



LIGHTS ON YOGA

Sri Aurobindo



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This collection consists of illuminating extracts from Sri Aurobindo's letters to disciples.

“This Yoga implies not only the realisation of God, but an entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work. This means an inner discipline far more exacting and difficult than mere ethical and physical austerities. One must not enter on this path, far vaster and more arduous than most ways of Yoga, unless one is sure of the psychic call and of one's readiness to go through to the end.”

Sri Aurobindo

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Publishers' Note

This booklet was first published in 1935 with the following note:

These are extracts from letters written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in answer to their queries. They have been put together and arranged so as to be of help to some aspirants for the understanding and practice of the Yoga.

The extracts were compiled by Sri Aurobindo's secretary. Sri Aurobindo approved the arrangement and lightly revised the texts.

It has recently been found that the notes on purity, faithfulness and sincerity on pages 23 and 24 were written by the Mother. They remain here in their original places in the compilation.

THE GOAL

The way of Yoga followed here has a different purpose from others, – for its aim is not only to rise out of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness into the divine consciousness, but to bring the supramental power of that divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter. This is an exceedingly difficult aim and difficult Yoga; to many or most it will seem impossible. All the established forces of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness are opposed to it and deny it and try to prevent it, and the Sadhak will find his own mind, life and body full of the most obstinate impediments to its realisation. If you can accept the ideal whole-heartedly, face all the difficulties, leave the past and its ties behind you and are ready to give up everything and risk everything for this divine possibility, then only can you hope to discover by experience the Truth behind it.

The Sadhana of this Yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come.

*

The only creation for which there is any place here is the supramental, the bringing of the divine Truth down on the earth, not only into the mind and vital but into the body and into Matter. Our object is not to remove all “limitations” on the expansion of the ego or to give a free field and make unlimited room for the fulfilment of the ideas of the human mind or the desires of the ego-centred life-force. None of us are here to “do as we like”, or to create a world in which we shall at last be able to do as we like; we are here to do what the Divine wills and to create a world in which the Divine Will can manifest its truth no longer deformed by human ignorance or perverted and mistranslated by vital desire. The work which the Sadhak of the supramental Yoga has to do is

not his own work for which he can lay down his own conditions, but the work of the Divine which he has to do according to the conditions laid down by the Divine. Our Yoga is not for our own sake but for the sake of the Divine. It is not our own personal manifestation that we are to seek, the manifestation of the individual ego freed from all bounds and from all bonds, but the manifestation of the Divine. Of that manifestation our own spiritual liberation, perfection, fullness is to be a result and a part, but not in any egoistic sense or for any ego-centred or self-seeking purpose. This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine.

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This Yoga implies not only the realisation of God, but an entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work. This means an inner discipline far more exacting and difficult than mere ethical and physical austerities. One must not enter on this path, far vaster and more arduous than most ways of Yoga, unless one is sure of the psychic call and of one's readiness to go through to the end.

*

In the former Yogas it was the experience of the Spirit which is always free and one with the Divine that was sought. The nature had to change only enough to prevent its being an obstacle to that knowledge and experience. The complete change down to the physical was only sought for by a few and then more as a "siddhi" than anything else, not as the manifestation of a new Nature in the earth-consciousness.

*

All the consciousness in the human being who is the mental embodied in living Matter has to rise so as to meet the higher consciousness; the higher consciousness has also to descend into mind, into life, into Matter. In that way the barriers will be removed and the higher consciousness will be able to take up the whole lower nature and transform it by the power of the supermind.

The earth is a material field of evolution. Mind and Life, Supermind, Sachchidananda are in principle involved there in the earth-consciousness; but only Matter is at first organised; then life descends from the life plane and gives shape and organisation and activity to the life principle in Matter, creates the plant and animal; then mind descends from the mind plane, creating man. Now Supermind is to descend so as to create a supramental race.

*

In order to get the dynamic realisation it is not enough to rescue the Purusha from subjection to Prakriti; one must transfer the allegiance of the Purusha from the lower Prakriti with its play of ignorant Forces to the Supreme Divine Shakti, the Mother.

It is a mistake to identify the Mother with the lower Prakriti and its mechanism of forces. Prakriti here is a mechanism only which has been put forth for the working of the evolutionary ignorance. As the ignorant mental, vital or physical being is not itself the Divine, although it comes from the Divine – so the mechanism of Prakriti is not the Divine Mother. No doubt something of her is there in and behind this mechanism maintaining it for the evolutionary purpose; but what she is in herself is not a Shakti of Avidya, but the Divine Consciousness, Power, Light, Para Prakriti to whom we turn for the release and the divine fulfilment.

The realisation of the Purusha consciousness calm, free, observing the play of forces but not attached or involved in them is a means of liberation. The calm, the detachment, a peaceful strength and joy (*ātmarati*) must be brought down into the vital and physical as well as into the mind. If this is established, one is no longer a prey to the turmoil of the vital forces. But this calm, peace, silent strength and joy is only the first descent of the Power of the Mother into the Adhar. Beyond that is a Knowledge, an executive Power, a dynamic Ananda which is not that of the ordinary Prakriti even at its best and most Sattwic, but Divine in its nature.

First, however, the calm, the peace, the liberation is needed. To try to bring down the dynamic side too soon is not advisable, for then it would be a descent into a troubled and impure nature unable to assimilate it and serious perturbations might be the consequence.

*

If the Supermind were not to give us a greater and completer truth than any of the lower planes, it would not be worth while trying to reach it. Each plane has its own truths. Some of them are no longer true on a higher plane; e.g., desire and ego were truths of the mental, vital and physical Ignorance – a man there without ego or desire would be a Tamasic automaton. As we rise higher, ego and desire appear no longer as truths, they are falsehoods disfiguring the true person and the true will. The struggle between the Powers of Light and the Powers of Darkness is a truth here – as we ascend above, it becomes less and less of a truth and in the supermind it has no truth at all. Other truths remain but change their character, importance, place in the whole. The difference or contrast between the Personal and Impersonal is a truth of the Overmind – there is no separate truth of them in the Supermind, they are inseparably one. But one who has not mastered and lived the truths of Overmind cannot reach the supramental Truth. The incompetent pride of man's mind makes a sharp distinction and wants to call all else untruth and leap at once to the highest truth whatever it may be – but that is an ambitious and arrogant error. One has to climb the stairs and rest one's feet firmly on each step in order to reach the summit.

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It is a mistake to dwell too much on the lower nature and its obstacles, which is the negative side of the Sadhana. They have to be seen and purified, but preoccupation with them as the one important thing is not helpful. The positive side of experience of the descent is the more important thing. If one waits for the lower nature to be purified entirely and for all time before calling down the positive experience, one might have to wait for ever. It is true that the more the lower nature is purified, the easier is the descent of the higher Nature, but it is also and more true that the more the higher Nature descends, the more the lower is purified. Neither the complete purification nor the permanent and perfect manifestation can come all at once, it is a matter of time and patient progress. The two (purification and manifestation) go on progressing side by side and become more and more strong to play into each other's hands – that is the usual course of the Sadhana.

*

Intensities like that do not remain so long as the consciousness is not transformed – there has to be a period of assimilation. When the being is unconscious, the assimilation goes on behind the veil or below the surface and meanwhile the surface consciousness sees only dullness and loss of what it had got; but when one is conscious, then one can see the assimilation going on and one sees that nothing is lost, it is only a quiet settling in of what has come down.

The vastness, the overwhelming calm and silence in which you feel merged is what is called the Atman or the silent Brahman. It is the whole aim of many Yogas to get this realisation of Atman or silent Brahman and live in it. In our Yoga it is only the first stage of the realisation of the Divine and of that growing of the being into the higher or divine Consciousness which we call transformation.

