



GUIDANCE FROM  
SRI AUROBINDO

Letters to a young disciple

NAGIN DOSHI

VOL - III

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Nagin Doshi

Volume – III

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## INTRODUCTION

This third and final volume of letters contains my correspondence with Sri Aurobindo during the fourth and fifth years of sadhana, 1936 and 1937.

For those who have not read the first and second volumes, it may be well to repeat here a part of the original Introduction, which throws light on the circumstances surrounding the exchange of letters. The reader should especially keep in mind that Sri Aurobindo was replying to a boy in his late teens:

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.

*Nagin Doshi*

# PART I

## ASPIRATION AND SURRENDER

*Shouldn't a sadhak offer to the Mother not only his good experiences and knowledge but also the ordinary movements of ignorance? Otherwise how will his lower nature be purified and transformed? The psychic elements of our nature will help, won't they?*

It is true that with the psychic action these things are more easily overcome. Also the ignorance etc. must be surrendered, i. e., all attachment to them, justification or acquiescent habitual response must be given up.

*If my being is to make some real and substantial progress, it will be done only when it learns to depend completely on the Mother and her inner help and guidance.*

Yes. It must be absolutely sincere in its self-giving and dependence and keep nothing for the ego and its desires.

Sincerity means to accept the Divine influence only and not that of lower forces.

*When one learns to leave things to the Divine, isn't He bound to answer all our real needs?*

The Divine is not bound to do that, He can give or not give; whether He gives or does not give makes no difference to the one who is surrendered to Him. Otherwise there is an *arriere pensee* in the surrender which is not then complete.

*Because there is a sense of ego in our surrender, to stop surrendering is absurd. Even if we can't reject the ego, an egoistic surrender is better than no surrender.*

Certainly. The action must go on, only the mixture of ego in it must more and more disappear.

If there is any identification with the vital demands or outcries, that necessarily diminishes the surrender for the time.

*What is meant by a complete surrender?*

A surrender of all the parts and all the movements without insistence or claim or desire or demand of any kind.

*In this case a complete surrender is not possible in the initial stages.*

It is for that reason that personal effort is necessary.

*You said that, when the surrender is not complete, personal effort is necessary. Is the baby-cat attitude not possible in the beginning?*

If there is not a complete surrender, then it is not possible to adopt the baby-cat attitude; it becomes mere tamasic passivity calling itself surrender. If a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, it follows that personal effort is necessary.

*If complete surrender means a total extinction of the ego, then not a single human creature can claim it till he reaches the final stage of Yoga.*

It is correct on the whole, but one can overcome this difficulty if the psychic leads.

The absolute surrender must be not only an experience in meditation, but a fact governing all the life, all the thoughts, feelings, actions. Till then the use of one's own will and effort is necessary, but an effort in which also there is the spirit of surrender, calling in the Force to support the will and effort and undisturbed by success or failure. When the Force takes up the sadhana, then indeed effort may cease, but still there will be the necessity of the constant assent of the being and a vigilance so that one may not admit a false Force at any point.

It depends on what is meant by absolute surrender — the experience of it in some part of the being or the fact of it in all parts of the being. The former may easily come at any time; it is the latter that takes time to complete.

If you are surrendered only in the higher consciousness, with no peace or purity in the lower, certainly that is not enough and you have to aspire for the peace and purity everywhere.

If the surrender is complete, then that certainly is the best — what has to be avoided is a tamasic state devoid of will or vigilance justifying itself under the name of surrender.

*In the morning there comes a spontaneous state during which I feel like surrendering my sadhana to the Mother. But in the evening that condition withdraws, and I have to take up personal effort to save my nature from getting into inertia. Is this the only way to arrive at a complete surrender?*

It is not a way or method of arriving at complete surrender; it is a mixed action that one has to use so long as there is not a complete surrender.

How can you surrender to the psychic if you are not conscious of its action?

*Can't I do it in the same way as surrender to the Force above? I am not always conscious of the Force.*

It is then a *sankalpa* [resolution] of surrender. But the surrender must be to the Mother — not even to the Force, but the Mother herself.

If the psychic manifests, it will not ask you to surrender to it, but to surrender to the Mother.

Surrender and love-bhakti are not contrary things — they go together. It is true that at first surrender can be made through knowledge by the mind but it implies a mental bhakti and, as soon as the surrender reaches the heart, the bhakti manifests as a feeling, and with the feeling of bhakti, love comes.

A surrender by any means is good, but obviously the impersonal is not enough — for surrender to that may be limited in result to the inner experience without any transformation of the outer nature.

*Could you kindly inform me when you find my surrender is on the decrease?*

It is not a question of decrease, but of necessary increase.

The aspiration must be for entire purification, especially (1) purification from sex, so that no sex imaginations may enter and the sex impulse may cease, (2) purification from desires and demands, (3) purification from depression which is the result of disappointed desires. It is the most important for you. Particularly what you must aspire for is peace in all the being, complete equanimity — samata. The feeling that peace is not enough must go. Peace and purity and equanimity, once established, all the rest must be the Mother's free gift, not a result of the demand from the being.

You can mix normally with people keeping as much as possible an inner quietude. In future when the purification is done and a continuous experience possible we can reconsider the matter.

*Is not a state where no aspiration is needed better than one with aspiration?*

You have to arrive at such a state first.

*How is it that the working of the Force felt at one time is so different from what is felt at another?*

I can only say as before, that there is "no specific" reason which the mind can determine. It depends on the total condition and interaction of the forces. One has to hold on to the aspiration and look steadily towards the goal without being disturbed by these inequalities and fluctuations.

*Are there not some laws and rules in the fluctuations? Cannot one find out what caused them and then manage them?*

There are no fixed rules. There are simply a mass of tendencies and forces with which one has to become familiar. It is not a fixed machinery which one can manage by devices or by pulling this or that button. It is only by the inner Will, the constant aspiration, by detachment and rejection, by bringing down the true consciousness, force etc. that it can be done.

*You said, "It is a stage [in which one cannot aspire freely] from which you must come out as soon as possible." What is this stage?*

Your present condition in which the lower nature is able to stop the aspiration and experience.

*Instead of trying to find out reasons for not being able to aspire, better I turn all my energy to making the way forward.*

That is right.

*My attitude of surrender is now being planted too deeply to be shaken by the storm of suggestions and demands of ego. Therefore I live as if I have no difficulties.*

Not to be touched or disturbed by the difficulties, to feel separate from them is the first step towards freedom.

## MEDITATION AND CONCENTRATION

*Effort means straining endeavour. There can be an action with a will in it in which there is no strain or effort.*

Straining and concentration are not the same thing. Straining implies an overeagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or overeagerness, then that is not concentration.

*I have been advised to have some dispersion of mind in order to get over difficulties of sadhana.*

Dispersion and sadhana are two things that cannot go together. In sadhana one has to have a control over the mind and all its actions; in dispersion one is on the contrary controlled and run away with by the mind and unable to keep it to its subject. If the mind is to be always dispersed, then you can't concentrate on reading either or any other occupation; you will be fit for nothing except perhaps talking, mixing, flirting with women and similar occupations.

*Mental work during the meditation — is that what you have written? How is that?*

The condition of meditation (Yogic concentration) is mental quietude, there can be no mental "work" during meditation. Unless you mean meditation of the mental kind, i.e. thinking about things, but that is a different matter.

*Have I a capacity for long meditation?*

The capacity is there of course, but latent.

Naturally one does not get tired if the meditation has become natural. But if the capacity is not there yet, then many cannot go on without a strain which brings fatigue.

*At present, I spend a lot of time in meditation. People say too much meditation is sometimes not very good or healthy. It makes life too one-sided.*

Certainly, if all one's life one did nothing but meditate, it would be a one-sided affair. But at times to give the first place or a lion's share to meditation may be necessary. It is especially when things are coming down and have to be fixed.

*Do you approve of my long sittings of motionless meditation?*

If you can have it, it is certainly desirable at this stage.

*Because there is no result yet, should I think that the aspiration, concentration and will used to bring down the higher things are not sincere?*

It does not follow.

*At 1 p.m. my consciousness became less and less aware of the mind and body. It felt as if it was moving towards some unknown region. At 2 p.m. while getting up from the chair, my body began to stagger as if I had lost consciousness even though inwardly I was perfectly self-aware.*

That happens if one gets up too suddenly from a deep concentration.

Too suddenly means before the consciousness has come back into the body.

*You wrote, "if one waits, the consciousness comes back." Waiting for what?*

You say that the consciousness had gone too high to come down in order to support the physical movement of going. If so, you have to wait till it comes back before you make the movement.

*At times, when I read a piece of philosophy or yogic literature I feel like falling into meditation. Is it not a sign of laziness in the mind?*

It is quite natural to want to meditate while reading Yogic literature — that is not the laziness. The laziness of the mind consists in not meditating, when the consciousness wants to do so.

*How is it that I can concentrate well only in a sitting posture and not while standing or walking?*

That is so with most people.

The sitting motionless posture is the natural posture for concentrated meditation — walking and standing are active conditions suited for the dispense of energy and the activity of the mind. It is only when one has gained the enduring rest and passivity of the consciousness that it is easy to concentrate and receive when walking or doing anything. A fundamental passive condition of the consciousness gathered into itself is the proper poise for concentration and a seated gathered immobility in the body is the best for that. It can be done also lying down, but that position is too passive, tending to

be inert rather than gathered. This is the reason why Yogis always sit in an asana. One can accustom oneself to meditate walking, standing, lying, but sitting is the first natural position.

It is not a fact that when there is obscurity or inertia, one cannot concentrate or meditate. If one has in the inner being the steady will to do it, it can be done.

One can have no fixed hours of meditation and yet be doing sadhana.

If it is possible to keep a fixed period for meditation and stick to it, it would certainly be desirable.

## THE POWER OF WILL

*What is the will?*

The energy which dictates the action or prevents a wrong action is the Will.

*By energy is meant the life-force. If energy is the will, why do we sometimes find the will without any power or energy?*

Energy is energy, it is not the life-force. I have not said that "energy is the Will". There is a whole qualifying clause there which you treat as if it were meaningless nonsense.

The will is a part of the consciousness and ought to be in human beings the chief agent in controlling the activities of the nature.

Will is will whether it is calm or restless, whether it acts in a yogic or unyogic way, for a yogic or an unyogic object. Do you think Napoleon and Caesar had no will or that they were Yogis? You have strange ideas about things. You might just as well say that memory is memory only when it remembers the Divine and it is not memory when it remembers other things.

*Is there no difference between the will used by a worldly man and that used by a Yogi?*

Who said there was not? but both are will, different forms of the same thing. To say one is will and the other is not is nonsense.

*Is it not true that the will becomes or changes into desire when it comes down into the lower nature?*

It usually does so in the vital or at least it gets a strong mixture of desire.

*I suppose the vital despair is the cause of my not being able to put up a persistent and calm aspiration and will.*

The calm and steady will must be the mental being's. There is no reason why the mental being should allow itself to be at the mercy of the vital.

*The fundamental remedy is to strengthen the vital at any rate. But that cannot be done if the inner vital remains weak and indifferent. The only way to do it is to reject all vital desires and bring the Mother's peace and force.*

That is the way. If there is a constant use of the will the rest of the being learns however slowly to obey the will and then the actions become in conformity with the will and not with the vital impulses and desires. As for the rest (the feelings and desires etc. themselves) if they are not indulged in action or imagination and not supported by the will, if they are merely looked at and rejected when they come, then after some struggle they begin to lose their force and dwindle away.

Peace is not a necessary precondition for the action of the will. When the being is troubled, it is often the business of the will to impose quiet on it.

There is no such thing as an inert passive will. Will is dynamic in its nature. Even if it does not struggle or endeavour its very presence is dynamic and acts dynamically on the resistance. What you are speaking of is a passive wish — I would like it to be like that, I want it to be like that. That is not will.

*I have mentioned several methods available to me for dealing with my human nature. Which of them do you find best for me?*

Whatever method is used, persistence and perseverance are essential. For whatever method is used, the complexity of the Nature — resistance will be there to combat it.

There can be no persistence or insistence without will.

Insist on the effort till it becomes persistent. Especially you must make up your mind to be master of your vital, not "helpless" before it.

Impulse is not enough; steady carrying out of a resolution is necessary.

*You wrote, "One need not 'feel' a Force in order to use the will." By "feel" I meant that there should be at least some force or energy to make the will work.*

The will can make itself work — it is in its own nature a force or energy.

*I find my will power almost veiled and forceless. How to bring it out and use it is itself a problem.*

That is the suggestion that has been enforced on you by the physical inertia. It has covered up your will and persuaded you that there is no will left and no possibility of any will.

One can always use the will. The idea that you cannot is only a suggestion of the inertia.

*I lack the requisite energy to stand up against the opposite forces. Where does my difficulty lie?*

In the indolence of the will which does not want to make a sustained effort for a long period. It is like a person who moves slightly half a leg for a second and then wonders why he is not already a hundred miles away at the goal after making such a gigantic effort.

You cannot expect a persistent inertia like that to disappear in three days because you made some kind of a beginning of effort to resist it.

*The will sometimes seems to be without energy or like something that can act only if some additional energy pushes it from behind.*

It simply means that your will is weak and not a true will. Queer kind of will! Perhaps it is like a motor car that won't go and you have to push from behind.

I suppose it must be because you have not been in the habit of using the will to compel the other parts of the nature — so when you want it done, they refuse to obey a control to which they are not accustomed and it also has not any habitual hold upon them.

*The difficulty of managing the mechanical mind is part of the human constitution. But I find it more active and burdensome in me than in the majority.*

That is what everyone thinks about his difficulties — this idea is an effect of tamasic egoism and forms an excuse for not making the necessary effort. What is more in you than in the majority is the entire laziness of the nature in facing the need of dealing with this difficulty.

The helplessness is there because of the habit of not using the will. You can use the will obstinately enough when you want to satisfy a desire.

*You wrote, "You can use the will obstinately enough when you want to satisfy a desire." It is true. But the difficulty is that I am not aware of using the will consciously while satisfying a desire. Would you kindly explain to me how to use it? If the process is known, I can employ it to overcome the wrong movements of the sadhana instead of for satisfying desires.*

There is no process. The will acts of itself when the mind and vital agree as in the case of a desire. If the desire is not satisfied, it goes on hammering, trying to get it, insisting

on it, repeating the demand, making use of this person or that person, this device or that device, getting the mind to support it with reasons, representing it as a need that must be satisfied etc. etc. till the desire is satisfied. All that is the evidence of a will in action. When you have to use the will for the sadhana, you have not the same persistence, the mind finds reasons for not getting on with the effort, as soon as the difficulty becomes strong it is dropped; there is no continuity, no keeping of the will fixed on its object.

*Something ought to intervene in this inert period. How else shall I prepare myself for the coming Darshan of the 15th August?*

There is not much use in thinking that something ought to be. It is better to get done what can be done by as steady a will, aspiration and pressure as possible.

The resolution, to be a real resolution, must be there always, fixed. If it is dependent on an urge, not self-dependent, it can also be knocked down by inertia.

I have said, it is the persistent will and endeavour that matter, not the date of achievement.

*The ego and the vital demand feel baffled due to the strong action by the Force and by my resolution to drive them out completely before the 15th of August. That is why such a vehement resistance has surged up suddenly.*

Of course, they always resist a pressure to get rid of them — and if one fixes a given time, they are all the more resistant in the hope of creating disappointment and discouragement by the failure to do it in the given time.

*I wonder how my own will that was dormant all this time suddenly became so active and powerful!*

The Force can bring forward and use the will.

*Is not Mother disclosing my true will in this way?*

It sounds like it.

*If this will-power is developed fully, it may soon be possible for Mother's Force to use my will consciously for the conquest of my lower nature.*

Very good — it was that that was needed.

*If I persevere in the use of my will-power, many obstructions will be worked out within a short time.*

Yes.

*I want to develop my will to perfection, so that it can merge into Mother's Will.*

By development it becomes fit to merge into the Mother's will. A will that is not strong is a great hindrance to sadhana.

*What was my position up to now regarding the consciousness and the will?*

All the time when the sadhana in you was really active, the whole stress was on the consciousness, not on the will. It is only recently you are giving more attention to the will.

*This morning also the habitual depression tried to enter. But the Mother saved the situation by pulling my consciousness above and using my will-force on the vital, with the result that the depression failed to get in. All this happened because of the intervention of Mother's power and not of any effort on my part.*

All the same, there must be a will acting on the vital in the way you describe. Such a use of will is essential so long as the Higher Consciousness has not occupied the being.

You had written, "I need not bother about it — if peace is needed it will bring itself." Certainly the main stress should be on the Force, but the active assent of the sadhak is needed, in certain things his will also may be needed as an instrument of the Force.

The higher action does not preclude a use of the will — will is an element of the higher action.

*I feel that I must make a dynamic and serious effort to overcome the inertia — at least so much as the Force wants me to do so that it can then complete the purification by itself. Do you think that I allow the inertia to play with me willingly and that I do nothing to overcome it?*

Are you going to deny the tamas in you and put all the fault of your want of progress on the Divine Force?

*I did not mean that the Force should do everything for me while I remain lazy. But is it not true that our personal effort can bear definite and lasting fruit only if the Force has acted in or through.*

The Force also produces no definite and lasting fruit unless there is the will and the resolution to advance in the sadhak. Your argument tries to establish the very thing you deny in your first sentence — viz. that all your want of progress is due to the Force, you yourself are not to blame.

*I started using the higher will because I read that this Will-Tapas is all-powerful and effective and least strainful.*

Is the will you are using all-powerful? Does it succeed inevitably always and produce infallible effects?

The will of the Supreme is alone all-powerful.

## PERIODS OF ASSIMILATION

*Why am I not aware of the process of assimilation?*

Hardly one ever feels that. It goes on under cover.

The period of assimilation can either be a perfect quietude or else the assimilation can go on behind the veil, as it were.

*The difficulty is that I am not conscious of the assimilation taking place. It almost seems a cessation of sadhana.*

Quite natural. But one must keep in the inner being the faith and knowledge that it is an assimilation and not a cessation, even if it looks like a cessation.

*If I could only watch this process behind the veil, all the wrong reactions of the assimilation would cease.*

How on earth could it be said then to be behind the veil? It would be a very unveiling veil.

*During these periods the experiences etc. come like mere flashes or glimpses and disappear in a short time. During other periods they come almost like a state, as a normal thing to the inner being.*

That is as it should be.

*Do I still need long periods of assimilation?*

The periods of assimilation continue really till all that has to be done is fundamentally done. Only they have a different character in the later stages of sadhana. If they cease altogether at an early stage (you are still in a very early stage), it is because all the nature was capable of has been done and that would mean it was not capable of much.

The only change in the assimilation periods afterwards is that certain things remain settled while the assimilation applies to others that are not yet settled in the system. E.g. one feels always a constant peace in the inner being, but disturbances go on on the surface, till the surface also has assimilated peace. Or perhaps peace is settled everywhere and always there, but knowledge comes and goes, or strength comes and goes. Or all these are there but Ananda comes and goes, etc. etc.

If they stop early, it means that all has been done that could be done and nothing more is possible; the later and more advanced developments of the sadhana are not possible, — if they were, the assimilation periods would continue until all was developed and not cease. The only reason for such a premature end of the sadhana would be that the sadhak is not capable of going farther.

## ACTION OF PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI

What do you mean by the individuality of the Prakriti? Prakriti means nature — each person individualises his own nature in the sense that he centres it round his ego and also in the sense that he makes or there happens for him a selection and combination of the qualities and movements of Nature which he calls his nature and character. But this is not usually called the individuality of the Prakriti.

*People with strong egos would find the process of surrender difficult and painful if there was no separation of the inner Purusha.*

Yes — it is hardly possible except by separation of the inner Purusha or the pressure of the psychic.

*In the absence of the working of the Force, my condition is uncertain. The mental control is completely withdrawn and there is no other control to replace it. So anything is able to take hold of my mind and use it as if it came from the truth!*

A control is necessary — if nothing higher, there ought at least to be the will of the mental Purusha (that is different from the control by the reason).

*What is this will and from what centre does it act?*

It is the will of the Purusha that can act directly or from anywhere. For the will of the Purusha there is no fixed centre.

The different Purushas are only representatives of the one Purusha. Each naturally acts from his own centre if there is to be his separate action. But the Purusha-will as a general power is not confined to any one centre.

*What is this one Purusha? Is it the psychic being?*

The one Purusha is the individual Being of which the psychic and all others are representatives.

*Then is this one Purusha the Jivatman, the Self above?*

The Self above may be the Atman one in all. When the Atman is individualised — i.e. supporting from above the play of individual being, it is called the Purusha or sometimes the Jivatman. It is the central being. Usually however it is the mental Purusha one first

becomes aware of and through that the nature is led. To become aware of the psychic being or the central Purusha is more difficult.

*Even during action, when I am vigilant, I can remain above as a separate and observing Purusha. But I always fail to change the nature of the actions. Could you kindly give me some instructions so that the actions might be changed into at least psychic actions if not divine for the present?*

For the actions to be psychic the psychic must be in front. The observing Purusha can separate himself, but cannot change the Prakriti. But to be the observing Purusha is a first step. Afterwards there must be the action of the Purusha-Will as an instrument of the Mother's force. This Will must be founded on a right consciousness which sees what is wrong, ignorant, selfish, egoistic, moved by desire in the nature and puts it right.

*What a great will the Purusha has that you write it with a capital W!*

You might just as well ask what a great man is Nagin that his name has to be written with a capital.

*If the Purusha has a will, why does it not exert it on the nature and keep it under its control? I see it remaining simply detached, doing nothing!*

That is its first condition when it manifests in the lower nature. It is then called the witness Purusha. If you want the rest to develop, you have to train your mind to be its instrument.

*The working consciousness is still so restless during work. The Purusha is separate but unable to control the force of inertia.*

It is because you have not developed the will for these purposes.

*For the last few days, there is something like a tangible experience and vision that I am the lord of my mind, vital and physical. I see myself seated above them, as the Mother's child, full of power and energy — enough to make the revolting parts obey me by a mere look.*

I suppose it is a vision and experience of what should be or is to be or of what the Purusha is in the Force consciousness. The Purusha is really the master of the nature — it is only in the play of the ignorance that he behaves as if its slave.

*The will of the Purusha is emerging with a force and effectiveness which cannot be neglected so easily by the inertia and the vital demand.*

That is good.

*Today, during the work I found that the separation from and control over the Prakriti would not come by fighting with the thoughts. The mechanical and the subconscious minds have great power. The Purusha tried to detach itself and bring the Prakriti too to the detachment by a quiet separation from the thoughts. So far as it went, it promised to bring about a complete aloofness. What then happens is that I begin to feel myself, even in the midst of activity, more and more above, one with the Mother and her Force, carrying out the actions as if I was a second person!*

That is quite as it should be.

*Regarding the mental work, at least I feel the study is being done in the silent consciousness. Is that true?*

Yes, if you feel so.

*During the physical work the Purusha is often separate. But the Prakriti, though it wants to separate itself from the action, finds it rather difficult to follow the Purusha. What comes in the way?*

It is more difficult for the Prakriti as its ordinary play is that of the surface being. It has to divide itself into two to separate from that. The Purusha on the contrary is in its nature silent and separate — so it has only to go back to its original nature.

*How does the Prakriti divide itself into two for the necessary separation?*

It divides itself into an inner Force that is free in its action (free from rajas, tamas, etc.) and the outer Prakriti which it is using and changing.

*Does Prakriti's division mean separating one part of itself from the gunas and becoming the inner being?*

It becomes an inner Force, not the inner being.

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE GUNAS

*Are Prakriti, Nature and the gunas quite different things? If so, why do we see them always mixed?*

Prakriti and Nature are the same thing — the gunas are modes or processes of Nature (Prakriti).

*Do impulses or passions such as killing or fighting come from a push of Rajoguna or Tamoguna?*

Both together — for it is made up of tamasic obscurity and rajasic wrong impulse.

*Can a purely sattwic man become very angry or passionate?*

No — he can only be firm or severe when severity is needed.

*Are depression, despair and fear reactions of tamas or rajas?*

Tamas.

*“Not only will the Purusha stand apart and be trigunatita, beyond the three gunas, but the Prakriti, though using the gunas, will be free from their bondage.” So says the The Yoga and its Objects. How can Prakriti remain free from the bondage of the gunas in spite of her using them?*

By the transformation of the gunas eventually. Till then by using them without attachment as the will and as the instrumentation of the Divine Shakti.

*But before the transformation, how can the Prakriti use the gunas without attachment, since it is with a great difficulty that even the Purusha manages to be detached?*

How then are the Yogis who act with detachment able to act at all? If the action of the gunas necessarily implies attachment, then it follows that in their parts of nature they remain attached, ego-ridden, desire-ridden, not free. There are three separate things, ego, desire, the gunas.

*How is your last sentence related to the previous sentences? In fact, my mind failed to grasp properly your whole answer.*

If ego and desire are different things from the gunas, then there can be an action of the gunas without ego and desire and therefore without attachment. That is the nature of the action of these gunas in the unattached liberated Yogi. If it were not possible, then it would be nonsense to talk of the Yogis being unattached, for there would remain still attachment in part of their being. To say that they are unattached in the Purusha but attached in the Prakriti, therefore they are unattached, is to talk nonsense. Attachment is attachment in whatever part of the being it may be. In order to be unattached one must be unattached everywhere, in the mental, vital, physical action and not only in the silent soul somewhere inside.

*Does not the usual action of the gunas bring attachment, desire and bondage? If not, why should we bother so much about the transformation of the gunas?*

We were not speaking of the "usual" action of the gunas, but of an unusual action possible by Yoga. The transformation of the gunas is necessary for the *perfection* of the nature, not for liberation. Liberation comes by loss of ego and desire.

*When speaking of the detached activity in spite of the gunas' action, if you meant that the yogi's inner being remains detached while the outer is under the action of the gunas, then it is an understandable thing.*

All nature is Prakriti, not only the outer nature. The difference is between Purusha and Prakriti, not between inner and outer being. Purusha is the still, observing, supporting, creating consciousness. Prakriti is the dynamic side of the being.

It is not the inner Purusha only that remains detached — the inner Purusha is always detached, only one is not conscious of it in the ordinary state. It is the Prakriti also that is not disturbed by the action of the gunas or attached to it — the mind, the vital, the physical (which are Prakriti) begin to get the same quietude, unperturbed peace and detachment as the Purusha, but it is a quietude, not a cessation of all action. It is a quietude in action itself. If it were not so my statement in the 'Arya' that there can be a desireless or liberated action on which I found the possibility of a free (mukta) action would be false. The whole being Purusha-Prakriti becomes detached (having no desire or attachment) even in the action of the gunas.

The outer being is also detached — the whole being is without desire or attachment and still action is possible. Action without desire is possible, action without attachment is possible, action without ego is possible.

*"Prakriti is the dynamic side of the being." What is meant here by "the being"? Generally we use the term "lower being" for the Prakriti.*

Prakriti is Nature; being includes Purusha also. Prakriti is not the lower being — the word covers the whole of Nature. We speak of the lower nature, the higher nature.

*I cannot make out how the action of the gunas can escape causing attachment.*

That inability of yours does not prevent it from being a fact. It simply means that you have not reached the point where such detachment of the Prakriti is possible.

It is a general progress of the consciousness that is needed. These things are not done according to a fixed programme, map or plan.

*If the Prakriti is separated from the gunas, what will remain of it? How will it act?*

If the gunas are quiescent, then Prakriti ceases to act — unless the gunas are transformed into their divine equivalents, — then Prakriti becomes the higher or divine Nature.

*When the Prakriti is emptied of the action of the gunas, or when it ceases to act, what is left in it for us to distinguish between Prakriti and Purusha?*

You seem to think that action and Prakriti are the same thing and where there is no action there can be no Prakriti! Purusha and Prakriti are separate powers of the being. It is not that Purusha = quiescence and Prakriti = action, so that when all is quiescent there is no Prakriti and when all is active there is no Purusha. When all is active there is still the Purusha behind the active Nature and when all is quiescent there is still the Prakriti, but the Prakriti at rest.

Prakriti is the Force that acts. A Force may be in action or in quiescence, but when it rests, it is as much a force as when it acts. The gunas are an action of the Force, they are not the Force itself. The sea is there and the waves are there, but the waves are not the sea and when there are no waves and the sea is still, it does not stop being the sea.

*When we do work without ego, desire and attachment, what kind of action do the gunas take up?*

The sattwa predominates, the rajas acts as a kinetic movement under the control of sattwa until the tamas imposes the need of rest. That is the usual thing. But even if the tamas predominates and the action is weak or the rajas predominates and the action is

excessive, neither the Purusha nor the Prakriti gets disturbed, there is a fundamental calm in the whole being and the action is no more than a ripple or an eddy on the surface.

*Is "kinetic" a Sanskrit word?*

No, the word is "kinetic" from Greek *kineō* I move, "kinetic" means something that puts things in activity. It is *kinesis*, pure activity and movement without desire.

*Even when our actions are really free from any attachment we feel sometimes tamas or rajas.*

I said that the predominance of sattwa was the usual thing, but rajas and tamas could also be prominent.

When the consciousness as well as the action is free from ego and desire, there is always a fundamental calm. This calm remains whether sattwa predominates or not. Sattwa need not always predominate, because to become sattwic is not the object of sadhana. To need to be always sattwic would be a limitation. Whatever guna predominates in the action, to be free, desireless, calm behind all actions, is the condition of the liberated man.

*In the unattached actions, it is, as you said, usually the sattwa that predominates. What happens, then, to the gunas when the Mother's Force takes up our actions?*

They are used and led gradually towards transformation.

*In the process, are the gunas first transformed or the Prakriti?*

The Prakriti can be psychicised and spiritualised and the gunas yet remain but with the sattwa dominant and the rajas and tamas enlightened by the sattwa. 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.

*I encounter so much resistance, revolt and attack from my physical nature while trying only to enlighten it. How much resistance you and the Mother must be facing while supramentalising the whole material Nature! How do you manage it? The attacks must be coming on your physical body also.*

When one knows that it is like that and sees the play of forces one does not get disturbed. There is the inner position described by the Gita, "Whatever comes or goes, sattwa, rajas or tamas, the Yogi regards calmly and is not elated or depressed by it."

*Today the Prakriti also was able to detach itself to a certain extent, while I felt myself quite inactive in the midst of work. Why then does the Prakriti fall back into the gunas?*

It is because of the existence of the ordinary consciousness which relapses to its old movement.

*When one feels it is the Mother's Force that acts through one and not one's own, is it then her Force alone that works in the actions and do the gunas remain quiescent?*

No, the gunas are there and not quiescent — for they are the instrumentation. If the force and the inner consciousness are very strong, then there is a tendency for the rajas to become like some inferior form of tapas and the tamas to become more like a kind of inert *shama*. That is how the transformation begins, but usually it is very slow in its process.

*What is the inert shama?*

Inert *shama* is *shama* still mixed with tamas — a quietude that has no force of action (tapas) in it, no positive principle of happy ease, no positive light of knowledge — but is still calm, repose, release from all disturbance.

## PART II

## IMPORTANCE OF THE INNER BEING

When I speak of the inner being I mean the inner consciousness and inner existence.

*Through which centre does the inner being manifest itself?*

Do you not know that the inner being means the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical with the psychic behind as the inmost? How can there be one centre for all that?

*Is it true that the point between the eyebrows is the centre of the will as well as of the inner vision?*

It is the centre of the inner mind — therefore also of the inner mental will and inner mental vision.

*I sometimes feel as if my inner being is located above and lives on the higher planes.*

The inner being cannot be "located" above, it can only join with the above, penetrate it and be penetrated by it. If it were located above, then there would be no inner being.

There is a central consciousness, I suppose? When the consciousness is centred above, it can be said to be located above. That does not mean that there is no consciousness left in the lower parts.

Obviously, the outer life must be a transcript of the inner, not a mere empty mould or form. But if the outer life is unyogic, that means that the inner is still unchanged in some, even in a great, perhaps the greater part of itself.

*I conceive that there are two inner beings. One is just behind the outer, but wider and finer. Artists and thinkers often create from it. However, it can be as impure and restless as the outer. The other inner being is centred not around the ego but around the psychic being. It is peaceful and pure and open to the Divine and not only to the universal forces. It helps in preparing the outer nature for the spiritual life. Though it can act directly, it usually acts through the inner being that is just behind the outer. Is there any substance in my statement?*

It is correct as a distinction between the true mental, vital, physical beings and the outer layers of the inner mind, vital and physical.

The inner parts in everybody remain vulgar or become high according as they are turned to the outward forces of the Ignorance or towards the higher forces from above

and the inner impulsion of the psychic. All forces can play there. It is the outer being that is fixed in a certain character, certain tendencies, certain movements.

*At present, when I meditate, in one part there is a high concentration while in another part ordinary thoughts, images etc., move about. Thus there is no full concentration of the whole nature. Formerly I used to have long periods of sheer inner or higher concentration in which the lower nature was forced to remain quiescent. Where is my inner being now?*

Even now you speak of periods when all is still in the whole being below as well as above. If there were no inner being, that would not be possible.

There is a contradiction between what you write here and what you write later on. You probably get the impression that there is no inner being felt, only an upper and a lower, because you are trying to bring down the Force and as yet the Force has not come down from above, reaching the inner mind only; so the inner being is empty of force, though not, as you admit later on, of peace.

*During meditation I observed that there are two quite separate parts of my being — one is above the head, completely separate from mind, life and body. The other is of the lower being. The one is high, wide, receptive; the other is inert and full of the ordinary stuff.*

The consciousness above is naturally a separate consciousness — it has nothing to do with the lower consciousness. It is only by descending and occupying the inner being (which is again a separate consciousness) that it can proceed to act on the ordinary lower being.

*In my meditations I try to bring down a force from above which will change the lower being.*

You cannot change the lower (external) nature directly — it can only be changed from above through the within.

A going up and up higher, though a part of the total necessary movement, does not by itself have any effect on the outer being. It only divides the consciousness into two and its only logical outcome is Nirvana. I have always written that the descent is necessary to change the nature; ascent is useful to open the higher planes and exalt the level of the consciousness, but it does not change the lower being except superficially by opening to it certain possibilities it had not before. But the descent must first take

place in the inner being. When the higher consciousness is settled in the inner being, then it can change the outer. But necessarily the descent must be dynamic, not merely that of a static peace; the inner peace must itself become dynamic.

The descent whether of peace or force or light or knowledge or Ananda must occupy the whole inner being down to the inner physical. Without that how is the outer to be transformed at all? It is an amazing idea to suppose that the outer can be changed while the inner is left to itself. What you had in the inner being was a static stillness which did not even entirely occupy the inner physical except at times — that was why the dynamic descent was necessary, but in the inner being or if possible the whole being, the inner outflowing into the outer, not in the outer being to the exclusion of the inner.

*My inner being lives mostly in the deeper experiences, my outer being in the ordinary consciousness. Are not 3 or 4 years of sadhana enough to fuse them into one?*

3 or 4 years is not such a very long time in the sadhana.

*After each state of samadhi — trance — I feel a change in my waking state for a long time, a change not usually brought about even by the deeper and higher experiences, a change more deeply penetrating than any other and more prolonged and tangible even than experiences in the waking state. But it is said that samadhi does not bring any change in the waking consciousness.*

It depends on how far the inner being imposes the result of its experience on the outer.

*After the samadhi is over, many parts of my being continue to remain indrawn. The physical and mental activities are handed over to the Mother's force. Then I feel myself positively living and moving in quite another region, and the actions are felt as if carried out by some other person, as if it was somebody else elsewhere.*

That is very good. It is the condition at which the sadhak arrives in his progress, when the inner being goes on with its experience and something in the outer is carried automatically through its action outside.

*You wrote, "something in the outer is carried automatically through its action outside". I am not able to understand this.*

It means simply that some part of the outer being does its action as a thing outside (you said as if it was somebody else elsewhere) under the push of the Force that carries it through without its having to call the whole consciousness to aid in the action.

*Gradually the inner and outer beings become like statues of peace and silence. My inner being feels as if there is no end to peace, silence or ascent.*

Good.

*If there is an established peace, then only is the inner being safe.*

If the inner being is safe, then there is no longer any struggle or overpowering by inertia or depression or other fundamental difficulty. The rest can be done progressively and quietly, including the bringing down of the Force. The outer being becomes merely a machinery or an instrumentation to be set right. It is not so easy to be entirely *mukta* [liberated] in the inner being.

*I have just come out from a deep trance-like state. It was a sudden invasion by an intoxicating Peace. If such powerful states come twice a day, the mastery over the human nature will not be so difficult. But it depends on how far the higher consciousness can act without even a call from below and in spite of the pervading inertia.*

If the inner being once becomes separate, then inertia need not interfere at all with such states. The outer consciousness is up to now stronger than the inner in you, more normal still, so it happens like that, inertia interfering and stopping these states.

When the inner being once thoroughly establishes its separateness, even oceans of inertia cannot prevent it keeping it. It is the first thing to be done in order to have a secure basis in the Yoga, to establish thoroughly this separateness. It is most usually when the peace is thoroughly fixed in all inner parts that the separateness also becomes fixed and permanent.

The outer being does not care for the sadhana unless it gets something by it which is to it pleasant or gratifying or satisfying — depression therefore comes easy to it.

