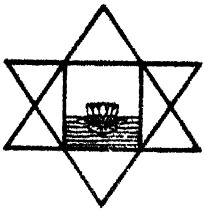
SRI AUROBINDO



LETTERS ON YOGA

PARTS TWO AND THREE

BIRTH CENTENARY
LIBRARY

SRI AUROBINDO
BIRTH CENTENARY LIBRARY

LETTERS ON YOGA

PARTS TWO AND THREE

Acc. No. 11369 Date 7.11.96 294'57 AUR/L

VOLUME 23

SRI AUROBINDO BIRTH CENTENARY LIBRARY - POPULAR EDITION
Published By Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry . Reproduced by offset at the All India Press, Pondicherry, India
PRINTED IN INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO

BIRTH

August 15, 1872

•

MAHASAMADHI

December 5, 1950

•

CENTENARY

August 15, 1972

Contents

PART TWO

Section I

THE OBJECT OF INTEGRAL YOGA 503

Section II

SYNTHETIC METHOD AND INTEGRAL YOGA . . . 525

Section III

BASIC REQUISITES OF THE PATH 545

Section IV

THE FOUNDATION OF SADHANA 635

Section V

SADHANA THROUGH WORK 669

Section VI

SADHANA THROUGH MEDITATION 721

Section VII

SADHANA THROUGH LOVE AND DEVOTION . . . 753

Section VIII

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN YOGA 803

Section IX

SADHANA IN THE ASHRAM AND OUTSIDE 847

PART THREE

Section I

EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS 877

Section II

VISIONS AND SYMBOLS 931

Section III

EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER AND THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS 991

Your writing is still difficult to
handle without pressure when all is quiet
& nothing being done on the surface. But
mental pressures are bad and cannot
be avoided. You must not therefore
suppose that it is because of your writing
otherwise wrong or unpleasant that it is so
and, if you had thought differently or spoken,
there there would be mental pressures and there
could be an unbroken flow of
correspondence. That is not so. Even if the opposition
were there, the mental pressure would
be better — better in the sense that
there would be greater quietude and more
willing, deliberate and independent. A certain
force can be there when a certain stage has
been reached or reached, but there is
always inside us something which knows
better, but behind all the machinery of
the mind, vital, physical is necessary. For
this purpose to be psychic and be accompanied
& always accept the mind's effort.
Then psychic has to fully liberate and that
and the force is ready to make fully possible.

14.7.36

Sri Aurobindo

Facsimile of a letter on pp. 570-571

It is quite an official letter in the form and not I will tear it to pieces and throw it away. It is understood that it is not possible for the human nature to be always without some measure of doubt, obscurity or things not right until the inner consciousness has sufficiently grown to make this impossible. It is because it is so that the will is necessary and that the force and work to remove these things with full assent of all the mind and heart of the whole. Only to reject these things and make the will permanent is not enough; for it is this effort that brings eventually the permanence.

The depth of the sleep in your experience was intended to make you go deep inside and see how much you did not, your outer mind and the psychic and spiritual state which takes the impress of the beautiful wonders and the flow of white light and the coolness and peace. The staircase was a symbol of the exact formation psychic and spiritual state to higher and higher levels of the spiritual consciousness above the source of the light. The rotary [illegible] the guiding [illegible] and will which will draw you up and lead you to the top of the ladder.

18.4.36 Sri Aurobindo

Facsimile of a letter on p. 581

PART TWO

Section One

THE OBJECT OF INTEGRAL YOGA

The Object of Integral Yoga

THE object of the yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine, and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine. Its object is not to be a great yogi or a Superman (although that may come) or to grab at the Divine for the sake of the ego's power, pride or pleasure. It is not for Moksha though liberation comes by it and all else may come, but these must not be our objects. The Divine alone is our object.

*
**

To come to this yoga merely with the idea of being a superman would be an act of vital egoism which would defeat its own object. Those who put this object in the front of their preoccupations invariably come to grief, spiritually and otherwise. The aim of this yoga is, first, to enter into the divine consciousness by merging into it the separative ego (incidentaly, in doing so one finds one's true individual self which is not the limited, vain and selfish human ego but a portion of the Divine) and, secondly, to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth to transform mind, life and body. All else can be only a result of these two aims, not the primary object of the yoga.

*
**

You must get out of certain wrong ideas that you seem to have about yoga, for these are dangerous and ought to be thrown away by every sadhak:

1. The object of yoga is not to become "like" Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. Those who cherish this idea easily come to the further idea that they can become their equals and even greater. This is only to feed the ego.

2. The object of yoga is not to get power or to be more powerful than others or to have great siddhis or to do great or wonderful or miraculous things.

3. The object of yoga is not to be a great yogi or a superman. This is an egoistic way of taking the yoga and can lead to no good; avoid it altogether.

4. To talk about the supramental and think of bringing it down in yourself is the most dangerous of all. It may bring an entire megalomania and loss of balance. What the sadhak has to seek is the full opening to the Divine, the psychic change of his consciousness, the spiritual change. Of that change of consciousness, selflessness, desirelessness, humility, bhakti, surrender, calm, equality, peace, quiet sincerity are necessary constituents. Until he has the psychic and spiritual change, to think of being supramental is an absurdity and an arrogant absurdity.

All these egoistic ideas, if indulged, can only aggrandise the ego, spoil the sadhana and lead to serious spiritual dangers. They should be rejected altogether.

⁂

Of course you can [do yoga without being great]. There is no need of being great. On the contrary humility is the first necessity, for one who has ego and pride cannot realise the Highest.

⁂

As for the book itself, I am unfortunately ignorant of the Telugu language and cannot read the original, but from the account given in English I have formed some idea of the substance. I gather that it is in the main a statement and justification of the Purna Yoga and of my message; I believe you have rightly stated the two main elements of it — first, the acceptance of the world as a manifestation of the Divine Power, not its rejection as a mistake or an illusion, and, secondly, the character of this manifestation as a spiritual evolution with yoga as a means for the transformation of mind, life and body into instruments of a spiritual and supramental perfection. The universe is not only a material

but a spiritual fact, life not only a play of forces or a mental experience, but a field for the evolution of the concealed spirit. Human life will receive its fulfilment and transformation into something beyond itself only when this truth is seized and made the motive force of our existence and the means of its effective realisation discovered. The means of realisation is to be found in an integral yoga, a union in all parts of our being with the Divine and a consequent transmutation of all their now jarring elements into the harmony of a higher divine consciousness and existence.

*
**

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.

*
**

You have apparently a call and may be fit for yoga; but there are different paths and each has a different aim and end before it. It is common to all the paths to conquer the desires, to put aside the ordinary relations of life, and to try to pass from uncertainty to everlasting certitude. One may also try to conquer dream and sleep, thirst and hunger etc. But it is no part of my yoga to have nothing to do with the world or with life or to kill the senses or entirely inhibit their action. It is the object of my yoga to transform life by bringing down into it the Light, Power and Bliss of the divine Truth and its dynamic certitudes. This yoga is not a yoga of world-shunning asceticism, but of divine life. Your object on the other hand can only be gained by entering into Samadhi and ceasing in it from all connection with world-existence.

⁂

It is not indispensable to be an ascetic — it is enough if one can learn to live within in the inner being instead of on the surface, discover the soul or true individuality which is veiled by the surface mind and life forces and open the being to the superconscient Reality. But in this one cannot succeed unless one is wholly sincere and one-pointed in the effort.

As to the second question, participation in Sri Aurobindo's mission depends on capacity to do a difficult yoga or on a call to devote oneself to that ideal without thought of the claims of the ego or the vital desires; otherwise it is better not to think of it.

⁂

Yes, unless the external nature is transformed, one may go as high as possible and have the largest experiences — but the external mind remains an instrument of Ignorance.

⁂

It is always possible to have realisations of a kind on the mental-spiritual plane even if the vital is still impure. There is a sort of separation of the mental Purusha and Prakriti which results in a

knowledge that has no transforming effect on the life. But the theory of these yogis is that one has to know the Self; life and what one does in life do not matter. Have you not read of the yogi who came with his concubine and Ramakrishna asked him, "Why do you live like that?" He answered ,"All is Maya, so it does not matter what I do so long as I know the Brahman." It is true Ramakrishna replied, "I spit on your Vedanta", but logically the yogi had a case — for if all life and action are Maya and only the silent Brahman is real — well!

⁂

In the Brahmic condition one feels the self to be untouched and pure but the nature remains imperfect. The ordinary Sannyasin does not care about that, because it is not his object to perfect the nature, but to separate himself from it.

