

KNOWING OUR MANY SELVES

Excerpts from an online discussion on the topic



Organisation of the Being around the Psychic

Photo credit: www.blossomlikeaflower.com

The following discussions took place in an online course titled 'The Psychology of Yoga' facilitated by Larry Seidlitz.

Class members included: *Lauran, Oeendrila Guha, Rigved Das, Suchitra Mishra, Todd Wilson, Vaishali Jain, Warren Dupuy*

For the particular weeks selected for this compilation, class members read sections from A. S. Dalal's book titled, "Our Many Selves: Practical Yogic Psychology."

Topic: Consequences of the Complexity of Our Nature

Following question was posed to the class members for discussion and reflection:

What consequences derive from the complexity of our nature, from the fact that we have these different personalities and tendencies within us?

The responses from the learners in the class and some additional clarification/comments provided by the facilitator are given below.

Todd Wilson:

For the consequences stemming from the complexity of our nature, there are numerous answers and one could ponder far and wide, concluding with a book or dissertation. Pondering them would be a practice similar to *neti, neti*, yet an embracing and confronting of the threads that are collectively the fabric of our nature. This course has already been a catalyst for this level of pondering and the complexity, like the cosmos, pulls one in to adventure and explore, seeking to differentiate and ascribe, untie and loosen, the intimate mental, vital and physical comings and goings and all with varying levels of wraithlike presence. Mark this as one consequence—an unfathomable range to explore. After some small scale dabbling in the complexity of the multiplicity, I understand the history of going to the hills and mountains to explore the inner terrain and limit the external stimulation that is often a distraction. Thus, a second consequence would be the practice of Yoga and the system that was developed and passed on by the ancient Rishis. A third is the beautiful truth that we are composite beings, evolutionary accumulations who constitute the swirling antecedents of this planetary system ascending from inconscient beginnings towards Being. I claim this in the positive; however, our lineage is also our greatest source of slog and friction to unite our will and being with the Divine. Sri Aurobindo states that “[t]he practice of Yoga brings us face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our being, the stimulating but also embarrassing multiplicity of our personality, the rich endless confusion of our Nature” (Dalal, p.8). He goes on to claim that during the practice of Yoga, “[t]he most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us—intellect, will, sense-mind, nervous or desire self, the heart, the body—has each, as it were, its own complex individuality and natural formation independent of the rest” (p.9). We are, therefore, beings without union. But we are grand accumulations of selves.

And in regards to the fact of our multiple and different personalities and tendencies within us, there is, in the words of the Mother, a possible army of allies or an army of foes. Through Yoga, one has the opportunity and instruments to gather the complexity and multiplicity under one banner and align or at least cluster the selves of the physical, vital, mental as well as the higher selves that await our ascension. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are pronouncedly clear that this is a superlative task, yet the initial psychological bombardment and confusion stems from our singular attention to the “physical vitality and physical mind” (*Ibid.*, p.10). Identifying the sources of the ideas, desires, suggestions, motives, etc. and stepping back from the impact zone is very helpful for delineation and recognition. As I mentioned earlier in reference to the course being a catalyst, the task, the text and readings have been incredibly insightful and practical. Just yesterday as I was walking, I was also listening to the poetry of Walt Whitman on a portable music device and was engrossed in thought about a few of the lines. While in thought, listening and walking, I found myself suddenly turning to locate an upcoming jogger

a few feet from me. Immediately, I realized that my physical body was acting alongside the mental, realizing as well that my thought stream was unbroken by the turning. The experience immediately connected with the current readings as well as adding to a growing awareness of my many selves—I am grateful for the guidance and support for this expanding awareness.

Lauran:

In response to the question, ‘what consequences derive from the complexity of our nature, from the fact that we have these different personalities and tendencies within us?’ I would respond by first acknowledging that they act as a distraction even as they are our field of action. Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Therefore the mental Pursha has to separate himself from association and self-identification with this desire-mind. He has to say, “I am not this thing that struggles and suffers, grieves and rejoices, loves and hates, hopes and is baffled, is angry and afraid and cheerful and depressed, a thing of vital moods and emotional passions. All these are merely workings and habits of Prakriti in the sensational and emotional mind.” (CWSA, Vol.23, p.352)

Past that and once into the fray there is the tension between the desires and ideals, hopes and ambitions of the different personalities that need to be rectified, understood, and held together to create a, “complete, coordinated, conscious organized action,” as the Mother so clearly articulates in the passage cited in *Our Many Selves* (p.3).