*It is true that my outer being is always stronger than the inner. It was why the inner separation could not be dynamic and effective. Also I think it was due to the nature of the descents, which were mostly of peace and silence rather than of Force.*

That cannot be so; for if the peace is there with the separation, then the inner being is free and not subject to the outer nor is one identified with the outer. Passive peace is sufficient for that, provided it is complete in all parts of the being.

The descent will come down when it is possible for it to come down. Meanwhile more quietness and fortitude in the physical mind and consciousness would perhaps be helpful.

*You spoke of the restlessness, impatience etc. Were they only in the outer being or also in the inner being?*

I have already said that if they did not touch the inner then there would be the sense of complete separation and no disturbance except in a superficial part which could then be more easily dealt with.

*Do you agree with me that the peace and silence have remained above and have never come down?*

If you have felt them below, they must have come below. But it is evident that they are not perfectly established in the inner physical being — otherwise there would be the complete separateness there.

*Is it not true that inertia is still so strong because there is no peace in the inner physical?*

If there were full peace in the inner physical, it would be always calm and separate and not disturbed or affected by any superficial disturbances.

*If the inner physical has peace, the tamas of the outer is bound to decrease and slowly fade away.*

That does not follow. Tamas might come, but there would be no active disturbances.

If the separateness depends on the dynamic peace filling up the empty or passive peace, if it is not felt in the empty or passive peace itself, it cannot be depended upon. It must always be there even in the utmost passivity.

*How is it that the peace that comes down is always passive and not solid or dynamic?*

Because your inner being is not sufficiently solid in an established passive peace to be able to bring down the dynamic at will.

*As soon as I get back to the higher poise, I must put forth all my efforts to stabilise myself in the inner being.*

It is of the greatest importance that that should be done.

*If the enlightened parts of the inner being have more and more of Mother's love, joy and peace, it becomes easier to turn the physical to purity and light.*

All that may be very well in theory, but practically it is found that the physical impurity is strong enough to bar the inner progress and limit rigidly the inner experience to some passive peace.

*I have often seen that when the inner being or the mind feels love, happiness, joy, etc., the other parts of my being also feel a tendency towards them.*

That is all right if the inner being had separated itself firmly from the outer and was free from the pressure of its desire and inertia, manifesting at all moments the true consciousness — but it is not so yet.

*I want to attempt a full stabilising of my central consciousness in the higher nature, so that there will be a complete separation between the lower and the higher nature.*

This is only possible if the inner being becomes quite awake, open to the Higher and able to feel itself separate from the outer nature.

I did not say that you should not remain in the higher consciousness. I only said that without the separateness of the inner from the outer, the *complete* separateness of the higher *and full* stabilisation in it was not likely.

You spoke of a *complete* separation between the lower nature and the higher, a *full* stabilising of the central consciousness in the higher nature. That would mean staying above and leaving the lower nature including the inner consciousness to themselves until this had been done. I questioned whether this was possible so long as the inertia was so strong. Usually the full stabilising can only come if the inner being is separate from the outer consciousness, otherwise the outer consciousness is sure to pull the central down.

*I aspire also for the inner being to bring down the Mother's Force not merely to guide the actions of the outer being but to take the actions into itself and be their doer.*

That is more possible, provided the inner being separates itself from the outer.

*If instead of going in for the higher development, I had gone in for the inner development first it would have been much better. For I could have lived more easily in my inner being — separate from the outer — even during work.*

Yes. But also the psychic development would have been easier, and the conquest of ego — likewise the widening of the consciousness.

*If the inner being is filled with the Mother's dynamic Power, I do not think the outer being will still be able to remain separate from the inner.*

It is much better to have it separate and not identify oneself with it — so long as the consciousness is not ready for the unification in the Infinite.

*There was something like an inner quietude which the mind misinterpreted as separation.*

There can surely be no mistake about the sense of separation. One feels it or one does not. One feels a being within always calm and separate and another part outside or on the surface which may be touched by things, but that does not affect the inner being.

*During certain moments the inner being calls me within. When I accept it the outer being tries its best to keep me on the surface. Then a tug-of-war takes place!*

That is because you are accustomed to submit to your outer consciousness and not live within in your inner consciousness. If one lives within, then it is the inner consciousness that one depends on, not the outer. The inner consciousness can then always go on independent of the outer state to which it gives attention only when it chooses.

*The Mother's inner or subtle touch had not the same effect as her physical touch during the Pranam. The former came and disappeared within a few seconds, leaving practically no effect, whilst the latter left its impress for a long time in spite of depression and resistance.*

It is because you have lived in your outer and not in your inner being that it is like that. But unless you open to the inner touch, the inner being cannot develop. I mean by the inner being, the inner mind, the inner vital, the inner physical, the psychic.

*What exactly is the inner touch?*

The inner touch is the Mother's influence felt in the inner being.

*When I had experiences and realisations, why did I not feel the inner touch, since it is said that none can have experiences (which are the fruits of the inner being's development) without it?*

You did not feel it because the inner being was not awake to it — it felt only the results — and these results were not experiences in the inner being itself but in the self above.

## THE PSYCHIC BEING

*In the Synthesis of Yoga, you have written, "As the Supreme Shastra of the Integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every man, so its Supreme Guide and Teacher is the inner Guide, the World Teacher...." A friend said that this Supreme Teacher is the psychic being.*

It is not the psychic. It is the Divine within — the psychic is only an instrument.

If desire is rejected and no longer governs the thought, feeling or action and there is the steady aspiration of an entirely sincere self-giving, the psychic usually after a time opens of itself.

It is impossible to become like a child giving oneself entirely until the psychic is in control and stronger than the vital.

It is true of every soul on earth that it is a portion of the Divine Mother passing through the experiences of the Ignorance in order to arrive at the truth of its being and be the instrument of a Divine Manifestation and work here.

*I am told that the psychic even when it unites itself with the Mother keeps its separation. It is the individual self that merges entirely like a drop of water in the sea.*

If the psychic unites itself, it cannot be separated; separation is non-union. The psychic realisation is one of diversity in unity (the portion and the whole); it is not one of dissolving like a drop of water in the sea — for then no love or devotion is possible unless it is love of oneself, devotion to oneself.

Between psychicisation and spiritualisation there is a difference. The spiritual is the change that descends from above, the psychic is the change that comes from within by the psychic dominating mind, vital and physical.

Of course the ego and the vital with its claims and desires is always the main obstacle to the emergence of the psychic. For they make one live, act, do sadhana even for one's own sake and psychicisation means to live, act and do sadhana for the sake of the Divine.

*If things go on like this, how am I to fulfil the promise of psychicising my nature before the Darshan of the 15th August?*

Why a "promise"? The nature has to be psychicised, but dates are not binding.

*If dates do not bind one, what meaning remains in the resolution?*

A resolution means the will to try to get a thing done by the given time. It is not a binding "promise" that the thing will be done by that time. Even if it is not, the endeavour will have to continue, just as if no date had been fixed.

*When the sadhana of an average sadhak goes on well, does it take long before the inner being is psychichised?*

It takes some time to be fully psychichised.

*Are my intellectual mind, middle vital and emotional being psychichised?*

I don't think it can be said definitely yet. There has been a change and growth of consciousness in these parts, but it has been due partly to knowledge and force from above, partly to the action of the psychic fire. It has not been done by the psychic coming forward and governing and guiding mind and vital which is a very distinct and tangible process. There has been a certain amount of psychichisation, but subordinate to the growth of consciousness which seems to be the main movement.

*It is said that if a disciple receives his Guru's touch or grace, his difficulties very often disappear.*

All that is popular Yoga. The Guru's touch or grace may open something, but the difficulties have always to be worked out still. What is true is that if there is complete surrender, which implies the prominence of the psychic, these difficulties are no longer felt as a burden or obstacle but only as superficial imperfections which the working of the grace will remove.

*When one has become conscious of one's inner being and lives there, why even then is it so difficult to come into direct contact with the psychic being? The psychic is supposed to be just behind the inner being.*

The psychic is behind the veil and deep inside.

*Now my self and soul are progressing together. But why is there no love, joy and devotion?*

It depends on how the soul progresses.

*Why does my soul not progress in love, joy, happiness?*

Too much activity of the mind and vital — not enough self-giving.

*Is there no element of love and joy in my nature?*

There may be, but it must be free from ego and vital mixture — it must be the psychic kind.

*People say that an average human being starts first with vital love, joy, etc. and afterwards it changes into pure psychic love, joy, etc. For if he does not begin this way, how will he proceed?*

He doesn't usually. He begins and ends with the vital love except when the vital changes into vital dislike, hatred, revolt, repugnance, contempt or indifference. Why should it change into pure psychic love etc.? And why should a man not start with psychic love, joy etc.? There are very extraordinary theories that reign in the Ashram. People seem to take a pleasure in inventing theories that justify their not following the ideals of the sadhana.

*You said that the peace, silence and knowledge come from above the mind. Do not love and joy also come from there? But then why are they said to be part of the psychic experience?*

The soul's love and joy come from within from the psychic being. What comes from above is the Ananda of the higher consciousness.

Love and devotion depend on the opening of the psychic and for that the desires must go. The vital love offered by many to the Mother instead of the psychic love brings more disturbance than anything else because it is coupled with desire.

*Do love, devotion and surrender belong only to the psychic being? Have they nothing to do with the higher or spiritual planes?*

The love that belongs to the spiritual planes is of a different kind — the psychic has its own more personal love, bhakti, surrender. Love in the higher or spiritual mind is more universal and impersonal. The two must join together to make the highest divine love.

*We cannot be satisfied with experiences of the Mother's infinite Peace and Silence: they are impersonal. We also want something of her personality — of her presence, love, joy and beauty. These experiences would be a sign of a true psychic progress.*

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

*Is this want a right one?*

Yes, but it should not come in the way of other progress, spiritual and psychic.

*What difficulty does the psychic being find in coming forward and governing my nature?*

Your nature has always been very self-centred and the mind active — in such a nature it is easier for the higher mind to act than for the psychic.

*You wrote, "It must be that it is easier for the nature to open the psychic from above than directly." Is it not a defect in the nature not to be able to open the psychic directly? There are people who simply concentrate on the heart centre and get a psychic opening!*

In using the expression "opening of the psychic" I was thinking not of an ordinary psychic opening producing some amount of psychic (as opposed to vital) love and bhakti, but of what is called the coming in front of the psychic. When that happens one is aware of the psychic being with its simple spontaneous self-giving and feels its increasing direct control (not merely a veiled or half-veiled influence) over mind, vital and physical. Especially that is the psychic discernment which at once lights up the thoughts, emotional movements, vital pushes, physical habits and leaves nothing there obscure, substituting the right movements for the wrong ones. It is this that is difficult and rare. More often the discernment is mental and it is the mind that tries to put all in order. In that case it is the descent of the higher consciousness through the mind that opens the psychic, instead of the psychic opening directly.

*Cannot "the coming in front of the psychic" be brought about by a direct concentration on the heart? Why should it be done necessarily by the higher consciousness?*

Nobody said it must be done necessarily from above. Naturally it is done direct and is most effective then. But when it is found difficult to do direct, as it is in certain natures, then the change begins from above, and the consciousness descending from there has to liberate the heart centre. As it acts on the heart centre, the psychic action becomes more possible.

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

*Even when I make good progress, it seems to be limited to the development of the Self above. I thought that the spiritual realisation would help the psychic development, just as the psychic realisation helps the development of the Self.*

It does not necessarily happen like that. There are people who develop the psychic for a long time before the higher consciousness begins to come down. There are others who get peace or force or knowledge from above, but the specific psychic development does not take place until the ego disappears and the love and psychic surrender are able to manifest.

*Do you think that while realising the Self I pay no attention to the psychic development?*

Some get the self-realisation first. It is not usually a result of personal choice, but the working of the nature.

*If the dynamic descent reaches the heart, will it relieve the psychic being fully?*

How do you mean relieve? It can help the psychic to come forward, but it does not always do so automatically — it at least creates better conditions for the psychic.

*Our higher experiences or realisations bear a psychic stamp only when we materialise them.*

Right.

*My central consciousness has come down into the heart centre and left the sadhana to the psychic being. Was it this that you meant when you wrote: "It is of the greatest importance."?*

No. It is the psychic opening and the action of the psychic on the mind, vital and physical that is important.

*You wrote to me, "Naturally, it is the psychic being of which that can be said." But I wanted to know if there was anything solid and practical in my writing about the inner and psychic being, or was it merely theoretical?*

I don't understand. What you wrote applies to the psychic being only. You say you feel something within you that is like that and that on the point of emerging a little more. If so, it is something solid and practical and cannot be only theory.

*While I was writing to you about desires, something like a light touched a part of the vital which up to now has been indulging desires. It suddenly felt an irresistible need to give up its desires! My mind had said nothing to my vital regarding this, nor was there any pressure or force on it. It was a spontaneous feeling coming from the light above, that the desires had better be given up. Later I found that such a feeling is far more effective and decisive than human will-power.*

Yes, because it is the light from the psychic.

*I had just finished my Pranams to the Mother and was watching Purani go to her for Blessings. All of a sudden I experienced profound oneness with the Mother. For a moment I felt as if I was a part of her. This unity was experienced right up to her physical body. Then tears welled up which I could not check. Why the tears?*

Psychic tears, I suppose. No harm in them.

*During yesterday's sleep I found myself moving in a world where I had a fine experience. It was not a dream or vision, but something like entering a plane or a world during waking meditation. But I have been told that there are worlds and planes that are dangerous to get into for an inexperienced sadhak.*

Everything is dangerous in the sadhana or can be except the psychic change.

*When I wrote that while reading your answers I experienced something coming out of my heart, you replied, "It depends on the nature of the movement. Something from the psychic?" Well, it was something from the psychic. But how did it get connected with the answers?*

The psychic can be connected with anything that gives room for love or bhakti.

*But more than love or Bhakti, I experienced a sort of psychic oneness with your answers. Will you please explain this?*

You have explained it yourself — it is the psychic contact with what is in or behind the answers — what comes out into them from myself.

*Just after making my Pranams to the Mother I experienced an unimaginable depth in the heart and as if a great fire was bursting out.*

That is of course the psychic depth and the psychic fire.

*Sometimes when concentrated on the psychic centre, I feel as if I am the psychic fire itself and can burn out whatever comes in the way of sadhana. Is this not an egoistic feeling?*

It is egoistic if the ego thinks it is the psychic fire. If the consciousness feels identified with the psychic fire and becomes conscious that the fire can burn out all impurities, then it is a true experience.

*When the surrender develops sufficiently, one discovers that it has its own delight and ananda, which no amount of satisfaction of desire can bring. A true and pure surrender is nothing but a movement of the psychic being.*

All that is quite right.

*I learnt a lot about myself yesterday, my birthday, on which Mother gave me an interview. It may be perhaps a kind of experienced knowledge aided by her Force. I no more feel myself so weak, helpless or a slave to my defects and imperfections. Rather there is a growing surety that I shall be able to get rid of my whole lower nature.*

It is what we call growing conscious — a perception of which the base is the psychic though it may take place in the mind or vital or physical. No doubt the Force that woke it up came from the Mother.

*Now a rapid flow of love and joy springs out from my heart centre. Is there any possibility of the lower vital misusing this flow?*

It can be misused on a large scale only if there is a strong and vehement vital ego not accustomed to correction or else a vital full of the *kamavasana* (sexual desire). On a small scale it can be misused by the small selfishnesses, vanities, ambitions, demands of the lower vital supporting themselves upon it. If you are on guard against these things, then there is no danger of misuse. If the psychic puts forth psychic discernment along with the love, then there is no danger, for the light of psychic discernment at once exposes all mixture or misuse.

*I feel the psychic fire and the Agni of the Self active and intense. If it were not so, an uninterrupted sadhana without any mental effort would not be possible.*

These are usually supposed to be dynamic things.

*I feel quite happy in my union with the Mother. It is self-existent and self-delightful; there is no mind and therefore no thoughts. What is unique is it grows deeper and higher and yet is centred on the same level of the being.*

It is all that is necessary at present, — if it remains always.

## UNIVERSAL LOVE

*Some say that X had universal love which he used to share with others.*

X is a man full of impulses of love and kindness which are spoilt by his excessive sensuousness and angers, but this is a very common combination. His nature has a great need of loving and being loved; it is quite natural that he should pull down the feeling of universal love and natural also that he should spill it and be unable to keep it.

*X used to press the hands or shoulders of some of his friends. This was not in joke or play but as if something had descended in him which he could not contain in himself and therefore had to throw out through such a physical contact. We did feel some sensations of love and thrills.*

There was no descent; but he felt the universal love and tried to express it in action instead of holding it in himself — so inevitably the vital took hold of it, as he had not yet the purification and the peace.

*Is physical contact necessary to transmit universal love?*

There is no need of physical contact.

*As regards X's misuse of the universal love, is it not a common error of most of the untransformed human creatures?*

It is not a question of what untransformed human creatures do, but of a sadhak whose business is to transform himself and therefore to get rid of this lower mixture.

*How to differentiate universal love from psychic love?*

Universal love is always universal — psychic love can individualise itself.<sup>1</sup>

*What is the connection between universal love and a special liking for some which X had?*

It has nothing to do with special likings or dislikings.

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<sup>1</sup> In another letter Sri Aurobindo wrote, "The psychic has its own more personal love, bhakti, surrender."

That was exactly what X tried to do — to express the love in connection with this or that person. But the universal love is not personal — it has to be held within as a condition of the consciousness which will have its effects according to the Divine Will or be used by that Will if necessary, but to run about expressing it for one's personal satisfaction or the satisfaction of others is only to spoil and lose it.

*I fail to understand what is meant by universal love having to be "held within as a condition of consciousness."*

A state of consciousness, just as peace becomes a state of the consciousness, or wideness or anything else that is permanent.

*Did he pull down that love before he was ready, and thus misuse it?*

He did nothing to bring the feeling of love down — it came of itself. His misuse of what came was not a dangerous result of the descent; it was the result of his past nature.

*My feeling of love and bhakti seem to be almost receding.*

It is presumably because the intensity of resolution for it or the vital enthusiasm for it does not last and as soon as it relaxes the resistance comes up.

*It would be the best thing for me to have an absolute and integral love for the Mother.*

It is all right, but the knowledge is not enough, there must be the effective push to fulfilment — to love absolutely and integrally is not so easy.

## PART III

## MECHANICAL MIND

*The useless mechanical mind is very active, while the useful recording mind has fallen silent; it can't do any thinking or even note down the experiences!*

Perhaps it is waiting for a higher mind to act from above.

*How is it that when I talk with someone, with whom I do not usually converse, his thoughts and ideas hover round my mind for a long time?*

It is the nature of the mind acting for itself to do that. It always chews and rechews the subject in which it has been engaged, provided that the talk catches on to its memory.

*Why does my mind chew and re-chew what I hear from others?*

It is a movement in every mind; you probably did not notice it before when the mind was not accustomed to silence. For everybody whatever takes hold of the mind tends to be ruminated like that.

*I am afraid I may go mad if my mind continues to be so restless.*

That is absurd. There is nothing to get mad about in that. It is a normal movement of the mind which has to be got over like other movements. Things have to be taken quietly and simply (difficulties included), not unduly magnified like that.

*My mind often wanders, thinking about unimportant things. This movement has a strong power of recurrence, in spite of my efforts to check it.*

You must go on rejecting it till you get the mastery of it.

The mechanical mind is a part of the constitution of human nature and its activity is a well-known phenomenon, not due to something wrong in the spinal chord. What is unusual in your case, is the absolute helplessness of your will in the face of this very ordinary phenomenon. If that is due to the spinal chord, it is another matter, but the real cause there too is psychological.

*The mechanical and subconscious minds are stirred up by the inertia. When the inertia is strong they become more active.*

That only means that they take advantage of the inertia to be active. There is no other activity in the mind, so they become active, and there is no will or energy to stop them, so they continue. But the inertia itself is not a dynamic principle. The nature of inertia is *apravritti* [immobility] — the action of the mechanical mind is a *pravritti* [movement] though a tamasic obscure *pravritti*.

*Cannot the mechanical mind be fired out by a spiritual Force? What is the need of transforming it?*

You can't fire out a part of the being. What is called the mechanical mind is necessary for the maintenance (in the physical) of things gained — it is by conservation and repetition that Nature does that. The subconscious is the basis of conservation and the mechanical mind is the means of repetition. Only they have to be enlightened and change and conserve and repeat the new divine things and not the old undivine ones.

*When I asked if the subconscious and mechanical mind could be changed by a direct higher action, you replied, "It is possible if you can bring the direct higher action into this part of the consciousness or else let the Force pass there." I have often concentrated the higher Force on this part and also on the vital but without any result.*

It is a question not merely of concentrating but of bringing the Force into that part and keeping it there long enough to bring light and silence. If the Force does not pass there, it means that something obstructs and does not let it pass.

*Can knowledge and experiences change this mechanical mind?*

Knowledge and experiences can change it only if they act within it and occupy it driving out the old things. The other way to get rid of it is to develop the psychic being and its power over the nature.

*Can knowledge and experiences act within the mechanical mind to get rid of what is in it?*

The question is whether they merely act upon it or act within it and occupy that plane of the nature.

## PHYSICAL MIND

*Are not the physical mind and the intellect two separate parts of our being?*

They are closely connected and act together.

*At times suggestions come: "You meditate for so long and work so little. This Yoga is not to attain motionless Samadhi. People here are expected to lead a balanced life working, meditating and reading."*

These mental suggestions are of no use when there is experience and development going on — one must not turn from the experiences in obedience to a mental rule.

*Is the dynamic descent obstructed by my physical mental?*

It is probably that your physical mental is too active, putting its ideas between the Force and the field of its working.

*How to stop the physical mental from that activity before it takes deep root?*

What do you mean? Activity of the physical mind is not a new thing that needs to take root. It has been there very well rooted since you began your human evolution in the primaeval forests.

The physical mental or externalising mind is part of the mental consciousness, not part of the physical consciousness. But it is closely connected with the mental physical — so that the two usually act together.

It is not by a general descent that people come out of the physical mind. If one chooses to remain in the physical mind, one million descents can come down and make no difference to him.

*My physical mind often insists on mental questions and guidance.*

That insistence of your physical mind comes up very strongly whenever the sadhana is interrupted. It has always the tone "Why don't you answer? Why don't you answer? Can't you see that you are not giving me what I need in my difficulties? I must have answers, answers."

*To overcome the obstinacy of the physical mind I had better stop asking you so many questions about the sadhana, and only state what happens and what I fail to understand by myself.*

Out of one thousand mental questions and answers there are only one or two here and there that are really of any dynamic assistance — while a single inner response or a little growth of consciousness will do what these thousand questions and answers could not do. The Yoga does not proceed by upadesh but by inner influence. To state your condition, experiences etc. and open to the help is far more important than question-asking — especially the questions about why and how which your physical mind so persistently puts.

## STUDY AND SADHANA

*A question often stirs in my mind: Why is the Ashram atmosphere so full of mental activities? If people remain engrossed in them where will be the chance for sadhana?*

There is no obligation on anyone to be engrossed in mental pursuits; sadhana must be done by one's own choice, not by rule or compulsion.

*Do you suggest that people here should have some mental development if possible? Would it really help the sadhana?*

I don't know if it helps the sadhana and I don't quite understand what is meant by the phrase. What is a fact is that mental like physical work can be made a part of the sadhana, — not as a rival to the sadhana or as another activity with equal rights and less selfish and egoistic than seeking the Divine.

*One has to do some physical work as part of the Karma Yoga, also some personal work. Where is the time then to read for one's mental development except at the cost of the time spent in meditation?*

If the power to meditate long is there, a sadhak will naturally do it and care little for reading, — unless he has reached the stage when everything is part of the Yogic consciousness because that is permanent. Sadhana is the aim of a sadhak, not mental development. But if he has spare time, those who have the mental turn will naturally spend it in reading or study of some kind.

For one who wants to practise sadhana, sadhana must come first, — reading and mental development can only be subordinate things.

*I want to study as part of my sadhana, as an offering to the Mother, just as I do physical work with her Force supporting and guiding me. But I am sorry to say it is not so as yet.*

Probably you are still too much identified with your mind when you study, so that you cannot stand back and watch it working or the Force working through it.

*How can one build up a well-developed intellect? By studying and reading?*

By training it to see, observe, understand in the right way. Reading and study are only useful to acquire information and widen one's field of data. But that comes to nothing if one does not know how to discern and discriminate, judge, see what is within and behind things.

*Is it true that a person with a well-trained intellect will not have much inertia?*

A well-trained intellect and study are two different things — there are plenty of people who have read much but have not a well-trained intellect. Inertia can come to anybody, even to the most educated people.

*Are the limitations and defects of my mind likely to go, at least to some extent, through reading and studying?*

They may, but they are more likely to go by an increasing capacity coming from above.

*I have been asking you many questions, from different angles, about study. The subject confuses me a bit. I came here very young, without enough schooling. Mental development was foreign to me.*

*X is about my age. He was asked to continue his studies here, while I was asked to give them up and take up physical work. Consequently his mind is more developed. He can reason much better than I. Well?*

X is more reasoningly stupid, that is the only difference. Intelligence does not depend on the amount one has read, it is a quality of the mind. Study only gives it material for its work as life also does. There are people who do not know how to read and write well who are more intelligent than many highly educated people and understand life and things better. On the other hand a good intelligence can improve itself by reading because it gets more material to work on and grows by exercise and by having a wider range to move in. But book knowledge by itself is not the real thing; it has to be used as a help to the intelligence, but it is often used only as a help to a logician's stupidity or ignorance — ignorance because knowledge of facts is a poor thing if one cannot see their true significance.

*If I could study properly, I think it would be good not only for my mental development but also for my sadhana, for it would divert my consciousness from the lower or subconscious mind.*

Yes.

Study is of importance only if you study in the right way with the turn for knowledge and mental discipline.

*What do you think would be good for me to study?*

These are things that must come from yourself; imposed, they will not succeed and have no value.

*Now I have finally decided to study. Arjava (Chadwick) has consented to help me. He will teach me the subject which you think would be good for the development of my mind.*

I think some knowledge of science will be most useful to you — that field is quite a blank for most people here, and yet the greater part of modern thought and knowledge is largely influenced by it.

*While writing essays I concentrate to bring down fine expressions, but they don't come. Where is the defect?*

It may be in an insufficient command of words in the instrument or else in an awkwardness of the transcribing mind.

*When I tried to resume my French lessons, the mind proper was completely absent. The physical mind found the activity too difficult to support. Some parts of the being wanted to read stories, but I continued to study.*

It is what people usually do in life — they control the physical mind and don't allow it to do whatever it likes.

What is lacking in your French study is attention to details and entering into the spirit of the language. Grammar and syntax not [only] must be correct, but also, even if grammatically correct, English turned into French is not French. There is a turn, a way of writing that is proper to French and that has to be learned.

You should pay more attention to correctness of grammar and phrase. Otherwise one can go on studying forever without much progress in entering into the spirit of using properly the forms of the language.

*What is the need for so many here to learn French? Are you preparing them for giving lectures or opening centres in France or French-speaking countries?*

Are life and mind to be governed by material utility or outward practicality? Spiritual life would then be inferior even to ordinary mental life where people learn for the sake of acquiring knowledge and culturing the mind and not only for the sake of some outward utility.

*Is my French study of any help to the sadhana?*

I don't know what you mean by help. One can do sadhana without knowing French or for that matter English either. Knowing languages is part of the equipment of the mind.

One does not learn English or French as an aid to the sadhana; it is done for the development of the mind and as part of the activity given to the being. For that purpose learning French is as good as learning English and, if it is properly done, better. Nor is there any reason, if one has the capacity, to limit oneself to one language only.

*Learning languages makes the mind active. Does not the Yoga mean to keep the mind quiet and turn it always to the Divine?*

Do you mean to say that in order to have quietness of the mind one must do nothing? Then neither the Mother nor I nor anyone else here has a quiet mind.

Doing nothing with the mind is not quietude or silence. It is inactivity that leaves the mind thinking mechanically and discursively instead of concentrating on an object — that is all.

Keeping the mind without occupation is not the same thing as peace or silence.

*Is it not a fact that most of the true Yogas demand a passivity of the mind as a first important basis? Does our Yoga differ from them in this discipline? If not, why does it allow the sadhaks to keep their minds constantly active in learning languages? Or has it created for them such a climate that they can keep their minds calm and quiet somehow, in spite of this mental activity?*

One can go on without anything except a little rice daily and some water — without clothes even or a house to shelter. Is that what you call true Yoga and what should be followed in the Ashram? But then there is no need for an Ashram. A cave somewhere for each will do.

Why do you use a fountain pen? You can very well go on with an ordinary one. Why do you take these cahiers [notebooks] from the stores? Cheap papers would do. Why do you write? The mind should be passive.

If by passivity of the mind you mean laziness and inability to use it, then what Yoga makes that its basis? The mind has to be quieted and transformed, not made indolent and useless. Is there any old Yoga that makes it a rule not to allow those who practise it to study Sanskrit or philosophy? Does that prevent the Yogis from attaining mental quietude? Do you think that the Mother and myself never read anything and have to sit all day inactive in order to make our minds quiet? Are you not aware that the principle of this Yoga is to arrive at an inner silence in which all activities can take place without disturbing the inner silence?

Your objection was to learning languages and especially French as inimical to peace and silence because it meant activity. The mind, when it is not in meditation or in complete silence, is always active with something or other — with its own ideas or desires or with other people or with things or with talking etc. None of these things is any less activity than learning languages. Now you shift your ground and say it is because owing to their study they have no time for meditation that you object. That is absurd, for if people want to meditate, they will arrange their time of study for that; if they don't want to meditate, the reason must be something else than study and if they don't study they will simply go on thinking about "small things". Want of time is not the cause of their non-meditation and passion for study is not the cause.

*At times the mind is too passive and refuses to attend to any intellectual activity. Then how can I do my study?*

If it refuses, of course you can't — unless you allow the Force to work through you.

*Do you think I should study only when I feel an inner urge for it, when my mind is disposed to study?*

It need not be insisted on if it is found difficult to do it owing to the pressure.

*Should I stop my lessons if my consciousness is not responding to the higher working as adequately as it does during an inactive period? Or should I put a will on my consciousness to make it capable of responding to the higher working at the same time as it carries on the mental activity?*

The latter course is the best.

I have sanctioned your studying because it is good for you to study — so you can go on with it.

Making it [study] a part of your sadhana depends wholly on the spirit in which you do it.

You seem to use the word meditation for a state of higher consciousness; or do you use it for thinking about the Divine? One can have a state of Yogic consciousness behind the reading or study or one can read or study from a state of Yogic consciousness, but that is not called meditation.

## LEARNING LOGIC

*Does logic help us to observe, think, judge, imagine in the right intellectual way?*

No, not necessarily. It is a theoretical training; you learn by it some rules of logical thinking. But the application depends on your own intelligence. In any sphere of knowledge or action a man may be a good theorist but a poor executant. A very good military theorist and critic if put in command of an army might very well lose all his battles, not being able to suit the theories rightly to the occasion. So a theoretical logician may bungle the problems of thought by want of insight, of quickness of mind or of plasticity in the use of his capacities. Besides, logic is not the whole of thinking; observation, intuition, sympathy, many-sidedness are more important.

*When Dr. Sircar came to teach logic and philosophy to Shanti I found out that they are concerned with the mental things and have nothing much to do with the practice of Yoga.*

Why should you expect the theory of logic to have anything to do with Yoga — it is concerned with mental reasoning, not with spiritual experience. Cooking also has nothing to do with Yoga; you can't cut up Brahman and the Purusha and surrender and put them into the dishes either as a vegetable or a sauce. All the same, cooking is a part of existence, even of existence in an Ashram.

*Can logic and philosophy help one in his sadhana?*

They can help to prepare the mind or they can help to express the knowledge properly in the mental way. What else do you expect them to do?

I am not aware that by learning logic one gets freed from physical things. A few intellectuals lead the mental life and are indifferent to physical needs to a great extent, but there are very few.

*Would a developed mind help the sadhana?*

It may or may not — if it is too intellectually developed on certain rationalistic lines, it may hinder.

*You wrote to N that though people call you a philosopher, you have never learnt philosophy. Well, what you have written in the "Arya" is so philosophical that the*

*greatest philosopher in the world could never hope to write it. I don't mean here the bringing down of the highest Truth, but the power of expression, the art of reasoning and arguing.*

There is very little argument in my philosophy — the elaborate metaphysical reasoning full of abstract words with which the metaphysician tries to establish his conclusion is not there. What is there is a harmonising of the different parts of a many-sided knowledge so that all unites logically together. But it is not by force of logical argument that it is done, but by a clear vision of the relations and sequences of the knowledge.

*In course of the sadhana, can one receive intellectual or other training by the direct power of Yoga? How did your own wide development come?*

It came not by "training", but by the spontaneous opening and widening and perfecting of the consciousness in the sadhana.

*You say that you never developed your intellect. Then how did it become so keen and powerful before you started the Yoga?*

It was not any such thing before I started the Yoga. I started the Yoga in 1904 and all my work except some poetry was done afterwards. Moreover my intellect was inborn and so far as it grew before the Yoga it was not by training but by a wide haphazard activity developing ideas from all things read, seen or experienced. That is not training, it is natural growth.

An unintellectual mind cannot bring down the Knowledge? What then about Ramakrishna? Do you mean to say that the majority of the sadhaks here who have not learned logic and are ignorant of philosophy will never get Knowledge?

*But what a difference there is between Ramakrishna's expressions of knowledge and those of a perfectly developed intellect like yours!*

His expressions are unsurpassable in their quality. Don't talk nonsense. Moreover I never developed my intellect and I made zero marks in logic.

*And who preached Ramakrishna's gospel to the world? Vivekananda, a highly developed intellect.*

And who taught Vivekananda the Truth? Not a logician or highly developed intellect certainly?

*Is there not a world of difference between an intellectual man and an unintellectual one expressing the Knowledge?*

Expression is another matter, but Ramakrishna was an uneducated non-intellectual man, yet his expression of knowledge was so perfect that the biggest intellectuals bowed down before it.

I never heard that learning logic was necessary for good expression. So far as I know very few good writers ever bothered about learning that subject.

## MIND AND ITS ENLIGHTENMENT

*My English teacher and I read the following passage from your book:*

*"What has to be surpassed and changed is the intellectual reason which sees things from outside only, by analysis and inference when it does not do it rather by taking a hasty look and saying 'so it is', or 'so it is not'."*

*Here, did you mean to say that the intellect usually judges things after forming hasty conclusions and that when it cannot do so it tries analysis and inference? That is how my teacher interpreted the passage. My understanding of it is just the opposite! It is only when the intellect cannot decide by analysis and inference, which is its usual process, that it forms hasty conclusions. Well, which of the two explanations is really correct?*

Neither is correct. Each of these statements is a hasty conclusion of the intellect.

Both the interpretations are absurd. I have said nothing about "cannot". I have said "when it does not rather", and that means that what it ordinarily does is to take a hasty look, that is what most people usually do, and the habit of careful analysis and inference (which is no doubt the proper function of the intellect) is the exception.

*If even the intellect usually takes a hasty look without reasoning in a logical way, why should people spend so much time, energy and money developing it? The growth of the physical mind should serve their purpose!*

People don't take time etc. for developing the intellect. It is only one man out of thousands who has a trained intellect. In others it is either ill-developed, undeveloped or very partially developed.

The intellect of most men is extremely imperfect, ill-trained, half-developed — therefore in most the conclusions of the intellect are hasty, ill-founded and erroneous or, if right, right more by chance than by merit or right working. The conclusions are formed without knowing the facts or the correct or sufficient data, merely by a rapid inference, or the process by which it comes from the premises to the conclusion is usually illogical or faulty — the process being unsound by which the conclusion is arrived at, the conclusion also is likely to be fallacious. At the same time the intellect is usually arrogant and presumptuous, confidently asserting its imperfect conclusions as the truth and setting down as mistaken, stupid or foolish those who differ from them. Even when fully trained and developed, the intellect cannot arrive at absolute certitude

or complete truth, but it can arrive at one aspect or side of it and make a reasonable or probable affirmation; but untrained, it is a quite insufficient instrument, at once hasty and peremptory and unsafe and unreliable. That is why I laid stress on its habit of hasty look and conclusion.

*You said, "The intellect of most men is extremely imperfect, ill-trained, half-developed." What is the right way of training the intellect so that it may become perfect, fully developed and turn always to the truth and be able to deal with more than one side of the truth?*

To look at things without egoism or prejudice or haste, to try to know fully and accurately before judging, to try to see the truth behind other opinions than your own, etc. etc.

*Is not the usual function of the intellect to see, reason, analyse, infer, scrutinise, judge?*

If it is its function, what prevents it from trying to do all that by a hasty look? Does everything in this world discharge its function perfectly? Very few people scrutinise before they judge.

*What is the characteristic of a well-developed intellect? Is it helpful to a higher knowledge?*

A well-developed intellect is one which is plastic, wide, free from rigidity and stiffness, — that can be of use.

*You said, "The intellect is made up of imaginations, perceptions, inferences. The pure reason is quite another thing, but only a few are able to use it." What is the pure reason made of?*

Pure reason deals with things in themselves, ideas, concepts, the essential nature of things. It lives in the world of ideas. It is philosophic and metaphysical in its nature.

*How to get a strong, firm and clear mind?*

That can only come either by mental training or by a working of the higher consciousness on the parts from above.

