



GUIDANCE FROM
SRI AUROBINDO

Letters to a young disciple

NAGIN DOSHI

VOL - I

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INTRODUCTION

In this series of selected letters we have Sri Aurobindo's guidance to a boy in his late teens. Some of them are published for the first time, while most are taken from the pages of the Ashram monthly, *Mother India*, where they appeared as several series: (1) "My Boyhood under Sri Aurobindo", (2) "Guidance from Sri Aurobindo", (3) "My Sadhana with the Mother", (4) "The Problems of the Integral Yoga". The letters, no less illuminating for all their simplicity, cover a fairly large number of subjects. As their recipient grew up more and more, the subjects naturally increased in significance.

Perhaps it would be interesting to supply a brief personal background to the correspondence.

I came to Pondicherry in 1931 when I was about fourteen years old. In those days the Mother did not admit youngsters into the Ashram. It was only out of her kindness that she made an exception in the case of four children: Bala, Romen, Shanti and myself. We did not have a school here at that time, nor were there regular study classes. Before coming, my mind was occupied with only two things — study and cricket: they were my life and my world. I had almost decided to go to Europe and become a "big" doctor. I first visited the Ashram during my school vacation just for the sake of making a nice long journey, certainly not for taking up Yoga. I stayed for a month and returned in time for the reopening of my school. During that stay, what the Mother did within my being I could hardly fathom. But the result was that I returned home to stay for only two days. I hurried back here with the full realisation that I could not possibly live, either happily or unhappily, without the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Till 1933 I did not know what this strange thing called Yoga was. Hence the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were to me just like my own human mother and father. When the correspondence with Sri Aurobindo started, he had to teach me everything, not only what was meant by Yoga but also what culture, religion, philosophy and morality were. He used to correct my English, too, for quite a long time. Whatever I have gained in any way is a growth from the seeds he and the Mother sowed in me during those boyhood days.

The correspondence with Sri Aurobindo ran up to 1937. The present selection covers only the years 1933-34 — except for a batch added from a later time for the sake of their very general interest. The remaining letters will appear in another volume.

Nagin Doshi

PART I

HIGHER AND LOWER WORLDS

The year 1933

How was man involved on the earth in inconscient Matter — with the divinity behind him?

The question is itself rather involved. Man has evolved from Matter — or rather Nature has worked first the plant, then the animal, then Man in a regular succession out of Matter. What is involved is not Man, but mind and life and spirit. "Involved" means that they are there even though there seems to be no mental activity (as in the tree) and no mental or vital activity (as in the stone); as the evolution goes on the involved life appears and begins to organise itself and the plants appear and then the animals; next mind, first in the animal, and then man appears.

What is meant by the Divine Consciousness?

By the Divine Consciousness we mean the spiritual consciousness to which the Divine alone exists, because all is the Divine and by which one passes beyond the ignorance and the lower nature into unity with the Divine and the Divine Nature.

Here in the ignorance we are not aware of the Divine and we obey the lower Nature.

What are the forces at work in the cosmos?

There are the higher forces of the Divine Nature — the forces of Light, Truth, Divine Power, Peace, Ananda — there are the forces of the lower nature which belong either to a lower truth or to ignorance and error — there are also the hostile forces whose whole aim is to maintain the reign of Darkness, Falsehood, Death and Suffering as the law of life.

Are there hostile forces in every plane of our being?

The main strength of the hostile forces is in the vital — but there are some in the lower ranges of mind and smaller beings and forces in the subtle physical also.

Why are certain forces called hostile and why have they worked against the Divine?

Because they wanted their own way which is the way of the Ignorance.

What is their final aim?

To follow their nature, possess the world and prevent the Light from possessing it.

You said, "It is through the Cosmic Shakti that the Divine creates." Has the Cosmic Shakti anything to do with the hostile forces?

She has to do with everything in this world, good, bad or indifferent.

If the Cosmic Shakti has come from the Divine, why is the world such as to allow the hostile forces to reign in it?

It is the nature of this world because it is an evolutionary world moving out of the Inconscient into the full consciousness of the Divine.

Is it not the Cosmic Shakti's work to reach the Divine through all her evolutionary forms?

The Cosmic Shakti maintains the cosmos. To reach the Divine is the ultimate, not the immediate object.

It is said that everything is already arranged by the Divine, even one's future. Can't one change anything if one wants?

If it is arranged by the Divine how can one's wanting change it? If it is merely a result of the play of forces which seems inevitable, then one can change it by the will, if the will is supported by the Divine.

Is every movement, even the future, planned by Nature?

In Nature it is by the play of forces that the result is determined.

In the ultimate vision of things, can it not be said that the Divine arranges and plans all future occurrences of one's life and their exact time also?

It is not mentally arranged by the Divine — the word plan is a mere metaphor. But the Divine sees what arises out of the movement of being and there is Foresight and a Sanction above.

Does the Divine Power work in us at all times, even though we may be unconscious of it?

It does not work directly at all times; very often it allows the Nature to work.

What is the cause of impurity in our understanding?

Ignorance and ego.

I am very eager to get out of the movements of the Ignorance and put the consciousness into touch with the Mother. How to achieve what I want?

There is no way except to open to the higher consciousness so that it may descend and open to the Mother.

I am speaking of the higher planes of mind which are always more luminous than the ordinary mental.

How is it that the vital beings allow Gods to remain on their plane?

The vital plane is not one world but many.

In which of the worlds do the divine vital beings stay?

There are worlds of the vital Gods, they stay there.

How has the vital world which can have even its own Gods got distorted in us?

Everything in the exterior being is distorted by the Ignorance — if it were not distorted it would not be the Ignorance.

If there are Divine Forces in all the planes, why do we not feel them acting in us during the hostile attacks?

If you are sufficiently awakened to them and call them in, they will act.

What effect has fear regarding the hostile forces?

If you are afraid of the hostile forces when they try to come, you expose yourself to their power.

How do the hostile forces manage to time their attacks on us accurately and put into our minds formations which attract us?

They find elements of the construction in your mind — and they are always on the watch and can take action immediately.

How is it that they know so much more than we do? Is their knowledge very vast?

No. They are not physical beings, so they can be aware of things directly to a great extent — that is all.

Can the planes above the mind, but below the Supermind, be influenced by the hostile forces?

No — but the hostile forces can use the forces sent down from them if they get mixed with the mind or the vital.

When one lives in the higher consciousness, will the lower nature still act in us, doing the same things in the same way as now?

No, it will be the higher Nature, provided the body also lives in the higher consciousness.

What brings about death? Is it the hostile forces?

It is the decay of the body or illness or violence or accident. The last three are special attacks of the hostile forces. The other is the pressure of the lower nature.

What is the function of the karana sarira, the causal body?

It originates from behind the veil.

Will the karana sarira ever come forward, tearing the veil?

Yes, if the consciousness develops so much that the superconscient overmind and supermind cease to be superconscient.

You once said: "In the true consciousness things appear differently from what they do now." Were you referring to the supramental consciousness?

In any true consciousness, intuition or spiritual or overmental or supramental.

Something in me, when I have made a mistake, goes on shouting. "Why have you done this? Why have you done this?" Is it the lower Nature?

Yes, — it is the lower mind that does like that. The higher mind would simply recognise the mistake and correct it.

Is the higher mind a part of the intellect — the higher part?

The higher mind is a thing in itself above the intellect. — It is only when something of its power comes down and is modified in the lower mind substance that it acts as part of the intellect.

Are the inner mind and higher mind and Overmind separative like our individual minds? How are we to get into the Overmind?

No, they are more universal. You cannot reach the overmind so long as you are bound to the separative consciousness.

When one lives in a separative consciousness, what is one's relation with the universal consciousness?

One receives from it and returns things to it without being conscious of the process or of the source of what one receives.

Are the Brahman and the Universal Consciousness one and the same?

The universal consciousness is the universal Brahman — in it you see everything as one.

Is not the human being in his true reality superior even to the Supermind?

What is the true reality of a human being — and how is it different from the true reality of any other being? The true reality of all is the Divine.

Is not the Supermind one instrument of man for realising the Divine upon earth?

Realising means what? You mean manifesting, I suppose. Anyone can realise the Divine, in the sense of being conscious of the Divine.

Man is a mental being in a body — how can he have command of the Supermind which is above mind? Even Overmind is far above him.

When one becomes one with the Divine, what exactly is the function of the Supermind?

One can become one with the Divine on the mental plane. The Supermind is necessary for manifesting the Divine on earth.

CENTRES AND PLANES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The year 1933

The Mother sent a picture of flowers named by her: "Opening of the centres." What does the phrase signify? What is meant by "centres"?

The centres of consciousness, the chakras. It is by their opening that the Yogic or inner consciousness develops — otherwise you are bound to the ordinary outer consciousness.

The more they open, the more the consciousness increases.

They are reckoned as six usually — or with the one above the head, seven.

May I know what the "Adhara" is?

The Adhara is that in which the consciousness is now contained — mind-life-body.

The Vedanta speaks of seven planes. It says that the human mind tends naturally to confine its activities to the three lower centres. Does our Yoga accept this? What are the three lower centres?

According to our system the three lower centres are the vital, the lower vital and the physical — but the planes are quite different. The three lower planes are mind, life and matter and it is true that the human mind confines itself to these three activities. But it is not true that its activities are confined to the vital and physical things.

The Vedanta also says that when one enters into the fourth centre one sees the Divine Effulgence. Is that a fact?

What is the fourth centre? In our system the fourth centre is the heart and the Divine is there in the psychic, behind the heart. But the fourth of our seven planes is the supramental which is far above the head but can be communicated with through the seventh centre, the Sahasradala padma.

The Overmind and the Supermind — are they the sixth and seventh planes?

No. The Overmind is part of the mental plane. The Supermind is the fourth not the seventh plane.

After attaining to the fourth centre — with the psychic behind it — does one still lapse back into the three lower centres?

What is meant by "attaining" to the fourth centre? The centre is there already in the manifested being — it is not above it like the Supermind.

What I meant by "attaining" is "passing through" the centre during sadhana.

One does not pass through the psychic centre or any centre. The centres open under the pressure of the sadhana. You can say that the Force descends or ascends into a centre.

What are the fifth and sixth centres?

The throat centre (externalising, expressing mind, the physical mind) and the 'ajnachakra' between the eyebrows, centre of inner thought, will and vision.

Are our higher levels — Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind, Supermind — automatically in connection with the Divine?

Of course, but you can hardly call them your levels, since you are not conscious of them and in your manifested being they are not organised to act or function.

Has one to reach the planes or do they open themselves like the centres?

They open by the concentration and by the opening of the centres.

There are the higher forces of the Divine Nature on every plane; when the vital attacks come, why do we not feel the divine Forces intervening to help?

If you are sufficiently awake to them and call them in, they will act.

Where do you locate the sex centre?

The lowest centre at the bottom of the spine.

Nowadays I often feel much pressure in the head between the eyebrows or on top of the head. Why is this so?

These are the two highest centres — and the first to be touched by the descending Force.

What is the higher vital?

The heart and the dynamic vital. The heart centre and navel centre.

The year 1934

Listening to the Mother's music I felt something descending into me. Up to the neck the descent was concretely experienced.

Up to the neck means in the whole thinking mind, but not lower.

What part does the spine play in connection with the centres?

The spine is the support of the centres, and it is through the spine that in the Tantric sadhana the Kundalini rises.

What is the Kundalini?

It is the Yogic force asleep in the Muladhar and covered up in the other centres by the ordinary consciousness. When it is liberated, it rises up to join the Brahmic (Divine) consciousness above passing through the centres on its way.

The lower consciousness ascends towards the higher to join it, the higher descends into the lower to transform it. It is the rule of the consciousness in this sadhana.

During a receptive period I feel a free flow of what the Mother may be granting me. It passes down easily through my head and forehead.

It is the inner mind centres that have become open and conscious.

Today's pressure was two-fold. One came forth from behind the eyes. The second entered through each of the ears. Both met in the mouth.

Pressure on the inner mind centre and on the externalising mind also — probably connecting their activities together.

The working on the lower part of the face always indicates an action on the externalising mind (physical mental) whose centre is in the throat.

An opening is felt in the central part of the head. What is this part? Is it a centre?

It is the Brahmarandhra through which there is the communication between the higher consciousness and the lower in the body. It is a passage not a centre. The centre is the thousand petalled lotus just above the head, at that part.

The station in the heart centre is for the psychic opening. What you are at present doing is the upward opening to the Self and for that the inner mind centre is the proper station.

The heart is the seat not only of the psychic but of the emotional vital which covers it.

Sometimes I experience voidness near the navel centre. Is it the centre of the inner or of the outer vital?

It is the centre of the inner vital but what is felt there can extend to the outer.

THE MIND

From the beginning of my correspondence I was asking Sri Aurobindo a good number of questions about the nature of the mind and the right way of turning it towards the higher light and truth. The reason for doing this was not a wish to develop my immature mind; as a matter of fact, I did not quite know the reason myself till the correspondence was over. I just asked because I was somehow moved to do so. But as time passed I realised that in my sadhana the mind was to be the chief instrument — not a purely intellectualised mind moving about within its own limited boundaries but a mind plastic and receptive to the higher truth and able to act under its impulsion, and also open to the psychic behind.

As my mind began to develop with Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's help, the answers to my letters began to be more and more brief. At first this came as a shock, but later I understood that Sri Aurobindo wanted me to try and solve my own questions about my sadhana and send him the solutions only for verification. For a time I did not quite appreciate this kind of mental growth, which deprived me of his interesting and valuable replies. I remonstrated a little; he soothed me finally by making me understand that in the spiritual field the true development of the mind lies not in its restless questionings and wanderings amidst ideas, but in its capacity to remain calm and find the truth which lies beyond itself, and that the higher it penetrates, the more illumined it becomes.

HOW THOUGHTS ARE FORMED

What is the function of Manas?

To sense things and react mentally to objects and convey impressions to the Buddhi etc.

What is the place of the Manas in the scheme of our Sadhana?

I don't use these terms myself as a rule — they are the psychological phraseology of the old Yoga.

What exactly is the relation between the Manas and the Chitta?

The Chitta is the general stuff of mental consciousness which supports Manas and everything else — it is an indeterminate consciousness which gets determined into thoughts and memories and desires and sensations and perceptions and impulses and feelings (chittavritti).

Is it not true that at times the Chitta takes something from the general Nature and then determines it into thoughts, desires etc.?

It is both ways. The Chitta receives these things, gives them for formation to the vital and the mind and all is transmitted to the Buddhi, but also it receives thoughts from the Buddhi and turns these into desires and sensations and impulses.

You say "The Chitta receives these things, gives them for formation to the vital and mind and all is transmitted to the Buddhi". Does it mean that the Chitta does not give formation to anything but that the mind or the vital does it?

The Chitta is the consciousness out of which all is formed, but the formation is made by the mind or vital or other force — which are, as it were, the instruments of the Chitta for self-expression.

When the Chitta sends things to the mind and the vital for formation, is it they that are responsible for the formation made and not at all the Chitta?

There is something in the Chitta that either lends itself or subtly determines the formation.

What does your word "subtly" mean here?

Not openly or precisely or in such a way that you can say — the Chitta has done this or that and the vital the rest.

Has not the Chitta to cease catching influences at random from outside?

Yes, certainly, but as its whole business is to receive from above or below or around it cannot stop doing it, it cannot of itself determine what it shall or shall not receive. It has to be assisted by the Buddhi, vital will or some higher power. Afterwards when the higher consciousness descends it begins to be transformed and capable of an automatic rejection of what is not true or right or divine or helpful to the growth of the divine in the being.

When the vital will helps the Chitta, does it do so as freely and impersonally as the Buddhi?

In the ordinary control by the Buddhi or vital will there is no need of impersonality.

Can one distinguish between the thoughts, desires, sensations, impulses etc. coming to the Chitta from outside and those coming from the Buddhi?

Yes. But the Chitta does not receive desires and sensations from the Buddhi. It takes thoughts from the Buddhi and turns them into desires.

Unless the Chitta is enlightened the desires cannot be expected to be transformed fundamentally. Is it not so?

Yes.

When the Chitta receives thoughts, desires etc. not from the Buddhi, but from outside, does it keep them as they come or does it change them?

There is always or generally at least a modifying reaction in the Chitta — except when it simply receives and stores without passing over to the instruments.

The Manas may cease conceiving but how does it stop perceiving?

It can perceive passively and silently — that creates no vibration and does not break the silence.

What sort of connection exists between the Chitta and the Subconscient?

The same as with any part of the being — there is a subconscient part of the Chitta which keeps the past impressions of things and sends up forms of them to the consciousness in dream or else keeps the habit of old movements and sends up these whenever it finds an opportunity.

Is it the Chitta which supplies our mechanical mind with the recurrent rounds of thoughts?

Yes.

May I know the nature of thoughts, desires and impulses? How and why do they come into men?

This is a thing one feels: one cannot say more than what everybody knows. As for how these come, they come as movements of universal Nature, taking form in the person if they are admitted, just as other natural forces move about in waves or currents and take form or act for particular purposes in a suitable receptacle.

You wrote to me the other day that X's thought and desire may have taken form in my dream. How can a thought or desire of another person take form in my dream?

Why not? People's thoughts are passing into each other's mind always during the waking state even, without their knowing it, why not in dream also?

If one gives full and constant assent to the Mother's working, how can the attempt of other beings to enter into one succeed?

If you give consent to the Mother's working alone, then it cannot.

It is not always an attempt. One receives the thoughts and feelings of the others without any attempt or intention of theirs, because they are in the atmosphere.

If one is unconscious of others' thoughts, wouldn't they come and pass away leaving no trace behind?

Not at all. If you don't know how they come you take them for your own and they have much greater force.

Is it true that no one has his own thoughts? Either they come from the lower nature — from people — or from the higher mind?

All comes from Nature of which people are a part — but they are called ours because they receive a particular form, arrangement or combination in our own minds.

All thoughts that are passing into one's mind do not stay there. Some pass away invisibly, leaving no trace but others stay there and work. Do they not stay because of the response of some part of the being? If nothing responds to them, how can they stay there any longer?

It is not a conscious response. It is only when the thoughts rise to the surface, that the conscious mind is aware of them and accepts them — but it accepts them with the idea that they are its own thoughts.

In which condition can one be conscious of one's thoughts and desires before they enter?

When one has got out of one's limited physical personality and the consciousness is spread outside.

To keep the thoughts out of the system, is it not preferable that one should become indifferent to them and aspire to the Mother?

You can do it in that way — provided the thought does not get hold of you through your inattention.

Is it true that what we receive from the general Nature has no definite form, but is a particular kind of force? How is the force changed so as to make us feel it as a thought, sensation or impulse?

One can not only receive a force, but an impulse, thought or sensation. One may receive it from others, from beings in Nature or from Nature herself if she chooses to give her Force a ready-made form of that kind.

What happens with the force and energy of a thought or impulse rejected by a sadhaka?

A force returned goes back necessarily into the universal plane—at most its form gets abolished but the energy returns there.

When everything comes really from universal Nature, why are impulses felt as if they arose in one's own self?

Because people are shut up in their personal consciousness — they see the results, that is the sensations in themselves but they do not see the process and the source — it is so all through human life.

Cannot a thought be a guide to us by ceasing to follow its own exclusive satisfaction?

What thought? The mental thought can never be more than a partial and ignorant guide.

What is the function of the physical thoughts?

They are concerned with physical things, ordinary external experiences, habitual thought and action. The physical mind looks at these things from a superficial point of view, taking things as they seem and dealing with them in what appears to it to be a practical ordinary way.

When the mind is psychicised the thoughts that come from the lower forces would change themselves into divine thoughts. Correct?

Yes, or fall off and come no more.

MIND'S ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

How does the real knowledge come? Can it descend even though the mind is not prepared?

In some it does, others need a mental preparation.

How shall I obtain mental development? Can it be had only by reading?

A man may have read much and yet be mentally undeveloped. It is by thinking, understanding, receiving mental influences from his intellectual superiors that a man's mind develops.

Where does the discriminating power of the mind or the psychic come from?

It belongs to them by nature — only the mind can err, the psychic does not.

You once said: "You have to become conscious entirely and not only in your mind." I fail to catch the exact meaning of these words.

The mind is not the whole of you, there is also the vital and physical. If the mind is conscious and rejects but the vital or the physical do not, then you cannot get free.

The mind can be easily conscious of a wrong movement. But I don't know how the vital and the physical can be conscious of it and reject it.

There is a vital mind and a physical mind and there is too a power of feeling and a consciousness. If there is a consciousness, why should it be impossible for it to be conscious?

Sometimes the mind feels the pressure and wants to be free from mental work and to remain at rest. Should I let it do that?

If it did that, it might get the habit of inertia. You can do less mental work, if you like.

How is the lower mind to be transformed or thrown away in order to awake the faculties of the higher mental ranges?

How can you throw away the mind unless you want to disappear from manifested existence? It has first to be made quiet and open to the higher consciousness and transformed by the descent of the higher consciousness.

Does a quiet mind mean focusing attention one-pointedly on a particular subject? As for instance, while aspiring one should not allow any other thoughts than of the Divine in the quiet mind.

A quiet mind is a mind that does not get disturbed, is not restless and always vibrating with the need of mental action.

What you are talking about is a concentrated mind, concentrated on something or on a subject. That is quite different.

Does one build the vital world for oneself just like the mental world?

It is the mind that builds, the vital tries to enjoy and possess the world of its desires.

Does each human being live and move in a world of his own? Has it any relation with the world of another being?

As he lives in a separative consciousness, he makes a mental world of his own out of his experience of the common world in which all here live. It is built in the same way as that of others and he receives into it the thoughts, feelings of others, without knowing it most often, and uses that too as material for his separate world.

Everyone carries around him an environmental consciousness or atmosphere through which he is in relation with others — or with the universal forces. It is through this that there [enter] forces or thoughts or feelings of others.

It can become silent when there is the wideness. One can become conscious of it and deal with what passes through it. A man without it would be without contact with the rest of the world.

Can the hostile forces attack us on the mental plane as they do on the vital plane?

Yes — the physical mind especially can be made easily their prey — they can also invade the thinking mind.

Our sense mind is active all the time and leaping out. How is one to make it sit down for some time? How to hold it in one's hands, so to speak?

It is not the sense mind that has to sit down; it is the mind that has to stop paying attention.

What would be the true activity of the senses which at present are so subject to material things and cause all sorts of dualities of emotion (like, dislike etc.)?

It is to record the divine or true appearance of things and return to them the reaction of an equal Ananda without dislike or desire.

What does the mental physical contain?

Habitual thoughts and thoughts that are reflexes to the touch of external things.

The physical mind can deal only with outward things. One has to think and decide in other things with the mind itself (buddhi), not with the physical part of it.

This morning the mind — the physical mind, most probably — became very obstinate and refused to concentrate or to receive light. Any reason for its being thus headstrong?

That part of the being has no reason except its whims, its habits or an inclination to be tamasic.

If the mechanical mind goes on in its rounds, it does not matter much. But when the thinking mind seems to get caught into them and identifies itself with them one feels troubled. What exactly is it that gets caught?

That is the physical mind. The physical and the mechanical mind are closely connected.

Repetition is the habit of the mental physical — it is not the true thinking mind that does like that, it is the mental physical or else the lowest part of the physical mind.

From this morning to this evening, I was in a somewhat passive condition — one part of me receiving all sorts of thoughts, the other part observing and sometimes rejecting but not very effectively. What is it in us that receives thoughts like this?

It is usually the mechanical mind if the thoughts are random — the physical mind, if they are connected.

From where does the mechanical mind obtain its food?

From things and impressions and old habitual thoughts or ways of thinking and feeling.

The mechanical mind is a sort of engine — whatever comes to it puts into the machine and goes on turning it round and round no matter what it is.

Is it not the function of the mechanical mind to be mechanical, just as it is that of the mind proper to perceive and conceive?

Certainly not — it is mechanical because it has no light in it and goes on like a machine. If there were light, it would not be like that.

When the higher consciousness takes hold of the mechanical mind, it ceases to be mechanical.

When the thinking mind and the physical mind become quiet, does not the mechanical mind cease by itself to be mechanical?

No. It has to be separately transformed.

Is it natural that old impressions from the subconscious should come up or does it happen because some part of the being opens to them?

The human like the animal mind lives largely in impressions rising up from the subconscious.

MIND'S ENLIGHTENMENT

On what level can imagination find out the Truth?

What Truth? Imagination is a power of the mind and supplies the mind with formations which may be true or not. It is not the business of the imagination to find out whether they are true — that is the work of other powers.

What other powers?

Any powers whose business it is to seek for or reveal or discover the Truth — from mental discrimination or intuition to Supermind. All I meant was that Truth-finding is not the business of imagination which imagines all things, conceives all possibilities, but does not tell us which of them is true.

What is the proper function of the intellect? Is it helpful in Sadhana?

Its function is to reason from the perceptions of the mind and senses, to form conclusions and to put things in logical relation with each other. A well-trained intellect is a good preparation of the mind for greater knowledge, but it cannot itself give the Yogic knowledge or know the Divine — it can only have ideas about the Divine, but having ideas is not knowledge. In the course of the sadhana intellect has to be transformed into the higher mind which is itself a passage towards the true knowledge.

How to distinguish the thoughts and actions of the mind, vital and physical? Are not the vital's thoughts and actions derived from desire or ego?

Yes, from some vital movement. Vital thought expresses vital movements, the play of vital forces. It does not think freely and independently of them as the thinking mind can do. The true thinking mind can stand above the vital movements, watch and observe and judge them freely as it would observe and judge outside things. In most men however the thinking mind (reason) is invaded by the vital mind and not free.

Does the thinking mind need some guidance in order to stand above the vital and watch and judge?

No. It can do it in its own right. It is its function to think, observe, discover and judge.

If the intellect judged impersonally, would it not be always right?

To judge impersonally does not necessarily mean to judge rightly — it only gives a greater chance of being right.

I have a "Meccano". A thought came that I should offer it to the Mother as there was no time left for me to make steamers and aeroplanes from it. But soon followed another thought that I was still young and should use it and ought to send the Model Book to the Mother and ask her to select models for me to make and show her. Again, on returning from the pranam, I decided to send the whole set, but only after the Model Book had got bound properly and its stand repainted. I am much confused by these conflicting thoughts. What is the truth in them? How to pick out the correct thought at once? Please give me a clear answer. Finally I have decided to offer the "Meccano" to you.

These are merely different thoughts trying to represent different sides of a question. For the human thinking mind there are always many sides to everything and it decides according to its own bent or preference or to its habitual ideas or some reason that presents itself to the intellect as the best. It gets the real truth only when something else puts a higher light into it — when the psychic or the intuition touches it and makes it feel or see.

Before the psychic being takes hold of the Adhar, which part governs our mind, vital and physical?

Usually it is the Mind (buddhi) that governs the rest as best it can.

When the Buddhi governs the Adhar (mind, vital and physical), does the Mother's Force work through the Buddhi?

Not necessarily — if the Buddhi is surrendered or open to the Mother, she works through it. If it is ignorant and closed to her, the mental Nature (Intelligence) works through the Buddhi.

What would be the right activity of the Buddhi when it opens or surrenders itself to the Mother?

The right activity of the buddhi is always to observe, discern, discriminate, understand rightly and give the right direction to the vital and the body. But it does it imperfectly so long as it is in the Ignorance; by opening to the Mother it begins to get the true light and direction. Afterwards it is transformed into intuition and from intuition to the instrumental action of the overmind or the supermind Consciousness.

How does the Buddhi begin to open or surrender to the Mother?

By recognising its own ignorance and aspiring for light and transformation.

Can it by itself have the right activity or must it be enlightened by the higher consciousness to do so?

If it is trained, it can act rightly within its limits, — but that does not give the higher Truth.

What is the true activity of the psychicised intellect?

To see and judge things in their inner or spiritual truth, not merely in their external appearances.

Once you wrote: "It is either the mind or the psychic that controls the vital or both the mind and the psychic together." Why should the psychic control the vital together with the mind? I thought, the psychic being was sufficiently powerful.

Why should the mind be left out of the action? How is the mind to be spiritualised if the psychic refuses all association with it? Or what is the mind there for if it is not to be used as an instrument by the soul?

In the course of the sadhana what happens to the mental world of one's own?

The Truth comes down in the mind and a world of Truth is created there.

When the mind has discovered that what it had received was not true, why should there be any "unwillingness and resistance" in its rejecting it?

Your question presupposes that the mental cares only for the truth and does not prefer its own opinions. Most minds have not that desire for the truth.

Why does something that happened come to one's consciousness in a representation that changes the form of it instead of giving the fact?

Where? In the mind? The mind does not record things as they are, but as they appear to it. It catches parts, omits others; afterwards the memory and imagination mix together and make a quite different representation of it.

By this time it is possible for me to remain conscious of the Mother during my physical work unless I become careless. Now I feel that it is time I became aware of Her presence during intellectual activity also. How to start doing it?

By developing a double consciousness, one that reads and writes and one that watches and receives the inspiration or is in contact with the Divine.

While trying to remember the Mother during the intellectual work I cannot pay sufficient attention to what is read or written. Why is this so?

Because your consciousness is not wide enough to contain many things at a time.

LOSS OF MENTAL CONTROL

For the last three days I have been noticing this difference. A lack of strength or power in my consciousness to react against the movements of the ordinary nature. What is the matter with me?

It is, I suppose, because the mental control has fallen silent and the new control has not come as yet.

In the absence of the mental control which, as you say, has fallen silent, how am I to carry out my actions?

It is the will of the Purusha that ought to meet the action — will is a silent force put upon the thing to be changed.

Why did my consciousness relax the mental control?

Because you thought you must leave everything to the Mother and not interfere.

Did not the Mother like me to do it?

It may be necessary at a certain stage, but it stops the mental control.

Could you kindly enlighten me a little more about the mental control? Was it really necessary to lose it?

It is perfectly clear. You were using a mental control. When the silence came, the mind stopped its action, so the mental control ceased. It has to be replaced by a spiritual control, the silent Purusha will.

It was probably inevitable owing to the nature of the movements towards passivity, emptiness and silence.

TALKING

Yesterday I wrote to you about my good inner condition. But, outwardly, something made me talk a lot. In spite of my knowing that such unnecessary speech would disturb the inner and higher experience I could not check it. Kindly explain what made me go on?

It is always something in the physical or the outermost vital that does that.

You have to learn not to allow the speaking to alter your condition or else to recover it as soon as the interruption is over.

To remain aloof from the talk is what you should always do. The detachment is the first necessary condition for being free.

My writing comes out more easily through silence than my speech does.

Talk is more external than writing, depends more on the physical and its condition. Therefore in most cases it is more difficult to get it out of the clutch of the external mind.

To remain concentrated during a talk is very difficult.

That is very usual. It is only when the consciousness is very strongly established that it remains while talking.