And yet as I understand it this is also our field of work. Even as we need this play of forces which help create ego toward self-awareness and the capacity to know the Divine personally and consciously we also are put in a position at some point to move beyond them. It looks as if moving beyond them includes organizing them to some extent or perhaps to be more true to the truth, letting them be organized within us.

So the consequences are the distractibility, the inherent tensions between the personality forces, the much needed coordination of their impulses and energies as well as the necessity to develop the concentration and aspiration to move beyond them into a wider, truer, finer experience of the Divine.

On a lighter note I’m looking forward to understanding and being able to discriminate between the different aspects of my nature. I wonder if naming these characters would help like Seven of Nine on Star Trek Voyager who was part of the Borg Collective. I could have One of L, Two of L, or maybe One of Vital, Two of Vital, One of Mental, Two of Mental and so on. Getting all those names straight could be a task in itself and then what would happen when you get those marriages between the vital and the physical and then the offspring that head into the subtle bodies? Would that be One of Vital once removed or a marriage where the parties hyphenate their names like One and Two of

Mental-Vital, or would it be Vital-Mental? I'm starting to confuse myself just thinking about it.

Warren Dupuy:

The consequences are that these different personalities do not usually agree with each other. As the Mother says: "One of them might wish to make some progress, to become more and more perfect, to get a deeper knowledge of things, to realise more and more, to proceed towards the perfection of the being, while another one may simply want to have fun and enjoy itself as much as it can." (*Dalal*, pp.6-7)

What results from this is "conflicts, friction, inner disorder" in one's life (p.7).

Rigved Das:

Different personalities in us try to dominate each other at every instant, thereby creating conflict and fall from the state of harmony. Self with different personalities can be looked upon as a large corporation (or nation) with different departments, where each department has set targets and objectives for achieving the organisation's goals. However in longer run, the organisation's goal is lost and individual departments are busy fulfilling their own objectives. For example, every big organisation has a vigilance department, the purpose of which is to stop pilferage of organisation's wealth. So the objective of this department is to be vigil, however with passage of time, one can see that this department becomes suspicious and begins to doubt each and every employee, thereby creating hindrance to smooth working of the organisation. Similar is the case with all the other departments like material management, finance and accounting, operations and even human resource department. When I look at myself, I find all these faculties or departments present in me too. I have certain skills, which help me in earning my bread and butter (Operations Department), because of greed (Finance Department) I work more and earn more, because I earn more I spend more, incur unnecessary expenditure (Materials Management), and indulge myself into unnecessary actions and so on. In this process I have completely forgotten the basic purpose of being here, that is realizing, being one with the Divine and making this life Divine.

Unlike self, these large organisations, which have been successful in business for a long time, develop a structured system of seeking approval or sanction from the right authority, which in most of the cases is the CEO or Head of the Organisation. The success of the organisation in achieving the ultimate goal largely depends on the CEO's wisdom. Unfortunately, in our case the CEO, the self, is silent spectator. If we are able to invoke that self, our

CEO in us, and take his sanction or approval for our actions, I think we will be able to reach our goal of making this life divine.

So, the first consequence of these different personalities in us is conflict. Second consequence, by understanding these conflicts one feels the requirement of the CEO the self, and thus we labour to invoke it. To invoke the self, a two-word mantra by the Divine Mother works very well and apt. She says "Be Conscious".

Lauran:

Hello Rigved! I like your analogy of an organisation with its different departments and how it relates to our inner personality tensions. I will say though that an organisation is a step forward when you think about it. At least in an organisation there is some semblance of a common goal. Some of us haven't even gotten that far. Sometimes my experience is more like that of a kindergarten class!

After spending several hours trying to solve a computer problem I feel the tension of not having read or studied or even thought much about the Divine during that time and I feel the less for it. Contrary to the other day when I was doing some outdoor work and was attempting to stay present to Peace as I worked and found the effort agreeable to the task.