*What sort of "mental training" do you mean here?*

Reading, learning about things, acquiring complete and accurate information, training oneself in logical thinking, considering dispassionately all sides of a question, rejecting hasty or wrong inferences and conclusions, learning to look at all things clearly and as a whole.

*Is it not true that a proper mental training greatly helps the higher action to work upon a sadhak?*

If so, it should have been done before taking up sadhana; for in sadhana the mind has to be quiet, not active.

Is getting knowledge from above and getting it by the mind in its own capacity the same thing? If the mind is capable then there is no need of knowledge from above, it can do the getting of knowledge by its own greatness.

Mental knowledge is of little use except sometimes as an introduction pointing towards the real knowledge which comes from a direct consciousness of things.

It is not a mental knowledge that is necessary but a psychic perception or a direct perception in the consciousness. A mental knowledge can always be blinded by the tricks of the vital.

*To perfect our actions, feelings and thoughts, we have to teach the outer being first with the mind. We cannot wait idly for the psychic or higher consciousness to take up that work.*

Obviously the mind has to teach the outer being, so long as the psychic or the higher consciousness are not ready to take up the work.

*It is impossible for a yogi to do anything without having more than one thought.*

Don't understand. A yogi can do hundreds of things without having a single thought much less "more than one thought". If you say you cannot do that at this stage, that is quite another matter.

*When you do not answer my questions about sadhana, my mind falls into confusion and doubt. It argues with itself. All this disputing disturbs my sadhana.*

Your mind is too active. If it were more quiet and less questioning and argumentative and restlessly wanting to find devices it seems to me that there would be more chance

of knowledge coming down and of intuitive, non-intellectual consciousness developing within you.

It seems to me better to call down the Force and let it work in its own way rather than the mind always asking "Shall I do this, shall I do that? Will this device serve? Will that device help?"

You have to develop the inner intuitive response first — i.e. to think and perceive less with the mind and more with the inner consciousness. Most people do everything with the mind and how can the mind know? The mind depends on the senses for its knowledge.

*I don't feel at all happy, gay or fixed on anything. Almost constantly I see my thoughts opposing each other. There is hardly any stable condition. Some parts of the being feel that I am good for nothing, neither for sadhana nor for work.*

Don't accept and hug and dandle these ideas. Everybody has thoughts opposing each other — it is the very nature of the mind — one has to draw back from all that and fix on the straight things alone that lead to the Divine. The rest one must treat as external rubbish.

*When I give intellectual answers to my friends, the answers seem to be dry. Why so?*

Answers about what? Intellectual answers about spiritual things are usually dry, except to the intellect.

*Has an intellectual no emotions — love, joy for others?*

There is no reason why he should not have.

*To understand and dismiss the delusions and devices of the vital and the ego, we need a deeper consciousness; an undeveloped or half-developed intellect is seldom sufficient.*

Yes. The intellect easily deceives itself, putting forth the idea and saying "it is done" when all along the vital reactions are there.

What I write usually helps only the mind and that too very little, for people do not really understand what I write — they put their own constructions on it. The inner help is quite different and there can be no comparison with them, for it reaches the substance of the consciousness, not the mind only.

*You said, "What I write usually helps only the mind and that too very little, for people really do not understand what I write." Is it because you are writing from too high a plane for our little mind to understand what you write?*

It is because the mind by itself cannot understand things that are beyond it. It constructs its own idea out of something that it catches or thinks it has caught and puts that down as the whole meaning of what has been written. Each mind puts its own ideas in place of the Truth.

*About my recent questions you wrote, "They are mental questions seeking a mental answer." Are questions regarding things of the sadhana considered as mental ones?*

Mental questions are questions put by the mind which expects them to be answered according to its own habits and standards although the happenings of the consciousness do not follow any law which accords with the mind's standards.

*This morning I had a direct meditation with the Mother, that is, I took her embodied self as the centre of my concentration. This had a unique result. She poured into me certain thoughts which changed my oscillating mental attitude. These thoughts did not merely tell me something in the form of words, but revealed before me vividly and expressively what the proper place of mind in sadhana should be. Never in any book have I come across these thoughts in such an illuminating form. It might take ten or twenty pages to describe them adequately. Each thought was full of light and had several sides. Every thought was not only received as an abstract thought but felt at the same time as an experience. Wherever it penetrated into me, it created spontaneously a full consent to it and a resolution to abide by its truth. So far as I remember now all that took place within a few seconds.*

Very good.

## SEPARATING MENTAL PURUSHA FROM MENTAL PRAKRITI

*When my consciousness keeps itself separate from reading or talking, it cannot understand what is being said or read.*

That only means that you cannot separate yourself from your mental consciousness in its activity. Naturally, if you take your mental consciousness off the reading, you can't understand what is being read, for it is with the mental consciousness that one understands. You have not to make the mental consciousness separate from the reading, but yourself separate from the mental consciousness. You have to be the Witness watching it reading or writing or talking, just as you watch the body acting or moving.

*I try to separate myself from the mental activity, but what happens is that, instead of the witness Purusha, the mental consciousness gets separated from the mental activity!*

It is, I suppose, because you have not yet got the mental Purusha separate from the mental Prakriti — so when you pull the Purusha back, the Prakriti comes with him.

*What can be done to prevent this from happening?*

The only way is to separate the Prakriti and Purusha. When you feel something within watching all the mental activities but separate from them, just as you can watch things going on outside on the street, then that is the separation of mental Purusha from mental Prakriti.

*Still I cannot separate the mental Purusha from mental Prakriti!*

You will have to learn the trick. You must learn to become the observer of thoughts and no longer the thinker.

*This morning I could not stop my thoughts. So I tried to catch them after detaching myself from the mind. But, when I pursued them, the only trace I found was voidness.*

That would mean the thoughts were coming up only by the quiescence of the mental Purusha and as soon as they were looked at could go on no more. Usually one has to reject them before the mind falls silent.

*What are these things we call thoughts?*

They are forms of the play of mental forces. These mental forces come from general Nature and make use of the individual mind for expressing themselves. Usually the mental Purusha accepts and allows the play — if he draws back and refuses his consent, then they persist for a time, but afterwards lose their control of the mind and the mind falls silent.

*The whole day the useless activities of the mind simply go on, wandering like vagabonds without aim. Of course, my intellect has nothing to do with them.*

In that case, are you separated from those activities? Do you watch them going on, wandering like vagabonds, or do you wander with them?

*The crowds of mechanical and subconscious thoughts have increased to such an extent that they have become intolerable.*

They cannot decrease until you definitely separate yourself from them and refuse to accept them or respond.

*At this stage of the sadhana, should I try to divide my mental consciousness into two, one part doing mental work, the other part doing the sadhana?*

It usually comes of itself, not by trying.

## PART IV

## THE VITAL DIFFICULTY

*After stopping tea my mind seems to become dull. I cannot take interest in anything. It has become difficult to attend my classes.*

All that is evidently due to the vital-physical becoming tamasic because you refuse it its small desires. You should throw it away altogether and call down into the vital-physical the Mother's Force.

So long as something in the being clings to the desire of indulgence, no Force can get rid of these things by violence. Even if the Force threw it out, that in the being would call it back.

*The tamas could rise so completely because some part of my vital was upset yesterday.*

That is the difficulty which is standing in the way — the power of this part to upset the consciousness.

*I wonder why I do not have any psychic experiences at present, even during the periods when my vital is calm.*

Only calm in the vital is hardly sufficient. There must be something throwing out the ego from the vital.

*My vital has become extremely unstable. When its views are even slightly contradicted, it invariably sinks into despair. I often try to stop it but it always returns to its nature.*

It is because the vital was very much under the grip of its desires and so, now that it is separately active, not controlled by mental will, it kicks and cries whenever its desires are not satisfied. That is an ordinary movement of the human vital when not dominated and kept in its place by the mental will.

*What a curious nature I have — to be upset because somebody spoke this or that! I take it as a great weakness.*

That also is the usual movement of the vital when acting in its own nature.

*The vitality in my outer being has decreased much. What I could do in one day now needs three days! Is this due to a transition period for establishing a higher life in the outer nature?*

It depends on how you take it. If you allow the inertia to depress you it becomes an interruption and not a transition.

*Could you kindly explain how it becomes a period of transition simply by not allowing the depression?*

It becomes a state of transition in which something that has to be dealt with is worked out. But if there is depression etc. it becomes instead a struggle between the lower consciousness and the impulsion towards higher things.

*Dullness, unhappiness and indifference in regard to every earthly thing are felt by some parts of my nature. That, I think, is not depression.*

Then what is it? That is usually called depression.

*At times, parts of my being do not feel happy, yet neither do they feel depression or despair.*

If dullness and unhappiness are not depression, I do not know what depression means. Despair is another matter.

*To be desireless does not need a long tapasya. There are people in the world who keep themselves detached from desires. It is an initial step of any Yoga.*

Of Yoga, yes. But people in the world are not desireless — only they control their desires, choose between them, accept some, reject others.

Desire is a psychological movement and it can attach itself to a "true need" as well as to things that are not true needs. One must approach even true needs without desire. If one does not get them, one must feel nothing.

*In what way am I keeping myself open to "Ego, Demand and Desire"?*

The fact that your vital "goes out of the poise" and accepts them means that you keep yourself open to them. The sign that these things are no longer admitted is when the inner vital rejects them so that they become suggestions only and nothing else. There

may be even a siege of suggestions or waves from the general nature, but they cannot get admission. It is only then that a wall can be kept in which one is untouched by the general atmosphere.

*I feel some sort of voidness just after my English class. It is not a spiritual emptiness, but a kind of exhaustion of my life-energy.*

Voidness may be of different kinds — a certain kind of spiritual voidness or the emptiness that is a preparation for new experiences. But an exhaustion of life energy is a very different thing. It may arise from fatigue, from somebody or something drawing away the vital force or from an invasion of *tamas*. But I don't know why it should be connected with the English study and happen only then.

*I just read that if our vital lays its hold on the physical the transformation of the body can be done very quickly. Why then does my vital not try it?*

Laziness. The vital can be all right when things are going on swimmingly, but when difficulties become strong, it sinks and lies supine. Also if some bait is held out to the vital ego, then it can become enthusiastic and active.

The vital struggle comes from a wrong attitude in the vital itself and in the physical mind, an absence of quietude resulting.

*In this Yoga, desires are not to be suppressed but conquered. But to dissolve them is not easy — when no longer in the mind, they are found lurking in the vital or the physical or the subconscious.*

I do not know what you mean by dissolution. The principle of the Yoga is rejection — throwing out of the being. It is true that rejected from the mind it often goes to the vital, rejected by the vital, to the physical, rejected by the physical to the subconscious. Rejected from the subconscious also, it can still linger in the environmental consciousness — but there it has no longer any possession of the being and can be thrown away altogether.

*Why did the vital feel that the Mother was displeased with me?*

Causeless vital habit, constructing things in order to have an excuse for being dissatisfied. It is the nature of the vital, there is no other why.

*It seems something has happened in my vital being. The displeasure, depression and despair it now feels really have nothing to do with physical occurrences; they are only excuses it projects for its justification. For while these outer circumstances have remained the same, it is only now that such absurd dissatisfaction has risen up. What has happened? Is there a real cause?*

There is no cause. It is the nature of the vital. The ordinary vital movement is to go through pleasure and pain, joy and grief, exaltation and despondency, all the dualities. Therefore the vital seizes on any cause it can find to get these things. If there is no real cause, it will invent one. If it is not allowed to invent, it will bring up a causeless grief or despondency or discontent rather than have none at all. This is especially the case when peace or quietude is trying to establish itself — the vital nature does not like that and tries all it can to bring despondency, grief, revolt, any kind of disturbance. When one is free from these things, that is the sign that the consciousness has become liberated and the higher consciousness is there.

It is the vital joy or pleasure I spoke of as the thing desired by the vital along with variations of grief and depression. The deeper joy and delight comes only with the touch of the higher consciousness.

*“The ordinary vital movement is to go through pleasure and pain, joy and grief, exaltation and despondency, all the dualities.” Then why did I not have periods of pleasure, joy or exaltation before this present lapse into depression?*

Because you had brought down the peace which is free from the dualities. What came to oppose it and cover it was the inertia, and the inertia is not easily capable of joy or exaltation, but it easily admits despondency etc., so the vital not finding any rajasic pleasure takes refuge in despondency.

*I was told that despondency comes only when the vital stirs. What makes it stir only at certain times and not at other times?*

You might just as well ask why sometimes the wind blows and at other times there is no breeze since the air is always there. The vital cannot be expected to be always in action to bring despondency — it does when it feels inclined so to act.

*The vital seems to be unable to reject depression and despair.*

That is because your mind often participates and gets despondent — also because the will to dissociate and push it out is not steady and calm enough. To a calm and steady will the vital would be obliged to respond after a time.

*But why does the depression increase in spite of my efforts to reject it?*

It is the resistance of the vital to change. Formerly it probably took more the form of an undiscovered and therefore unresisted activity of ego etc., and, when dissatisfied, of discontent and soreness rather than depression. Now that it is definitely and finally asked to change, its reaction takes the form of refusal and depression.

*What is the inner reason for the vital's dissatisfaction?*

It is dissatisfied by its claims not being recognised, by the pressure on it to change, by the attempt to stabilise a consciousness in which its ego cannot have a place.

A wise vital is a rare phenomenon. It has to be enlightened from above, otherwise it is always imprudent.

*For some days I have been trying to recover my past attitude of surrender: "Give everything and ask for nothing." But I don't know why I meet there with a total failure.*

I suppose because you are giving too big a place to your vital — that is to say the part of the vital which insists on itself as the one important thing and says, "If I am not satisfied there can be no sadhana; if I am going wrong, then all this sadhana must be false like X's."

Things in sadhana cannot be done in a "short time". The vital despondency comes largely from an impatience and the unwillingness to spend a calm, steady labour on the things to be done. No great work was ever done without the patient overcoming of difficulties.

*When the vital is dissatisfied, the being does not care much for the sadhana. For it feels that if the Divine is displeased with me what is the use of all this tapasya, experience, progress?*

What being feels like that? If it is the whole being that shares whatever the vital chooses to raise, dissatisfaction, causeless despair etc., how do you propose to get rid of the vital

opposition in a short time? It is not possible to get rid "directly" of a thing to which the whole being consents.

It is mostly when the sadhana condition is interrupted that the vital becomes agitated or impatient and restless. Instead of remaining quiet and waiting or calling down the real push from above, it begins to get vexed and restless and begins to ask questions "Why this? Why that?" Also the old vital mental egoism rises up and if the answers do not please it, it becomes challenging, disputatious, insistent on its own point of view. These are old defects which are part of the external nature and therefore difficult to root out. You must learn to recognise them and get rid of them by a quiet rejection and disuse.

*What is the "sadhana condition"?*

When the sadhana is strong and intense or sufficiently active, that is the sadhana condition. When it is interrupted, then the vital becomes impatient and restless.

*Why does the sadhana condition get interrupted?*

Always the same question! Everybody's sadhana gets interrupted because it is the nature of the consciousness to have these oscillations, until the whole nature is sufficiently changed to have the constant realisation in all parts. I do not know how often I have explained that.

*Even before our whole nature is changed, I think that if the higher action is persistent, we can at least throw off our human imperfections for a long time.*

If it were so easy as that, there would be no need of sadhana. The higher action would only have to rush in and stay and everything would be done in no time.

*A mere peaceful state makes my vital impatient. For it thinks: "If there is no restlessness or turmoil, why shouldn't the higher things descend at once?"*

It is this impatience of the vital that is, as I told you, one of the chief obstacles. If the vital were quiet (not either inert or restless) one would feel peace itself as a great realisation as all great Yogis do, and into it would come the sense of the free silent Self unperturbed for ever and tranquil and in that condition the Force also could descend. A vital attached and demanding results and refusing to go on with the sadhana without them is a great hindrance.

*Since yesterday there has been a strong revolt in the vital. It is accompanied with anti-divine suggestions. Is not all this surging up as a resistance to a new opening?*

It may be. But more probably because of the pressure on it to change, give up its attachments etc.

*When the vital does not express its dissatisfaction it takes refuge usually in a form of passive surrender: "If you don't satisfy my desires, it is all right. I don't want anything, don't want to do sadhana. I fall back to my old position." This, I suppose, is as bad as the vital's insistence on its desires!*

All the same that is the first step towards freeing the vital. So long as it insists on its desires, it cannot be freed. One has to make it give up its insistence first and give up its passive resistance afterwards.

*What is the difference between the voidness caused by a drawing of the life energy and that produced by a spiritual emptiness?*

The drawing of the life energy leaves the body lifeless, helpless, empty and impotent, but it is attended by no experience except a great suffering and unease sometimes.

*Is it good to have a vital sensitive to others, exposed to others?*

It is neither good nor bad. It comes like that in the course of the development. Some are incapable of consciously or visibly opening to others because they are insensitive. On the other hand to be too open is troublesome.

*Has everybody to pass through the stage of vital sensitiveness?*

The Mother and myself have passed through it. It comes inevitably in the full opening of the being to the universal.

*Isn't insensitiveness better than the constant trouble which comes from remaining open to others?*

There can be no transformation of the being in an insensitive consciousness.

The depression is not the only cause of suspension of experiences. There are others such as inertia etc. If one can have experiences continuously in spite of these things,

that means that a part of the consciousness has definitely separated from the rest and is able to go on in spite of the outer resistance.

*Since yesterday there has been no gloom or despondency in spite of enough outer reasons for it. Is it then a fact that my being does not respond to the outer reasons, or does the mind simply think like that?*

The outer reasons are created by the mind and it is the mind that responds or does not respond to them. Nothing outward can affect unless the mind (vital mind usually) represents them to itself in a particular way and makes its own response.

If the mind does not respond to any suggested reasons for despondency, that is indeed a great liberation.

*Does the vital by itself never get depressed? It is only when the mind creates outer reasons that vital depression is possible?*

The vital mind is part of the vital. If the mind (mental mind, vital mind, physical mind, subconscious mind) does not respond to outer things, depression is impossible. The self at one end, the stone at the other never get into depression. In between, the true mind, true vital, true physical consciousness never get depression because they do not give the responses to things that create depression.

*I have raised this question again because X tells me that when he is depressed there are never any external causes. Well, that may prove that depression is possible in the absence of any outward reasons.*

You seem to rely very much on X and his experiences and ideas about them. X's experience proves nothing because he is quite ignorant. His depression comes from outside and has its causes, only his vital mind does not record or understand the causes, but there is a response to them all the same. Because the vital mind has in the past always associated depression with these causes and that impression remains in the vital stuff, so it responds to their touch with the usual reaction taught to it by the vital mind. An ignorant and untrained mind like X's cannot be expected to realise the secret machinery of the movements of his own consciousness.

If the vital responds [to the depression] so intensely and easily, it shows that there is not a complete liberation in the vital. You have been stressing so much on the violence and intensity of this vital activity or response, that it is difficult to suppose it is in the

environmental only. For then, how is it that you do not feel, are not conscious that it comes from outside and is not a thing having its origin within you?

*When the vital truly turns with passion towards the Divine, then can there be any real difficulty in changing one's nature?*

There will be changes that have to be made, but they will not present themselves as almost insuperable difficulties.

The lower vital does not like egolessness — it wants always its own personal satisfaction.

*What is the inner reason that the vital gets depressed?*

The original nature of the vital — selfish, demanding, dissatisfied with anything that does not respond to its desires. It is the only reason why it rejects the peace and gets depressed or revolted. Even if there is no active cause, this essential and fundamental cause is sufficient.

*My vital gets restless by its own restlessness.*

Of course, because it is the habit of its nature to be restless.

*Have you started any higher action directly on the lower vital to remove the particular difficulty there?*

The only action has been for bringing down the Force of the Higher Consciousness into the lower being.

The higher Force is not likely to come down into the vital independently of the rest of the system.

*You wrote once that the outer being cannot be changed without bringing down the higher consciousness first into the inner. Shall I have to wait then for the inner being to get the higher consciousness before this depression can go?*

Yes, unless you free the vital from subjection to ego and demand. But that needs a will which will master the instinctive movements of the lower vital.

*If the middle vital accepts the right attitude, will there still be depression?*

If the middle vital accepts it, the depression ought to diminish. If the lower vital accepts it, then there will be no depression.

*Could medical treatment cure the vital depression?*

Doctors think that they can, as it is due to physico-psychological causes, which are in their province.

*Why does my vital feel a strong attraction towards a particular person?*

There is no why to the attractions of the vital. The vital is not governed by reasons.

*You wrote, "Liking and disliking always means interchange of influences." If I have a special liking for P, will not the interchange between us be only of good influences?*

Whether good or bad is not the question, there is an interchange in the vital.

*Will there be any interchange of influences with a person whom we like or dislike but have no physical contact?*

There can be and usually is, but not so much as by physical contact.

*Does a good vital interchange, due to our liking a person, interfere with the sadhana?*

It can interfere, if it is strong and brings an attachment.

*The physical vital has made some progress. Though it does not feel satisfied with the higher things, strangely enough it is troubled when it cannot have them or when mud from the general Nature enters into it.*

The physical vital is always full of inconsistencies. The contradiction you describe is quite normal and usual in the intermediate stage before the complete conversion of the vital.

*When the vital feels dull and unhappy because of the constant emptiness, the light of the higher knowledge brings it to the right attitude. But this lasts only for a few days, after which the vital reverts to its old habit. Why so?*

Because of the obstinacy of the subconscious vital in error — it sends up the same thing always. If the conscious vital refuses to receive it, then it will stop or at any rate be ineffective.

*It seems to me that the part of my being that gets despondent is not my own vital. It becomes mine only when I take it as mine. I say this because I feel the gloom more in the form of suggestions from outside than as feelings from within, and the sadhana goes on in spite of it. The depression must be due to a push of the general lower nature and the vital's inability to reject it.*

Yes. The depression comes from without, not from within. But some part of the vital is too habituated to respond or at least passively accept or reflect and to take it as its own. If it were not for this, there would be little or no difficulty in throwing off the depression when it tries to come.

*Why do I find no interest, no joy, no satisfaction even in my higher experiences?*

It is strange that there should be no interest or satisfaction of any kind. Perhaps it is the vital interest, joy or satisfaction that you are expecting? But that comes only if the vital takes part in the experience.

Really I do not know what kind of joy you want. All experiences are not accompanied by joy. Interest is another matter.

*You know that my mind and inner being at least are quite earnest to rid the being of the vital ego and vital demands. Can you not then cut them off by a direct higher action? It is said that the Divine comes to one's aid if one aspires sincerely for it.*

These things cannot be done in that way. For transformation to be genuine, the difficulty has to be rejected by all the parts of the being. The Force can only help or enable them to do that, but it cannot replace this necessary action by a summary process. Your mind and inner being must impart their will to the whole.

*I have always said that it is not P and his vital which upset my sadhana but my own self and nature.*

Certainly, it is the vital ego that is the cause and there is no need of bringing in P's vital. You have to get rid of it altogether. It is this kind of thing that must be preventing the dynamic Force from coming down — for if it came into this part of the vital, this kind of reaction getting strength in the vital might assume enormous proportions.

*What is meant by your last four words?*

Might become exceedingly strong and violent.

The vital is too selfish to have any gratitude. The more it gets the more it demands and it takes everything as its right and every denial of what it wants as an injustice and an offence.

The whole significance of your sentences was that you had made all the necessary resolutions, but you could not carry them out because the Force refused to support you. That is the usual trick of the vital mind when it wants to rid itself of the blame for difficulties or want of progress in the sadhana. "I am doing all I can, but the Force is not supporting me."

I am not "pressing" any Force. The Force is there to help if the help is acceptable. The vital is depressed and dissatisfied because ego and desire have to be given up and it does not want to give up anything. And as for you, well, you will say "If the vital does not want, what can I do?"

Your vital responds to it [depression] and reproduces its suggestions of despondency etc. If your vital stopped doing that, you would feel it is a suggestion from outside and simply answer with your mind "Nonsense" and dismiss it. Even if you could live separate in your inner being, the response of your vital would be felt as something superficial, negligible, not effective.

Perhaps the vital cooperated before because it hoped to get something for the ego out of the sadhana and refuses to cooperate now as its demands are not honoured — also because there is now a pressure for the giving up of desire and selfishness and it is not prepared to do it. In the absence of the vital cooperation the mind cannot get up steam to do anything steadily in the sadhana line.

Purification of the vital is usually considered to be a condition for a successful sadhana. One may have some experiences without it, but at least a complete detachment from the vital movements is necessary for a substantial realisation.

The cause of depression does not lie in there being Pranam or no Pranam but in the nature itself — in a certain kind of rajasic and tamasic vital egoism which seizes on any excuse for indulging its propensities.

The reason is that there is in the vital a desire or an interest and in the mind a habit of bringing itself all the satisfaction of the desire or chewing the cud of interest and the mechanical mind goes on doing these things even when it ought to be free from all such things and concentrated on the sadhana. That is why the roots of all desires have to be loosened so that one can do things without desire or attachment and be able also not to do them; so with interests they must be held loosely on the surface of the mind

so that they can be dismissed or taken up at will and not allowed to fasten on the mind and occupy it against its will.

## TALKING AND VITAL INTERCHANGE

*Yesterday I was talking with A before I went to bed. This morning when I got up, I found my vital unusually restless. But there had been no conflict or opposition in our talk. Why then such a strong turmoil in the vital?*

It is not only talk that creates a turmoil — disturbing forces can come in by contact also. There may be restlessness or confusion of consciousness in the person who talks with you to which he does not give expression or is not even aware that he is like that, or he may bring forces from others. Again it may be that you met or contacted in your sleep the vital of others or some vital forces in the atmosphere. Turmoil may come in many ways.

*How does one "bring forces from others" and then pass them on while talking?*

There is no how to it; it so happens. Whenever one mixes with others, things are passing from one to the other. If I talk with a number of people, I bring away with me in my atmosphere many forces that were around them; they may affect me or not, but they remain for a time at least. If in that time I speak with another man, he may receive them from me. It is like a man carrying germs with him from a person he has visited; he may not fall ill himself (or he may), but, even if he does not, he can pass them on to another man he visits afterwards — who falls ill. It is the same thing here in the supraphysical parts.

*If one has much inertia, will someone with whom he is talking feel void?*

He may; if he is sensitive to other people's atmospheres.

*I was under the impression that it is the excess of selfishness or ego that influences others with voidness.*

No. That happens when one draws on the vital of others or when the other is sensitive and one pulls him down to a lower consciousness so that he no longer feels the energy which usually supports him.

*After talking with X I often feel empty or uneasy or a kind of disturbing restlessness.*

The disturbing restlessness may come from him for he has always been restless; the uneasiness may come from the contact with his obscure atmosphere; but the emptiness can only come from the reasons aforesaid.

*The last three days I talked so much that all my inner energy was exhausted.*

Talking has a very exhausting effect for the inner energies — unless the inner itself controls the talk.

Everyone who lives much inside tends to feel too much talking a fatiguing thing and quite shallow and unnecessary unless it is talk that comes from within. Of course if you make a practice of talking much, that will bring you outside, externalise you and then you will no longer find it fatiguing even if you talk for 18 hours out of the 24.

*It is my perpetual experience that the less I speak, the better my inner being feels. If I talk more than usual, it brings a headache! Is this not a sign of disability?*

It is not a sign of disability. It is a characteristic of the inward consciousness in sadhana not to throw itself out too much in speech, as that tends towards externalisation and dispersion. The headache is a sign that this is being too much done.

*Why does even a slight casual talk create a disturbance in my work?*

It is because by talking one passes into another consciousness. That is so long as the inner being has not attained a constant and even calm poise.

It is no use giving up talking altogether — the proper course is to speak usefully to people but not to talk for the sake of talking.

*Can one maintain peace within, even while talking and mixing with others?*

Possible only if the inner being can separate itself in the peace and remain unaffected by the outer movements and contacts.

One has to go inside into the inner being and one can minimise contacts, *if necessary*, not as an absolute rule — provided there is a real living in the inner being and sufficient contact with outside things not to lose one's hold of practical realities. But if there is an isolation which brings depression, inertia, unhappiness, gloom or else morbidity of any kind, then it is evident that the retirement is not wholesome.

*If one tries to deal with the outer world without that poise of peace and silence, is he not likely to be entangled by the vital forces?*

Yes, but in retirement from the outside things also vital forces can get hold of you.

*At present, I aspire to separate my inner being from the outer and to keep it always in direct contact with the Mother.*

That is the thing to be done if there is to be peace stabilised under all circumstances.

*Have not the sadhaks to exchange their sympathy, kindness, etc. when they talk or mix with each other? Otherwise there will be only dryness.*

What if they exchange other things also along with the sympathy and kindness? In a psychic feeling there is no question of anything so commercial as an excuse.

*Dr. R has asked me to talk freely. Will it help my sadhana?*

R asks you from the medical point of view. He thinks not talking makes you morose, moody, depressed, without vital force. If so and talking will mend that, you must talk.

To talk and take pleasure in talking is a natural vital impulse.

*I can now talk freely without fatigue. But is such talking necessary for a sadhak? Is it our highest aim?*

No. But it is offered you as a means not an end — a means of getting back vital force and liveliness.

The mixing and talking are not prescribed as good for the sadhana, but as good for the health and spirits.

*The Doctor advises me to talk more. Will talking remove the inertia and depression or bring in the vital force necessary to remove them?*

I don't know whether it will. The Doctor goes upon ordinary psychological grounds, viz. that talking and mixing with others helps to keep the vital active and cheerful, whereas solitude and repression of the social instincts makes one shut up in oneself and can lead to moroseness and melancholy. One can forgo the ordinary freedom of vital interchange only if one has something to support one within, peace or joy or the satisfaction of the inner life. When this inner peace, *sukha*, or satisfaction (*atmarati*) is

there, then the need of social talk etc. disappears and it becomes even disturbing or lowering to the consciousness — only talk from the source within or with a true meaning must be felt as tolerable.

## THE ACTION OF THE EGO

Everybody is an instrument of the Cosmic Force through his ego.

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 possession by the Divine without disappearance of the ego. Any man can be an instrument of the Divine, e.g. X, Kemal Pasha — the thing is to be a perfectly conscious instrument.

*My English teacher told me that the ego and the soul are like two sides of a rubber ball. The outer side is the ego, the inner is the soul. So if you pull out what is within, you have the soul, the psychic being.*

The ego has nothing to do with the soul. It is a formation of Nature in the mind, vital or physical.

*I read somewhere that the ego is to be dissolved, while in another place I read that it is to be transformed.*

The form of ego has to be dissolved, it has not to be replaced by a bigger ego or another kind of ego. It has to be replaced by the true being which feels itself, even though individual, yet one with all and one with the Divine.

*Is it a fact that R's ego has risen up more than before?*

It is not more than it was. One cannot expect him to divest himself of his ego at this early stage of his sadhana.

*You have described certain kinds of egoisms — pride, vanity, etc. Are there other kinds?*

Any number of kinds, sattwic, rajasic and tamasic.

*In most there are one or two defects which are exceptionally obstinate and return even after a long rejection. Cannot the Mother's Force intervene directly and quickly wash them out?*

If there is the consent from the part affected, it can be done.

The ego can be made to give its consent. If it were not so, the transformation would not be possible.

*In the beginning many sadhaks were proud of their surrender — but how could surrender and ego go together?*

But who has got rid of ego in this Ashram? To get rid of ego is as difficult as to make a complete surrender.

*So long as the ego remains below and acts behind the veil, one can't see its manoeuvres in full light; therefore it will be difficult to tackle it and transform it.*

Yes — it is true.

*It is said that with the presence of ego one cannot have love, joy, happiness etc. in Yoga. But I had these experiences in the past. What then about my ego?*

It had been subdued, by a knowledge from above and a will in the mind. It was still there, but its movements and their power were too small and the movement above too large for that to interfere except by bringing in small movements of error and desire.

Error and desire are not the same thing. Error is of the mind, desire is of the vital.

*What still comes in the way of Mother taking me on her sunlit path?*

If the ego is gone and the full surrender is there, then there should be no obstacle. If however the rajas of the vital is only quiescent, then its quiescence may bring up the tamas in its place, and that would be the obstacle.

*Some suggestions say, "You are studying by a push of ambition." Is it really so?*

That is for you to see. You have to become sufficiently conscious of yourself to see where ego mixes and where it does not.

*You say that the difficulty in the descent of the Mother's Force is due to something in the vital which is not ready. What is this "something"?*

I suppose not yet sufficiently surrendered or free from ego. The Force can come down in spite of that, but then it is in danger of being misused by the exaggerated ego for its desires.

*Instead of thus being misused, cannot the descent be rather used for lessening or destroying the ego and its desires?*

That is its proper working, but if the ego is not rejected, then the wrong use may take place.

*Could you kindly tell me why I have become so dry?*

It is a natural result of the rising up of the vital and the ego with inertia — whenever that dominates you get into the dryness and when you can overcome it, you get into a good condition.

*Does the present coming up of the vital and the ego coincide with the need of my sadhana, i.e. for their transformation?*

The ego and the vital movements do not come up for the sake of the sadhana, but because they are there and wish to remain there. Whenever the consciousness relaxes and gives them room, they rise up.

*Don't you think I have rejected whatever is to be rejected?*

Obviously you have not, otherwise the ego and the vital would not have risen so strongly.

*The vital sensitiveness is becoming excessive — I can't stand any disagreement, refusal or clash with others.*

That all comes from the ego and it is precisely the thing you have to get rid of.

*If one is more sensitive, does it follow that he has more ego in him?*

It depends on the nature of the ego. Some egoists are hard-skinned and not sensitive at all; others are hypersensitive.

Most sensitiveness is the result or sign of ego.

*So many pretensions and excuses are there for self-indulgence. Sometimes they are very subtle and therefore more difficult to deal with even than hostile forces. Should we not deal with them with a concentrated mind?*

Yes, certainly. The mind must become conscious of these things and on its guard — without this consciousness it is not possible to get rid of these vital things — they will go on lurking under all sorts of disguises.

*Can the ego be thoroughly rejected?*

If it is not ever indulged in thought, speech or action, it will not return. That is the full rejection.

*I find that even the descents cannot change or purify the ego and desire.*

It is not descents that can do [it]. It is either psychic rejection or the settling of the higher consciousness in the lower nature or both together that can do it.

*The ego comes out in most of my thoughts, feelings and actions, even in trifling and stupid movements where there is nothing to be proud of. Please explain why it is so.*

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

*But why only now do I feel the presence of ego in such little acts? Formerly it was detected only in things done with desire or pride.*

Perhaps because then you were looking for ego only in the form which people specially call egoism, i.e. pride, vanity, selfishness, insistence on vital satisfactions. But ego is of all kinds — and you are only just now finding it out.

*As most of my activities are "shot through with ego" my life has become a source of trouble, not of delight as a sadhak's should be. For there is a division in the being. The inner being is very strict that there should be no sense of ego in whatever is done. But the ego never forgets to colour everything.*

There is nothing to be troubled about. You ought rather to congratulate yourself that you have become conscious. Very few people in this Ashram are. They are all ego-centric and they do not realise their ego-centricity. Even in their sadhana the I is always there, — *my sadhana, my progress, my everything*. The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, act, do sadhana for the Divine; not to consider how this

or that affects *me* personally, not to claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly but it is the proper way.

It is better to be conscious of the egoism than to think that one is free when one is not.

*Off and on, time breaks into my eternity when the small ego turns up and says. Hello!  
"What are you doing leaving me alone?"*

Obviously, unless the object is Nirvana, the small ego has to be attended to, — not indulged, but transformed out of existence.

*Can the ego disappear totally in the self-realisation?*

The sense of ego can disappear into that of the Self or the Purusha but that of itself does not bring about the disappearance of the old ego reactions in the Prakriti. The Purusha has to get rid of these by a process of constant rejection and remoulding. The remoulding consists in turning everything into a consecration to the Mother and doing all for her without regard to oneself, one's desires, opinions, vital reactions, as if they were the things to be fulfilled. This is most easily done if the psychic being becomes quite awake.

*I go on rejecting the ego-movements but they go on assuming new forms. My rejection seems to have a negative result. I am afraid there will be no final change unless some positive thing intervenes from above.*

Without persistent rejection it cannot be done. Going up into the Self liberates the higher parts, but the ego remains in the lower parts. The most effective force for this liberation is the psychic control along with steady rejection.

It is rather a wider than a higher consciousness that is necessary for the liberation from the ego. Going high is necessary of course, but by itself it is not sufficient.

*I was under the impression that the psychic can be liberated by love and devotion and till then the ego cannot disappear.*

Without the liberation of the psychic and the realisation of the true Self the ego cannot go, both are necessary. If there is no consciousness of the Self how can the ego disappear? The psychic can be liberated by love and devotion, but I was speaking of a

case in which it is not so liberated, and the realisation of the Self seems more easy — a case like yours.

*The ego wanted to utilise my present experiences and trances for its own aggrandisement! Something like what X did. It picked out particularly that samadhi experience of "trance within trance" as something unique!!*

Good Heavens!!

*What is the attitude in action of the unegoistic and the ego-centric man?*

The ego-centric man feels and values things as they affect him. "Does this please me or displease, give me gladness or pain, flatter my pride, vanity, ambition or hurt it, satisfy my desires or thwart them," etc. The unegoistic man does not look at things like that. He looks to see what things are in themselves and would be if he were not there, what is their meaning, how they fit into the scheme of things — or else he feels calm and equal, refers everything to the Divine, or if he is a man of action how they will serve the work that has to be done or the life of the world or the cause he serves, etc. etc. — there can be many points of view which are not ego-centric.