You have said: "But at this stage it is much better to keep yourself separate and look with a certain indifference at the doings of others." I suppose it means also not talking. What is actually meant by the last few words of your statement?

Not to mind what they do or interest yourself or criticise or intervene — but leave all to the Mother.

Now it is becoming possible to observe silence during mental pursuits also. But it is rather a slow and tedious process. While talking I have to utter each sentence to myself first and then only express it.

Good. But afterwards that process will not be necessary. You will remain in the silence automatically even when speaking.

KNOWLEDGE

The year 1933

It is often better to wait for experience and then ask because to form mental notions beforehand does not help, it becomes an obstacle to getting the real thing — you either remain with the idea only or you get something limited by the idea you have formed, not the force and full action of the power.

The object of the writing should be not to get replies, but to put what passes in you before the Mother and get help — not merely mental but spiritual and psychic.

You have said: "There can be no perfect understanding unless you are in union with the unexpressed mind." What is this mind and how is one to come into contact with it?

I don't know the context. But it can only mean that only one part of the mind expresses itself, the rest remains unexpressed behind — it is that unexpressed part with which you have to get into union.

In what way are our mental activities divided from the Truth and are a deformation of the Divine Knowledge?

They work for themselves, not for the Divine, and they follow their own ignorant light and cling to it instead of opening to the Divine Knowledge.

What are the conditions in the lower vital and physical for the higher consciousness to begin action?

There must be the will to purify, the will of sadhana, some capacity for introspection and experience.

The year 1934

From the beginning the power of my intellect has been very weak. I generally live in the physical mind only. Is not the growth of intellect important to our Yoga?

If your sadhana develops, knowledge will come with it and there will be the necessary development.

In connection with becoming conscious of the Mother's working in me, you write: "Yes. But it will probably bring the pressure on the forehead centre, of which you complain." What is the connection between getting knowledge and the pressure on the forehead?

You asked I believe about knowing what comes. The knowledge you speak of comes most easily when the inner mind centre is open.

You want me to observe and understand the movements of my nature and the working of the Mother within me. But I do not know how to do it exactly and correctly. For instance, when something descends I feel simply that a new thing is coming down into me. But I cannot distinguish its particular aspect. Will you kindly tell me how to learn the art of doing so?

You must aspire for the conscious knowledge — not mental but the knowledge which comes with the experience itself. Nothing elaborate is needed. But if something comes from the psychic, you must know that it is psychic — or if something comes from above, you must know what it is — just as you know when the peace is there.

My friend Naik inquired about the exact meaning of what you wrote to me yesterday: "...Nothing elaborate is needed."

I mean that what is needed for you is to be conscious of the nature of the movements that take place — you need not make your mind active to try to know elaborately all details. But knowledge will come of itself once there is the consciousness.

Even now (it is about two months since I asked you last for it) I do not possess even some elementary idea of experiences and descents. So often they come and pass through me without getting the proper value they deserve. Please tell me something about them at least from the general point of view.

You have to learn by experience. Mental information (badly understood, as it always is without experience) might rather hamper than help. In fact there is no fixed mental knowledge for these things which vary infinitely. You must learn to go beyond the hankering for mental information and open to the true way of knowledge.

You wrote the other day: "...there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development." What is that knowledge?

You have not got it yet. It is a knowledge which comes from above.

Before the higher knowledge begins to enlighten me, how will I understand new experiences?

You have to watch and see how they develop. For the most part they carry their own meaning and if you go on observing them with a silent and vigilant mind you will understand more than if you were in a constant turmoil of thought about them.

I am now thinking of asking you no more questions on either difficulties or experiences. Let me simply dedicate myself through writing to you and to the Mother.

Yes, that is the best. You must let your power of observation grow and your mind be prepared from within for knowledge.

I am at a loss to know how to tackle the present spiritual thoughts. They are almost all about the Divine Mother and her new creation. They may be very good and helpful for active-minded writers, as they carry some higher truth. But, for me, they come at once in a great number and occupy my inner mind. Unless a strong will is put to stop them, they go on forming and shaping this and that. And sometimes they create images after images for expressing this truth as if I were writing poetry!¹

Where do they come from?

I mean that if they come from above they may be something of the knowledge coming down.

¹ That mood actually inspired me to write some verses. I was about to send them to Sri Aurobindo (as every budding poet in the Ashram used to do) for his comments. But I had a second thought: what if he asks me to continue and develop into a poet? That would demand such a lot of my precious time and energy out of the inner sadhana. So I tore off the verses and said nothing to Sri Aurobindo. But who could obliterate his fate? I was forced to succumb to versification in 1955 when our professor of English poetry asked all his students to write a poem as home-work!

The other day you wrote to me: "The knowledge can come without disturbing the silence and peace of the mind." That is actually what has begun to happen. When the inner or higher thoughts come the mind remains only as a channel. Occasionally there is even a feeling that there is no mind at all — only blankness.

That is the right way of reception of these thoughts.

In any case, I think, the mind must be there, if not active at least passive. Were it not so how could the knowledge take a form?

It uses the substance of mind (for of course the mind is there), but the mind remains passive and does not try to form or originate thoughts for itself.

When one is plunged in the immutable Brahman, does one not usually prefer to keep oneself all still, unmoved even by the higher knowledge?

Not necessarily. The immutable Brahman is only a base for the transcendent action which comes down into its peace and silence and fills it with power also and Ananda and the light of knowledge.

If my mind is right, the Mother has opened me to some higher plane. And that is why my inner being remains in constant touch with the above-world.

Yes.

THE VITAL BEING

It is said that we must be quiet, vigilant and conscious even in our vital being. What does this mean?

It means to observe the vital movements, and not allow them to catch hold of you or force you into action, not to be careless and let them come in you — not to let the vital get excited or depressed — to keep it calm always.

Please tell me if it is possible to make my surrender to the Mother complete before my vital is cleaned?

It is not possible to make it complete before — but if you do not do it at all, how will the vital be cleaned? Who will do it for you?

What do you exactly mean by “cleaning the vital”

To be straightforward, sincere and without falsehood and unclean desires.

Will not the lower movements fall off naturally when one begins to live in the higher consciousness?

Not when one begins, but when the higher consciousness has fixed itself in the vital and physical. But meanwhile, if dealt with by the higher Light, they can be pushed out and can no longer occupy an important place.

The other day I became a bit more conscious. I felt I had overcome everything and asked directly for the divine consciousness! If one wave of the higher consciousness makes me so proud, what will happen when the whole thing comes down? I would like very much to know how a mere wave coloured my ideas so much — so that next time I may not make myself so absurd.

It is again the vital mind. It has no sense of proportion or measure and is eager to be or achieve something big at once.

There is an idea that one should allow an impulse to have some play instead of suppressing it, and that this is the best way of getting rid of it.

If you do that, the impulse may spread so far as to take hold of you and master you. If a wrong impulse comes, you must reject it as soon as you become aware of it.

How are we to distinguish between our needs and desires? The vital can easily cheat the mind and show its desires as needs.

You have to develop discrimination so that it becomes impossible for the vital to deceive you.

Why is there no place for even good desires in the spiritual life?

If there are good desires, bad desires will come also. There is a place for will and aspiration, not for desire. If there is desire, there will be attachment, demand, craving, want of equanimity, sorrow at not getting, all that is unyogic.

If our desires are to be rejected, why does the Mother sometimes satisfy them?

It is you who have to get rid of them. If the Mother does not satisfy at all and the sadhaka keeps them, they will get stronger by suggestion from outside. Each one has to deal with them from within.

Does a desire recur in one even when it has been satisfied?

It recurs in another form — it is the principle of desire that is maintained in the being by indulgence — unless or until there is detachment from the desire.

I have been given the following method of rejecting impulses and desires: "First recognise that it is the vital that has sent the thought or the impulse. Then dissociate yourself from the thought or impulse, as if you had no real connection with it. Finally, throw it away." Is this method correct?

Yes, it is the recognised method of getting the desire out of the system.

What is meant by "vital consecration"?

Consecration means offering and making sacred to the Mother so that the whole vital nature may belong to her and not to the lower nature.

In the vital itself everything is not necessarily untrue.

What would be the nature of a transformed vital?

Calm, strong, wide, obedient only to the Divine will. It (the vital) is weak or strong according to the person or the occasion — but its strength is rajasic and narrow and ignorant and imperfect, not divine. Wide means not narrow or limited or shut up in a small consciousness as all human consciousness, mental, vital or physical always is.

Yesterday X was explaining to me Antony's oration over the dead body of Caesar. I felt in such sympathy with Antony and such pity for Caesar that tears began to roll from my eyes. How did this emotional outburst happen even though the separative consciousness felt the movement to be stupid?

It is the sentimental part of the vital identifying itself with imaginary sorrow. It is its nature and habit to take delight in joy and suffering.

The people who do not feel sorrow or joy have their sentimental feelings dried up, I suppose.

It is not a question of feeling sorrow or joy or any other emotion, everybody does that who has not overcome the ordinary Nature. That is not sentimental but emotional. Sentimentalism comes in when you take pleasure either in indulging or in displaying the feelings or when you have them for no reason or without sufficient reason.

When one breaks or does not consciously obey the rule or law of the Guru one feels depressed. Is it not a proper reaction?

Not depression, but a stronger aspiration.

Why is the vital depression condemned so much? What is its effect?

All depression is bad as it lowers the consciousness, spends the energy, opens to adverse forces.

Could this feeling be correct that even my vital wants me to do nothing against the Mother's will?

If that were so, transformation would be easy. It could mean that nothing would want to go its own way and so nothing would happen in you except what was in conformity

with the Mother's will. You mean that the conscious part of the vital does not want to do anything contrary to the Mother's will — but that is a different thing.

Our physical has to depend on the vital's help for action. Will it have always to do so — even in its true nature?

Yes. The spirit itself if it wants to manifest in matter must use the vital. It is so that things are arranged.

Once when I asked you if an old desire was again rising up in me owing to a previous insufficient rejection, you said that it had remained in the physical vital. What does the "physical vital" mean?

I think I said it was left in the subconscious part of the physical vital. As there is a physical mind, so there is a physical vital — a vital turned entirely upon physical things, full of desires and greeds and seekings for pleasure on the physical plane.

Has the vital any connection with the play of sex?

Of course, it is the vital that gives it its intensity and power to hold the consciousness.

The other night I could not get sleep till three o'clock! In the morning the body was aching and I looked like a sick man without, any illness! Did not this state have some inner cause?

It is rather an outside influence. Do not open so much to those you mix with.

How does "an outside influence" affect my physical and deprive me of the necessary sleep?

Why should it not? What is there to prevent it from doing that? An outside influence can bring depression, disturbance, doubts, everything else. It can affect the health, the sleep, anything.

There are people you mix with who have doubts, suggestions, depression, jealousies, dissatisfaction with the Mother's action. They can easily throw that on you without intending it. These influences are all around in the atmosphere, so it is not sufficient to avoid this or that person. You have to be on guard and self-contained.

What is the lower vital and its movements? How does it differ from the central vital?

It is the small vital that brings small desires, greeds, jealousies, angers etc.

The other is a larger movement of ambition, power, play of forces, effectuation of work etc.

What are doubts and hesitations? From where do they pay us an uninvited visit and how to get the upper hand over them? Such things arise in me frequently. I do not want them to rule over me.

You have some faith as well as doubts, I suppose. Refuse to let your mind dwell on the doubts and think always of the faith.

They come from the ignorance of physical Nature. You have to reject them and replace them by faith.

When one reads pages and pages of a novel one does not get tired. But studying lessons even for an hour exhausts one. Why so?

Because one is amusement and the other is work — the lazy physical does not like work unless it is supported and driven by the vital. But the lower vital is more attracted by amusement than by work.

How is it that the good condition of consciousness so often disappears?

There is no stability in the early stages. Conditions come and go. You have to persevere till you get a stable basis.

I see that every evening some being throws false suggestions upon me, saying, "The Divine does not like you." Lately their force of insistence has increased. I try my best to reject them but without any success. May the Mother prevent this being from approaching me ever! What is that being? From some vital world?

Yes, it is a being of falsehood from the vital world which tries to make one take its false suggestions for the truth and disturb the consciousness, and get it to leave the straight path and either get depressed or turned against the Mother. If you reject and refuse to listen or believe always, it will disappear.

Do the beings of the vital world have shapes and moulds (subtle, of course) just as human beings have?

Yes — but they can change their shapes at will.

Is each person surrounded by a particular number of vital beings or are there different vital beings entangling him at each attack?

There is no particular number — but sometimes there are particular vital beings that attach themselves to a man if he accepts them.

Do not the Gods of the vital world indulge in their own powers, and with a view to reign on the earth? Are they not individualised?

Some are — but often the Forces play of themselves. I suppose by the Gods you mean the vital beings. But they are not Gods — they are Asuras, Rakshasas or other undivine Powers.

I am again feeling depressed; I can't understand the reason for it.

Often waves of depression come from the general Nature — the mind finds out inner or external reasons for them when there are none. That may be the reason why the reasons are not clear. On the other hand it may be due to some part of the being getting discouraged or fatigued or unwilling to follow the movement either of work or sadhana. If it is something in the vital being, it may hide itself so as not to be exposed or cleared; if a part of the physical, it may be simply dumb and obscure, unable to express itself. Finally it may come up from the subconscious. These are various cases in which there is what seems a causeless depression. One has to see for oneself which it is.

How am I to maintain the Mother's inner contact when I am in a prolonged state of depression?

If you want the Mother's contact always, you must get rid of depression and the mental imaginations that bring it. Nothing comes more in the way than that.

Why does our vital being desire outer and superficial things from the Mother instead of Ananda, Light, Force?

It is the small physical vital that desires and wants to deal in the same way with these things as it did with the outward desires. It is not so easy for it to open to invisible things — that is more easy for the higher vital.

What is the nature of the higher vital?

Emotion, the larger desires, creative or executive life forces.

The mind has its divine equivalent above: the Supermind. What is the equivalent of the vital?

Mind - Supermind

Emotional being (heart) - Ananda

Vital - Tapas

Matter - Sat

These are correspondences — but the Supermind is a sufficient instrument for divinising the vital.

I do not understand the meaning of Tapas.

Chit Tapas — the second plane of the Divine Consciousness.

My vital is very much affected by all sorts of things, good and bad.

It is an excessive vital sensitiveness which sometimes comes with a growing openness in the consciousness. It has to be rejected. The consciousness must be open to the right things, but not to the wrong ones.

I do not know what exactly you mean here by the right or wrong things. If for example some one insults me for a fault not committed by me, is it wrong for me to feel insulted?

If feeling insulted is to be considered the right thing, then there is no use in doing Yoga. Yoga is based on equanimity, not on the ordinary vital reactions.

You once spoke of two kinds of causes — a psychological cause and a rational one. Will you please tell me when depression can be attributed to the former and when to the latter?

If you imagine that the Mother is displeased because she does not do what you would like her to do and begin to be depressed and sorrowful, the psychological cause is the vital, its egoism, its demand, its turn for being miserable. If you had been smoking and the Mother were really displeased, that would be a rational cause.

Why does our vital being sometimes love to be miserable even when its desires are satisfied?

It is its nature to get depressed and miserable. Something in it enjoys the play of it, as one enjoys a drama.

When the vital aspires, the aspiration becomes so intense that I feel as if it would break the being. Is this the effect of the true vital's activity?

If it is the true vital, there is no feeling of breaking the being. That is a rajasic mixture.

EMERGENCE OF THE TRUE VITAL BEING

Once I had a fear that if the vital aspired it would break the body (because of its powerful intensity). Now I see that it was an imaginary fear. The intensity of its aspiration is such that it carries away in its momentum even my tamasic physical! Consequently my breathing becomes more rapid. And my body feels an extra energy in all its movements.

It is good there should be the energy — vital aspiration always brings energy. But the rapid breathing is not necessary, though it sometimes takes place.

When I feel the vital aspiration, is it my psychic being which projects out into the vital and either itself aspires or makes the vital aspire?

It may also be the vital itself that aspires.

When the vital cooperates, are its aspirations always so intense, deep and full of power?

Not always — but the participation of the vital does usually help to bring a greater force and intensity.

I noticed my vital rising to my head — as if to aspire and go upward. What was it that really happened?

The vital can rise to the head in two ways — one to cloud the mind with the vital impulses, the other to aspire and join with the higher consciousness. If you noticed the aspiration, it was evidently the latter movement.

The ascending movement is often felt. What does the vital do in joining with the higher consciousness?

It comes under its influence first — afterwards it develops into the true vital, which is an extension of the higher consciousness.

By this time, I feel my vital tranquillised, pure, empty of ordinary movements. All this to some extent, and waiting for the descent of the higher consciousness to transform it still more. Is it quite so?

There is no reason to suppose your feeling is not correct. It has to remain like that.

If my above statement is correct, does that mean that my vital is psychicised?

It is under the psychic influence.

Up to now I had to deal only with the mind, vital and physical. But today I found for the first time that my heart took certain things very deeply. I don't know how to keep it under the psychic control?

The heart is part of the vital — it has to be controlled in the same way as the rest, by rejection of the wrong movements, by acceptance of the true psychic surrender which prevents all demand and clamour, by calling in the higher light and knowledge.

THE PHYSICAL BEING

The Year 1933

Can I not command my body to cut down its sleep to two or three hours only? I have heard that many Yogis are able to minimise their sleep.

It is not possible to do at once what you like with the body. If the body is told to sleep only 2 or 3 hours, it may follow if the will is strong enough — but afterwards it may get exceedingly strained and even break down for want of needed rest. The yogis who minimise their sleep succeed only after a long tapasya in which they learn how to control the forces of Nature governing the body.

How is one to get out of one's limited physical personality?

Getting out means the consciousness widening so that one does not feel oneself any longer as shut up in the body or identified with the body and with the ordinary personality.

The Peace is not of the nature of inertia, but the inertia of tamas is a degradation of peace or rest as rajas is a degradation of divine Force. So when the physical is invited to peace and cannot receive it, it brings up inertia instead.

Does the mental tamas remain till one realises the supermind?

No. The mental tamas need not remain — the physical can only disappear altogether by the supramental descent.

Does not the whole nature get transformed only when the Supramental descends?

Yes — but there is a preliminary transformation in which the tamas can be greatly reduced or remain in the most material or be changed in its character.

Tamas cannot of itself turn into Peace. One has to bring down Peace from above.

What would be the activity of the transformed mechanical mind?

It would be no longer mechanical, but a basis of permanent illumination in the body consciousness.

Some friend said: "One feels the inner touch gone because one may not be quite ready to retain the Divine's pressure. Probably it might be the Divine Himself who takes it away, for our physical body may get fatigued by the constant working." Is this a fact?

Yes, the ordinary physical consciousness is not able to hold the contact and it does get tired — also it cannot assimilate much at a time. But it is not always the Divine who takes away the pressure; the lower consciousness itself loses it or gives it up.

Why is the physical mind so much open to the vital suggestions and forces?

The physical depends on the vital, at every step — it could not do anything without the help of the vital — so it is quite natural that it should receive its suggestions.

What makes the physical so weak that it can't do without the vital's help?

The physical is not weak, it is inert, because inertia is its principle — it is meant to be an instrument.

If our vital is a projection from the vital world itself, why does it feel everything new and strange when it enters there during night?

The vital does not feel anything strange there. It is the physical consciousness that feels strange when it gets the transcript of the experience.

The year 1934

It is not necessary to have committed anything — the obstacles of vital and physical Nature are sufficient to bring a pause. One has to remain quiet during the pause and not allow vital disappointment and depression.

The true passivity does not lead to inactivity — but the physical may wrongly take the pressure of passivity for an invitation to inaction.

Is the inertia due to the pressure of the Force?

The pressure of the Force never produces inertia. It is a resistance or non-response in the physical that produces it.

“You” are not the body. It is perfectly possible for the body to be strained without the mind or vital knowing or feeling it. The result appears only afterwards.

It is more often the physical that lowers like that without cause. In the vital it is only when there is a general feeling of want of interest in the sadhana because the sadhana is concerned with things it does not understand or seek for or else because it is not bringing results rapidly or brilliantly or for some other similar reason.

The body needs rest, if it is given the needed rest, it can be taught to recover quickly — if forced it quickly becomes tamasic.

Cannot the vital aspirations drive out the mental or physical tamas by their intensity?

For the time being only. It must be a higher power that will take them away permanently.

When there is intensity in the vital it always brings down a lot of energy. What does the intensity in the physical give?

Solidity or stability.

You wrote: “Get rid of the tamas of the physical which makes it painful.” I am not aware of this tamas specially during the meditation when the spine and the body ache.

That you don't feel it does not prove that it is not there. You had better become conscious of the tamas if you are not. By tamas I mean the inertia of the physical being which resists the Power and so causes the aching of the spine and the body. Why should the spine and body ache if there were no physical resistance?

THE MOTHER'S FORCE ON THE PHYSICAL BEING

During the present extrovert state when I try to concentrate for a silent receptivity it creates a pain in the forehead and particularly between the eyebrows. Why so?

Resistance in the physical stuff to the activity of the inner will and vision centre.

Doubt and questioning are part of the physical obstruction.

The physical does not get tired of the blankness. It may feel tamasic because of its own tendency to inertia, but it does not usually object to voidness. Of course it may be the vital physical — you have only to reject it as a remnant of the old movements.

I could not understand this — “peace we must have, but not the peace of a devastated nature or a mutilated capacity incapable of unrest because it is incapable of intensity.”

Not tamasic peace which is at rest because it does not aspire after anything, is too tired by suffering and misfortune etc. to care for anything.

After seeing the Mother, my flesh began to feel different kinds of experiences. I do not know how to express them.

Even the teeth, the most inconscient part of the body, have entered into the field of experience!

Yes, these things are felt when the Force is working.

But I wonder why the action of the Mother's Force is confined so much. All is limited up to the parts of my neck only!

It always begins like that.

You said yesterday: “These things are felt when the Force is working.” Our human mind would like to argue about this point: how is it the Force begins to act on an inconscient substance like teeth before it has acted sufficiently on the conscious parts like the vital and physical?

With many these experiences are the first they get.

The Fire around the body continues. It has enveloped the being like an armour. But what is its effect in the body? — a fiery intensity in the cells and the pores. Can this be true? The mind refuses to believe it.

It can very well be true.

Just at the end of the general Meditation the submind (subconscious or mechanical mind) became very active. I fail to understand the reason of its sudden coming up like that at such a time. Usually after the Meditation most of the being is either taken up into the absolute silence of the Self or the Higher fills it up with its static pure existence. This keeps the submind strongly intoxicated till I fall asleep.

It is probably the physical that could not keep up with the concentration, so started the submind business.

My lower vital seems to have hindered the free opening of the psychic being. That is why I don't feel any soul-movement like love, bhakti or joy in my heart and inner vital.

I think this is the worst possible phase of the sadhana.

The uprising of the inertia and the persistence of the vital have to be fought out by constant rejection until there is the descent of the Force in such a way as to make one with the peace and silence — these being so strong that nothing will be able to touch or cover the inner being.

The year 1934

There is a doubt in the physical mind whether, when the mental proper and the vital are not totally quieted, the purification of the physical can begin.

Does it imagine that everything is done by sections? All the parts of the being react upon each other. The purification of the physical being is long but the mind and the vital are thoroughly and permanently cleaned.

There is a feeling of the Mother's Force having entered into my physical nature and now working there. Is it correct?

There is a pressure on the physical nature to admit the Force.

When the tamas and rajas are driven out, one is in a sattwic state. But if the tamas enters again into this state how can an utter quietness be maintained?

You cannot drive out rajas and tamas, you can only convert them and give the predominance to sattwa. Tamas and rajas disappear only when the higher consciousness not only comes down but controls everything down to the cells of the body. They then change into the divine rest and peace and the divine energy or Tapas, — finally sattwa also changes into divine Light. As for remaining quiet when tamas is there, there can also be a tamasic quiet.

During the general morning concentration, my human consciousness went deep into the inner being and began to aspire. There it felt the working of the Mother's Force which slowly became more and more intense. My body could not bear its pressure for a long time. So I brought my consciousness out for a rest and again took it inward; like this it went on for some time.

When the body cannot bear, one has to go slowly, doing as much as possible without disturbing it.

Almost for the whole day the previous experience of the mind's liberation went on. During the physical activities it was not felt so vividly and exclusively. What I fail to grasp is, however, this; since it is a (purely) mental liberation, how is it that my flesh too feels some experience?

The flesh has a consciousness as well as the mind — all the consciousness is connected together so if the mind is freed, there is no reason why there should not be an effect on the physical also.

Let me tell you what happened during my noon nap. I was on the lap of the Mother. She had put her transforming palm on my head. With her thumb she was pressing or rather opening the Brahmik centre of my head. I began to feel as if something were received from there. Then all on a sudden there was a shifting of the consciousness into some other world. A supra-physical light was experienced in the cells of the body which was already flooded with light. The physical itself was taken up. Will you please explain this phenomenon?

There is nothing to explain. It was what you describe: At once the raising of the consciousness to a higher plane and the descent of that into the physical.

Today's special working seems to be on the eyes. Something definitely is going on there. A strong pressure is felt working on them.

That is when the Force is preparing the body.

It would really be interesting to know what is going on in the parts between my head and neck?

It is a preparation of the body for the mental transformation.

My body-consciousness does not resist as before and allows itself to be used by me.

Evidently there has been much progress there.

When the Mother's Force tackles the physical, cannot the body allow it to work quietly as the mind and vital do?

The law of the physical is inertia, dullness, obstruction to whatever is new or not yet established.

Even when the physical throws up inertia, is it not possible to cast off dullness and sorrow brought in by the inertia and continue maintaining our normal state of happiness?

Yes, but it needs a strong poise and great vigilance. Normally it is only after one has had a taste of dullness and inertia that one recovers.

It is the physical resistance which came up in you (the vital dissatisfaction with the emptiness giving it a chance) and the physical resistance there is an obstinate inertia. Its note is "stay where you are". Probably you will have to resort to an active aspiration to get rid of the obstructive inertia.

The physical consciousness has a force of inertia which makes it always go on with its old conditions, movements, responses, habits even without sanction or any true utility in them.

It is the tendency of the physical to substitute its own inertia for the emptiness. The true emptiness is the beginning of what I call in the *Arya* "shama" — the rest, calm,

peace of the eternal Self — which has finally to replace *tamas*, the physical inertia. *Tamas* is the degradation of *shama*, as *rajas* is the degradation of *Tapas*, the Divine Force. The physical consciousness is always trying to substitute its own inertia for the calm, peace or rest of the true consciousness, just as the vital is always trying to substitute its *rajas* for the true action of the Force.

At present when the descent of the Mother's Force is the only movement prominent, why do I feel an increasing weakness in the body?

Probably the material is not yet open enough to receive the Force.

In the evening I felt something descending and reaching down to the chest. Probably it was the Mother's Force.

Probably. You should establish the Force now in the form of a strong peace.

For the last three Darshans it has been noticed that the physical consciousness rises up and disturbs the free play of my consciousness just during these days.

The obstacles still in the nature very often rise up at these times. That means that they offer themselves to be overcome, — that is how you must take it.

Some say that it is not possible to fix peace in the outer physical till the supramental descent, and that there is only one man in the world who has done it up to now.

Who says that? Peace can be brought down into the physical — to its very cells. It is the active transformation of the physical that cannot be *completely* done without the supramental descent.

BODY-SENSE AND SADHANA

It is not only from the teeth that the nectar-juice (Amrita) flows. It springs from any part of the body.

During such a condition, sometimes the consciousness feels as if there does not exist a mouth or any part inside the mouth — only there is Amrita and Amrita!

That kind of non-existence of the body or of some part of it is a frequent experience in sadhana.

During the state of self-realisation very little sense remains of my body. I do not know what it does or where it lies.

That is usual. I was in that way unconscious of the body for many years.

It also happens that when the experience is of a voidness I feel the whole body to be as light as cotton-wool.

Yes, it becomes like that. In the end you feel as if you had no body but were spread out in the vastness of space as an infinite consciousness and existence — or as if the body were only a dot in that consciousness.

Occasionally the whole head down to the neck becomes as if unreal — no substance is felt there.

That happens when the consciousness is liberated from the body sense.

The consciousness feels as if the Pure Existence were materially descending into one, down to the neck. But how can that be?

The Pure Existence is not something abstract but substantial and concrete. Moreover it is descending into the body, so it is quite natural to feel it materially.

During the general meditation with the Mother, my consciousness rose upwards in an utter passivity. I became unaware of my body up to the neck.

It means the whole mind was liberated for a while from imprisonment in the body sense and became free in the passivity of the wider self.

During that experience I did feel the freedom from the body sense. But what about the mind sense? In a full and solid experience of this kind will there be any trace of the mind's existence?

That depends on the experience. It is usually had on the spiritual mental plane. There may be no active thinking mind, but the stuff of consciousness is still mental, even though it may be mind spiritual and liberated. Of course there may be the sense of pure spiritual existence, but that comes less easily.

THE INNER BEING

The year 1933

What is the outer consciousness? Is it connected with the inner being?

The outer consciousness is that which usually expresses itself in ordinary life. It is the external mental, vital, physical. It is not connected very much with the inner being except in a few — until one connects them together in the course of the sadhana.

Is it not true that our vital lays bare all our hidden desires and impulses?

It is not the vital that does that. It is either the psychic or something from the inner mind or the higher consciousness.

I did some offering, but something was kept back. Someone from within me was constantly beating me for keeping that back. So there was depression.

What was important in either case was not the outward action but the movement behind it. The exterior action is important only because of the inner state or motive it expresses. Your inner being was calling your attention to a defect in the inner movement — to the attachments that were there.

You once said about an action: "Because you did it from the outer mind and vital instead of from within." How am I to receive the necessary guidance from within?

You have to be conscious of your inner being.

I would very much like to bring out my inner being and live in it.

If you call down the higher consciousness, its descent of itself will show you your inner being as separate from the outer. Until then you can only go on observing yourself and the movements of your nature till you see the difference.

Does the inner being lie hidden? Will it never express itself through the outer before the outer is transformed?

If the inner being does not manifest or act, the outer will never get transformed.

Does the inner being open to the Mother by itself?

The inner being does not open except by sadhana, or by some psychic touch in the life.

What goes on so long as it is shut up?

It is the outer being that acts with as much of the inner influence as can filter through the closed centres.

When the inner being is shut up, isn't there a psychic sadness and, as a result, depression?

The psychic sadness is of a purifying and not a depressing kind.

How do the outer and the inner being become one?

By your becoming conscious in the inner being and living in it, the outer is then only an instrument and as soon as this instrument is filled with what is in the inner consciousness, it becomes a mere prolongation of the inner.

When in the state of passivity should I go on observing the movements?

You can go on observing and at the same time call for the inner will to guide.