I often find simpler tasks to be easier to practice conscious awareness than more complex ones and I wonder how people who have highly mental, interactive work can practice the yoga without a lot of frustration.

Oeendriila Guha:

Dear Rigveda, I enjoyed reading what you wrote about the compartments in our being. It is so original.

Vaishali Singhal:

Pursuing this course has enriched my knowledge about myself comprising of different personalities within. As far as the complexity of our Nature is concerned, this question is close to an earlier question: Describe some of the personalities within yourself, which was tough for me to pen down. However, it has surely helped me to observe myself closely than ever.

In our ordinary lives, a person is unable to distinguish between his mind, higher mind, outer being, inner being, inmost being and all other parts and planes of the being. For him, every part is more or less one & the same. Now, when someone is ignorant of the parts themselves, how

would he know the quality and nature of each part, the ignorance of which creates many troubles for him in his attempt to understand his personality. Sri Aurobindo says, "Everything has a physical part—even the mind has a physical part; there is a mental physical, a mind of the body and the material. So the emotional being has a physical part. It has no location separate from the rest of the emotional. One can only distinguish that when the consciousness becomes sufficiently subtle to do so." (*Dalal*, p.15) These lines describe the complexity of human personality.

As Sri Aurobindo says, "In the ordinary life people accept the vital movements, anger, desire, greed, sex, etc. as natural, allowable and legitimate things, part of the human nature. Only so far as society discourages them or insists to keep them within fixed limits or subject to a decent restraint or measure, people try to control them so as to conform to the social standard of morality or rule of conduct. Here, on the contrary, as in all spiritual life, the conquest and complete mastery of these things is demanded." (*Ibid.*, p.32)

Apart from the different parts and planes of our Being, the primary qualities of our Nature (gunas) are three in number: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva is pure and binds the soul through attachment with happiness and knowledge. Rajas is full of passion and Tamas is the darkness and crudeness in man.

These gunas exist in all human beings in various degrees of concentration and combination. Depending upon their relative strengths and combinations, they determine nature of individuals, their actions, behaviours, attitudes and their attachments to the objective world in which they live. The primary purpose of the gunas is to create bondage, through desire for sense objects, leading to attachment with them and keep the beings under perpetual control of Prakriti. The three gunas compete among themselves for supremacy while they exist. When Sattva is predominant, human body radiates the illumination of knowledge. When Rajas is dominating, greed and striving for selfish activities would appear. When Tamas increases, darkness and ignorance increases too. It is pathetic when confusion and anxiety occur because a person is unable to understand the workings of his own mind and body. At times the Rajas guna increases and Sattva guna decreases, which creates negative feelings in the person and he may create problems for himself as well as for the society.

There are also many positive sides of our complex nature. If one is aware about the minute working of one's own body, it can be helpful in curing disease too since any disease enters the nervous or vital-physical sheath of the subtle consciousness and if one is conscious of one's subtle body, one can prevent the disease from entering the physical body.

Also, it is only the true knowledge of these parts that can lead us from ignorance to knowledge. If one understands the different planes of consciousness, they lead a clear path to the highest which is Sachchidananda.

Finally, I would sum up by saying that the list can be end-less about the pros and cons of the complexities of our nature but we must understand the objective of our human birth and make our best to reach closer to that Divine.

Lauran:

Vaishali, your summation sentence is for me the gem even as the rest of your answer reflects its shine. To move through the day caught up in who's this and who's that and the why and the wherefore of it all can sometimes reduce me to tears. But when I remember that I can "let go, and let God", as the saying goes I can be returned to an equilibrium.

I appreciate your well thought out contemplations.

Larry Seidlitz:

Yes, Vaishali has summarized some important points, and given us some good reflections. I'm not sure if it is possible to sort of organize all these different parts in a mental way, with our mental will, though that too may play a part. Now what we would like is simply to get a general mental picture of the different parts of our nature. Then, as life goes on, we will begin to see, "oh, this impulse is coming from that part" (e.g, physical vital) or "this thought is coming from that part" (e.g., mental vital). Gradually we develop a bit more differentiated view of ourselves. Moreover, this may help us to get a bit of detachment from it, to observe as a semi-detached observer or witness the different parts of us acting. That is a movement towards the mental *purusha*. From there we may begin to exercise a quiet will or formulated intention for a certain unwanted movement to quiet down (without struggle). That is a beginning of mastery.