*You wrote, "If it was an impersonal experience how does the ego come in? Self (Atman) is one thing, the ego another." Certainly the ego did not come with the experience. It was only when the experience was over that the foolishness of my mind brought it in as an idea. Why? Because I had heard that X's ego became aggrandised after his experiences of the Self.*

The ego cannot come into the experience as an experience. What the ego can do however is to get proud of having the experience and think "What a great one am I." Or it may think "I am the Self, the Divine, so let me go and do what I will, for it is the Divine who wills in me." It is only if the experience of Self imposes silence on the other parts and frees the psychic, that the ego disappears. Even then not ego itself, but numerous fragments and survivals of ego-habit can remain and have to be eliminated.

*I cannot say my ego is gone. Only it is controlled by the mental will.*

It is not possible to get rid of the ego-movements all at once. They have to be worked out of the nature by a constant consciousness and rejection. Even when the central ego has gone, the habitual movements stick for a long time.

*For so long I have been trying to get rid of the ego! But something of it always remains!*

The element of the egoism in the thoughts, feelings, actions has to be got rid of, but that cannot be done in a day.

*If I work for the Mother alone, the interference of the ego would mean that it comes from outside. For the Mother's work and the ego can't go together.*

Of course it is a way. But one has still to be careful about the ego. Even people who sincerely think they are doing only the Mother's will are yet actuated by ego without knowing it.

*You said above that people "are yet attached<sup>2</sup> by ego without knowing it." In which way are they attached to it?*

I don't know what you mean by "in which". Ego attaches them means that it gets into their thought, feeling or action. It gets in in whatever way it can — there is no rule that it can get in only in certain things and not in any others.

*One cannot dissolve the ego in the early stages of the sadhana. But one can keep it separate from oneself and at a distance, can't one?*

In the inner being, yes — the difficulty is to exclude it from the action (thought, feeling, motive, etc.) of the outer part of the consciousness.

*Because of my increased withdrawal from social contacts like mixing, talking etc., people around me say that I am becoming more and more egoistic.*

Obviously one must not get egoistic about it, but withdrawal from the outer or lower consciousness into the inner is not in itself an egoistic movement. If it were so, all sadhana would be egoism and to be always social and on the surface would be the only thing!

*I feel no love, devotion or joy even when there is no ego or inertia.*

The quiescence of ego or inertia does not automatically bring love, joy or bhakti.

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<sup>2</sup> This word was misread; Sri Aurobindo wrote "actuated", not "attached".

*Now I feel that to have desires, attachments, ego, is something strange to my true consciousness!*

Yes, these things are foreign to the true being.

*During one of the meditations, I found that the ego was disturbing my life and sadhana. So I separated myself from it and kicked it out. Is there any validity to such a feeling?*

It has a validity of experience — if the action repeats itself consciously and applies itself to all the movements of the ego, then by an accumulative effect it can get rid of the ego.

## YOGA AND THE PHYSICAL

When the working is in the physical consciousness, it is the tamas which is the main physical force that comes in whenever it can.

*You said that R cured A's inertia. The question is whether it is cured by medicines or by some other means of which R himself may not be conscious.*

R does not profess to cure by medicines alone — he knows that it is only when supported by Force that his medicines are infallibly effective. But A's inertia resisted the Force for years, because he was shut up to the Force. When R took him up, he got confidence and the medicines were able to act both in their own power and as instruments of the Force.

*Many sadhaks were not fit for any Yoga, much less for the Integral Yoga. It was sheerly by the Mother's Grace that we were accepted. And yet the only return we have offered to her is to tire her out by our ego and vital demands.*

It is so — if the sadhaks had been different in their reaction to the Mother's grace, the work in the physical would have been much easier and less perilously subject to hostile attacks, perhaps it would have been done by now.

*I distinguish the inertia in me as of two types. First there is the type which is always there in the outer being whether my consciousness goes above or below.*

Only removable by being transformed into *shama*, i.e. divine peace, quietude, stillness.

*The second type is a special surge which comes to obstruct me from diving within or ascending above. This type comes usually after a luminous period.*

Correct. That is what usually happens.

*This evening the inertia took a different turn. It put on the mind the impression that study was impossible. This impression was accepted for a long time.*

The acceptance of such impressions must necessarily stand in the way of getting rid of the inertia. If the inertia finds its suggestions seriously accepted, it will go on merrily bringing them in.

*When I speak of inertia, I mean usually mental inertia.*

Mental inertia would not come to you to that extent if there were not the physical tamas.

The feeling "I can't aspire etc. What can I do?" is suggested by the physical inertia, but it must not be accepted as a truth.

*The rush of inertia would not have mattered so much had it not been for a complete inert passivity of my mind and vital.*

If it did not bring ego, sex, tamas, despondency etc. it would not matter. Inert passivity can be turned into a state of spiritual quietude.

Inertia by itself is simply dull or else quiet, it is only if the vital stirs that despondency comes in.

*Though my vital is not dissatisfied, it does not live in a satisfied condition either!*

Well, if it is not dissatisfied that is something. If inertia there is to be, it is better to have a quiet rather than a restless inertia.

*Today I tried to take a walk. It was so tiring that my right leg ached! I had to suspend my normal painting work! All this in spite of my having used will-power.*

In the body there is a strong resistance of obscure inertia and this inertia is always accompanied by an openness to contrary forces. So as soon as you put your will on it the contrary reaction is suggested by the lower forces and through habit prevails. I don't see anything to do but press on with the progress of the inner and higher consciousness till the body is obliged to open to it.

*Will the dynamic descent stop the inertia from interfering with the sadhana?*

By the descent the inertia changes its character. It ceases to be a resistance of the physical and becomes only a physical condition to be transformed into the true basic immobility and rest.

*After each two days of the higher state, the inertia comes back again, turning the whole consciousness dark. Can we not prevent this regular rush of inertia?*

The peace and silence have to come into the physical and replace the inertia.

*This morning I tried for some time to bring down the higher Force. Its effect was immediately felt in the body. I could not continue the effort for long with the same intensity. What came in the way?*

It is impossible to say anything precise about these things. It is always some *aprakash* and *apravritti* in the lower consciousness that comes in the way.

*The higher things I felt this morning were not felt in the evening, even during the meditation. What happened to them?*

To have the higher things all the time would mean that the whole physical consciousness had been changed — that has not yet happened.

*At present the spiritual experiences etc. are felt either above or in the body. The mind and vital seem to have been put aside.*

That is because it is in the physical that they have to be established.

*The higher working remains until 4 a.m. The evening brings a straight descent into inertia!*

Because the inertia is there in the physical consciousness and has made itself habitual — so the consciousness falls back to it. It is by the higher working getting hold of the physical that that can cease — unless of course you succeed in throwing off the inertia by your own will.

*Cannot the enlightened parts of the body exert their pressure on the tamasic parts of the body to turn them towards the same light?*

No. It is a local working which has to be extended to the whole by the Force, but the parts of the body can do nothing towards it.

*I experience a greater and greater passivity. What is the need of this?*

I suppose it is in order to liberate the consciousness more completely and prepare the turning of *tamas* into *shama*, inertia into absolute repose and peace.

*Up to 1 a.m. my consciousness deepened more and more into higher consciousness. Afterwards, there came such a strong pressure for sleep that my eyes became*

*blurred. I went to bed but got no sleep. I struggled in vain for two hours though the pressure for sleep continued all the time.*

But why struggle? That usually increases the difficulty. The difficulty itself must come from some resistance in the physical.

*The dynamic descent seems to have stopped at the throat centre (the physical mind centre).*

If it has stopped there, it must be because there is not sufficient plasticity and surrender in the physical mental to let it through.

The descent will come when it is possible for it to come down. Meanwhile, more quietness and fortitude in the physical mind and consciousness would perhaps be helpful.

*The latest higher descent is now penetrating into my physical and material consciousness — so inertia, dullness etc. are natural. Is this not true?*

It may be — as a reaction of the lower nature resisting change.

*Just after the general evening meditation there is a great uprush of inertia. Its power prevents me from doing any sadhana. What is the cause of this?*

There can be many reasons. Either something still not quite right in the attitude of reception or else the force pressing and the inertia rushing up to resist or else a fatigue-resistance of the physical.

*Release from the inertia comes only when a strong and powerful Force presses on the head. As soon as it withdraws, the inertia again surges up. How long will this go on?*

These things last so long as they can last. When the consciousness as a whole is ready, they disappear.

*The resistance of inertia is not a new phenomenon, but formerly it was only occasional. Now there is not a single day when it does not overpower the sadhana!*

The hold of inertia always increases when the working comes down into the physical and subconscious. Before that the inertia is overpowered though not eradicated by the

action in mind and vital — afterwards it comes up in its natural force and has to be met in its own field.

*Why don't the inertia, ego and desire decrease in spite of our sustained effort to change them?*

It needs time, persistent will and effort and increasing equality and quietude to do it.

It is probably the refusal of the vital to give up its desires that gives the inertia so much strength to impede the sadhana.

I have said it is evidently the vital resistance to change that is holding up your sadhana, bringing the inertia and preventing the action of the higher consciousness.

*I have discovered that there is always something in the vital and physical mind that tries to oppose what you desire me to do — especially when a physical thing is concerned.*

Well, that is all right. You have to discover like that all these ignorant desire movements in you — for it is partly these or rather the mind's acquiescence in them and support of them that keeps the physical consciousness unable to receive the full Peace and the Force.

*How do the vital desires supported by the mind prevent the physical from receiving the Peace and the Force?*

If the mind and the vital impose their obstacles how can the physical get the Peace or Force? You seem to think that mind, vital and physical are three quite independent things which have no connection with each other and no influence or effect upon each other. That is not so. They powerfully affect each other. Moreover in mind there is a vital mental, a physical mental — in vital there is a mental vital, a physical vital — in physical there is a mental physical, a vital physical. How do you imagine then that vital can have no effect on the physical?

Inertia is mental, vital, physical, subconscient. Physical inertia can produce mental inertia, mental inertia can produce physical inertia, vital inertia almost always makes the physical lifeless and lustreless and dull, and that is inertia. Vital inertia can also infect the mind, unless the mind is very strong and clear. I have always said that the physical consciousness is the main seat and source of inertia. Your ideas about these things seem to be very fanciful and elementary.

## EXPERIENCES IN THE SUBTLE AND GROSS PHYSICAL

*When H wrote in his poem that he felt peace in his body, some people commented that it was impossible to experience peace or anything spiritual in the body itself at such an early stage of the sadhana. According to them, a strong peace descending into the inner or subtle physical gives only an illusion of reaching the outer gross physical. What is the truth of the matter?*

All experiences that penetrate the centres are recorded in the body and seem to be the body's experiences, but one has to distinguish between the reflection of the experiences there and the experiences that belong to the physical body consciousness itself. It is a matter of consciousness and fine discernment. There is no absolute law about the time.

*If one feels a fountain of Force rushing into the body, can it be a mere reflection of the inner being's experience?*

It can be a rushing of Force into the subtle body which the physical records and feels the effect. When Force descends into the head it means that it has come down into the mind, when it is felt in the heart it means it has entered into the emotional vital, when it is in the Muladhara and below it means it is acting on the physical consciousness. The centres are all in the subtle body although there are corresponding parts in the gross physical.

*I understand from your answers that all experiences felt in the physical body are reflections of experiences of the subtle physical. What progress is needed to bring the experiences directly into the outer physical?*

I spoke only of the fact that what one feels recorded in the physical body may be actually taking [place] only in the subtle body. Whether in a particular case it is that or a direct experience in the physical body also, is a matter to be seen in each case. One must distinguish for oneself which it is.

*I would say this: the static Peace and the Force are sometimes felt in the outer body directly, and not merely as reflections from the subtle physical. Now it is for you to correct me.*

Have you a clear feeling of the subtle body as separate from the outer body or of the mental and vital and subtle physical sheaths which comprise the subtle body? If not how can you say which is of the subtle body and which is of the physical?

*The influence and action of the Mother's Force is felt so tangibly in the outer physical; there can hardly be any doubt about it.*

Any reflection or outflowing from the subtle body into the physical would also be felt as tangible.

*For instance, when the Force is in the outer physical it is sometimes felt as a great mountain entering my external body.*

But the same thing would be felt if it was acting massively in the subtle body.

*When the Force and Peace descend into my body, I experience the power, swiftness and palpability as of a waterfall. Could such concrete sensations be a mere record of the experiences of the inner physical?*

Why "mere" record? If you think the experiences in the subtle body are feeble vague things, you are mistaken — they can be quite as intense, swift, palpable, massive as those of the body.

*How to distinguish a mere reflection of a subtle physical experience from a pure and direct experience of the outer body?*

You cannot distinguish except either by intuition or by experience and established direct knowledge of the different sheaths.

*Is the whole of the inner being made up of sheaths only?*

Yes. Sheaths is simply a term for bodies, because each is superimposed on the other and acts as a covering and can be cast off. Thus the physical body itself is called the food sheath and its throwing off is what is called death.

*Sometimes I feel the Force acting in the nerves, and also the nerves passing through different states of consciousness. Are there really nerves in the subtle physical sheaths?*

Yes, there are nerves in the subtle body.

*Yesterday not only my consciousness but the body also felt horizontally wide and vertically huge. And then I experienced that I was the Self. When the physical began to widen out still more, I was afraid of a possibility of ego aggrandisement, though the whole experience was taking place in an impersonal aspect.<sup>3</sup> So I called at once for the Personal and put my widened self on the Mother's lap.<sup>4</sup> Was my fear a true one?*

The feeling of the body enlarging and widening itself is of course an indication of widening out of the physical (body) consciousness and is a subtle material rendering in the body of the self-realisation. One has not to be afraid of it, but to keep the idea of the ego out of it, for it is not the personality that is in question but the realisation of the self, one in all.

*There was a dynamic action of the Mother's Force in my left arm. But why did the arm become especially red?*

There is no reason why the arm should become physically red merely because there was Force in it. If the redness was a subtle physical phenomenon, that is different.

*Today I felt for a long time a powerful action of the Mother's Force in my feet. It was an experience in various phases. In order to describe it concretely, let us imagine the feet as a pebble. At times the pebble expanded to the size of a rock, at other times it was still a pebble but seemed as heavy as if filled with lead, and at other times it contained a tremendous energy and strength! During this condition, the mind, vital and higher parts of the being remained almost blank.*

Action in the feet means action on the most physical consciousness.

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<sup>3</sup> If it was an impersonal experience, how does the ego come in? Self (Atman) is one thing, ego is another. (Sri Aurobindo's comment in margin)

<sup>4</sup> That is all right. (Sri Aurobindo)

# PART V

## SEX DIFFICULTY

The sex centre is the physical centre — it happens to be the centre for sex and physical propagation also, but it is not separately and solely the centre of sex. If that were so, there would be no centre governing the physical consciousness, but only a centre governing the sex organ.

The sex exists in itself — put a number of sexual men together debarred from all possibility of feminine society — after a time they will begin to satisfy themselves homosexually.

To raise the sexual impulses and feelings to the head is no way of turning the sex-fluid into *ojas*. To turn the sex-fluid into *ojas* is done by Brahmacharya and partly by a special uplifting process which only those who are ready for it and can do it can accomplish. To raise sexual feelings and impulses to the head can only make things worse.

Chastity in body, mind and speech is the usual definition of Brahmacharya.

*The cosmic sex tries to push itself into me with a great force.*

That is so. The individual in sex matters is only a puppet of the universal sex force.

*I do not allow consciously any sexual thought, feeling and impulse. And yet the movement goes on.*

It is because it is part of the heredity and has deep roots in the subconscious.

*What do you think of my sex difficulty?*

I think it is a nuisance.

Whatever gives trouble and interferes with what is to be done is a "nuisance".

*Last night was full of sexual dreams. Can nothing be done to stop them?*

The waking vital must first be cleared of all consent to sex.

*During dreams it is noticed that my vital and physical express strong desires for sexual enjoyment. In the waking state there is a natural control by the will which goes away at night.*

That is because of the imaginations. If one indulges in sex imaginations in the waking, then the subconscious (if not the conscious vital physical) is stimulated, keeps the impression and can send it up at night. You must get rid of the habit of sex imagination.

*Sex is more active at present. The subconscious sends up all sorts of past sexual impressions.*

Keep yourself detached and refuse to be moved or touched by them.

*You wrote, "I do not know any reason — except the push and continued force of the sex-element in the nature." But why is it more prominent and more active than before, even when my present state is of a luminous passivity?*

The more conscious you become, the more it is felt so long as it is allowed to stay.

*At present I am very busy with other developments, so could you not kindly withdraw this consciousness for a time?*

That would mean going backward in the development.

*But what is the use of my becoming more and more conscious, if I cannot control it?*

Consciousness is necessary — otherwise it would mean that the sex would be there gathering still greater force for future activity. The control is not there because you do not put forth the necessary will-force.

*How is it that the power of becoming conscious increases so much, while that of control so little?*

Because of a weakness in yourself which continues to let the thing remain.

*Please show me in which way I have allowed it to remain. I thought I had always tried to separate myself from the sex when conscious as far as I could.*

Trying in a half way is not enough. There must be the sustained resolution not to allow it. Detachment is only a first step. But something in the vital wants it, therefore your will is lazy about throwing it out.

*When I am near women my vital or physical mind takes careful note of their gait, hair or dress. I do not know what the mind means by that. But these perceptions are supported only by the mechanical and restless parts of the surface mind, while the other parts feel much disturbed by them and call them "lunatic wanderings"!*

There is nothing harmful in such perceptions in themselves; one can observe anything, for the eyes are not meant to be blind. The question is how does the sex-instinct make use of the perceptions.

*It is not always the attraction on our part that brings or creates the sexual pull. At times it is the mere presence of some particular type of women that does it. What we feel is our vital energy being drawn out.*

Attraction is always the result, not the cause.

*How is it my vital feels a special attraction towards some particular women?*

Sex-appeal, perhaps — or in Z's case a pull from her.

*Sex-appeal? But they are less beautiful than many others in the Ashram!*

Sex-appeal does not depend on being more beautiful than others or on being beautiful at all. It is a power in one vital of raising sex in another person's vital.

*I think women are not to be blamed even if they pull consciously. If men want to conquer sex they have to detach themselves from the pull of women and make their vital strong enough to remain detached. Is it not so?*

It is right except that the starting-point or rather starting line is the sex-weakness in the man and the woman's pull is only an immediate cause of its activity, not the fundamental cause. Moreover the sexual pull from the woman is not always conscious. Sometimes there is no pull from her; the man is attracted by the mere fact of her beauty or charm or even her femininity only while she herself has no sex desire at all. In such cases the man often fatuously imagines that the woman wants him, though it is quite untrue.

*Apart from the sex difficulty of the vital, the body often feels a tendency to throw out something from the sex organ.*

Is what is thrown out physical or subjective? If there is a strong excitement some liquid can come out — or in a spasm semen comes out and then it is called an emission. Sometimes semen comes out in certain illnesses by other means.

*Is there no physical or psychological way of preventing the semen from being thrown out during sleep?*

There is a way, if one can succeed in it — all don't. It is to put a strong will as concrete as possible (like putting a line or current of force) on the sex-organ not to have emission — this force or will is put every night before going to sleep. Some have succeeded in that way. But if one has a great activity of sex imaginations in the waking state, then it is difficult or may be so to control at night. Another thing is to accustom oneself by a will in the subconscious to wake before the emission comes.

*What are mental sex imaginations?*

Mental sex imaginations are a form (the most subtle) of subtle indulgence. But if it is accompanied by sensation, then either the vital or physical must also be responding.

*I told Dr. R that I get discharge of semen at night, mostly in connection with sexual dreams. He then asked if this happened during the waking state also. I replied, "Never." But there can be no connection between my sex imaginations during the waking state and the discharges, because the women in the dreams at night are not the same as the ones who enter into my imaginations.*

It does not follow that there is no connection. These imaginations stimulate the sex-urge and that assumes in sleep the form of dreams with any feminine form known or unknown as the centre. Sometimes even the forms are vague, it is the dream of touch etc. that causes the emission. It is true the emission can take place even if there is no waking sex urge, especially if there is pressure of urine or constipation, but that is usually less frequent or can more easily be eliminated.

What I said was that, if there is the sexual mixing in imagination that is enough to depress the consciousness and outward mixing or not then becomes an immaterial question, for it can't bring down the consciousness worse than this kind of thing.

Can medical treatment cure an excessive sexuality? What it can cure perhaps is certain untoward results of sex on the body.

Some say it [sex] gets greater force by suppression than by leaving the ground free. But neither statement is true. All depends on the subjection of the consciousness to the sex or its power and will to control it.

*Dr. R says that I get sex-imaginings because I do not mix freely with women.*

Men mix freely with women in Europe — it doesn't prevent them from having sex impulses, thoughts or imaginings.

*He says Europeans don't get so many sexual thoughts, impulses etc. like shy Indians.*

That is not true — they have quite as many and they indulge them more freely.

Europe and America are full of free sex indulgence — they do not nowadays consider it a thing to be avoided but rather welcomed. But this is an Ashram and people are supposed to be doing a sadhana in which sex has to be surmounted. In the Ashram there are many who mix freely with all the *sadhikas* — they are certainly not free from sex. Avoiding also is not a panacea. One can avoid and have sex imaginings and desires. But it is absurd to say that avoiding is the cause of sex-imaginings and impulses or that mixing is a panacea for it.

It may be true that ordinarily mixing with women removes shyness etc., — though it is not always so, for many people are sex-timid by nature — but that is a means for ordinary life, not Yoga, and in ordinary life marriage is the direct means for getting rid of sex-uneasiness; marriage or else having love-affairs with women and satisfying the sex. But that is not the proper means for an Ashram and Yoga. In Yoga the proper means is to train the mind and vital to meet women without thought of sex, to look on them as sadhaks and human beings only, not as objects of sexual possession and enjoyment.

What is best for everyone is to be able to meet women without seeking out their company, to meet without being preoccupied with the sex. Shyness and uneasiness are usually signs of the sex-preoccupation unless they are constitutional, when they will be there for other things also, not for women only.

*What is sublimation of sex as some people put it?*

If the sex seeks the Divine Love and Ananda, it must be the sex that gets it — the sex impulse changed from a lower into a higher anandamaya sex impulse. That or mostly like it is what people mean when they speak of the sublimation of sex.

*I see that some people have misunderstood about sex in the Yoga. Instead of its disappearance they seem to believe in its sublimation. Why not make a public announcement about its real place in the Yoga?*

There are already letters on sex published in the *Bases of Yoga* — they have only to read the book. Every sadhak knows that the sex action is forbidden and the sex desire discouraged here; they have themselves written complaining of the sex-impulse continuing and praying that it might go. Why all that if they expect to enjoy rapturously or sublimely?

*Sometimes the mind can detach itself successfully from sex, while at other times it finds it difficult even to make an effort!*

If you can detach yourself successfully sometimes, it is a matter of perseverance to go on until the power to do so becomes automatic and always available. It may take long, but by perseverance it can be done.

## ILLNESS – THE FORCE AND MEDICINES

*At present, for constipation I have to take a much stronger dose than before. And yet it is not fully effective. Have you anything to say?*

No, except that it is a sign of great tamas in the body.

*Are the conditions which allow Mother's Force to act in my body no longer there?*

Evidently not. There must be either a steady power of the will to act as the instrument of the Force or a great habit of openness in the body — and these conditions don't seem to be there.

*But even before this inertia came, I never used my will or made a conscious opening to the Force for my illness. And yet Mother's Force acted like a miracle!*

Something was open in the consciousness which acted on the body — probably from the mind or the vital. But since the body-resistance and inertia rose up that indirect method is no longer effective.

Three hours are sufficient for digestion, though not for the full assimilation. That is why three hours after meals is given as the earliest time for taking an enema.

*Between 3 and 6 I felt very hungry. But I think that this is not a true bodily appetite.*

What is a true bodily appetite then? Hunger is of the body and its appetite. You will never get rid of your weakness and fatigue if you cling to artificial notions of that kind.

*It is said that the feeling of hunger is vital — so hunger can be felt even when the belly is full.*

Hunger when the belly is full is abnormal, but it is still physical and vital. Greed is vital.

*I thought the extra appetite of 3 p.m. might be connected with the emptiness in which the being feels void, so that the vital or physical might interpret it as empty = hungry.*

Not at all. It is a physical phenomenon. Inability to eat is a sign of illness and disorganisation in the system — when that is being cured, it is quite usual for the appetite to return with a great and unusual force for a time. In the same way people

who have starved themselves out of asceticism and lost the normal power of eating, become for a time great eaters when they stop and recover the normal condition.

This voidness is not a voidness of food or a feature of the physical forces. So there is no reason why it should tend to hunger.

Z had feelings of weakness, lassitude, the body being broken down and incapable in a very violent way. That was cured and with it his constant fits of vital despondency. But the latter were largely due to his not being able to lead a free vital life here.

*Perhaps you meant that it was not so much the medicines that cured the depression, lassitude, etc. but your Force. And as Z was not so open to you directly, you had to use R and his medicines as a medium for transferring it. When your Force is transferred through somebody, does not the influence of his lower stuff also get transferred consciously or unconsciously?*

Yes, it may be, if his lower stuff is self-assertive.

Wherever there are physical or nervous cases (depending on the body or the physical nerves) it is possible for the physicians to do something by removing these causes. R besides recommends a free vital life to his patients, so that whatever vital despondency, depression, lassitude, inertia is due to the vital's dissatisfaction at not getting indulgence may disappear.

The medical means have to be used when the mind, vital or body of the sadhaks is not responsive.

*We allow the vital to indulge its desires because of bad health. When the body is cured and is fit to resume the sadhana, will not the vital start again with its depression if denied its demands and satisfactions?*

It may very well do that.

If the patient is in a state of physical collapse, I suppose he has to be put together again somehow.

*Some sadhaks hold the belief that an illness is a cherishable thing, that it comes from the Divine to test our faith: it makes us remember the Divine more often than otherwise!*

All that is quite wrong. Illness is a wrong movement of the body and is no more to be cherished than a wrong movement of the mind or vital. Pain and illness have to be borne

with calm, detachment and equanimity, but not to be cherished — the sooner one gets rid of them the better.

*The peace and quietude are normal and so are my aspirations in spite of the pain in the body.*

Probably it is because you put yourself in connection with the Force — or, if you don't, then it may be because the vital becomes more subdued because of the pain, less rampant.

*Occasionally does it not happen that the pain or illness becomes all the more violent because the force is put on it to throw it out?*

It may for a time, but if the force is strong, quiet and persistent, it will get the better of the resistance — unless something in the consciousness supports the illness or is open too much to the adverse Forces, for in that case the struggle may be a long one.

*Why could I not succeed in opening myself for the cure of the eyes as much as for the sciatica?*

Because it is more material perhaps and the material is less receptive than the vital-physical.

You can use the will, but take medicine also.

*In the morning I take two slices of bread, at lunch time rice and one slice and in the evening four pieces of bread. I do not take plantains because it is hard to digest them.*

Your food is all right. Plantains are helpful towards getting rid of constipation, but on condition you can digest them; if you cannot digest, then of course we cannot ask you to eat them. Have a quiet will always for the constipation to go and at the same time keep yourself open for the Force from above to work.

You must first have it seen whether there actually are [head] lice or not; it is easy to see. Flytox<sup>5</sup> can be used, if there are, provided there are no ulcerations on the scalp — if there are it cannot be used. Flytox however can injure the eyes, so the eyes must be kept closed during the flytoxing.

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<sup>5</sup> The brandname of a disinfectant and insecticide.

## THE SUBCONSCIENT

Subconscient and material are parts of the lower nature.

The subconscient is the basis of conservation.

There is a general violent resistance by the vital in the sadhaks against change, a resistance for which there is no true reason except the subconscient unwillingness to alter the obscure foundations of human character.

*Whatever may be the case with the general Nature, why has my vital opened itself so much to sensitiveness, resistance and gloom?*

It has become like that with most because the subconscient root of these things has been reached, — being subconscient it is not dependent on reasons or causes but inherent in the habit of Nature and it keeps no measure or proportion but is vehement beyond measure whenever the slightest pressure comes upon it.

*How are we to come out from the subconscient root?*

By standing back from it and refusing to be made its instrument of the subconscient nature, — by a persistent will to live in the inner consciousness and live not for ego but for the Divine.

*How is it that the "subconscient root" has been reached while the purification of the vital is still to be completed?*

The descent into the subconscient was a necessity of the general sadhana, i.e. of the Divine Work. That descent could not be held up till everybody had conquered his vital nature or till you personally had done so.

*What "Divine Work" is referred to here?*

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.

*When I asked how the violent resistance in the general nature came about, you answered, "Through the weakness and egoism of the sadhaks." Up to now, how did they restrain these defects?*

They did not, but it is now made worse by the subconscious forces moving the egoism and weakness.

## SLEEP AND DREAMS

*Is six hours of sleep at night enough?*

Seven would be better at your age. Six is the minimum, at any time except in old age.

The ordinary period of sleep most people give themselves is 8 hours. In bad health (I am not speaking of acute illness) it can extend to 9. 12 hours is excessive unless one is seriously ill or recovering from illness or else has underslept for a long time and the body is making up arrears of needed sleep.

There is no reason at all why intensity of sadhana should bring insufficient sleep.

*What is the cause of the "wrong kind of sleep" you spoke of?*

The "wrong" kind is usually a heavy subconscious sleep — when inertia prevails, one is likely to get that kind of sleep.

*Sometimes in my dreams, there is an accident or a dangerous happening. Its shock is felt even when I wake up.*

It comes sometimes in dreams — there is an effect of some inner shock or alarm on the body consciousness, which lasts after the dream state is over.

*At noon there is an urge to sleep. During the sleep I pass through ordinary or sometimes even lower dreams. And yet when I wake up I feel quite concentrated and withdrawn in peace. Today there was an utter silence for a long time.*

One passes through several states in sleep or even some part of the being may be in the lower dreams, another in silence during the sleep.

*I tried in the morning to concentrate on the sadhana but did not completely succeed. Yet when I got up from my noon nap, I found a great and spontaneous flow of force, which lasted through the whole evening. How could sleep bring about such an effortless state?*

I suppose in sleep the mind and vital don't interfere — so the force called by the effort of concentration has its chance.

It is usually only if there is much activity of sadhana in the day that it extends also into the sleep state.

*In dreams and visions how can we be sure that what we see or hear is from you or Mother and not from an anti-divine force taking your form or imitating your voice?*

You cannot be sure unless you have sufficient experience and consciousness to discriminate. There are several people who have constructed an image of the Mother or myself and they<sup>6</sup> come and say the things the person would like or expect them to say.

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<sup>6</sup> "They" refers to the images of Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

## CONSCIOUSNESS AND ENERGY

*If we let energy go out in work, are we not open to any forces that can take hold of our mind?*

Certainly not — if the consciousness remains within, there is no harm done by the energy being put out. The energy is meant to go out in work — even when there is right consciousness energy goes out. It is the consciousness that ought not to go out.

*During work, how is the consciousness to be kept within when the energy goes out? Are consciousness and energy really the same thing?*

If consciousness and energy are the same thing, there would be no use in having two different words for them. In that case instead of saying "I am conscious of my defects" one can say "I am energetic of my defects." If a man is running fast, you can say of him "He is running with great energy." Do you think it would mean the same if you said "He is running with great consciousness"? Consciousness is that which is aware of things — energy is a force put in action which does things. Consciousness may have energy and keep it in or put it out, but that does not mean that it has to go out when the energy goes out and that it cannot stand back and observe the energy in action. You have plenty of inertia in you but that does not mean that you and inertia are the same and when inertia rises and swamps you it is you who rise and swamp yourself.

*Could you not kindly make the above point of consciousness and energy a little more clear?*

How do you expect it to be made clearer to you except by self-observation and experience?

*I requested more elaboration, because I want to use the knowledge for a practical use. The question is how to separate the consciousness from the energy when it is put out in action; can that not be done by the mind or the inner being? But the mind and the inner being are not consciousness.*

Certainly the mind and the inner being are consciousness. For human beings who have not got deeper into themselves mind and consciousness are synonymous. Only when one becomes more aware of oneself by a growing consciousness, then one can see different degrees, kinds, powers of consciousness, mental, vital, physical, psychic,

spiritual. The Divine has been described as Being-Consciousness-Ananda, even as a Consciousness (Chaitanya), as putting out a force or energy, Shakti that creates worlds. The mind is a modified consciousness that puts forth a mental energy. But the Divine can stand back from its Energy and observe it at its work, it can be the Witness Purusha watching the works of Prakriti. Even the mind can do that — a man can stand back in his mind consciousness and watch the mental energy doing things, thinking, planning, etc.; all introspection is based upon the fact that one can so divide oneself into a consciousness that observes and an energy that acts. These are quite elementary things supposed to be known to everybody. Anybody can do that merely by a little practice; anybody who observes his own thoughts, feelings, actions, has begun doing it already. In Yoga we make the division complete, that is all.

*If the consciousness is by its nature detached from the mind and life, how is it that ordinarily it always goes out with the energy and loses its separateness?*

It is not by its nature detached from the mental and other activities. It can be detached, it can be involved. In the human consciousness it is as a rule always involved — but it has developed the power of detaching itself — a thing which the lower creation seems unable to do. As the consciousness develops, this power of detachment also develops.

*Not only so, the consciousness always feels a tendency towards identification or going out with the energy!*

That is the normal movement of the Ignorance.

*When the consciousness is separated from the vital and physical, it is not easy to separate it from the mind. Even to make it realise that it is not the mind but something deeper and higher takes years of sadhana.*

It is because man is a mental being and therefore closely identified with his mind.

*When we try to separate ourselves from the mental activities we can't understand them properly.*

A man with a very developed introspective mind often identifies himself with the witness part of his mind and observes his own thoughts and studies their nature. That is a beginning which makes it easy for the full detachment to come. For others it is less easy, but it can be done by all.

*Is this power of detachment developed in the course of evolution in a universal way? This power might have been developed, but the animal nature in man is still much undeveloped.*

In what other course than that of evolution could it have been developed? And what is meant by a universal way? It is in man that it is developed and it is not there in all men. What is an undeveloped animal nature in man? The animal nature is developed in the animal; in man it has to be humanised. The man who has learned to detach his mind from its activities can be merely a thinker observing his thoughts or creative mental activities and trying to perfect them or he may observe his vital nature also and try to perfect that by making it more mental, human and controlled by the thought and will. Obviously he can do that much better if he is detached and introspective than if he isn't — in fact the non-introspective man can only control his nature according to rules given him (morality etc.), he can't truly perfect it.

## WORK AS SADHANA

*Two days back I resumed washing my clothes myself in spite of the sciatica. But there was a strong reaction on my body. I wonder why the body has become so weak.*

It is better not to force the body at present.

*If I don't increase work now, when will the body be capable of more work?*

When the inner force (strength) comes down and occupies the body also.

*About the mind in relation to study, you said, "If it refuses, of course you can't — unless you allow the Force to work through you." How am I to bring the Force down?*

I was not speaking of the Force coming down from above, but of the Force from behind doing action through the mind and body as instruments. Very often when the mind and body are inert, their actions still go on by this push from behind.

*How am I to make the "Force from behind" act through the mind and the body? What are its conditions and how does this Force differ from "the Force coming down from above"?*

The Force from above is the Force of the Higher Consciousness. That from behind works as a mental, vital or physical force according to need. When the being is open to it and there is a certain passivity to its working, it takes the place of the personal activity and the Person is a witness of its action.

*You seem to have written to Dilip that there is a special Force for the work and, if it is brought down, its action need not remain a separate thing from meditation. What is this Force for work?*

It is the Mother's Force, naturally.

*It is said that we should refer all our acts to the Mother. But I don't know how to refer and get her answer before doing actions.*

There is no question of getting an answer. It is simply to offer the actions to the Mother and call her Force to guide or do what is necessary.

*To Dilip you said, "...this is the thing that used to happen daily to the physical workers in the Ashram. Working with immense energy and enthusiasm with a passion for the work. The sense of rest and the flood of energy came after a call to the Mother's Force." Which period of general sadhana were you referring to?*

I was speaking of the time when the sadhana was in the vital and people had a great enthusiasm for work.

*Have the Ashram people no such enthusiasm for work any more?*

Enthusiasm belongs to the vital. Nowadays many complain of fatigue in the work, having too much work etc. They never did that in those days though they did more.

*There are some sadhaks who still have the same enthusiasm for work, in spite of the sadhana being in the physical or subconscious. But how can that be so?*

Some have, like Khirod and some others; but for them work is their field of sadhana and it is not by vital enthusiasm that they do it, but by the inner urge.

*For the followers of Jnana Yoga, it is not easy to open to the Mother's peace during work rather than during meditation.*

This is not Jnana Yoga. Many have opened during work before they were able even to meditate.

*Why do people often complain that they are not able to keep up the sadhana during work?*

It is a question of doing work in the right attitude — as a means of sadhana. Most take the work as work only.

*R told me that Rishabhachand can do sadhana as consciously and comfortably during work as during motionless meditation?*

Those who can do that have either the Force for work acting in them naturally or a double consciousness, one of which meditates, the other attends to the work.

*Did not the old Yogas always say that the approach to the Divine is more easy and direct through meditation than through work?*

They wanted to get away from life, so necessarily work was unfavourable for them since work is part of life. Our Yoga is to find the Divine in life also.