What is this part which feels like opening to the Mother through writing, even when it is the same thing that goes on being repeated?

It may be the inner mental, it may be the psychic.

The year 1934

It means that you feel a consciousness within you which is calm and silent, not disturbed by external thoughts, grief or disturbance — as when the sea is disturbed on the surface but below the surface all is still and calm.

To throw oneself out means to externalise the consciousness so that it is dispersed, not concentrated, running about after outer things, obeying superficial and lower impulses and without contact with the inner being.

The inner being is not usually unquiet but it can be quiet or unquiet like the outer.

The psychic can have peace behind it — but the inner mind, vital and physical are not necessarily silent — they are full of movements. It is the higher consciousness that has a basis of peace.

My inner concentration and quietude seem to be extending outwards. I feel quietude and can concentrate with eyes open. Now I would like to ask you one question. When one leads an inner life, how does one deal with the outer activities?

They are dealt with by the Force that works through the being.

When I feel drawn into the inner being my consciousness still remains aware of all the things of the outer world, though usually it does not react to their impacts. Does not this remaining consciousness of external phenomena mean that my inward turning is incomplete?

No, why should it? To live in the inner being it is not necessary to become unconscious of external things. One is conscious of them, but not affected or controlled by them or subject to the ordinary reactions.

The “whole nature” does not so easily change. What has to be done is to get the inner being spiritualised by a higher consciousness.

As for the vital, there is always something in it that resists and tries to retard, but if the inner being opens sufficiently and you can live in the inner being, peace can descend and establish itself there in such a way that the vital movements of the surface may be there, but will not be able to break the inner peace.

When one lives an inner life, does not one come in touch with the psychic and bring about its leadership?

Not always at once. There is the inner mind, vital, physical. Many live a long time in that. The psychic is the inmost.

Till the evening the consciousness was in such a state that I could not make out anything. Along with the inner quietude it experienced a condition never before felt. It remained quite indifferent to what the outer being did and it stood on its own as if waiting for something.

It is some part of the inner being that has entered into quietude and separated itself from the external nature.

Usually it is my mind that determines and formulates the aspiration. But in today's silence, I saw the aspiration surging up spontaneously and harmoniously in a ready-made form!

So much the better. It is the inner being that has become active.

During the work also, though the mind was busy with thoughts, there was stillness, firm and solid, behind the activity.

Very good.

Does the above experience mean that my consciousness was not only in the inner being but on some higher plane?

It is the inner being. But the stillness comes from the higher consciousness.

It is sufficient to begin with if there is a constant inner stillness not disturbed by any thoughts or movements on the surface.

If the inner being did sadhana behind the surface or during the sleep, would I not know it as I do about my dreams?

Not necessarily — the inner being can do many things which the surface mind does not know.

People do not feel all that is going on in them — very little comes to the surface of the ordinary consciousness.

If you feel emptiness, peace, and silence in the midst of the most restless activities, the inner being cannot have withdrawn.

THE PSYCHIC BEING

The year 1933

It seems to me that you must know by this time about the psychic being — that it is behind the veil and its consciousness also; only a little comes out in the mind and vital and physical. When that consciousness is not concealed, when you are aware of your soul (the psychic being), when its feelings and consciousness are yours, then you have got the consciousness of the psychic being. The feelings and aspirations of the psychic being are all turned towards truth and right consciousness and the Divine; it is the only part that cannot be touched by the hostile forces and their suggestions.

But how to remove that veil and get the psychic in front?

You have to aspire for it and it can only happen when you are sufficiently advanced.

Usually the mind opens first or the heart — the psychic centre opens afterwards.

From where does the mind or the psychic receive the power of discrimination?

It belongs to them by nature — only the mind can err, the psychic does not.

Is it not the Mother who warns us indirectly, through the mind or the psychic?

It is only when the Mother speaks directly that you can say “The Mother has said”.

Nowadays, I notice that when I do not check the useless thoughts and impulses, some part within feels a sense of uneasiness.

It may be something psychic-mental, that is, an influence of the psychic put out into the mind.

When the psychic has put its influence into the mind, why is it so weak that it cannot prevent the wrong thoughts and impulses coming in, but simply tolerates them with an uneasy feeling?

The mind and the vital have always been dominant and developed themselves and are accustomed to act for themselves. How do you expect an influence coming forward and

for the first time to be stronger? The psychic is not uneasy, it makes you uneasy when you do the wrong thing.

The uneasiness created by the psychic is not depression — it is in the nature of a rejection of the wrong movement. If the uneasiness causes depression or vital dissatisfaction, it is not the psychic.

The uneasiness is simply a reminder to you to be more vigilant in future.

In what way am I going so wrong that the psychic becomes too feeble to control my vital and its wrong movements?

You have been keeping the psychic in the background during a thousand lives and indulging the vital. That is why the psychic is not strong.

Is not our psychic being in itself surrendered to the Divine?

It has to be surrendered consciously and with more knowledge. The psychic aspires to the Divine or answers to things divine, it is surrendered in principle, but it has to develop its surrender in detail carrying with it the surrender of all the being.

Is it true that unless each of our parts — mind, vital and physical — aspires for transformation there cannot be a total surrender?

Yes.

Does your answer mean that all our being must come under the psychic influence and obey it?

Yes.

Does the psychic aspire through the mind only?

Why should it aspire through the mind only?

Because the mind has a greater purity and openness to the Divine than the vital and the physical.

The psychic can aspire from itself. It can aspire through the vital and the physical also.

When the mind, vital and physical are not awakened, how does the psychic manifest its influence on the material plane?

You do not seem to have understood my answer at all. In the ordinary consciousness in which the mind etc. are not awakened the psychic acts as well as it can through them, but according to the laws of the Ignorance.

This evening I saw young D doing Pranams to your photograph and then prostrating himself before it. Is it not rather supernatural for such a little boy to do that?

There is nothing that can be called supernatural. There are children in whom the psychic is already awake.

In the evolution, the animal is at a lower stage than man. How then do we sometimes find dogs and horses so faithful and skilful that even for a human being it would be difficult to act like them?

Faithful yes — but how skilful, except in the special connection of dogs and horses? These are faithful because of the psychic part in them, but in mind they are inferior.

Why do I not feel love and Ananda every time I see the Mother?

Does the psychic consist of a centre as well as a plane?

Yes.

As for the love and Ananda, it depends on the psychic coming up.

On the Darshan Day (15th August) and the day before it, I felt an intense love for you and for the Mother. It possessed my whole being for some time. And then a high and profound reverence for both of you — and "a happiness that no worldly pleasure can give us".

That is obviously psychic.

Along with the ascending movement in the spine, there has been an immense intensity in the area of the heart. Something from there rises up ardently. Is that the soul?

Something from the psychic at any rate.

Does your answer mean that the psychic has unveiled itself now?

It is trying to open.

It seems that the psychic being has begun to work directly on the outer consciousness, with love and devotion as its main means.

Yes, certainly that is the working of the psychic.

A thrill comes from above and passes through my body, making the adhar stilled for a while.

Of course it is the thrill of the Mother's touch coming from above and felt by the psychic and vital together.

Day by day it is now becoming obvious that the Mother is bestowing upon her child a psychic and spiritual realisation simultaneously.

It is an immense progress.

Through my forehead something has definitely been coming from above. The descent is powerful as well as rapid.

It is the higher consciousness sending its force down into the inner mind centre.

The descent felt today has not been confined to me alone: it has been rather general. Will it not change the whole atmosphere?

There is an increasing Power descending — but to change the whole atmosphere will take time.

The descent felt before on the forehead is now coming further down as if passing through the nose.

It is coming down towards the externalising mind centre.

After returning from the Mother, I feel as if there is something like a burning fire within. As I did not have such an experience before, I am not sure if it is exactly a fire, but the feeling is constant.

That state pulls me inward, plunging me deep into the peace and silence.

It is all right. It is the fire of aspiration and purification with the beginning of the true inner experience which, if it continues, creates the Yogic consciousness and in the end replaces by it the ordinary outer consciousness.

The central fire is in the psychic being, but it can be lit in all the parts of the being.

There is aspiration during the whole day. Now I feel that it is not my mind alone that aspires but also some being from within joins with it! What is more is that it aspires more constantly than the outer mind. What is that being?

It may be the inner being or part of it — may be the psychic.

What should be our preparation to bring out the psychic from its veil?

Aspiration for devotion, and refusal of egoistic movement.

I feel as if something from inside presses my outer being constantly for a change.

I suppose it is the pressure of the psychic.

But why has the psychic to press thus?

Your question has no meaning. If the psychic did not press, there would be no sadhana.

My consciousness feels that M's psychic being is much in front. His nature is inwardly well built. Is it a correct observation?

He has a good psychic being — well developed.

A lady visitor was leaving the Ashram today. No sooner did the Mother finish the Pranam ceremony than this lady began to weep. In fact she tried hard to check herself as we all were still there, but it seems she could not help it. Was it not due to her psychic coming in front for the time?

It is not a question of the psychic coming in front. She has a psychic being which is awake and has long been in connection with the Mother on the inner plane.

THE HEART AND THE PSYCHIC BEING

At times I feel as if my heart opens out or ascends with joy to the Mother. Has the heart also to rise?

The emotional being has to ascend.

What happens to the heart in the process of the Integral Yoga? Is it purified in itself?

Yes, it becomes an instrument of self-expression of the psychic being.

Before it becomes the instrument of the psychic, what does it follow?

The vital — the heart is the centre of the emotional being and the emotions are vital movements. When the heart is purified, the vital emotions change into psychic feelings or else psychicised vital movements.

Sometimes we feel pure and true emotions surging out from us. Are they not directly from the psychic being? For how could the unpurified heart produce anything pure and true?

Pure and true thoughts and emotions and impulses can rise from the human mind, heart and vital, because all is not evil there. The heart may be unpurified but that does not mean that everything in it is impure.

The heart is part of the vital — it has to be controlled in the same way as the rest, by rejection of the wrong movements, by acceptance of the true psychic surrender which prevents all demand and clamour, by calling in the higher light and knowledge.

Whenever an inner love springs out for the Mother, tears rush out too.

If it is tears of love or joy, then they are usually from the psychic being. These are psychic tears of devotion etc.

You have written: "The heart is the seat not only of the psychic but also of the emotional vital." Does this mean that the emotional being itself acts as a veil in front of the psychic?

Yes, when it is full of vital movements or accustomed more to a vital than a psychic way of emotion.

Some dissatisfactions come and affect the heart which is opening to the Mother.

Get rid of these dissatisfactions, they prevent the permanent psychic opening.

Perhaps it is because the psychic is just opening that it comes under the influence of these dissatisfactions?

What the psychic always feels is "What the Mother does is for the best", and accepts all with gladness. It is the vital part of the heart that is easily touched by the suggestions.

THE VITAL NATURE AND THE PSYCHIC BEING

What is required for the psychic to emerge?

Aspiration for devotion, and refusal of egoistic movement.

When the psychic touches there is an intensification of love but the lower vital mixes up the love with all sorts of demands.

You speak of the psychic transforming the lower vital. Can it do so completely or is it the higher consciousness that does it?

I mean here a preliminary transformation turning it towards the Divine and purifying it so that it can receive the higher consciousness.

How is it that when one is realising the Self above, one does not get the ecstasies one has when the psychic is active?

Love, joy and happiness come from the psychic. The Self gives peace or a universal Ananda.

Is it possible for the psychic to be inactive even though the Self is realised, and the mind and the vital do not resist the Divine?

It is often like that. The psychic waits till the full stabilisation of the self-realisation down to the physical or sometimes down to the higher vital.

When the consciousness drops a little below the overhead centre, there is a sense of separation and the heart begins to yearn.

The yearning of the heart may be there but it should not disturb the peace.

I think it is better to stop it for the present. It is very possible that the vital is taking advantage of it to create dissatisfaction with the progress of the sadhana. The psychic yearning brings no reaction of impatience, dissatisfaction or disturbance.

If the psychic yearning is like that, then how will it express the pangs of separation?

Pangs of separation belong to the vital, not to the psychic; the psychic having no pangs need not express them. The psychic is always turned towards the Divine in faith, joy and confidence — whatever aspiration it has is full of trust and hope.

If the pangs of separation are in the vital, is it because its nature is such that when it turns to the Divine it feels them? Or are they a wrong movement?

It is its ordinary nature applying itself to the movement towards the Divine.

Is this the right way of the vital's opening to the Divine?

No, not in this yoga. It is allowed in certain Vaishnava forms of Yoga. In this Yoga, the more psychic the movements, the better.

What would be the right way for the vital in this Yoga?

It must conform its movement to the psychic movement.

It is said that the psychic is in direct connection with the Divine. Why should it then have yearning for the Divine?

It is for the presence of the Divine in the heart consciousness or manifestation here.

How is one to distinguish the bhakti of the vital from that of the psychic?

The main distinction is that the vital demands, the psychic gives itself.

When the whole nature is engrossed in feeling, thinking, acting round the word "Mother", would the psychic be realised?

That would of itself be the psychic state.

An increasing pressure is felt, right from the cardiac centre down to the navel. It rises and descends increasingly.

It means a strong working to connect the psychic and vital together.

Can one be wide-awake to the Mother's presence in sleep even?

That does happen, but usually only when the psychic is in full activity.

I dreamt of three aeroplanes rising from a steamer. What does it indicate?

I suppose something capable of ascent in the psychic, the inner mind, the inner vital.

During the sadhana, has the psychic also to ascend?

It joins itself to the higher consciousness.

THE POWER OF AGNI AND THE PSYCHIC FIRE

Coming from the Mother, I felt as if a burning transformation had started. I feel around me a burning sensation. To give an example, each of my fingers feels surrounded by a fire.

It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation.

While leaving the Ashram I was conscious of something very weighty, wide, full of power and intensely strong entering not merely through the Brahmic passage at the top of the head but through the whole head.

It is simply the force of the higher consciousness descending in greater mass.

I feel the experience in flesh and teeth and it is becoming more and more dense. Does it mean that there is also a working of peace?

The force can also be dense in that way; but probably it is establishing the solid calm in that way.

Along with the psychic fire in the heart there was a simultaneous action of a vital fire. How is that?

There is no incompatibility between them.

What is it that acts in the Agni?

It is the Mother's Force that works in the Agni.

Before my consciousness could realise fully the Self the psychic seems to have come so much forward. Is the experience of a burning action almost everywhere in the being a sign of this?

All that is simply the burning of the Agni in various parts of the being. It prepares it for transformation. But the coming forward of the psychic is another matter and its signs are psychological.

Since it is mostly the Agni that burns within me, why does the mind take it for the psychic fire?

It is some association in the mind probably coupling Agni with the psychic. Of course the individual Agni fire has its starting point in the psychic, but the mere burning of the fire does not show that the psychic is coming forward.

When it burns in the heart it is the fire in the psychic. The psychic fire is individual and takes usually the form of a fire of aspiration or personal tapasya. This Fire is universal and it came from above.

What is experienced in the vital as fire?

The psychic fire may burn in the vital. It all depends on whether it is the fire of the general Force that comes from above or the fire of your soul's aspiration and tapasya.

What does the fire in any part indicate?

The fire indicates a dynamic action.

You wrote a few days back that the signs of the psychic's coming forward are psychological. What are these signs?

A central love, bhakti, surrender, giving everything, a sight within that sees always clearly what is spiritually right or wrong and automatically rejects the latter — a movement of entire consecration and dedication of all in one to the Mother.

I feel something very intense and as if burning deep within — Just as it was in the case of the fire of aspiration, and yet it is not the same!

It may be the Yogic force (tapas) which is also called *Yogagni* — Yoga fire.

What is the function of the Yogagni?

It prepares the system, creates the yogic aspirations, brings in the experiences of the sadhana etc.

At about seven a.m. I began to feel the pressure. It was perhaps for the peace because soon I began to experience peace. At eight there was another pressure probably for silence. But I could not maintain the silence properly due to the

mechanical thoughts. After a short while, there came a third pressure. It gave me much energy; I could work very quickly without getting tired. Since the beginning of the third pressure I have been feeling much heat in me and around me. What is that heat?

It is the heat of the tapas created by the pressure.

After entering into the condition of peace and silence, the fire of aspiration and the Yogagni are not experienced any more. It seems I get one new thing and lose the previous one!

It may be they are not felt at present — the one thing to be felt always is the silence and peace. The Agni in that form is an experience, which you have to feel as an aspiration and a force working.

The higher flow that descends through the top of my head — the Brahmic centre — was felt till now only up to the inner mind centre in the forehead. Now it has extended and runs into the nose.

It is coming down towards the externalising mind centre.

I do not understand how the higher pressure is not only coming with intensity and power but also burning like a fire.

That is the Agni-force in it.

All that is simply the burning of the Agni in various parts of the being. It prepares for the transformation.

Cannot the passive and the active Self be harmonised so as to govern and change my nature properly? Either one of the two does not seem sufficient to handle the whole of the human nature.

Yes, but the Peace, Purity and Calm of the Self must be fixed — otherwise the active Descent may find the forces it awakes seized on by lower Powers and a confusion created. That has happened with many.

Can the active Descent take place even if Purity, Peace and Calm are not sufficiently established?

It can, — but to have the peace and calm first is better. Many call down the superior Force first.

Is it not possible at my present stage to maintain my central consciousness in the pure-existence all the time and let my external actions be directed by the Mother's Force so that they may come automatically from the true consciousness?

No, it is not yet possible. The true consciousness must be there in the mind and vital before that is done and the true consciousness is the psychic and the higher. What one can do before that is to use the mental will to direct the actions in the right way or reject the things that have to be rejected. But this you had stopped when the silence, emptiness etc. came down.

Today my inner being collected all its diffused energy of will-power and fought out the inertia massed within me. Was the force used rajas, the vital push, something unspiritual? It was not a silent duel. There were strong vibrations all around me.

There is nothing unspiritual in that — the use of this force is very good — it is tapas, not rajas.

You once wrote: "As for the submind etc., these things have a habit of sticking, so long as the higher dynamic activities are not established." What are the higher dynamic activities?

Knowledge, higher Will, Force, universal Ananda.

With a certain kind of will, I can quiet even the subconscious for a while. But a greater will-power is required for a constant bold.

That is one of the higher dynamic activities.

ANANDA AND LOVE

I have been experiencing calm and silence, but the Ananda and love which I was feeling have disappeared.

The basis of calm and silence should be there first — otherwise the Ananda and love may take a too vital character and prove unstable.

You once wrote about the disappearance of love and Ananda: "It is so with all the spiritual experiences. The ordinary consciousness is not accustomed to hold them." But if calm and silence came, would it still be the ordinary consciousness?

I mean by the ordinary consciousness the human consciousness which has to be changed — it is into that consciousness that all these experiences from above come in order to change it first into higher mind and then into a still higher thing. Before divine Love and Ananda can be made to settle, there is much more that is to be done — first the psychic love must be there and other things besides.

How would you distinguish the psychic love from the divine love?

The psychic love is pure and full of self-giving without egoistic demands, but it is human and can err and suffer. The Divine Love is something much vaster and deeper and full of light and Ananda.

One is told that without a universal love there can be no real progress. But mostly one remains inwardly withdrawn and concentrated on the Mother.

You are not able now to have the universal love — it is not in your nature. Wait till your nature is widened by the higher consciousness, then your disabilities in that direction will disappear.

Sometimes the being feels something physically all over like a thrill, but it is not exactly a thrill. Is it what may be called a "glow"?

A glow means a subdued but rich light or else a sort of warm exhilaration of a luminous kind.

Somebody told me that the void is a Divine Darkness.

I don't believe much in this Divine Darkness. It is a Christian idea. For us the Divine is Peace, Purity, Wideness, Light, Ananda.

A sadhaka need not give himself to an outsider, but can he express his psychic love to him? I would also like to know from you if the sadhaka might help him to rise higher.

It is safer not to indulge in such activities. One is more likely to be drawn into the other's consciousness than to be able to help him — unless he is himself a truth-seeker.

To give oneself to an outsider is to go out from the atmosphere of sadhana and give oneself to the outer world forces.

One can have a psychic feeling of love for someone, a universal love for all creatures, but one has to give oneself only to the Divine.

THE CENTRAL BEING AND THE PSYCHIC

Would you please indicate the difference between the psychic being and what is called the central being? Is our psychic a part of this central being and does it receive the Divine's help through it? In Yoga, how does our central being stand in relation to the other parts of our being?

The central being is above the Adhar — most people are not aware of their central being (Jivatman) — they are aware only of the ego.

The psychic is the soul, it is a portion of the Divine that supports the mind and body in the evolution. The psychic gets the Divine's help directly from the Divine.

The central being is that on which all the others depend. If it makes its surrender, that is, renounces its separate fulfilment in order to be an instrument of the Divine, then it is easier for the mind, vital and physical to surrender.

Is it a fact that when circumstances are suitable the central being renounces its separate fulfilment and surrenders itself to the Divine?

It has nothing to do with suitable circumstances. If the will of the central being turns towards union with the Divine, then it renounces its separate fulfilment.

Is it true that the Supreme instead of working directly on man acts through the Jivatman?

For the most part the Supreme acts through the Jiva and its nature and the Jiva and the nature act through the ego and the ego acts through the outer instruments — that is the play of the Ignorance.

Is it true that the psychic can come in front and reign over the mind, vital and physical only when the central being has surrendered itself to the Divine?

If there is the will to surrender in the central being, then the psychic can come forward.

It is said that the soul and the Atman are not one and the same; there is a difference. How do you distinguish them?

The Atman is one in all, is not born, does not evolve or change.

The soul is something that comes from the Divine into the evolution and as the psychic being it evolves and assumes different personalities from life to life.

You said, "The Atman is one in all, is not born, does not evolve or change." In that case, is there any difference between the Atman and the Divine?

The Divine is more than the Atman. It is Nature also. It contains everything in Itself.

Does the soul coming from the Divine enter into this universe from the very beginning or after the evolution of animal life?

The soul is there from the beginning as a spark of the Divine. It grows and takes form as the psychic being in the course of the evolution.

THE PSYCHIC BEING AFTER DEATH

After death, what happens to the adhar — I mean mind, vital and subtle physical — when the psychic being returns to the psychic plane for rest?

It is dropped off — unless the being has become strongly individualised on the mental plane or both on the mental and vital. Then it keeps its mental and vital sheaths — otherwise they disintegrate and everything essential is drawn back into the psychic.

Why has the psychic being to pass through the other worlds before reaching its own?

Because they are there in between and because so long as the vital and mental formations are there, you cannot go elsewhere than the mental and vital worlds.

While passing through the mental and vital worlds, does not the psychic draw back the substance from its mental and vital beings in order to use it for the next birth?

It does not necessarily take the same substance as before. If it did, there would be no difference between the past life and the new one.

Does the psychic really take rest in its plane as we do here in the physical world when tired?

It is a different kind of rest.

When does it return to the earth again?

Whenever it is due.

After death, when the vital retires to its vital plane, what does it do there till the psychic calls it back for the next life on the earth?

For most people the vital dissolves after a time as it is not sufficiently formed to be immortal. The soul descending makes a new vital formation suitable for the new life.

Could the vital of a worldly man whose vitality was very strong, like Napoleon's, be immortal, or only that of him who was far advanced in Yoga?

Only if it is consciously developed and connected with the psychic being.

It is said that when one has left this world one enjoys or suffers according to one's Karma. In which world is this done?

In whatever worlds you pass through — but it is doubtful whether the statement is more than very partially true.

But which part of us suffers or enjoys when our physical body is no more there?

The vital can suffer, or enjoy in the vital world for a time.

PART II

THE PURUSHA AND THE PRAKRITI

The year 1933

Can a beginner get a distinct answer from the Purusha?

The Purusha does not talk. It is a movement of consciousness — a movement of consent or refusal.

Has not each of our beings — mental, vital and physical — its own Purusha, which observes all the movements without identifying itself with them and is quite indifferent and impersonal?

By itself the Purusha is impersonal, but by mixing itself with the movements of Prakriti it makes for itself a surface ego or personality. When it appears in its own separate nature then it is seen to be detached and observing.

Is the Purusha above us?

It is behind, not above — you have to become aware of it.

It is said that the mental control has to be replaced by a divine control. Between these two there is a period of transition when there is no control at all. How is one then to deal with the activities of life?

You have to call down the higher control in such a case. But the withdrawal of mental control need not be sudden and complete — it can be replaced as it goes by the action of the Purusha — his consent or refusal.

You have said, "Everything which belongs to Prakriti can be rejected by the Purusha." But when the Purusha itself has become one with Prakriti, what is one to do?

There is no need of rejection when the Purusha is one with the Prakriti — but that happens only on a higher plane. Here the Purusha is not one, it is only subjected to Prakriti as long as it remains inert.

Today the leaning towards the ordinary nature seems to be reducing to a great extent. Is it a sign of my Purusha separating itself from the Prakriti?

If it does one knows it. When it separates there is an imperturbable calm inside and a feeling of all the movements as not being oneself or one's own.

*How fine would it be if we remembered that everything in us comes from Nature!
There will be little difficulty then in pushing out the undesirable things.*

It does not follow. It depends on whether the Purusha part in you is passive or active with the light and Will in it.

The Purusha in men is normally passive not active. It is the Prakriti that is active. By development of the inner will it (the Purusha) can become active.

When I asked you about the part in me which had begun to observe the movements and to warn me sometimes, whether it was the Purusha or not, you replied, "Yes." Could I then conclude that my Purusha is coming out from its identification with the Prakriti?

It has begun to separate itself.

The year 1934

In the silent state, who is it that guards our being and witnesses it?

The Self or Purusha is the witness.

There was a vital disturbance. I know quite well of its irrational character and yet cannot get out of it. This is my normal defect and weakness. But this time somehow I tried to persevere in coming out of the disturbance. After some time, my consciousness entered a state where it could not only detach itself from the vital and its revolt but force it to throw away its selfish and unsatisfied feelings by the Mother's Force which was there. During that time I felt as if I were neither mind, vital nor physical, but something else.

What was that experience?

What experience? The separation from mind, physical and vital? That is the separate Purusha consciousness. The Purusha separated from the instruments can control them — when there is an identification, he cannot.

Now I am attempting to save myself from the identification with mind, vital and physical. How does the inner Purusha deal with these instruments?

It observes their movements and gives or withdraws its consent according to their nature. Or else it quiets them all down so as to receive only from above.

How shall I make the Purusha consciousness concentrated and receptive?

When you are in the Purusha consciousness, that itself implies a state of concentration and receptivity.

At present how far is my Purusha in direct touch with the Divine?

At present it is the Purusha in the mind that you feel — when you become aware of the Purusha on the spiritual plane then there is more chance of its getting into direct touch with the Divine.

P believes that the Purusha can remain withdrawn and allow the lower nature (the Prakriti) to satisfy its desires. For he is not bothered whether the nature is satisfied or not so long as he is not identified with it.

That is the old Vedantic idea — to be free and detached within and leave the Prakriti to itself. When you die, the Purusha will go to glory and the Prakriti drop off — perhaps into Hell. This theory is a source of any amount of self-deception and wilful self-indulgence.

The Purusha consciousness is becoming separate from the Prakriti. If Prakriti does not obey, has not the Purusha to become severe and harsh to her?

No. The Purusha always remains calm and always goes on putting its will till it succeeds.

Even when the Purusha does not lose its separateness and wants the Prakriti to be calm, the Prakriti does not care to listen to it at all. Why so?

As you have indulged the Prakriti for the last ten thousand lives or so, it has been accustomed to impose its own way on the Purusha. To be separate is only the first step. Also I fancy the Purusha in you is still very mental in its will.

The Purusha's action is more effective when it is spiritual. But that comes afterwards.

It is the will of the Purusha that ought to meet action — will is a silent force put upon the thing to be changed.

It is only by developing the habit of will or command in the Purusha consciousness that that can be done. Left to himself the Purusha is either inactive in Prakriti, controlled by her or separate and a witness.

You were using a mental control. When the silence came the mind stopped its action, so the mental control ceased. It has to be replaced by a spiritual control, the silent Purusha will.

THE EGO

I want to be free of my ego. Is it possible now?

I do not see how you can be free from ego at this stage.

I find it difficult to keep myself free from feeling disgust for X whenever I see him. When I meet him all the wrong actions he has done come up before my memory. How am I to throw away such stupid reactions from my nature?

By having dislike and disgust for nobody — remembering that the Divine is in all.

I do not understand how I manage to forget that once I too did the wrong things even more freely than X.

It is the vital ego that does like that.

Ego is not only common in man, it is universal.

What is the place of individuality in our Yoga?

There is a spiritual individuality in each person which develops with the development of the consciousness in sadhana.

But what happens in the course of the sadhana to the other — non-spiritual — individuality which is already there in us?

What individuality? If you mean the ego it has to disappear and be replaced by the true individual.

If we were conscious surely we would find that the source of all extra capacity of ours lay in the Divine, and that we were mistaken in appropriating it.

Obviously. It is Nature, Prakriti, that expresses itself in the capacity — the ego is only an instrument of her workings.

If the Purusha separates itself from the Prakriti, will the ego disappear by itself?

Not at once, but it is the first step for the disappearance of the ego.

After taking something from the universal consciousness one returns to his individual being. Can that something now be called one's own?

You can consider anything you like as your own, if you look at it from the egoistic point of view.

It is of course from Nature that the artist receives his faculty. But afterwards it is he who develops it and tends it. What has Nature got to do with it then?

You might just as well talk of the electricity in a dynamo belonging to the dynamo and not to Nature. All is Force of Nature. You cannot breathe or think or move without Nature breathing or thinking or moving in you.

What is it in us that makes demands?

It is a sentimental demanding part of the vital ego which makes demands and when they get no answer become despondent, revolted or miserable. If it gets an answer, even then it likes to think that it has not got one or that the answer was not sufficient or finds some other cause for being despondent, revolted or miserable.

Something in it enjoys the play of it, as one enjoys a drama.

Is that ego to be rejected outright? Or is it to be transformed so that it demands nothing but only gives itself to the Mother?

The ego has to be thrown out — it is the true vital being that gives itself to the Mother.

H told me, as one goes on progressing higher and higher one's ego tends to become greater and greater till the Overmind is reached. Is that so?

Not if one takes care to lose the ego on the way.

From a friend of mine I learnt indirectly that my nature is egoistic. How is it? You never pointed it out to me?

You were egoistic, but that is so common that I did not know I had to point it out. There are very few who are not or were not like that.

Could you kindly explain what is meant by "drawing energy from others"?

That is what the vital often or usually does if it is egoistic. People are always drawing forces from those around them, but they give also. But the vital ego tends often to draw without exchange, then there comes the drain.

Studying my own nature a little deeply, I observe that it is very difficult to catch the ego before it prints its colour even on our surrender to the Divine.