Suchitra Mishra:

Dear Todd, I really appreciate your passionate words and your attempt to connect Sri Aurobindo's philosophy to our day to day life. The experience you narrate regarding listening to Whitman and suddenly being aware of the approaching jogger is very striking in the sense that we are not always mindful of such instances which are reminders of our more than one plane of existence.

Here is my response to the question.

The complexity of human nature could be approached as a complement rather than a burden. For as Sri Aurobindo says, "Man is a transitional being" and through all the complexity of his nature human consciousness is evolving to reach that highest level where he will be united with the Divine. But as we exist today, there are layers of personalities, selves, or we can say personae, and deep down sits the *chaitya purusha*, the psychic being. As Sri Aurobindo points

out: “The ordinary mind knows itself only as an ego with all the movements of the nature in a jumble and, identifying itself with these movements, thinks ‘I am doing this, feeling that, thinking, in joy or in sorrow etc.’ The first beginning of real self-knowledge is when you feel yourself separate from the nature in you and its movements and then you see that there are many parts of your being, many personalities each acting on its own behalf and in its own way” (Dalal, p.5). Because of this ego or the overpowering grip of nature we tend to accept a given emotion, say, love, anger, hatred or envy as the expression of our real self and get attached to our emotion. In our ignorance we suffer as we mistake our outer being and the inner being as our inmost being, the soul. We live and act in the physical, vital and mental plane and our consciousness is not yet prepared to know Him who is in us and who is manifesting Himself in all of our actions and emotions. The Upanishads describe the two birds sitting on the tree of life—one which partakes of the fruits of action and the other which does not. With the beginning of self knowledge man begins to identify himself not with ego but with his psychic being, the soul. With this knowledge he knows what part of his being, physical, vital or mental is responsible for his actions and emotions and thereby remains detached from the pain and pleasure that result from them. The man who lives only in the surface and knows himself as only the Prakriti is a jumble of desires and trivial thoughts. But the moment the separation takes place between Prakriti and the Purusha, man becomes aware of the depth of his being. As Dalal quotes from Sri Aurobindo, “We then perceive ‘the extraordinary complexity of our own being, the stimulating but also embarrassing multiplicity of our personality, the rich endless confusion of Nature.’” (p. xviii)

Sri Aurobindo does not negate the outer rings of the concentric system of our being. What is important is to realize the multiplicity of our unique self and to know one self as the purusha and not the clamouring nature.

Topic: Becoming Conscious and Harmonizing the Being

Following questions were posed to the class members for discussion and reflection:

- What does it mean to “become conscious” as described in the text? How does one do this?
- What does it mean to “harmonize and unify the being,” as described in the text? How does one do this?
- What follows are the responses from the learners in the class and some additional clarification/comments provided by the facilitator.
- *What does it mean to “become conscious” as described in the text? How does one do this?*

Lauran:

Becoming conscious is becoming aware of oneself, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and that means becoming aware of our thoughts, our feelings and our actions and their motivations. We do this by first having a will to do it and then in practice by observing, standing back from each and every impulse and thought and desire and looking closely at it.

We pursue this with an aim of harmonizing and unifying our being, which if I understand correctly means bringing all the aspects of ourselves to revolve, unite, identify and/or unify with the psychic being, our personal touch of the Divine within that can guide, nourish and direct.

One suggested method for this process is after observing and investigating a behavior or a thought we put it in the light of the Divine and see if it “measures up”. Is it consistent with Divine will, intention and direction for our lives? The Mother says that at first our imagination may not be up to the task of imagining just what the Divine wills, but it is a start. After that a decision must be made to accept or reject or transform the thought, feeling, desire or intention.

As an example, this morning I made an effort to watch my thoughts more closely as the tasks I had before me were simple ones and allowed room for this observation with no encumbrance. I watched the mind engage in fanciful conversation, sometimes expressing strong opinion or judgment and I would stop the thought and say, “that is not my concern”, or “those judgments are not for us to make” or “this is a form of gossip and is to be avoided”.