*

The true being may be realised in one or both of two aspects – the Self or Atman and the soul or Antaratman, psychic being, Chaitya Purusha. The difference is that one is felt as universal, the other as individual supporting the mind, life and body. When one first realises the Atman one feels it separate from all things, existing in itself and detached, and it is to this realisation that the image of the dry coconut fruit may apply. When one realises the psychic being, it is not like that; for this brings the sense of union with the Divine and dependence upon It and sole consecration to the Divine alone and the power to change the nature and discover the true mental, the true vital, the true physical being in oneself. Both realisations are necessary for this Yoga.

The “I” or the little ego is constituted by Nature and is at once a mental, vital and physical formation meant to aid in centralising and individualising the outer consciousness and action. When the true being is discovered, the utility of the ego is over and this formation has to disappear – the true being is felt in its place.

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The three Gunas become purified and refined and changed into their divine equivalents: *sattva* becomes *jyoti*, the authentic spiritual light; *rajas* becomes *tapas*, the tranquilly intense divine force; *tamas* becomes *śama*, the divine quiet, rest, peace.

*

There are three powers of the cosmos to which all things are subject – creation, preservation and destruction; whatever is created lasts for a time, then begins to crumble down. The taking away of the Force of destruction implies a creation that will not be destroyed but last and develop always. In the Ignorance destruction is necessary for progress – in the Knowledge, the Truth-creation, the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya.

PLANES AND PARTS OF THE BEING

Men do not know themselves and have not learned to distinguish the different parts of their being; for these are usually lumped together by them as mind, because it is through a mentalised perception and understanding that they know or feel them; therefore they do not understand their own states and actions, or, if at all, then only on the surface. It is part of the foundation of Yoga to become conscious of the great complexity of our nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge. We are composed of many parts each of which contributes something to the total movement of our consciousness, our thought, will, sensation, feeling, action, but we do not see the origination or the course of these impulsions; we are aware only of their confused and pell-mell results on the surface upon which we can at best impose nothing better than a precarious shifting order.

The remedy can only come from the parts of the being that are already turned towards the Light. To call in the light of the Divine Consciousness from above, to bring the psychic being to the front and kindle a flame of aspiration which will awaken spiritually the outer mind and set on fire the vital being, is the way out.

*

Yoga means union with the Divine – a union either transcendental (above the universe) or cosmic (universal) or individual or, as in our Yoga, all three together. Or it means getting into a consciousness in which one is no longer limited by the small ego, personal mind, personal vital and body but is in union with the supreme Self or with the universal (cosmic) consciousness or with some deeper consciousness within in which one is aware of one's own soul, one's own inner being and of the real truth of existence. In the Yogic consciousness one is not only aware of things, but of forces, not only of forces, but of the conscious being behind the forces. One is aware of all this not only in oneself but in the universe.

There is a force which accompanies the growth of the new consciousness and at once grows with it and helps it to come about and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga-Shakti. It is here coiled up and

asleep in all the centres of our inner being (Chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force – not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves – to the power of the Mother. In the mind it manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind cannot do; it is then the Yogic mind-force. When it manifests and acts in the vital or the physical in the same way, it is there apparent as a Yogic life-force or a Yogic body-force. It can awake in all these forms, bursting outwards and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence.

In the process of our Yoga the centres have each a fixed psychological use and general function which base all their special powers and functionings. The *mūlādhāra* governs the physical down to the subconscious; the abdominal centre – *svādhiṣṭhāna* – governs the lower vital; the navel centre – *nābhipadma* or *maṇipura* – governs the larger vital; the heart centre – *hr̥dpadma* or *anāhata* – governs the emotional being; the throat centre – *viśuddha* – governs the 'expressive and externalising mind; the centre between the eye-brows – *ājñācakra* – governs the dynamic mind, will, vision, mental formation; the thousand-petalled lotus – *sahasradala* – above commands the higher thinking mind, houses the still higher illumined mind and at the highest opens to the intuition through which or else by an overflowing directness the overmind can have with the rest communication or an immediate contact.

*

In our Yoga we mean by the subconscious that quite submerged part of our being in which there is no wakeningly conscious and coherent thought, will or feeling or organised reaction, but which yet receives obscurely the impressions of all things and stores them up in itself and

from it too all sorts of stimuli, or persistent habitual movements, crudely repeated or disguised in strange forms can surge up into dream or into the waking nature. For if these impressions rise up most in dream in an incoherent and disorganised manner, they can also and do rise up into our waking consciousness as a mechanical repetition of old thoughts, old mental, vital and physical habits or an obscure stimulus to sensations, actions, emotions which do not originate in or from our conscious thought or will and are even often opposed to its perceptions, choice or dictates. In the subconscious there is an obscure mind full of obstinate Sanskaras, impressions, associations, fixed notions, habitual reactions formed by our past, an obscure vital full of the seeds of habitual desires, sensations and nervous reactions, a most obscure material which governs much that has to do with the condition of the body. It is largely responsible for our illnesses; chronic or repeated illnesses are indeed mainly due to the subconscious and its obstinate memory and habit of repetition of whatever has impressed itself upon the body-consciousness. But this subconscious must be clearly distinguished from the subliminal parts of our being such as the inner or subtle physical consciousness, the inner vital or inner mental; for these are not at all obscure or incoherent or ill-organised, but only veiled from our surface consciousness. Our surface constantly receives something, inner touches, communications or influences, from these sources but does not know for the most part whence they come.

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There is a vital plane (self-existent) above the material universe which we see; there is a mental plane (self-existent) above the vital and material. These three together, – mental, vital, physical, – are called the triple universe of the lower hemisphere. They have been established in the earth-consciousness by evolution – but they exist in themselves before the evolution, above the earth-consciousness and the material plane to which the earth belongs.

*

There is behind all the vital nature in man his true vital being concealed and immobile which is quite different from the surface vital

nature. The surface vital is narrow, ignorant, limited, full of obscure desires, passions, cravings, revolts, pleasures and pains, transient joys and griefs, exultations and depressions. The true vital being, on the contrary, is wide, vast, calm, strong, without limitations, firm and immovable, capable of all power, all knowledge, all Ananda. It is moreover without ego, for it knows itself to be a projection and instrument of the Divine: it is the divine Warrior, pure and perfect; in it is an instrumental Force for all divine realisations. It is the true vital being that has become awake and come in front within you. In the same way there is too a true mental being, a true physical being. When these are manifest, then you are aware of a double existence in you: that behind is always calm and strong, that on the surface alone is troubled and obscure. But if the true being behind remains stable and you live in it, then the trouble and obscurity remain only on the surface; in this condition the exterior parts can be dealt with more potently and they are also made free and perfect.

*

The “Mind” in the ordinary use of the word covers indiscriminately the whole consciousness, for man is a mental being and mentalises everything; but in the language of this Yoga the words “mind” and “mental” are used to connote specially the part of the nature which has to do with cognition and intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, the reactions of thought to things, with the truly mental movements and formations, mental vision and will, etc., that are part of his intelligence. The vital has to be carefully distinguished from mind, even though it has a mind element transfused into it; the vital is the Life-nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, energies of action, will of desire, reactions of the desire-soul in man and of all that play of possessive and other related instincts, anger, fear, greed, lust, etc., that belong to this field of the nature. Mind and vital are mixed up on the surface of the consciousness, but they are quite separate forces in themselves and as soon as one gets behind the ordinary surface consciousness one sees them as separate, discovers their distinction and can with the aid of this knowledge analyse their surface mixtures. It is quite possible and even usual during a time shorter or longer, sometimes very long, for the mind to accept the Divine or the Yogic ideal while the

vital is unconvinced and unsundered and goes obstinately on its way of desire, passion and attraction to the ordinary life. Their division or their conflict is the cause of most of the more acute difficulties of the Sadhana.