⁂

Peace is a necessary basis but peace is not sufficient. Peace if it is strong and permanent can liberate the inner being which can become a calm and unmoved witness of the external movements. That is the liberation of the Sannyasin. In some cases it can liberate the external also, throwing the old nature out into the environmental consciousness, but even this is liberation, not transformation.

⁂

They [the ancient yogas] aimed at realisation and did not care about divinisation, except the Tantric and some others. The aim however even in these was rather to become saints and siddhas than anything else.

⁂

The plane makes a considerable difference in the power and luminosity and completeness etc. of the experience. A mental realisation is very different from an overmental or supramental although the Truth realised may be the same. So also to know

Matter as the Brahman has a very different result from knowing Life, Mind, Supermind or Ananda as the Brahman. If realising the Divine through the Mind was just the same as realising him on higher planes, there would be no meaning in this yoga at all — there would be no need of ascending to supermind or bringing supermind down.

⁂

To be in full union with the Divine is the final aim. When one has some kind of constant union, one can be called a yogi, but the union has to be made complete. There are yogis who have only the union on the spiritual plane, others who are united in mind and heart, others in the vital also. In our yoga our aim is to be united too in the physical consciousness and on the supramental plane.

⁂

But why should they [the yogis of the traditional paths] feel any pressure [of the descent of the supermind] when they are satisfied with the realisation they have? They live in the spiritual mind and the nature of the mind is to separate — here to separate some high aspect or state of the Divine and seek that to the exclusion of all else. All the spiritual philosophies and schools of yoga do that. If they go beyond, it is to the Absolute — and mind cannot conceive of the Absolute except as something inconceivable, *neti neti*. Moreover for getting samadhi they concentrate on one single idea and what they reach is that which is represented by that idea — the samadhi is in its nature an exclusive concentration on that. So why should it open them to anything else? There are only a few who are sufficiently plastic to escape from this self-limitation of the sadhana — what they experience is that there is no end to the realisation, when you get to one peak, you find another beyond it. In order to see more than this one has to get into conscious waking touch with the supramental or at least get a glimpse of it — and that means passing beyond spiritual mind.

⁂

It is the very principle of this yoga that only by the supramentalisation of the consciousness which means rising above mind to supermind and the descent of the supermind into the nature can the final transformation be made. So if nobody can rise above mind to supermind or obtain the descent of the supermind, then logically this yoga becomes impossible. Every being is in essence one with the Divine and in his individual being a portion of the Divine; so there is no insuperable bar to his becoming supramental. It is no doubt impossible for the human nature being mental in its basis to overcome the Ignorance and rise to or obtain the descent of the supermind by its own unaided effort, but by surrender to the Divine it can be done. One brings it down into the earth Nature through his own consciousness and so opens the way for the others, but the change has to be repeated in each consciousness to become individually effective.

*
**

The aim of the yoga is to open the consciousness to the Divine and to live in the inner consciousness more and more while acting from it on the external life, to bring the inmost psychic into the front and by the power of the psychic to purify and change the being so that it may become ready for transformation and be in union with the Divine Knowledge, Will and Love. Secondly, to develop the yogic consciousness, i.e., to universalise the being in all the planes, become aware of the cosmic being and cosmic forces and be in union with the Divine on all the planes up to the overmind. Thirdly, to come into contact with the transcendent Divine beyond the overmind through the supramental consciousness, supramentalise the consciousness and the nature and make oneself an instrument for the realisation of the dynamic Divine Truth and its transforming descent into the earth-nature.

*
**

The Divine has three aspects for us:

1. It is the Cosmic Self and Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings, from which and in which all is manifested in

the universe — although it is now a manifestation in the Ignorance.

2. It is the Spirit and Master of our own being within us whom we have to serve and learn to express his will in all our movements so that we may grow out of the Ignorance into the Light.

3. The Divine is transcendent Being and Spirit, all bliss and light and divine knowledge and power, and towards that highest divine existence and its Light we have to rise and bring down the reality of it more and more into our consciousness and life.

In the ordinary Nature we live in the Ignorance and do not know the Divine. The forces of the ordinary Nature are undivine forces because they weave a veil of ego and desire and unconsciousness which conceals the Divine from us. To get into the higher and deeper consciousness which knows and lives luminously in the Divine, we have to get rid of the forces of the lower nature and open to the action of the Divine Shakti which will transform our consciousness into that of the Divine Nature.

This is the conception of the Divine from which we have to start — the realisation of its truth can only come with the opening of the consciousness and its change.

*
**

The distinction between the Transcendental, the Cosmic, the Individual Divine is not my invention, nor is it native to India or to Asia — it is, on the contrary, a recognised European teaching current in the esoteric tradition of the Catholic Church where it is the authorised explanation of the Trinity, — Father, Son and Holy Ghost, — and it is very well-known to European mystic experience. In essence it exists in all spiritual disciplines that recognise the omnipresence of the Divine — in Indian Vedantic experience and in Mahomedan yoga (not only the Sufi, but other schools also) — the Mahomedans even speak of not two or three but many levels of the Divine until one reaches the Supreme. As for the idea in itself, surely there is a difference between the individual, the cosmos in space and time, and something that exceeds this cosmic formula or any cosmic formula. There is a cosmic

consciousness experienced by many which is quite different in its scope and action from the individual consciousness, and if there is a consciousness beyond the cosmic, infinite and essentially eternal, not merely extended in Time, that also must be different from these two. And if the Divine is or manifests Himself in these three, is it not conceivable that in aspect, in His working, He may differentiate Himself so much that we are driven, if we are not to confound all truth of experience, if we are not to limit ourselves to a mere static experience of something indefinable, to speak of a triple aspect of the Divine?

In the practice of yoga there is a great dynamic difference in one's way of dealing with these three possible realisations. If I realise only the Divine as that, not my personal self, which yet moves secretly all my personal being and which I can bring forward out of the veil, or if I build up the image of that Godhead in my members, it is a realisation but a limited one. If it is the Cosmic Godhead that I realise, losing in it all personal self, that is a very wide realisation, but I become a mere channel of the universal Power and there is no personal or divinely individual consummation for me. If I shoot up to the transcendental realisation only, I lose both myself and the world in the transcendental Absolute. If, on the other hand, my aim is none of these things by itself, but to realise and also to manifest the Divine in the world, bringing down for the purpose a yet unmanifested Power, — such as the supermind, — a harmonisation of all three becomes imperative. I have to bring it down, and from where shall I bring it down — since it is not yet manifested in the cosmic formula — if not from the unmanifest Transcendence, which I must reach and realise? I have to bring it into the cosmic formula and, if so, I must realise the cosmic Divine and become conscious of the cosmic self and the cosmic forces. But I have to embody it here, — otherwise it is left as an influence only and not a thing fixed in the physical world, and it is through the Divine in the individual alone that this can be done.

These are elements in the dynamics of spiritual experience and I am obliged to admit them if a divine work has to be done.

*
**

Obviously to seek the Divine *only* for what one can get out of Him is not the proper attitude; but if it were absolutely forbidden to seek Him for these things, most people in the world would not turn towards Him at all I suppose therefore it is allowed so that they may make a beginning — if they have faith, they may get what they ask for and think it a good thing to go on and then one day they may suddenly stumble upon the idea that this is after all not quite the one thing to do and that there are better ways and a better spirit in which one can approach the Divine. If they do not get what they want and still come to the Divine and trust in Him, well, that shows they are getting ready. Let us look at it as a sort of infants' school for the unready. But of course that is not the spiritual life, it is only a sort of elementary religious approach. For the spiritual life to give and not to demand is the rule. The sadhak, however, can ask for the Divine Force to aid him in keeping his health or recovering it if he does that as part of his sadhana so that his body may be able and fit for the spiritual life and a capable instrument for the Divine Work.

*
**

Let us first put aside the quite foreign consideration of what we would do if the union with the Divine brought eternal joylessness, Nirananda or torture. Such a thing does not exist and to drag it in only clouds the issue. The Divine is Anandamaya and one can seek him for the Ananda he gives; but he has also in him many other things and one may seek him for any of them, for peace, for liberation, for knowledge, for power, for anything else of which one may feel the pull or the impulse. It is quite possible for someone to say: "Let me have Power from the Divine and do His work or His Will and I am satisfied, even if the use of Power entails suffering also." It is possible to shun bliss as a thing too tremendous or ecstatic and ask only or rather for peace, for liberation, for Nirvana. You speak of self-fulfilment, — one may regard the Supreme not as the Divine but as one's highest Self and seek fulfilment of one's being in that highest Self; but one need not envisage it as a self of bliss, ecstasy, Ananda — one may envisage it as a self of freedom, vast-

ness, knowledge, tranquillity, strength, calm, perfection — perhaps too calm for a ripple of anything so disturbing as joy to enter. So even if it is for something to be gained that one approaches the Divine, it is not a fact that one can approach Him or seek union only for the sake of Ananda and nothing else.