I can be very pragmatic and I have a list of several things I intend to accomplish today and after reading what the Mother said about putting my next choice before the Divine I was rather halted. I was confronted with just how awkward that is to do. I could feel the “desires,” the “pulls” to get up after reading and plow headlong into the next task and then the next but now I was stumped and simply sat still for a moment.

Her words of thinking of the Divine and the ‘Eternal’ had the effect of bringing a startling stillness. I knew I was facing something quite different than I was accustomed to. It was thinking on the Eternal that made me realize that I sincerely look to learn these things we are studying, even as I go in and out of that commitment by way of action, the inner will is there and so I decided rather than run to the next task I would sit and formulate the answers to the questions posed for this week’s readings while they were fresh in my mind. I wondered that by putting these “learnings” on paper I would deepen them into my consciousness and so affect the rest of the day and the way I may approach these tasks ahead. That may not be exactly what the Divine had in mind but I’m going to trust it was an improvement over what I would have done prior to the reading and in effect gave me an opportunity to practice the very lesson at hand.

Oeendrila:

Dear Lauran,

What you experienced is the human dilemma. I wish to share the Mother's answer to the question –

“How can we find the Divine within ourselves?” She says, “First of all, you must begin to seek Him, and then that must be the most important thing in life. The will must be constant, the aspiration constant, the preoccupation constant, and it must be the only thing you truly want. Then you will find Him. But of course, if in one's life one thinks of Him for five minutes and is busy with other things for three-quarters of an hour, there is not much chance of success. Anyway, it will take many lifetimes. It must not be a pastime. It must be the exclusive preoccupation of one's being, the very reason of one's existence.” (*Darshan message*, 21 February 2012)

Larry Seidlitz:

Lauran, I was very touched by what you wrote. You have hit upon a fundamental idea or practice, and put it into action. And it had a profound effect. Oeendrila, that is a marvelous quote from the Mother!

Todd Wilson:

In simplest terms, a person becomes aware of the changes that he or she needs to make. These changes are not cosmetic or superficial, rather they are results of initial and then deeper inquiries into one's true nature. These results or findings lead one along the path towards harmony and unity, for each new layer of results and findings reveals what is in the way of becoming more conscious.

A person must develop a willingness to change and persevere beyond the initial will to change. Moment to moment, and day to day, the person must be an aspirant and exude earnestness for all that leads toward the ultimate end of humanity. In the words of the Mother, a person must be “in constant contact with [the] true centre of consciousness” (117). Doing so requires a diligence and marriage to the effort.

Suchitra Mishra:

In his poem “Essay on Man” Pope writes: “Know then thyself presume not God to scan, / The proper study of mankind is man”. The writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother very lucidly and convincingly explain the meaning of becoming “conscious” and the ways and means to attain this state of self consciousness. It is

a bitter truth that most of us live without becoming aware of our true selves and the purpose of our existence or our relation with the Divine. Sri Aurobindo says it is never too early or too late to become conscious. There is a moment when it happens and after that moment everything changes in a positive direction. The Mother says: to know oneself perfectly is to control oneself perfectly, and that is the science of living. Most of the human beings are not conscious about their words or actions. They cannot explain why do they utter certain words or why do they do certain actions. Hence the first step towards becoming conscious is to know what we say and what we do. We must consciously distinguish right speech and right action from that of the wrong ones. We must know when we say or do things which are not Divine. This conscious exercise of analyzing our speech and action will prepare us to proceed closer to our inmost being. At this stage it is important to understand that human beings are not separate individualities. There are forces and vibrations which act and react upon them. Individual beings act strangely, quite in contrast to their individual nature when they are among the mass. Sometimes a certain place or environment also provokes people to act in a certain manner. There are also suppressed desires which play havoc with our consciousness. Therefore, instead of living on the surface we should delve deep into our being. To become conscious of oneself is to be individualized in collectivity and to know the truth of one's being. We are conscious only about an insignificant part of our being. Once we become conscious of the psychic being at the centre, all our outer parts will be harmonized to this centre and with the practice of Yoga we can direct all our speech and action as per the will of the Divine in us.