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The mental being within watches, observes and passes judgment on all that happens in you. The psychic does not watch and observe in this way like a witness, but it feels and knows spontaneously in a much more direct and luminous way, by the very purity of its own nature and the divine instinct within it, and so, whenever it comes to the front it reveals at once what are the right and what the wrong movements in your nature.

The being of man is composed of these elements – the psychic behind supporting all, the inner mental, vital and physical, and the outer, quite external nature of mind, life and body which is their instrument of expression. But above all is the central being (Jivatman) which uses them all for its manifestation: it is a portion of the Divine Self; but this reality of himself is hidden from the external man who replaces this inmost self and soul of him by the mental and vital ego. It is only those who have begun to know themselves that become aware of their true central being; but still it is always there standing behind the action of mind, life and body and is most directly represented by the psychic which is itself a spark of the Divine. It is by the growth of the psychic element in one's nature that one begins to come into conscious touch with one's central being above. When that happens and the central being uses a conscious will to control and organise the movements of the nature, it is then that one has a real, a spiritual as opposed to a partial and merely mental or moral self-mastery.

*

The phrase “central being” in our Yoga is usually applied to the portion of the Divine in us which supports all the rest and survives through death and birth. This central being has two forms – above, it is Jivatman, our true being, of which we become aware when the higher self-knowledge comes, – below, it is the psychic being which stands

behind mind, body and life. The Jivatman is above the manifestation in life and presides over it; the psychic being stands behind the manifestation in life and supports it.

The natural attitude of the psychic being is to feel itself as the Child, the Son of God, the Bhakta; it is a portion of the Divine, one in essence, but in the dynamics of the manifestation there is always even in identity a difference. The Jivatman, on the contrary, lives in the essence and can merge itself in identity with the Divine; but it too, the moment it presides over the dynamics of the manifestation, knows itself as one centre of the multiple Divine, not as the Parameshwara. It is important to remember the distinction; for, otherwise, if there is the least vital egoism, one may begin to think of oneself as an Avatar or lose balance like Hridaya with Ramakrishna.

*

The Spirit is the Atman, Brahman, Essential Divine.

When the One Divine manifests its ever inherent multiplicity, this essential Self or Atman becomes for that manifestation the central being who presides from above over the evolution of its personalities and terrestrial lives here, but is itself an eternal portion of the Divine and prior to the terrestrial manifestation – *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*.

In this lower manifestation, *aparā prakṛti*, this eternal portion of the Divine appears as the soul, a spark of the Divine Fire, supporting the individual evolution, supporting the mental, vital and physical being. The psychic being is the spark growing into a Fire, evolving with the growth of the consciousness. The psychic being is therefore evolutionary, not like the Jivatman prior to the evolution.

But man is not aware of the self or Jivatman, he is aware only of his ego, or he is aware of the mental being which controls the life and the body. But more deeply he becomes aware of his soul or psychic being as his true centre, the Purusha in the heart; the psychic is the central being in the evolution, it proceeds from and represents the Jivatman. the eternal portion of the Divine. When there is the full consciousness, the Jivatman and the psychic being join together.

The ego is a formation of Nature; but it is not a formation of physical

nature alone, therefore it does not cease with the body. There is a mental and vital ego also.

The base of the material consciousness here is not only the Ignorance, but the Inconscience – that is, the consciousness is involved in form of Matter and energy of Matter. It is not only the material consciousness but the vital and the mental too that are separated from the Truth by the Ignorance.

*

The word Jiva has two meanings in the Sanskritic tongues – “living creatures”¹ and the spirit individualised and upholding the living being in its evolution from birth to birth. In the latter sense the full term is Jivatman – the Atman, spirit or eternal self of the living being. It is spoken of figuratively by the Gita as “an eternal portion of the Divine” – but the word fragmentation (used by you) is too strong, it could be applicable to the forms, but not to the spirit in them. Moreover, the multiple Divine is an eternal reality antecedent to the creation here. An elaborate description of the Jivatman would be: “the multiple Divine manifested here as the individualised self or spirit of the created being.” The Jivatman in its essence does not change or evolve, its essence stands above the personal evolution; within the evolution itself it is represented by the evolving psychic being which supports all the rest of the nature.

The Adwaita Vedanta (Monism) declares that the Jiva has no real existence, as the Divine is indivisible. Another school attributes a real but not an independent existence to the Jiva – it is, they say, one in essence, different in manifestation, and as the manifestation is real, eternal and not an illusion, it cannot be called unreal. The dualistic schools affirm the Jiva as an independent category or stand on the triplicity of God, Soul and Nature.

*

The soul takes birth each time, and each time a mind, life and body

1 In Bengal when one is about to kill a small animal, people often protest saying “Don’t kill – it is Krishna’s Jiva (His living creature).”

are formed out of the materials of universal Nature according to the soul's past evolution and its need for the future.

When the body is dissolved, the vital goes into the vital plane and remains there for a time, but after a time the vital sheath disappears. The last to dissolve is the mental sheath. Finally, the soul or psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close.

This is the general course for ordinarily developed human beings. There are variations according to the nature of the individual and his development. For example, if the mental is strongly developed, then the mental being can remain; so also can the vital, provided they are organised by and centred around the true psychic being; they share the immortality of the psychic.

The soul gathers the essential elements of its experiences in life and makes that its basis of growth in the evolution; when it returns to birth it takes up with its mental, vital, physical sheaths so much of its Karma as is useful to it in the new life for further experience.

It is really for the vital part of the being that Shraddha and rites are done – to help the being to get rid of the vital vibrations which still attach it to the earth or to the vital worlds, so that it may pass quickly to its rest in the psychic peace.

The consciousness in the individual widens itself into the cosmic consciousness outside and can have any kind of dealing with it, penetrate, know its movements, act upon it or receive from it, even become commensurate with or contain it, which is what was meant in the language of the old Yogas by having the Brahmanda within you.

The cosmic consciousness is that of the universe, of the cosmic spirit and cosmic Nature with all the beings and forces within it. All that is as much conscious as a whole as the individual separately is, though in a different way. The consciousness of the individual is part of this, but a part feeling itself as a separate being. Yet all the time most of what he is comes into him from the cosmic consciousness. But there is a wall of separative ignorance between. Once it breaks down he becomes aware of the cosmic Self, of the consciousness of the cosmic Nature, of the forces playing in it, etc. He feels all that as he now feels physical things and impacts. He finds it all to be one with his larger or universal self.

There is the universal mental, the universal vital, the universal

physical Nature and it is out of a selection of their forces and movements that the individual mind, vital and physical are made. The soul comes from beyond this nature of mind, life and body. It belongs to the transcendent and because of it we can open to the higher Nature beyond.

The Divine is always One that is Many. The individual spirit is part of the “Many” side of the One, and the psychic being is what it puts forth to evolve here in the earth-nature. In liberation the individual self realises itself as the One (that is yet Many). It may plunge into the One and merge or hide itself in its bosom – that is the *laya* of the Adwaita; it may feel its oneness and yet as part of the Many that is One enjoy the Divine, that is the Dwaitadwaita liberation; it may lay stress on its Many aspect and be possessed by the Divine, the Vishistadwaita, or go on playing with Krishna in the eternal Vrindavan, the Dwaita liberation. Or it may, even being liberated, remain in the Lila or manifestation or descend into it as often as it likes. The Divine is not bound by human philosophies – it is free in its play and free in its essence.