That involves something which throws all your reasoning out of gear. For these are aspects of the Divine Nature, powers of it, states of his being, — but the Divine Himself is something absolute, someone self-existent, not limited by his aspects, — wonderful and ineffable, not existing by them, but they existing because of Him. It follows that if he attracts by his aspects, all the more he can attract by his very absolute selfness which is sweeter, mightier, profounder than any aspect. His peace, rapture, light, freedom, beauty are marvellous and ineffable, because he is himself magically, mysteriously, transcendently marvellous and ineffable. He can then be sought after for his wonderful and ineffable self and not only for the sake of one aspect or another of his. The only thing needed for that is, first, to arrive at a point when the psychic being feels this pull of the Divine in himself and, secondly, to arrive at the point when the mind, vital and each thing else begins to feel too that that was what it was wanting and the surface hunt after Ananda or what else was only an excuse for drawing the nature towards that supreme magnet.

Your argument that because we know the union with the Divine will bring Ananda, therefore it must be for the Ananda that we seek the union, is not true and has no force. One who loves a queen may know that if she returns his love it will bring him power, position, riches and yet it need not be for the power, position, riches that he seeks her love. He may love her for herself and could love her equally if she were not a queen; he might have no hope of any return whatever and yet love her, adore her, live for her, die for her simply because she is she. That has happened and men have loved women without any hope of enjoyment or result, loved steadily, passionately after age has come and beauty has gone. Patriots do not love their country only when she is rich, powerful, great and has much to give them; love for country has been most ardent, passionate, absolute when the country was poor, degraded, miserable, having nothing to

give but loss, wounds, torture, imprisonment, death as the wages of her service; yet even knowing that they would never see her free, men have lived, served and died for her — for her own sake, not for what she could give. Men have loved Truth for her own sake and for what they could seek or find of her, accepted poverty, persecution, death itself; they have been content even to seek for her always, not finding, and yet never given up the search. That means what? That man, country, Truth and other things besides can be loved for their own sake and not for anything else, not for any circumstance or attendant quality or resulting enjoyment, but for something absolute that is either in them or behind their appearance and circumstance. The Divine is more than a man or woman, a stretch of land or a creed, opinion, discovery or principle. He is the Person beyond all persons, the Home and Country of all souls, the Truth of which truths are only imperfect figures. And can He then not be loved and sought for his own sake, as and more than these have been by men even in their lesser selves and nature?

What your reasoning ignores is that which is absolute or tends towards the absolute in man and his seeking as well as in the Divine — something not to be explained by mental reasoning or vital motive. A motive, but a motive of the soul, not of vital desire; a reason not of the mind, but of the self and spirit. An asking too, but the asking that is the soul's inherent aspiration, not a vital longing. That is what comes up when there is the sheer self-giving, when "I seek you for this, I seek you for that" changes to a sheer "I seek you for you." It is that marvellous and ineffable absolute in the Divine that X means when he says, "Not knowledge nor this nor that, but Krishna." The pull of that is indeed a categorical imperative, the self in us drawn to the Divine because of the imperative call of the greater Self, the soul ineffably drawn towards the object of its adoration because it cannot be otherwise, because it is it and He is He. That is all about it.

I have written all that only to explain what we mean when we speak of seeking the Divine for himself and not for anything else — so far as it is explicable. Explicable or not, it is one of the most dominant facts of spiritual experience. The will to self-

giving is only an expression of this fact. But this does not mean that I object to your asking for Ananda. Ask for that by all means, so long as to ask for it is a need of any part of your being — for these are the things that lead towards the Divine so long as the absolute inner call that is there all the time does not push itself to the suface. But it was really that that has drawn from the beginning and is there behind — it is the categorical spiritual imperative, the absolute need of the soul for the Divine.

I am not saying that there is to be no Ananda. The self-giving itself is a profound Ananda and what it brings, carries in its wake an inexpressible Ananda — and it is brought by this method sooner than by any other, so that one can say almost, "A self-less self-giving is the best policy." Only one does not do it out of policy. Ananda is the result, but it is done not for the result, but for the self-giving itself and for the Divine himself — a subtle distinction, it may seem to the mind, but very real.

*
**

It was not my intention to say that it was wrong to aspire for the Ananda. What I wanted to point out was the condition for the permanent possession of the Ananda (intimations, visits, down-rushes of it one can have before); the essential condition for it is a change of consciousness, the coming of peace, light, etc., all that brings about the transition from the normal to the spiritualised nature. And that being so, it is better to make this change of consciousness the first object of the sadhana. On the other hand, to press for the constant Ananda immediately in a consciousness which is not yet able to retain it, still more to substitute for it lesser (vital) joys and pleasures may very well stop the flow of these spiritualised experiences which make the continuous ecstasy essentially possible. But I certainly never intended to say that the Ananda was not to be attained or to insist on your moving towards a *nirānanda* (joyless) Brahman. On the contrary, I said that Ananda was the crown of the yoga, which surely means that it was a part of the highest *siddhi*.

Whatever one wants sincerely and persistently from the Divine, the Divine is sure to give. If then you want Ananda and

go on wanting, you will surely have it in the end. The only question is what is to be the chief power in your seeking, a vital demand or a psychic aspiration manifesting through the heart and communicating itself to the mental and vital and physical consciousness. The latter is the greatest power and makes the shortest way — and besides one has to come that way sooner or later.

*
**

To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him, — that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature. To bring into activity the principle of oneness on the material plane or to work for humanity is a mental mistranslation of the Truth — these things cannot be the first true object of spiritual seeking. We must find the Self, the Divine, then only can we know what is the work the Self or the Divine demands from us. Until then our life and action can only be a help or means towards finding the Divine and it ought not to have any other purpose. As we grow in the inner consciousness, or as the spiritual Truth of the Divine grows in us, our life and action must indeed more and more flow from that, be one with that. But to decide beforehand by our limited mental conceptions what they must be is to hamper the growth of the spiritual Truth within. As that grows we shall feel the Divine Light and Truth, the Divine Power and Force, the Divine Purity and Peace working within us, dealing with our actions as well as our consciousness, making use of them to reshape us into the Divine Image, removing the dross, substituting the pure gold of the Spirit. Only when the Divine Presence is there in us always and the consciousness transformed, can we have the right to say that we are ready to manifest the Divine on the material plane. To hold up a mental ideal or principle and impose that

on the inner working brings the danger of limiting ourselves to a mental realisation or of impeding or even falsifying by a half-way formation the true growth into the full communion and union with the Divine and the free and intimate outflowing of His will in our life. This is a mistake of orientation to which the mind of today is especially prone. It is far better to approach the Divine for the Peace or Light or Bliss that the realisation of Him gives than to bring in these minor things which can divert us from the one thing needful. The divinisation of the material life also as well as the inner life is part of what we see as the Divine Plan, but it can only be fulfilled by an outflowing of the inner realisation, something that grows from within outwards, not by the working out of a mental principle.

You have asked what is the discipline to be followed in order to convert the mental seeking into a living spiritual experience. The first necessity is the practice of concentration of your consciousness within yourself. The ordinary human mind has an activity on the surface which veils the real Self. But there is another, a hidden consciousness within behind the surface one in which we can become aware of the real Self and of a larger deeper truth of nature, can realise the Self and liberate and transform the nature. To quiet the surface mind and begin to live within is the object of this concentration. Of this true consciousness other than the superficial there are two main centres, one in the heart (not the physical heart, but the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest), one in the head. The concentration in the heart opens within and by following this inward opening and going deep one becomes aware of the soul or psychic being, the divine element in the individual. This being unveiled begins to come forward, to govern the nature, to turn it and all its movements towards the Truth, towards the Divine, and to call down into it all that is above. It brings the consciousness of the Presence, the dedication of the being to the Highest and invites the descent into our nature of a greater Force and Consciousness which is waiting above us. To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result

once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way.

That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. It is important, however, to remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise, one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there. For some the mental concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately — but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable.