It is sometimes easier to keep the right consciousness in the work than in the meditation.

In the meditation one has to keep out all sorts of things; in the work one has only to offer oneself and one's work to the Mother and aspire.

The only difficulty of work is that one is apt to forget the Mother in the absorption of the work and so forget to offer. In the meditation one is apt to forget the Mother in all kinds of thoughts and lose the concentration.

If the body goes on working and the mind thinks of the Mother, that is a stage in the Karma Yoga. In meditation also the body may go on sitting while the mind thinks of things that have nothing to do with the meditation. In each case it is a difficulty that has to be overcome, — the mind being turned to the right direction.

Aspiration can be done while one is active for outer objects also — that is supposed to be part of this Yoga. Especially one must aspire for purification of the being and this can be best done and tested in action — purification from desire, ego, selfishness etc.

One can work and aspire and offer to the Divine; one can purify oneself of one's imperfections by the aid of the Mother's Force and one's own sincere vigilance and one can do it in action and not only in meditation. It does not follow that only those who are meditating all the time are doing sadhana.

*When a doctor asks a patient to stop his work, what happens to the help and purification that the patient was receiving through his work?*

The purification etc. does not depend on the quantity of work done, but on the attitude and sincerity. Work is entirely stopped only when the patient needs complete rest. In that case he can still remember the Mother and offer himself to her and pray and aspire.

Certainly if there is the right attitude, the work done with it will have its effect. Nobody is asked to take on too much work or to do it in the wrong attitude. On the other hand sitting idle with the wrong attitude will not help either. If he does a lot of meditation with the wrong attitude that will not help him either. If the attitude is wrong the first business of the sadhak is to put it right. It was not doing too much work that put X in the wrong attitude. It is the defects of his nature that put him into the wrong attitude and I don't see how that is to be cured by his sitting idle.

*It is my general experience that the mind always comes in and occupies the working consciousness instead of allowing the Mother's Force to act. When it is so, the Force is able to work only from behind. But it is only when the Force takes up the whole activity that a sadhak gains fully by the work.*

That is not true. If the Force works from behind and one is conscious of it, then too one gains by the work.

*How can the mind be stopped from interfering with the work?*

Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work.

*For the last three days my mind has been drawn within so much that no words, in speech or on paper, come out unless I make a strong effort.*

The stress of the Power is all right, but there is really nothing incompatible between the inner silence and action. It is to this combination that the sadhana must move.

*Dividing my mind in two — one part acting for the outer work and the other for the higher — seems to be impossible during the present turn of the sadhana.*

It happens sometimes like that. One has to go on doing the outer work with the outermost mind and senses till the phase is over.

*As soon as I begin any action my higher state is pulled down automatically. Where is the obstruction?*

In action it is always more difficult because the consciousness goes out towards the work or else is at least not wholly held within — it is therefore difficult to remain in an inward state. There is no other obstacle. But if the inward state is strong and habitual, then it gains upon the action also and at first one always feels it behind and afterwards it occupies the whole consciousness, outer included, and the action takes place in it. This is for static states like peace, self-realisation etc. If one has the realisation of the dynamic Force, there is no difficulty — because that can take up the action at once.

*However high my consciousness might be before work, there is a straight fall into inertia as soon as action starts! Is this condition never to change?*

It is not necessary to fall into inertia, but one always comes into a less intensity of consciousness during work unless one has established in work the conscious contact with the Mother's Force and is aware of that during the work or unless one has developed a double consciousness, the inner concentrated, the outer doing the work.

*The physical work becomes burdensome only if I have to do several things, one after another, without an interval in which to rest and regain a state of concentration.*

It is often like that in the first stages.

*How many times the higher action has stopped just when it is becoming powerful, simply because I have to attend to the outer work! Can nothing be done to avert this?*

You must learn to do action without an externalising push.

It is quite possible to feel like an empty vessel and yet do work. It is probably because you associate work with your own personal action and initiation that you have the difficulty.

*In what way do I associate work with my personal action and initiation?*

As everybody does.

I can't enter into an exposition of how human beings associate work when they do it with their own personal action and initiation. It is a mistake to think that you do it in a different way from others, if that is what you mean.

*Does personal initiation mean to mix up our own individual work with the Mother's work, which brings desire, ego and other lower elements into the work?*

Personal initiation does not mean that — it means oneself being the worker and doing the work for oneself — instead of feeling the work as the Mother's — done by the Mother's Force for the sake of the Divine Purpose.

Personal action is the result of the personal initiation, for that makes the action personal.

*In inaction, sometimes my consciousness becomes completely blank and forgetful of the mind, life and body. But then there is hardly any deeper or higher experience during the action.*

That can come afterwards. The first step is to get silence.

*For many days now, I have felt void for the whole day, especially during work. My entire nature is like an immobile statue. The mind, vital and body are emptied of energy, as though they shifted somewhere else.*

What you describe is not at all a drawing away of life-energy; it is simply the effect of voidness and stillness caused in the lower parts by the consciousness being located above. It is quite consistent with action, only one must get accustomed to the idea of the possibility of action under these conditions. In a greater state of emptiness I carried on a daily newspaper and made a dozen speeches in the course of three or four days — but I did not manage that in any way, it happened. The Force made the body do the work without any inner activity.

*Work is an active movement. If there is no dynamic force in the being — as is the case with my present state of emptiness — the lower parts will take advantage and turn the work to their own ends.*

Not necessary at all. It is perfectly possible to work in an entire emptiness without any interference or activity of the lower parts of the consciousness.

*Why then am I unable to do work in emptiness without any interference?*

It is quite impossible for me to answer all your whys and hows. I have told you again and again that these things depend upon the general state of the consciousness and are things that cannot be expressed or analysed by the mind. It is only by becoming more and more conscious that you can begin to observe for yourself how things work out and have an intuitive perception of them and develop automatically the right movements.

I spoke of developing intuitive capacity in connection with knowledge, with understanding of what goes on in oneself. The working consciousness is another matter. When intuition comes, it will no doubt be helpful for the work, but the main thing to be achieved there is to feel the Mother's Force doing the work. For that to come it is necessary to be separate from the work — that separateness must increase and fix itself.

*I can separate myself from work and feel myself as a supervisor. But this separation is very passive, empty and fragile because of the static peace and lack of Force of*

*the inner being. It does not help me to do any active or conscious sadhana while I work.*

There has to be a beginning to everything. The first step is to detach oneself from the work and be the witness. If the detachment is fragile, it has to be strengthened and deepened. It is naturally empty at first — if it were not, it could not effect itself, for it would fill with the ego of the worker. It must be passive till it is filled with the higher force and knowledge.

I have said that it would not effect itself, that is, it would not establish itself as detachment at all. Becoming full of the ego of the worker, it would be simply the Ego standing behind the work and directing it or else full of the pride of the instrument.

*During mental and physical work it is only the Purusha that at times keeps detachment, but not the Prakriti.*

If the Purusha can keep detachment *all the time*, then it will be easier to liberate the Prakriti in the same way.

*At times it becomes possible to a certain extent to keep the inner poise during work. It is something like standing above and letting the psychic do the work.*

It is not the psychic that does the work, it is the Force that does it taking up the direction.

*At that time, during work, something from the depths of the heart surged out and it seemed to be in contact with the work. That is why I thought it came from the psychic.*

The psychic may well be in contact with the work supporting it, but that is different from doing it.

*What is meant by "taking up the direction"?*

Directing the work instead of the directing consciousness doing it.

*Today, during the work, I noticed that the inner being remained separate and in peace.*

That at any rate is very good and signifies a great progress.

*Since 10 today, some parts of my being seem never to have left the higher consciousness, whether during action or inaction, during quiescence or outer restlessness. Along with this stationing above, there was a constant flow of Mother's Peace and Silence and a sense of living amid a dynamic Power. What was missing was the bringing down of that Power right into the action itself.*

If that could be made permanent (some parts never leaving the higher consciousness), it would make the bringing of the Power in action easier.

*Today, though I happened to work much more than usual, there was much less fatigue. I presume it was due to shama [quiet, peace].*

Yes. With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue.

*After working at Dilip Kumar's place for an hour, my body felt tired. Then I went to Jasavanta's house for fly-toxing. There I not only did the work assigned to me but even dusted and arranged his jumbled-up things. I felt as though it was a room of the Mother's which needed cleaning. While working I did not feel any fatigue, but when I came out of his house all the ordinary reactions showed themselves — fatigue, sciatica pains, doubts etc.*

When doing this work you had the Force in you and the right consciousness filling the vital and physical — afterwards with relaxation the ordinary physical consciousness came up and brought back the ordinary reactions — fatigue, sciatica etc.

*Along with the above reactions came a host of suggestions: that it was the ego's secret action which moved me to do things which were hardly connected with my fly-toxing work, and that it was the superficial notion of "Mother's room" that moved me to do his personal work, etc.*

These are the wrong suggestions from the physical mind — work done with the thought of the Mother and not for oneself cannot be egoistic. How was the idea of the "Mother's room" superficial? It was on the contrary a suggestion that could only come to one from the deeper consciousness, for the ordinary mind does not think like that. The idea of Jasavanta's room, Jasavanta's personal work was rather the ordinary superficial notion.

*I think that it was the inner being alone which acted during the work in Jasavanta's room; the outer being simply became its tool?*

That is correct.

*You wrote, "When doing this work you had the Force in you." But how is it that as soon as that particular action was over I lost the Force and fatigue and sciatica came back?*

The Force in these instances comes for the work; when the work is over, it usually withdraws — unless and until you have become able to keep it.

*Why does the Force not come for other actions also?*

I suppose because you do not bring it down for other actions, or your condition and feeling about them is not the same.

*Am I then doing only fly-toxing and painting for the Mother and the other things for myself?*

Do you mean to say that in all your actions you are selfless, thinking only of the Mother, doing everything only for the Mother? If so, you are the greatest Yogi in this Ashram.

*You were joking, I believe, when you wrote about "the greatest Yogi in the Ashram." I know that I am far from being a Yogi. At most, I might be a sadhak when I am in the right consciousness.*

Yes, naturally, but I said that because you wrote as if you were perfectly self-offered in all your actions with an indignant query why, that being so, the Force came down only for fly-toxing and painting — did it then regard all your other self-offered works as nonsense?

*As for my bringing down the Mother's Force into certain actions and not into others, I don't think that I tried to bring it consciously only into the fly-toxing and painting work.*

It is not a question of trying or of mental intention, it was a psychic state of the consciousness that brought it down.

The condition you described as there when the Force came down in your work was that of the true instrument, not merely thought but felt — so it opened a way for the Force to come. Quietness is not necessarily sufficient for the Force to come down. A certain state of psychic self-giving is the best condition.

It is the Mother's Force that has to work through the sadhak, not the sadhak who has to work through the Mother's Force.

The first stage is when one works with the outer energy, but there is an inner consciousness supporting it which relies wholly on the Mother. The second is when there is an inner consciousness and force which uses the outer instruments — the outer energy being quiescent or else a part only of the inner — while this inner consciousness knows that the force is the Mother's or feels the Mother's presence in it: there are different experiences in this respect. The third is when all is the Mother's Force working.

## WORKING CONSCIOUSNESS

*Sometimes there is an excess of inertia before and after the work, and yet an unruffled peace in the work. At other times there is a higher peace and silence before and after the work, but only inertia in the work. I cannot understand this at all.*

You cannot understand because you regard the consciousness as a sort of clockwork which ought to go by rules. It is not like that at all. Both of these experiences are perfectly possible. Inertia before and after the work or a higher peace and silence before and after it need not at all determine the condition during work. It may but also it may not. All depends on the position taken by the consciousness or by different parts of it during the work itself.

You said you *could not at all understand* how it could be like that, the working consciousness getting peace when before and after there had been inertia and not getting it when before and after there had been peace and silence; this means that such a thing would not really be possible. I replied that it is quite possible as the movements of the consciousness are not subject to fixed rules and it depended on the state of things with regard to the working consciousness at the time of the experience. Now you want to put another rule! viz. that it must have developed so far as to be separated and have its own growth and development. The working consciousness is always a separate part of the being just as is the thinking mind, even before Yoga, but people are not conscious of it. By sadhana one becomes conscious of its separateness. But this does not ensure its having peace always. That depends on its condition at the time. It may have the peace today, not have had it yesterday, not have it tomorrow.

*From your reply, now I understand that the working consciousness is always a separate part of the being. What I was trying to point out is this: formerly, when there was peace and silence practically all the time, my working consciousness remained under the influence of inertia in spite of my efforts to join it to the peace and silence. Now there is inertia throughout the day, but the working consciousness has a peace and inner silence. Is this change due to any new development centred only in the working consciousness?*

No — the working is sometimes in the other parts, sometimes in the working consciousness, that is all.

## GENERAL SADHANA

*During the morning Pranam and in the evening before the Mother, water began to pour out of the eyes profusely. Would you kindly explain the reason?*

There is nothing to explain, it is quite natural. It is the psychic emotion of the inner being that brings the tears.

*When I do something wrong, many parts of my being suffer and lament.*

Lamentation is no use. To be conscious and eliminate is the proper way.

*Whatever basis was necessary for the higher action is now established, so I see no more need for periods of rest or a decrease of intensity in the sadhana. The intensity can go on increasing every day.*

The intensity very seldom remains even for a long time in these things — it rises and falls and rises again. That is the normal movement.

*The rich and intense condition of sadhana I had three days ago has now returned with a greater fullness! Could I ask you a question that has been puzzling me? How and why did that state get veiled for three long days?*

These things do not depend on definite mental reasons and cannot be dealt with by a mental rule. It is the oscillations in a mass of forces playing together and can be dealt with only by a fixed will in the consciousness to progress through all vicissitudes.

*If its going was due to a relaxation in the being, how did it come about? If due to a surging up of inertia, why did it surge up just at that time? The same question could be asked about my identification with the inertia.*

A thousand questions can be asked about anything whatsoever, but to answer would require a volume, and even then the mind would understand nothing. It is only by a growth in the consciousness itself that you can get some direct perception of these things. But for that the mind must be quiet and a direct feeling and intuition take its place.

*I asked you such questions not only for my intellectual interest, though that is there, but also for understanding them and putting the knowledge into practice.*

That also is intellectual — to find a mental device for dealing with these things. Rather keep the mind quiet and let direct, intuitive observation and understanding grow in you.

## SADHAKS AND THE LOWER NATURE

*People say that the Yogis of other Yogas can lead a better life with less difficulty. For they seldom need to touch their lower nature. They merely keep it quiet by the force of their higher or inner being. Since they consider the world as Maya, these Yogis do not bother to fix the true consciousness in the lower being. But is it not rather an excuse for not leading a yogic life?*

All that is simply an excuse. The Yogis of other Yogas do at least try to keep the lower nature quiet by tapasya; they do not think it quite the right and normal thing to indulge it. If the rule of this Yoga is to change the lower nature, those who follow it must similarly try to do that, not consider it the right and normal thing to indulge the lower nature.

*Many sadhaks here do not seem to care for any psychic or spiritual development. They prefer to give a greater importance to the intellectual pursuits.*

It is quite true that hardly any try to lead a truly Yogic life by fixing the true consciousness in all the being. Some experience and a contented ordinariness seems to be the rule.

*You ask, "What circumstances? A Yogi or seeker of Yoga is supposed to lead the Yogic life in all circumstances." I had meant the present circumstances of the sadhana, when so many have fallen into the clutches of the physical, and the lowest and darkest nature remains always so prominent.*

If the prominence of the lower nature is a good reason for not trying to live the Yogic life instead of the ordinary one, then it is also a good reason for not doing Yoga at all. The business of the seeker of Yoga is to overcome the lower nature, and for that he must try to lead the Yogic life and not sit contentedly in the lower nature.

*Under such conditions how are we to fix the true consciousness in all the being and lead the Yogic life in all circumstances?*

Everybody has to deal with the lower nature. No Yoga can be done without overcoming it, neither this Yoga nor any other. A Yogic life means a life in which one tries to follow the law of Yoga, the aim of Yoga in all details of life. Here people do not do that, they live like ordinary people, quarrelling, gossiping, indulging their desires, thinking of Yoga only in their spare moments.

The Ashram is full of these things, because so many people are living in their ordinary mind and vital and allowing it to occupy the whole consciousness, doing only a nominal Yoga or no Yoga. It is quite natural therefore that such suggestions should come. You have only to reject them and remember for what you are here.

*How sad it is that in spite of the Mother and yourself being here and the divine Force, Grace and Protection granted to us in abundance, we cannot master even our little natures! Other Yogis have not this advantage and yet progress much more than we do.*

The Yogis who progress are those all whose thought is for their Yoga — here people are thinking most of the time of anything but that. But that is so elsewhere too. It is only by being in dead earnest that one can progress quickly.

"Dead" is an emphatic term for "complete".

*Cannot a wall of protection be erected around me so that the general Nature may not touch me?*

Rather difficult if you keep open to the Generals. The wall will go down each time.

*What are these Generals?*

The Generals of the general nature, Ego, Demand and Desire.

*In what way am I keeping myself open to the Generals?*

The fact that your vital "goes out of the poise" and accepts them means that you keep yourself open to them. The sign that these things are no longer admitted is when the inner vital rejects them so that they become suggestions only and nothing else. There may arise a surge of suggestions or waves from the general nature, but they cannot get admission. It is only then that a wall can be kept in which one is untouched by the general atmosphere.

Whatever seriousness is necessary must come of itself from within. To be serious outwardly by rule is not needed.

Inner withdrawal is always much better than physical withdrawal.

*You wrote, "There are simply a mass of tendencies and forces with which one has to become familiar." But how to do it?*

By experience and observation and increasing consciousness.

*Usually we are not conscious of such tendencies or forces.*

That means an insufficient consciousness. It is only by a direct consciousness that one can seize these things — the mind's thought can't do it.

*I can't make out how the ego, sex, inertia and vital difficulties have all come up together at the same time. Surely they were not in such a mess before? Can you not kindly make this thing clear?*

There is nothing to be made clear. These things were there before but to some extent controlled by the will or not sufficiently recognised by the consciousness. They now come up in the physical nature separated from the rest in their true appearance and force. They are able to persist because of the tamas in your nature which is unwilling to make a sustained and constant reaction of a quiet, steady and resolute kind. To be firm in rejection and firm in the call for the higher consciousness is the only way to deal with these things.

*After the above realisation I put forth my efforts to overcome the difficulties. My mind imposed a pressure on the vital for getting strength and wideness and also for giving up its sensitiveness. I must go on rejecting all that stands in the way.*

That is the whole truth of the matter. If you do that, you will be doing the real thing and the only thing. It is no use simply observing and mentalising about the difficulties; one has to see once for all what they are and do what is necessary to get rid of them.

*Even during the period when my inner being was detached from the lower movements, there was something that came up, stayed for two full days, spread some desires and then subsided. This "something" must have been very subtle and imperceptible.*

It is simply the same thing always — the old nature coming up from the subconscious (or sometimes it may be from outside) in the form of suggestions and trying to recover hold as a substantial formation in the being. I do not know why your mind wants to find in it something subtle and remarkable or special and new.

*I bring up this subject again because I would very much like to know how that "something" came and why it withdrew by itself.*

But it is always like that. The outer reasons are mere suggestions. The one fact is this tendency of the recurrence as a rule of Nature so long as these forces have any chance of finding a lodging in you.

*I was surprised to discover that one part of my being can remain in light and truth while another part remains in ignorance and falsehood.*

Yes, that is so. There are many parts and movements in each plane and all do not get enlightened together.

*The inertia persists so powerfully because there is no sufficient resistance on my part. Some parts of my being try at times to repel it, but seeing that nothing improves by their efforts, they withdraw into a tamasic passivity.*

You are right. That is the real trouble — a laziness in the nature that cannot take the trouble to persist.

*I observe that there is no definite movement in my physical consciousness towards a higher progress. Is it the same thing with other sadhaks and the earth consciousness itself?*

Yes, for the time being.

*Let me not compare my difficulties with N but with great sadhaks like Rishabhchand and Khirod.*

Neither Rishabhchand nor Khirod nor anybody else is free from difficulties and from oscillations and alternations of progress and stoppage of progress.

*When I asked why the evenings brought me a fall straight into inertia, you said, "Because the inertia is there in the physical consciousness and has made itself habitual — so the consciousness falls back to it." Well, the inertia is there in the mornings also and yet I remain in the higher consciousness. What is the exact reason for the fall after 4 p.m.?*

There is no mentally definite and rigidly effective reason for the thing coming in the evening rather than at 2 p.m. or in the midnight or the morning. For some people the fall comes in the evening, for some in the morning, for some at other times, and so too with the rise. But the alternations happen to most people in one law of rhythm or

another. The times vary with people and even can vary with the same man. There is no definable reason for it being at a particular time except that it has made itself habitual at that time. The rest is a question of the play of forces which is observable but the reasons of which escape mental definition.

*There is a certain amount of peace and silence so long as I keep myself plunged in writing. But when I go for meditation the same old thing returns — small and useless thoughts.*

It is either because you lose the concentration by the cessation of the writing which helps to concentrate you — or else because you are invaded by the general atmosphere which is full of inertia and the small movements of the little physical mind and physical vital.

*In the morning, after getting up from sleep, I find it difficult to get back to the higher consciousness or to bring about the same intensity as during the day.*

That is so with most who do sadhana.

I cannot undertake to be telling you all the time all that is not perfectly Yogic in the details of your action from morning to night. These are things to see to yourself. It is the movements of your sadhana that you place before me and it is there that I have to see whether they are the right thing or not.

The actions are of importance only as expressing what is in the nature. You have to be conscious of whatever in your actions is not in harmony with the Yoga and to get rid of it. But for that what is needed is your own consciousness, the psychic, observing from within and throwing off what is seen to be undesirable.

*When you make a fresh opening in me, is it not possible to inform me one day in advance, so that I may keep myself ready?*

No, certainly not. Such a mental method would be of no use whatever. The experience must come spontaneously.

*About the "push" from outside that I experienced, I don't understand how it could rush in two opposite directions simultaneously — towards the deep psychic centre as well as towards the higher spiritual consciousness.*

I do not see what there is in it that cannot be understood. Why should not one thing go into two separate parts? There is no uncrossable wall between different parts. Peace or any other spiritual power can enter mind and heart at the same time. Anger starting from the entrails can occupy heart and mind simultaneously.

*I feel some positive and tangible presence on the top of the head that is doing the sadhana for me, something that is other than myself. Is there any truth behind this feeling and, if so, what exactly is this "something"?*

If you feel it, if you are conscious of it — you can accept your feeling. If you merely think it without feeling or being conscious of it, then it may be merely a mental imagination. As to what it is, you must wait till you become aware. Asking the question with the mind is of no use; you must either become aware of it from within or get the knowledge from above.

*When the forces of ego and desire failed to influence me openly, they started to act secretly on the subtle or unenlightened parts where I am still unconscious. It is due to this that I am unable to progress sufficiently.*

Naturally if one is not awake within, the sadhana cannot be easy or complete.

## OSCILLATIONS IN SADHANA

*Usually there is a fullness from the early morning till the afternoon, and an emptiness in the evening. But for the last three days there has been practically no sadhana in the morning. Why so?*

I don't know. Times and seasons vary according to the poise and flux and reflux of the forces in the consciousness. It is not a thing to which you can affix a rationalised and systematised explanation. One can feel it and understand in the essence of the consciousness, but not formulate precise cause and effect.

*When the higher consciousness is active, it is very easy for me to deal with my lower nature. But that action is rare and stays for a short time only. Can it not be made more frequent?*

It is the condition of the lower nature itself that interferes with the frequency.

*The peace has been there for years, and it is still descending more and more from above. What then prevents it from becoming dynamic?*

Probably because the nature is taking long to get ready.

One cannot say whether the conquest is near or not, — one has to go on steadily with the process of the sadhana without thinking of near or far, fixed on the aim, not elated if it seems to come close, not depressed if it still seems to be far.

*What is needed is to be perfectly silent and support and watch how the Mother's Force acts and how our being reacts to it.*

Yes, that is the best.

*Even when I rise to the higher consciousness, I sometimes feel dullness, dissatisfaction and an absence of the true higher spiritual joy, happiness and peace. How can it be possible?*

I don't know unless you are unconscious or in trance and it is therefore a blank to your ordinary consciousness when you come out? If it is like that it is perhaps one reason why the Force has so much difficulty in coming down and the Peace that comes is only passive.

*At times I feel neither happy nor dull, neither active nor passive, neither liking nor disliking the sadhana.*

It is a neutral condition — that frequently comes.

*On one of the Darshan days, it seems you burnt some being which had been troubling N very obstinately for a long time.*

Such burning gives only a temporary relief if the part that called the being does not reject it. The thing comes back in another form.

*Is not the present absence of experience, descent, etc. due more to the obstruction of the general working of Nature than to our own resistance? I feel the resistance more in the general Nature than in myself.*

It comes to the same thing so long as the response to it is not rejected.

*Can you give some general characteristics of the different forms of Force?*

I have never classified the different forms — they can be hundreds or thousands in number. Force varies its form according to the work it has to do.

I don't know that there is any utility here in distinguishing between force and energy as in Science. Energy is simply force in action.

The lower nature is called lower because it is unenlightened — it can't be enlightened and changed by ignoring it, the higher has to be brought there. So one must speak of both, not of the higher alone.

The satisfaction of the vital desires is a normal feature of the ordinary life, only it must be controlled and regulated by the mental will, so that one may not be enslaved to the desires. It is only if one turns to the spiritual life that one has to get rid of vital desires.

Once one takes up the spiritual life, what is done in the worldly life can no longer be a standard to be followed.

*During the morning meditation my state was elevated, the silence was deepening. But then my vital fell into depression and adverse suggestions came. I took them as a test. But from where do such tests come and why are they necessary?*

Your description is too vague. From what you wrote it may just as well be the reaction that frequently follows an experience; the adverse Force coming in with a contrary movement. Tests come sometimes from the hostile forces, sometimes in the course of Nature. I suppose they must be necessary, since they always come in sadhana.

*Do you mean that an experience is followed sometimes by a movement of the hostile or adverse forces?*

Very often.

The stress of the inertia is the general obstacle; it may be overcome in one thing, it may not be overcome in another. Your physical mind applies conceptions in a much too stiff and narrow way. Mind and life do not move in set formulas. "The inertia is the obstacle in both cases, in one it has yielded, so it ought to have yielded in the other" is not a logic that can serve. The balance of conditions in the two cases can be different so as to make the inertia effective in one case while it is overcome in the other. The same with the result of the concentrations; it depends on many things what the immediate result may be.

I thought it was understood that what I wrote to you about persons was private. Experiences, one's own or others' if one comes to know about them, should not be talked about or made a matter of gossip. It is only if there can be some spiritual profit to others and even then if they are experiences of the past that one can speak of them. Otherwise it becomes like news of Abyssinia or Spain, something common and trivial for the vital mass mind to chew or gobble.

Sadness is of no use — it is itself a form of *tamas* (inertia) and therefore does not help recovery.

As for the inconveniences, you should take them as a training in *samata* (equality). To be able to bear inconveniences is one of the most elementary necessities if one wants to enter into the true spirit of Yoga.

These generalisations on either side are not of much value. One does not need to get a hatred for food in order to get rid of the greed for food. On the other to develop dislike for certain things may help to reject them — but that too is not always the cure, for they may remain in spite of the dislike.

*By the increasing signs of inertia I knew that the lapse from a good to a lower state was coming. Why could it not be prevented? Was it really an inevitable fall?*

There is nothing inevitable, only things that happen, because of the condition of the consciousness, the forces that work on it and the reaction to the forces by being more responsive to us than to the inertia.

*You wrote about "an effort in which also there is the spirit of surrender". Kindly explain to me how to keep a spirit of surrender in my effort.*

By calling on the Force to aid the personal effort, by not getting into despondency and the rest of it if the results do not come, by a never failing tranquil confidence in the final outcome of the sadhana.

Headaches "produced by a pressure from above", as you put it, are not due to the pressure or produced by it, but produced by a resistance. R's headaches have nothing to do with Yoga or sadhana.

The pressure does not "bring" a resistance. "If there were no resistance there would be no headache" is the proper knowledge, not the reverse. So long as you think that it is the pressure that brings the resistance, the very idea will create the resistance. R's case is not an example either of headache due to resistance or of headache due to pressure — it is due to ordinary physical and psychological causes.

Certainly, you cannot have reached the point of thinking always about the Mother alone or Yoga alone! If you had, there would not have been trouble of sex or depression. You were at the very least thinking of yourself also.

*When will my spiritual life take a positive and permanent step forward?*

It will happen I suppose when you are fit for it — i.e. when the vital and physical being begin to take an un-egoistic interest in the Yoga.

*When my mind presses the vital and the ego for an inward turn, they start a revolt. That brings in all sorts of wrong forces. The sadhana then becomes difficult and dangerous instead of simple, happy and safe.*

There is no reason to accept their despair, depression or revolt. One has persistently to separate oneself from these things — if one separates oneself they cannot occupy the being. There is also no reason why one should insist on the sadhana being simple, happy and safe and, if it is not, refuse to follow it.

*Since my being wants so eagerly to be free from inertia, is it not possible for you to remove it?*

How do you propose that I should remove it? By magic? Even if that were done, your nature would call it back. It is only if you determine to be rid of it and make the necessary endeavour, not for a day or two, but for as long as it is necessary that it can go.

You cannot conquer a difficulty by avoiding it.

*I see from your answers that I did not try to develop my inner being which is of great importance in the Integral Yoga. The self-realisation was all I sought for. Shall I now centre my sadhana around the inner being?*

The whole question is whether you can go farther in the realisation of the self without either purification of the vital and the ego or development of the inner being. If you can, it is all right, but it does not look as if you could.

*Today I did not have the usual tendency to throw myself out in gossiping with friends. So I remained indoors. But they came to my place and we had the normal chit-chatting, which resulted in my full externalisation.*

*How does Nature bring about the things or events through others, when it finds it difficult to do it directly?*

Nature forces are conscious forces — they can very well combine all that is necessary for an action or a purpose and if one means fails, take another.

*In that case whatever obstacles we meet with in the form of accidents are purposely arranged by Nature to hinder our progress.*

Not by Nature, but by certain forces of Nature. Nature has in her both helpful forces and hindering forces.

## HEREDITY AND AFFINITY

*I feel a great exhaustion and void after talking with X. Why is it so?*

Well, you drew a big part of your lower nature from him — so it is quite natural talking with him should affect you in that way.

*I still cannot understand why merely speaking with X should create such a reaction in me. I hope I am no longer drawing anything from him or from anybody else. Y and Z are as much connected with him as I am — but they are not complaining about exhaustion and voidness.*

It was drawn at birth, that is quite enough. There is always a hereditary part of the nature which is a large portion of the outward nature — there is also the educational influence of the father which has put a stamp on you — as also on Y and Z. It is quite natural therefore that your lower nature should become more active by the touch of his lower nature. Y and Z are not inwardly conscious of these impacts and nothing in them resists, so there is no feeling of exhaustion or consciousness of any interchange.

*What kind of educational stamp has X put on me?*

Not at all a desirable one.

*Now I understand the hereditary part drawn from X. But does my lower nature still keep contact with his? Is not what was to be drawn already drawn in and finished with?*

Consciousness is not a mechanical dead thing to act in that way. Hereditary influence creates an affinity and affinity is a living thing. It is only when the hereditary part is changed that the affinity ceases.

*Does not reading newspapers bring diffusion of mind?*

It is only the attachment and diffusion of mind that are objectionable. One can read if there is no attachment and no diffusion.

*Why does not the will in me become active? Whenever it is pulled out of the passivity I feel a strain and it falls back into inertia after a few seconds.*

That is the nature of the physical inertia. You have to separate yourself from the physical inertia and become separately conscious within of something that is not at all identified with the physical.

*The whole day my mind remains too active. Even during the general meditation it is no better.*

It depends on what it is active with. Are you wrestling with your physical mind to quiet it? If so, that won't succeed. You must quietly let it fall quiet.

## VALUE AND SADHANA ELEMENTS

*You said, "Trances and experiences have their value. There is no question of less or more important — each thing has its place." How to find the place or value of different things in our sadhana? If we give equal value to everything we do, will not our life become like a machine?*

It is not a question of giving an equal value to everything you do, but of recognising the value of all the different elements of the sadhana. No such rule can be made as that trances are of little value or that experiences are of inferior importance any more than it can be said that work is of no or inferior importance.

*How are we to recognise "the value of all the different elements of our sadhana" when we are not aware of its inner or subtle processes?*

I was not speaking of giving a correct value or establishing a table of values, but of recognising that each has some importance in the total working, not disparaging as some do and saying "Meditation and experiences have no value, only work is the thing" — or "What can work do for siddhi, without meditation and experiences?"

*Yesterday I went to the Dining Hall for flytoxing work and didn't feel much fatigue. But today after doing the same work I felt so tired! Why such a difference when both days I went for the same purpose?*

It does not depend upon the purpose, but on some element or other in the total condition of the consciousness. What that element is has to be seen — there is no rule.

*Can you not say what are these elements so that I can try to find out their relation with work and fatigue?*

You seem to want to reduce everything to a catalogue and a scientific analysis. Nobody has ever been able to do that with the working of the consciousness. The elements of a condition of consciousness cannot be classified like the "elements" of Matter.

*You wrote the other day: "What that element is has to be seen — there is no rule." How can I see that element unless I know something about the elements? I don't even know what is meant by "elements" here.*

Elements are things that constitute. Elements of a condition of consciousness are things that constitute it. It is a perfectly general and vague phrase and meant to be so. One cannot know the total condition of one's consciousness by books or by classifications, but only by observation, vision and an increasing self-knowledge within.

*About the scientific classification of the elements of consciousness, well, people say that Yoga is a kind of science.*

It is not physical science where everything can be analysed and measured or where there are a certain number of processes which can always be repeated at will with an exact mechanical precision and control or by a device like turning a button for the electric light.

*You wrote to me, "Those who seek the self by the old Yogas separate themselves from mind, life and body and realise the self apart from these things." How do they manage to do it so easily? Will not the mind, life and body interfere with their realisation, since to make it possible these parts must withdraw from their ordinary movements of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa*?*

Of course they will — it can only be prevented by the lower movements if you assent to the lower movements; one who refuses to accept them as his real being can always withdraw from them to the self. The movements of Nature become for them an outer thing not belonging to their true being and having no power to pull them down from it.

## ACTION OF WORLD FORCES

*You wrote, "I mean by the universe the forces of the world around." What then is that cosmos which includes not only the forces of this world but also those of the inner and larger worlds, like the universal mind, vital and physical?*

The forces of the world around are mental, vital and physical and come from these sources either direct or through persons.

*I was told that J was not able to come near ladies because he felt strong sex-vibrations. Did he feel like that due to his opening to the universe?*

I mean by the universe, the forces of the world around. If J felt like that, it must have been because he had become conscious. Most people are unconscious; they are subject to the forces but do not know it.

*Just as the opening to these universal forces has come naturally and by itself, I hope that the control over them will also come by itself in time.*

To be conscious is the first step towards overcoming — but for the overcoming strength is necessary and also detachment and the will to overcome.

*How is it that many sadhaks are not conscious of these forces in spite of their being here for so many years?*

There are many who have been here for a long time who are not conscious of the action of the forces. Reasoning and inferences are worth nothing in these matters.

## PART VI

## BLANKNESS AND SILENCE

*Is any personal aspiration necessary during the state of blankness or self-forgetfulness? I ask this because once you wrote that if the silence is deep there is no need of personal aspiration; let the silence itself work.*

Blankness is only a condition in which realisation has to come. If aspiration is needed for that, it has to be used; if the realisation comes of itself, then of course aspiration is not necessary.

*You once wrote that aspiration is not needed in the state of blankness.*

The "state" I was speaking of was not blankness but something else — I see by reference to the passage in your letter that it was a "state in which aspiration is not needed." Such a state is not blankness but a condition in which the Mother's Force is present to the consciousness and doing everything.

*In any case, if the aspiration is used there is no harm at least. Is it not so?*

No.

*What kind of "realisation" did you mean when you wrote, "Blankness is only a condition in which the realisation has to come"?*

Every kind of realisation — infinite self, cosmic consciousness, the Mother's Presence, Light, Force, Ananda, Knowledge, Sachchidananda realisation, the different layers of consciousness up to the Supermind. All these can come in the silence which remains but ceases to be blank.

*If blankness is only a condition in which realisation has to come, what is the difference between the blankness and the silence?*

The silence can remain when the blankness has gone. All sorts of things can pour in and yet the silence still remains, but if you become full of force, light, Ananda, knowledge etc, you cannot call yourself blank any longer.

*What are the stages of the silence? Is the non-existence one of them?*

In the silence one comes to feel the Existence, not the non-existence, and afterwards all that is in the Divine Existence by direct realisation.

*What is this Existence?*

What one feels first is the pure existence of the self, without any idea, characteristic or movement — existence pure and simple, Sat Brahman — or else one feels that and a vast peace and wideness. Afterwards other things are felt such as Ananda, but always with this as the basis.

*I have not tried to analyse mentally what I feel exactly in the silence. I took it as non-existence simply because once you wrote to me that it is only I who feel the silence as empty.*

You must have misunderstood what I wrote. I cannot have written that it is only you who feel the silence as empty, as there are plenty who do so feel it at first. One feels it empty because one is accustomed to associate existence with thought, feeling and movement or with forms and objects, and there are none of these there. But it is not really empty.