*

What is meant by Prakriti or Nature is the outer or executive side of the Shakti or Conscious Force which forms and moves the worlds. This outer side appears here to be mechanical, a play of the forces, Gunas, etc. Behind it is the living Consciousness and Force of the Divine, the divine Shakti. The Prakriti itself is divided into the lower and higher, – the lower is the Prakriti of the Ignorance, the Prakriti of mind, life and Matter separated in consciousness from the Divine; the higher is the Divine Prakriti of Sachchidananda with its manifesting power of Supermind, always aware of the Divine and free from Ignorance and its consequences. Man so long as he is in the ignorance is subject to the lower Prakriti, but by spiritual evolution he becomes aware of the higher Nature and seeks to come into contact with it. He can ascend into it and it can descend into him – such an ascent and descent can transform the lower nature of mind, life and Matter.

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The Overmind has to be reached and brought down before the

supermind descent is at all possible – for the Overmind is the passage through which one passes from Mind to Supermind.

It is from the Overmind that all these different arrangements of the creative Truth of things originate. Out of the Overmind they come down to the Intuition and are transmitted from it to the Illumined and Higher Mind to be arranged there for our intelligence. But they lose more and more of their power and certitude in the transmission as they come down to the lower levels. What energy of directly perceived Truth they have is lost in the human mind; for to the human intellect they present themselves only as speculative ideas, not as realised Truth, not as direct sight, a dynamic vision coupled with a concrete undeniable experience.

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Supermind is between the Sachchidananda and the lower creation. It alone contains the self-determining Truth of the Divine Consciousness and is necessary for a Truth-creation.

One can of course realise Sachchidananda in relation to the mind, life and body also – but then it is something stable, supporting by its presence the lower Prakriti, but not transforming it. The Supermind alone can transform the lower nature.

*

Sachchidananda is the One with a triple aspect. In the Supreme the three are not three but one – existence is consciousness, consciousness is bliss, and they are thus inseparable, not only inseparable but so much each other that they are not distinct at all. In the superior planes of manifestation they become triune – although inseparable, one can be made more prominent and base or lead the others. In the lower planes below they become separable in appearance, though not in their secret reality, and one can exist phenomenally without the others so that we become aware of what seems to us an inconscient or a painful existence or a consciousness without Ananda. Indeed, without this separation of them in experience pain and ignorance and falsehood and death and what we call inconscience could not have manifested themselves – there could not have been this evolution of a limited and suffering consciousness out

of the universal nescience of Matter.

SURRENDER AND OPENING

The whole principle of this Yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by union with the Divine Mother all the transcendent light, power, wideness, peace, purity, Truth-consciousness and Ananda of the Supramental Divine.

*

Radha is the personification of the absolute love for the Divine, total and integral in all parts of the being from the highest spiritual to the physical, bringing the absolute self-giving and total consecration of all the being and calling down into the body and the most material nature the supreme Ananda.

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Purity is to accept no other influence but only the influence of the Divine.

*

Faithfulness is to admit and to manifest no other movements but only the movements prompted and guided by the Divine.

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Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained.

Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will.

*

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the

power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda.

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Talk of surrender or a mere idea or tepid wish for integral consecration will not do; there must be the push for a radical and total change.

It is not by taking a mere mental attitude that this can be done or even by any number of inner experiences which leave the outer man as he was. It is this outer man who has to open, to surrender and to change. His every least movement, habit, action has to be surrendered, seen, held up and exposed to the divine Light, offered to the divine Force for its old forms and motives to be destroyed and the divine Truth and the action of the transforming consciousness of the Divine Mother to take their place.

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There is not much spiritual meaning in keeping open to the Mother if you withhold your surrender. Self-giving or surrender is demanded of those who practise this Yoga, because without such a progressive surrender of the being it is quite impossible to get anywhere near the goal. To keep open means to call in her Force to work in you, and if you do not surrender to it, it amounts to not allowing the Force to work in you at all or else only on condition that it will work in the way you want and not in its own way which is the way of the Divine Truth. A suggestion of this kind is usually made by some adverse Power or by some egoistic element of mind or vital which wants the Grace or the Force, but only in order to use it for its own purpose, and is not willing to live for the Divine Purpose, – it is willing to take from the Divine all it can get, but not to give itself to the Divine. The soul, the true being, on the contrary, turns towards the Divine and is not only willing but eager and happy to surrender.

In this Yoga one is supposed to go beyond every mental idealistic culture. Ideas and Ideals belong to the mind and are half-truths only; the mind too is, more often than not, satisfied with merely having an ideal, with the pleasure of idealising, while life remains always the same,

untransformed or changed only a little and mostly in appearance. The spiritual seeker does not turn aside from the pursuit of realisation to mere idealising; not to idealise, but to realise the Divine Truth is always his aim, either beyond or in life also – and in the latter case it is necessary to transform mind and life which cannot be done without surrender to the action of the Divine Force, the Mother.

To seek after the Impersonal is the way of those who want to withdraw from life, and usually they try by their own effort, and not by an opening of themselves to a superior Power or by the way of surrender; for the Impersonal is not something that guides or helps, but something to be attained and it leaves each man to attain it according to the way and capacity of his nature. On the other hand, by an opening and surrender to the Mother one can realise the Impersonal and every other aspect of Truth also.

The surrender must necessarily be progressive. No one can make the complete surrender from the beginning, so it is quite natural that when one looks into oneself, one should find its absence. That is no reason why the principle of surrender should not be accepted and carried out steadily from stage to stage, from field to field, applying it successively to all the parts of the nature.

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In the early part of the Sadhana – and by early I do not mean a short part – effort is indispensable. Surrender of course, but surrender is not a thing that is done in a day. The mind has its ideas and it clings to them; the human vital resists surrender, for what it calls surrender in the early stages is a doubtful kind of self-giving with a demand in it; the physical consciousness is like a stone and what it calls surrender is often no more than inertia. It is only the psychic that knows how to surrender and the psychic is usually very much veiled in the beginning. When the psychic awakes, it can bring a sudden and true surrender of the whole being, for the difficulty of the rest is rapidly dealt with and disappears. But till then effort is indispensable. Or else it is necessary till the Force comes flooding down into the being from above and takes up the Sadhana, does it for one more and more and leaves less and less to individual effort – but even then, if not effort, at least aspiration and vigilance are needed

till the possession of mind, will, life and body by the Divine Power is complete. I have dealt with this subject, I think, in one of the chapters of “The Mother”.

On the other hand, there are some people who start with a genuine and dynamic will for a total surrender. It is those who are governed by the psychic or are governed by a clear and enlightened mental will which, having once accepted surrender as the law of the Sadhana, will stand no nonsense about it and insists on the other parts of the being following its direction. Here there is still effort; but it is so ready and spontaneous and has so much the sense of a greater Force behind it that the Sadhak hardly feels that he is making an effort at all. In the contrary case of a will in mind or vital to retain self-will, a reluctance to give up your independent movement, there must be struggle and endeavour until the wall between the instrument in front and the Divinity behind or above is broken. No rule can be laid down which applies without distinction to everybody – the variations in human nature are too great to be covered by a single trenchant rule.

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There is a state in which the Sadhak is conscious of the Divine Force working in him or of its results at least and does not obstruct its descent or its action by his own mental activities, vital restlessness or physical obscurity and inertia. That is openness to the Divine. Surrender is the best way of opening; but aspiration and quietness can do it up to a certain point so long as there is not the surrender. Surrender means to consecrate everything in oneself to the Divine, to offer all one is and has, not to insist on one’s ideas, desires, habits, etc., but to allow the divine Truth to replace them by its knowledge, will and action everywhere.

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Always keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose

touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement.