The other side of discipline is with regard to the activities of the nature, of the mind, of the life-self or vital, of the physical being. Here the principle is to accord the nature with the inner realisation so that one may not be divided into two discordant parts. There are here several disciplines or processes possible. One is to offer all the activities to the Divine and call for the inner guidance and the taking up of one's nature by a Higher Power. If there is the inward soul-opening, if the psychic being comes forward, then there is no great difficulty — there comes with it a psychic discrimination, a constant intimation, finally a governance which discloses and quietly and patiently removes all imperfections, brings the right mental and vital movements and

reshapes the physical consciousness also. Another method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life, physical being, to regard their activities as only a habitual formation of general Nature in the individual imposed on us by past workings, not as any part of our real being; in proportion as one succeeds in this, becomes detached, sees mind and its activities as not oneself, life and its activities as not oneself, the body and its activities as not oneself, one becomes aware of an inner Being within us — inner mental, inner vital, inner physical — silent, calm, unbound, unattached which reflects the true Self above and can be its direct representative; from this inner silent Being proceeds a rejection of all that is to be rejected, an acceptance only of what can be kept and transformed, an inmost Will to perfection or a call to the Divine Power to do at each step what is necessary for the change of the Nature. It can also open mind, life and body to the inmost psychic entity and its guiding influence or its direct guidance. In most cases these two methods emerge and work together and finally fuse into one. But one can begin with either, the one that one feels most natural and easy to follow.

Finally, in all difficulties where personal effort is hampered, the help of the Teacher can intervene and bring about what is needed for the realisation or for the immediate step that is necessary.

*
**

This yoga demands a total dedication of the life to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever. To divide your life between the Divine and some outward aim and activity that has nothing to do with the search for the Truth is inadmissible. The least thing of that kind would make success in the yoga impossible.

You must go inside yourself and enter into a complete dedication to the spiritual life. All clinging to mental preferences must fall away from you, all insistence on vital aims and interests and attachments must be put away, all egoistic clinging to family, friends, country must disappear if you want to succeed in yoga. Whatever has to come as outgoing energy or action, must proceed

from the Truth once discovered and not from the lower mental or vital motives, from the Divine Will and not from personal choice or the preferences of the ego.

⁂

It is a universally accepted principle of the spiritual endeavour that one must be prepared to sacrifice everything without reserve in order to reach the Divine through a spiritualised consciousness. If self-development on the mental, vital and physical plane is his aim that is another matter — that life is the life of the ego with the soul kept behind undeveloped or half-developed. But for the spiritual seeker the only development he seeks is the development of the psychic and spiritual consciousness and that too only because it is necessary to reach and to serve the Divine, not for its own sake. Whatever mental, vital, physical development or use of faculties can be made a part of the spiritual life and an instrumentation for the Divine can be kept on condition of surrender of them for transformation and restatement on the spiritual basis. But they must not be kept for their own sake or for the sake of the ego or considered as one's own possession or used for one's own purpose but only for the sake of the Divine.

As for James' statement it is of course true except in so far as the politician can indulge in other things as hobbies for his leisure hours, but if he wants to succeed as a politician he must give his best energies to politics. Conversely if Shakespeare or Newton had spent part of their energies in politics they would not have been able to reach such heights in poetry and in science or even if they had they would have done much less. The main energies have to be concentrated on one thing; the others can only be minor pursuits at leisure or for distraction or interests rather than pursuits useful for keeping up a general culture.

⁂

All depends on the aim of the life. To one whose aim is to discover and possess the highest spiritual truth and the divine life, I do not think a University post can count for much, nor do I

see that there can be any practical connection between them. It might be different if the aim were the life of a writer and thinker on the intellectual level only, without any higher flight or deeper seeking. I do not see that your unwillingness to commit yourself to this kind of work is due to any weakness. It is rather that only a small part of your nature, and that not the deepest or strongest part would be satisfied with it or with the atmosphere in which it would have to be done.

In these matters it is not the thinking mind but the vital being — the life-force and the desire-nature, or some part of it at least — that usually determines men's action and their choice, when it is not some outward necessity or pressure that compels or mainly influences the decision. The mind is only an interpreting, justifying and devising agent. By your taking up the sadhana this part of your vital being has had a pressure put upon it from above and within, which has discouraged its old turn of desires and tendencies, its past grooves, those which would have decided its direction before; this vital has, as its often one first result, fallen silent and neutral. It is no longer strongly moved towards the ordinary life; it has not yet received from or through the psychic centre and the higher mental will a sufficient illumination and impulse to take up a new vital movement and run vigorously on the road to a new life. That is the reason for the listlessness of which you speak and the mistiness of the future.

*
**

If your soul always aspires for the transformation, then that is what you have to follow after. To seek the Divine or rather some aspect of the Divine — for one cannot entirely realise the Divine if there is no transformation — may be enough for some, but not for those whose soul's aspiration is for the entire divine change.

*
**

At X's conscientious hesitations between Krishna and Shiva and Shakti I could not help indulging in a smile. If a man is attracted by one form or two forms of the Divine, it is all right,

but if he is drawn to several at a time he need not torment himself over it. A man of some development has necesssrily several sides in his nature and it is quite natural that different aspects should draw or govern different personalities in him: he can accept them all and harmonise them in the One Divine and the One Adya Shakti of whom all are the manifestations.

Section Two

SYNTHETIC METHOD AND INTEGRAL YOGA

Synthetic Method and Integral Yoga

AS REGARDS X's question — this is not a yoga of bhakti alone; it is or at least it claims to be an integral yoga, that is, a turning of all the being in all its parts to the Divine. It follows that there must be knowledge and works as well as bhakti, and in addition, it includes a total change of the nature, a seeking for perfection, so that the nature also may become one with the nature of the Divine. It is not only the heart that has to turn to the Divine and change, but the mind also — so knowledge is necessary, and the will and power of action and creation also — so works too are necessary. In this yoga the methods of other yogas are taken up — like this of Purusha-Prakriti, but with a difference in the final object. Purusha separates from Prakriti, not in order to abandon her, but in order to know himself and her and to be no longer her plaything, but the knower, lord and upholder of the nature; but having become so or even in becoming so, one offers all that to the Divine. One may begin with knowledge or with works or with bhakti or with Tapasya of self-purification for perfection (change of nature) and develop the rest as a subsequent movement or one may combine all in one movement. There is no single rule for all, it depends on the personality and the nature. Surrender is the main power of the yoga, but the surrender is bound to be progressive; a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, but only a will in the being for that completeness, — in fact it takes time; yet it is only when the surrender is complete that the full flood of the sadhana is possible. Till then there must be the personal effort with an increasing reality of surrender. One calls in the power of the Divine Shakti and once that begins to come into the being, it at first supports the personal endeavour, then progressively takes up the whole action, although the consent of the sadhak continues to be always necessary. As the Force works, it brings in the different processes that are necessary for the sadhak, processes of knowledge, of bhakti, of spiritualised action,

of transformation of the nature. The idea that they cannot be combined is an error.

⁂

The object of the sadhana is opening of the consciousness to the Divine and the change of the nature. Meditation or contemplation is one means to this but only one means; bhakti is another; work is another. Chitta-shuddhi was preached by the yogins as a first means towards realisation and they got by it the saintliness of the saint and the quietude of the sage but the transformation of the nature of which we speak is something more than that, and this transformation does not come by contemplation alone; works are necessary, yoga in action is indispensable.

⁂

The growth out of the ordinary mind into the spiritual consciousness can be effected either by meditation, dedicated work or bhakti for the Divine. In our yoga, which seeks not only a static peace or absorption but a dynamic spiritual action, work is indispensable. As for the supramental Truth, that is a different matter; it depends only on the descent of the Divine and the action of the Supreme Force and is not bound by any method or rule.

⁂

I have never disputed the truth of the old yogas — I have myself had the experience of Vaishnava Bhakti and of Nirvana in the Brahman; I recognise their truth in their own field and for their own purpose — the truth of their experience so far as it goes — though I am in no way bound to accept the truth of the mental philosophies founded on the experience. I similarly find that my yoga is true in its own field — a larger field, as I think — and for its own purpose. The purpose of the old is to get away from life to the Divine — so, obviously, let us drop Karma. The purpose of the new is to reach the Divine and bring the fullness of what is gained into life — for that, yoga by works is indispensable. It seems to me that there is no mystery about that or anything to

perplex anybody — it is rational and inevitable. Only you say that the thing is impossible; but that is what is said about everything before it is done.