It has been accustomed to do that always, so it has the strength to continue. The old action of the Prakriti continues even after mental rejection until it is either exhausted or rejected by the vital itself.

ASPIRATION – CONCENTRATION – WILL – SURRENDER

What is the meaning of “aspiration”?

It is the call of the being for higher things — for the Divine, for all that belongs to the higher or Divine Consciousness.

I think many aspire only on the mental plane in the beginning. How can I bring down this aspiration into the heart, so that it may have an effect more easily and quickly?

By concentrating on the heart while aspiring.

There are so many things to aspire for. How is a man to choose one from another? How can he know his own true need with his mind?

He can't — It is either by the will or the heart that the aspiration has to be decided.

One aspires for a thing for five minutes and afterwards for something else. Will this have the same effect as aspiring for one thing for a long time?

The order or time is of no importance. It is the force and sincerity of the aspiration itself that matters.

How do you differentiate the aspiration from the will?

The aspiration is a call to the Divine Force to act — the will is itself a force put forth to act or accomplish or bring about a result.

What is the definition of will in the yogic sense?

A conscious force that acts with a perception and a purpose.

How can we increase the power of our will?

By exercising it and by calling down more consciousness and force from above.

Why is it that sometimes the will power does not produce the required result?

How can it always unless it is the true and perfect will?

Once you wrote to me: "You must have a sincere will for opening." Is it not true to say that the will is sincere, true and effective in itself?

What will? The vital will is often insincere, mixed with ambition, vanity or vital desire. The mental will often prefers its own ideas to the Truth. The will for opening may itself be affected by these things.

You have said: "But it is not so easy for it to be free." Anyhow one has to make an effort for a free will. How can one succeed?

By persistent aspiration, rejection of all that is in the way.

When can the will work straight on the object from the Sahasradala?

When one is conscious there and can take one's inner seat there and direct thought and will and action from that centre.

You have said: "You can go on observing and at the same time call for the inner will to guide." What is this inner will?

Not the outer ignorant one but the inner psychic or the higher will from above.

It is said: "You can hasten the realisation by lending your will to the Divine." What does it mean and how to put this precept into practice?

It means "By allowing your will to be used by the Divine". You have first to become conscious of the Divine Force — then you can make your will one of its instruments.

When I asked for the permission to go to see the festival, the Mother said: "Comme vous voulez" ("As you like"). What should I understand by that answer? I thought, as long as we are subject to the lower Nature we cannot expect any freedom (of action): the Mother's order is our law. Since she did not give me any definite reply I gave up my desire to see the festival.

She meant that it was of no importance one way or the other.

It is when you are free from the lower Nature that her will is the Law.

The lower Nature is constantly disobeying the Divine Will.

What I meant to ask you was this: so long as we are bound to the lower Nature what does the Mother actually intend by leaving the responsibility to us by saying, "Comme vous voulez"? Only if one is a little advanced, one can make the best use of such a freedom.

When one is advanced one does not ask for freedom, but to obey the Divine Will.

In order to reach the higher Nature, have we not to prevent the lower Nature from disobeying the Divine will?

Yes, but it is a free uncompelled assent to the Divine Will — in the higher Nature there is a spontaneous oneness of the Divine and the individual will.

What exactly is the meaning of "Will one with the Divine Will"?

Agrees and is the same as the Divine Will — does not follow after separate personal preferences and desires.

Is it advisable to sometimes exceed our normal quantity of food and digest it by the will force? P Says he takes at times three or four times more food and sets everything right by his will.

It is better not to try unless you are sure of the effectivity of your will on the body.

The Mother has said: "If you surrender you have to give up effort, but that does not mean that you have to abandon also all willed action." Will you kindly explain it?

Effort means straining endeavour. There can be an action with a will in it in which there is no strain of effort.

Should one not use a straining effort in order to become free from a clouded state?

If one cannot do without straining. But it is not so effective as the true spiritual will in which there is no straining.

When I sit down to meditation many thoughts seem to attack me. If I go about and work or simply walk, I feel a little more conscious than in the meditation.

Then it is better not to meditate; probably you become too passive and let anything come.

It is said that the significances of the flowers given by the Mother are often quite different from what is ordinarily understood. For instance, ordinarily "sincerity" means "honesty" but in our Yoga it has a much wider implication.

Sincerity means more than mere honesty. It means that you mean what you say, feel what you profess, are earnest in your will. As the sadhak aspires to be an instrument of the Divine and one with the Divine, sincerity in him means that he is really in earnest in his aspiration and refuses all other will or impulse except the Divine's.

Please sum up the meaning of "sincerity" in our Yoga?

To allow no part of the being to contradict the highest aspiration towards the Divine.

What is the significance of "pure mind"?

Pure = under no other influence than the Divine.

What is meant by "vital consecration"?

Consecration means offering and making sacred to the Mother so that the whole vital nature may belong to her and not to the lower nature.

You said yesterday: "It is only after you become conscious that the surrender can be complete." Which consciousness was spoken of here? How am I to receive it from the Divine Shakti?

The right consciousness by which you become aware of all that is going on in you and of the real character of the movements and aware too of the right working. You can get it by aspiration.

What is the "true consciousness"?

The consciousness that is aware of the Divine and the Truth and does not look at things from the ego — it is wide and calm and strong and aspires to union and surrender — it is many things besides, but this is the essential.

What is "surrender"? How is one to offer a total and sincere surrender?

By becoming conscious of the Divine, offering everything in you to the Divine Force to transform and obeying its will.

How am I to offer a complete surrender to the Mother?

Surrender cannot be so easily completed. You have to go on quietly and patiently till the whole being is awake and open.

About surrender you have said: "It would mean that nothing would want to go its own way." In that state nothing undivine would be expressed in our action. There might enter, however, wrong thoughts or desires but we would dismiss them. Is it not so?

If everything in you were surrendered to do the Mother's will only, other things would not come in or would not be received or followed if they came.

How is one to offer everything back to the Divine that has come from the Divine?

Have attachment to nothing — aspire until you get the consciousness of the Divine — call on the Divine to control and take up all you are and have.

What is the "fixed and unflinching aspiration" you spoke of the other day?

Aspiration that is there always and does not get tired and cease.

Doing work, when the mind is engrossed in it, how can one aspire?

One can both aspire and attend to the work and do many other things at the same time when the consciousness is developed by yoga.

Is it not really difficult to aspire for two things at a time?

It is as easy as to aspire for one thing.

To feel the forces coming from the Mother and to be open to the Mother's Force — are these two things different?

The two include each other. If you feel the forces it means that you are open. If you open, you will soon become conscious of the Mother's Force.

What is meant by "burning aspirations"?

Very strong and intense, full of the fire of Agni.

Does the consciousness merely warn that we should do this and not that, we should accept that and reject this? Or has it the power also to prevent us from doing anything against its will?

It depends. If the consciousness is developed on the side of knowledge it will warn only. If on the side of will or power it will help to effectuate.

A wrong undivine thought entered into me. Some part of my mind found it out and rejected it. It then went away. Which was the part that dismissed it? Is it not a fact that our mind can disapprove of such things but not dismiss them?

There is a will in the mind and not merely the power of thought.

How are we to put a will in the subconscious when we are not even conscious of this part of our nature?

Just as you put a will anywhere else in the vital or physical — it has only to be imposed on the consciousness and addressed through the consciousness to the subconscious part of the being.

What is equality?

Equality is to remain unmoved within in all conditions.

You wrote to me: "By concentrating in the heart while aspiring..." I do not know how to concentrate. Kindly tell me how to do it?

When you read or do anything in which you take interest, you concentrate on it. Concentration simply means fixing of consciousness on something.

You have said that one has to concentrate a little till one gets one's proper state of consciousness back. On what is one to concentrate?

To concentrate the consciousness in itself simply, as you tighten a belt. It has got relaxed and diffused, so you have lost what you gained. Or if you have not the habit of doing

that, concentrate in the remembrance of the Mother till the undiffused state comes back.

I find it rather difficult to concentrate with my eyes open. How am I to cultivate this habit?

It is so with everybody — unless they have made a habit of concentrating with open eyes.

There is no special how. You have to concentrate in the same way as you do when you shut your eyes.

The year 1934

While returning from the Mother I feel something like a burning fire within me; it pulls me more and more inward till I get plunged into peace and silence.

It is the fire of aspiration and purification with the beginning of the true inner experience which, if it continues, creates the Yogic consciousness and in the end replaces by it the outer ordinary consciousness.

Is this fire the aspiration of the psychic being?

The central fire is in the psychic being, but it can be lit in all the parts of the being.

In order to maintain the fire, is not a prolonged effort required?

Aspiration more than effort.

Is it not true that unless the physical joins there can be no eagerness in the aspiration?

No. It is when the vital joins that there is the eagerness.

Today I felt a deep intensity even though there was no aspiration. How do you explain it?

It must have been a concentration in the consciousness. That can take place of itself even without a mental aspiration.

How should one set about detaching oneself from the mental action in order to be a witness?

There is no device for these things. All is done by aspiration, tapasya (concentration, will etc.) or by opening oneself to the Divine Force.

N told me, "Offering is a thing that comes by itself. One need not make any effort, for it is a movement of love and joy."

Essentially that is true — it is the real nature of offering — but there is a veil of self-centred vital ego which many find it difficult to remove without an inner tapasya.

Is it not time I left the charge of my sadhana to the Mother's Force?

That can be only when all is ready. The system has first to be accustomed to the Force working.

For the higher working, is not a state of blankness and silence better than that of aspiration?

Neither is better than the other. Aspiration can come better from an inner silence than from a mind that is jumping about.

My concentration gets dispersed as soon as I aspire for anything. It prefers simply a state of receptivity — to receive whatever comes down from the Mother. Is that really a good habit?

Not altogether. If the receptivity were very great it would not matter, but with a limited receptivity aspiration is indispensable.

What kind of change is necessary for the consciousness to give up straining and have a free receptivity?

It is not dependent on any other change. That is itself the change — to strain no longer but to call and receive. Only most people if they stop straining, stop calling also, and become tamasic.

I read: "The Will — not that wish of the heart or that preference of the mind to which we give the name, but that dominant and often veiled force of our being." Could you kindly explain where that veiled Will is.

In the consciousness. Mental will or vital will is only an outward form of this essential will in the consciousness.

Does this mean that the essential Will has a quite separate consciousness of its own?

There is a consciousness other than mind and vital — if there were not, there would be no use in doing sadhana. The true will belongs to that consciousness.

Kindly tell me how to be conscious of and develop that true Will power.

The only way to do it is (1) to become aware of a conscious Force behind that uses the mind etc. (2) to learn by practice to direct that Force towards its object. I don't suppose you will find it easy to do either of these things at once — one must first learn to live more deeply in the inner consciousness than you have done hitherto.

In order to get into touch with the true Will power, has not one to start with the mental or vital will?

Everybody starts with the mental will. The vital does not usually help to get into touch with the real Will unless there is a very unusual kind of vital nature.

Today's general condition is of emptiness. My consciousness does not like to concentrate on or aspire for any particular thing. It feels: let the Mother choose the course of the sadhana. Is this condition good?

It depends on the stage which one has reached. Personal aspiration is necessary until there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development.

May I leave everything of my sadhana solely to the Mother so long as there is quietness?

Yes, provided there is no falling into unprogressive inertia.

My consciousness is coming down from its usual pitch of intensity. The mind seems to be under the impression that everything is going on well.

Perhaps you are becoming too passive and ought to go in for some more dynamic aspiration.

RECEPTIVITY AND ASSIMILATION

The year 1934

Aspiration is intense in the morning, then diminishes, and in the evening the consciousness becomes calm and quiet. Is this the rule in such matters?

It is quite usual to have such periods in the day. The consciousness needs time for rest and assimilation, it cannot be at the same pitch of intensity at all times. During the assimilation a calm quietude is the proper condition.

Should not one tend the consciousness towards offering at all times?

Unless it is a period of quiet peace in which there is no disturbance. Such periods are very useful for assimilation.

With peaceful passivity is one inclined to be inactive?

Passivity must not lead to inactivity — otherwise it will encourage inertia in the being. It is only an inner passivity to what comes from above that is needed — inert passivity is the wrong kind of passivity. The true passivity does not lead to inactivity — but the physical may wrongly take the pressure of passivity for an invitation to inactivity.

Does it help to assimilate the Mother's Force if one keeps awake at night as much as possible?

One can assimilate in sleep also. Remaining awake like that is not good, as in the end it strains the nerves and the system receives wrongly in an excited way or else gets too tired to receive.

The pressure of the Force is sometimes so great at night that one cannot sleep till very late and the lack of sleep makes one's consciousness heavy the next day.

In that case you should not invite the pressure any longer but be satisfied with what you have until the body can assimilate it. If the body does not get rest, sadhana is not possible.

There is no necessity of feeling pressure. One feels force when something is being done or the force is flowing on or if it is there manifest in the body — but not when what is manifesting is peace and silence.

When one is silent, is not one naturally receptive?

There may be empty silence and peace satisfied with themselves. Reception is a separate power. Of course, all quietude of the mind makes good conditions for the receptivity to act.

One can be receptive without being conscious — without knowing exactly what is given.

Are periods of no definite movement necessary for the working of the Force?

Yes, there are sometimes periods of assimilation, sometimes of preparation of some part of the being or nature.

During assimilation, why should the consciousness lose silence and receptivity?

Because it is parts of the ordinary consciousness that are assimilating.

How does one assimilate when one does not feel one is receiving.

When one is assimilating, one is not receiving.

Even in your good days you have usually periods less good — it is then that the assimilation takes place.

After the period of assimilation, the mechanical mind and even the subconscious seem more under control.

There is always a gain or progress at some point after these periods of assimilation if one takes them rightly — however dull or troublesome they may be.

When, after action during the day, the being feels empty in the evening, is it for rest?

Yes — the system has to take rest so as to assimilate and renew its receptive power.

It is very rare (in sadhana) to go on uninterrupted. The movement is usually backwards and forwards... there are fertile periods and unfertile periods.

EXPERIENCES

Quietness, calm and receptivity, creating a happy state, are increasing.

If you have that experience it is very good — for it is the first step.

How can one be sure that what one takes to be an experience of calm and of inner contact with the Divine is really so?

An experience is an unmistakable thing and must be given its proper value. The mind may exaggerate in thinking about it but that does not deprive it of its value.

How is it that the consciousness loses its activity of experience after a short while every day?

It is often like that — the period of intense activity is limited to a particular part of the day and for the rest of the time there is a lull.

When it is possible to sustain an experience of inner silence and fire for long, can one have it continuously? Or is the being ready only for a prolonged experience?

Yes, it can have it now from time to time, but an absolutely continuous experience (it would no longer be an experience then, but an established condition) is not likely so soon.

The consciousness is indrawn and there is an inner fire, but the mind is unable to aspire at the time of the experience.

Aspiration during the period of experience is not so necessary. It is in the intervals that it should be there.

I experience Love and Ananda, but they disappear after a while.

It is so with all spiritual experiences. The ordinary consciousness is not accustomed to hold them.

A fall in concentration is very upsetting.

Fall of the concentration happens to everybody — it has not to be taken as if it were something tragic or allowed to be the cause of depression.

A quiet and even basis means a condition of the sadhana in which there is no tossing about between eager bursts of experience and a depressed inert or half inert condition, but whether in progress or in difficulty there is always a quiet consciousness behind turned in confidence and faith towards the Divine.

All sorts of experiences are, of course, valuable, but is it not true that unless the being is filled with peace, there is always a chance of falling?

Yes — if the peace is established, then the falls are only on the surface, and do not affect the inner consciousness.

In one's working time, one's self can experience peace and watch quietly, but mechanical thoughts of an obscure type can still keep running. Is it the vital being that is non-cooperative in the sadhana?

That is for you to observe. There are usually parts of the vital and physical which do not take great interest in the sadhana — until the whole being is converted.

There is at times a strong concentration at the forehead centre and one feels as if something were flowing down into one from there. And yet one has a feeling of resistance to the pressure of the descending light.

The feeling of resistance may be the result of the effort at response. When there is the free flow there is neither effort nor resistance.

If the feeling of resistance may be the result of the effort at response, is it wrong to make an effort to aspire for the light that is pressing to descend?

No. But when you make the effort you will naturally become conscious of whatever resistance there may be to the effort.

The Mother's Force, instead of descending through the head, seems to come at times through the forehead.

It can come in anywhere but the normal way of descent is through the head.

What enters the forehead comes usually from above or from around.

*You have said: "It is through the spine that in the Tantric sadhana the Kundalini rises."
Can we have Tantric experiences here?*

One can feel the experiences of any sadhana as a part of this one.

Was the experience of the Mother's Force interfered with by the lower vital's depression because that Force entered this part of the being?

It may have been — but very often the lower Nature pushes these things across an experience in opposition to the working of the force.

Is it the Mother who stops a certain line of experiences in order to make the consciousness attend to something else?

The experiences stop because the consciousness is defective.

PEACE AND SILENCE

The year 1933

What is meant by a quiet mind and a quiet vital?

A quiet mind means a mind not restless with all sorts of thoughts. A quiet vital is a vital not restless and troubled by all sorts of impulses and desires.

Peace is said to be of capital importance in Yoga. From where is one to get it and how?

It is there above you. You have to aspire for it to descend into you.

When we get peace and purity and light and other such things, from what plane do they come?

From any higher plane. Peace and purity may come from the psychic also.

How is one to remain quiet within even while carrying on all kinds of activities?

By having a separate consciousness calm and silent within, separate from the mental, vital or physical activity.

You have spoken of "a separate consciousness calm and silent." Is not that the Purusha consciousness?

It may be. But it is part of Nature in you that becomes calm and silent.

What is "Silence"?

Silence means freedom from thoughts and vital movements — when the whole consciousness is quite still.

If a silent mind is without thoughts or movements, what place is there for thoughts of the Divine or for spiritual aspirations?

In the entirely silent mind there is usually the static sense of the Divine without any active movement. But there can come into it all the higher thought and aspiration and

movements. There is then no absolute silence but one feels a fundamental silence behind which is not disturbed by any movement.

Suppose a man begins to concentrate. He goes deeper and deeper and reaches a stage where his mind becomes empty. At last he throws away the mental bondage and advances further. Now he finds himself all alone. Here, to what will he cling? There must be something to hold on to; otherwise he will have to emerge back to the world. For it will be difficult to stay away from it quite alone.

When the mind is silent there is peace and in the peace all things that are divine can come. When there is not the mind, there is the Self which is greater than the mind.

You should keep it (the vital mind) quiet and receive with a silent mind waiting for the light. In the silent mind one can receive an answer even if I write nothing.

How is the mind to remain quiet while rejecting a movement? Is it not that the rejection moves the mind away from quietness?

Do you imagine that a quiet mind cannot reject anything and it is only the unquiet mind that can do it? It is the quiet mind that can best do it. Quiet does not mean inert and tamasic.

What is meant by the words: "Meet things without any superficial and unnecessary reaction"?

Not to allow the mind to bubble up with all sorts of ideas and feelings etc. but to remain quiet and learn to think and feel only what is true and right.

How is one to establish a homogeneity in the vital being?

Reject all disturbance and call in more and more peace and equality from above into the vital.

If you get peace then to clean the vital becomes easy. If you simply clean and clean and do nothing else, you go very slowly — for the vital gets dirty again and has to be cleaned a hundred times. The peace is something that is clean in itself — so to get it is a positive way of securing your object. To look for dirt only and clean is the negative way.

Can things like depression and despair arise in a person even though he has peace?

If there is established peace in the inner being, they can arise but would trouble only the surface — not the inner peace. If there is established peace in the outer being too they will not at all arise in you.

It is said that when peace descends, a greater depression and inertia can also come. Is that right?

There is no connection between the descent of Peace and depression. Inertia there may be if the physical being feels the pressure for quietude but turns it into mere inactivity — but that cannot be called exactly a descent — at least not a complete one, since the physical does not share in it.

The Peace is not of the nature of inertia, but the inertia of *tamas* is a degradation of peace or rest as *rajas* is a degradation of divine Force. So when the physical is invited to peace and cannot receive it, it brings up inertia instead.

You say, "The inertia is a degradation of peace or rest." What kind of rest do you mean here?

Rest of the being from effort, disturbance etc. The Spirit is eternally at rest even in the midst of action — peace gives this spiritual rest. *Tamas* is a degradation of it and leads to inaction.

The year 1934

When one is experiencing the silence, what should be the correct attitude towards the Mother?

Consecration. It means the devoting of all that comes to you, all your experiences and progress to the Mother.

In the silence, should one keep the mind blank or aspiring?

Keep the aspiration always.

What kind of aspiration should one have during such a state?

Aspiration for the growth of the true consciousness.

I hope that this first descent of the silence does not fade away soon.

Remain very quiet in your mind and do not disperse it.

It is a little difficult to keep the silence whilst reading and working. What should I do?

The same thing — do all with a quiet mind, not throwing yourself out in what you do, but seeing quietly what is done and what happens.

Whilst doing physical work is it possible to maintain the silence unaffected by the thoughts that keep on coming mechanically?

It is quite possible for thoughts to pass without disturbing the silence — but for that you must be perfectly detached from the thoughts and indifferent to them.

The silence is felt deep within, but there is still some disturbance on the surface.

It means that you feel a consciousness within you which is calm and silent, not disturbed by external thoughts, grief or disturbance — as when the sea is disturbed on the surface but below the surface all is still and calm.

How is it that the silence seems to be fading already?

It is not always quite stable in the beginning — but it returns always till it fixes itself, provided you quietly aspire.

From where does the silence come to us?

From above — from a higher consciousness in which silence is always the background even of thought and action.

We usually speak of complete silence, calm, peace, etc. Will you kindly say something about these so that we can understand the real difference between them?

Calm is a strong and positive quietude, firm and solid — ordinary quietude is mere negation, simply the absence of disturbance.

Peace is a deep quietude where no disturbance can come — a quietude with a sense of established security and release.

In complete silence there are either no thoughts or thoughts come, but they are felt as something coming from outside and not disturbing the silence.

Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things that are very close together and bring each other.

If quietude means only a freedom from disturbance, then even ordinary people have it.

The world would be a very different place from what it is if quietude were the usual state of the ordinary people.

What is the function of the peace and silence in us? What purpose do they serve?

As the basis of the true consciousness that is to replace the ordinary restless and troubled human consciousness.

Regarding the diffusion of my consciousness you said, "Probably some quite involuntary relaxation in some part of the consciousness — that always happens. One has to be quiet till one gets back the movement."

Quiet means to keep the inner quietude and keep turned to the Mother with the aspiration, will or call for the return of the right condition.

Generally by noon-time my being gets tired, so I give it rest for a quiet assimilation. It is so difficult to keep up the intense state all the time.

It is often like that — the period of intense activity is limited to a particular part of the day and then the rest of the time there is a lull.

Your deeper experiences are only just beginning — these ups and downs are common at that period. It is not many who can keep a fairly even sadhana.

My experience of the silence or self-realisation is purely static, that is to say, in meditation only. As soon as I plunge myself in work, it vanishes.

Get it first in meditation always — then we will see about work. When the silence or self-realisation is achieved, it can remain in spite of the work.

When the intensity of my peace withdrew I presumed it was no more the peace. Somehow I could not associate real peace with absence of intensity.

It is quite wrong to expect that always. That was only a preparatory experience and the intensity of the first experience does not remain all the time. Peace is peace whether it is intense or not. One has to be accurate in one's self-observation and not establish wrong notions like that.

There can be peace in the mind even when the vital is not quite at rest or peace in the inner being even if the surface is disturbed. Consciousness cannot feel at rest and free, if there is no peace.

Can silence and peace be established without the descent of the Higher Consciousness?

The silence and peace are themselves part of the higher consciousness — the rest comes in the silence and peace.

Is it possible to feel peace in the midst of a disturbance in one's being?

Of course. It is quite usual to feel an established peace in the inner being even if there is disturbance on the surface. In fact that is the usual condition of the Yogi before he has attained the absolute samata in all the being.

In spite of a quiet condition a lot of undesirable impressions and thoughts come up.

It very often happens when there is quietude, but not the silence — they have to be rejected as foreign and so cleaned out. If they are indulged, they get a new lease.

You have to go on increasing the inner peace until it imposes itself on the vital also.

If there is absolute silence within it is quite natural that the thoughts on entering and touching it should fall off. It is the way in which the silence of the outer mind usually comes.

The peace has to spread in all the parts. In the peace one must become conscious of the Mother's Force descended and working in all the being.

You always seem to think that because the silence is there in the consciousness, the whole consciousness must be equally affected by it. The human consciousness is not of one piece like that.

PEACE AND FORCE

The year 1934

If I remain withdrawn an intense peace is felt. The mind gives too high a value to it and thinks that without it there can be no possibility of going even one step further.

One can go forward even if there is not peace — quietude and concentration are necessary. Peace is necessary for the higher states to develop.

The silence, at least the quietude, was there for the whole day. During such a state shouldn't one feel the Mother's Force working in the being?

If one feels it is all right — but it does not always happen. The quietness, silence or peace is a basis for the extension of consciousness, the coming of the higher experiences or realisations etc. In what way or order they come differs according to the individual nature.

I could not quite understand the passage: "Peace we must have, but not the peace of a devastated nature or a mutilated capacity incapable of unrest, because it is incapable of intensity."

Not a tamasic peace which is at rest because it does not aspire after anything, is too tired by suffering and misfortune etc. to care for anything.

During work the mind was not very quiet. I observed at the same time the contradiction between the inner passivity, and the mechanical working of the outer nature, the intense activity of the Force working, and the insistent thinking of the outer mind. All this is rather perplexing!

Not at all. It often happens, even usually at this stage. You have to go on till the many parts are quieted down.

Usually I have to make an effort for a free receptivity with closed eyes. Today, however, I entered into a state where there was no need of any personal endeavour, and the receptivity was spontaneous with open eyes. What is the explanation?

It is the silence of the mind and vital — silence implying here not only cessation of thoughts but a stillness of the mental and vital substance. There are varying degrees of depth of this stillness.

You asked, "What is the exact nature of this pressure?"

When I withdraw for concentration a pressure, sometimes very powerful and intense, is felt on the entire spinal cord. If the concentration is continued for a long time the back gets tired.

There is no need to concentrate on it, if it comes as a natural result of the general withdrawal and concentration. I suppose, it is simply that the effort brings a concentration in the centres of the vital and physical to share in the stillness which the will acting through the mind is trying to impose on the nature.

All the time I feel in my being an energy which does not seem to be rajasic or sattwic. It disapproves of tamasic passivity, and quietly supports my actions, helping me to accomplish them steadily and harmoniously.

That is the beginning of what is called Tapas — though at first it tends to have a rajasic element.

As to the Force, you said, "It creates its own activities in the mind or elsewhere." In that case the mind or any other part on which it acts will express only what the Force has created.

That is the ideal condition when the Force is the true Force only — but there is too much mixture in the nature for that to be possible at this stage of sadhana.

In that case, does it not mean that what my consciousness feels as the Force is not the real Force of the Mother?

I have said that it gets mixed with the action of the present mind, vital and body. That is inevitable since it has to work upon them. It is only after the transformation that it can be fully the Mother's Force with no mixture of the separate personality. If the Divine Force in all its perfection without mixture were to act from the beginning, not taking any account of the present nature, then there would be no sadhana, only a miraculous substitution of the Divine for the Human without any reason or process.

Since the evening the working of the Force has begun. During the evening darshan of the Mother my consciousness opened itself before her more widely than ever before.

Very good. The Force usually works in that way with interruptions and returns growing each time stronger and fuller.

It is said that all experiences come in silence. But sometimes I find nothing coming in my silence.

All experiences come in the silence but they do not come all pell-mell in a crowd at the beginning. The inner silence and peace have first to be established.

Could I not leave the charge of my sadhana to the Mother's Force? Why let my adhar think that it is doing it for the Mother?

The system has first to be accustomed to the Force working.

Today I felt as if someone other than myself was carrying out my actions. Of course I was there, but in the background. Was it not the Mother's Force?

What you say amounts only to some glimpse of the cosmic Force behind all the actions.

I gather that the cosmic Force is behind all our actions whether we see it or not. Now, have we to open ourselves to this Force in order to arrive at the divine Force?

Not necessarily — for the perfect action it is necessary.

At the end of a certain experience, it was felt that something like an electricity shock passed through my physical being.

Electricity shock always indicates a passage of dynamic Force.

My psychological analysis indicates that it is not always possible for us, sadhakas, to let the Mother work in us spontaneously. For often something in us keeps off and closes the doors against her. I think the best course would be to develop our will-power, so that something might be always there to help us reopen the doors. I mean here the will not of the vital or mental kind but of the true power. Would you kindly enlighten me as to how to develop it?

The only way to do it is (1) to become aware of a conscious Force behind that uses the mind etc. (2) to learn by practice to direct that Force towards its object. I don't suppose you will find it easy to do either of these things at once — one must first learn to live more deeply in the inner consciousness than you have done hitherto.

At present what I often feel is the silence and the Force.

They are the two first things that have to be frequent till they are stabilised.

If I do not allow any mental activity, through which agency will the Force act?

It creates its own activities in the mind or elsewhere.

There is a pressure on the head. Perhaps a higher Force is trying to descend and my being resists?

The being does not resist — if it did the pressure would disappear. It is some part of the nature which is not yet able to have the free flow so there is the pressure of the Force to make a way for itself.

Now there is no pressure of the Force. Does it mean that the Force has gone behind and works under a veil?

The action of the Force does not always create a pressure. When it does not need to press it acts quietly.

When I got up from sleep I found that a cold had already entered. My consciousness brought down the Mother's Force and the cold disappeared. The same process was tried for other troubles too. I want to know if the method adopted for the Force was quite the right one.

It is quite the right way. It is very good that you are learning to use the Force.

The higher consciousness flows down perpetually with its force. Coming down the nose it has begun to work on my throat.

It has then touched the externalising mind centre.

During the evening meditation there were very powerful pressures inside the head. Is there any working started?

No — an extension of the working on the inner mind.

There were also sharp pressures on many parts of the face as with a pointed instrument.

All that is a working on the externalising mind.

During the blank state my consciousness shifts its lodging from the inner mind centre to the centre on the top of my head.

That is a first entry into the higher consciousness.

When the pressure on the temples of the head becomes stronger there comes a spontaneous tendency to soar upwards.

It is through the inner mind that one ascends — so that is quite natural.

There is such a prolonged pressure on the whole head that I am forced to remain withdrawn all the time. And the eyes have become like two balls of fire — so much so that I cannot keep them open easily for a while — they are as if intoxicated. How then shall I carry out my outer work?

If the pressure is too great, the remedy is to widen the consciousness. With the peace and silence there should come a wideness that can receive any amount of Force without any reactions, whether heaviness or compulsion to remain withdrawn or the difficulty of the eyes.

Some strong vibrations were felt when I went to the Mother for Pranam.