*The physical mind is still so active, in spite of the fact that several parts of the being remain in muteness.*

If the silence is sufficiently intense, then no activity of the mind or anything else can disturb it.

*Yesterday I tried to bring down the Mother's Force into the silence in order to make it solid and dynamic, as suggested by you. Was it all right?*

If there is no disturbance of the silence, it is all right.

*Only a few days ago I was moving in a dark inertia — suggestions, turmoil, depression etc. Now I am in full peace and silence. Is this due to any conquest in the general Nature?*

No, it is personal.

*During this peace and silence, should not my aspiration also be strengthened and constant?*

Not necessarily. The peace and silence are only a basis. Into that there must come a transformation of the active consciousness.

*Sometime ago there was an overpowering peace and silence. When they descended into the physical they were met with a strong resistance. The present excess of inertia is the result of that resistance. This is what happens regularly at every descent into the body consciousness. Is this not true?*

Yes.

## PEACE AND SILENCE

*After two days of the higher state, inertia comes, covering up my consciousness. Then the restlessness becomes so overwhelming that I cannot even meditate. Can nothing be done to prevent this reaction?*

The peace and silence have to come into the physical and replace the inertia.

*I always feel the peace and silence coming down from above. Many sadhaks must have gone beyond me. Is their experience the same as mine?*

Everybody does not get the peace and silence from above. I do not know what you mean by "gone beyond me" or to whom you refer.

*The descents of peace and silence are ceaseless from morning to night. But even these descents are not able to control or quiet the subnature.*

If peace becomes permanent in the inner being, then the subnature becomes an external and superficial thing — one part of the consciousness is then free, unmoved by anything that happens, it regards the surface turmoil as something not belonging to itself. If the peace extends in the same way to the external parts also, then the whole being becomes free and the surface nature is felt only as something moving about in the atmosphere, trying to enter but unable to do so. But this of course happens only when the descents of Peace have turned into a massive stability of Peace.

*I am unable to have in action the same sadhana which is possible in static meditation. It is due to my too passive peace, which can concentrate only if I am inactive. But when the Force above is strong and intense, this difference between the action and inaction decreases. What about the coming down of the dynamic descent?*

It is not the innate character of passive peace that it can only concentrate in inaction. It can be there and concentrate in or behind action also.

As for the dynamic descent, you say that the Force has descended to your forehead (inner mind) centre. It seems to be very slow in coming through. It has to come down to the heart centre and below before it can begin to be fully effective. Probably there must be something either in the physical mental (throat) [or] the emotional vital that obstructs the descent. That may be the reason of the union of the upper Agni and the

psychic fire and the push in the psychic centre — something is trying to remove the difficulty.

*Is it true that the passive peace can stop the lower action?*

The peace that descends from above can stop the lower action, if it settles in all the being. But that is not sufficient if one wants to develop the dynamic side of the being also on the lines of Yoga.

*You asked me, "Then what do you feel? not even quietude or peace? What then is the experience?" The experience is often of a deep stillness — a state higher than the silence, of being high above. What I feel lacking is a definite sense of joy or Ananda.*

I understand from what you wrote that there was nothing at all except the sense of being on high above. If there is a stillness higher than the silence, — the absence of joy or Ananda does not so much matter. What is lacking seems to be the sense of wideness, of mukti, of the free illimitable self which is usually the nature of these experiences of stillness high above the head.

*Is this absence of Ananda common with other sadhaks?*

Ananda is not so common a state as peace and with most, if it comes, it is not continuous.

*Whatever peace I bring down is devoured by the inertia. Is there no way out?*

To bring down so much that the inertia can't devour it, but it devours the inertia.

*For handling the present vital and physical difficulties it is very necessary to strengthen my passive peace. Can't it be done by bringing down the Force from above?*

A tranquil force — not the force that fights — it is really a silent Strength that comes from above and is part of the complete Peace.

A dynamic descent brings tapas not *shama*. It is a greater and greater descent of peace that brings *shama* — the dynamic descent helps but by dispersing the element of rajasic disturbance and changing rajas into tapas.

## INTERVALS OF PASSIVE PEACE

*There are long plunges into the passive peace and silence and yet no dynamic action in spite of my rejection of ego-centricity.*

It always happens like that so long as the nature is not ready for the continued dynamic action. If the ego and its results are gone, then there can be no harm in having intervals of passive peace and silence.

*I was not speaking about a state of lapse, but of a condition of continued sadhana without any dynamism.*

My answer stands. There is nothing wrong in having intervals of passive peace without anything happening — they come naturally in the sadhana as a basis for fresh action when the nature is ready for it. It is only the vital attitude that turns it into a disharmony, because somewhere in its being there is not the assent to or participation in the peace and passivity. To be able often to rest, repose in all the being outspread in the silent Brahman is an indispensable thing for the Yogi. But the vital wants always fuss, action, to feel that it is somebody doing something, getting on, having progress, on the move. The counterpart to this rajasic fuss is inertia. If the whole being can widen itself out, rest outspread in the silence, then progressively inertia fades out and gives place to *shama*.

*What happens when inertia turns into shama?*

If it is turned into *shama*, then you will not feel tamasic or inert, only a calm repose pervading the being.

Passive peace is always the first proper basis. Those who get force first have no settled basis, so long as peace is not there.

*You have said that most people do not find it difficult to bear the state of emptiness without any activity in the inner being. Then why do I find it difficult?*

Most people means most who have the tendency or will to Yoga, for silence of the being is the first natural aim of the Yoga. You and some others do not find satisfaction in it because you have not overcome the vital mind which wants always some kind of activity, change, doing something or something happening. The eternal immobility of the silent Brahman is a thing it does not relish. So when emptiness comes, it finds it dull, inert, monotonous.

There is no necessity of explanation. Your mind creates problems and difficulties where none really exist. There is always the idea behind that passive peace is an undesirable thing. On the contrary it is the state of the silent Impersonal and an essential element and sure basis of the mukta condition and one can always rest in it whenever necessary with advantage.

*During the morning meditation for some moments I felt as if I was a huge stone or a mountain. Was it an experience of wideness?*

The wideness is rather a feeling of being far-spreading or all-pervasive to all sides and above and below without end. This must be an experience of the consciousness enlarged in a massive stillness.

*Since 3 p.m. I feel much intoxicated. I find that the active parts of my being have fallen blank and the other parts are as if nonexistent. I feel myself nowhere, not even in Nothingness, Sunya. Enriched heavy peace and silence are obviously in their increasing fullness. Is this intoxication tamasic or spiritual?*

If peace and silence are in their increasing fullness, it can't be a tamasic intoxication, — I don't know that there is such a thing. If there is, it could only be an overwhelming dullness. This is simply a deepening of the silence of the self in the whole being.

*In such a condition what is best to be done — meditation, reading or working?*

Any of them.

*To my question, "In a deepened silence why do I feel myself nowhere, not even in Sunya? where then do I go?", you wrote, "I suppose you feel yourself nowhere because you are accustomed to regard the individual consciousness as somewhere and this experience goes outside that somewhere." What is this "somewhere" and what is meant by going out of it?*

I said the individual consciousness is felt by you as the only definite plane of your existence. When your consciousness spreads out of it, you feel as if you had gone out of all planes of existence, that you are nowhere.

*Sometimes I go out of my small self and enter into some other plane of consciousness or existence. In this plane there seems to be no thought, movement*

*or action of its own. How can I then distinguish it as a definite plane? I feel there only empty peace and silence.*

Because it is the silent static self into which you rise.

*From 12 noon to 5 p.m. my inner being was in a quiet repose. During this long period of peace there was no intensity or zeal.*

A peaceful state is the basis of the Yogic consciousness. It is only when that is accepted and fully established that the true intensity and energy can come.

Equanimity and peace in all conditions in all parts of the being is the first foundation of the Yogic status. Either Light (bringing with it knowledge) or Force (bringing strength and dynamism of many kinds) or Ananda (bringing love and joy of existence) can come next according to the trend of the nature. But peace is the first condition without which nothing else can be stable.

*Since yesterday, so far as I am conscious, I try to live in the Self. This has such an effect on the lower nature that it gives up any attempt to pull me down. However, this is not enough. I must be able to live in the Self all the time and not merely during motionless meditations.*

Yes, that is it.

*The peace, silence or pure-existence is no more felt merely as an experience.*

Good.

Passive peace is not supposed to do anything. It is by its complete solid presence alone that all disturbance is pushed out to the surface or outside the consciousness.

*Today during the work I felt a special peace which gave me an automatic separateness — a peace which was not experienced even in my static meditation. The inertia had no effect on it!*

Peace and separateness need not be affected and have not to be affected by inertia — it is only so affected if it is incomplete.

*Yesterday I realised that my mental ideas about the lack of dynamic action were wrong. Why? The mind brings in its own ignorant methods of understanding what is beyond its range. Let me describe my experience.*

*After half an hour of feeling Mother's touch, even my subtle body was falling slowly into silence. Then such a complete peace and silence possessed my mind and body that one may call it a conscious samadhi. In place of my outer self I experienced a solid peace and stillness almost unconnected with me. Then came Mother's Force which reached up to the inner physical. As the descent took place in the midst of solid peace and silence, there was no rajasic movement, which is otherwise so common. The Force came and worked in such a quiet and spontaneous way that one may well doubt if it was really a Force and not merely a deep peace.*

It is this quiet and spontaneous action that is the characteristic divine action. The aggressive action is only, as you say, when there is resistance and struggle. This does not mean that the quiet force cannot be intense. It can be more intense than the aggressive, but its intensity only increases the intensity of the peace.

## SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS

Voidness can come from anywhere, mind, vital or from above.

Voidness may be of different kinds — a certain kind of spiritual voidness, or the emptiness that is a preparation for new experience.

*There are two types of emptiness, I think: 1) a mere inert condition; 2) a spiritual emptiness to create a sort of vacuum in order to receive a greater fullness.*

If it is the spiritual emptiness, then it will not be felt as interfering with the sadhana.

*What is the function of the emptiness?*

Emptiness usually comes as a clearance of the consciousness or some part of it. The consciousness or part becomes like an empty cup into which something new can be poured. The highest emptiness is the pure existence of the Self in which all manifestation can take place.

*Sometimes the emptiness in the vital becomes unbearable in its influence. If it comes only to clean the vital, why such a forceful action?*

I suppose because the vital is very forceful in its clinging to old movements.

*If the emptiness comes to clear the consciousness, then it would mean that it is something spiritual and comes from above.*

Emptiness as such is not a character of the higher consciousness, though it often looks like that to the human vital when one has the pure realisation of the Self, because all is immobile, and for the vital all that is not full of action appears empty. But the emptiness that comes to the mind, vital or physical is a special thing intended to clear the room for the things from above.

*The stronger the descent in the morning, the greater is the emptiness in the evening!*

If it is a spiritual emptiness, that could easily happen — that is to say, if it is a pressure for the quietude of the vital and physical.

*First you wrote, "Emptiness as such is not a character of the higher consciousness..." Then, the next day you wrote, "If it is a spiritual emptiness..." If the emptiness is*

*spiritual, is it not also "a character of the higher consciousness", just as Light, Ananda, Force, etc. are?*

It does not mean the same thing. An emptiness in the mind or vital may be spiritual without emptiness being an essential characteristic of the higher consciousness. If it were, there could be no Force, Light or Ananda in the higher Consciousness. Emptiness is only a result produced by a certain action of the higher Force on the system in order that the higher consciousness may be able to come into it. It is a spiritual emptiness as opposed to the dull and inert emptiness of complete *tamas* which is not spiritual.

*After the noon-sleep, which you have termed as "some kind of samadhi", I feel a greater emptiness or voidness than at other times. Could you kindly explain what kind of connection the emptiness has with the samadhi?*

I don't know that I understand altogether even now. If you mean that after this kind of samadhi, you feel a greater emptiness or voidness, it is quite natural. To void the being of the old consciousness and its movements and to fill the void from above are the two main processes used by the Force from above.

*I feel the voidness of the being but why do I never experience the fullness which usually ought to follow the emptiness?*

You have written of the Force coming down — even sometimes of its filling all parts — so what is this "never"? I did not at all mean that there is a mechanical process by which every time there is emptiness afterwards there comes an entire filling up. It depends on the stage of the sadhana. The emptiness may come often or stay long before there is any descent — what fills may be silence and peace or Force or Knowledge and they may fill only the mind or mind and heart or mind and heart and vital or all. But there is nothing fixed and mechanically regular about these two processes.

*When my nature is being voided of the old consciousness and its movements, why does the *tamas* rise up in greater waves than before?*

When the working is in the physical consciousness, it is the *tamas* which is the main physical force that comes in whenever it can.

*In such states of inertia does the higher action really retire and keep no contact with the being?*

It remains in contact, but not active, and you are not aware of it, because you are too much identified with the inertia.

*The emptiness is in the mind, vital and physical. But when the fullness comes, it is in the mind or at most in the mind and vital.*

That ought to be quite enough until you are ready for the fuller descent of the Force.

*Do you not think an entire fullness of the Force should come by this time?*

There is no should about it. It will come when you are ready for it and able to receive it.

*You had the emptiness for several years together. But yours seemed to be of a different kind than mine. For you could use it as a wall against anything undesirable.*

I never used it as a wall against anything. You seem to know more about my sadhana than I do.

*I recall that you wrote that whenever some undesirable activity came, you could retire into this emptiness and take refuge there.*

It is very strange if I wrote that; for certainly I never did anything of the kind. I don't even know what this "undesirable activity" can mean. The Nirvanic peace and calm has a perpetual support but not a refuge in which one can avoid the necessary struggle and play of forces that occur in the movement of transformation. These things can go on without breaking the supporting calm and peace.

*For the past few days, I feel much too void or neutral. But I try not to allow any feeling of unhappiness or dullness. For why should only a rapid progress or a flood of experiences be a source of delight and not an empty period which prepares that state of progress?*

There is no reason why the void should be a dull or unhappy condition. It is usually the habit of the mind and vital to associate happiness or interest only with activity, but the spiritual consciousness has no such limitations.

If it is real emptiness, one can last in it for years together, — it is because the vital is restless and full of desires (not empty) that it is like that. Also the physical mind is by no means at rest. If the desires were thrown out and the ego less active and the physical mind at rest knowledge would come from above in place of the physical mind's

stupidities, the vital mind would be calm and quiet and the Mother's Force take up the action and the higher consciousness begin to come down. That is the proper sequel of emptiness. But nothing of this has happened because the "emptiness" could not complete itself, that is to say, the true silence and peace —

There is no such thing as néant. By "void" is meant emptiness clear of all contents except existence pure and simple. Without that one cannot realise the silent Brahman.

To be an empty vessel is a very good thing if one knows how to make use of the emptiness.

*The emptiness felt in the mind and physical is calm and quiet. But in the vital, though peaceful, it seems to take a dynamic form. It acts like a powerful bellows and I have to concentrate on it in order to bear it.*

I don't see how emptiness can be like a bellows? Do you mean that there is a force that acts on the emptiness like a bellows or that there is a breathing. The latter often happens when a Force is being brought down and there is some difficulty.

*I feel only a powerful breathing but not the Force that is being brought down.*

You feel the process but not the Force that is acting. That is quite possible.

*Today's emptiness is greater than the last fullness! It sinks deeper and deeper. There is also a difference in the place it is felt. It has occupied the area between the navel and sex-centre.*

If it is only emptiness, there is nothing wrong. Alternations of emptiness and fullness are quite a normal feature of experience in sadhana.

*Every evening an increasingly greater emptiness comes in the mind, vital and physical. The vital feels it more deeply. What is this emptiness and why only in the evening?*

It is *the* emptiness, I suppose. I can't say why it comes in the evening. It is, I presume, a rhythm it has taken.

## TRANCE AND THE WAKING STATE

A waking state cannot be called trance, as the word trance refers specially to a condition in which the outer waking state disappears and the consciousness goes entirely inside.

*X told me that if one leaves the physical consciousness one can easily have the experience of the Brahman everywhere and in all things.*

If he means by leaving the physical consciousness going into samadhi that is not much use — it is the waking consciousness of the Brahman everywhere that is needed — and for that the physical consciousness must be there.

*During today's experience, even my body consciousness was so much submerged in peace and silence that had it not been for the last vestiges of my sense of the mind, it would have been a complete trance.*

Trance would be not sufficient — the waking consciousness must be the same.

*Why is trance not sufficient? Is it not my present need?*

It is not a trance but a new consciousness that is wanted.

*During the noon nap I sometimes enter into a vaster and more solid peace than during the waking state.*

That is why people used to seek it most in the samadhi. But for us it must be there both in sleep and waking.

*For the last two days there has been a strong urge to sleep at noon. Does the higher action on the body need this noon sleep? Normally I don't sleep at that time.*

Sometimes the pressure brings a tendency to go inside which takes the form of sleep.

*Can I not turn this push for sleep into something better than a mere unconscious sleep?*

It can only be either thrown off in favour of waking concentration or turned into some form of insideness (usually called samadhi).

*But how can this be when the pressure brings only slumber — an unconscious sleep?*

The slumber can change into insideness.

*Why does this pressure for sleep come?*

Such pressure only comes (1) when the body needs sleep, not having had enough or because enough rest is not given, (2) when it wants to recuperate after illness or strong fatigue, (3) when there is a pressure from above which the physical consciousness or part of it replies to by trying to go inside

*How can the slumber be changed into insideness?*

There is no device for it. It comes with the growth of the inner consciousness.

*Is our normal sleep such that the physical consciousness can go inside and reply to the higher pressure?*

No. But when the pressure gives a tendency to insideness (samadhi), the physical being, not being accustomed to go inside except in the way of sleep, translates this into a sense of sleepiness.

*I thought our sleep brought us down into the depths of the subconscious and inertia.*

That is the ordinary sleep, but under pressure of Yogic force sleep often gets a tendency to change into the Yogic *Swapna-samadhi*.

*To enter the trance I always have to pass through a sleep-state. But the mind felt as if the outer being disappeared even without needing to pass through a sleep-state, as was the normal process.*

Do you mean by the sleep state a state of dreaming sleep or swapna samadhi or what? It is not usual to go through ordinary sleep into trance, but one often enters into a state of swapna samadhi which can be mistaken for sleep.

*In our Yoga is not trance necessary? Does it not help in working out certain things?*

Yes; but it is not so important or indispensable as in other Yogas. But plenty of people have the easier forms of samadhi here.

*What are these easier forms of samadhi?*

The forms of swapna samadhi in which they go inside and are conscious and have visions and experiences within, but are unconscious of outer things.

*Why do some people get this kind of samadhi and not others?*

There is no fixed reason for these things. It depends on the turn of the nature,

*I seem to be passing through a strange phase. The sadhana stops and the pressure for noon-slumber starts. Would it be better to take half-an-hour's nap just after the pranam?*

Yes, especially if it turns out to be as pleasant as the noon sleep.

*Yesterday when I slept at noon, I found myself floating effortlessly in some other world where I had a fine experience. It was not a dream or a dream-vision.*

*This pressure for the noon-slumber is sweet, pleasant, deep and high. It lulls the entire nature except for the submind.*

Then why object? That is much better than submind and inertia.

*Until noon, the higher pressure was too strong. There was something in its nature by which I could neither attend to it nor study.*

Possibly the pressure was trying to put you into some kind of trance.

*But is not our work much more important than any number of trances or experiences?*

Trances and experiences have their value. There is no question of less or more important — each thing has its place.

*You asked me what I mean by a "waking state". I meant not quite an ordinary state but the one called swapna awasthā where one is aware of what happens inwardly, but is unconscious of the outer condition.*

That is not waking state; it is swapna samadhi.

*Today I was almost spellbound by the higher pressure and its calming effect. So I retired to my bed. I don't know if it was sleep or trance into which I fell. The only*

*thing I remember is that I was conscious of myself all the time but quite unaware of the surroundings. It lasted for one and a half hours.*

It was not sleep evidently.

*These days there is a descent of the Force which lasts from 10 a.m. until 2.30 p.m. When this movement does not take place due to depression or inertia, I feel a strong impulse to sleep at noon. But the sleep is not ordinary; it is spiritual and positive. What kind of sleep is this and why does it happen only under these circumstances?*

That is quite natural. The usual movement does not take place, but there is still a pressure habitual at the time under which the consciousness goes inside not into sleep but into some kind of samadhi in which a working takes place in the inner consciousness. As yet you have not developed the power of being conscious in this state nor the power of remembering what took place.

*Why does the tendency for sleep at noon come under these circumstances only?*

The tendency for sleep under such circumstances is always the same thing, the tendency of the physical consciousness to go inside under the pressure from above.

*Does the samadhi during the afternoon nap come to bring a greater emptiness or voidness than at other times?*

If you mean that after this kind of samadhi, you feel a greater emptiness or voidness, it is quite natural. To void the being of the old consciousness and its movements and to fill the mind from above are the two main processes now by the Force from above.

*Why do I have samadhi only during the noon sleep and not during the night sleep?*

Because at night the body needs and is accustomed to sleep as rest, not to sleep-samadhi.

*During the noon sleep, dreams come sometimes just as in the night sleep. Can it still be called a swapna-samadhi?*

It may pass into only a dream sometimes, — that often happens; there is a fluctuation between the two states.

*During yesterday's swapna-samadhi it became a little clearer why I am unable to record all that happens in the trance. When the consciousness rises, my mental Purusha can follow it only up to a certain distance on the higher planes, after which the consciousness flies away, leaving the mental Purusha behind.*

That is quite natural. The higher planes are not planes on which man is naturally conscious and he is even not open to their direct influence — only to some indirect influence from those nearest to the human mind. He can reach them only in a deep inner condition or trance and the higher he goes the less easy is it for him to be conscious of them even in trance. If you are not conscious of your inner being, then it is more difficult to be conscious in trance.

*Is it not possible for me to respond to the spiritual pressure without passing through a sleep in which I enter into samadhi?*

Samadhi is not a thing to be shunned — only it has to be made more and more conscious.

*While coming out of samadhi, my body was conscious for the first time that it had not been sleeping, but had passed into a certain inner state.*

That is a progress — the next step is to be conscious in the samadhi.

*The body also felt a new kind of energy, with a strength and intensity which I can only call spiritual.*

Good.

*Ordinarily it is said that samadhi does not bring any change in the outer being. But I think it is not so in the samadhi of our Yoga.*

There is no reason why samadhi should have no effect on the waking being.

*But why are some experiences received more easily in samadhi? I think one reason is that in samadhi our central consciousness gets separated from the mind no less than from the body.*

In samadhi it is the inner mental, vital, physical which are separated from the outer, no longer covered by it — therefore they can freely have inner experiences. The outer mind is either quiescent or in some way reflects or shares the experience. As for the central

consciousness being separated from all mind that would mean a complete trance without any recorded experiences.

*Why are certain things of the sadhana better worked out in samadhi than in the waking state?*

It is easier to do it in samadhi so long as the waking consciousness is not governed consciously by the inner being.

*In that case samadhi is a useful state even for our Yoga. But some time ago you wrote to me, "It is not the samadhi that is needed but a new consciousness."*

Certainly, samadhi is not barred from this Yoga. The fact that the Mother was always entering into it is proof enough of that. What I said then was not a general statement that samadhi is never needed and never helpful, but referred to your then need. Particular statements must not be converted by the mind into exclusive and absolute laws.

*How does a samadhi differ from a trance?*

Trance in English is usually used only for the deeper kinds of samadhi; but, as there is no other word, we have to use it for all kinds.

*Is it really too early for me to change the dream or sleep consciousness into a swapna-samadhi, or into a conscious and waking sadhana?*

All dream or sleep consciousness cannot be converted at once into conscious sadhana. That has to be done progressively. But your power of conscious samadhi must increase before this can be done.

*In samadhi the physical consciousness goes inside due to the pressure from above. What does it do after going in?*

It remains quiet within and supports by its quiescence the experiences of the other parts of the being or, if it is conscious, shares them. Or it sleeps and has dreams or else is quiet in sleep and by its quiescence supports the dream experiences of the mind and vital.

*The other day you asked me to be conscious in trance; I tried hard and this is the result: In trance I saw a Holy Woman entering a place where a few sadhakas were*

*assembled for her darshan. She went into a closed room where we were to go one by one. I noticed that everyone was allowed one or two minutes, as is done on our Darshan days. My turn was last.*

*In the centre of the room the Holy Woman was seated dressed in simple clothes. Without looking at her face I put my head on her lap. She placed her hands on my head and caressed me softly, meanwhile murmuring as if to herself: "Let him have..."; the last word of the sentence I caught quite distinctly then, but cannot recall now. It was the name of some spiritual power. No sooner had she said this than I felt a sudden rush of that power entering through my head.*

*After a few seconds she uttered the name of another power. This power struck me with a tremendous force — it was shattering in its intensity.*

*After a while I raised my head and looked at the Holy Woman for the first time. Her face appeared like the Mother's. Then I said to her, "May I ask you a question?" She did not seem to like this, but as she had not refused, I repeated the question. This time she said, "I don't like questions." (I wanted to inquire about the two gifts of different powers she had conferred on me.) Then I don't remember what I said. After a long time we both came back to consciousness, for we had both entered into a trance together. We knew it only when we asked the door-keeper how much time we had spent together. Afterwards I told her, "You must have entered into a trance and I simply followed you."*

*This whole phenomenon is beyond my understanding.*

*(1) Who was the Holy Woman?*

*(2) Why did she grant me the gifts of higher powers?*

*(3) Trance within trance! This is something new.*

Obviously the Holy Woman was the Mother herself in a supraphysical form. It was natural that she should not like questions — the Mother does not like mental questions very much at any time and least of all when she is giving meditation as she was doing in this experience. It is rather funny to ask "Why" (your eternal why) higher powers should be given. People do not question the gifts of the Shakti or demand reasons for her giving them, they are only too glad to get them. Trance within trance of course, since your sadhana was going on in the trance, according to the ways of trance. It is also in this way that it can go on in conscious sleep.

*Today the inner process of the sadhana began at 10.15 a.m. At 1 p.m. it turned first into samadhi and then trance. At 2.30 p.m. it came back again to samadhi and remained till 3.30. Then some parts of my being were in trance while others were in the higher consciousness. The deep intoxication of the samadhi is still there everywhere.*

*This time my consciousness went too deep into trance to be able to record anything, but I was quite aware of the sadhana which was going on during the samadhi, as much as one is aware of it out of samadhi. Is this distinction between samadhi and trance correct?*

Trance also is samadhi but deep samadhi.

*Whatever is experienced in the waking state leaves its effect upon the outer being; does the samadhi-experience act in the same way?*

Not necessarily, but it helps to prepare the inner being.

*The samadhi sometimes leaves a strong after-effect and sometimes nothing. For instance, yesterday the Mother brought down two kinds of Forces in my samadhi, and yet when all was over I did not feel anything in particular; while in today's samadhi there seemed to be no descent, and yet the outward effect was powerful enough to continue not only during the waking state but even during the working hours.*

It happens in both ways. When there is no outward effect, it means that it was something deep within meant for the preparation of the inner being.

*Should the trance become a normal state of our consciousness?*

No. It is the waking realisation of the inner consciousness separate from the outer that has to be the normal state. But it is the trance experience that is bringing this separateness.

*Sometimes a strong pressure to go into sleep or samadhi is felt. It is so compelling that no physical or mental activity can be attended to; but when I lie down, I can't sleep, nor do I go into samadhi.*

It is probably because there is a pressure from above but a contrary reaction comes from the ordinary consciousness and stops the sleep or samadhi.

*At night the working of the higher Force is rather strong; but just when a new and still higher pressure is felt on the head, the body feels an irresistible push to fall asleep.*

It interprets the new pressure as something to be met by going inside, I suppose, and the inward movement is sleep.

*In such circumstances, is it better to sleep or meditate?*

It depends on the nature of the sleep.

*The day before yesterday there was a prolonged tussle with the lower physical nature. I could not control the obscure forces which invaded, so I left the outer being. Then to my utter surprise I was pulled into an experience of stillness where I saw myself as a huge globe which was as wide as the universe. Its top was the sky and its bottom the earth. In that ball my being began to expand and tended to be as vast as the globe itself. This widening movement was recorded down to my inner physical.*

That is a symbolic experience of the cosmic consciousness — it is that widening which is still lacking in your experience of peace.

*Yesterday at 6 p.m. (which is not my usual time for trance) I felt very deeply some call from above and felt also that I must rise to it at once. Then my being fell into trance by itself. Kindly explain this experience.*

What is there to be explained in it? There was a call or pull from above which was drawing you into a state of trance.

*I think that what my inner being wants is complete separation from the outer being. But this is not possible at this stage during the waking meditation, so it takes refuge in trance. It must be difficult to have trance in a waking state.*

How do you mean trance in a waking state? Trance is a going inside away from the waking state. What corresponds to trance in the waking state would be a complete concentration indifferent to outward movements or else a silence of the whole being in Brahman realisation, the samahita state of the Gita.

*By "trance in a waking state" I meant that in order to enter the trance I have to pass through a state of sleep. But some people do not need this step — they simply sit and plunge into trance.*

That does not explain the phrase. Many people pass through sleep to trance.

*During today's noon sleep, intense waves of love were flowing out from me towards the Mother while she was giving me an interview. The Mother was holding me close to her. What was it — sleep or samadhi?*

If it was sleep, you must have got into the vital plane or some supraphysical plane and met the Mother there.

*During the samadhi states the Mother's Force was quite solid. During the waking state, however, the action induced a certain emptiness or voidness in my being, right down to the body. I am unable to say whether it was in the subtle body or the outer that the density was felt.*

It must be in the subtle body, for it is that one feels in trance or sleep — besides, if it were the physical body, the density would usually last for some time after waking.

*For the last three days the trance comes at noon. After it is over the dense energy it brings lasts up to the night. What is this dense energy?*

I don't know what it should be other than a form of the Force.

*For several days there was no trance. However, there was a continued sadhana.*

If there was a continued sadhana, it does not matter about the samadhi. The sadhana took another form, that is all.

*Now the pressure for the samadhi comes at the usual time, but there is no samadhi. If it is due to the rising of inertia, how is it that I can concentrate and live without effort in the higher consciousness but can't withdraw into samadhi?*

There is no answer to these hows and whys except that your consciousness has sufficiently developed the capacity to ascend into the higher consciousness so as to be able to do it at will, but has not to an equal extent developed the capacity of going into samadhi. But that is obvious and is simply the statement of the fact.

*In one letter you have written that the Mother always sees things when she goes into trance. Is it not natural for one to see things in trance, even though in the waking state one does not have even a single vision?*

Vision in trance is vision no less than vision in the waking state. It is only the condition of the recipient consciousness that varies — in one the waking consciousness shares in the vision, in the other it is excluded for the sake of greater facility and range in the inner experience. But in both it is the inner vision that sees.

## HIGHER KNOWLEDGE AND MENTAL KNOWLEDGE

*How is it that at times I feel myself in the proximity of knowledge and at times miles away from it?*

Neither knowledge nor anything else is constant at first — and even when it is there one cannot expect it to be always active. That comes afterwards.

*I understand that knowledge cannot be constant or active at all times. But why is it completely absent, even when silence is there?*

There is no definite reasoning why to these things.

*The Mother's peace and silence have pressed down on me from all sides. Why do I feel myself beyond the need even of knowledge?*

It is the condition of the silent self in which there is no need of knowledge or action.

*Is spiritual knowledge an active thing in itself?*

Yes. Active in an imperturbable calm.

*At times, when I bring down knowledge the intensity, depth and height of the silence are diminished.*

That must be because the mind becomes active instead of receiving the knowledge in silence.

*On one side the useless mechanical mind is active, while on the other the useful recording mind has fallen completely silent. It cannot do any thinking or even recording of the experiences!*

Perhaps it is waiting for a higher mind to act from above.

*My mental control seems to have been removed completely. So I miss the service of my mind proper (the intellect). I think, act, write only with the physical mind. This mind, since it is still undeveloped, is moved by the ordinary nature and its ignorance.*

*Is there no way to prevent my mind from being removed or falling neutral?*

It can come only by farther development and the activity of another kind of knowledge communicating itself to the physical and taking up gradually the functions of the mind in all its parts.

There is nothing out of the normal in what you describe — it happens in the course of the change of consciousness.

*The flow of the higher knowledge has been missing for a long time.*

It is probably because the physical mind has come up into activity and finds difficulty in receiving the knowledge.

*But even when the physical mind is quiescent and there is only silence, still the knowledge does not come.*

It is still the stuff of the physical mind which must receive it and, as that physical mind is too obscure, it does not come.

*I feel somewhere a dark veil which keeps the knowledge from descending. Is it a strain of inertia?*

It must be a mental inertia or tamas of some kind — perhaps in the physical brain.

*I find that no amount of knowledge and experiences has been able to decrease the strength of my external mind.*

Knowledge and experiences can change it only if they act within it and occupy it driving out the old things. The other way to get rid of it is to develop the psychic being and its power over the nature.

*Is it possible to change it by a direct higher action?*

It is possible if you can bring the direct higher action into this part of the consciousness or else let the Force pass there.

*From where does the higher knowledge descend — the knowledge that gives Truth?*

As for the knowledge in Yoga it comes first from the higher mind, but even that does not see the whole Truth, only sides of it.

*What are these sides? How many sides has the higher Truth?*

You will have to let it develop till you can see what the sides are. There is no limitation to one side or two or three, there may be a hundred.

*How many sides of a Truth can the higher mind and the illumined mind give at one time?*

There is no fixed number of sides. In fact the attempt to put such rules and limitations and to define the field of these higher things is useless; such an attempt is mental and ceases to have any meaning as one goes upward.

*What is the difference 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; it becomes more and more intense, clearly defined, dynamic and effective on the higher planes so much so as to change always the character and power of the knowledge.

*About the illumined mind, you wrote, "There begins to be a peculiar light and energy and ananda of knowledge." Could you kindly give me some idea of this light, energy and ananda?*

No. It has to be experienced first. Things that are above the ordinary mind (intellect) cannot be submitted to rules and descriptions.

*Is it true that the knowledge of the higher mind always brings down with it light and force in so far as they belong to its plane?*

Light, not necessarily force.

*You said that one has to go by stages. While rising above, some parts of the being ask, "Which plane should I attempt first?"*

It is not necessary for the parts of the being to understand mentally where they have to rise or determine that by the mind. That is determined by a higher power than the mind

and, if any knowledge comes, it must be from above or as a part of the ascending movement.

When you get the true intuitive plane, there will be no need for instructions or questions as to how to do sadhana. The sadhana will do itself under the light of the intuition.

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.

Absolute certitude about all things can only come from the supermind. Meanwhile one has to go on with what knowledge the other planes give.

*During the descent of the higher knowledge, at times I ask questions or show hesitation in accepting it as perfect. But this stops or interferes with the free flow of the knowledge. Afterwards I find it difficult to reconnect myself with the flow.*

Such questions should not be allowed to stop the flow. Afterwards one can consider them and get the answer. The knowledge that comes is not necessarily complete or perfect in expression, but it must be allowed to come freely and amplifications or corrections can be made afterwards.

## ANSWERING MY OWN QUESTIONS

*The suggestion came to me that it is due to ego that I have been trying to answer the questions I write to you.*

There may be an egoism in making answers according to one's own mental or vital preference — but there is no egoism in trying to get an answer inwardly from the source of Truth. One may not succeed perfectly because the consciousness is not perfect, but to be inactive and inert out of fear of error is not the right thing.

*But what about the ego getting into my answering the questions with the higher knowledge?*

The only thing necessary is to do the thing without the ego, but to stop doing it because the ego gets in would end in an entire inaction; for the ego can get into any action — into your asking questions from me as well *as into your* answering them yourself.

*Was there any egoism in my answers about the sadhana?*

Sometimes the ego may have mixed itself. Questions and answers in themselves are not egoistic.

*Now I feel a great disgust with my way of answering the questions myself. I seek permission to give it up in the future.*

How then do you propose to grow in consciousness and knowledge? Simply by reading my written answers? Unless something within you responds and sees what I mean and sees it in the right way. But that something can also get answers from within. The only safeguard necessary is that the answers should be placed before me so that if there is anything seriously incorrect it may be put right.

When what you write is correct, I say nothing — when it is your physical mind that brings in wrong ideas, I correct.

*Formerly you had to correct hardly anything I wrote! Why this difference between now and then?*

It is because you have come down from the mental into the physical — therefore the physical mind comes across the knowledge.

*If I am not able to answer my own mental questions properly, what shall I be able to answer? Are not the inner, subtle and higher questions even more difficult to answer?*

Certainly they are if you try to answer them mentally. In the things of the subtle kind having to do with the working of consciousness in the sadhana, one has to learn to feel and observe and see with the inner consciousness and to decide by the intuition with a plastic look on things which does not make set definitions and rules as one has to do in outward life.

*My inner being does not like this questioning business. It often gets tired of it since it is all mental. But what to do when the intuition is not available?*

So long as the outer mind is not quiet, it is impossible for intuition to develop. So if you want to go on asking intellectual questions about what is beyond the intellect until the intuition develops in spite of this activity, you will have to go on forever.

*Now I want to put aside mental questioning and return to knowledge. Was anything wrong in the way it was descending before?*

It was all right. It is not the way of descending that can be wrong — what one has to guard against is the mind making a wrong transcript of it or a lower mental mixture.