I may point out that Karmayoga is not a new but a very old yoga; the Gita was not written yesterday and Karmayoga existed before the Gita. Your idea that the only justification in the Gita for works is that it is an unavoidable nuisance, so better make the best use of it, is rather summary and crude. If that were all, the Gita would be the production of an imbecile and I would hardly have been justified in writing two volumes on it or the world in admiring it as one of the greatest scriptures, especially for its treatment of the problem of the place of works in spiritual endeavour. There is surely more in it than that. Anyhow, your doubt whether works can lead to realisation or rather your flat and sweeping denial of the possibility contradicts the experience of those who have achieved this supposed impossibility. You say that work lowers the consciousness, brings you out of the inner into the outer — yes, if you consent to externalise yourself in it instead of doing works from within; but that is what one has to learn not to do. Thought and feeling can also externalise one in the same way; but it is a question of linking thought, feeling and act firmly to the inner consciousness by living there and making the rest an instrument. Difficult? Even Bhakti is not easy and Nirvana for most men more difficult than all.

I do not know why you drag in humanitarianism, activism, philanthropical *sevā*, etc. None of these are part of my yoga or in harmony with my definition of works, so they don't touch me. I never thought that politics or feeding the poor or writing beautiful poems would lead straight to Vaikuntha or the Absolute. If it were so, Romesh Dutt on one side and Baudelaire on the other would be the first to attain the Highest and welcome us there. It is not the form of the work itself or mere activity but the consciousness and Godward will behind it that are the essence of Karmayoga; the work is only the necessary instrumentation for the union with the Master of works, the transit to the pure Will and power of Light from the will and power of the Ignorance.

Finally, why suppose that I am against meditation or

bhakti? I have not the slightest objection to your taking either or both as the means of approach to the Divine.. Only I saw no reason why anyone should fall foul of works and deny the truth of those who have reached, as the Gita says, through works perfect realisation and oneness of nature with the Divine, *saṁsiddhim sādharmyam* (as did Janaka and others) — simply because he himself cannot find or has not yet found their deeper secret — hence my defence of works.

*
**

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 control-

ling 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 bhakti 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.

*
**

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.

*
**

The including of the outer consciousness in the transformation is of supreme importance in this yoga — meditation cannot do it. Meditation can deal only with the inner being. So work is of primary importance — only it must be done with the right attitude and in the right consciousness, then it is as fruitful as any meditation can be.

*
**

To keep up work helps to keep up the balance between the internal expèrience 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.

⁂

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.

⁂

Work by itself is only a preparation, so is meditation by itself,

but work done in the increasing yogic consciousness is a means of realisation as much as meditation is.... I have not said, I hope, that work *only* prepares. Meditation also prepares for the direct contact. If we are to do work only as a preparation and then become motionless meditative ascetics, then all my spiritual teaching is false and there is no use for supramental realisation or anything else that has not been done in the past....

The ignorance underlying this attitude is in the assumption that one must necessarily do only work or only meditation. Either work is the means or meditation is the means, but both cannot be! I have never said, so far as I know, that meditation should not be done. To set up an open competition or a closed one between work and meditation is a trick of the dividing mind and belongs to the old yoga. Please remember that I have been declaring all along an integral yoga in which Knowledge, Bhakti, Works — light of consciousness, Ananda and love, will and power in works — meditation, adoration, service of the Divine have all their place. Meditation is not greater than yoga of works nor works greater than yoga by knowledge — both are equal.

Another thing — it is a mistake to argue from one's own very limited experience, ignoring that of others and build on it large generalisations about yoga. This is what many do, but the method has obvious demerits. You have no experience of major realisations through works, and you conclude that such realisations are impossible. But what of the many who have had them — elsewhere and here too in the Ashram?

Don't conclude however that I am exalting works as the sole means of realisation. I am only giving it its due place.

*
**

You forget that men differ in nature and therefore each will approach the sadhana in his own way — one through work, one through bhakti, one through meditation and knowledge — and those who are capable of it, through all together. You are perfectly justified in following your own way, whatever may be the theories of others — but let them follow theirs. In the end all

can converge together towards the same goal.

*
**

What you felt before was in your mental being and consciousness, after coming here you have evidently come out into your external and physical consciousness, that is why you feel as if all you had before was gone. It is only covered over by the obscurity of the physical consciousness and not gone.

As for sadhana, I presume you mean by that some kind of exercise of concentration etc. For work also is sadhana, if done in the right attitude and spirit. The sadhana of inner concentration consists in:

1. Fixing the consciousness in the heart and concentrating there on the idea, image or name of the Divine Mother, whichever comes easiest to you.

2. A gradual and progressive quieting of the mind by this concentration in the heart.

3. An aspiration for the Mother's presence in the heart and the control by her of mind, life and action.

But to quiet the mind and get the spiritual experience it is necessary first to purify and prepare the nature. This sometimes takes many years. Work done with the right attitude is the easiest means for that — i.e. work done without desire or ego, rejecting all movements of desire, demand or ego when they come, done as an offering to the Divine Mother, with the remembrance of her and prayer to her to manifest her force and take up the action so that there too and not only in inner silence you can feel her presence and working.

*
**

Prayer and meditation count for so much in yoga. But the prayer must well up from the heart on a crest of emotion or aspiration, the Japa or meditation come in a live push carrying the joy or the light of the thing in it. If done mechanically and merely as a thing that ought to be done (stern grim duty!), it must tend towards want of interest and dryness and so be ineffective.... You were doing Japa too much as a means for bringing about a

result, I meant too much as a device, a process laid down for getting the thing done. That was why I wanted the psychological conditions in you to develop, the psychic, the mental, for when the psychic is forward, there is no lack of life and joy in the prayer, the aspiration, the seeking, no difficulty in having the constant stream of bhakti and when the mind is quiet and inturned and upturned there is no difficulty or want of interest in meditation. Meditation, by the way, is a process leading towards knowledge and through knowledge, it is a thing of the head and not of the heart, so if you want *dhyāna*, you can't have an aversion to knowledge. Concentration in the heart is not meditation, it is a call on the Divine, on the Beloved. This yoga too is not a yoga of knowledge alone, knowledge is one of its means, but its base being self-offering, surrender, bhakti, it is based in the heart and nothing can be eventually done without this base. There are plenty of people here who do or have done Japa and base themselves on bhakti, very few comparatively who have done the "head" meditation; love and bhakti and works are usually the base; how many can proceed by knowledge? Only the few.

*
**

I was quite in earnest in speaking of the progress you had made by the psychic movement and the endeavour to detect and remove the ego. I had already written to you strongly approving of that way. It is in our yoga the way to devotion and surrender — for it is the psychic movement that brings the constant and pure devotion and the removal of ego that makes it possible to surrender. The two things indeed go together.

The other way, which is the way to knowledge, is the meditation in the head by which there comes the opening above, the quietude or silence of the mind and the descent of peace, etc. of the higher consciousness generally till it envelops the being and fills the body and begins to take up all the movements. But this involves a passage through silence and certain emptiness of the ordinary activities — they being pushed out and done as a purely superficial action — and you strongly dislike silence and emptiness.

The third way which is one of the two ways towards yoga by works is the separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti, the inner silent being from the outer active one, so that one has two consciousnesses or a double consciousness, one behind watching and observing and finally controlling and changing the other which is active in front. But this also means living in an inner peace and silence and dealing with the activities as if they were a thing of the surface. The other way of beginning the yoga of works is by doing them for the Divine, for the Mother, and not for oneself, consecrating and dedicating them till one concretely feels the Divine Force taking up the activities and doing them for one.

If there is any secret or key of my yoga which you say you have not found, it lies in these methods — and, in reality, there is nothing so mysterious, impossible or even new about them in themselves. It is only the farther development at a later stage and the aim of the yoga that are new. But that one need not concern oneself with in the earlier stages unless one wishes to do so as a matter of mental knowledge.

*
**

Meditation is one means of approach to the Divine and a great way, but it cannot be called a short cut — for most it is a long and most difficult though a very high ascent. It can by no means be short unless it brings a descent, and even then it is only a foundation that is quickly laid; afterwards meditation has to build laboriously a big superstructure on that foundation. It is very indispensable but there is nothing of the short about it.

Karma is a much simpler road provided one's mind is not fixed on the Karma to the exclusion of the Divine. The aim must be the Divine and the work can only be a means. The use of poetry etc. is to keep one in contact with one's inner being and that helps to prepare for the direct contact with the inmost, but one must not stop with that, one must go on to the real thing. If one thinks of being a literary man or a poet or a painter as things worthwhile for their own sake, then it is no longer the yogic spirit. That is why I have sometimes to say that

our business is to be yogis, not merely poets, painters, etc.

Love, bhakti, surrender, the psychic opening are the only short cuts to the Divine — or can be; for if the love and bhakti are too vital, then there is likely to be a seesaw between ecstatic expectation and Viraha, Abhiman, despair, etc., which makes not a short cut but a long one, a zigzag — not a straight flight — a whirling round one's own ego instead of a running towards the Divine.