Strong vibrations are simply those of the force coming in.

Vibrations are either of a Force or a Presence.

Is it possible for me now to remain centrally in the pure-existence and direct the actions of the outer being by the true consciousness?

No, it is not yet possible. The true consciousness must be there in the mind and vital before that is done and the true consciousness is the psychic and the higher. What one can do before that is to use the mental will to direct the actions in the right way or to

reject the things that have to be rejected. But this you had stopped when the silence, emptiness etc. came down.

Could I ask you why I had stopped that?

Because you thought you must leave everything to the Mother and not interfere.

There must be the rasa (in the work) but it comes when there is the dynamic descent of the Power.

What are the higher dynamic activities?

Knowledge, higher Will, Force, universal Ananda.

With a certain kind of will, I can quiet even the subconscious for a while. But a greater will-power is required for a constant hold.

That is one of the higher dynamic activities.

About the strength you wrote, "That can only come by the Force as well as the Peace descending." I think I was wrong in taking that the Mother's Force and Peace were already there.

You have not said that the Force of the Higher Consciousness has come down and settled itself in the body. It is only now that you are speaking of the descent of that Force. Mother's Force is acting all the time, but that can act upon or through the ordinary consciousness also.

EMPTINESS AND FULLNESS

The year 1934

In the afternoons I feel a voidness in the consciousness. It increases greatly during the general evening Meditation. This voidness is a new thing for me. Kindly explain it.

The voidness (if by that you mean silence and emptiness of thoughts, movements etc.) is the basic condition into which the higher consciousness can flow.

This morning and evening my consciousness was silent and receptive as usual; it received the Mother's grace and at the same time felt a voidness. That is, there was no movement, inner or outer.

The voidness is the best condition for a full receptivity.

I was returning from the Pranam. The thrill of the Mother's touch had filled my being with joy and love. On the way I met X. I just happened to touch her with a notebook I had with me.

Afterwards I asked X about the result of the touch. She replied, "Before you touched me I was in a state of depression but afterwards I experienced happiness."

Was it a mistake to touch her instead of remaining withdrawn in myself?

Certainly it is better not to touch. As it happened it had a good effect, but if the happiness has to flow out to another, it can be done without touch.

What made me touch her? I never dreamt of sharing anything of this kind with anybody.

It was probably an automatic movement of the vital consciousness. There is a tendency in the vital to connect with others and participate.

I would like to know how I got N's pain. Either it was consciously transferred to me or it naturally entered into me.

Naturally entered. When there is the development of the Self-realisation or of the cosmic consciousness or if there is the emptiness which is the preliminary condition for these things, there comes an automatic tendency for a unity with all — their affections, mental, vital, physical may easily touch. One has to keep oneself free.

What is the meaning of the word "affections" used by you here with regard to people?

"Affections" here has not the ordinary sense — it means "ways in which they are affected by things e.g. joy, grief, pleasure, pain, illness etc."

(Today also the same emptiness continues.) How is one to reconcile these two notions — "You cannot feel emptiness unless you are full, and you cannot experience fullness if you are not void."

The void is a condition for the fullness coming, in that sense the last part is true. I do not quite understand the other. Perhaps it is true in the sense that what seems emptiness is often a fullness of the peace.

Specially after seeing the Mother there is a deeper and greater voidness. Do you think that what is felt as a void is not true? Since about a week whatever is experienced is this emptiness and nothing else.

Why not true? The void is the condition of the Self — free, wide and silent. It seems void to the mind but in reality it is simply a state of pure existence and consciousness. Sat and Chit with Shanti.

Yesterday you wrote, "Sat and Chit with Shanti". Why "with Shanti" — that is to say, "with peace"?

The three things are Sat, Chit and Ananda — but at this stage there is more usually the Shanti than the Ananda.

Shanti is peace or calm — it is not Ananda. There can of course be a calm Ananda.

Ananda comes afterwards — even if it comes at the beginning it is not usually constant. Wideness does not come because the consciousness is not yet free from the body. Probably when what is felt above the head comes down, it will be liberated into the wideness.

My human consciousness feels too tired to sustain itself in a steady blankness.

It must be the vital wanting to move about.

Was it really the vital getting tired of the blankness? Or could it rather be the physical? As a result of the fatigue I was getting mechanical thoughts.

The physical does not get tired of the blankness. It may feel tamasic because of its own tendency to inertia, but it does not usually object to voidness. Of course it may be the vital physical. You have only to reject it as a remnant of the old movements.

Emptiness is a state of quietude of the mental or vital or all the consciousness not visited by any mind or vital movements, but open to the Pure Existence and ready or tending to be that or already that but not yet realised in its full power of being. Which of these conditions it happens to be depends on the particular case. The Self state or the state of pure existence is sometimes also called emptiness, but only in the sense that it is a state of sheer static rest of being without any contacts of mobile Nature.

When I try to keep the being silent and blank the whole thing appears empty and without interest to the vital.

Certainly, the vital cannot take an interest in a blank condition. If you depend on your vital you cannot prolong it. It is the spirit that feels a release in the silence empty of all mental or other activities, for in that silence it becomes self-aware. For the blankness to be real one must have got into the Purusha or Witness Consciousness. If you are looking at it with your mind or vital, then there is not blankness, for even if there are not distinct thoughts then there must be a mental attitude or mental vibrations — e.g. the not feeling interest.

Could one have a great fullness of spiritual being and at the same time a deepening of emptiness?

Without the emptiness there can be no fullness.

How is it possible to have fullness and emptiness at the same time?

I meant that in the higher consciousness that simultaneous experience was quite natural. It is the same with complete rest and full activity, — experience of infinite

impersonality and of the true person. All these (and many other things also) are to the mind incompatible, but in the higher consciousness they go together.

In my present state, I can't keep any aspiration for further progress. Is it all right to lose it?

If not aspiration, at least keep the idea of what is necessary — (1) that the silence and peace shall become a wideness which you can realise as the Self — (2) the extension of the silent consciousness upwards as well so that you may feel its source above you — (3) the presence of peace etc., all the time. These things need not all come at once, but by realising what has to be in your mind, any falling towards a condition of inertia can be avoided.

What is established in the emptiness?

What is established in the emptiness is pure existence consciousness, peace and bliss. Into that all things can come, yet it remains always the same.

Is it not true that nothing of this world can touch the pure existence?

Yes, the pure existence is intangible.

What would be the difference between my present state of emptiness and its future development?

The only difference is that what you feel as a negative emptiness, you will feel positively as the Self or the pure existence consciousness, peace and bliss.

THE SELF-REALISATION

The year 1934

During certain periods, there is neither inner nor outer mind but a quiet blank!

It is a very favourable condition for the higher workings.

You have written of the spirit becoming self-aware. Is there any distinction between spirit and Self or between Self and the psychic?

There is no distinction between the Self and the spirit. The psychic is the soul that develops in the evolution — the spirit is the Self that is not affected by the evolution, it is above it — only it is covered or concealed by the activity of the mind, vital and the body. The removal of this covering is the release of the spirit — and it is removed when there is a full and wide spiritual silence.

The coming of the peace makes it easier to get the experience of the pure and free Self.

In the blank consciousness the Purusha watches and there is also an aspiration in the Purusha for the release of the Self. But what exactly would the release mean?

When one becomes aware of the Self calm, silent wide, universal, it is no longer covered by the ignorance, when one identifies with the Self and not with the mind, life and body and their movements or with their small ego, that is the release of the Self.

You have said that the spirit or Self is covered or concealed by the activity of the mind, vital and the body. But would not the mind's aspiration help the spirit to uncover itself?

Yes, but to feel the full silence one must be capable of suspending all mental and vital activity.

Is it possible to have the release of the Self without the outer nature rising upward to the higher Prakriti?

And how is the outer nature to rise into the higher Prakriti before you realise the Self? The higher nature is that of the higher consciousness of which the first basis is the peace and wideness and realisation of the Self, the One that is all.

In the quietness or silence, should not one feel the Mother's Force working?

If one feels, it is all right — but it does not always happen. The quietness, silence, or peace is a basis for the extension of consciousness, the coming of higher experiences or realisations etc. In what way or order they come differs according to the individual nature.

You are seeking for Self-realisation — but what is that Self if not the Mother's self. There is no other.

As the soul, the psychic being, is in direct connection with the Divine and is a part of Him, so too is Self the Atman. Why then does one not feel intimacy with the Divine while realising the Self as one experiences during the soul-realisation?

The Self has two aspects, passive and active. In the first it is pure silence, wideness, calm, the inactive Brahman, in the second it is the Cosmic Spirit, universal not individual. One can feel in it union or oneness with the Mother. Intimacy is a feeling of the individual, therefore of the psychic being.

Do the two aspects of the Self come one after the other?

Usually they are there one after the other and remain separate till the Supermind is being prepared.

Does the first aspect remain always as mere silence, wideness and calm? Is there no further step?

Not until the final change, when calm and action are fused into each other. Except that strength may come in before that and a strong wide calm be experienced. That happens when the true vital emerges.

The Peace, Purity and Calm of the Self must be fixed — otherwise the active Descent may find the forces it awakes swayed on by lower Powers and a confusion created. That has happened with many.

What is this influence felt in my navel centre?

It is an influence from the wider self above occupying the vital.

Why do I feel blankness at times? Is it really usual during this state of sadhana?

Yes, that is a usual experience when that state comes.

There is an impression that my concentration is now located on the head.

On the head means what — above it or just on the top outside? In any case it is an important movement in the direction of self-realisation.

On the head means outside and just on it (like a cap or cloth) or skull around the head but in the top part.

Since this morning there is a warm intoxication fringed with cooler peace. What is this simultaneous experience of the two contraries?

It is the Agni and the peace together.

Why do I have a station in the forehead centre instead of in the heart?

The station in the heart centre is for the psychic opening. What you are at present doing is the upward opening to the Self and for that the inner mind centre is the proper station.

I feel a rising movement skywards.

It is very good that the consciousness is realising this movement.

Is the experience that I feel as Shanti really Shanti?

If it seems like Shanti — otherwise why should you use the word? — it may be a happy calm or a very calm Ananda.

When my consciousness is in the Self I lose the sense of the body. It then experiences itself as wider and in absolute peace — as if it were nothing but Shanti.

That is how one feels when one is living in the silent Self.

Kindly tell me where the source of peace, silence etc. is?

As I told you it is a thing for you to feel not for me to tell. The centre of silence, peace etc. as you feel them now is above, so it must be there. But you must be conscious and able to feel it there.

What is this constant spell of the Spirit I feel in me?

There is no spell of the Spirit there is the consciousness of it in you.

Sometimes I feel a thread-like connection between my head-centre and some planes far beyond me.

That is very often how one feels the connection with the higher levels.

I wrote to you that at present my consciousness is not only living in the Self but itself becoming that. Is it not a little too much to say so?

It is quite possible at this stage.

You said, "One need not think of it (self) by any word or name. One simply is that." What is exactly meant by your last sentence?

One simply is that (pure existence) but one does not put a name on it.

My consciousness passes hours and hours in pure existence and pure consciousness, is there no fear of ever?

No. It is taking time so as to establish these things well.

What about my study at present?

Your study is of not much importance at present. The passive self has to be fixed and extended.

When in the consciousness of the Self why do I seem to lose the sense of time and space?

In the self or pure existence there is no time or space — except spiritual space or wideness.

Does the universal aspect of the Self take a long time to follow the individual aspect?

It varies with different people. With some the universality comes first.

Today, I felt that the pure-existence is descending into my being. What is more I experienced the descent in a material form.

The pure-existence is not something abstract but substantial and concrete. Moreover it is descending into the body, so it is quite natural to feel it materially.

The Self extends its influence more and more. Even my body feels it and remains intoxicated most of the time. This perhaps shows that the subconscious and mechanical mind and all other parts are under its spell?

Yes.

At present my consciousness feels that, instead of letting it go higher or deeper, the Mother is making me fix what has already been achieved. Thus something will remain stabilised for good.

That is what is being done.

Being in the Self, am I now living in the Mother's consciousness? And are not all actions coming from that true consciousness?

What do you mean by coming from the true consciousness? The pure existence consciousness does not initiate any action. Actions come through it either from the ordinary nature or from the Mother's Force.

In fact I don't actually know what is meant by living in the Mother's Consciousness. I wrote simply thinking that to dwell in the Self-consciousness is only the first step towards living in the Mother's Consciousness.

Yes, it is the first step. Afterwards the silent self gets filled up with the Mother's active consciousness, the true consciousness, without the fundamental silence being disturbed — then all the action can become more and more the true action.

I wrote to you that the Mother has brought down what I had experienced above. But now I find that She has opened other greater levels above. Thus there will remain above always something higher than what comes down.

Yes, up to the Supermind there are ranges above ranges.

For the last two days, I have felt a direct connection with something just a little above the Brahmik passage of the head. Something of it remains in touch with that passage, which feels it as a thing floating up above it.

It may be the thousand-petalled lotus which is the centre of the higher consciousness.

It is something new to me when my consciousness feels a depth in the heart and a height on the head simultaneously.

That is what should be.

You wrote, "All that dissatisfaction is of course an ignorant objection of the lower vital which does not know how the higher consciousness works or even what is real fullness." Will you kindly enlighten me how the higher consciousness works and what is a real fullness, since I too am as ignorant about it as is the vital?

By knowing I do not mean mental ideas about it — I mean it has not the consciousness and feeling of what these things are.

What my physical mind considers as emptiness or nothingness — is it not a pure working of the higher consciousness?

Yes.

PURE EXISTENCE AND THE ATMAN REALISATION

The year 1934

Two hours after the Pranam I felt something from above descending. It was not only the Force. I am used to recognising its descent. Is it the higher consciousness as a whole then? I am not yet definite about it. It came down only after a sound preparation of two hours, blankness and emptiness.

It will have to be seen — it can hardly be the higher consciousness as a whole — in the sense of that with all its contents — it may be the essential power of the higher consciousness.

At present the pure existence has surcharged the whole being. Excepting an occasional feeling of something descending from above there is no feeling, no movement. What is it then?

We shall have to wait till it becomes precise. If the whole being is surcharged with the pure existence, it is true something first came down. Perhaps the descent is that something first.

There is a great pressure on all the centres of my consciousness to focus their concentration on the higher being. But the external centres are still too much under the influence of the mechanical mind to come up in consciousness.

These things also can be quieted — but it is more likely to happen when the higher consciousness Force is there all through in the calm and silence.

The silence of the pure-existence takes part in nothing, but it can support anything. All work can be done in the blankness and silence.

The being is not supposed to remain always empty. When the calm and peace of the pure existence is established Force also has to descend as well Light, Ananda and other things.

I am not aware of those who have stabilised it (peace and silence) in a few weeks there may be one or two who got it comparatively quickly.

What actually did you want to convey by saying "the descent of the Force"? I already feel the Force.

The descent in the whole being of the Divine Strength. I do not mean the working of the Force which is there always.

One thing needs to be made clear. You wrote, "There is no such thing as emptiness, it is pure existence, silence etc." Why then does it create a feeling of voidness, a suspension of all sadhana?

It is because there is no activity and the outer consciousness is accustomed to be always thinking, feeling or doing something.

Since the day before yesterday there is a feeling of a strong Force existing not only within me but around me up to a foot's distance. The form of the force is very dense.

That is good — it must be the beginning of being conscious beyond the body.

It is difficult for me to appreciate the present condition of dumbness. It is a state beyond blankness where no thinking, feeling, or acting ever intrudes. There is simply a consciousness and Shanti — no contact with the entire nature.

That is the pure static Atman consciousness or separate Purusha consciousness. Purusha separated from Prakriti is like that, Atman separated from Maya (I don't mean Illusion) or Shakti is like that. This is the static side of being, the other the dynamic must manifest in that.

I feel that I should not at present aspire for anything in particular, but to leave it to the Mother to choose what she thinks my need.

That is all right for the present. But there must be a consciousness of what is next needed — (1) release into silent wideness (2) descent of Force so as to make the peace solid and dynamic.

The Brahmic passage (the top of the head) remains open all the time. It is felt like an open window. Does it not denote a keen working of the higher planes? The pressure is all over the head.

It is necessary for the wide Atman realisation, the liberation from the body consciousness and other things that must come.

I do not understand what has happened at pranam this morning. It seems something strange when I see myself neither in the body consciousness nor in any definite centre.

It is the usual condition when one has formed the connection with the centre above the head and is realising the self. Then there is no location of the consciousness — it is everywhere. Only in your case you do not seem to feel this wideness or everywhere-ness — as yet the feeling seems to be only negative, not of everywhere-ness but of nowhere-ness. Is it like that, actually?

Yes. I do feel nowhere-ness rather than everywhere-ness. Why so?

It is because you have not yet spread out in the realisation of the Atman everywhere.

"It is the active transformation of the physical that cannot be completely done without the supramental descent." Could you kindly explain to me what the active and the passive transformations are?

The passive is the peace and calm, the active is the change of the² functionings.

My consciousness has grown very unconscious of the body. It does not feel in the least what the physical holds in itself (i.e. when there is some heavy thing in my hand, not only do I not experience any weight, but there is no sense of the existence of the thing itself).

That is usually a result of the peace and silence and of the Atman realisation. It brings a liberation from the body identification.

When I rub my body with my hand I feel no substance — as flesh, bones, etc. — in the physical frame.

That happens when one has the silence and separation from the body.

² Uncertain reading

I cannot make out why I felt loneliness. It is said one gets into it only when he is deserted by his true self. Surely I am in my real self.

If there is any part of the being that does not share in the realisation, it may throw this sense of loneliness.

If there is loneliness one should get down the peace and presence in that part to cure the loneliness.

Yesterday's experience of Self-realisation seems to have withdrawn today.

It is usually so with new or yet unestablished experiences.

The nature takes a long time to be able to keep the higher condition without a break.

Strengthen the peace — higher power in the will (Tapas); extension and continuity of peace and self-realisation; if possible descent of a Force removing the Tamas and vital difficulty.

When one is in the immutable Atman or Brahman, does not one usually prefer to keep oneself all aloof even from the higher knowledge?

Not necessarily. The immutable Brahman is only base for the transcendent action which comes down into its peace and silence and fills it with power also and Ananda and the light of knowledge.

A definite and conscious change was felt after the Mother's coming down for the evening meditation. For a time, I felt myself above the head and the body was simply hanging down below me.

That is a very important development.

THE MOTHER AND HER WORKING

All these who are doing Sri Aurobindo's Yoga know that it cannot be done except with the Mother's help. In fact, as the sadhana progresses, one becomes conscious that it is she who is doing the sadhana in him and bearing the burden of his transformation. Truly speaking, to become conscious of the Mother's working in us is itself a part of the Yoga.

The Mother stands before us as a being at once individual, cosmic and transcendental. It is just this triplicity that creates in our limited human mind a problem. We try in vain for long to solve this riddle — how one in a human frame could contain in herself these three different aspects, and not only contain, but also manifest in action.

The vision of the Mother doing sadhana in us begins to be clear as we get liberated more and more from the ego's bondage into the cosmic self. Then the Mother appears like an infinite Being holding us in herself like the blood-cells in a body and feeding us with her consciousness, force and bliss and love.

In 1933 Sri Aurobindo explained a little of the Mother's sadhana in us:

"The Mother has her own experiences in bringing down the things that have to be brought down — but what the sadhaks experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then gives what is brought down to others. — Naturally, the Mother does the sadhana in each sadhaka — only it is conditioned by their zeal and their receptivity."

The year 1933

We look upon the Mother as divine. Does she carry the full divine Shakti in her?

There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here — it is so that you should regard her as the Divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine Force.

Is it always necessary for us to understand what the Mother's Force is doing in us for the progress of our Yoga?

Plenty of people progress rapidly without understanding what the Force is doing — they simply observe and describe and say "I leave all to the Mother". Eventually knowledge and understanding come.

Somebody told me: "Before Sri Aurobindo gave us the Mother as our guru, he never used to teach us anything about the Yoga. He would tell us to follow our own knowledge." Did you really give this advice?

I am not aware of that. But now also the Mother does not teach, she asks all to open and receive. But she does not tell them and I don't think I told people to follow their own "knowledge".

My mind was trying to become conscious of the Mother's thoughts and to receive them. Is this activity right?

It is not altogether the way — if the mind is active it is more difficult to become aware of what the Mother is bringing. It is not thoughts she brings, but the higher light, force etc.

Today I felt the Mother filling my head with her light. Was I imagining things or did she really do so?

She does it every time, only today you not only received but were consciously receptive.

Is it not true that one who sees the Mother often and talks with her receives more Light by being in her presence?

No. It depends entirely on the condition of the person and his attitude. Especially if they insist on seeing her or on remaining when she wants them to go or are in a bad mood and throw it on her, it is very harmful for them to see her. Each should be content with what the Mother gives them, for she alone feels what they can or cannot receive. Mental constructions of this kind and vital demands are always false.

The Mother does not seem to turn away from people who are not faithful. She often allows them to do what they like.

It is the Mother's business. She alone can say what is the right way to deal with people. If she were to deal with people only according to their defects, there would be hardly half a dozen people left in the Ashram.

If people constantly have the Mother's protection around them, I don't think they will ever have depression and doubt or anything hostile to the Divine.

These things may try to come but they will not be able to enter or stay.

When one works, one aspires for the Mother's Force to take up one's activity in due course. What should one aspire for when one is not working?

For the Mother's power to work and bring down by the proper stages the higher consciousness. Also for the system to be more and more fit — quiet, egoless surrendered.

What is meant precisely by surrender to the Mother?

Surrender means to be entirely in the Mother's hands, and not to resist in any way by egoism or otherwise her Light, Knowledge, Will, the working of her Force etc.

Last evening when the Mother was walking on the terrace I saw a light on Her body. What was it?

Many see light around the Mother. The light is there always.

When I am too late to see the Mother, do I still receive her Light as in her presence?

You can receive the Light at all times, — even if less concretely than in the physical presence.

This morning I perceived a great beauty in the Mother. It was as if her whole body was glowing with a supernatural light. In fact I felt as if a Supreme Goddess had come down from the heavens above.

It was only that you felt the Divinity with her which is always there.

I would like to know whether it is good or harmful to talk while waiting for the Mother to come out.

If you attach any value to the darshan, it is better to be recueilli. If her coming is only one incident of the day's routine like taking dinner, then of course it does not matter.

Recueilli means drawn back, quiet and collected in oneself.

If you want the Mother to work through you, you must lay before her your thoughts and desires and reject them.

What is "discipline"?

To act according to a standard of truth or a rule or law of action (dharma) or in obedience to a superior authority or to the highest principles discovered by the reason and intelligent will and not according to one's own fancy, vital impulses and desires. In Yoga obedience to the Guru or to the Divine and the law of the Truth as declared by the Guru is the foundation of discipline.

Is there really any difference between the Guru, the Divine and the Truth in our Yoga? I have been considering that the Mother and you are not only the Gurus but also the Divine, and that whatever either of you says is the law of the Truth. Why then are you using (in reply to my question on discipline) these three different words?

I wrote the general law of spiritual life and obedience. You have to know that as well as its special application here. Moreover many here are satisfied with saying, "The Mother is divine", but they do not follow her commands — others do not really regard her as the Divine — they treat her as if she were an ordinary Guru.

The Guru is the Guide in the Yoga. When the Divine is accepted as the Guide, He is accepted as the Guru.

I must increase my knowledge about the Mother so that I may be able to understand Her more and more. What is the meaning of "Radha"?

Radha is Divine Love and Ananda (the word means adoration and also delight).

You often speak of "the Mother's Force". What is it?

The Mother's force is the manifestation of the Mother herself.

It is the Divine Force which works to remove the ignorance and change the nature into the divine nature.

Sometimes, if not often, the Mother's Force comes down, finishes its work and disappears. When once it has descended why has it to return at all?

So long as you cannot contain its action, there is no other way.

In that case, generally speaking, is not every Sadhaka ready to receive and contain the Mother's force at any time and in any circumstances? Who on earth would not like to hold its constant action.

It is not a question of mental wish but of capacity and whether all the parts of the being are ready and can retain it. If everybody were containing the constant action of the Mother's force, the sadhana would be finished by now and the siddhi complete.

If one gives full and constant assent to the Mother's working, how does the attempt of other forces to enter into him succeed?

It is not always an attempt. One receives the thoughts and feelings of the others without any attempt or intention of theirs, because they are in the atmosphere.

You wrote: "Ask for the consciousness of Her force." Does it mean that I should aspire to the Mother to know about Her force and how and where are its workings in me?

Yes — not know with the mind only, but to feel them and see them with the inner experience.

The year 1934

I do not attempt anything and yet wrong suggestions, ideas, etc., are failing away. Even my receptivity seems to be on the increase. How do such changes come about?

By turning to the Mother and getting her contact, that result naturally begins to come.

If you want the Mothers contact always, you must get rid of depression and the mental imaginations that bring it. Nothing comes more in the way than that.

Kindly tell me what I should aspire for at present when I am quiet?

For the Mother's power to work and bring down by the proper stages the higher consciousness. Also for the system to be more and more fit, quiet, egoless, surrendered.

You often speak of the Mother's Force. What is it really?

When I speak of the Mother's Force I do not speak of the force of the Prakriti which carries on things of the Ignorance but of the higher Force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature ...The Mother's Force is the manifestation of the Mother herself.

How can we progress quickly without understanding what the Mother does in us?

Plenty of people progress rapidly without understanding what the Force is doing — they simply observe and describe and say "I leave all to the Mother". Eventually the knowledge and understanding come.

You wrote to me: "You must learn to take the unspoken help." How to do it?

I meant to receive help inwardly without having to rely on written answers to your questions etc. The outward help cannot always be there, the inward can, if you get into the habit of receiving it whenever you need.

How to develop "the habit of receiving the unspoken help"?

By aspiration and opening.

Tajdar says that while giving us flowers the Mother always tells us something; as for example, our future difficulty, danger, fall, etc. Is it true?

Mother never thinks of future difficulties, falls or dangers. Her concentration is always on help and uplift, not on difficulty and downfall.

In the morning, I experience the effect of the Mother's light dynamically. It penetrates the inner as well as the outer being in an intense way. In the evening I feel nothing of the kind. There is only silence. Why so?

In the evening the Mother brings down silence, but not the silence only — also the power for transformation. But as calm and silence are the first requisite for transformation, you feel that.

Is it true that when the Mother plays on the organ she calls down the Gods of the higher worlds in order to help us?

Not consciously.

Does your answer mean that the Gods are attracted to her music and so they come down just to listen to it?

They may be.

When the Mother plays on the organ something new enters my consciousness. Does she really bring down something?

If she does not bring down something why should she play at all?

The Mother's music has often been recognised by V... as Indian of this or that raga. The Mother plays whatever comes through her — she does not usually play any precisely composed music whether European or Indian — the latter in fact she has never learnt.

During the general Evening Meditation, my mind tries in vain to become conscious of the thoughts the Mother brings down. Is it its right activity?

It is not altogether the way — if the mind is active it is more difficult to become aware of what the Mother is bringing. It is not thoughts she brings, but the higher light, force etc.

Does the Mother's Light always remain in the inner being even when due to engrossment in the external activities we do not feel it?

It is always there in the inner Purusha consciousness — but identification with the mental, vital and physical movements prevents it from being effective.

During the Terrace Darshan, the Mother filled my whole head with her Light.

She does so every time, only today you not only received but were consciously receptive.

You can receive the Light at all times even if less concretely than in the physical presence.

You said, "H has got a communicating power if one is at all receptive." Here, what communicating power did you mean?

The Mother's influence — faith, joy, peace.

Has the Mother really encircled us all, as the poet H feels, "A radiant circle around each of us"?

Those who allow her to encircle them.

Sadhaks would not deny her encircling them. Why should they? But perhaps you meant that certain conditions have to be fulfilled before she can fully do it.

There are very few who allow it. There is a general protection around all, but most go out of it by their attitude, thoughts or actions or open the way to other forces. But what H speaks of must be something different from the general protection.

A thrill comes from above and passes through my whole body making the "adhar" still for a time. What is this thrill?

Of course it is the thrill of the Mother's touch coming from above and felt by the psychic and vital together.

During today's Pranam, I perceived the Mother in a majestic form, seated very high. Of course she is always that inwardly. But what I experienced this morning was something on the physical plane and seen by my human eyes. Her grandeur showed as if she had already conquered the whole universe!

Yes, the power was there in the body. Both your perception and reaction are right — which shows that you have progressed immensely.

The Mother appears to me more luminous now than ever before. What is this due to?

Probably to your inner sight being more open.

THE MOTHER AND FLOWERS³

What is the meaning behind the Mother's giving us flowers — I mean, what does she try to do to us?

Simply to put the power indicated upon you if you are willing to receive it. It is a progress suggested and offered.

It is said that the five petals of the flower called "Psychological Perfection" mean love, bhakti, surrender, sincerity and faith. But today she gave me this flower with six petals. What does the sixth petal indicate?

The five are purity (not love), devotion etc. The sixth is steadfastness (stability, etc.).

This morning the Mother gave me a flower signifying "The Divine Consciousness". What did it mean for me?

It meant that she offered the higher consciousness or her consciousness to you — that is all.

In a dream I saw a flower signifying "Victorious Love". Has it any connection with my sadhana?

It is usually some force that is represented, probably here some vital Power that seeks transformation through love.

Nowadays I see different kinds of flowers during meditations and waking state with eyes wide open. Sometimes they themselves announce their significance. As for example, one flower surged up before my eyes saying: "Aspiration for the Divine."

It is usually when the psychic is active that this seeing of flowers becomes abundant.

³ This is what the Mother, in one of her talks, said about flowers: "I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man... If you are receptive, you will easily be able to absorb the message I put in the flowers I give you. When I give them, I give you states of consciousness: the flowers are the mediums."

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF

As I approach your photo in the Ashram Reception Room, a feeling surges up that it is an emanation of yours. There seems to be a special light on it.

The Sadhaks may themselves bring this light by approaching me through the photo.

Is it not true that the letters we receive from you are full of power?

Yes, power is put into them.

What do you express through your poetry?

I am expressing spiritual truth or spiritual experience.

It ought to be possible to read with the inner consciousness looking on and, as it were, seeing the act of reading. In the condition of absolute inner silence I was making speeches and conducting a newspaper, but all that got itself done without any thought entering my mind or the silence being in the least disturbed or diminished.

When I got the emptiness, it lasted for years. Whatever else came, came in the emptiness, and I could at any time withdraw from the activity into the pure silent peace.

My own sadhana when I was far more advanced than you used to stop for half a year together. I did not make a fuss about it, but remained quiet till the empty or dull period was over.

I don't know that I have "called" myself a Superman. But certainly I have risen above the ordinary human mind, otherwise I would not think of trying to bring down the Supermind into the physical.

