleep of inconscience, and with solicitude for their miseries, pity for their latent suffering which would arise in them when they

awoke, I wanted that a little of Thy Peace might live in their hearts and awaken in them the life of the spirit, the light that dispels ignorance. Then I thought of all the inhabitants of this vast sea, both visible and invisible, and I willed that Thy Peace might spread over them." (CWM 1: 94)

15.

August 24, 1914

"...

The light has come, the road has opened; with a grateful bow to the laborious past, we shall move swiftly forward on the new way opened wide by Thee before us." (CWM 1: 230)

16.

"Let us understand and receive with gratitude this Divine Solicitude, so often not understood." (CWM 15: 231)

17.

"We pray to the Divine to accept the ardent flame of our gratitude and of our joyous and fully confident adherence." (CWM 15: 208)

XXI—Story by the Mother on Virtues

The Virtues
(A tale for young and old)

"ONCE UPON a time there was a splendid palace, in the heart of which lay a secret sanctuary, whose threshold no being had ever crossed. Furthermore, even its outermost galleries were almost inaccessible to mortals, for the palace stood on a very high cloud, and very few, in any age, could find the way to it.

It was the palace of Truth.

One day a festival was held there, not for men but for very different beings, gods and goddesses great and small, who on earth are honoured by the name of Virtues.

The vestibule of the palace was a great hall, where the walls, the floor, the ceiling, luminous in themselves, were resplendent with a myriad glittering fires.

It was the Hall of Intelligence. Near to the ground, the light was very soft and had a beautiful deep sapphire hue, but it became gradually clearer towards the ceiling, from which girandoles of diamonds hung like chandeliers, their myriad facets shooting dazzling rays.

The Virtues came separately, but soon formed congenial groups, full of joy to find themselves for once at least together, for they are usually so widely scattered throughout the world and the worlds, so isolated amid so many alien beings.

Sincerity reigned over the festival. She was dressed in a transparent robe, like clear water, and held in her hand a cube of purest crystal, through which things can be seen as they really are, far different from what they usually seem, for there their image is reflected without distortion.

Near to her, like two faithful guardians, stood Humility, at once respectful and proud, and Courage, lofty-browed, clear eyed, his lips firm and smiling, with a calm and resolute air.

Close beside Courage, her hand in his, stood a woman, completely veiled, of whom nothing could be seen but her searching eyes, shining through her veils. It was Prudence.

Among them all, coming and going from one to another and yet seeming always to remain near to each one, Charity, at once vigilant and calm, active and yet discrete, left behind her as she passed through the groups a trail of soft white light. The light that she spreads and softens comes to her, through a radiance so subtle that it is invisible to most eyes, from her closest friend, her inseparable companion, her twin sister, Justice.

And around Charity thronged a shining escort, Kindness, Patience, Gentleness, Solicitude, and many others.

All of them are there, or so at least they think.

But then suddenly, at the golden threshold, a newcomer appears.

With great reluctance the guards, set to watch the gates, have agreed to admit her. Never before had they seen her, and there was nothing in her appearance to impress them.

She was indeed very young and slight, and the white dress which she wore was very simple, almost poor. She takes a few steps forward with a shy, embarrassed air. Then, apparently ill at ease to find herself in such a large and brilliant company, she pauses, not knowing towards whom she should go.

After a brief exchange with her companions, Prudence steps forward at their request and goes towards the stranger. Then, after clearing her throat, as people do when they are embarrassed, to give herself a moment to reflect, she turns to her and says:

'We who are gathered here and who all know each other by our names and our merits are surprised at your coming, for you appear to be a stranger to us, or at least we do not seem to have ever seen you before. Would you be so kind as to tell us who you are?'

Then the newcomer replied with a sigh:

'Alas! I am not surprised that I appear to be a stranger in this palace, for I am so rarely invited anywhere.

'My name is Gratitude'." (CWM 2: 5–7)

XXII—Other Quotations on Gratitude

1.

THE DEPARTURE OF ABDUL BAHA

"Each morning when you get up, before you begin your day, with love and admiration and gratefulness hail this great family, these saviours of mankind who, ever the same, have come, come and will come until the end of time, as guides and instructors, as humble and marvellous servants of their brothers, in order to help them to scale the steep slope of perfection. Thus when you wake up, concentrate on them your thought full of trust and gratitude and you will soon experience the beneficial effects of this concentration. You will feel their presence responding to your call, you will be surrounded, imbued with their light and love. Then the daily effort to understand a little better, to love a little more, to serve more, will be more fruitful and easier at the same time. The help you give to others will become more effective and your heart will be filled with an unwavering joy." (CWM 2: 115–116)

2.

How to change one's consciousness

"Sometimes, when one sees a generous act, hears of something exceptional, when one witnesses heroism or generosity or greatness of soul, meets someone who

shows a special talent or acts in an exceptional and beautiful way, there is a kind of enthusiasm or admiration or gratitude which suddenly awakens in the being and opens the door to a state, a new state of consciousness, a light, a warmth, a joy one did not know before. That too is a way of catching the guiding thread. There are a thousand ways, one has only to be awake and to watch." (CWM 8: 405)

3.

(*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." July 1972 (CWM 13: 226)

4.

"On the ingratitude of nations:

It takes nobility of character not to resent someone who does you good." (CWM 15: 60)

5.

1934

"Lord, the year is dying and our gratitude bows down to Thee.

Lord, the year is reborn, our prayer rises up to Thee.

Let it be for us also the dawn of a new life." (CWM 15: 165)

6.

"We pray to the Divine to accept the ardent flame of our gratitude and of our joyous and fully confident adherence." (CWM 15: 208)

7.

"Let us understand and receive with gratitude this Divine Solicitude, so often not understood." (CWM 15: 231)

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61. Suffering Is Not Indispensable Nor Necessary
62. Causes and Remedies of Suffering
63. Through Yoga One Can Come Out of Suffering
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66. How to Account for Suffering If Existence Is Delight
67. Delight Secretly Supports All Our Sufferings
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