I have always said that work done as sadhana — done, that is to say, as an outflow of energy from the Divine and offered to the Divine or work done for the sake of the Divine or work done in a spirit of devotion is a powerful means of sadhana and that such work is especially necessary in this yoga. Work, bhakti and meditation are the three supports of yoga. One can do with all three or two or one. There are people who can't meditate in the set way that one calls meditation, but they progress through work or through bhakti or through the two together. By work and bhakti one can develop a consciousness in which eventually a natural meditation and realisation becomes possible.

All that is quite different from X's idea of making oneself virtuous and self-controlled and pure by some mysterious innate power in the pursuit of literature. If he had asked me the question about work and sadhana, I would have answered him otherwise. Of course literature and art are or can be a first introduction to the inner being — the inner mind, inner vital; for it is from there that they come. And if one writes poems of bhakti, poems of divine seeking, etc. or creates music of that kind, it means that there is a bhakta or seeker inside who is supporting himself by that self-expression. But it was not from any point of view like that that X put his question and it was not from that point of view that I gave my answer. It was about some especial character-making virtue that he seemed to attribute to literature.

It is altogether unprofitable to enquire who or what class will

arrive first or last at the goal. The spiritual path is not a field of competition or a race that this should matter. What matters is one's own aspiration for the Divine, one's own faith, surrender, selfless self-giving. Others can be left to the Divine who will lead each according to his nature. Meditation, work, bhakti are each means of preparative help towards fulfilment; all are included in this path. If one can dedicate oneself through work, that is one of the most powerful means towards the self-giving which is itself the most powerful and indispensable element of the sadhana.

To cleave to the path means to follow it without leaving it or turning aside. It is a path of self-offering of the whole being in all its parts, the offering of the thinking mind and the heart, the will and actions, the inner and the outer instruments so that one may arrive at the experience of the Divine, the Presence within, the psychic and spiritual change. The more one gives of oneself in all ways, the better for the sadhana. But all cannot do it to the same extent, with the same rapidity, in the same way. How others do it or fail to do it should not be one's concern — how to do it faithfully oneself is the one thing important.

To say that one enters the stream of sadhana through work only is to say too much. One can enter it through meditation or bhakti also, but work is necessary to get into full stream and not drift away to one side and go circling there. Of course all work helps provided it is done in the right spirit.

There are several sadhaks who have advanced very far by work alone, work consecrated to the Mother or else by work mainly with very little time for meditation. Others have advanced far by meditation mainly, but work also. Those who tried to do meditation alone and became impatient of work (because they could not consecrate it to the Mother) have generally been failures like X and Y. But one or two may succeed by meditation alone, if it is in their nature or if they have an intense

and unshakable faith and bhakti. All depends on the nature of the sadhak.

As for the *purātan mānuṣ* I do not see that the workers have their external being less changed than others. There are some who are where they were or only a little progressive, there are others who have changed a great deal — none is transformed altogether, though some have found a sure and sound spiritual and psychic basis. But that applies equally to workers who do not spend time in meditation and to those who spend a long time in meditation.

Each sadhak must be left to himself and the Mother to find his right way which need not be that of his neighbour.

✓
*
**

As for the line on which most stress is laid, it depends on the nature. There are some people who are not cut out for meditation and it is only by work that they can prepare themselves; there are also those who are the opposite. As for the enormous development of egoism, that can come whatever one follows. I have seen it blossom in the *dhyānī* as well as in the worker; X says it does so in the bhakta. So it is evident that all soils are favourable to this Narcissus flower. As for "no need of sadhana", obviously one who does not do any sadhana cannot change or progress. Work, meditation, bhakti, all must be done as sadhana.

✓
*
**

Why argue from your personal experience, great or little, and turn it into a generalisation? A great many people (the majority perhaps) find it (sadhana through work) the easiest of all. Many find it easy to think of the Mother when working; but when they read or write, their mind goes off to the thing read or written and they forget everything else. I think that is the case with most. Physical work on the other hand can be done with the most external part of the mind, leaving the rest free to remember or to experience.

*
**

What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method for calling down the true consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. (Meditation is only a means or device, the true movement is when even walking, working or speaking one is still in sadhana.)

*
**

It is not meditation (thinking with the mind) but a concentration or turning of the consciousness that is important, — and that can happen in work, in writing, in any kind of action as well as in sitting down to contemplate.

*
**

Meditation is best when it comes spontaneously. But there should be full concentration in the work if it is to take the place of meditation.

*
**

You need not have qualms about the time you give to action and creative work. (Those who have an expansive creative vital or a vital made for action are usually at their best when the vital is not held back from its movement and they can develop faster by it than by introspective meditation.) All that is needed is that the action should be dedicated, so that they may grow by it more and more prepared to feel and follow the Divine Force when it moves them. (It is a mistake to think that to live in introspective meditation all the time is invariably the best or the only way of yoga.)

*
**

Then how is it [meditation] necessary for all, if some are asked not to do it? Much meditation is for those who can meditate much. It does not follow that because much meditation is

good, therefore nobody should do anything else.

I have not suggested that you are to progress by *dhyāna* alone; but you have a great capacity for that and you cannot progress fully without it. In this yoga some kind of action is necessary for all — though it need not take the form of some set labour. But for the moment progress through concentration and inner experience is the first necessity for you.

This is what we call the activity of the mind, which always comes in the way of the concentration and tries to create doubt and dispersion of the energies.

It can be got rid of in two ways, by rejecting it and pushing it out, till it remains as an outside force only — by bringing down the higher peace and light into the physical mind.

He has to learn to consecrate his work and feel the Mother's power working through it. A purely sedentary subjective realisation is only a half realisation.

I may stress one point, however, that there need not be only one way to the realisation of the Divine. If one does not succeed or has not yet succeeded in reaching him, feeling him or seeing him by the established process of meditation or by processes like *japa*, yet one may have made progress towards it by the frequent calling of bhakti in the heart or a constantly greater enlargement of it in the consciousness or by work for the Divine and by dedication in service. You have certainly progressed in these directions, increased in devotion and shown your capacity for service. You have also tried to get rid of obstacles in your vital nature and so effect a purification not without success in several difficult directions. The path of surrender is indeed difficult, but if one perseveres in it with sincerity, there is bound to be some

success and a partial overcoming or diminution of the ego which may help greatly a further advance upon the way. One must learn to go forward on the path of yoga, as the Gita insists, with a consciousness free from despondency — *anirviṇṇacetasā.* Even if one slips, one must rectify the posture; even if one falls, one has to rise and go undiscouraged on the Divine Way. The attitude must be:

"The Divine has promised Himself to me if I cleave to Him always; that I will never cease to do whatever may come."

⁂

Sadhana is the practice of yoga. Tapasya is the concentration of the will to get the results of sadhana and to conquer the lower nature. Aradhana is worship of the Divine, love, self-surrender, aspiration to the Divine, calling the name, prayer. Dhyana is inner concentration of the consciousness, meditation, going inside in Samadhi. Dhyana, Tapasya and Aradhana are all parts of sadhana.

Section Three

BASIC REQUISITES OF THE PATH

Basic Requisites of the Path

THE goal of yoga is always hard to reach, but this one is more difficult than any other, and it is only for those who have the call, the capacity, the willingness to face everything and every risk, even the risk of failure, and the will to progress towards an entire selflessness, desirelessness and surrender.

⁂

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.

⁂

By readiness, I did not mean capacity but willingness. If there is the will within to face all difficulties and go through, no matter how long it takes, then the path can be taken.

⁂

A mere restless dissatisfaction with the ordinary life is not a sufficient preparation for this yoga. A positive inner call, a strong will and a great steadiness are necessary for success in the spiritual life.

⁂

Mental theories are of no fundamental importance, for the mind forms or accepts the theories that support the turn of the being.

What is important is that turn and the call within you.

The knowledge that there is a Supreme Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which is not merely a negative Nirvana or a static and featureless Absolute, but dynamic, the perception that this Divine Consciousness can be realised not only beyond but here, and the consequent acceptance of a divine life as the aim of yoga, do not belong to the mind. It is not a question of mental theory — even though mentally this outlook can be as well supported as any other, if not better, — but of experience and, before the experience comes, of the soul's faith bringing with it the mind's and the life's adhesion. One who is in contact with the higher Light and has the experience can follow this way, however difficult it may be for the lower members to follow; one who is touched by it, without having the experience, but having the call, the conviction, the compulsion of the soul's adherence, can also follow it.