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Then only can the psychic being fully open when the Sadhak has got rid of the mixture of vital motives with his Sadhana and is capable of a simple and sincere self-offering to the Mother. If there is any kind of egoistic turn or insincerity of motive, if the Yoga is done under a pressure of vital demands, or partly or wholly to satisfy some spiritual or other ambition, pride, vanity or seeking after power, position or influence over others or with any push towards satisfying any vital desire with the help of the Yogic force, then the psychic cannot open, or opens only partially or only at times and shuts again because it is veiled by the vital activities; the psychic fire fails in the strangling vital smoke. Also, if the mind takes the leading part in the Yoga and puts the inner soul into the background, or if the Bhakti or other movements of the Sadhana take more of a vital than of a psychic form, there is the same inability. Purity, simple sincerity and the capacity of an unegoistic unmixed self-offering without pretension or demand are the conditions of an entire opening of the psychic being.

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It is no part of this Yoga to dry up the heart; but the emotions must be turned towards the Divine. There may be short periods in which the heart is quiescent, turned away from the ordinary feelings and waiting for the inflow from above; but such states are not states of dryness but of silence and peace. The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.

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All attachment is a hindrance to Sadhana. Goodwill you should have for all, psychic kindness for all, but no vital attachment.

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The love of the Sadhak should be for the Divine. It is only when he has that fully that he can love others in the right way.

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There is no reason why one should not receive through the thinking mind, as one receives through the vital, the emotional and the body. The thinking mind is as capable of receiving as these are, and, since it has to be transformed as well as the rest, it must be trained to receive, otherwise no transformation of it could take place.

It is the ordinary unenlightened activity of the intellect that is an obstacle to spiritual experience, just as the ordinary unregenerated activity of the vital or the obscure stupidly obstructive consciousness of the body is an obstacle. What the Sadhak has to be specially warned against in the wrong processes of the intellect is, first, any mistaking of mental ideas and impressions or intellectual conclusions for realisation; secondly, the restless activity of the mere mind which disturbs the spontaneous accuracy of psychic and spiritual experience and gives no room for the descent of the true illuminating knowledge or else deforms it as soon as it touches or even before it fully touches the human mental plane. There are also of course the usual vices of the intellect, – its leaning towards sterile doubt instead of luminous reception and calm enlightened discrimination; its arrogance claiming to judge things that are beyond it, unknown to it, too deep for it by standards drawn from its own limited experience; its attempts to explain the supraphysical by the physical or its demand for the proof of higher and occult things by the criteria proper to Matter and mind in Matter; others also too many to enumerate here. Always it is substituting its own representations and constructions and opinions for the true knowledge. But if the intellect is surrendered, open, quiet, receptive, there is no reason why it should not be a means of reception of the Light or an aid to the experience of spiritual states and to the fullness of an inner change.

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The turmoil of mental (intellectual) activity has also to be silenced like the vital activity of desire in order that the calm and peace may be

complete. Knowledge has to come but from above. In this calm the ordinary mental activities like the ordinary vital activities become surface movements with which the silent inner self is not connected. It is the liberation necessary in order that the true knowledge and the true life-activity may replace or transform the activities of the Ignorance.

The soul, the psychic being is in direct touch with the divine Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical nature. One may practise Yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may establish even surprising physical Siddhis; but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this Yoga the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the Supramental cannot find a sufficient base in a spiritualised mind alone. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible.... If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the Sadhana.

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I have said that the most decisive way for the Peace or the Silence to come is by a descent from above. In fact, in reality though not always in appearance, that is how they always come; – not in appearance always, because the Sadhak is not always conscious of the process; he feels the peace settling in him or at least manifesting, but he has not been conscious how and whence it came. Yet it is the truth that all that belongs to the higher consciousness comes from above, not only the spiritual peace and silence, but the Light, the Power, the Knowledge, the higher seeing and thought, the Ananda come from above. It is also possible that up to a certain point they may come from within, but this is

because the psychic being is open to them directly and they come first there and then reveal themselves in the rest of the being from the psychic or by its coming into the front. A disclosure from within or a descent from above, these are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-Siddhi. An effort of the external surface mind or emotions, a Tapasya of some kind may seem to build up some of these things, but the results are usually uncertain and fragmentary, compared to the result of the two radical ways. That is why in this Yoga we insist always on an “opening” – an opening inwards of the inner mind, vital, physical to the inmost part of us, the psychic, and an opening upwards to what is above the mind – as indispensable for the fruits of the Sadhana.

The underlying reason for this is that this little mind, vital and body which we call ourselves is only a surface movement and not our "self" at all. It is an external bit of personality put forward for one brief life, for the play of the Ignorance. It is equipped with an ignorant mind stumbling about in search of fragments of truth, an ignorant vital rushing about in search of fragments of pleasure, an obscure and mostly subconscious physical receiving the impacts of things and suffering rather than possessing a resultant pain or pleasure. All that is accepted until the mind gets disgusted and starts looking about for the real Truth of itself and things, the vital gets disgusted and begins wondering whether there is not such a thing as real bliss and the physical gets tired and wants liberation from itself and its pains and pleasures. Then it is possible for the little ignorant bit of personality to get back to its real Self and with it to these greater things – or else to extinction of itself, Nirvana.

The real Self is not anywhere on the surface but deep within and above. Within is the soul supporting an inner mind, inner vital, inner physical in which there is a capacity for universal wideness and with it for the things now asked for – direct contact with the truth of self and things, taste of a universal bliss, liberation from the imprisoned smallness and sufferings of the gross physical body. Even in Europe the existence of something behind the surface is now very frequently admitted, but its nature is mistaken and it is called subconscious or subliminal, while really it is very conscious in its own way and not subliminal but only behind the veil. It is, according to our psychology, connected with the small outer personality by certain centres of

consciousness of which we become aware by Yoga. Only a little of the inner being escapes through these centres into the outer life, but that little is the best part of ourselves and responsible for our art, poetry, philosophy, ideals, religious aspirations, efforts at knowledge and perfection. But the inner centres are for the most part closed or asleep – to open them and make them awake and active is one aim of Yoga. As they open, the powers and possibilities of the inner being also are aroused in us; we awake first to a larger consciousness and then to a cosmic consciousness; we are no longer little separate personalities with limited lives but centres of a universal action and in direct contact with cosmic forces. Moreover, instead of being unwillingly playthings of the latter, as is the surface person, we can become to a certain extent conscious and masters of the play of nature – how far this goes depending on the development of the inner being and its opening upward to the higher spiritual levels. At the same time the opening of the heart centre releases the psychic being which proceeds to make us aware of the Divine within us and of the higher Truth above us.

For the highest spiritual Self is not even behind our personality and bodily existence but is above it and altogether exceeds it. The highest of the inner centres is in the head, just as the deepest is the heart; but the centre which opens directly to the Self is above the head, altogether outside the physical body, in what is called the subtle body, *sūksma śarīra*. This Self has two aspects and the results of realising it correspond to these two aspects. One is static, a condition of wide peace, freedom, silence: the silent Self is unaffected by any action or experience; it impartially supports them but does not seem to originate them at all, rather to stand back detached or unconcerned, *udāsīna*. The other aspect is dynamic and that is experienced as a cosmic Self or Spirit which not only supports but originates and contains the whole cosmic action – not only that part of it which concerns our physical selves but also all that is beyond it – this world and all other worlds, the supraphysical as well as the physical ranges of the universe. Moreover, we feel the Self as one in all; but also we feel it as above all, transcendent, surpassing all individual birth or cosmic existence. To get into the universal Self – one in all – is to be liberated from ego; ego either becomes a small instrumental circumstance in the consciousness or even disappears from our consciousness altogether. That is the

extinction or Nirvana of the ego. To get into the transcendent self above all makes us capable of transcending altogether even cosmic consciousness and action – it can be the way to that complete liberation from the world-existence which is called also extinction, *laya*, *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*.