LETTERS OF THE MOTHER

Ce n'est pas pas la Mere qui prend ou qui repousse, c'est l'enfant qui s'approche ou s'eloigne.

It is not the Mother who takes up or pushes back, it is the child who draws near or moves away.

Non, ce n'est pas par manque d'interet que je n'ai pas repondu par ecrit — j'ai fait une reponse silen-cieuse.

Quand je ne reponds pas c'est que la reponse est trop subtile pour pouvoir etre donnee en quelques mots et je n'ai pas toujours le temps d'ecrire longuement.

No, it is not for lack of interest that I have not answered in writing — I have made a silent reply.

When I do not answer, it is only because the reply is too subtle to be given in a few words and I do not always have the time to write at length.

There was nothing wrong, but you ought to understand that I can be absorbed in some inner work and not smile although I am not in the least displeased.

Les bateaux, comme les trains, les automobiles et tout autre moyen de transport sont le symbole de la sadhana, la discipline qui conduit vers le but.

Boats, like trains, motor-cars and all other means of transport, are a symbol of the sadhana, the discipline that leads towards the goal.

Il y a en chaque homme une volonte. Il faut que cette volonte refuse son consentement aux mouve-ments du vital et donne son plein appui seulement aux mouvements du psychique.

There is in every man a will. This will should refuse its consent to the movements of the vital and give its full support only to the movements of the psychic.

Evidemment il vaut mieux être joyeux que morose, mais il y a quelque chose de mieux encore, c'est de vivre dans un bonheur calme et concentré.

Evidently it is better to be cheerful than morose, but there is something better still, it is to live in a happiness calm and concentrated.

Vous dites vous-mêmes que ce sont des pensées inférieures qui passent, il n'y a qu'à les éloigner de vous sans attacher votre attention sur elles.

Restez calme, dans le calme l'inspiration se fera sincère et spontanée.

You say yourself that it is the lower thoughts that are passing; there is nothing to do but to put them away from you without fixing your attention on them.

Remain calm, in calmness the aspiration will become more sincere and spontaneous.

Si je comprends bien ce que vous dites, vous pensez qu'il est des propos qui peuvent insulter le Divin. Il faut vous détromper, le Divin ne peut être insulté par rien ni par personne. Ainsi s'il y a insulte, elle retombe sur celui qui l'a faite.

If I understand correctly what you are saying, you seem to think that idle gossip can insult the Divine. You need to be set right. The Divine cannot be insulted by anything or anybody. So if there is insult, it recoils on the one who makes it.

Quand vous nous donnez le lotus rose qui est le symbole de Sri Aurobindo, nous recevons de vous la conscience du Suprême, n'est-ce pas?

When you give us the red lotus which is the symbol of Sri Aurobindo, we receive from you the consciousness of the Supreme, don't we?

Je ne peux pas donner la conscience du Suprême car qui serait capable de la recevoir? — Lorsque je donne le lotus rose j'établis simplement un rapport entre les sadhaks et Sri Aurobindo — ou plutôt je renouvelle ce rapport.

I cannot give the consciousness of the Supreme, for who would be capable of receiving it? — When I give the red lotus I establish simply a relation between the sadhaks and Sri Aurobindo — or rather I renew this relation.

PART III

FOOD AND FORCES

The year 1933

I always take salt with curds and vegetables. Is it good?

It is not good. On the seashore one ought not to take too much salt. Salt in curds is always bad for health.

X says that a little pepper should be taken with certain kinds of fruits. She got this bit of advice from you!

It is very strange — Pavitra himself gives me daily pamplemousse with sugar, never with salt and pepper. So how I could have written that, I do not know — there must have been a mistake somewhere either in my writing or her reading.

Pepper is not to be eaten with fruits — it is very bad for it would spoil the effect of the fruit.

Is not a greedy desire for food and drink a movement of the vital being? Can it be felt as a physical need?

Yes. The first effect of such a desire is on the physical.

Y told me that if anything comes to us without our asking for it we should not reject it. For example, someone offers us sweetmeat: we may accept it. But we should not be depressed when things desired by us are not given to us. What do you say about that?

How can such a rule stand? Supposing someone comes and offers you meat or wine, can you accept it? Obviously not. A hundred other instances could be given where the rule would not stand. What the Mother gives or allows you, you can take.

I believe that one should not accept any food from outside. But when an impulse — desire for food or sex-urge or anything else — arises, should not one let it spread in full in oneself so that one might offer all of it to the Mother and aspire for its transmutation?

If you do that, the impulse may spread so far as to take hold of you and master you. If a wrong impulse comes, you must reject it as soon as you become aware of it.

People who take outside food fall ill very often. Do they suffer merely because of the food or because they have been disobedient?

For both reasons. The food is bad or full of bad influences — also they create a struggle in themselves between the Yoga force and a foreign force.

How is it that some people enjoy outside food without feeling any struggle?

It creates no conscious struggle if one does not care for the sadhana, but even then it accumulates bad forces which end either in illness or some other adverse result.

ILLNESS: ITS PREVENTION AND CURE

The year 1933

A straight answer cannot be given because much depends upon your mind. It is doubtful whether an exclusive milk diet and complete inertia will be good for you — especially if the pains are due to constipation accompanied by flatulence.

I asked you not to consider what I thought of the matter in order to avoid personal hesitations. My physical condition is as follows: anything other than liquid food makes my stomach suffer. But I shall now forget all about the pain because I have handed it over to you. I think it was lack of faith that prevented me from going to my work. Tomorrow I must anyhow work.

If the pains are strong, you can abstain from work for a day or two till they have subsided. Of course if you feel that you suffer from anything else but liquid food, that settles the question. — You can take liquid food only and if you take the liquid food only then you will not be strong enough to work. But usually the thought takes a big part in determining these things. — The mind has the impression that any solid food will hurt and the body follows — so naturally as a result any solid food does begin to hurt.

The year 1934

I am going through a state in which the illness seems to have stopped all aspiration, all concentration. Is such a state inevitable?

It need not come if one is able to detach oneself from the body and the sense of illness.

By detaching yourself you must make it easier for the Mother's Force to work on the body — that is the object.

Reject the movement of the vital physical and affirm the principle of health. The vital desires to be ill — throw out the desire.

How has the vital physical become like this? Formerly it did not want the illness.

It was the mind that did not want it; this vital when left to itself often wants illness, it finds it dramatic, thinks it makes it interesting to others, likes to indulge the tamas etc., etc.

It is no use stopping work because of rheumatism (unless it is of the kind that disables one from working), — it only makes things worse.

Does the Mother want me to consult the doctor?

Well, if you consult the doctor he will probably give you salicylate which will cure the pain but tends to spoil the stomach — if you can shake it off by the Force, that is the best.

If you don't sleep enough the physical system becomes more open to these attacks. If it is kept in good condition, then usually it repels them automatically and one does not notice even that there has been an attack.

What is the Yogic method of getting rid of a pain or illness?

To separate yourself from the thing and call in the Mother's Force to cure it — or else to use your will force with faith in the power to heal, having the support of the Mother's Force behind you. If you cannot use either of these methods then you must rely on the action of the medicines.

I think my consciousness is separate from the vital movements, and yet it suffers.

If it is separate it should not suffer from them. Even for the pains, the body may suffer but the consciousness should not feel itself suffering or overpowered.

If my sciatica pains are nervous, surely they can be thrown out by an act of will on my part?

Sciatica is something more than nervous — it affects the movement of the muscles through the nerves. It can be got rid of at once, however, if you can manage to direct the Force on it.

After the evening meditation all the pains vanished. Does this mean that the being allowed the Mother's working freely?

Yes, certainly — if you always received the Power and let it work, there would soon be no sciatica.

In spite of complete relief yesterday evening, I have got the pain again after last night's sleep.

You had opened your consciousness, so the pain disappeared. If it came back during the sleep, it must have been because you lost touch and fell back into the ordinary consciousness. That often happens.

WORK

Work has played a big part in my sadhana. In my early life in the Ashram, before becoming conscious of what Yoga or Yoga of Works was, I took up work and did it as simply and innocently as a child plays and studies, without in the least knowing that by this one's body and mind are automatically developed. The Divine acts best in us when we least intercept Him with our minds. The work proved a good field for the Mother to prepare and lift up my inner being. A little later, when I did become aware of the sadhana, it was a surprise to find myself suddenly touching depths and heights. The Mother's Force acts, of course, in all states and not in the work only. The question is: to what extent can we offer it a more or less total receptivity? In solitary meditation the outer being becomes vague to one and is either dormant or quiescent while the inner reigns supreme. In work, although the exterior self is predominant, the inner is there just behind it, if not with it supporting it with the Mother's Force, Light and Peace. Thus the whole being is dynamised in the work, and whatever change comes is made permanent. On the other hand, all that is achieved in meditation has to be projected into the outer and fixed there before it becomes part of ourselves. What then is this thing called Work in the Ashram? There is no fixed activity that is stamped as work, the rest condemned as non-work. Anything — big or small — given us by the Mother is work for the Divine here. For the students study, the playground-movements and all recreation activities can be made part of the work.

The year 1933

While doing the work I was puzzled as to the motive of it. Kindly enlighten me about the attitude I should have during the work.

The work is for the Mother and should be offered to the Mother.

All work given you must be felt as the Mother's and done with joy, opening yourself for the Mother's force to work through you.

You can be absorbed (in the work) without throwing yourself out — that means a silent concentration.

During work I am so much entangled by unnecessary thoughts that I don't know how to escape from them.

Reject the thoughts and remember the Mother and ask for consciousness of her force doing the work.

While working I become too weak to stop the physical mind from thinking all sorts of useless things.

That is very usual. The really active part of the mind is engaged in the work. It is the mechanical mind that is left to itself to think and its way of thinking is just that.

Before becoming conscious of the Mother in all the being, cannot one offer mentally to Her one's personal actions like eating, sleeping etc.?

One can always offer with the mind, but that is only a beginning. It is a step towards a fully conscious surrender, but it will not do to stop there and say, "Now all my actions are hers, she is doing everything; so nothing else matters." There is a transformation to be made and it can be made only by becoming conscious.

You say, "There is a transformation to be made." In the actual work, how are our actions to be transformed?

It is first by having the true consciousness in it, — the true consciousness would give the action the right form. You are always asking how, as if everything could be done by a device or mental or other method. It is only by a change of consciousness that all these things can be done.

You said that the transformation could only be made by becoming conscious. I would like to know, "conscious" of what?

Conscious with the inner and higher consciousness.

It is true that everything one does should be offered to the Mother. But how is one to consecrate to her one's personal actions? Of what one does for oneself (eating, sleeping, etc.) it cannot obviously be said, "It is for the Mother that I do it."

If you remove ego and desire, it is as easy to do the personal work for the Mother as to do any other.

Varnishing Amiya's chest of drawers I felt, "How nicely I have applied the varnish! How pretty it looks!" Evidently such feelings are not acceptable. But what then am I to think in such a case, when the work is actually well performed?

To observe whether it is really well done or not and feel the Ananda of work done for the Mother. Get rid of the "I". If it is well done, it is the Force that did it and your only part was to be a good or a bad instrument.

During the work, is it preferable to think that it is the Mother who acts through us?

If it is work, you can always do that, provided you realise that it depends on the instrument whether the Mother's force works freely or not.

But in that case, will not a wrong movement lurk disguised in the Mother's work?

If you think that all your actions come from the Mother, then of course it will have that effect — the actions come from Prakriti. Work is a different matter, for it is the Mother's work you are doing.

Someone says, "In the beginning one cannot remember to offer one's work throughout to the Mother. It is very difficult to do it; the inner being may not be ready." Is the remembering really impossible?

It is perfectly possible. There are people who do it. Difficult it is, but that is because of the outer, not because of the inner being.

The year 1934

During the working period the useless thoughts intrude and interrupt the contact of the outer with the inner being. To what special difficulty do you attribute this?

There is no special difficulty beyond what everybody feels, that of reconciling work with the inner concentration. It is a difficulty that has to be conquered, but for most it takes time to conquer.

You must be able to work and keep the silence of the inner being.

You wrote, "But when you concentrate what is the need of attending to the things of the exterior plane?" While concentrating, is not my attention to be maintained all the time — during the intellectual pursuits as well as during the physical work?

For that a double concentration is needed, and it is successful when either the inner or the outer concentration becomes automatic.

The inner concentration and quietude seem to be extending outwards. I feel quietness and I am now able to concentrate with the eyes open. When one leads an inner life, how does one deal with the outer things?

They are dealt with by the Force that works through the being.

May I request you to elaborate your above answer?

When one is concentrated within, the body can go on doing its work by the Force acting within it. Even the external consciousness can work separately under the motion of the Force while the rest of the consciousness is in concentration.

During all my physical activities, there is probably a quietness but not the same inner contact or experience as during meditation.

That comes with more difficulty in the outer activity than in the inward concentration, but it can become quite as vivid there also.

Particularly when something descends from above, my consciousness feels an exclusive need of inwardness and withdrawal from all actions.

Work has not to be given up — the consciousness must be kept in the work.

When the personal consciousness is silent whatever actions are carried out seem to be mechanical. No conscious orientation by our will should be there. There is only a spontaneous attitude of self-offering.

Yes, that is what often happens for a time until there is a new consciousness taking up the actions.

Before the dynamic self pours itself down into me, is there no possibility to start the actions from the "true consciousness"?

Activity would mean either directing work by the ordinary vital or mental consciousness or else handing it over to the Mother's Force. But for that you must be conscious of the Mother's Force doing things through you.

You wrote, "Rasa must be there in the work." But I am not able to get this rasa, this enjoyment.

For the perfect condition in the work rasa must be there — but the perfect condition is not always at once possible.

What are these other things that are more important for the present than rasa?

Strength in the peace — higher power in the will (tapas); extension of continuity of peace and self-realisation; if possible descent of a Force removing the tamas and the vital difficulty.

SEX THOUGHTS AND IMPULSES

The year 1933

How are we to reject a sexual movement?

As you reject any other vital movement — by throwing it away or withdrawing yourself from it.

Naturally, if you read about these things (novels etc.) they enter the mind and pass into the subconscious where they leave their impression. If the consciousness is not free from the sexual impulse, this impression can rise up from the subconscious and work in the mind.

Which is the centre (chakra) from which sexual thoughts and impulses come?

The lowest centre at the bottom of the spine. It contains many other things but also it is in its front the support of the sexual movements.

What is one to do when the sexual sensations come?

Turn away your attention and think of something else.

Where is the root of the sexual impulses?

In matter and vital.

So long as sex presents itself before me as thoughts I can turn it out as you suggested the other day. But the difficulty is about its impulses.

The will ought to have the same mastery over impulses as over the thoughts. Many people find it easier to control an impulse than to prevent a thought.

With what is the sexual impulse to be replaced? And of what Divine part is it a degradation?

The Divine Ananda in the vital and in the body.

Ananda — which is the source of the Divine Creation.

Generally, does a bachelor get fewer sexual sensations than a married man?

It depends upon the man — if he has strong sexual desires, he may get more.

While listening to music this morning I felt as if stones were falling on me in the form of sexual sensations. A very strange experience!

When the mind and the higher vital reject, they take this form which belongs to the vital-physical.

If you want to reject, you have to reject patiently and persistently — these forces are not going to give up so early.

Up to what stage do the sexual forces follow us?

There is no rule about that. Some get rid of them early, — others keep them till the physical and subconscious are taken up by the Force altogether.

The year 1934

It is said that if one gets sex thoughts and impulses, one should practise what is called 'nigraha' for some time, so that during this time peace or purity may descend and change the lower habits. What does our Yoga say about 'nigraha'?

Nigraha means holding down the movement, but a movement merely held down is only suspended — it is better to reject and dismiss, detaching yourself from it.

With the peace and silence established in the being, do the sexual suggestions fall off naturally?

If it is established all through, then it brings purity and the purity throws off the sexual suggestions.

Some people get sexual suggestions in regard to anybody — beauty or character has nothing to do with them. Is there no rhyme or reason in this matter?

None. The sexual impulse is its own reason to itself — it acts for its own satisfaction and does not ask for any reason, for it is instinctive and irrational.

Will sex-dreams disturb one's sadhana? And what do they imply?

Sex in the subconscious. If it is only in the subconscious, it should not be of much importance.

Along with the sex thoughts, there are the egoistic thoughts about the power to attract others through one's physical charms.

It is the usual vanity of the lower vital — it is very common. Any man can have an attraction for any woman, and vice versa, when the sex forces are active, but that attraction is not his, it is the pull of the sex force.

Sometimes the physical feels the sex sensation, but it has greatly diminished elsewhere.

In order not to have a hold, it must be pushed out from the vital also. Then the physical sensation only touches and passes.

The sex thoughts do not seem to come really from within us. Most of them have even no connection with us. They are merely a play of the physical nature without any individuality in them. They pass simply from men to women or the other way round — often without our knowledge.

Yes, that is what happens — but sometimes people, if they receive and indulge them, become themselves instruments for passing them on to others.

Considering sex as something outside one, could one leave it entirely to the Mother for transformation?

Yes — so long as it does not come inside, that can be done.

What does "coming inside" mean?

Coming inside means taking hold of you so that there is a push for satisfaction. Pressure from outside however strongly felt is not coming inside.

After taking the position of witness, one feels strengthened to change it to that of governor in matters of sex.

That is good. The Mother is pressing for the sex trouble to go out of the sadhakas, — as it is a great obstacle. So it must go.

If sex is fought out up to the vital and remains only on the surface of the physical, cannot one have a "pure purity"?

It must be pushed out from the physical also, to have a complete purity of the whole being. The mind and vital can have a pure purity even when it is there on the surface of the physical.

Even when one has hardly any sexual feeling, how does the vital attraction come at times?

If there is no sexual feeling or hardly any, that is a great gain. The difficulty then remains only in the vital pull for interchange and in the formative imagination. They have to fade out.

Cannot one admire the beauty of women without any special sex attraction?

If one admires all beautiful things, not women only, without desire — then there would be no harm. But specially applied to women, it is a relic of the "sex appeal".

Talking with the other sex, one's consciousness does not always have the same ease as with one's own, even though there is no perceptible sex attraction.

It is the sense of sex that causes that, even if there is no attraction. One must be able to deal with all without any sense of sex.

I was walking on the road when some local women of low class passed by near me. Immediately I felt a vehement sexual sensation in the form of pain. By the time they had gone far the sensation too had left me. Was it due to the women? If so, how could my body come in their influence without my ever taking any interest in them?

Why not? It is not *their* influence, but the influence of the forces, which are around them.

The sexual thoughts and sensations do not spare me even when I am attending Purani's and Kanai's classes! My vital is attracted toward some girls.

How is it that my sexual centre has opened so widely that anything may enter?

It is rather that you have become more conscious of the things that were coming.

In the evening, just at the time of meditation, the sexual thoughts began to rush up. They were so haphazard that I do not know how to express them. I suppose my mind and vital have nothing to do with them; for they were seen to be coming exactly from the front part of the sex-centre. Absolutely no sensations or impulses (only thought-formations). From where does this sexuality come?

It rises from the purely physical then.

I am not aware of what is going on with sex in me. The organ remains constantly in a stimulated condition.

That is the mechanical physical reaction. By itself it has no importance. What matters is what is behind it — thought imaginations, physical sex sensation, vital sensation or what?

You ask what is behind. It is the usual sex reaction from the atmosphere.

What is the usual sex reaction from the atmosphere? Make it precise.

Whenever I come across a woman, sex thought-imaginings begin at once to intrude mechanically. These things are seen coming from the front part of the sex centre. There are sometimes physical sex sensations too. However, all these reactions are in thought formations — there is never any impulse or conscious desire for the sex enjoyment in any part of the being — vital or physical.

It is therefore only the body and the most material part of the mind that are still affected.

Can a full bladder during sleep be responsible for sex?

A pressure of water is often the immediate cause of sex movement in the organ (purely physical) and often sexual dreams.

VISIONS AND VOICES

The year 1933

Sometimes scenes come before my eyes even when I have not thought of them and when I have not wanted their presence. Are these images mental or subtle?

These are not mental images. There is an inner vision that opens when one does sadhana and all sorts of images rise before it or pass. Their coming does not depend upon your thought or will; it is real and automatic. Just as your physical eyes see things in the physical world, so the inner eyes see things and images that belong to the other worlds and subtle images of things of this physical world also.

Suppose an image has appeared before one's eyes. If one had not desired or even thought of it, would it not disqualify from being called a mental image?

No, it is not like that. A mental image may also come suddenly, e.g. if someone is thinking of you, you may see a mental image of that person.

Can one stop such mental images when one does not want to see them?

One can always dismiss them and if one is very conscious one can put up a mental will against their appearance.

Has one no power to do anything with his inner eyes? Can they not turn and look towards the divine worlds?

You see what you are able to see, it is a mental vision. If you try to see this or that, you are likely to create mental images only. It is only by the development of consciousness that you can see the divine worlds.

Are subtle images restricted to any particular object or realm?

Subtle images can be images of all things in all worlds.

Everything not physical is seen by an inner vision.

I saw Mother's form in a dream last night. Was it real or was it imagination only at work?

What do you mean by real? It was the form of Mother in a dream experience. Imagination applies only to the waking mind.

But cannot false forces take the form of the Mother?

If false forces take the form of the Mother, it will be with some bad object. If there is no attack or wrong suggestion, you need not suppose that it is false forces that have done it.

Of course it is always possible that something in your own consciousness has constructed a dream about the Mother or put her figure there when she herself was not there. That happens when it is only a dream, a number of ideas and memories etc. of the mind put together and not experience on another plane.

In a letter about subtle supraphysical fragrance, you used the phrase: "Like the supraphysical light seen by the eyes." Do our eyes see the supraphysical light, then? Can one really enjoy it without going to the supraphysical worlds?

What light? If you mean the supraphysical light you don't get it on the physical. You get the supraphysical inner vision often behind the physical sight and you see with that, supraphysical things as is perfectly natural.

When one tries to do something that is contrary to the Divine's Will, what is it that tells one inwardly not to do it?

It is the discriminating mind or the psychic that tells.

You have said: "To hear and recognise the Mother's voice within is not easy." When is one ready?

When one has equality, discrimination and sufficient yogic experience, — otherwise any voice may be mistaken for the Mother's.

On several occasions I seemed to listen to people's thoughts. What being in me did this?

It is not a being listening. It is simply that your mind became aware of the others' thoughts.

After I become aware of others' thoughts, if I am not careful and if I let them enter me they may take hold of my vital being and disturb my consciousness. If they come and pass, it is all right, but I must not stick to them.

Certainly, but if you don't know where they come from, still they might come in and then you would take them for your own thoughts and find it more difficult to dismiss them.

The year 1934

The Mother's body does not appear to me any longer a physical structure like that of other human beings. It is simply a particularised manifestation of a magnificent light. Is it really so? Or am I simply exaggerating my experience?

No, that is all right — it so appears to the inner vision.

Visions are not indispensable — they are a help, that is all, when they are of the right kind.

I dreamt of an insect flying from near a lamp, entering my body and illumining it. Has it any meaning?

The insect may symbolise some force of light on a small scale.

In my last night's dreams I saw two events. First, I saw that the Mother would come out for her evening walk earlier today, and that I would somehow be present to see her. Second, I saw a new poem of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. Both these predictions have become facts today.

One can see beforehand things that happen in the physical. One can see them on the vital plane or on the subtle physical, — but the subtle physical foreseeing is usually more exact and sure.

The Mother's Force has started working in my ears! Often it closes them as if with some physical substance. Then I feel quite deaf for the time being.

It is through the ears that the thought vibrations usually come from outside.

Yesterday I was sitting before the Mother and receiving something from her. At the same time I began to feel the near presence of H through a particular smell. But H was not at all present in the Hall and wherever I moved the smell also accompanied me. Once you wrote to me that each person has a special subtle smell different from others'. Was the experience something of the kind?

It is simply that the subtle physical sense has been developed and you feel H near although he is not physically present — with that comes the smell.

I had just closed my eyes — but was not asleep. Suddenly I saw a small bird coming down in swift flight. It knocked at my forehead, just above the inner mind-centre. I could not quite remember afterwards whether it entered in or fled away.

It must have gone in. I suppose the bird indicates a power of ascension.

I wonder if what I feel as silence is the true silence. People say that by the silence is usually meant a state in which one hears the Divine's Voice. As yet I have not come across any such voice.

Nonsense. The silence does not depend on hearing the Divine's Voice. Hearing voices is not always a very safe thing either unless one is clear first in the vital.

During the noon nap there was a dream-vision. I saw your answer to my question about H. You had written, "Yes." The characters of the writing were exactly like yours. Can the hostile forces imitate your handwriting?

They can imitate anything — but why should it have been the hostile forces?

On the same paper you had drawn a sketch of a bottle. It was filled to the brim. Just above it there were two figures of small size, one representing the Mother and the other H. The figures were shown to be pouring something into the bottle. By the bottle you had meant Nagin. How do you explain this?

I suppose it indicates something to be poured into you by her through H's help. These things seem to be mental and may be mental intuitions or mental formations.

At times I feel as if a burning spark enters my forehead. It remains only for a while. What does it indicate?

A spark of the higher dynamic force, I suppose.

THE SUBCONSCIENT AND SLEEP

The year 1933

The things already stored in the subconscious will be emptied one day — but what about future impressions? How is one to deal with them in advance so as to prevent them from entering?

If the subconscious is emptied, it would mean that you have got beyond the ordinary consciousness and the subconscious itself is prepared to be an instrument of the Truth.

If you are perfectly indifferent about it that is sufficient. The impressions that come up constantly from the subconscious are of things in which the mind (or the vital) was interested — e.g. family, relatives, friends, past surroundings or occupations etc.

Yesterday when I went to give my grammar book to Z, I found her standing in a graceful pose. The subconscious took the scene in and thought too much about it.

How do you say that the subconscious took it in? — you can hardly be aware yet of the movements of the subconscious. What you describe was a quite conscious vital movement.

I am quite unconscious of my nights. I do not remember any dreams even though there is a recollection of having seen something.

It does not matter much. The sleep consciousness can be effectively dealt with only when the waking mind has made a certain amount of progress.

In the book, Words of the Mother, I came across this passage: "In sleep many people fall into the grip of those subconscious regions and they open and swallow all that they have laboriously built up in their waking hours." If the subconscious swallows up all the achievements of our waking life, done with so much labour, is it not imperative to be conscious of our nights as much as of our days?

At night when one sinks into the subconscious after being in a good state of consciousness we find that state gone and we have to labour to get it back again. On the other hand, if the sleep is of the better kind one may wake up in a good condition. Of course, it is better to be conscious in sleep, if one can.

How is it I get dreams even during my noon sleep?

All sleep is full of dreams. Why should night or day make any difference?

Yesterday I had quite a long sleep; and yet when I got up this morning I felt so tired, heavy and tamasic. It almost seemed as if I had not slept. Could it be due to my having read a novel before going to bed?

What is actually the connection between the reading and the sleep?

Obviously — it threw you into a tamasic consciousness and consequently the sleep was heavy in a gross subconsciousness and the fatigue was the result.

Simply it lowered your consciousness — and as you slept with a lowered consciousness, you went into the subconscious.

How to prevent or set right the loss of a good state which one suffers by a dull kind of sleep? Does the consciousness set it right automatically?

No — one has to concentrate a little till one gets it back.

Upon what is one to concentrate?

To concentrate the consciousness in itself simply, — as you tighten a belt. It has got relaxed and diffused, so you have lost what you gained. Or if you have not the habit of doing that concentrate in the memory of the Mother till the undiffused state comes back.

In what condition should one go to bed in order to prevent at least the outer influences caught during the day from entering into sleep?

In a state of concentration. But sleep is long and one goes through many changes and passes from one condition to another — so it is not sure. Still it gives the best chance for a conscious sleep.

Does one lose one's gains in every dream or in some particular ones only?

Dreams have nothing to do with it. It is the sleep that lowers the consciousness — if it is an ordinary sleep.

How to recognise the things that come from outside and those from the subconscious?

You can recognise only when you feel conscious with a wider consciousness not limited by the body. You can then feel or inwardly see things coming, just as you feel or see in the physical consciousness.

What is the connection between the memory and the subconscious?

What is forgotten is there in the subconscious as an impression. When it comes up, one says, "I remember."

Is our subconscious turned particularly towards Ignorance like the lower vital?

It is like the rest of the nature, only less conscious — it admits whatever comes into it.

It is only if the mind is silent that the subconscious can be empty. What has to be done is to get all the old ignorant unyogic stuff out of the subconscious.

The subconscious is the support of habitual action — it can support good habits as well as bad.

How to put a will even in the subconscious?

Just as you put a will anywhere else — in the vital, in the physical — it has only to be imposed on the consciousness and addressed through the consciousness to the subconscious part of the being.

The year 1934

The absence of sleep does not always have its effect immediately — but it accumulates and the physical subconsciously feels the strain and the full effect appears afterwards.

Formerly I could sleep for eight to nine hours, but now hardly for five!

Five hours is too little. Sometimes some tension in the consciousness comes which diminishes sleep, but it should not go too far.

Why does the tension come?

It comes because the physical is not able to meet the intensity of the concentration of force without tension.

How is it that the physical meets the intensity of the concentration by tension?

Tension is its way of realising the intensity — it stiffens and strains itself for the purpose.

At present my body demands a long sleep — eight hours at night and two in the afternoon! Should it be allowed? Is it not a kind of tamas?

It is a little too long, but perhaps the body needs it for a short time so as to recoup some past strain.

Eight hours at night is all right, the additional two hours is probably necessitated by the bad sleep you were having before. The body recoups itself in this way. That is why it is a mistake to take too little sleep — the body gets strained and has to recoup itself by abnormal sleep afterwards.

The body needs rest, if it is given the needed rest it can be taught to recover quietly — if forced it becomes tamasic.

To take some rest is necessary but then it would be for the sake of the Divine that one rests and not for the satisfaction of one's ego.

Also because of the need of the body — because the body must be kept in good condition as an instrument, — for the sake of the Divine.

One can assimilate in sleep also. Remaining awake like that is not good, as in the end it strains the nerves and the system receives wrongly in an excited way or else gets too tired to receive.

If the body does not get rest sadhana is not possible.

During the state of quietude lots of subconscious impressions, thoughts etc. come up. Sometimes the mind considers them as foreign, sometimes it indulges them. Is there any reason for their rising up particularly when I am in quietness?

It very often happens when there is quietude but not the silence — they have to be rejected as foreign and so cleared out. If they are indulged, they get a new license.

It is not the impressions but the mechanical subconscious activity that has to cease. The subconscious has (with all the rest of the being) to become luminous and conscious.

In sleep one easily loses the consciousness of the day, because of the lapse of the physical being into the subconscious. You have to get the power to reestablish it when you wake.