*
**

An idealistic notion or religious belief or emotion is something quite different from getting spiritual light. An idealistic notion might turn you towards getting spiritual light, but it is not the light itself. It is true however that "the spirit bloweth where it listeth" and that we can get an emotional impulse or touch or mental realisation of spiritual things from almost any circumstance, as Bilwamangal got it from the words of his courtesan mistress. Obviously, it happens because something is ready somewhere, — if you like, the psychic being waiting for its chance and taking some opportunity in mind, vital or heart to knock open a window somewhere.

*
**

Mere idealism can only have an effect if one has a strong will in the mind capable of forcing the vital to follow.

*
**

The push to drown oneself in the Divine is very rare. It is usually

a mental idea, a vital urge or some quite inadequate reason that starts the thing — or else no reason at all. The only reality is the occult psychic push behind of which the surface consciousness is not aware or else hardly aware.

⁂

What you write is quite accurate about the true soul, the psychic being. But people mean different things when they speak of the soul. Sometimes it is what I have called in the *Arya* the desire-soul, — that is the vital with its mixed aspirations, desires, hungers of all kinds good and bad, its emotions, finer and grosser, or sensational urges crossed by the mind's idealisings and psychic stresses. But sometimes it is also the mind and vital under the stress of a psychic urge. The psychic, so long as it is veiled, must express itself through the mind and vital and its aspirations are mixed and coloured there by the vital and mental stuff. Thus the veiled psychic urge may express itself in the mind by a hunger in the thought for the knowledge of the Divine, what the Europeans call the intellectual love of God. In the vital it may express itself as a hunger or hankering after the Divine. It can bring much suffering because of the nature of the vital, its unquiet passions, desires, ardours, troubled emotions, cloudings, depressions, despairs. Nevertheless all cannot approach, at least cannot at once approach the Divine in the pure psychic way — the mental and vital approaches are often necessary beginnings and better from the spiritual point of view than unsensitiveness to the Divine. It is in both cases a call of the soul, the soul's urge — it only takes a form or colour due to the stress of the mind or vital nature.

⁂

It is very evident that X has had a sudden opening to spiritual experience — a surprisingly sudden opening, one would think, but it happens often in that way, especially if there is a sceptical mind outside and a soul ready for experience within. In such cases also it comes often after a blow such as his brother's illness,

but I think there was already a turning of the mind which prepared it. This sudden and persistent visualisation also shows that there is a faculty within that has broken the gates which shut it in — the faculty of supraphysical vision. The coming up of the word "consecration" is also a familiar phenomenon of these experiences — it is what I call the voice of the psychic, an intimation from his own soul to the mind as to what it wants him to do. Now he has to accept it, for the assent of the nature, of the outward man to the inner voice, is necessary so that it may be effective. He is standing at the turning-point and has been given an indication of the new road his inner being, the Antaratman, wants him to follow — but, as I say, the assent of his mind and vital is necessary. If he can decide to consecrate, he must make the *saṅkalpa* of consecration, offer himself to the Divine and call for the help and the guidance. If he is not able to do that at once, let him wait and see, but keeping himself open, as it were, to the continuation and development of the experience that has begun, till it becomes definitely imperative to his own feeling. He will receive help and, if he becomes conscious of it, then there can be no further question — it will be easy for him to proceed on the way.

⁂

Your influence on him for turning towards the yoga was good, but it was not able to change his vital nature. No human influence — which can only be mental and moral — can do that; you can see that he is just what he was before. It can be done only from his own soul turning towards the Divine.

⁂

Knowledge of the way is not enough — one must tread it, or if one cannot do that, allow oneself to be carried along it. The human vital and physical external nature resist to the very end, but if the soul has once heard the call, it arrives, sooner or later.

⁂

For those who have within them a sincere call for the Divine, however the mind or vital may present difficulties or attacks come or the progress be slow and painful, — even if they fall back or fall away from the path for a time, the psychic always prevails in the end and the Divine Help proves effective. Trust in that and persevere — then the goal is sure.

⁂

I have already answered your question. You came because your soul was moved to seek the Divine. That some part of your vital has strong attachments to the people you left behind, is a fact, but it does not make your soul's seeking unreal. If the presence and persistence of vital difficulties were to prove that a sadhak is unfit and has no chance, then only one or two in the Ashram — and perhaps not even they — would survive the test. The feeling of dryness and not being able to aspire is also no proof. Every sadhak gets periods and even long periods of such emptiness. I could point to some who are considered among the most "advanced" sadhaks and yet are not free yet altogether from the family instinct. It is therefore quite unreasonable to be upset because these reactions still linger in you. These reactions come and go, but the need of the soul is permanent, even when covered up and silent, and will always stay and re-emerge.

⁂

All who came here did not come with a conscious seeking for the Divine. It is without the mind knowing it the soul within that brought them here. In your case it was that and the relation your soul had with the Mother. Once here the force of the Divine works upon the human nature till a way is opened for the soul within to come out from the veil. The conscious seeking for the Divine does not by itself prevent the struggle with the ignorance of the nature; it is only self-giving to the Mother that can do that.

⁂

When someone is destined for the Path, all circumstances through all the deviations of mind and life help in one way or another to lead him to it. It is his own psychic being within him and Divine Power above that use to that end the vicissitudes both of mind and outward circumstance.

⁂

When the soul is meant to go forward and there is an external weakness like that, circumstances do come like that to help the external being against itself — which means that there must be a truly sincere aspiration behind; otherwise it does not happen.

⁂

The spiritual destiny always stands — it may be delayed or seem to be lost for a time, but it is never abolished.

⁂

A spiritual opportunity is not a thing that should be lightly thrown away with the idea that it will be all right some other time — one cannot be so sure of the other time. Besides, these things leave a mark and at the place of the mark there can be a recurrence.

⁂

The vision of the Light and the vision of the Lord in the form of Jagannath are both of them indications that he has the capacity for yoga and that there is a call of the Divine on his inner being. But capacity is not enough; there must be also the will to seek after the Divine and courage and persistence in following the path. Fear is the first thing that must be thrown away and, secondly, the inertia of the outer being which has prevented him from responding to the call.

The Light is the light of the Divine Consciousness. The aim of this yoga is first to come into contact with this consciousness and then to live in its light and allow the light to transform the

whole nature, so that the being may live in union with the Divine and the nature become a field for the action of the divine Knowledge, the divine Power and the divine Ananda.

He can succeed in this only if he makes it the supreme object of his life and is prepared to subordinate everything else to this one aim. Otherwise all that can be done is only to make some preparation in this life — a first contact and some preliminary spiritual change in part of the nature.

⁂

All can do some kind of yoga according to their nature, if they have the will to it. But there are few of whom it can be said that they have capacity for this yoga. Only some can develop a capacity, others cannot.

⁂

Nobody is fit for the sadhana — i.e. nobody can do it by his own sole capacity. It is a question of preparing oneself to bring in fully the Force not one's own that can do it with one's consent and aspiration.

⁂

It is difficult to say that any particular quality makes one fit or the lack of it unfit. One may have strong sex-impulses, doubts, revolts and yet succeed in the end, while another may fail. If one has a fundamental sincerity, a will to go through in spite of all things and readiness to be candid, that is the best security in the sadhana.

⁂

When one enters into the true (yogic) consciousness then you see that everything can be done, even if at present only a slight beginning has been made; but a beginning is enough, since the Force, the Power are there. It is not really on the capacity of the outer nature that success depends, (for the outer nature all self-exceeding seems impossibly difficult,) but on the inner being and to the inner being all is possible. One has only to get into contact with

the inner being and change the outer view and consciousness from the inner; that is the work of the sadhana and it is sure to come with sincerity, aspiration and patience.

*
**

You must realise that these moods are attacks which should be rejected at once — for they repose on nothing but suggestions of self-distrust and incapacity which have no meaning, since it is by the Grace of the Divine and the aid of a Force greater than your own, not by personal capacity and worth that you can attain the goal of the sadhana. You have to remember that and dissociate yourself from these suggestions when they come, never accept or yield to them. No sadhak even if he had the capacity of the ancient Rishis and Tapaswis or the strength of a Vivekananda can hope to keep during the early years of his sadhana a continuous good condition or union with the Divine or an unbroken call or height of aspiration. It takes a long time to spiritualise the whole nature and until that is done, variations must come. A constant trust and patience must be cultivated — must be acquired — not least when things go against — for when they are favourable, trust and patience are easy.