*For some time I have discontinued writing with the help of the higher knowledge because I found that there was an egoism lurking in the mind, which was answering my questions according to its own ideas.*

That is the mixture which has to be kept out.

*I wonder if you find some ego in the knowledge I am reporting to you. I did experience distinctly some restlessness in my consciousness while writing it down.*

There is a shade of ego in the tone perhaps but the substance has not been altered by it.

*I want to know why even the tone of the knowledge was influenced by the ego. What form of ego still has a hold on me?*

It is the sense of superiority in passing judgment on others that is still there, subconsciously at least.

*Now I know how to keep out the ego from the higher knowledge, but not the limitation. I can't express more than one or two sides of the truth and I lack an integral grasp over things.*

What is to be kept out is the ego. Limitation of knowledge will necessarily be there so long as there is not the fullest wideness from above; that does not matter.

## HUMAN DEFECTS AND KNOWLEDGE

*In order to bring down the higher knowledge, has one not to give up all one's mental desires and satisfactions?*

Yes, the human mind's activities very often come much in the way.

*Nine days ago, you pointed out to me a shade of ego in the tone of my expression of knowledge. Since then I have become attentive to that point. Do you find now some improvement?*

Yes.

*Usually it is my mind that determines the subject on which I write. But now I don't want the mind to do it, and suggest rather that you fix a subject on which the knowledge may express itself.*

No. The knowledge and the subjects on which it works have to come from within.

*You wrote, "It may have been a partial knowledge, but badly expressed by the mind." How did the knowledge become erroneous in the act of transmission?*

It comes through the mind, so the mind can always modify its expression unless it is entirely and absolutely still.

*About my mental defects you said, "They are more likely to go by an increasing capacity coming from above." Did they not disappear when the knowledge was descending?*

They did not disappear — they were only quiescent. However, your mental capacity has already increased by what knowledge came. For instance there is a great superiority to X in your understanding power which was not there at the beginning.

*The Mother's Force seems to be pressing strongly on my forehead. Is the resistance at the throat-centre still very strong?*

It has evidently diminished — otherwise so much knowledge would not be coming through.

*At the Pranam ceremony I am unable to fathom the mystery of the Mother's working: what she gives and how I receive it. What is the inner meaning of her touch on my head or her look into my eyes?*

You have to develop the inner intuitive response first — i.e. to think and perceive less with the mind and more with the inner consciousness. Most people do everything with the mind and how can the mind know? The mind depends on the senses for its knowledge.

*Sometimes it happens that the flow of knowledge starts from a certain kind of realisation or a deeper perception. But afterwards it develops and runs to other things which have no connection with the fundamental realisation or perception.*

Yes, it happens like that. A touch of realisation is enough to set the higher mind knowledge or the illumined mind knowledge flowing.

*While writing with the help of the knowledge, why do I so often write about lower movements rather than about higher things?*

It is the things which are practically necessary that the knowledge brings at the moment, I suppose.

*When one forgets oneself entirely and moves only in the Mother's consciousness, one actually feels whatever one thinks. This statement may appear strange to the limited human mind. But the experiences when sufficiently developed will prove its truth.*

Do you mean by "one actually feels whatever one thinks" that instead of knowing things only by thought one knows them by direct contact in the consciousness, a sort of concrete spiritual sense?

*Yes. I meant that.*

When the knowledge comes strongly from above, it very often brings its own language and the defects of the instrument are overcome. There are people who knew very little but when the knowledge began to flow they wrote wonderfully — when it was not flowing, their language became incorrect and ordinary.

*How is it that when the knowledge was descending in me I hardly felt myself inspired? It seemed like natural phenomena.*

The knowledge is not inspiration. I repeat that you did not write of it at that time as natural phenomena but as knowledge coming down. Your mind at the time was quite incapable of such knowledge or of expressing it as you did.

No poet feels his poetry as a "normal phenomenon" — he feels it as an inspiration — of course anybody could "make" poetry by learning the rules of prosody and a little practice. In fact many people write verse, but the poets are few. Who are the ordinary poets? There is no such thing as an ordinary poet.

Thought and expression always give one side of things; the thing is to see the whole but one can express only a part unless one writes a long essay. Most thinkers do not even see the whole, only sides and parts — that is why there is always conflict between philosophies and religions.

## THE HIGHER PLANES

*What is the source of peace, silence and knowledge?*

That comes from above the mind.

*As there is love and joy on the higher planes, is there not also devotion and surrender as in the psychic?*

There can be, but it is not inevitable as in the psychic. In the higher mind one may be too conscious of identity with the "Brahman" to have devotion or surrender.

*What is the position of the 7th centre in connection with the higher planes?*

The 7th centre is a place of communication with the higher planes of consciousness — the planes themselves are mostly above.

*What is the difference between a spiritual thing and a thing having the essential character of the higher consciousness?*

There are many things that are spiritual that are not the essence of the higher consciousness. All that tends towards the transformation and helps to prepare it is spiritual. Psychic sorrow is a spiritual movement, but sorrow is not part of the essential character of the higher consciousness. Resignation, the ego's submission to the divine will is a spiritual movement, but the higher consciousness has no need of resignation and a submitted ego is not a part of its essence, for it has no ego.

*You wrote that the planes between the Mind and Overmind came down long ago. But why do we not feel their presence here?*

Why should there be a "presence here", or in what sense? It is for each one to open to these levels in his own being when he is ready to do so.

*H has written something about the Overmind in his poems. He used to tell me about the falsehood and ignorance of the Overmind and of the possible dangers there.*

He certainly knew nothing about it by experience. There are no Overmind dangers — it is only the lower consciousness misusing overmind or higher consciousness intimations that can make a danger. There are also no Overmind Falsehoods. The Overmind is part

of the Ignorance in this sense that it is the highest knowledge to which the Ignorance can attain, but the knowledge is still divided and so can be a knowledge of parts and aspects of the Truth, not the integral knowledge. As such it can be misused and turned into falsehood by the Mind.

*When can one make an attempt at the Supermind?*

One has to go by stages and to reach and be conscious on the higher planes between mind and Overmind is already sufficiently difficult without insisting on Supermind as the immediate goal.

*Would you say something in brief about how the Supermind works on the earth consciousness in order to transform it?*

No. I have never written on that except in *Arya* and do not propose to start now. It would be mere words to the mind which would be likely to make its own wrong constructions about it. The sadhak should first get the higher consciousness down and know something by experience of the higher planes before trying to know what is the Supermind.

*What is the difference between spiritualisation and supramentalisation?*

Spiritualisation means the descent of the higher peace, force, light, knowledge, purity, Ananda etc. which belong to any of the higher planes from higher mind to Overmind, for in any of these the Self can be realised. It brings about a subjective transformation; the instrumental Nature is only so far transformed that it becomes an instrument for the Cosmic Divine to get some work done while the Self within remains calm and free and united to the Divine. But this is an incomplete individual transformation — the full transformation of the instrumental Nature can only come when the Supramental change takes place. Till then the nature remains full of many imperfections, but the Self in the higher planes does not mind them, as it is itself free and unaffected. The inner being down to the inner physical can also become free and unaffected. The Overmind itself is subject to limitations in the working of the effective knowledge, limitations in the working of the Power, subject to a partial and limited Truth, etc. It is only in the Supermind that the full Truth-consciousness comes into being.

*There is a popular idea here that whenever one experiences a rapid and powerful action from above, it is the Supermind preparing to descend — as if no such action was possible from the planes below the Supramental.*

Obviously — but it is so nice to think that at the first leap one is becoming a supramental being!

*When some people here feel a higher pressure they pronounce it to be of the Supermind!*

That is also so nice and self-flattering an idea.

## THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS AND FORCE

*It is said that in the beginning whatever comes down or develops is confined to the inner being. The outer is dealt with only after a long time.*

This does not mean that there should be no progress at all in the outer. One may not get the higher consciousness into the outer as yet, but that is no reason why one should not expunge from it whatever is of the nature of a wrong attitude.

*Is it only in this Yoga that difficulties must be rejected by all the parts of our being? Is it true that your Force alone cannot work them out, even if our inner being and outer mind are there to help the Force?*

It is not a question of "can" or "cannot" — it is a question of what is necessary for the true transformation. Theoretically the Force can transform you in one hundredth of a second from an animal to a god, but that would not be transformation or the working out of a spiritual evolution, it would be mere thaumaturgy, i.e. miracle-working without a significance or purpose.

*Is it true that the dynamic descent has resulted badly in some sadhaks?*

It seems to me that there are a fair number who have left because of that, like Bejoy, Nolinbehari etc. and others who fell in the same way, e.g. X. And yet that was not a full descent, but only a very little bit of a thing.

*Can one understand the Force before it descends?*

One may feel the Force above, for instance, and know what it is and even be governed by it before it has descended into the mind, heart, vital or body.

*Is there any force on the higher planes which is not dynamic in itself and may be distinguished as passive?*

A passive Force has no meaning — Force is always dynamic. Only a Force can act on a basis of calm passivity just as in the material world the Force acts on the basis of inertia.

*To live always above, behind or at least in the mind would be good for my nature as well as for the Mother's working in me.*

If you can do that, it will be good.... It will need a strong will on your part to do it.

There is no need to bring down the help — it is there. Whether it [the will] makes the help effective and affects the opposite forces depends on the perseverance. You can see for yourself that it has momentary effects, but it needs a sustained effort before the effect can be more than temporary.

Help is given in whatever way is necessary or possible. It is not limited to Force, Light, Knowledge.

It [the help] diminishes as one gets higher and higher or rather fuller and fuller, being replaced more and more by the automatic action of the Force.

*While working one can remain always separate within. Can one also remain separate while stationing oneself above?*

It can with difficulty [be done] (1) if he is always in trance, (2) if he does not want transformation of the rest of the nature, (3) if he cuts himself off from life and action, (4) if he does not allow anything in the lower being or the outer being to draw any part of his upgathered consciousness to go down or out from the upper silence.

*Even during these difficult times I can detach and separate myself from the mind and body and touch the pure self-consciousness above. But such experiences do not last long; the ascent is not complete and there is a strong pull from below.*

That is to be expected. It is only if one gains the wideness of the infinite Self that one can remain above — or, if all the parts of the being share in the peace and freedom of the self.

## INNER BEING AND THE SELF-REALISATION

*Is not our lack of wideness because the inner being is seized by inertia and ego?*

Yes, I suppose so.

A complete silence makes realisation of the Self more possible — but that can be had on the Higher Mind level far below Overmind.

*I can understand that the psychic development and the conquest of ego would have been easier if I had lived in the inner being rather than in the higher. But how would the widening of the consciousness have been easier? Is not the higher being wide and infinite in itself?*

Do you realise it as wide and infinite? When you are there do you feel spread through infinity? Do you feel all the universe within you, yourself one with the self of all beings? Do you feel the one cosmic Force acting everywhere? Do you feel your mind one with the cosmic mind? your life one with the cosmic life? your matter one with the cosmic Matter? separative ego unreal? the body no longer a limitation? What is the use of merely arguing that the higher being is wide and infinite? Do these realisations come when you are in the higher being and if not why not? The inner being easily opens to all these realisations, the outer does not. So unless your inner being becomes conscious of itself, the mere ascent gives only height or some vague sense of other planes, not these concrete realisations.

*At times my experience is as if my mind, life and body have shifted away from me or from their old lodging.*

It means only that the consciousness has gone above.

*Until yesterday, whenever I felt myself above, my station was just above the head. But now I find myself about afoot higher than the head.*

“Above” the head means higher than the head. You meant that you were on the top of the head?

*At times, the whole of my consciousness feels like a single block situated below the head. It then rises up, as a wooden block rises up from beneath the sea. After the ascent it experiences itself as moving there as a part of the higher consciousness.*

*Then it experiences positively — not merely feels — that it truly is the Self. It experiences all this with such an intensity that I can't refuse to believe it.*

That is the ascent of the lower consciousness to meet the Above consciousness. Such ascent usually prepares the lower parts to receive the descent from above.

*This morning, during the meditation, I felt concretely that I am stationed above the head; it is from that centre that I do my inner sadhana, aspire, will or bring down things.*

That is the proper station of the consciousness.

*When there, I feel myself made up more of solid peace, silence, force, than of bones, flesh or skin.*

You are there the Self or Purusha, spiritual in consciousness and the spiritual consciousness is made of peace, force, silence and in its greater intensities of light and ananda also.

*Above the head I see a plane of infinite and eternal Peace. The Mother is the Queen of this world. From there I feel an unceasing flow coming down towards me. It first touches my higher being and passes through it without any resistance. But on its way downwards the flow narrows to a small current which passes through the Brahmic hole. How do you find this description?*

That is quite correct. In many however it descends in a mass through the whole head and not in a current through the Brahmic hole.

*That is the usual movement of the descent. But at times I experience that the plane of Peace and Silence, and my higher and inner consciousness are as if packed together, one and inseparable.*

This is felt in the consciousness only or through the whole body? Or does it ever extend through space, space becoming identical with your own consciousness?

*Some suggestions say, "You remain on the higher station satisfied with its peace and silence and do practically nothing for the parts below." Is it correct?*

Not altogether, but the higher peace and silence has to come down fully and not merely remain above — so the other contents of the higher consciousness may have a chance of descending too and stabilising themselves.

*In the integral Yoga what is the place of the capacity for rising above?*

Both ascent and descent are necessary.

*That capacity does not seem to be so easy to acquire for those who do not shut themselves up in a room.*

It is not necessary to be shut up in order to have it. Many go up but cannot stay there. Some open into the wideness before they undertake a higher ascent. You have risen above but you have not yet opened into the Brahman consciousness where one begins to lose the ego.

*What is the Brahman Consciousness and where is it spread out?*

In the wideness of the Self and of the universal Divine Consciousness — these two together are the Brahman consciousness.

*I have asked so many questions about dwelling on the higher planes. I want to know now if you want me to come down from the above-station into the inner being.*

No. That is not the point.

I have said that the higher station must be accompanied by the action on the inner being. You have to stabilise peace everywhere, to separate from the outer disturbances, to establish such a condition that it would be possible for the Force to descend and work on the outer to get rid of the persistent difficulties there.

*Some of the outer parts of my being feel it is no use being stationed on the higher plane. It has brought no change in the nature.*

Do they think they will get changed quicker by not living in the higher consciousness at all?

Nobody said that you should not take the higher being as a first station. The question was about enforcing the peace of the higher being on the lower parts down to the physical so as (1) to create that separateness which could prevent the inner being

affected by the superficial disturbance and resistance, (2) to make it easier for the force and other powers of the higher being to descend.

*Now I find that I have stayed too long above and did not work enough for the inner development, not to speak of the outer.*

It is a thing that can be done for a time so as to strengthen the capacity for remaining above — but if the lower consciousness is left to itself there can be no transformation. The higher position has to be used for bringing down the higher forces below.

*From the higher station shall I start working on the inner being?*

It may be better to let the general pressure proceed as it has been doing.

*What is this general pressure?*

The pressure of the Force.

## THE DYNAMIC DESCENT AND THE LOWER NATURE

*You will agree that it is just a dynamic descent of the Force that is wanting; my being is already prepared.*

Except for the recurrent difficulty of the vital and the ego.

*Cannot the descent take place in spite of that?*

Not fully. There are alternations of descent and interruption of descent.

*If there are no descents from the higher planes, how are these difficulties to go? I thought it was the descents that would work on them and bring about the necessary change.*

Descents there can be, but not the permanent descent.

*Cannot the descent be used for lessening or destroying the ego and its desires?*

That is its proper working, but if the ego is not rejected, then the wrong use may take place.

*If the proper working of the descent is to lessen or destroy the ego, where does the question of rejection or wrong use come in?*

The sadhaka is not an automaton. He can receive the force wrongly, use it for his ego. Do you think only proper workings take place in the world and improper workings never happen? What kind of question is this?

*I thought the descent would give us more strength to reject wrong things.*

It gives more force, but the force can be misused, as it has been misused by many.

*I would very much like to know why the dynamic descent is prevented or obstructed.*

It is, I suppose, because the greater part of the nature is accustomed to identify dynamism with the movements of the ordinary consciousness and to let these have free play.

It [the dynamic descent] tries to come, but the habit of falling back into the physical inertia is still too strong.

I suppose it [the dynamic descent] is waiting for you to bring it down.

*I cannot understand how physical inertia prevents the dynamic descent. I thought it would rather relieve me from inertia, ego and vital difficulties.*

If the habit of the ordinary nature is not any obstacle to the descent then what is the need of sadhana? What prevents the whole higher consciousness from coming down and changing you into a superman in one second? It is because the things of the lower nature offer an obstinate resistance that long sadhana is necessary.

*Are not the dynamic means necessary for turning *tamas* into *shama* (repose, peace)?*

The dynamic means are not necessary for that — they are needed for bringing *tapas* into *shama* and they are useful for repelling the obstruction of inertia to other lines of progress.

*Can all the parts of the outer being accept a complete peace without any helping action of the higher Force?*

Yes, if you mean without any *descent* of the dynamic Force. Action of the higher Force is implied in all spiritual change, but it may be an action without dynamic descent.

*After rising to a certain height, I feel I cannot go beyond. What is the cause?*

Probably because there is too much drag from below. As the lower drag diminishes, one can go higher.

*The Force gets diffused a few minutes after its descent.*

Because of the mass of inertia, I suppose.

*Could we not press it a little more so that it may come down earlier?*

It can be pressed.

The Force is there, but the Force is not going to push and trundle you along while you loll back and allow the vital and the inertia to play with you.

*In which part of my being is the Force present?*

It is not in the being. It is there with you and near you ready to act whenever your nature will allow it. It is so with everybody here.

One feels the Force only when one is in conscious contact with it.

*Peace flows into me freely and abundantly, especially in the evening. But why does it not turn into a dynamic peace or bring a Force along with it?*

Peace is the first condition, but peace of itself does not bring Force — it is a receptacle of Force, not a bringer of Force.

All that is true is that peace, calm, purity are the proper basis of the descent of Force and if Force comes before the peace, calm, purity are sufficient, it may not be safe.

## A HIGHER PROCESS IN THE SADHANA

*Is this not a period of rest in which the higher Force prepares my nature for a new opening while the assimilation of the previous descent is still going on?*

It is often so.

*Some parts of the being feel tired of the peace as it never brings anything but passivity!*

It is very stupid of these parts to be tired of Peace. Would restlessness be better? Without Peace either Force cannot descend or it would be a mixed or Asuric force.

*What is this tremendously passive state that has come to me?*

Probably only as a preliminary to the dynamic descent.

*Yesterday my state was all peace and silence — an entire stillness. But nothing more. Today, along with yesterday's condition, I feel strong vibrations of the Force — not only above the head but as if around my whole body. Has a dynamic Force started to work?*

Evidently, if you feel its vibrations round you.

*Today the action of the Force was felt above the head and on the face and hands, but only while I was strongly concentrated on it. Instead of increasing its field of action, why such a restraint in its movement?*

There seems to be a special difficulty about the Force descending. It must be that something in the vital is not ready.

*Often a new thing descends from above, increases in power for a time, then begins to disperse and finally fades away completely.*

It is because only a part of the being receives it and only as an experience, not as a settled or a dynamic realisation in the nature — even in that part of the nature.

Merely to have experiences of the higher consciousness will not change the nature. Either the higher consciousness has to make a dynamic descent into the whole being and change it — or it must establish itself in the inner being down to the inner physical

so that the latter feels itself separate from the outer and is able to act freely upon it — or the psychic must come forward and change the nature — or the inner will must awake and force the nature to change. These are the four ways in which change can be brought about.

*What happened to the dynamic descent? I thought something was trying to remove the obstacle it met in the physical mind and heart centres.*

Such a working does not always immediately fulfil the object. It works and waits and works again and that may go on for a long time.

*What good is this dynamic descent if it needs years and years merely to touch the heart centre? Just what is this dynamic descent?*

It is a thing which is new and has to be worked out by this Yoga.

*Why such a long period of emptiness after a descent?*

There is no special why, it is a process of the consciousness in the preparation of the lower by the higher.

It is true that the preparation is going on and much progress has been made.

*After a descent into the physical, why is there a long period of emptiness? If it is for assimilation, cannot the other parts, — mind, vital and the higher consciousness — continue their normal progress?*

No, it is not done in that way.

*The higher Force cannot descend fully and permanently unless the ground is well laid out and secured. But our attempts to make it descend are always fruitful. Either a part of the Force comes down or it at least sends a pressure which is felt like a generating power. This pressure cuts asunder the obstructing veils between the higher nature and ours.*

Yes.

*A Force is felt in the body. But as it is not tangible, I am not sure if it has really come inside the body. It is said that when the Force works in the physical, it has to be tangible.*

Don't understand — the Force can be felt above, around, or anywhere else and yet be quite tangible. If it is felt in the body, then it must be in the body.

## HEAVY PRESSURE ON THE HEAD

*I sit up to the end of the Pranam ceremony in the Meditation Hall. A strong pressure is felt just when I stand up. It is like a heavy load pressing me down to the floor.*

It must be the pressure of the Force present there which you feel at that moment because of some shifting of the consciousness at the moment of preparing to go.

There is a certain state of consciousness while sitting there [in the Meditation Hall] in which one is under the Force but does not feel it as a pressure because there is a sufficient assimilation of the Force. When one rises there is a change of consciousness and the Force is felt as a pressure. As soon as the transition to the ordinary consciousness is complete, the pressure is no longer there.

*During this period in the Hall, the higher things or experiences are felt either above or in the body. My mind and vital seem to be kept aside!*

That is because it is in the physical that they have to be established.

*Is such a state of consciousness always there in the Hall? Does everybody there always come under that Force?*

No — there are plenty who are not in that state. The same person may be in one day and not be in another day.

*While meditating in my room, I feel a tremendous heaviness on the head — a mighty pressure. Whenever I get up from the chair, it is disturbed because it gets shaken. This affects the whole being.*

It is probably a weight of the higher consciousness or its force there. I don't know why it gets shaken by getting up. If its presence were dependent on the concentration and stillness in the body, that would be quite understandable, but you say it is there all the time.

*This heaviness on the head and forehead is constant, while other pressures of different kinds knock there only at times. The heaviness is not passive even when I am not working. It seems rather powerfully active. Even my teeth feel as if they have something like a dynamic force in them! Is such writing of small details necessary for your work?*

Yes, it is better to write them.

*What was the reason for the higher consciousness remaining in the form of a heavy pressure on the head? Could not something of it come down?*

It depends on what is pressing and also it may depend on the condition of the consciousness.

*By the descent we usually mean something that comes down up to the physical consciousness, otherwise it would not be a full descent.*

Descent means into the centres and their field — the descent would therefore be registered in the body, but that would not necessarily mean that it had come down in the physical consciousness. When the descent is in the head that means that it is in the mind — not in the physical consciousness.

*When does the full descent take place?*

It comes down when things have been made ready for it.

*If a higher descent is not felt or if it is stopped on its way, could it still be called descent?*

If a descent is not felt, one cannot know that there was a descent, so no question about it can arise — unless one knows that there has been an unfelt descent by the results it leaves behind. Also its descending only up to the mental or other level and no farther does not make it a non-descent.

*The previous descent came down only up to the mind centre.*

I suppose so.

*If so, I wonder what was new in it. We know that there had already been a descent into the mind centre long ago.*

I don't know what was new in it — but the descent is not always of the same things, it may bring or try to bring new things that were not there before or it may bring more of the force or peace or anything else that was descending or had come in the former descents.

*The higher pressures are becoming sharp and powerful. They have occupied not only the Brahmic centre but the whole head and forehead.*

Good.

*If I were to judge the higher working by the quality of subtle sounds, I would say it is increasing all the time. What do you say?*

The working is all the time for its increase.

*Sometimes the higher Power presses my head so much that it is extremely difficult to use my hand for writing. In such a condition, could I stop my correspondence for the time being?*

No, it is better to write.

*When there is a good opening to the higher things, sometimes the Force descends like an armour down to my navel centre.*

When you say like an armour, do you mean that you feel it outside you and surrounding you, but not within the body?

*At times it is hard to distinguish a pressure of the Force from the Force itself.*

The pressure is of the Force, it is not the Force itself. The Force is felt as a Power and not merely a pressure.

## AGNI AND THE PSYCHIC FIRE

*During the evening meditation, when concentrated above, I felt the Agni [Fire] of the Higher Consciousness coming down and uniting below with the psychic fire. Their oneness was experienced deep down in the heart centre. I have never heard of such a unity of the two fires.*

If the development of a higher consciousness did not bring things that were not before heard of by the mind, it would not be good for much. The unification of the psychic and the higher consciousness forces and activities is indispensable for the sadhana at one time or another.

*What about the dynamic descent we have been discussing of late? Are my peace and silence not enough to keep up the descent? It seems that such a descent is absolutely necessary at present; it will help me to bring active sadhana into the work also.*

As for the dynamic descent, you say that the Force has descended to your forehead (inner mind) centre. It seems to be very slow in coming through. It has to come down to the heart centre and below before it can begin to be fully effective. Probably there must be something either in the physical mental (throat) [or] the emotional vital that obstructs the descent. That may be the reason of the union of the upper Agni and the psychic fire and the push in the psychic centre — something is trying to remove the difficulty.

*When I become conscious of the Fire or of Mother's Force, my heart feels a great fire deep in itself. Though the centre of the fire is in the human heart, it is not confined to my being. It is experienced as a vast and limitless fire stretching out everywhere.*

It is so that all that belongs to the spiritual consciousness is experienced. One's own self and consciousness is felt like that, something vast and limitless and stretched out everywhere, — so too the force and everything else. It is in that universality that all special action in one's own mind and body or in others takes place.

*I awoke at 4 a.m. with powerful pressures on the head. The body felt weak, sluggish and unusually warm. In short, its condition was no better than that of one suffering from a high fever. Such higher pressures I have never had before. It seemed like*

*burning coal pressing down! Was there really any descent that gave the material being a cause for such strong resistance?*

It must have been if you felt it so. The feeling of fever, as of headache, can often be the body's misinterpretation of the tapas heat and pressure and working, and this misinterpretation may develop some fever or headache. If the mind can convert the body feeling then it can pass away as a mere feeling of heaviness or of heat in the body.

*Did the body make a fuss because the descent took place during the night?*

I suppose so.

*Is the heat felt in the body due to the fever I am having or to the Mother's Force, which has put a tremendous pressure on the adhar?*

That has still to be seen. It is most probably the tapas heat; the question is whether it is turned partially in the body into fever.

*This morning some of my physical parts experienced much heat while other parts were cold. Was the heat from the Agni and the cold from the calm peace?*

It is probably that.

*A strong higher working has started between my thighs and the soles of the feet. The Peace, Force and stillness are there. At times there is a sense of Agni also in it. In another experience I felt the Mother's working as a burning fountain in the arms and the feet.*

Very good.

*On the spiritual path there are few things that are really abnormal. It is rather the habit of our ego or ignorance to take any new step, pressure or experience as something rare and miraculous.*

Obviously.

A certain exaltation of the being comes naturally with the stronger experiences and the sense of marvel or miracle may go with it, but there should be no egoistic feeling in the exaltation.

*Did the descent of the new Force come before or after the Pranam ceremony? I saw some signs of it when I went for the Mother's Blessings.*

That you must know best. Yesterday [16-9-36] the Mother put the new Force that came down on everyone. Each had his own reaction.

*At pranam my vital felt that the Mother was not so pleased with me.*

That means that it felt the new Force that had come down and did not like it.

Nobody can prevent it [the new Force] from entering, if you accept it.

*If the Force is not received completely, is there any chance of its being withdrawn?*

It has not "withdrawn" — it is in the atmosphere permanently.

## PROCESS OF BRINGING DOWN THE HIGHER FORCE

*When there is a spiritual emptiness I call down or draw the Mother's Force in order to fill it. Do you have any objection to this process?*

No. It is all right.

*Whenever possible should I draw down the Mother's Force?*

Yes, you can do so.

*When I make an attempt at drawing down the Force, I experience it as much in my body as above the head. It seems to be a very dense and powerful Force.*

Very good.

*Drawing the Force has a good effect on my lower nature which feels it as a pressure for change. Shall I continue it?*

Yes — it is better than being always passive.

*Yesterday's experience of drawing down the Mother's Force was rather unusual. It did not come down when I used my personal efforts but only afterwards, when I had forgotten all about it! However, when it did descend, some concentration was needed to sustain it. I do not know how my body will stand this process; please tell me if I am to continue it.*

You can do so and see what the result is — whether the physical accommodates itself, etc.

*When the peace descends, especially in the evening, should I try to draw down the Mother's Force with it by active means? Is there any fear of the descending peace getting disturbed by that?*

If it is done in the wrong way it may — i.e. if it is not done quietly.

One must be able to keep as well as pull.

*Usually absence of an active sadhana means for me the prominence of inertia. But today I noticed rajas in full action supported by the inertia. The vital was restless,*

*agitated and wanted activity, like talking etc. The inner being was feeling void since it could not supply as much energy as the vital being needed. Could you kindly explain such a reaction?*

It may be because you have been bringing down Force. So the vital got a reaction, "Let me be forceful and active too." Or it may be that some force reached the subconscious and got deposited and the vital took it and turned it into talking etc. Or it may be — well, a hundred other things.

*You said, "It means that you are evidently not able to remain there and until you can, it is not possible to send down things from there." At present I cannot remain in the higher consciousness all the time. But as long as I can, is it not possible to send down the higher things without my accompanying them?*

If you are not able to stay a sufficiently long time that means you have not a secure seat there, so if you send down things you are likely to come down too with them. But that would perhaps not matter if you kept the thing with which you came down!

*Sometimes the higher action is too strong to let me write or even read your letters. I wonder why it takes my consciousness away even from mental activities.*

That is quite natural. The higher action is not mental so it brings something else than the mental. When the mind is transformed, then it will be different.

*To my question why the higher action does not take place at times even when my state seems to be quite good, you replied, "Cannot say. These things, as I have told you, depend on the general state of consciousness and the mind cannot always determine that for this or for that it happened or did not happen. One has to go on till it does happen." Could you clarify what you mean by the general "condition". Does it not mean the surface state of our consciousness?*

The general "condition" does not mean, in my sentence, the surface condition as known to you. It contains many things in it unknown to you. What comes from above can come when one is in a clear mind or when the vital is disturbed, when one is meditating or when one is moving about, when one is working or when one is doing nothing. Most often it comes in a clear concentrated state, but it may not; there is no absolute rule. Moreover the pull or call may produce no immediate effect and yet there may be an effect when one is no longer actually pulling or calling. All these mental reasons alleged

for its coming or going are too rigid — sometimes they apply, very often they don't apply. One has to have faith, confidence, aspiration, but one cannot bind down the Force as to when, how and why it will act.

*I asked you if it was possible to change the mechanical mind by a direct higher action. Your reply was, "It is possible if you can bring the direct higher action into this part of the consciousness or else let the Force pass there." Well, I have often concentrated the higher Force there, but there is no change whatever.*

It is a question not merely of concentrating but of bringing the Force into that part and keeping it there long enough to bring light and silence. If the Force does not pass there, it means that something obstructs and does not let it pass.

*The whole of my human nature was under a blaze of suggestions and attacks not only from the vital but also from the subconscious. The resulting depression was stronger than ever before. For about twenty minutes I was almost unconscious. When I came back to awareness, I found that a strong process was already taking place — as if the Mother had come to my rescue. She was bringing down force after force into my lower nature. She looked as if in wrath that the powers of falsehood should trouble her child so constantly! I remained in my chair to allow the Mother's forces to work. This process continued for about two hours. Is my above description correct?*

It seems to be correct.

*Anything to say about my cooperation with the Mother's process of bringing down the forces?*

It was all right.

*Should I busy myself with such processes? If so, how often?*

You might do it once at first. We will see afterwards.

*After the withdrawal of the process, there surged up a new and a greater resistance.*

That is quite normal. The lower movements, especially after holding the field so long, are bound to resist.

*Even after the process did its work, I still feel the lower resistance.*

You cannot expect to get rid of it in a single day. Persistence is needed.

*There is an attempt to keep a part of my human consciousness on the higher plane, so that at least half of myself stays exclusively in the Mother's Consciousness and so that her Force can work freely through this part into my whole nature.*

Yes, that would be very good.

*After receiving the Mother's touch at the Pranam I found myself in the higher consciousness. I was there from morning till 1 p.m. Today I felt that the movement of sending down the Force was a little different than before — I had not to take active part in it. I simply watched how the Mother's Force was moving from above downwards, as if in calm waves. Once it was experienced as an armour shielding my body from head to foot. It remained thus for about half an hour. Can it be called a process? I am not able to understand the movement of the descending Force.*

Of course it can be called a process. But it is the natural and right movement of the descent of Force. I do not see what there is that is not understandable. The Silence or the Force or whatever comes down is at first felt above and then in the mind also, but it must descend afterwards into the heart and vital and physical and everywhere else within and around, if it is to do its work.

*In spite of that process, how is it my vital and physical mind do not yet turn away from the lower nature?*

What I said was, it could not be done at once — e.g. by a single descent. Whatever the process or movement the lower nature takes time to receive. What is first necessary is to get down the higher consciousness into all the inner being down to the inner physical and live in that, so that anything lower should be quite superficial and unable to invade or trouble.

*You wrote, "But it was the natural and right movement of the descent of Force. I don't see what is there that is not understandable." I felt the Force like a whole armour at a standstill, whereas the action of the Force the other day was quite different. At that time I felt the forces descending one by one and meeting the lower resistance. Therefore I could not understand what this armour-like stillness was — whether it was only remaining still or passing into processes.*

If there was stillness like an armour, a Force merely at a standstill and like a whole armour — what ground has the mind for speculating whether it is passing into processes? The experience must be taken as it is — the mind ought not to speculate whether it is not something quite different from what the observation sees it to be. Because the Force descends one day as an active and aggressive force, it does not follow that it cannot descend another day as a static and defensive one.

*But you have still not explained what was the “natural and right movement” of the Force.*

You do not seem to notice what you yourself have written. You said that it came without pulling — and I replied that was quite a natural and right process. You said nothing till afterwards about one descent being active, the other still. A descent is a process whatever the result. But a “passing to processes” in the sense of being active and aggressive against the lower nature movements is quite a different thing, and you wrote about that afterwards only. I never said anything in my first letter about passing to processes.

*Even if the Force which descended was at an absolute standstill, it must have, been doing something — not in a human but in an inner or mystic sense. When something descends in us, it is not merely to be motionless in us.*

There was no necessity of its doing anything. It came to fill the stillness with force and itself became still though with a forceful stillness.

# PART VII

## VISIONS AND VOICES

*I am not able to understand the varying subtle smells coming from some people. I used to get a strong bad smell from X. Then it stopped. Now again it is coming.*

The smell is due to something in the person's vital-physical. That something may not be prominent at all times. When it is, the smell is there.

*What is this something in the vital physical?*

I wrote that the something may be of different kinds in different cases and one cannot give a rule that it is this or it is that. What has the dirtiest smell is sex.

*Has this subtle smell any connection with sadhana?*

It isn't connected with one's sadhana. It is a part of the character, quite noticeable in those who do no sadhana.

*When certain people pass by me, their influence falls on my environmental consciousness like a shadow. Something in me can discriminate whether the influence is good or bad, pure or impure etc. But still I cannot be sure of my judgment as I am not a mature Yogi.*

The consciousness of these things is intended for knowledge — a psycho-occult knowledge, necessary for the fullness of consciousness and experience. It is not intended that what is felt should be allowed to become an influence, whether a good one or a bad one.

*In meditation I saw three flowers of "Divine Ananda" hanging from a bower. Some time ago there was a similar vision of the three flowers of "Divine Love" offered to the Mother. Has this any correspondence with my sadhana?*

It is not quite clear what this number 3 means in this connection. Possibly it is the aspiration for the divine's love in the three parts of the being.

*During yesterday's dream, while plucking flowers I found two hidden flowers of "Surrender". I plucked them immediately.*

Well, they mean surrender; hiding will mean withholding themselves still.

*In meditation I saw the Mother distributing the flowers called "Aspiration for the Divine". But as it was the Darshan day there were many visitors and the flowers were exhausted when my turn came. So she gave me an incense stick. What does it symbolise?*

The incense stick is the symbol of self-consecration.

*At about 2 o'clock this afternoon I heard something like this: "Rise from thy slumber. Tamas and ego are in everybody, do not be disappointed. You are a child of the Mother. Rush forward with her fire. The psychicisation of the nature is certain, have faith and confidence in her." From where and whom did this voice come?*

It is an inner voice, evidently, but from where or whom it comes is not clear — anyway, the advice is good.

*The inner voices give us a truth and a command. But books also can do that. The former must also bring the necessary force. Perhaps we don't get it because some veil between the inner and the outer being hinders it.*

The inner voice is a voice only — it may give direction, but not the force. A voice speaks, it does not act. There is a great difference between reading a book and receiving the inner direction.

*I wrote to you about the subtle sounds heard by my ears. But now I hear very loud sounds in the head also. These are different not only in pitch but also in their character. They are of two types which, ring simultaneously and yet separately. The latter increases when I use will-power or draw on the Mother's Force.*

They are frequently heard when the force of sadhana is strong — I suppose they are sounds made by the vibration of subtle forces.

*Has my opening to the subtle sounds, smells and tastes any importance for the progress of my sadhana?*

They were merely signs of the opening. Their becoming of importance depends upon the development of the occult knowledge and powers.