It must be noted however that the opening upward does not necessarily lead to peace, silence and Nirvana only. The Sadhak becomes aware not only of a great, eventually an infinite peace, silence, wideness above us, above the head as it were and extending into all physical and supra-physical space, but also he can become aware of other things — a vast Force in which is all power, a vast Light in which is all knowledge, a vast Ananda in which is all bliss and rapture. At first they appear as something essential, indeterminate, absolute, simple, *kevala*: a Nirvana into any of these things seems possible. But we can come to see too that this Force contains all forces, this Light all lights, this Ananda all joy and bliss possible. And all this can descend into us. Any of them and all of them can come down, not peace alone; only the safest is to bring down first an absolute calm and peace, for that makes the descent of the rest more secure; otherwise it may be difficult for the external nature to contain or bear so much Force, Light, Knowledge or Ananda. All these things together make what we call the higher spiritual or Divine Consciousness. The psychic opening through the heart puts us primarily into connection with the individual Divine, the Divine in his inner relation with us; it is especially the source of love and Bhakti. This upward opening puts us into direct relation with the whole Divine and can create in us the divine consciousness and a new birth or births of the spirit.

When the Peace is established, this higher or Divine Force from above can descend and work in us. It descends usually first into the head and liberates the inner mind centres, then into the heart centre and liberates fully the psychic and emotional being, then into the navel and other vital centres and liberates the inner vital, then into the Muladhara and below and liberates the inner physical being. It works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejecting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature. It can bring down

too a higher and yet higher force and range of the higher nature until, if that be the aim of the Sadhana, it becomes possible to bring down the supramental force and existence. All this is prepared, assisted, farthered by the work of the psychic being in the heart centre; the more it is open, in front, active, the quicker, safer, easier the working of the Force can be. The more love and Bhakti and surrender grow in the heart, the more rapid and perfect becomes the evolution of the Sadhana. For the descent and transformation imply at the same time an increasing contact and union with the Divine.

That is the fundamental rationale of the Sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the Siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, Bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the Sadhana – accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being – the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of Knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening – without any sense of descent of peace, light, wideness or power, or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or in a suddenly widened mind an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed – for there is no absolute rule for all – but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes

down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga.

The result of the concentration is not usually immediate though to some there comes a swift and sudden out-flowering; but with most there is a time longer or shorter of adaptation or preparation, especially if the nature has not been prepared already to some extent by aspiration and Tapasya. The coming of the result can sometimes be aided by associating with the concentration one of the processes of the old Yoga. There is the Adwaita process of the way of knowledge — one rejects from oneself the identification with the mind, vital, body, saying continually “I am not the mind”, “I am not the vital”, “I am not the body”, seeing these things as separate from one’s real self – and after a time one feels all the mental, vital, physical processes and the very sense of mind, vital, body becoming externalised, an outer action, while within and detached from them there grows the sense of a separate self-existent being which opens into the realisation of the cosmic and transcendent spirit. There is also the method – a very powerful method – of the Sankhyas, the separation of the Purusha and the Prakriti. One enforces on the mind the position of the Witness – all action of mind, vital, physical becomes an outer play which is not myself or mine, but belongs to Nature and has been enforced on an outer me. I am the witness Purusha; I am silent, detached, not bound by any of these things. There grows up in consequence a division in the being; the Sadhak feels within him the growth of a calm silent separate consciousness which feels itself quite apart from the surface play of the mind and the vital and physical Nature. Usually when this takes place, it is possible very rapidly to bring down the peace of the higher consciousness and the action of the higher Force and the full march of the Yoga. But often the Force itself comes down first in response to the concentration and call and then, if these things are necessary, it does them and uses any other means or process that is helpful or indispensable.

One thing more. In this process of the descent from above and the working it is most important not to rely entirely on oneself, but to rely on the guidance of the Guru and to refer all that happens to his judgment and arbitration and decision. For it often happens that the forces of the lower nature are stimulated and excited by the descent and want to mix with it and turn it to their profit. It often happens too that some Power or

Powers undivine in their nature present themselves as the Supreme Lord or as the

Divine Mother and claim the being's service and surrender. If these things are accepted, there will be an extremely disastrous consequence. If indeed there is the assent of the Sadhak to the Divine working alone and the submission or surrender to that guidance, then all can go smoothly. This assent and a rejection of all egoistic forces or forces that appeal to the ego are the safeguard throughout the Sadhana. But the ways of nature are full of snares, the disguises of the ego are innumerable, the illusions of the Powers of Darkness, Rakshasi Maya, are extraordinarily skilful; the reason is an insufficient guide and often turns traitor; vital desire is always with us tempting to follow any alluring call. This is the reason why in this Yoga we insist so much on what we call Samarpana – rather inadequately rendered by the English word surrender. If the heart centre is fully opened and the psychic is always in control, then there is no question; all is safe. But the psychic can at any moment be veiled by a lower upsurge. It is only a few who are exempt from these dangers and it is precisely those to whom surrender is easily possible. The guidance of one who himself is by identity or represents the Divine is in this difficult endeavour imperative and indispensable.

What I have written may help you to get some clear idea of what I mean by the central process of the Yoga. I have written at some length but, naturally, could cover only the fundamental things. Whatever belongs to circumstance and detail must arise as one works out the method, or rather as it works itself out – for the last is what usually happens when there is an effective beginning of the action of the Sadhana.

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Then as to concentration. Ordinarily the consciousness is spread out everywhere, dispersed, running in this or that direction, after this subject and that object in multitude. When anything has to be done of a sustained nature the first thing one does is to draw back all this dispersed consciousness and concentrate. It is then, if one looks closely, bound to be concentrated in one place and on one occupation, subject or object –

as when you are composing a poem or a botanist is studying a flower. The place is usually somewhere in the brain if it is the thought, in the heart if it is the feeling in which one is concentrated. The Yogic concentration is simply an extension and intensification of the same thing. It may be on an object as when one does Tratak on a shining point – then one has to concentrate so that one sees only that point and has no other thought than that. It may be on an idea or word or a name, the idea of the Divine, the word OM, the name Krishna, or a combination of idea and word or idea and name. But further in Yoga one also concentrates in a particular place. There is the famous rule of concentrating between the eyebrows – the centre of the inner mind, of occult vision, of the will is there. What you do is to think firmly from there on whatever you make the object of your concentration or else try to see the image of it from there. If you succeed in this then after a time you feel that your whole consciousness is centred there in that place – of course for the time being. After doing it for some time and often it becomes easy and normal.

I hope this is clear. Well, in this Yoga, you do the same, not necessarily at that particular spot between the eyebrows, but anywhere in the head or at the centre of the chest where the physiologists have fixed the cardiac centre. Instead of concentrating on an object, you concentrate in the head in a will, a call for the descent of the peace above or, as some do, an opening of the unseen lid and an ascent of the consciousness above. In the heart centre one concentrates in an aspiration, for an opening, for the presence of the living image of the Divine there or whatever else is the object. There may be Japa of a name but, if so, there must also be a concentration on it and the name must repeat itself there in the heart centre.

It may be asked what becomes of the rest of the consciousness when there is this local concentration? Well, it either falls silent as in any concentration or, if it does not, then thoughts or other things may move about, as if outside, but the concentrated part does not attend to them or notice. That is when the concentration is reasonably successful.

One has not to fatigue oneself at first by long concentration if one is not accustomed, for then in a jaded mind it loses its power and value. One can relax and meditate instead of concentrating. It is only as the concentration becomes normal that one can go on for a longer and longer

time.

WORK

To go entirely inside in order to have experiences and to neglect the work, the external consciousness, is to be unbalanced, one-sided in the Sadhana – for our Yoga is integral; so also to throw oneself outward and live in the external being alone is to be unbalanced, one-sided in the Sadhana. One must have the same consciousness in inner experience and outward action and make both full of the Mother.