Warren Dupuy:

To become conscious is to start understanding one's true nature and origin, to stay in a consciousness of Purusha with an understanding of the ego and the composition of the being. Being able to understand the purpose of life and to advance toward it. To unveil the consciousness within and open ourselves to the power above so as to create a unification with the divine through this introspective process.

It means that one has to get knowledge of one's own being and to study very carefully all movements so as to allow only the Divine ones and to reject the undivine. Only acting on one's knowledge, becoming aware of our true nature, our destiny and staying constantly willed toward the Divine which has to be the sadhak's only aim and only preoccupation.

Rigved Das:

Becoming conscious means becoming aware of the separate physical, vital and mental being in us. Otherwise we generally tend to refer all of them as mind.

Once we are aware and realize that there are these three separate entities, one should start observing their movements and play. This observation should be as stated by SA "But one must observe these things without being despondent or thinking "it is hopeless" or "I cannot change". Once this observation is attained, now the time comes for the change of prakriti or the nature. So in nutshell as I understand, being conscious is watching and observing the inner and outer movements of the nature as a third person, who himself is not involved with it. This third person is actually the true self who watches.

How to do it? In *Our Many Selves*, Dalal quotes the Mother, "To be in this state of attentive observation, you must have, so to say, antennae everywhere which are in constant contact with your true centre of consciousness. You register everything, you organise everything and, in this way, you cannot be taken unawares, you cannot be deceived, mistaken, and you cannot say anything other than what you wanted to say. But how many people normally live in this state? It is this I mean, precisely, when I speak of 'becoming conscious' " (p.17).

In the above sentence, I feel she has intentionally dropped few words, for us to experiment and derive. She actually says, if you do this, I am there with you. That is how I have taken it. This mantra works very well with me, mostly in the hours of difficulty. During difficult situation, the murmuring, the chanting of her name intensify as well deepens the level of consciousness, so the effects of being conscious are felt or seen very clearly.

Vaishali Jain:

To be conscious means to be fully aware and awake, to know one's inner and outer being, to know one's actions, thoughts, feelings, movements. Being conscious means to be knowledgeable about the Self, to be conscious of one's inner truth.

It is in the absence of consciousness in us that the negative forces enter into us and govern us. If we are awake to our nature, its movements, motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, we can control ourselves and change ourselves. It is only through consciousness that we can differentiate the good from bad, right from wrong, the Divine from the undivine.

To be conscious, one must learn to distinguish amongst the different parts of the being & their respective activities. One must be clearly aware of the origin of the movements, desires, impulses and reactions. This can be done only through much of patience, perseverance and sincerity.

One must try to eliminate whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, one which is not divine and that harms us. Only by this way can we organize ourselves around the Psychic centre.

This is a lifelong process and it needs lot of determination and will power. To get the results, one must constantly clean one's soul. The Mother says, "..... to become conscious of anything whatever, you must will it." (Dalal, p.126)

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. One must also become aware of the goal or purpose of life for which one is living.

What does it mean to "harmonize and unify the being," as described in the text? How does one do this?

Todd Wilson:

One must locate the psychic being and "arrange" all else around it as a hub or nucleus. Holding the center allows for harmony & oneness as the periphery will continue to whirl; however, one is no longer acting from the buzzing, whirring locales of the outer planes. For just as becoming conscious requires one to act in earnest at all times toward changing, it also leads one to a changeless space where all the rest of one's being can orbit without causing rampant disturbances and eventually fall away or become purified.

From the central inner space and from the "unique Person" that truly is each person, one begins to transform the "points" of disharmony that surround the psychic being. One must therefore move towards the psychic being and begin to allow the Person to "impose" itself on the aggregation that is the normal human state. This imposition can be perfectly done, states Sri Aurobindo, only when one "goes within and finds whatever central being is by its predominant influence at the head of all [one's] expression and action" (134). The finding, though, is fraught with false centers—circles within circles—and one must pull the center from the center until the soul radiates.