Sometimes the sadhana continues during the sleep with experiences and visions, while sometimes there are only vital and subconscious dreams. In such a case how to make the sleep-state conscious and prolong the sadhana to the night also?

It can only be by degrees that the sleep consciousness will entirely throw off the lower forms [of dreams].

If the sleep becomes conscious even for a time, the experiences and sadhana itself can go on in the sleep-state and not only in the waking condition.

During a recent night I thought there were no dreams. But today I remember to have had a dream that night about Harin and another about a rose. This proves that dreams were playing on and I was unconscious of their existence!

There are perhaps only a few minutes of sleep in the night without dreams.

DREAMS

THE VITAL AND SUBCONSCIENT DREAMS

You recently wrote to me apropos of incoherent dreams: "It depends on your attitude and consciousness; it is by bringing light down into the subconscious that these things can go." What exactly did you mean by "attitude" and by "consciousness"?

Your aspiration to a less downward consciousness in sleep.

It is the condition of your consciousness I spoke of — the more conscious you become, the more you will be able to have dreams worth having.

From where does what we ordinarily see in our dreams come?

It is more often the impressions of the waking state that come up in this (subconscious) type of dreams.

How to understand our dreams?

Observe them — if they are of importance or of a dynamic character, the meaning is not so difficult to find.

Is it helpful to study one's own dreams, unravel them and find out their meaning?

Unless they are really significant dreams it is a waste of time.

I don't think it is necessary to make the effort to remember unless you feel that there has been something of special importance.

In what way can our dreams prove useful?

They show what the subconscious contains.

For the last three nights I have been absolutely unconscious in sleep and don't remember even my being's participation in any dreams. What happens at night to the being in these cases? Where does the subconscious go?

The subconscious remains in the body. The being really goes out into different planes of consciousness, but its experiences are not kept in the memory, because the recording consciousness is too submerged to carry the record to the waking mind.

Are the forms, seen in dreams, of subtle beings those beings themselves or formations created by them?

They are rather formations created from the subconscious. It is a hotchpotch of subconscious impressions thrown out on the vital plane.

I am told by S that the people we see in our dreams are sometimes parts of our own being, and that the mind gives them the forms of men or women, with whom we are acquainted on the physical plane. Is it true?

It is not parts of our own real "being" usually. It is different forces and forms of nature — whether of general nature or of our own nature, also ideas, impulses etc., the formations of our outer personality, or mind, vital etc.

These dreams on the vital plane are often very mixed owing to the intrusion of figures and details from the subconscious.

These are dreams on the vital plane or excursions into the vital world of which the happenings are rendered in terms familiar to the physical mind — e.g. shopkeeper, police etc. though arranged in a different way from the physical. I cannot say they are clear and precise in significance as the mental dreams are.

The dream is a seeing of things that have their truth on the vital plane.

You do not know that you live on other planes as well as on the physical and that what happens there need not be the same as what happens on the physical. If you meet the Mother on the vital and certain things happen they can have their truth on the vital plane but it does not mean that they happened here in the physical world.

Things do happen on the vital plane — but they are not more important than what happens here because it is here we have to realise and what happens on the vital is only a help.

Subconscious dreams and lower vital dreams are usually incoherent. Higher vital dreams are usually and mental dreams are always coherent.

It was a sexual formation probably rising from the subconscious vital. Instead of allowing yourself to be disturbed by it, you should dismiss it from your mind altogether.

In our dreams, why sometimes do the figures take the form of a particular woman?

They take often the form of one who has some power of vital attraction in her so as to support their effort.

When I once asked you whether a certain dream was an attack by a vital force, you said "Yes". And you added: "There are other dreams that are formations put in by the vital forces, but this is not one of them." Please elucidate the difference.

I said this dream was an actual happening on the vital plane, not a formation. If somebody attacks you in the street, that is not a formation. But if somebody hypnotises you and suggests that you are ill — that suggestion is a formation put in by the hypnotiser.

It depends on the dream. It is sometimes a fact on the supraphysical plane, sometimes a representation in the mind of something that happened otherwise — sometimes only a formation.

Last night I saw in a dream a train passing at full speed and a horse which was very faithful to me. What does the dream mean?

The horse is a force acting for progress. The railway train at full speed means rapid progress.

What should we try to understand about dreams?

Simply to make precise where you are in the dream state.

In a dream I saw X who had my time-piece. First he went straight to Arjava and then told me, "Now I will repair your time-piece." Does not this dream differ from the previous ones of memory? For I never asked him to do anything for me.

But you have seen X and Arjava and know that X repairs time-pieces for the sadhaks. When all that comes up from the subconscious it arranges itself not as it is in life but in a confused and incoherent way because the coordinating mind is not at work — everything combines together in a haphazard way.

During the afternoon sleep I seem to come often into contact with the Mother. Is it the Mother who sends her emanation?

Yes, or rather something of her is always with you.

A dream: The time was hushed with twilight. I was entering the Ashram when I saw that the Mother had already come down. When she saw me, such a gracious and blissful smile escaped her lovely lips! There were many sadhaks about her.

Then she began to conduct music with a small and beautiful stick. There were three girls around her; one of them was playing on a harmonium and the other two on tamburas. While directing the music the Mother was also singing, but mostly in a trance.

Am I right in taking those three girls as the Mother's presiding Shaktis?

Yes.

Was it a mere dream or a real experience within?

It was an experience on the vital plane.

What does such a spiritual music signify?

There is such music on the supraphysical planes.

...You entered some part of the higher vital world and had the experience.

In a dream I saw the dawn of the 15th of August: a great storm arose, something like a cyclone. My mind considered it as a final revolt of the material nature against the higher Powers that were brought down by you on the occasion of your birthday. Very soon all the resistance vanished and instead of the obscurity, created by the storm, I found a bright sunlight! What does this event signify?

It is not an event. It is simply a symbolic dream in the vital indicating a tendency or possibility.

There was another dream: I felt as if two parts of the being — one turned towards light and the other towards ignorance — came out of the body. They fought a duel. It was not clear who won, but I afterwards experienced a sort of release in the consciousness.

It was probably not a dream, but an experience within.

I dreamt that a few Christians were jeering at you. Then you made a statement by which the court could fine them.

It is a purely vital dream. Of course one can take the Christians as forces of the vital physical nature, which can be converted.

In a dream I saw the Mother walking with some of us. She asked me, "What is this tree?" I replied, "Peace in the vital." Amongst us there were many newcomers. One of them prostrated herself before the Mother. Sobbing, she prayed, "O Mother, how wretched I am that I am not able to stay here. I am already married," etc. In the dream itself my mind thought that it was her soul that had expressed itself.

That is more coherent than many of your vital dreams and was probably an actual fact of experience in the vital plane.

In last night's dream I saw a monkey. What does a monkey stand for?

The monkey may have been of the Hanuman type. Hanuman is a symbol of Bhakti and devotion.

THE MENTAL AND PSYCHIC DREAMS

In mental dreams can things, men and movements figure as in vital dreams?

They can, but the happenings there have a different less fanciful character with a clear meaning.

Last night I saw two dreams:

1) A warrior sends to his son a flower (signifying "Psychic Centre") and informs him thus: "There is a sword with just the shape of this flower on a certain mountain, go and get it." The sword was exactly like that.

2) A very beautiful maiden was perceived on a vast sea, raising her head out of the water. Only her head could be seen. She did not appear to be a vital kind of woman. My being looked at her with a great reverence.

The first dream seems to be mental and the meaning, as in all mental dreams, is plain enough in the dream itself. The other is probably from the higher vital representing some part of it with its presiding Shakti.

I went to X, during my afternoon nap, for some flowers to send to the Mother. He was seated with his usual group of people, telling them, "Z has been permitted to stay here (in the Ashram) for 30 years." Anyone could see that he was much excited with a vital joy. In the dream itself I could feel that he had pressed the Mother for keeping Z here. Then we all entered his room, where he began to pour some tea in his cup. As for my business, he said, "See, there are no flowers, my basin is empty."

It is of the mental vital expressing X's vital mind in these matters — so busy with vital things like his desire about Z that he has neglected to foster the psychic.

During sleep does the inner being stop the sadhana because of the commonplace dreams?

No. It can go on behind the surface.

In a dream I saw that it was night and I was sleeping on the mosquito-curtained cot. I found beside my cot some women of exquisite beauty playing.

I could not make out if they were angels or goddesses. Their bodies were filled with superhuman light. It seemed they had some rapport with the Divine Mother. They respected me and talked with me, I forget what, but probably it was about my sadhana and the Mother. A bright light was burning amidst them. Although they were not young they appeared as innocent as children.

Probably the dream represented something from the psychic realm.

Here is a dream I had during my noon sleep. I came across a lake. In its centre there was an island with a small but very beautiful garden. There stood a fountain in the middle from which water was springing out. I watched it from the brink of the lake.

It is probably a rendering in physical terms of some experience on the psychic-vital plane.

This time the dream was about the Mother's music. All the while I was seated apart from the throng of people and yet in such a place that I could see everything.

After some time the Mother opened her magic eyes. She turned her head towards me and threw only one glance on me for a few seconds — I could not bear it longer, so I bent my head down. I felt a glow all over my body — up to the material layer! It was something more than the touch of a fiat. This time my physical consciousness experienced being taken more inside than above. It was no more bound by the ignorant nature.

It is obviously an experience. It is not symbolic, so you can't ask what it signifies — it was a thing that happened, just as on the physical plane Mother might put something on you.

In today's dream I went to the Ashram Dining Room (Aroume). Casually I paid a visit to Y. As I was approaching him I felt as if stepping towards a psychic being!

His psychic is very prominent.

A dream: I went to the seashore where I heard a great noise. Then I noticed a big steamer. The noise was due to the taking off of three aeroplanes from the steamer, which was on fire. Perhaps they separated from it in order to save it. Strange to say, afterwards the steamer seemed to be all right and already sailing away!

Has the dream anything to do with the psychic fire?

It cannot have been the psychic fire because then there would have been no need to save the steamer.

You wrote the other day: "The subconscious is there, so long as it is not enlightened these dreams are bound to come." I had asked you the question from the viewpoint of Harin's lines:

Even in sleep-depths I am wide awake.

Thy sweet presence is always there.

That does happen, but usually only when the psychic is in full activity.

SOME DREAMS OF THE HIGHER PLANES

A dream: There was a small dog that wanted to take revenge on me, I don't know why. I had to run away from it in order to save myself. But it always pursued me, no matter where I fled and how. At last I escaped to a place which seemed like a highest room, and heaved a sigh of relief that the dog would never attempt to follow me here. But alas! After a while it did appear before me. But what a wonder! I perceived that all its anger had vanished! It simply bowed down before me.

This dream may be perhaps interesting.

It may be symbolic.

The dog is here something of the physical, adverse or injurious until one rises up to the highest part of the being when it gets transformed and becomes friendly and helpful.

Romen, Shanti, Jyoti and myself climbed to a high hill. There was a beautiful bungalow and garden on the summit. We were enjoying the place. Within a short time, Jyoti became impatient and insisted on going down immediately. In spite of our unwillingness we had to lead her down. Any meaning in this?

Probably that she cannot remain long on a high experience but comes down into the ordinary consciousness.

In a dream of mine, the Mother told Shanti, Romen and myself to go to her abode. It was at some distance. The Mother had shown us a particular passage which alone could be used. But it was full of dangers. There was a long and slippery slope. At the centre lay a narrow and crooked path of not more than nine inches breadth! A slight wrong step from the centre and there was water below to swallow us up! However, by the Mother's grace we three crossed all that and arrived at a certain safe place. And yet we had not reached the destination (somehow in the dream itself we had thought: "How can we hope to attain the goal so easily?"). Afterwards the Mother appeared and told us, "Why did you not journey forward? My abode was just a few steps farther. You ought not to be so discouraged once on the way." What meaning does this dream have?

It is indicated in the dream itself.

A dream during my noon nap: I saw an earthen pot of just an ordinary kind. But it was beautifully decorated. The pot was so manufactured that its upper half could be taken up without disturbing the lower half. The upper lid consisted of eight parts, and each one could be separated. This whole vision appeared as clearly as a cinema film. Later some writing surged up, which was deciphered as: "Those eight parts are the openings of eight Goddesses. Each part of the lid will open and a woman will emerge from it." Does the dream mean anything?

It may — the pot may be the symbol of the being, with its upper and lower parts and the eight divisions (physical, vital, psychic, mental, Supermind and Sachchidananda parts — or else more probably higher mental, intuitive, overmind and supramental). Each has its own Shakti to manifest.

A dream of last night: I was going towards the sea with some people. When we reached the shore we saw several boats just started on a voyage. Almost all the boats were new and very beautiful. They seemed to be constructed in quite a different design than what we find in this world. I felt as if not only the travellers were very gay and cheerful but also that even the boats themselves were manifesting joy and felicity! I could not quite make out the exact meaning of the happy and cheerful boats and the voyagers.

A happy movement of the sadhana without depressions and obstacles.

Some time after seeing the above dream, a voice was not only heard but felt as an experience, "A Light is dawning on the lower vital (for transformation) and we can sleep no longer." The voice awoke me at once and I felt profoundly that most of my lower vital difficulties had been ended by the Mother during the night — and then I felt myself free and full of delight and as if a thing like the lower vital existed no longer in my being!

It was at about 2.30 a.m. that I was roused from sleep. And yet I was so full of joy that more sleep was not necessary. The pure Atman consciousness which I had experienced before during fragmentary periods and only if I had first entered into a pure blankness, became now as spontaneous as peace!

Doubtless, all that shows a sudden and marvellous change in my being and also that the Mother has done it very consciously and precisely during the sleep.

It is a very good experience, especially as coming in a dream such experiences have power on the subconscious.

From where did that voice come?

Such voices come usually either from within oneself or from some higher plane.

(Meaning of "sleep no longer"): "Be tamasic and negligent about sadhana no longer."

PART IV

THE IMPULSE TOWARDS LAYA

When the human soul has reached perfection of the spiritual state it feels the attraction of laya irresistible. It feels that the purpose for which it was sent here on earth is accomplished and it must at once return to and rest in the Divine above, unless it is a special soul, an Avatar.

If it were so, then the soul would have to go into laya. Avatar or no Avatar. For if the purpose for which it is here is fulfilled, then there is no reason for it to remain any longer here.

When the old Yogis made spiritualisation their goal, it was not because they were weak, ignorant and selfish, seeking their own personal perfection and not the perfection of the terrestrial existence. They simply could not restrain their souls from laya. It is natural that one should not go against the impulse of one's soul. Moreover, it is by no means an illusion, otherwise the Divine too will be an illusion. We are saved from the impulse by the descent of the Avatar.

I do not understand the reasoning. If the soul's natural impulse is to seek laya and that is the true theory, otherwise the Divine would be an illusion, then anything contrary to it (e.g. my teaching that the true purpose of existence here is the manifestation of the Divine in the world and not laya) must be false. The Divine in the world and its manifestation here must be an illusion. The Avatar being here can only delay the laya, it can't alter the nature of things or the purpose of existence.

It is the descent of the Mother and yourself that helped us to transform the attraction for laya into one for the supramental life on earth. It must have demanded of you a Herculean work.

What work? You have said the purpose of existence is for the soul to have laya in the Divine. There can be no work — the only divine work possible is to get ready for laya and, once ready, to go into laya.

But the other alternative became possible only because the Divine is here in a personal form. The soul may prefer now to live with Him and act as His instrument rather than disappear into laya.

The Divine being here in a personal form is only for the work of further manifestation. How can it alter the fundamental purpose of the soul's presence here — which always was, according to the laya theory, to come into the world in order to go out of it again?

The old impulse will remain if the sadhaka himself does not abide with the will of the Supermind. And the Supramentalisation can never be achieved unless he accepts the personal aspect of the Divine. It is the personal aspect that creates the possibility of saving the soul from laya. Is all this correct?

No. The impulse towards laya is a creation of the mind, it is not the sole possible destiny of the soul. When the mind tries to abolish its own ignorance, it finds no escape from it except laya, because it supposes that there is no higher principle of cosmic existence beyond itself — beyond itself is only the pure Spirit, the absolute impersonal Divine. Those who go through the heart (love, bhakti) do not accept laya, they believe in a state beyond of eternal companionship with the Divine or dwelling in the Divine without laya. All this quite apart from supramentalisation. What then becomes of your starting-point that laya is the inevitable destiny of the soul and it is only the personal descent of the Avatar that saves it from inevitable laya?

I wrote to you at some length about Avatar and laya. Was it not helped by the higher knowledge?

It may have been a partial knowledge, but badly expressed by the mind.

What was wrong in it?

There were two points of error. (1) That the soul formerly had no other possibility once it reached the Divine than laya. There were other possibilities, e.g., passing into a higher plane, living in the Divine or in the presence of the Divine. Both imply the refusal of birth and leaving the Lila on earth. (2) That it was only for the sake of living with the incarnate Divine and by reason of this descent that the soul consented to give up laya. The capital point is the supramentalisation of the being which is the Divine intention in the evolution on earth and cannot fail to come; the descent or incarnation is only an instrumentation for bringing that about. Your statement therefore becomes wrong by incompleteness. If you had said "laya or other evasion of life" and "the Descent and the supramentalisation", then you would have got the right thing.

*You said, "It may have been a partial knowledge, but badly expressed by the mind."
How did the mind bring about errors in the act of transmitting it?*

It comes through the mind, so the mind can always modify its expression unless it is entirely and absolutely still.

BEAUTY AND ANANDA

What is the difference between the artistic look and the vital look?

In the artistic look there is only the perception of beauty and the joy of it because it exists and one has seen and felt it. There is no desire to possess or enjoy in the vital way.

The artistic way of seeing is better than the vital.

When I see certain faces, I like to look at them and, though ordinarily one may expect a wrong vital movement, I feel no such movement. Is such a thing possible?

One can have a preference or appreciation of a face or a body for aesthetic or other reasons without its being sexual — but when it is from a man to a woman the sex can come in at any moment unless one is master of one's own consciousness.

Is it not true that Beauty and Truth are always one — wherever there is Beauty there is Truth too?

In beauty there is the truth of beauty. What do you mean by Truth? There are truths of various kinds and they are not all beautiful.

You have written: "Beauty is an expression, a form of Ananda." In that case, is not Beauty itself part of the essence of the Divine, as are Ananda, Consciousness and Existence?⁴

⁴ Here is the letter of Sri Aurobindo to a Sadhaka which led me to seek elaboration from him:

"Beauty is not the same thing as delight, but like Love it is an expression, a form of Ananda, — created by Ananda and composed of Ananda it conveys that delight to the mind of which it is made. Aesthetically, the delight takes the appearance of Rasa and the enjoyment of this Rasa is the mind's and the vital's reaction to the perception of Beauty. The spiritual realisation has a sight, a perception, a feeling which is not that of the mind and vital; — it passes beyond the aesthetic limit, sees the universal beauty, sees behind the object what the eye cannot see, feels what the emotion of the heart cannot feel and passes beyond Rasa and Bhoga to pure Ananda, — a thing more deep, intense, rapturous than any mental or vital or any physical rasa reaction can be. It sees the One everywhere, — the Beloved everywhere, the original bliss of existence everywhere and all these can create an inexpressible Ananda of beauty, — the beauty of the One, the beauty of the Divine, the beauty of the Beloved, the beauty of the eternal Existence in things. It can see also the beauty of forms and objects, but with a seeing other

If it is, should not one think that Love, Knowledge, Force, Light etc. are also expressions of Sachchidananda?

The word "expression" means only something that is manifested by the Ananda and of which Ananda is the essence. Love and Beauty are powers of Ananda as Light and Knowledge are of Consciousness. Force is inherent in Consciousness and may be called part of the Divine Essence. Ananda is always there even when Sachchidananda takes on an impersonal aspect or appears as the sole essential Existence; but Love needs a Lover and Beloved, Beauty needs a manifestation to show itself. So in the same way Consciousness is always there, but Knowledge needs a manifestation to be active, there must be a Knower and a Known. That is why the distinction is made between Ananda which is of the essence and Beauty which is a power or expression of Ananda in manifestation. These are of course philosophical distinctions necessary for the mind to think about the world and the Divine.

You further said in the letter on Beauty: "Aesthetically, the delight takes the appearance of Rasa and the enjoyment of this Rasa is the mind's and the vital's reaction to the perception of Beauty." I find it difficult to understand how Beauty, Rasa and delight are connected with one other.

That can hardly be realised except by experience of Ananda. Ananda is not ordinary mental or vital delight in things. Rasa is the mind's understanding of beauty and pleasure in it accompanied usually by the vital's enjoyment of it (bhoga). Mental pleasure or vital enjoyment are not Ananda, but only derivations from the concealed universal Ananda of the Spirit in things.

You have said that peace, silence and knowledge come from above the mind. Do not love and joy too descend from above?

The soul's love and joy come from within, from the psychic being. What comes from above is the Ananda of the higher consciousness.

than the mind's, other than that of a limited physical vision — what was not beautiful to the eye becomes beautiful, what was beautiful to the eye wears now a greater marvellous and ineffable beauty. The spiritual realisation can bring the vision and the rapture of the All — Beautiful everywhere."

26-10-35

How is it that only a rose looks beautiful and not many other flowers?

The rose is not the only beautiful flower, there are hundreds of others; most flowers are beautiful.

There are degrees and kinds of beauty, that is all.

The rose is among the first of flowers because of the richness of its colour, the intensity of sweetness of its scent and the grace and magnificence of its form.

What makes a flower beautiful?

Form, colour, scent and something else which is indefinable.

Plato's book, The Banquet, is said to be about Love and Beauty. Is it a kind of philosophy?

Not much philosophy there, more poetry.

Shelley has translated The Banquet into English. Could I read it?

If you want to read it as a piece of literature, it is all right.

I did not find so much of poetry in the book. Perhaps you have read it in the original Greek?

Even in a good translation the poetry ought to come out to some extent. Plato was a great writer as well as a philosopher — no more perfect prose has been written by any man. In some of his books his prose carries in it the qualities of poetry and his thought has poetic vision. That is what I meant when I said it was poetry.

How do you find Plato's ideas about philosophy, about Nature, existence of the soul, etc.?

I don't know what are his ideas about philosophy or Nature. He believes in the soul and immortality and that is of course true.

When poets, authors, inventors, etc., bring down or create something quite new, do they do so by going for the time being beyond the human consciousness?

No. They remain in the human consciousness, but they open to something in the larger mind or larger vital (worlds of thought and vision, worlds of beauty) and become a medium for the expression of things that are [there].

You have explained to me something about Beauty and Ananda but not yet about the Divine Light. What is it and what is its function?

It has no function — it is just Light of Divine Consciousness. If you mean the result, it is supposed to illumine, to remove darkness and obscurity, to make the nature fit for true consciousness, Knowledge etc.

How do you define true consciousness?

The consciousness that is aware of the Divine and the truth and does not look at things from the ego — it is wide and calm and strong and aspires to union and surrender — many things besides, but this is the essential.

HUMAN GREATNESS

Till the other day I did not know how great men rise, flourish and then fall. So I tried to study H and R. But even in these cases I had to despair, for I failed to trace any greatness in them except perhaps in their ego!

I do not know to whom you refer as great men here; but H is certainly a great poet. So what is the difficulty in recognising his greatness?

Men with great capacities or a powerful mind or a powerful vital have very often more glaring defects of character than ordinary men — or at least the defects of the latter do not show so much, being like themselves, smaller in scale.

What particularly is there in these men that you call great?

By greatness is meant an exceptional capacity of one kind or another which makes a man eminent among his fellows.

A truly great man does not know himself to be great.

That is a very doubtful statement. Most great men know perfectly well that they are great.

The outer greatness is but an illusion. The true quality of greatness lies inside and to know it we must go within.

Why is the outer greatness an illusion?

While speaking about greatness I was thinking of the psychic and spiritual greatness and not of the outer kind like any great capacity nor of any powerful mind or vital. I thought the Divine does not care as much for this outer greatness as for the inner — especially in the real seekers of the Truth. That is why I called the outer greatness a mere illusion.

Why should the Divine not care for the outer greatness? He cares for everything in the universe. All greatness is the Vibhuti of the Divine, says the Gita.

I am puzzled how a man with a big ego, like R, can be an instrument of the Divine, for, where the ego exceeds, the Divine recedes. Both can't work together. And yet R cures diseases wonderfully. How is it that he is used as an instrument by the Divine?

The Divine is there in all men, so the Divine and the ego do live together. But the Divine is veiled by the ego and manifests in proportion as the ego *first submits itself*, then recedes and disappears. There can be no complete presence by the Divine without disappearance of the ego.

Any man can be an instrument of the Divine, e.g. Kemal Pasha. The thing is to be a perfectly conscious instrument.

Do you really mean to say that people like Kemal Pasha can be called the instruments of the Divine?

Yes, certainly, they are unconscious instruments — not for the great divine work, but for the cosmic work in the human race.

Is it true that one can be so extraordinary as to do several things simultaneously without any direct or indirect Yogic discipline, several quite different things? I was told that Napoleon used to do this.

Yes, Julius Caesar also — he could dictate 5 letters on different subjects at a time to 5 secretaries without losing the thread of any of them for a moment.

It is said about Napoleon that whenever he wanted to think or talk he used to open a particular drawer of his mind. And when he desired to be quiet he just closed it. How did he manage it?

Napoleon had a clear and powerful mind and a strong will — that is how.

One part of R seems to have turned beautifully towards the Mother and that is why she is able to use him as an instrument in curing cases of illness. The remaining parts seem to be still egoistic. Perhaps if his vital being were less egoistic, he would achieve greater things in his medical practice and in his inner sadhana.

He can cure the people all right, in spite of ego — the force too does work through his vital and not his mind only, because his vital is strong, ardent and enthusiastic. Most people's vitals are half-dead things, busy only with their little selfish desires. R's is at

most vain and ambitious but not selfish — it is rather large and generous; therefore a good instrument.

Inner sadhana is another matter, there the ego stands as a great obstacle.

Anyway, what has outer greatness got to do with the Yogis? if the sadhakas also aim at outer greatness what difference will there be between a Yogic life and a worldly life?

Obviously outer greatness is not the aim of Yoga. But that is no reason why one should not recognise the part played by greatness in the order of the universe or the place of great men of action, great poets and artists etc.

Nowadays men's minds have taken such a peculiar turn that they take delight in pointing out the defects and whims of great men.

People have begun to try to prove that great men were not great, which is a very great mistake. If greatness is not appreciated by men, the world will become small, dull, narrow and tamasic.

I cannot understand how these men with a big and generous vital manage to stock in themselves all kinds of vital vices.

Why not? Vices are simply an overflow of energy in unregulated channels.

Why do great persons have so often more glaring defects of character than ordinary people?

I have told you that already. They have more energy and the energy comes out in what men call vices as well as what men call virtues.

You said that one with an exceptional capacity is called a great man. R has that in curing his cases. He also seems to have many vices. Do they also come from an overflow of energy?

Yes, certainly. Many great men even have often very great vices and many of them. Great men are not usually model characters.

What is this "overflow of energy" in the great men you spoke of the other day? We usually associate energy with the vital.

Mental, vital, physical, all kinds of energies.

Because great men have an overflow of energy, does the Divine never care if they use it in virtues or in vices?

Why should he care? Is he a policeman? So long as one is in the ordinary nature, one has qualities and defects, virtues and vices. When one goes beyond there are no virtues and vices; — for these things do not belong to the Divine Nature.

If an overflow of energy in great men is merely of the mental, vital or physical kind what is new in it? There are plenty of people in the world who are not great and yet have a lot of energy in themselves. But they don't throw it out always in vices. The great men ought to be able to contain it and hold it back rather than be extravagant with it in wrong uses.

Who said there was anything new in it? If there are so many people in the world who have as much energy as great men, why are they not great? If they have such a stupendous lot of energy which they are keeping in reserve why do they not throw it out in something recognisable as great?

If great men are to lead their lives according to their fancies, considering themselves as the centres of the universe, self-applauding all the time and looking upon ordinary people as mere toys for themselves, what is there in them that we can call great? How are they helping the world and the Divine?

It is the power in them that is great and that power comes from the Divine — by their actions and greatness they help the world and aid the cosmic purpose. It does not matter whether they have ego or not — they are not doing Yoga.

You asked me why the Divine should care for vices or virtues. I cannot understand it, for, if He does not care for vices or virtues, how can He care for darkness or light, falsehood or truth?

Vice and virtue have nothing to do with darkness or light, truth and falsehood. The spiritual man rises above vice and virtue, he does not rise above truth and light, unless you mean by truth and light, human truth and mental light. They have to be transcended, just as virtue and vice have to be transcended.

If He does not care for vices, how will the world be divinised? Are not these things supposed to be unhelpful to His work?

Are you in a position to make a judgment as to what will or will not help God's work? You seem to have very elementary ideas in these matters. What is your idea of divinisation, — to be a virtuous man, a good husband, son, father, a good citizen etc.? In that case, I myself must be undivine, — for I have never been these things. Men like N or W would then be the great Transformed Divine Men.

If God is indifferent to both vices and virtues, what is the need of divinising the world at all? It would naturally mean that everything here is O. K. — in harmony with His divinity.

Of course not. It is only Z who is in perfect harmony with the Divine (he and two others like him); for he is a man without a single vice, all virtues from the crown of his head to the tip of his toe. He is the type of the truly great man as you conceive him. But do you really believe that men like Napoleon, Caesar, Shakespeare were not great men and did nothing for the world or for the cosmic purpose? that God was deterred from using them for his purpose because they had defects of character and vices? What a singular idea!

So far as we know all the Avatars came down here in order to deliver the world from falsehood, darkness, vices etc., at least to a certain extent. Each of them preached against these things.

I am not concerned with what the Avatars did or are supposed to have done (though in that case Krishna seems to have done some very queer and undivine things). My business is with rising above the human consciousness and not with fulfilling limited human ideals; and I look at things from that standpoint.

In defence of R you gave the examples of Napoleon, Caesar and Shakespeare. But they had no vices like his. Their ambition was not so small, petty and trivial but was rather great, heroic and dazzling — worth having by the great men of the world!

Great or dazzling, or small in the field, ambition is ambition and it is necessary for most for an energetic action. What is the use of calling a thing a vice when it is small and glorifying it when it is big?

Napoleon and Caesar were great not merely in one small thing as in the case of R, but in many things. I suppose many great people were like them, otherwise they would not have been of much use to the world or to the Divine.

It is not only the very very very big people who are of importance to the Divine. All energy, strong capacity, power of effectuation are of importance.

As for N, C and S not one of them was a virtuous man, but they were great men, — and it was your contention that only virtuous men are great men and those who have vices are not great, which is an absurd contention. All of them went after women, — two were ambitious, unscrupulous. Napoleon was most arrogant and violent. Shakespeare stole deer. Napoleon lied freely, Caesar was without scruples.