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To keep up work helps to keep up the balance between the internal experience and the external development; otherwise one-sidedness and want of measure and balance may develop. Moreover, it is necessary to keep the Sadhana of work for the Divine because in the end that enables the Sadhak to bring out the inner progress into the external nature and life and helps the integrality of the Sadhana.

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Everything depends on the inner condition, and the outward condition is only useful as a means and a help for expressing or confirming the inner condition and making it dynamic and effective. If you do or say a thing with the psychic uppermost or with the right inner touch, it will be effective; if you do or say the same thing out of the mind or the vital or with a wrong or mixed atmosphere, it may be quite ineffective. To do the right thing in the right way in each case and at each moment one must be in the right consciousness – it cannot be done by following a fixed mental rule which under some circumstances might fit in and under others might not fit at all. A general principle can be laid down if it is in consonance with the Truth, but its application must be determined by the inner consciousness seeing at each step what is to be done and not done. If the psychic is uppermost, if the being is entirely turned towards the Mother and follows the psychic, this can be increasingly done.

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There should be not only a general attitude, but each work should be offered to the Mother so as to keep the attitude a living one all the time. There should be at the time of work no meditation, for that would withdraw the attention from the work, but there should be the constant memory of the One to whom you offer it. This is only a first process; for when you can have constantly the feeling of a calm being within concentrated in the sense of the Divine Presence while the surface mind does the work, or when you can begin to feel always that it is the Mother's force that is doing the work and you are only a channel or an instrument, then in place of memory there will have begun the automatic constant realisation of Yoga, divine union, in works.

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The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the Yoga.

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The ordinary life consists in work for personal aim and satisfaction of desire under some mental or moral control, touched sometimes by a mental ideal. The Gita's Yoga consists in the offering of one's work as a sacrifice to the Divine, the conquest of desire, egoless and desireless action, Bhakti for the Divine, an entering into the cosmic consciousness, the sense of unity with all creatures, oneness with the Divine. This Yoga adds the bringing down of the supramental Light and Force (its ultimate aim) and the transformation of the nature.

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Self-dedication does not depend on the particular work you do, but on the spirit in which all work, of whatever kind it may be, is done. Any

work done well and carefully as a sacrifice to the Divine, without desire or egoism, with equality of mind and calm tranquillity in good or bad fortune, for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of any personal gain, reward or result, with the consciousness that it is the Divine Power to which all work belongs, is a means of self-dedication through Karma.

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Even the most purely physical and mechanical work cannot be properly done if one accepts incapacity, inertia and passivity. The remedy is not to confine yourself to mechanical work, but to reject and throw off incapacity, passivity and inertia and open yourself to the Mother's force. If vanity, ambition and self-conceit stand in your way, cast them from you. You will not get rid of these things by merely waiting for them to disappear. If you merely wait for things to happen, there is no reason why they should happen at all. If it is incapacity and weakness that oppose, still, as one opens oneself truly and more and more to the Mother's force, the strength and capacity necessary for the work will be given and will grow in the Adhar.

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Those who do work for the Mother in all sincerity are prepared by the work itself for the right consciousness even if they do not sit down for meditation or follow any particular practice of Yoga. It is not necessary to tell you how to meditate; whatever is needful will come of itself if in your work and at all times you are sincere and keep yourself open to the Mother.

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Openness in work means the same thing as openness in the consciousness. The same Force that works in your consciousness in meditation and clears away the cloud and ion fusion whenever you open to it, can also take up your action and not only make you aware of the defects in it but keep you conscious of what is to be done and guide your mind and hands to do it. If you open to it in your work, you will begin to feel this guidance more and more until behind all your activities you will

be aware of the Force of the Mother.

There is no stage of the Sadhana in which works are impossible, no passage in the path where there is no foothold and action has to be renounced as incompatible with concentration on the Divine. The foothold is there always; the foothold is the reliance on the Divine, the opening of the being, the will, the energies to the Divine, the surrender to the Divine. All work done in that spirit can be made a means for the Sadhana. It may be necessary for an individual here and there to plunge into meditation for a time and suspend work for that time or make it subordinate; but that can only be an individual case and a temporary retirement. Moreover, a complete cessation of work and entire withdrawal into oneself is seldom advisable; it may encourage a too one-sided and visionary condition in which one lives in a sort of mid-world of purely subjective experiences without a firm hold on either external reality or on the highest Reality and without the right use of the subjective experience to create a firm link and then a unification between the highest Reality and the external realisation in life.

Work can be of two kinds – the work that is a field of experience used for the Sadhana, for a progressive harmonisation and transformation of the being and its activities, and work that is a realised expression of the Divine. But the time for the latter can be only when the Realisation has been fully brought down into the earth-consciousness; till then all work must be a field of endeavour and a school of experience.

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I have never put any ban on Bhakti. Also I am not conscious of having banned meditation either at any time. I have stressed both Bhakti and knowledge in my Yoga as well as works, even if I have not given any of them an exclusive importance like Shankara or Chaitanya.

The difficulty you feel or any Sadhak feels about Sadhana is not really a question of meditation versus Bhakti versus works. It is a difficulty of the attitude to be taken, the approach or whatever you may like to call it.

If you can't as yet remember the Divine all the time you are working, it does not greatly matter. To remember and dedicate at the beginning

and give thanks at the end ought to be enough for the present. Or at the most to remember too when there is a pause. Your method seems to me rather painful and difficult, – you seem to be trying to remember and work with one and the same part of the mind. I don't know if that is possible. When people remember all the time during work (it can be done), it is usually with the back of their minds or else there is created gradually a faculty of double thought or else a double consciousness – one in front that works, and one within that witnesses and remembers. There is also another way which was mine for a long time – a condition in which the work takes place automatically and without intervention of personal thought or mental action, while the consciousness remains silent in the Divine. The thing, however, does not come so much by trying as by a very simple constant aspiration and will of consecration – or else by a movement of the consciousness separating the inner from the instrumental being. Aspiration and will of consecration calling down a greater Force to do the work is a method which brings great results, even if in some it takes a long time about it. That is a great secret of Sadhana, to know how to get things done by the Power behind or above instead of doing all by the mind's effort. I don't mean to say that the mind's effort is unnecessary or has no result – only if it tries to do everything by itself, that becomes a laborious effort for all except the spiritual athletes. Nor do I mean that the other method is the longed-for short cut; the result may, as I have said, take a long time. Patience and firm resolution are necessary in every method of Sadhana.

Strength is all right for the strong – but aspiration and the Grace answering to it are not altogether myths; they are great realities of the spiritual life.

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I do not mean by work action done in the ego and the ignorance, for the satisfaction of the ego and in the drive of Rajasic desire. There can be no Karmayoga without the will to get rid of ego, Rajas and desire, which are the seals of ignorance.

I do not mean philanthropy or the service of humanity or all the rest of the things – moral or idealistic – which the mind of man substitutes for the deeper truth of works.

I mean by work action done for the Divine and more and more in union with the Divine – for the Divine alone and nothing else. Naturally that is not easy at the beginning, any more than deep meditation and luminous Knowledge are easy or even true love and Bhakti are easy. But like the others it has to be begun in the right spirit and attitude, with the right will in you, then all the rest will come.

Works done in this spirit are quite as effective as Bhakti or contemplation. One gets by the rejection of desire, Rajas, and ego a quietude and purity into which the Peace ineffable can descend; one gets by the dedication of one's will to the Divine, by the merging of one's will in the Divine Will the death of ego and the enlarging into the cosmic consciousness or else the uplifting into what is above the cosmic; one experiences the separation of Purusha from Prakriti and is liberated from the shackles of the outer nature; one becomes aware of one's inner being and sees the outer as an instrument; one feels the universal Force doing one's works and the Self or Purusha watching or witness but free; one feels all one's works taken from one and done by the universal or supreme Mother or by the Divine Power controlling and acting from behind the heart. By constant referring of all one's will and works to the Divine, love and adoration grow, the psychic being comes forward. By the reference to the Power above, we can come to feel it above and its descent and the opening to an increasing consciousness and knowledge. Finally, works, Bhakti and knowledge go together and self-perfection becomes possible – what we call the transformation of the nature.