Suchitra Mishra:

Dalal quotes from Sri Aurobindo: "Man is in his self a unique Person, but he is also in his manifestation of self a multi-person; he will never succeed in being master of himself until the Person imposes itself on his multi-personality and governs it" (p. 134) To harmonize and unify the being is to organize the different parts or the multi-personality of the being around the psychic being. As we have seen in the concentric system of our being the psychic being or the *chaitya purusha* is enshrined at the inmost circle surrounded by the outer circles of the vital, physical and mental. Man in his ignorance gets stuck to the outer planes of his being and remains unaware of the Divine in him. But a human being cannot give in to the automatism of Nature. Sooner or later he has to surpass the attractions of the impulses and desires and hear the call of the *purusha* in him and give the correct expression of the will of the Divine presence. The first step to harmonize

and unify one's being with the psychic being or the Divine is to discover within oneself a "luminous consciousness". Then one has to be conscious of what is not in tune with this consciousness and arrange the inner individualities, the multi-personalities, only as the manifestation of the Divine at the centre of the being.

Warren Dupuy:

To harmonize and unify one's being means to listen and act on the divine influence. To carry out one's vital, mental, bodily activities with the only influence of the divine, the soul and psychic being. To allow the central being to have a free space to exercise its influence on the rest of the whole being, in other words, to create a mental, vital silence, to detach and dis-identify with the body, vital and mental so as to allow the divine to take up the work and the existence directly.

One does this through a constant aspiration to the Divine, acting always from one's knowledge based on its highest consciousness. It is a gradual process which requires at first acting on one's mental knowledge to enter the best possible attitude, to act from the inner centre and to give oneself to the Divine entirely without any demand. This is can be done through setting up daily habits of meditation, readings and self reflection.

Rigved Das:

Dalal quotes from the Mother, "The centre of the human being is the psychic which is the dwelling-place of the immanent Divine. Unification means organisation and harmonisation of all the parts of the being (mental, vital and physical) around this centre, so that all the activities of the being may be the correct expression of the will of the Divine Presence" (p.130).

So the first step is identification of being and then organizing all the parts and place them in the true position in a right poise. Having done this, one has to channelize all the activities of the being in such a way that, each activity is the true expression of that divine presence in us.

The Mother says this is assiduous task and needs perseverance, sincerity and patience.

Vaishali Jain:

Sri Aurobindo rightly says that, "Man is in his Self a Unique Person, but he is also in his manifestation of self a multi-person, he will never succeed being master of himself until the person imposes itself on his multi-personality and governs it but this can only be imperfectly done by the surface mental will & reason." (*Dalal*, p.134)

Now, when a man is a multi-person in himself, there arises a need to organise & create harmony in all the parts of the being to channelize it to one Supreme Truth, the ultimate goal of life. Unification means organising, harmonising all the parts of the being around this Divine Psychic centre.

Discovering the presence of a luminous consciousness within is the first step in the process. When one becomes aware of the variations in one's nature and movements, one can work to synchronise it with the inner nature which can be done through persistent efforts. One must discover the disharmonious points.

The second step is to look at the outer movements in the light of this inner consciousness and know whether both are in sync or not. We must try to harmonise both by making changes starting from the easiest points to the toughest.

Surrender yourself completely to the Divine and act accordingly to his Will, on His direction.

To become a conscious instrument, it is important to have inner organisation, absence of which will result into chaos and confusion.

The Mother says, "the important thing now is to find one's psyche, unite it and allow it to replace the ego, which will be compelled either to get converted or disappear." (*Dalal*, p.145)

Larry Seidlitz:

All very good replies. I suppose one thing I would add that being conscious means partly to be in the present moment, carefully attentive to what is going on in and around you. When we are carried by a movement of the mind or the vital and become identified with it, then we are not conscious, or only very partially conscious. We need to stand back from these movements, detach from them, and take our poise in conscious being.

From that inner poise detached from the movements of the outer nature we can connect with the higher consciousness, feel it above us, call it down into us. It may come down into us as peace, light, harmony, delight, knowledge, power, or the presence of the Divine. Then one must be attentive to these things. This is becoming conscious with the higher spiritual consciousness.

In addition, sometimes we need to work, to focus on what we are physically doing. In these times, we must not only throw ourselves into the work, losing our consciousness in the work, but must keep the inner connection with the spiritual consciousness and bring it into the work. We keep a stream of the inner consciousness flowing into the outer work, and then the work proceeds peacefully, harmoniously, and efficiently.