SPIRITUAL GREATNESS AND THE SUPRAMENTAL YOGA

There must be several great Yogis in India who are open to the Divine. If the Divine manifested in a human form in their own country, would they not know it?

There is no reason why they should. Each has approached the Divine in his own way. He may not recognise if the Divine manifests in another way or a new form.

People say that there are many similitudes between our Yoga and Raman Maharshi's. Are they right? I would also like to know if there is really something great in him.

Of course there is. But I know nothing about the similitudes. So far as I know he does not believe in the ascent and descent.

He dissuaded all his disciples from visions and voices and said that such things have nothing to do with the true realisation of the Self or with one's own goal. What is your opinion?

Maharshi is very much of a Vedantist. He does not believe in what we believe or in the descent etc. At the same time he himself had experiences in which the Mother interfered in a visible free material form and prevented him from doing what he intended to do.⁵

He discouraged his disciples because his aim was the realisation of the inner Self and intuition — in other words the fullness of the spiritual Mind — visions and voices belong to the inner occult sense, therefore he did not want them to lay stress on it. I also discourage some from having any dealing with visions and voices because I see that they are being misled or in danger of being misled by false visions and false voices. That does not mean that visions and voices have no value.

You have called Maharshi a great man and once you said that he lives always in the light. So he must be in the Truth-Consciousness. How then could he be mistaken in

⁵ The incident referred to may be this: Once Sri Raman Maharshi was much displeased with the quarrels among his disciples. He left the Ashram and was passing through a narrow track. There he saw an old woman, sitting with her legs stretched in such a way that he could not pass across. He was so angry that he did not halt to understand her attempt to stop him. A few steps later after by-passing her, he understood the situation and stopped, became normal and looked back at the woman. She had disappeared. Immediately the whole thing became clear to him. The Divine Mother had come in a physical form to prevent his quitting the Ashram. He returned and never left the Ashram again.

discouraging his disciples' occult faculties even when they were not misusing them but were making spiritual progress through them?

Because he is a great man does it follow that everything he thinks or says is right? or because he lives in the light does it follow that his light is absolute and complete? The "Truth-Consciousness" is a phrase I use for the Supermind. Maharshi is not in the Supermind. He may be and is in a true Consciousness, but that is a different matter.

If he lives in the true consciousness, has he not always the full knowledge? Is he not using the intuitive mind?

Living in the true consciousness is living in a consciousness in which one is spiritually in union with the Divine in one way or another. But it does not follow that so living one will have the complete, exact and infallible truth about all ideas, all things and all persons. Maharshi realises the Divine in a certain aspect and he has the knowledge of what is necessary for his path. It does not follow that he will have other knowledge that [is] beyond what he has reached or is outside it.

Intuition proper is true in itself (when not interpreted or altered by mind) although fragmentary — intuitive mind is mixed with mind and therefore not infallible; because the truth intuition gives may be mixed or imperfectly formed by mind.

Is not the inner Self everywhere? Why do we speak of descent and manifestation?

Perhaps you are of the opinion of Raman Maharshi, "The Divine is here, how can he descend from anywhere?" The Divine may be here, but if he has covered here his Light with darkness of Ignorance and his Ananda with suffering, that, I should think, makes a big difference to the plane and, even if one enters into that sealed Light etc., it makes a difference to the consciousness but very little to the Energy at work in this plane which remains of a dark or mixed character.

SUPERMIND AND THE OTHER PLANES OF HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

Since all is created from Ananda, contained and held by Ananda (I don't know if 'created' is the right word), from where have pain and misery, grief and sorrow, depression and darkness come?

Through Ignorance, Division and separative Ego.

Is every plane or everything below the Supermind influenced more or less by the Ignorance? I gather that the planes from the Higher Mind to the Overmind are also of the spiritual consciousness.

The planes below are of the spiritual consciousness, but when there is a dynamic action from them, it is always a mixed action, not an action of pure knowledge but of knowledge subduing itself to the rule of the Ignorance, the cosmic necessity in a world of Ignorance. If their action was that of the full Knowledge, there would be no need of any supramental descent.

What exactly is the difference between the Supermind and the Overmind?

The Supermind is the total Truth Consciousness; the Overmind draws down the truths separately and gives them a separate activity — e.g. in the Supermind the Divine Peace and Power, Knowledge and Will are one. In the Overmind each of these becomes a separate aspect which can exist or act on its own lines apart from the others. When it comes down to Mind they turn into an ignorance and incapacity — because Knowledge can come without a will to support it or Peace can be disturbed by the action of Power etc.

You have written: "If the soul having reached the spiritual state wills to pass out of the terrestrial manifestation, it may indeed do so — but there is also possible a higher manifestation in the Knowledge and not in the Ignorance." I don't understand how the soul can be in Ignorance after it has reached the spiritual state. Is not the spiritual consciousness and all beyond it All Knowledge?

It is only the supramental that is All Knowledge. All below that from Overmind to Matter is Ignorance — an Ignorance growing at each level nearer to the full Knowledge. Below Supermind there may be Knowledge but it is not All Knowledge.

The Overmind is part of the mental plane.

Is not the Overmind a centre of all dynamic movements?

It is not a centre at all — it is a plane far above the mind — above and organising the terrestrial existence but from a distance above it.

You say that Overmind is not a centre but a plane; then it must be full of beings working under a certain law of that world.

Of course.

Do the beings, then, of the Overmind plane work directly on the terrestrial beings or do they work, as your reply seems to suggest, indirectly — 'from a distance'. Do they themselves not take any direct part in the earth-life? or work through some human agents?

The Beings native to the Overmind are Gods. They work through the mind and life and body, but if they do it directly, then they do it from the lower planes, not from the Overmind — until at least the human being becomes conscious of the Overmind.

You said about the Beings of the Overmind: "If they do it directly, then they do it from the lower planes." Does it not mean that they come down upon the earth as incarnations?

No — they put out Powers from themselves in the lower planes and so act.

Are the gods of the vital world eternal, as are those of the Overmind?

They are mostly Emanations from the Overmind Gods.

Do the natives of the Overmind put powers from themselves in the cosmic consciousness in a general working?

The natives of the Overmind are Gods. Naturally the Gods rule the cosmos.

In the direct working of the Overmind Gods, when they want to put out some power upon the terrestrial existence, do they take birth upon this earth or do they work through some human agency?

Through some human agency. They can take birth if they like.

Have not some of the intermediary agents or the formateurs of Overmind shaped things mischievous and evil out of the Power that has gone out from the Divine?

The Formateurs of the Overmind have shaped nothing evil — it is the lower forces that receive from the Overmind and distort its forms.

Can the intuitive mind or the higher mind be influenced by hostile forces?

No — but the hostile forces can use the forces sent down from them if they get mixed with the mind or the vital.

What is the distinction between the knowledge of the Higher Mind and that of the Illumined mind?

The substance of knowledge is the same, but the higher mind gives only the substance and form of knowledge in thought and word — in the illumined mind there begins to be a peculiar light and energy and ananda of knowledge which grows as one rises higher in the scale or else as the knowledge comes from a higher and higher source. This light etc. are still rather diluted and diffused in the illumined mind; they become more and more intense, clearly defined and dynamic and effective on the higher planes so much so as to change always the character and power of the knowledge.

THE DESCENT OF THE SUPERMIND

I

The years 1933 to 1936

Naik has made the following remark: "The present preparation is going on to bring down the Supermind into the physical of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo." Is it true?

Not quite correct in all points. The things to be brought were in us no doubt but not all outwardly manifested from the beginning. Of course Naik's statement is altogether true only as far as the bracket goes.⁶

But have you not noticed that you have cut off the last much-emphasised part of Naik's statement?

Yes, of course. What is being done is meant to prepare the manifestation of the Supermind in the earth-consciousness down to Matter itself, so it can't be for the physical of myself and the Mother alone.

We know the Supermind is to be brought down into the physical; at least most of us do, but what Naik means is that the preparation is going on for bringing down the Supermind not into our physical but into yours and the Mother's.

If it comes down into our physical it would mean that it has come down into Matter and so there is no reason why it should not manifest in the sadhaks.

At 'pranam' time, after returning from the Mother, K felt an immense pressure on the head. Does this mean that a direct Supramental Force has started working and that our nature is now trying to accommodate itself to that action?

Direct Supermind Force is not possible at this stage. It is only when the whole being down to the physical has accepted and assimilated the higher consciousness that it can come.

⁶ Sri Aurobindo bracketing a part of Naik's sentence, left out the words: "of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo".

I understand that the transformation of the lower nature is not possible without the Supramental Force coming down and preparing the vessel for the complete perfection. Am I right?

Complete perfection is another matter. What must first be done is the fullness of the higher consciousness between human mind and Supermind.

When I wrote to you about a direct supramental action I took help from your own statement; for when I had previously asked you, "Is it not true that at present a direct Supermind Force is acting in the Ashram?" you had replied, as far as I remember, "I suppose so, but it should not be an excuse for a passive acquiescence (inertia etc.)." Another reason for my thinking that it might be the direct Supermind Force was that the force felt after the Pranam was overwhelmingly powerful and fiery-keen.

Acting in the Ashram means only acting in the earth-consciousness to prepare its own possibility. The forces above the human mind, especially Overmind, Intuition, Illumined Mind can be very intense and fiery. They have divine powers in them.

You said that "the Supermind descent into Matter is what is being attempted". In that case, has the Supermind already conquered the mental plane, the vital plane and the physical now that it is attempting to conquer Matter?

There can be no conquest of the other planes by the Supermind but only an influence, so long as the physical is not ready. Besides the Supermind did not attempt, — it is we who are attempting.

Unless the mind and the vital are perfectly prepared how is it possible to bring the Supermind down into the physical or Matter?

And how is it possible to perfect the mind and vital unless the physical is prepared, — for there is such a thing as the mental and vital physical and mind and vital cannot be said to be perfectly prepared until these are ready.

Why cannot the Supramental be brought down stage by stage — that is, first into the mind and the vital till the physical is ready?

It cannot be brought down to the mind and vital without being brought down into the physical, — also one can feel its influence or get something of it but bringing down means much more than that.

The Supermind is a luminous whole — it is not a mixture of light and ignorance. If the physical mind is not supramentalised, then there will be in mind a mixture of ignorance, but then it will not be Supermind there, but something else, — so also with the vital. All that can manifest in the mind separately is a partly supramentalised Overmind.

If the supramental can stand in the mind and vital, then it must stand in the physical also. If it does not stand in the physical, it cannot stand in the mind and vital also; it will be something else, not the supramental.

A touch or influence of the supramental is not the same thing as the supramentalisation. To suppose that the physical can be supramentalised before the mental and vital is an absolute absurdity. What I said was that the mind and vital could not be supramentalised so long as the physical was left as it was, untouched by the supramental descent.

Does your bringing down the Supermind into the physical depend upon the sadhaks here?

No, except that they can act as obstacles.

I think that though the descent has to a large extent to do with the progress of the Ashram, yet mostly it deals with the physical consciousness in general.

Yes.

And therefore I feel that when it has come down once every sadhak's physical will not be automatically supramentalised. Its first descent will only make our sadhana less difficult and the path clearer; but our personal share will be necessary to bring it into our physical.

No part of the sadhaks will be automatically supramentalised.

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To NB's question: "Why not try one more descent?" You replied: "No, thank you, sir! I have had enough of them; the only result of the last descent was an upsurging of the subconscious mud." What exactly was that descent?

The general descent of the Supermind into Matter was the subject on which I was writing.

Are our greater difficulties, struggles, attacks, etc. due to the result of the descent?

Not of the descent, but of the resistance to it.

Is there at present any kind of direct Supramental action on the earth-consciousness, and if so, is that the reason why the resistance has increased? The earth-consciousness seems to be too inert and obstinate. I gather that you started bringing down the Supramental into it in 1923.

Why not 1623? Or since the beginning of the evolution?

I gave 1923 as the year only because I have read that in 1923 you said that you were bringing down the Supermind. How can we presume that you started bringing it down much earlier unless we definitely know that you have yourself spoken to this effect?

But who said that? Started in 1923? The aim of bringing down the Supramental was there long before. The effort to bring it down to the physical is on the contrary quite recent — during the last few years only.

Z wrote to you that he saw some light of the Supermind descending into the earth-consciousness. You wrote to him in reply that his vision and feeling were justifiable. But before the Supermind's descent into the earth-consciousness, have not the planes between Mind and Overmind to descend first into it?

They descended long ago. It does not mean that they are available to everybody or developed anywhere in their full power — only that they can be counted among the things to which one can reach by *tapasya*. For Supermind, it may be descending, but it may take long before it is available to the race.

When the Supermind descends into the earth-consciousness, will all the sadhaks be aware of it?

It would not necessarily be known by everybody. Besides, even if the descent were here one would have to be ready before one could get the final change.

After hearing of your letter to NB, people have begun to think that there is some implication in it that six souls are ready to make a first batch of the Supermen.

...I don't know of any six souls ready for the S.D.⁷

If you say that you do not know of any such six souls, then all this talk about your having written to this effect to NB or anybody else must be untrue.

I suppose so — it hardly seems possible that I should have perpetrated such an absurdity, as there are no such six souls here and never were.

Is it true that the nearer the descent of the Supermind the greater will be the difficulties of those in whom it is to come down first?

It is true, unless they are so surrendered to the Mother, so psychic, plastic, free from ego that the difficulties are spared to them.

III

It is true that there is a latent possibility of Yoga in every human being. But are you sure that all of us here (in the Ashram) are sufficiently evolved for a Yogic life — especially for this, your Supramental Yoga?

They need not try for the Supramental. If they can give themselves and attain to the psychic and spiritual, that is sufficient for the present.

You wrote to me the other day: "The descent into the subconscious was a necessity of the general sadhana, i.e. of the Divine Work." Will you kindly explain what work of the Divine is meant here? Is there any reference to the Supermind?

The work of the yoga which includes the preparation for the Supermind. There is no other divine Work being done here, so the question as to what work has no meaning.

⁷ Supramental Descent

Though we are helped here by the supramental planes — sometimes even by their direct action — we find it too difficult to detach ourselves totally from the mind, life and body.

Who here has a direct action from the Supermind? It is the first news I have of it. Even indirect from the supramental is rare. Whatever comes to most comes from the intermediate planes.

About the transformation of the subconscious what I meant to ask you was this: Is it necessary for it to send up thought after thought from its chaotic stuff stored since ages or can a flash of the Divine Light burn these up and then fill the subconscious with things divine?

The Yoga cannot be done in a minute. Some essential changes are made rapidly, but even these have to be worked out and confirmed in the detail of action. What you speak of, only the Supramental could do if it acted directly or some force fully supported by the Supramental, but that occurs rarely.

I would like to ask a question about the gunas. In the process of transformation, are the gunas transformed first or the Prakriti?

The Prakriti can be psychicised and spiritualised and the gunas yet remain but with the psychic dominant and the rajas and tamas enlightened by the sattwic. As the transformation increases the gunas change more and more towards their divine equivalents, but it is only when the supramental comes that there is the full change.

The transformation of the gunas is necessary for the perfection of the nature, not for liberation. Liberation comes by loss of ego and desire.

H often wrote in his poems his experiences of the Supermind already coming down. He said that he smelt its descent! He even realised that he was among the first hatch of Mother's Supermen!

Others besides H have assumed that they had the Supermind because something opened in them which was 'super' to the ordinary human mind. It is a common mistake. Even the word Supermind (which I invented) has been taken up by several people (writers in the P.B. and elsewhere) and applied generally to the spiritual consciousness.

I see no reason to doubt that H saw things in vision (hundreds of people do) or had experiences.

Some people seem to be quite misled in the matter of the higher planes. When they are in these planes or receive something from them, they begin to think that they have reached a great height, and that the higher planes have nothing to do with the Mother. Especially about the Supermind they have such queer notions — that it is something greater than the Mother.

If they have a greater experience or consciousness than the Mother, they should not stay here but go and save the world with it.

If the Supermind has not been established in Mother's body-consciousness, it is not because she is not ready for it like us, but because in order to establish it she has to prepare first the physical of the Ashram people, and of the earth, to a certain extent. But some people here take it in the wrong way. They are under the misapprehension that the Supermind has not been established in her body because she has not yet reached perfection. Am I right?

Certainly. If we had lived physically in the Supermind from the beginning nobody could have been able to approach us nor could any sadhana have been done. There could have been no hope of contact between ourselves and the earth and men. Even as it is. Mother has to come down towards the lower consciousness of the sadhaks instead of keeping always in her own, otherwise they begin to say "How far away, how severe you were; you do not love me, I get no help from you, etc., etc." The Divine has to veil himself in order to meet the human.

The Mother does not work on the sadhak directly from her own plane above, though she can do so if she wants to. She can even Supramentalise the world in a day; but in that case the Supramental Nature created here would be the same as it is above, and not the earth in Ignorance evolving into the Supramental Earth, a manifestation which will not be in appearance quite the same as what the Supermind is.

That is a very important truth.

In our sadhana, at times we experience seas of the Mother's Peace, Force, Ananda, etc. But let not such heights or depths be usurped by our little human ego and make

us feel, as some already do, that we shall belong to the Mother's select band of Supermen.

I do not wish to be a Superman (with an 'S' big or small)! I shall be content to become her docile servant.

To want to be a Superman is a mistake. It only swells the ego. One can aspire for the Divine to bring about the supramental transformation, but that also should not be done till the being has become psychic and spiritualised by the descent of the Mother's peace, force, light and purity.

Those who consciously carry in them ambitious ideas about developing in sadhana and becoming equal in status with the Divine Himself may have to stay back long — If not in the other planes, at least in the Overmind, as long as the ego is there.

They cannot get beyond unless they lose it. Even in these planes it prevents them from getting the full consciousness and knowledge. For in the Overmind cosmic consciousness too ego is absent, though the true person may be there.

The Supermind coming down on earth will change nothing in a man if he clings to the ego.

Some sadhaks say that as one enters into higher planes one meets with greater ego, ignorance and falsehood. How can this be?

It is because they go higher and higher in the same plane of consciousness as before and do not rise beyond — e.g. higher and higher in the realm of vital mental formations — not higher beyond mind into the planes that lead to the full supramental.

Only today a suggestion from outside advised me to ask the Mother whether the knowledge that comes down in me at present is from the Higher Mind or the Intuitive. I said to myself: "If it is the true knowledge that is descending it matters little for me if it is from the Higher Mind or the Intuitive Mind or any other plane. The important thing is that it should be a pure and unmixed knowledge, the transcription by the mind in no way distorting it."

As for terms like Higher Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind, etc., it is necessary to make these distinctions in the sadhana only if one wants to foster one's ego.

Rather it has to be analysed when one comes to the stage at which one has to pass from the psychic and spiritual to the supramental transformation. But that stage for all the sadhaks is still far off, so to think of these distinctions now can only foster the ego without serving any useful purpose.

One sadhak says, "When I rise above, at times I have an inclination to aspire and go straight to the Supermind." Is this a right movement?

It is not possible to go straight to the Supermind. That should not be his preoccupation, but to become more and more strong in the higher consciousness so that it may be possible for it to become dynamic in the whole nature.

I asked you this question because I feel that it is too much for us, at the present stage of our sadhana, to aspire and rise to the Supermind. We all are yet too far away from it. In spite of this fact, if he or anybody else has such an inclination there must be something of the ego lurking in it.

That is partly true. It is only if the whole nature becomes dominated by the psychic and the higher spiritual consciousness that one can either reach the Supermind or bring it down.

SUPERMIND AND SACHCHIDANANDA

The years 1933 to 1935

When one becomes one with the Divine, would Supermind be still far from him?

One can become one with the Divine on the mental plane. The Supermind is necessary for manifesting the Divine on earth.

You have said in your book The Mother: "It is only the very highest supramental Force descending from above and opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical nature." What do you imply by "opening from below"? Is not "below" still unconscious of the Divine?

Wherever the Divine is, everything is — it is only concealed, not manifest. The Divine is there below in the inconscience itself, mind and life are concealed in Matter, so is Supermind and Sachchidananda. The below is not something outside the Divine Existence. But as mind manifested in Matter only after the descent of Mind opened it into action, so it is with Supermind. You have not noticed the word "opening" which implies that it was shut in there and concealed.

You state, "The Divine is there below in the inconscience itself." Does this not mean that it is the divine beings themselves who, in order to raise the whole world towards the Truth, have made a great sacrifice and come down upon earth and concealed themselves in Matter, even forgetting their true reality?

What beings? This is true of the Divine Light and Power itself descending towards the world. But the Divine Consciousness was already there, otherwise the world could not have existed.

Will not the Supermind be one of the powers commanded by man for realising the Divine upon earth?

...You mean manifesting, I suppose. Anyone can realise the Divine — in the sense of being conscious of the Divine.

Man is a mental being in a body — how can he have command of the Supermind which is far above mind? Even Overmind is far above him.

As the mind has its corresponding divine plane the vital too must have such a plane of its own. What is that plane?

Mind — Supermind

Emotional being (heart) — Ananda

Main vital — Tapas

Matter — Sat

These are the correspondences — but the Supramental is a sufficient instrument for divinising the vital.

Somebody, while explaining your letter to NB about "consciousness", said that Sat or Existence is Sri Aurobindo and Chit or Consciousness is the Mother. Is this correct?

...It is rather a crude way of putting it. Chit and Sat cannot be separated like that.

He also added that the transcendent is something beyond Sachchidananda.

People say like that because the transcendental Absolute is not only what to us is existence but also what to us is non-existence. But there is really no such thing as non-existence. So the transcendent can be conceived as transcendent Sat, transcendent Chit, transcendent Ananda.

Since "the Supermind is the total Truth-consciousness" why is it distinguished as the Supermind? Is not the Sachchidananda also a Truth-consciousness?

The Sachchidananda is not in itself an active consciousness, it is simply pure existence, consciousness and bliss. By a Truth-consciousness is meant — a Knowledge consciousness which is immediately, inherently and directly aware of Truth in manifestation and has not to seek for it like Mind. Sachchidananda is everywhere behind the manifestation and supporting it as well as above it and can be experienced below the Supermind — even in mind and vital it can be experienced.

In the early days of my sadhana I once had an experience of great stillness in which my consciousness rose upward; at a certain height, it felt the bliss, consciousness and existence all together and at the same time. It is said that below the Supermind, Peace and Power, Knowledge and Will, work separately or as separate aspects. Then how is it that my consciousness experienced them together?

Bliss, Consciousness and Existence together are Sachchidananda and can be experienced anywhere.

That is quite a different thing from Bliss, Consciousness and Existence. These below the Supermind are separate aspects and even if they work together work by association, not by an inherent oneness. Don't confuse different things with each other.

You said that Sachchidananda can be experienced anywhere, even below the Supermind. Does its triunity remain the same below the Supermind, or does it appear there only in diversity, e.g. as Consciousness or as Existence or as Ananda, but not all the three together as they are above?

One can have them together or realise pure Existence, pure Consciousness, pure Ananda separately.

I am told that everything is in the Supermind — that everything is the Will of Sachchidananda or its expression; but to say so is not enough to give us an idea of the Supermind. I would like to know the real difference between them.

The Will of Sachchidananda can act under different conditions in the Knowledge or the Ignorance. The Supermind is the Truth-Consciousness, the Knowledge, and the Will there works out spontaneously the unmixed Knowledge — whereas below the Supermind it allows the forces to play in quite another way and supports them or intervenes according to the need of the play in the Ignorance.

Am I right in saying that the Will of Sachchidananda can act in the Knowledge as well as in the Ignorance, while that of the Supermind can act only in Knowledge — below the Supermind Sachchidananda allowing the force to play according to the need of the Ignorance. Am I right about the Supermind's action?

Not "can act" only, but "acts". All its native action is the action of the Knowledge; if it comes down it brings down the action of Knowledge. If it acts from above only, then it is no longer a pure supramental action, but mixed.

ON AVATARHOOD

What is an incarnation? From what plane does it take place?

An incarnation is the Divine Consciousness and Being manifesting through the body. It is possible from any plane.

When the Divine descends here as an incarnation, does not that very act mould his infinity into a limited finite? How then does he still continue to rule over the universe?

Do you imagine that the Divine is at any time not everywhere in the universe or beyond it? or that he is living at one point in space and governing the rest from it, as Mussolini governs the Italian Empire from Rome?

I was speaking of the Divine in the body, and not of the Divine in his supreme plane above in an impersonal and formless aspect. Does not his incarnation on earth necessarily limit him? Living in such a world he has to govern all the three universes!

It is the omnipresent cosmic Divine who supports the action of the universe; if there is an Incarnation, it does not in the least diminish the cosmic Presence and the cosmic action in the three or thirty million universes.

When the Avatar comes down here how does he take on a mind, vital and body? It is, I think, the soul that is divine, but the Adhar has to be built up from the cosmos?

Everybody has to do that when he is born. It is the soul that is permanent.

Does an Avatar create a new mind, life and body from the cosmos for himself, or take hold of some liberated human being and use his outer personality for his manifestation?

That would be a possession not an Avatar. An Avatar is supposed to be from birth. Each soul at its birth takes from the cosmic mind, life and matter to shape a new external personality for himself. What prevents the Divine doing the same? What is continued from birth to birth is the inner being.

You wrote: "The Avatar is a special manifestation, while for the rest of the time it is the Divine working with the ordinary human limits as a Vibhuti." Does not the Divine find it difficult to mould himself into a Vibhuti and accept the human limits?

Why should it be difficult? Even the Avatar accepts limits for his work.

Since an Avatar comes here with a divine Power, Light and Ananda why should he pass through the same process of sadhana as an ordinary sadhak?

The Avatar is not supposed to act in a non-human way — he takes up human action and uses human methods with the human consciousness in front and the Divine behind. If he did not his taking a human body would have no meaning and would be of no use to anybody. He could just as well have stayed above and done things from there.

The Avatar, unlike the Vibhuti, does not need to satisfy his vital. [Sri Aurobindo's marginal remark: "Why should he not?"] For his vital has no cravings and desires as our vital has. He is above them. And if he seems to be satisfying them, it is only to acquire experience and knowledge of the vital worlds.

All that is wrong. The Avatar takes upon himself the nature of humanity in his instrumental parts, though the consciousness acting behind is divine.

When the Divine descends here (as the Avatar), he has to veil himself and deal with the world and its movements like an ordinary man of the cosmic product [Sri Aurobindo's marginal remark: "Exactly"]. But behind he is perfectly conscious of what happens. The universal forces cannot make him their tool as they make us.

That does not prevent the Avatar from acting as men act and using the movements of Nature for his life and work.

Does your above answer mean that the Avatars too satisfy the vital desires, cravings, lust etc. as a layman?

What do you mean by lust? Avatars can be married and have children and that is not possible without sex; they can have friendships, enmities, family feelings etc. etc. — these are vital things. I think you are under the impression that an Avatar must be a saint or a yogi.

The Avatars can of course be married and satisfy the vital movements. But do they really indulge them as ordinary people? While satisfying their outer being do they not remain conscious of their union with the Divine above.

There is not necessarily any union above before the practice of yoga. There is a connection of the consciousness with the veiled Divinity and an action out of that, but this is not dependent on the practice of yoga.

THE DIVINE AND THE AVATAR

We believe that both you and the Mother are Avatars. But is it only in this life that both of you have shown your divinity? It is said that you and she have been on the earth constantly since its creation. What were you doing during your previous lives?

Carrying on the evolution.

I find it difficult to understand so concise a statement. Can't you elaborate it?

That would mean writing the whole of human history. I can only say that as there are special descents to carry on the evolution to a farther stage, so also something of the Divine is always there to help through each stage itself in one direction or another.

The common mass of mankind in the past may not have recognised your presence amongst them, especially when outwardly both of you may have had personalities like those of ordinary human beings. But how is it that even Sri Krishna, Buddha or Christ could not detect your presence in this world?

Presence where and in whom? If they did not meet, they would not recognise, and even if they met there is no reason why the Mother and I should cast off the veil which hung over these personalities and reveal the Divine behind them. Those lives were not meant for any such purpose.

If you were on the earth constantly it would mean that you were here when those great beings descended. Whatever your external cloak, how could you hide your inner self — the true divinity — from them? It could not have mattered whether you and any of them were born in the same country or not. They ought to have discovered by their own higher light that the Divine Consciousness from which they had descended was already here in a physical form.

But why can't the inner self be hidden from all in such lives? Your reasoning would only have some force if the presence on earth then were as the Avatar but not if it was only as a Vibhuti.

You have asked, "Presence where and in whom?" Why have you put those question-words? What exactly is conveyed by them?

...It is "presence" in or behind some body and behind some outer personality. Also "presence" in what part of the world? If the Mother were in Rome in the time of Buddha, how could Buddha know as he did not even know the existence of Rome?

I did not mean that you or the Mother needed to cast off your veil. It is those Great Men who should have recognised you in spite of the veil.

One can be a great man without knowing such things as that. Great Men or even great Vibhutis need not be omniscient or know things which it was not useful for them to know.

You said, "But why can't the inner self be hidden from all in such lives?" I fail to understand how anyone could hide one's inner self from Avatars and Vibhutis.

An Avatar or Vibhuti have the knowledge that is necessary for their work, they need not have more. There was absolutely no reason why Buddha should know what was going on in Rome. An Avatar even does not manifest all the divine omniscience and omnipotence; he has not come for any such unnecessary display; all that is behind him but not in the front of his consciousness. As for the Vibhuti, the Vibhuti need not even know that he is a power of the Divine. Some Vibhutis like Julius Caesar for instance have been atheists. Buddha himself did not believe in a personal God, only in some impersonal and indescribable Permanent.

Still I can't understand one thing: even though you did not cast off your veil, how could people like Buddha or Christ not help casting off their veil (or ignorance) in order to recognise you?

Why should they? The veil was there necessary for their work. Why should it be thrown off? So if the Mother was present in the life of Christ, she was there not as the Divine Manifestation but as one altogether human. For her to be recognised as the Divine would have created a tremendous disorder and frustrated the work Christ came to do by breaking its proper limits.

You must have heard that just before Christ was born some Rishis from India knew of the divine Descent and set out for Jerusalem merely by their intuition, though they had not known what and where Jerusalem was.

I never heard of Rishis from India going there. There is a legend of some Magi getting an intuition that a divine Birth was there on earth and following a star that led them to the stable in which Christ was born. But this is a legend, not history.

Since you and the Mother were on earth constantly from the beginning what was the need for Avatars coming down here one after another?

We were not on earth as Avatars.

You say that you both were not on earth as Avatars. And yet you were carrying on the evolution. Since the Divine Himself was on the earth carrying on the evolution, what was the necessity for the coming down of the Avatars who are portions of Himself?

The Avatar is necessary when a special work is to be done and in crises of the evolution. The Avatar is a special manifestation while for the rest of the time it is the Divine working within the ordinary human limits as a Vibhuti.