These results certainly do not come all at once; they come more or less slowly, more or less completely according to the condition and growth of the being. There is no royal road to the divine realisation.

This is the Karmayoga laid down in the Gita as I have developed it for the integral spiritual life. It is founded not on speculation and reasoning but on experience. It does not exclude meditation and certainly does not exclude Bhakti, for the self-offering to the Divine, the consecration of all oneself to the Divine which is the essence of this Karmayoga are essentially a movement of Bhakti. Only it does exclude a life-fleeing exclusive meditation or an emotional Ibhakti shut up in its own inner dream taken as the whole movement of the Yoga. One may have hours of pure absorbed meditation or of the inner motionless adoration and ecstasy, but they are not the whole of the integral Yoga.

GLOSSARY

ādhāra (Adhar): Vessel, receptacle – the system of mind, life and body considered as a receptacle of the spiritual consciousness and force.

advaita (Adwaita): Monism, monistic.

advaita vedānta (Adwaita Vedanta): The monistic school of Vedanta.

ājñā cakra: Will centre – see *cakra*.

anāhata: See *cakra*.

ānanda (Ananda): Bliss, delight – the divine or spiritual bliss.

antarātman (Antaratman): Inner self, soul.

aparā prakṛti (Apara Prakriti): The inferior nature, Nature in the lower manifestation of the Ignorance.

ātman (Atman): Self.

ātmarati: The peace and joy inherent in the self.

avatāra (Avatar): The descent of the Divine in a human form.

avidyā (Avidya): The cosmic principle of Ignorance.

bhakta: Devotee.

bhakti: Devotion.

brahman: The spiritual Reality, universal and supreme.

brahmānda (Brahmanda): Cosmos, universe.

caitya puruṣa (Chaitya Purusha): Psychic being.

cakra (Chakra): Centre, nodus, plexus; the seven psychological centres in the subtle body.

cakra ājñā: Centre between the eye-brows.

– *anāhata*: Centre in the heart.

– *hṛdpadma*: Heart-lotus; same as *anāhata*.

– *maṇipura*: Centre at the navel.

– *mūlādhāra*: Centre at the bottom end of the spine.

– *nābhipadma*: Same as *maṇipura*.

– *sahasradala*: See *sahasradala*.

– *svādhiṣṭhāna*: Centre abdominal.

– *viśuddha*: Centre in the throat.

dvaita (Dwaita): Dualism, dualistic.

dvaitādvaita (Dwaitadwaita): Dualistic monism.

guṇa (Guna): Quality, mode of Nature.

guru: Spiritual Master.

hṛdpadma: See *cakra*.

japa: Repetition of set sounds or words or a name as prayer or invocation.

jīva (Jiva): The Jivatman; the living being.

jīva (Kṛṣṇa's) (Jiva, Krishna's): A creature of Krishna, i.e., God's creature.

jīvātman (Jivatman): The individual self.

jyoti: Light; the principle of spiritual light in the higher or divine Nature.

karma: Action, work: the resultant force of action done in the past, especially in past lives.

karma Yoga: The system of spiritual discipline which takes work (dedicated to the Divine) as its basis.

kevala: Absolute, sheer.

kṛṣṇa's jīva (Krishna's Jiva): See *jīva (Kṛṣṇa's)*.

kuṇḍalinī śakti (Kundalini Shakti): The power that lies coiled or involved in the lowest centre at the bottom of the spine; it is awakened by Yoga and rises to join the

Divine Power or Presence in the 'sahasradala' (seventh centre).

laya: Dissolution of the individual being, merging in the one Self-Existence.

līlā (Lila): Play (of the Divine).

maṇipura: See *cakra*.

mantra: Set words or sounds having a spiritual significance and power.

mokṣa (Moksha): Spiritual liberation from the sense of personal being; release from cosmic existence.

mūlādhāra: See *cakra*.

nābhipadma: See *cakra*.

nirvāṇa (Nirvana): Spiritual extinction of the separate individual self.

om: The primal sound representing the supreme spiritual reality.

Parameśvara (Parameshwara): The Supreme as Lord and Master of the universe.

parā prakṛti: The higher or divine Nature.

parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā: The higher Nature that has become the individual selves.

prakṛti (Prakriti): Nature, the active and executive Energy, as distinguished from the witnessing and sustaining soul or conscious being.

pralaya: The dissolution of the cosmos; any dissolution of the created things.

puruṣa (Puruṣa): The soul or conscious being supporting the action of Nature.

rajas: One of the three gunas, fundamental qualities or modes of Nature; the kinetic principle in Nature characterised by desire, action and passions.

rājasika (Rajasic): Full of the quality of *rajas*, the kinetic principle.

rākṣasī māyā (Rakshasi Maya): Illusions created by the Powers of Darkness.

śakti (Shakti): The Divine Power, the Conscious Force of the Divine.

śama (Shama): Quiet, rest – the principle of calm and peace in the higher or divine Nature.

śrāddha (Shraddha): The ceremony of offering oblation to the dead.

saccidānanda (Sachchidananda): The Supreme Reality as self-existent Being, Consciousness and Bliss.

sahasradala: The thousand-petalled lotus, seventh centre at the crown of the head.

samarpaṇa (Samarpana): Entire self-giving, surrender, dedication.

saṃskāras (Sanskaras): Fixed mental formations; impressions of past habits, experiences stored up in the subconscious parts.

sattva (Sattwa): One of the three gunas, fundamental qualities or modes of Nature; the principle of light and harmony in Nature.

sādhaka (Sadhak): One who practises the discipline of Yoga.

sādhanā (Sadhana): The discipline of Yoga as a means of realisation; practice of the Yoga.

sāṃkhya (Sankhya): A system of philosophy and spiritual practice based upon a detailed analysis of nature and consciousness, Prakriti and Purusha.

Sāttvika (Sattwic): Full of the quality of *sattva*, the principle of light and harmony.

siddhi: Realisation, fulfilment; also, an occult power gained by Yoga.

sūkṣma śarīra (Sukshma Sharira): The subtle body. *svādhīsthāna*: See *cakra*.

tamas: One of the three gunas, fundamental qualities or modes of Nature; the principle of obscurity and inertia in Nature.

tantra: A path of spiritual discipline based upon the principle of Consciousness-Power (conceived as the Mother) as the supreme Reality.

tapas: Energy of Consciousness – the principle of spiritual power and force in the higher or divine Nature.

tapasyā (Tapasya): Spiritual effort by concentration of the energies in a spiritual discipline or process.

tāmasika (Tamasic): Full of the quality of tamas, the principle of obscurity and inertia in Nature.

trāṭaka (Tratak): Focussing the eyes upon a single point to make the consciousness one-pointed.

udāsīna (Udasina): Seated above, detached.

vedānta (Vedanta): The system of philosophy and spiritual discipline in accordance with the “Book of Knowledge” that forms the latter portion of the Vedas (the Vedas are the ancient Indian Scriptures) – the earlier portion being known as the “Book of Works”.

viśuddha: Literally, pure, see *cakra*.

viśiṣṭādvaita (Vishishtadwaita): “Qualified monism.”

ṛndāvana (Vrindavan): The holy place where Krishna as the Divine Lover plays with his beloved ones.

yoga: Union with the Divine; the discipline by which one enters through an awakening into an inner and higher consciousness.

yoga-śakti (Yoga-Shakti): The power that comes with the awakening of the inner and higher consciousness.

yoga siddhi: Fulfilment or realisation of the aims of the Yoga.