*How is it that there has been no development of knowledge and powers since the opening of the subtle faculty two years ago?*

It was not an opening of occult knowledge and powers, but simply an opening of the inner consciousness.

*In your book Bases of Yoga one reads, "It is with the Mother who is always with you and in you that you converse." Will you kindly explain how the sadhak in question converses with her?*

One hears the voice or the thought speaking inwardly and one answers inwardly. Only it is not always safe for the sadhak if there is any insincerity of ego, desire, vanity, ambition in him — for then he may construct a voice or thought in his mind and ascribe it to the Mother and it will say to him pleasing and flattering things which mislead him. Or he may mistake some other Voice for the Mother's.

*L told me that she had been in touch with the Mother long before she came here. She saw the Mother not only in meditation and vision, but in a waking state with open eyes. She also said that when she was in difficulty, Mother would appear and tell her what to do. Do not these experiences indicate an advanced sadhana?*

She has not related them to us. But there is nothing improbable in it. It means simply that she externalised her inner vision and experience so as to see through the physical eyes also, but it was the inner vision that saw and the inner hearing that heard, not the physical sight or hearing. That is common enough. It does not indicate an "advanced" sadhana, whatever that phrase may mean, but only a special faculty.

*This kind of inwardly visible contact with the Mother and her clear guidance seems to be unique. I wonder how many sadhaks here have developed it.*

These things are extremely common among those who practise Yoga everywhere. In this Ashram the sadhaks are too intelligent, sceptical and matter of fact to have a mind of that kind of experience. Even those who might develop it are hampered by the outward-mindedness and physical-mindedness that dominates the atmosphere.

It is quite usual at a certain stage of the sadhana for people who have the faculty to see or hear the Devata of their worship and to receive constant directions from him or her with regard either to action or sadhana. Defects and difficulties may remain, but that does not prevent the direct guidance from being a fact. The necessity of the Guru in such cases is to see that it is the right experience, the right voice or vision — for it is possible for a false guidance to come as it did with Nolinbehari and Bijoy.

*Are not peace, purity, surrender, etc. what is wanted of an integral sadhak? These are the real spiritual aids, visions and voices are only helpful to build faith in us, and no more.*

Visions and voices are not meant for creating faith; they are effective only if one has faith already.

You take a very utilitarian view of spiritual things. Whatever develops in the sadhana, provided it is genuine, has its place in the total experience and knowledge. A knowledge of the occult worlds and occult forces and phenomena has its place also. Visions and voices are only a small part of that vast realm of occult experience. As for utility, for one who has intelligence and discrimination, visions etc. have many uses — but very little use for those who have no discrimination or understanding.

Visions and voices have their place when they are the genuine visions and the true voices. Naturally, they are not the realisations but only a step on the way and one has not to get shut up in them or take all as of value.

People who have the occult faculty always tend to give too large a place to it.

*I suppose this capacity for visions and voices is by no means a sign of progress in itself.*

What do you mean by progress? The Mother spent many years entering the occult worlds and learning all that was to be learnt there. All that time she was making no progress? She sees things always when she goes into trance. Her capacity is a thing of no value? Because a great number of people don't know how to use these faculties or misuse them or give them excessive value or nourish their ego by them, does it follow that these faculties themselves have no Yogic use or value?

Even by itself it [the capacity for visions and voices] is a progress in the development of the consciousness, though it may not carry with it any spiritualisation of the nature.

I do not know what you mean by practical sadhana. If one develops the occult faculty and the occult experience and knowledge, these things can be of great use, therefore practical. In themselves they are a part of opening of the inner consciousness and also help to open it further — though they are not indispensable for that.

*It is difficult to develop the faculty of hearing inner voices, whereas all can develop the consciousness for their guidance. Again, those voices are often dangerous, aren't they?*

There are plenty of difficulties and dangers in the consciousness also. There is only one reliable inner voice, the psychic.

X and Y had no voices but they justified the wrong things their consciousness suggested to them and indulged them as if they were divine things (Y) or very high and noble ideas (X). So what is the difference?

*I see now that my ideas about the occult faculty are elementary. But if it has such good uses, then why did Sri Raman Maharshi discourage his disciples from having any dealings with it?*

He discouraged his disciples because his aim was the realisation of the inner Self and the 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.

*The visions and voices can help one to receive constant directions from you or the Mother. Well, why not open me to them? I shall then not need to trouble you with all sorts of questions. With this faculty you will always appear before me and talk to me.*

I shall have first to be sure that you will make the right use of them. I prefer that you should get higher discrimination and knowledge first.

## PSEUDO-OCCULTISM

*I was surprised to learn that Y is going away. I thought he was progressing well.*

He was not progressing at all. He was full of pseudo-occult delusions and "sufferings". So he is going with our approval to see if he cannot shake them off by a change of atmosphere.

He opened himself to wrong suggestions and influences in his desire to get occult powers and be able to figure as a great Yogi. It was these forces that made him feel all sorts of pains and sufferings in his body caused by a distracted state of his nerves, while his mind and vital became clouded and tortured by the struggle between these influences and the Truth pressing upon him.

*I thought he was living in his inner being.*

What do you mean by the inner being? Y was not living in his psychic but in his vital.

X did the same. It is one thing to live within with the Mother and with the Truth in the psychic being and another to live in the vital with delusions and false voices that mislead and obscure.

He [Y] had too much ego, ambition, sex and he brought these into his sadhana, accepted them as part of it — when he tried to free himself from the delusions, the vital brought them back because the ego could not free itself from its ambition.

*Could not occultism be turned into a help in the sadhana?*

How can falsehood (his occultism was a false occultism, an interchange with wrong vital forces) help the sadhana?

Going away was necessary, because staying here he was moved always to do sadhana and sadhana had come for him to mean this occultism. He could not get back to the right track without getting back to the normal mind and living in the ordinary consciousness so as to begin with a blank page. This he failed to do here.

It is not for vital satisfaction that he goes, but to get out of this wrong groove.

*The Ashram is the best place for getting rid of wrong movements. Is not the Guru's physical presence the best means for doing it?*

That is only true if one can open oneself to the Mother. To be here and shut up to it and under another control does not help.

## OLD YOGAS AND OUR YOGA

*Some parts of my being feel this world as a strange place for them. They think they belong to the higher worlds which have nothing much to do with this earth. So whenever anything of the world pulls them down they do not feel at ease.*

That would be all right for some other Yoga — this one has as its aim a change of nature in this world.

What is meant by this *full* identification? A going up somewhere above and leaving the manifested being and nature to remain as they are? How then is the transformation to take place? It would be a full identification in the self as in the old Advaita Yoga; but what of the union in the whole being?

A sadhak of integral Yoga who stops short at the Impersonal is no longer a sadhak of integral Yoga. Impersonal realisation is the realisation of the silent Self, of the pure Existence, Consciousness and Bliss in itself without any perception of an Existent, Conscient, Blissful. It leads therefore to Nirvana. In the integral knowledge the realisation of the Self and of the impersonal Sachchidananda is only a step though a very important step or part of the integral knowledge. It is a beginning, not an end of the highest realisation.

*It is said that normally one passes from the impersonal to the personal aspect of the realisation. But at present I have both the aspects. The personal was there from the beginning and the impersonal came by itself. So what is the truth of the matter?*

There is no truth of the matter. One can pass from personal to impersonal or from impersonal to the personal or get the impersonal upon the personal or the personal upon the impersonal or both together. Why want to make fixed rules about everything?

There are two different things,

(1) The liberated soul.

(2) The sadhak who has surrendered his actions to God.

The liberated soul is necessarily above shastra. But the sadhak of liberation need not be unless he has surrendered his actions to God.

Quite so! To live in the mind and vital and try to reach the Divine through them is religion at the most, it is not spirituality nor Yoga.

I have never seen that despondency brings down anything — at least here. It is supposed in Vaishnava Yoga to be effective in that way — sometimes, or at least to be a natural movement or recurring phase of the sadhana. It certainly seems to be the latter with many sadhaks here but I think the sadhana is better without it.

Anyhow chaos means an anarchy of disordered forces and the old theory was that out of such a chaos God created a world by imposing order and harmony on the forces.

## THE ASHRAM SADHAKS

*People believe that drawing down of the higher things is not a desirable movement — there should be an effortless descent.*

But that is made an excuse for not doing any active sadhana at all — hence a general tamas and inertia in the Ashram, people taking things easily as if they had only to wait and chat and eat and read and sleep and whatever was necessary would descend of itself some day or other. There must be the concentration, the aspiration, the call, the rejection of the lower nature.

That is why the Ashram is what it is. Only those who are taking the Yoga seriously are making any progress.

*I am told some sadhaks have misused the descent of the Force. I wonder how such a thing takes place. For it is the Force that has to use us and not vice versa.*

They allow something else to use it and them.

*In Y's case, was there any descent of the higher Force which got mixed up or degraded by his lower nature and brought about the madness?*

There was no descent of Force at all — such results do not come from a descent of the higher Force — they are attacks from the Asuric vital forces.

It appears that he had a great spiritual ambition which was beyond his powers and he seems to have been indulging in practices such as not sleeping against which he had been warned as well as others (not allowed) which can put one into contact with the vital beings and lead to lunacy.

I am not aware of any "development" of the mental etc. on their own planes; the development takes place on earth. The mental and other planes are not evolutionary. The one who dies here is assisted in his passage to the psychic world and helped in his future evolution towards the Divine.

## DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR

*I heard that some people here remain constantly in despair and gloom because they have become conscious of their minutest imperfections and defects which they are unable to get rid of.*

They are unable for two reasons: (1) because they yield to despair and gloom and the illusion of impotence, (2) because they try only with their own strength and do not care or know how to call on the working of the Mother's Force.

*Some sadhaks think that when we do not meet Mother we should feel dull and unhappy. They even consciously bring in depression and despair in order to prove that their love for the Mother is overflowing!*

This theory is terrible nonsense. It is applying the formulae of the most vital kind of love to the Yoga. This vital idea of love for the Divine has been a great stumbling-block in the Yoga in the Ashram.

*Are not the movements of depression and despair big and strong movements?*

They can hardly be called big movements. The real distinction is that they are rajasic movements, not tamasic.

They are not big — they are small movements of the vital ego — I mean the movements of vital dissatisfaction which cause people here to be depressed and revolt and despair. If the resultant depression or despair is strong, that simply means that the minds of the people here are seeing things out of all right measure and proportion, magnifying trifles into tremendous things, swelling little hurts to vanity, petty pride, small ambition, amour propre etc. They make a tempest in a tea-cup, a tragedy out of a trifle. Because people are living here under the Mother's shelter and saved from the great sufferings and tragedies of human life, they must need spin despairs and tragedies out of nothing. The vital wants to indulge its sorrow sense and shout and groan and weep and if it can't have a good or strong reason for doing it, it will use a bad or small one.

*How poor, weak and sensitive is our little vital! Even in its own egoistic sense it has no pride and dignity. If it had, it would not allow itself to be moved by these petty movements of the world.*

Not even of the world — of a small circle of people exaggerating the little vital movements around them and in themselves into something big and stupendously important.

*How is it that there are some persons who rarely get depression or despondency? Has it anything to do with the Grace of the Divine?*

For many reasons, some because their vital has taken the right attitude, some because their psychic is prominent, some simply because they have a more sound, balanced and reasonable nature. The Grace of the Divine has nothing to do with it.

*It seems that yesterday some Ashramites ran away from here — a few miles — and returned after a short time!*

They are divided — they feel pushed to go and yet don't want to go.

*Did they act thus as a revolt against the Mother?*

Yes, there is that also. But it is a very confused condition.

*About people's impulse to go out at present, you wrote, "It was always strong — only now we don't contradict as strongly as before." Does your answer mean that now there is no harm (from the spiritual point of view) if they go out and return?*

No, it does not; it simply means that we can't always be holding back people whose vital says, "I want to go, I want to go," and they side with the vital. They are allowed to go and take their risk.

If one leads the ordinary vital life, there can be no spiritual struggles — only vital troubles.

He was always on the point of going. He wanted to be immediately rid of all imperfections and struggles and have at once a perfect surrender and when he found himself upset by the smallest things in his work or otherwise, he concluded that he was unfit for Yoga and must go away. He was in fact a constant victim of the going away illness and immediate siddhi demand illness from which Z also was a sufferer.

If I said only things that human nature finds easy and natural, that would certainly be very comfortable for the disciples, but there would be no room for spiritual aim or endeavour. Spiritual aims and methods are not easy or natural (e.g. as quarrelling, sex-indulgence, greed, indolence, acquiescence in all imperfections are easy and natural)

and if people become disciples, they are supposed to follow spiritual aims and endeavours, however hard and above ordinary nature and not the things that are easy and natural.

*When we have spoken the truth, should we withdraw it if the other person gets depressed or troubled by it?*

No. If it is true, it should not be withdrawn. But the truth need be told only when it helps the person spoken to, otherwise silence is better.

*I would like to know how sadhaks who have progressed more than I manage their outer life in spite of their overwhelming higher and deeper experiences?*

Nothing can be said about that, if there is no reference to specific sadhaks. Each has his own movement and it is not the fact that all have to pass through the same stages or experiences — for each has a different nature.

*I like P's atmosphere and find it helpful. Is my finding true?*

It is true. He is very sincere in his sadhana.

*There are a few here who share all the difficulties of the Path with others and yet do not seem to be burdened with them!*

Probably because they have a quiet and controlled vital and do not allow it to clamour — also in some a calm reliance on the Divine.

A fully developed sadhak can be an instrument of the Mother for helping others, but a fully developed sadhak means one who is free from ego and he would never claim the work as his own. In this Ashram all helping has recoiled on the helper by either making him egoistic or by his getting affected with the very things he is helping the other to get rid of.

*Could I entrust Mulshankar<sup>7</sup> with copying my letters to you?*

Mulshankar is a man with much serious strength in his character and a strong will. The discretion and secrecy of such people can be trusted.

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<sup>7</sup> Mulshankar was one of the six inmates selected by the Mother to attend on Sri Aurobindo during his convalescent period after the accident to his right leg in November 1938.

*Some sadhaks type out their experiences and your comments on them and then show them to their friends!*

To show what is written about experiences or to speak about one's experiences to others is always risky. They are much better kept to oneself.

Vanity is not pride. It is self-admiration and has always in it something light and absurd.

Ostentation can be a show of things one has but also a show of things one has not. Ostentation means a showing off to others. A vain man may or may not be ostentatious.

All antagonism to other sadhaks or dislike of them should go. There should be a calm goodwill and charity to all, but no inner mixing or interchange. Liking and disliking always means interchange of influences.

The point is that [human] relations and friendships are usually founded on the vital and are very mixed affairs. That is why they turn out to be obstacles in sadhana.

*Why are some people here always craving for letters or news from their relatives and friends?*

So long as the mind is not sufficiently drawn inwards, it runs after these things, needing food for its activity.

*You wrote, "They [the sadhaks] go according to their own preference, Mother's liking or not liking has nothing to do with it." They say that they go for outings with Mother's permission, not out of any desire but to see Nature and learn to appreciate it, and that she herself used to go and take some sadhaks with her.*

That is all rubbish. They go for the vital fun of it and it would be better if they recognised it instead of talking high-sounding humbug. Mother went because her health needed fresh air and she could not be quiet anywhere else owing to her position and people crowding round her. But if she had never gone, they would still be taking their Nature trips to please themselves.

What is a "true necessity" — one can always say to oneself that one has a "true necessity" for the thing one desires. Moreover in approaching a thing needed one can do it with desire or without desire. The fact that a thing is "needed" does not prove that you have no desire for it.

Every sadhak has a good amount of defects and imperfections and the majority of them seem as unable to get rid of them as X.

In fact, if Z and a few others had not made themselves the instruments of the Mother and helped her to reorganise the whole material side of the Ashram, the Ashram would have collapsed long ago under the weight of a frightful mismanagement, waste, self-indulgence, disorder, chaotic self-will and disobedience. He and they faced unpopularity and hatred in order to help her to save it. It was the Mother who selected the heads for her purpose in order to organise the whole; all the lines of the work, all the details were arranged by her and the heads trained to observe her methods and it was only afterwards that she stepped back and let the whole thing go on on her lines but with a watchful eye always. The heads are carrying out her policy and instructions and report everything to her and she often modifies what they do when she thinks fit. Their action is not perfect, because they themselves are not yet perfect and they are also hampered by the ego of the workers and the sadhaks. But nothing can be perfect so long as the sadhaks and the workers do not come to the realisation that they are not here for their ego and self-indulgence of their vital and physical demands but for a high and exacting Yoga of which the first aim is the destruction of Desire and the substitution for it of the Divine Truth and the Divine Will.

If the Mother sanctions it means that it is her will that it should be so.

## SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER

*Those who have visited other Ashrams say there is no Ashram like this one, no Guru like the Mother or Sri Aurobindo — it is beyond imagination. The freedom given here to every sadhak is really too much. And yet many here do not seem to know even what is meant by a spiritual Guru and how to respect him properly!*

Certainly very few seem to realise what a possibility has been given them here — all has been turned into an opportunity for the bubbling of the vital or the tamas of the physical rather than used for the intended psychic and spiritual purpose.

*In some Ashrams the disciples make too much of their Gurus. If the Gurus are just ordinary siddhas they insist on calling them Bhagavans [God incarnated], while here you and the Mother are brought down to such an ordinary level. How unintelligent must be our bright intellect!*

Perhaps it is too brilliant to see the Truth.

## DARSHAN – MOTHER’S BIRTHDAY

*In the Ashram atmosphere there are premonitions: “On this occasion of Mother’s birthday, something great and high that has never yet descended on the earth is to come down.” Is this true?*

Let us hope so. There are some others who are feeling like that, so it may be true — at least for those who feel it.

*Only two days ago I felt a great working all around as a preparatory stage for the great event of the 21st February.<sup>8</sup> Then what is meant by these two days of constant darkness? This has brought me down to the most material consciousness. How am I to prepare myself now for the grand descent?*

Let the descent come when it can, 20th or 22nd or any other day of the month or year. On the 21st only offer yourself to the Divine Mother and consecrate everything.

*I wonder why the lower resistance is greater now, especially when the Darshan is approaching?*

It is often so. One has to learn not to submit to the resistance.

*Yesterday during the Darshan, I felt as if you had put a strong Force on my lower vital. I became conscious of it immediately. Is this correct?*

It is correct.

*After the Darshan people experience love, Ananda, exaltation — which last for a while. But is it not something greater and deeper to feel one’s desires, attachments and ego fading away after the Darshan?*

Yes, certainly.

*On the 21st, the vital resisted in the beginning, but afterwards received what you and the Mother offered me during the Darshan. Was it not a willing acceptance by the vital?*

Yes, but the acceptance must be made permanent.

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<sup>8</sup> The Mother's birthday, one of the Darshan days at the Ashram.

*When will I be able to live, not in an impersonal sense, but in the Mother's manifested physical form?*

I do not know how you are going to live in the manifested physical form. To live in the Mother's consciousness down to the physical with the manifested form as the centre of this unity is possible. Perhaps you mean that? But how are you going to do that if the other parts are left to remain as they are? They will go on pulling you out of the true consciousness as they do now. And how are they to be changed if the Mother's Force is not there in them to change them?

There are not many Mothers, there is One in many forms. The transcendental is only one aspect of the Mother. I don't know what is meant by the embodied aspect of the transcendental Mother. There is the embodied aspect of the One Mother — what she manifests through it depends on herself.

*You have written: "But obviously the impersonal is not enough — for surrender to that may be limited in result to the inner experience without any transformation of the outer being." I do not understand.*

It is rather surprising that you should be unable to understand such a simple and familiar statement; for that has been always the whole reason of this Yoga that to follow after the Impersonal only brings inner experience or at the most mukti — without the action of the Integral Divine there is no change of the whole nature. If it were not so the Mother would not be here, and I would not be here — if a realisation of the Impersonal were sufficient.

*In our terminology how do you name the Purushottama and the Parashakti? Are they the Supreme and the Mahashakti as spoken of in your book The Mother?*

Yes.

*When I start writing to you, there comes a greater pressure, a deeper concentration of the higher Force. Why so?*

I suppose it is because in the act of writing or rather beginning to write you enter into contact with the Mother and the Force.

It is simply a fact that happens — the Force comes when you begin to write.

*How is it you never write to me anything unless I ask for it or make some statement about it?*

I never do to anybody unless he gives me the occasion. A sadhak must become conscious and lay himself before the light, see and reject and change. It is not the right method for us to interfere and lecture and point out this and point out that. That is the school master method — it does not work in the spiritual change.

The disciples here are not pupils and the gurus here are not school teachers.

*You often use words like "please" etc. In India at least, a Guru, not to speak of an Avatar, does not speak this way to his disciples!*

They were not in the habit of writing English.

*Since you and the Mother are supposed to know all that happens in us, then why do you want us to write to you about it?*

It is necessary for you to be conscious and to put your self-observation before us; it is on that that we can act. A mere action on our own observation without any corresponding consciousness on the part of the sadhak would lead to nothing.

I think I know as much about the dualities, weaknesses, ignorance of human nature as you do and a good deal more. The idea that the Mother or I are spiritually great but ignorant of everything practical seems to be common in the Ashram. It is an error to suppose that to be on a high spiritual plane makes one ignorant or unobservant of the world or of human nature. If I know nothing of human nature or do not consider it, I am obviously unfit to be anybody's guide in the work of transformation, for nobody can transform human nature if he does not know what human nature is, does not see its workings or, even if he sees, does not take them into consideration at all. If I think that the human plane is like the plane or planes of infinite Light, Power, Ananda, infallible Will Force, then I must be either a stark lunatic or a gibbering imbecile or a fool so abysmally idiotic as to be worth keeping in a museum as an exhibit.

*You wrote, "Openness is not reckoned merely by visions." Quite so. But to have the fusion of the Sun and Moon on each side of the body, and to feel the Mother's presence all around, is it not an exceptional experience and vision?*

Why should it be exceptional to see the Sun and Moon on each side or to feel the Mother's presence everywhere around? There are plenty of sadhaks who have had these

or equivalent experiences. What would be exceptional is to feel the Mother's presence like that always. But occasional experiences like these many have had.

*Just before approaching the Mother for Pranam, I feel a rapid and powerful heart-beating. But it ceases the moment I am with her. Why so?*

Many people have felt that at times — some excitement of the vital, difficult to say why.

*Today during the common meditation of the Mother I could receive her help easily and spontaneously. But after the meditation I had to use effort. Does it not mean that something in me is quieted by her very physical presence?*

It is not by the physical presence but by the Mother's concentration at the time of Meditation which brings that quiet to those who can receive it.

*If a sadhak has a profound, self-existent and dynamic love for the Mother, he always remembers her. Even if he happens to forget her in the initial stage, something from within automatically reminds him.*

Yes. In the full development, even this is not necessary — for it ceases to be necessary to remember the Divine, since one is always conscious of Her.

## OUTER AND INNER CONTACT WITH MOTHER

*Now that Mother has stopped giving daily Pranam, one should feel sorry that he does not receive her touch each day, as before. That would show a great and intense love for the Mother.*

Not necessarily, though it may be so with some. With others it may be only that they miss some vital force they were drawing out of the Mother.

If the sadhana goes on whether you see the Mother or not, that would rather show that the psychic connection is permanently there and active always and does not depend on the physical contact. The vital seems to think the sadhana ought to cease if you do not see the Mother, but that would only mean that the love and devotion need the stimulus of physical contact; the greatest test of love and devotion is on the contrary when it burns as strongly in long absence as in the presence. If your sadhana went on as well on non-pranam as on pranam days it would not prove that love and devotion are not there, but that they are so strong as to be self-existent in all circumstances.

It is only if one can feel the inward touch of the Mother without the necessity of the physical contact that the true value of the latter can be really active. Otherwise there is a danger of its becoming like a mere artificial stimulant or a pulling of vital force from her for one's own benefit.

*Some feel that in order to prepare for the Mother's inner touch, they need her physical touch, at least in the beginning.*

If they are so dependent on the physical touch that they cannot feel anything when it is not there, this means that they have not used it at all for developing the inner connection; if they had, the inner connection after so many years would already be there. The inner connection can only be developed by an inner concentration and aspiration, not by a mere outward pranam every day. What most people do is simply to pull vital force from the Mother and live on it — but that is not the object of the Pranam.

Pulling is a psychological act — people are always pulling vital force from each other though they do not do it consciously, i.e. with a purpose in the mind — it is instinctive in the vital to draw force from wherever it can. All contact is in fact a receiving and giving of vital forces in a small or great degree. You have yourself said that after meeting such and such person you felt empty and exhausted — that means the person drew your vital force out of you. That is what people do at Pranam, instead of being quiet and

receptive, they pull vitally. It can be stopped by cutting off connection, but if the Mother did that at pranam, then the pranam would be useless.

*We know that the need for a body-touch is an imperfection and defect, and yet we long for it.*

It is not the need of a body-touch, but the gross misuse of the opportunity given that is the imperfection and the great defect.

*Could you not tell the disciples not to pull vital force from the Mother?*

Telling would make no difference — they would go on doing it so long as they are in the clutch of the vital. Besides the recommendation not to pull has been made for the last decade almost without result.

## THROWING HUMAN DESIRES ON THE MOTHER

The idea of unburdening desires, imperfections, impurities, illnesses on the Mother so that she may bear the results instead of the sadhaks is a curious one. I suppose it is a continuation of the Christian idea of Christ suffering on the cross for the sake of humanity. But it has nothing to do with the Yoga of transformation.

*Then how can we free ourselves from desires, impurities, etc.?*

They have to be rejected, but not thrown on the Mother.

All bad thoughts upon the Mother or throwing of impurities on her may affect her body as she has taken the sadhaks into her consciousness, nor can she send these things back to them as it might hurt them.

I never spoke of attacks on you. I spoke of attacks on the Mother and the work as the cause of seriousness — when she is really serious. At present the whole atmosphere is full of attacks and nothing else because of the attitude of sadhaks. So long as that is so Mother can take no other attitude.

*What is the real cause of the Mother's illnesses?*

It is due to attacks. As the material is not yet conquered, the Mother's body has to bear the attacks which come daily and to which the sadhaks freely open the doors. If she cut off her consciousness altogether from that of the sadhaks or put them outside her consciousness, these things would not happen.

## THE TWO ATMOSPHERES OF THE ASHRAM

There are two atmospheres in the Ashram, ours and that of the sadhaks. When people with a little perceptiveness come from outside, they are struck by the deep calm and peace in the atmosphere and it is only when they mix much with the sadhaks that this perception and influence fade away. The other atmosphere of dullness and unrest is created by the sadhaks themselves — if they were opened to the Mother as they should be, they would live in the calm and peace and not in unrest or dullness.

## LETTERS OF THE MOTHER

*Que veut dire le dessin que vous m'avez envoyé sur l'enveloppe?*

C'est un agneau qui veut dire "pureté".

*What is the meaning of the drawing you sent me on the envelope?*

It is a lamb, which means "purity".

*What is the significance of the picture you sent me?*

This boar is the symbol of desires.

*Voulez-vous me donner la signification du cheval?*

Le cheval signifie les pouvoirs de l'être individuel qui doivent être maîtrisés (tenus en bride).

*Please tell me what the horse means.*

The horse signifies the powers of the individual being, which must be controlled (bridled).

Le renard de l'enveloppe veut dire habileté.

The fox on the envelope means cleverness.

C'est un lièvre — "prudence".

It is a hare — "prudence".

*Quelle est la signification du faucon?*

Vue perçante.

*What is the significance of the falcon?*

Keen sight.

Je vous mets le portrait de deux oiseaux à vue perçante pour vous encourager à avoir foi dans la guérison de vos yeux.

Je vais voir ce qui peut-être fait.

I am enclosing a portrait of two birds with *keen eyesight* to encourage you to have faith that your eyes will be cured.

I shall see what can be done.

*Est-il bon de manger des clous de girofle?*

Les clous de girofle sont une médecine pour quand on a mal aux dents. Mais il ne faut pas en abuser.

*Is it good to eat cloves?*

Cloves are a medicine for toothache. But they should not be misused.

*Est-ce bien nécessaire de prendre du thé?*

Ce n'est pas bon pour la santé.

*Is it really necessary to take tea?*

It is not good for health.

Sri Aurobindo vous a écrit [about tea] de continuer jusqu'à ce que vous soyez assez fort pour cesser.

Je pensais que vous étiez assez fort — voilà tout.

Sri Aurobindo has written to you [about tea] that you can continue until you are strong enough to stop.

I thought you were strong enough — that's all.

*Could I get some butter from the Ashram?*

You can ask Pavitra if he can give you butter. But be on your guard. There was on N a formation of fear — fear of cold, fear of bad health, etc. — take care that this formation does not jump upon you; you must reject it resolutely.

*W told me, "It was a mistake on your part not to inform the Mother about your body which is so thin and weak." Kindly tell me what to do to improve it.*

Do not bother about it and increase your faith in the Divine's Grace.

Blessings.

In fact I can assure you that the pain in the stomach as well as many other discomforts are due 90% to wrong thinking and wrong imaginations — I mean that the material basis for them is practically negligible.

With love and blessings.

Je suis contente que vous vous soyez ressaisi et j'espère que semblable chose ne se répétera plus.

I am pleased that you have recovered and I hope that nothing similar will happen again.

Je vous enverrai le livre [*Prières et Méditations de la Mère*] demain; mais il faut bien étudier la grammaire si vous voulez comprendre ce que vous lisez.

I shall send you the book [*Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*] tomorrow; but you must study grammar well if you want to understand what you read.

*Voulez-vous que je dessine quelquefois des oiseaux ou des animaux?*

Comme vous voudrez — mais les dessins *d'après nature* sont les meilleurs pour apprendre.

*Would you like me to draw birds or animals sometimes?*

As you like — but drawings *from nature* are best for learning.

*J'ai essayé de copier le dessin que vous m'avez envoyé aujourd'hui.*

Pour apprendre il vaudrait mieux agrandir le dessin afin de pouvoir montrer les détails.

*I tried to copy the drawing you sent me today.*

For learning, it would be better to enlarge the drawing so as to bring out the details.

*Ce matin je me suis senti fatigué après cinq minutes de travail. Il s'agit seulement de polir des meubles!*

Tout travail manuel fatigue les premières fois qu'on le fait. Mais petit à petit le corps s'habitue et devient fort. Cependant quand vous vous sentez bien fatigué, il faut vous arrêter et vous reposer.

*This morning I felt tired after five minutes' work. It was only polishing furniture!*

All manual work is tiring the first few times one does it. But gradually the body gets used to it and becomes strong. However, when you feel really tired, you must stop and rest.

*Quand il n'y a pas assez de travail au Bâtiment, puis-je employer ce temps à lire ou à dessiner?*

Votre travail est votre sadhana et c'est en faisant votre travail avec un esprit de consécration que vous pourrez le mieux progresser.

Je crois qu'il vaut mieux ne pas trop se fatiguer à lire ou à dessiner.

*When there is not enough work in "Building", can I spend my time reading or drawing?*

Your work is your sadhana, and it is by doing your work in a spirit of consecration that you can make most progress.

I think it would be better not to tire yourself too much by reading or drawing.

*Je voudrais bien savoir s'il n'y a pas aussi la même sadhana dans la lecture et le dessin?*

Tout peut être fait un moyen de trouver le Divin. Ce qui importe c'est l'esprit dans lequel les choses sont faites.

*I would like to know, isn't there also the same sadhana in reading and drawing?*

Everything can be made into a means of finding the Divine. What matters is the spirit in which things are done.

*Quelle est la signification de la fleur [Gomphrena globosa] que vous m'avez donnée ce matin?*

C'est la conscience de l'Immortalité.

*What is the meaning of the flower [Gomphrena globosa] you have given me this morning?*

It is the consciousness of the Immortality.

*Puis-je savoir la signification de la fleur (Zinnia) que vous m'avez envoyée ce matin?*

Endurance.

*May I know the meaning of the flower (Zinnia) you sent me this morning?*

Endurance.

*Je veux seulement ce que vous trouvez le mieux.*

Quand on me propose deux choses et qu'on me demande laquelle faire, je réponds "comme vous voudrez", quand l'une n'est pas mieux que l'autre.

*I want only what you think best.*

When people suggest two alternative things and ask me which one to do, I answer "As you like" when neither is better than the other.

*My mind is so entirely clouded by doubts and other lower influences that I feel if my body passed away just now, it would be so much for the better! In spite of all that, as a Purusha I am indifferent to any such absurd movements.*

Yes they are absurd — shake it off.

With my blessings.

*At present I am much disturbed by sex difficulty. My rejection is not of much value, and I feel confused.*

You have to persevere until it is valid.

*Une partie de mon être a contracté la mauvaise habitude de devenir misérable après le Pranam. Elle devient jalouse de certaines personnes, ne pensez-vous pas que je dois avoir la puissance de rejeter cet obstacle?*

Certainement — mais alors il faut le faire en toute sincérité et n'admettre d'aucune façon les mouvements de jalousie.

*A part of my being has developed the bad habit of feeling miserable after Pranam. It gets jealous of certain people. Don't you think I should have the strength to reject this obstacle?*

Certainly — but then you must do it in all sincerity and not accept these movements of jealousy in any way.

*Je ne comprends pas pourquoi mon vital est toujours jaloux de X? Apparemment il n'y a aucune raison valable.*

La jalousie n'a jamais de raison. C'est un mouvement très bas et ignorant.

*I do not understand why my vital is always jealous of X. Apparently there is no valid reason.*

There is never any reason for jealousy. It is a very low and ignorant movement.

*Est-ce que ces impulsions ont un sens?*

En effet, cela n'avait aucun sens véritable — je suis heureuse de voir que vous le reconnaissez vous-même.

*Do these wrong impulses have any meaning?*

No, that had no real meaning — I am happy to see that you recognise this yourself.

*Quelles sont ces suggestions qui m'envahissent quelquefois? Ne viennent-elles pas du dehors?*

Elles viennent, en effet, du dehors, de quelque entité vitale qui s'amuse à vous les envoyer pour voir comment vous allez les recevoir. Je l'ai vue passer (la suggestion) au moment où je vous ai donné la fleur. Je n'y ai pas attaché d'importance parce que c'était une sottise — mais je vois que vous l'avez reçue.

*What are these suggestions that sometimes invade me? Are they not coming from outside?*

They do come from outside, from some vital entity that is amusing itself by sending them to you to see how you will receive them. I saw the suggestion passing when I gave you the flower. I did not attach any importance to it because it was just foolishness — but I see that you received it.

A mistake recognised is a mistake pardoned. My blessings.

*When P, a dancer, came here to see you, many sadhaks flocked around him. They insisted on his performing some dances. But he said he has come here without any dance-dresses. He did not appreciate people's desires for dances. He secretly told me that if he ever came here he would take particular care not to bring the dance-costumes. For he would come not for showing himself off but for the Yoga!*

He is quite right. Too many people in the Ashram forget that they are here for yoga.

# SUPPLEMENT

## THE MOTHER'S FORCE AND ITS ACTION

From the very day of my arrival in the Ashram I was hearing a great deal about the Mother's Force. Everybody was talking about this Force as if it had been synonymous with the Mother herself! When someone was sick, met with some difficulty in work, faced a problem in study or an obstruction in the inner sadhana, he invoked the Mother's Force and it usually worked. This calling and the intervention of the Force seemed so spontaneous that nobody took it as anything but natural. It assumed the form of a miracle only in some rare cases. That was when the problem had already become so complicated that it did not get solved by a mere prayer and the Mother's personal intervention had to be sought.

Being new and too young to understand all this, I asked Sri Aurobindo what exactly was this unique thing called "the Mother's Force". Was it the same thing as the divine Shakti? There came forth one of the most beautiful and comprehensive explanations on the Mother he has ever given me in a few lines:

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.

The Master further explained the relationship between the Mother and Her Force:

### THE MOTHER'S FORCE

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. . . .

It is the Divine Force which works to remove the ignorance and change the nature into the divine Nature.

We little human beings can never fathom the full glory of the Mother's personality. Such is the case with the Mother's Force too. How much potency it must have that it not only removes the Ignorance but also changes and transforms the nature into the divine Nature, a process which was never attempted in the old Yogas. Sri Aurobindo tried to enlighten me further about the workings of this Force in my correspondence:

MYSELF: Sometimes, if not often, the Mother's Force comes down, carries on some work and disappears. When once it has descended why has it to go back and then return?

SRI AUROBINDO: So long as you cannot contain its action, there is no other way.

MYSELF: In that case, generally speaking, is not every sadhak 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?

SRI AUROBINDO: 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.

MYSELF: 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 its workings are in me?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes — not to know with the mind only, but to feel them and see them with inner experience.

Finally I may quote a most enlightening answer to a question by me:

MYSELF: When a sadhak does his work with the right attitude and calls down the Mother's Force into him freely and directly, how does it act to remove his defects?

SRI AUROBINDO: It acts by awakening the inner consciousness gradually or swiftly, by replacing the principle of ego-service by the principle of service of the Divine, by making him watch his actions and see his own defects and pushing him to rectify them, by establishing a connection between his consciousness and the Mother's Consciousness, by preparing his nature to be taken up more and more by the Mother's Consciousness and Force, by giving him experiences which make him ready for the major experiences of Yoga, by stimulating the growth of his psychic being, by opening him to the Mother as the universal Being etc. etc. Naturally it acts differently in different persons.