*
**

It goes without saying that the qualities you speak of are helpful in the approach to the spiritual path, while the defects you enumerate are each a serious stumbling-block in the way. Sincerity especially is indispensable to the spiritual endeavour, and crookedness a constant obstacle. The sattwic nature has always been held to be the most apt and ready for the spiritual life, while the rajasic nature is encumbered by its desires and passions. At the same time, spirituality is something above the dualities, and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration. This may come to the rajasic man as well as to the sattwic. If it does, he can rise by it above his failings and desires and passions, just as the other can rise beyond his virtues, to the Divine Purity and Light and Love. Necessarily, this can only

happen if he conquers his lower nature and throws it from him; for if he relapses into it, he is likely to fall from the path or at least to be, so long as the relapse lasts, held back by it from inner progress. But for all that the conversion of great sinners into great saints, of men of little or no virtue into spiritual seekers and God-lovers has frequently happened in religious and spiritual history — as in Europe St. Augustine, in India Chaitanya's Jagai and Madhai, Bilwamangal and many others. The house of the Divine is not closed to any who knock sincerely at its gates, whatever their past stumbles and errors. Human virtues and human errors are bright and dark wrappings of a divine element within which once it pierces the veil, can burn through both towards the heights of the Spirit.

Humility before the Divine is also a *sine qua non* of the spiritual life, and spiritual pride, arrogance, or vanity and self-assurance press always downward. But confidence in the Divine and a faith in one's spiritual destiny (i.e. since my heart and soul seek for the Divine, I cannot fail one day to reach Him) are much needed in view of the difficulties of the Path. A contempt for others is out of place, especially since the Divine is in all. Evidently, the activities and aspirations of men are not trivial and worthless, for all life is a growth of the soul out of the darkness towards the Light. But our attitude is that humanity cannot grow out of its limitations by the ordinary means adopted by the human mind, politics, social reform, philanthropy, etc. — these can only be temporary or local palliatives. The only true escape is a change of consciousness, a change into a greater, wider and purer way of being, and a life and action based upon that change. It is therefore to that that the energies must be turned, once the spiritual orientation is complete. This implies no contempt, but the preference of the only effective means over those which have been found ineffective.

*
**

It can be put like that; but virtuous and sinners is a wrong description; for it is not true that virtuous people suffer more than sinners. Many sinners are people who are preparing to turn

to the Divine and many virtuous people have a long run of lives yet to go through before they will think of it.

⁂

Such qualities as faith, sincerity, aspiration, devotion, etc. make up the perfection indicated in our language of the flowers. In ordinary language it would mean something else such as purity, love, benevolence, fidelity and a host of other virtues.

⁂

Get the psychic being in front and keep it there, putting its power on the mind, vital and physical, so that it shall communicate to them its force of single-minded aspiration, trust, faith, surrender, direct and immediate detection of whatever is wrong in the nature and turned towards ego and error, away from Light and Truth.

Eliminate egoism in all its forms; eliminate it from every movement of your consciousness.

Develop the cosmic consciousness — let the ego-centric outlook disappear in wideness, impersonality, the sense of the Cosmic Divine, the perception of universal forces, the realisation and understanding of the cosmic manifestation, the play.

Find in place of ego the true being — a portion of the Divine, issued from the World-Mother and an instrument of the manifestation. This sense of being a portion of the Divine and an instrument should be free from all pride, sense or claim of ego or assertion of superiority, demand or desire. For if these elements are there, then it is not the true thing.

Most in doing yoga live in the mind, vital, physical, lit up occasionally or to some extent by the higher mind and by the illumined mind; but to prepare for the supramental change it is necessary (as soon as, personally, the time has come) to open up to the Intuition and the overmind, so that these may make the whole being and the whole nature ready for the supramental change. Allow the consciousness quietly to develop and widen and the knowledge of these things will progressively come.

Calm, discrimination, detachment (but not indifference) are all very important, for their opposites impede very much the transforming action. Intensity of aspiration should be there, but it must go along with these. No hurry, no inertia, neither rajasic over-eagerness nor tamasic discouragement — a steady and persistent but quiet call and working. No snatching or clutching at realisation, but allowing realisation to come from within and above and observing accurately its field, its nature, its limits.

Let the power of the Mother work in you, but be careful to avoid any mixture or substitution, in its place, of either a magnified ego-working or a force of Ignorance presenting itself as Truth. Aspire especially for the elimination of all obscurity and unconsciousness in the nature.

These are the main conditions of preparation for the supramental change; but none of them is easy, and they must be complete before the nature can be said to be ready. If the true attitude (psychic, unegoistic, open only to the Divine Force) can be established, then the process can go on much more quickly. To take and keep the true attitude, to further the change in oneself, is the help that can be given, the one thing asked to assist the general change.

*
**

The best way to answer your letter will be, I think, to take separately the questions implied in it. I will begin with the conclusion you have drawn of the impossibility of the yoga for a non-oriental nature.

I cannot see any ground for such a conclusion; it is contrary to all experience. Europeans throughout the centuries have practised with success spiritual disciplines which were akin to oriental yoga and have followed, too, ways of the inner life which came to them from the East. Their non-oriental nature did not stand in their way. The approach and experiences of Plotinus and the European mystics who derived from him were identical, as has been shown recently, with the approach and experiences of one type of Indian yoga. Especially, since the introduction of Christianity, Europeans have followed its mystic disciplines which were one in essence with those of Asia, however much

they may have differed in forms, names and symbols. If the question be of Indian yoga itself in its own characteristic forms, here too the supposed inability is contradicted by experience. In early times Greeks and Scythians from the West as well as Chinese and Japanese and Cambodians from the East followed without difficulty Buddhist or Hindu disciplines; at the present day an increasing number of occidentals have taken to Vedantic or Vaishnava or other Indian spiritual practices and this objection of incapacity or unsuitableness has never been made either from the side of the disciples or from the side of the Masters. I do not see, either, *why* there should be any such unbridgeable gulf; for there is no essential difference between the spiritual life in the East and the spiritual life in the West; what difference there is has always been of names, forms and symbols or else of the emphasis laid on one special aim or another or on one side or another of psychological experience. Even here differences are often alleged which do not exist or else are not so great as they appear. I have seen it alleged by a Christian writer (who does not seem to have shared your friend Angus' objection to these scholastic small distinctions) that Hindu spiritual thought and life acknowledged or followed after only the Transcendent and neglected the Immanent Divinity, while Christianity gave due place to both Aspects; but in point of fact, Indian spirituality, even if it laid the final stress on the Highest beyond form and name, yet gave ample recognition and place to the Divine immanent in the world and the Divine immanent in the human being. Indian spirituality has, it is true, a wider and more minute knowledge behind it; it has followed hundreds of different paths, admitted every kind of approach to the Divine and has thus been able to enter into fields which are outside the less ample scope of occidental practice; but that makes no difference to the essentials, and it is the essentials alone that matter.

Your explanation of the ability of many Westerners to practise Indian yoga seems to be that they have a Hindu temperament in a European or American body. As Gandhi is inwardly a moralistic Westerner and Christian, you say, so the other non-oriental members of the Ashram are essentially Hindus in outlook. But what exactly is this Hindu outlook? I have not myself

seen anything in them that can be so described nor has the Mother. My own experience contradicts entirely your explanation. I knew very well Sister Nivedita (she was for many years a friend and a comrade in the political field) and met Sister Christine, — the two closest European disciples of Vivekananda. Both were Westerners to the core and had nothing at all of the Hindu outlook; although Sister Nivedita, an Irish woman, had the power of penetrating by an intense sympathy into the ways of life of the people around her, her own nature remained non-oriental to the end. Yet she found no difficulty in arriving at realisation on the lines of Vedanta. Here in this Ashram I have found the members of it who came from the West (I include especially those who have been here longest) typically occidental with all the quality and also all the difficulties of the Western mind and temperament and they have had to cope with their difficulties, just as the Indian members have been obliged to struggle with the limitations and obstacles created by their temperament and training. No doubt, they have accepted in principle the conditions of the yoga, but they had no Hindu outlook when they came and I do not think they have tried to acquire one. Why should they do so? It is not the Hindu outlook or the Western that fundamentally matters in yoga, but the psychic turn and the spiritual urge, and these are the same everywhere.

What are the differences after all from the viewpoint of yoga between the sadhak of Indian and the sadhak of occidental birth? You say the Indian has his yoga half done for him, — first, because he has his psychic much more directly open to the Transcendent Divine. Leaving out the adjective, (for it is not many who are by nature drawn to the Transcendent, most seek more readily the Personal, the Divine immanent here, especially if they can find it in a human body,) there is there no doubt an advantage. It arises simply from the strong survival in India of an atmosphere of spiritual seeking and a long tradition of practice and experience, while in Europe the atmosphere has been lost, the tradition interrupted, and both have to be rebuilt. There is an absence too of the *essential* doubt which so much afflicts the minds of Europeans or, it may be added, Europeanised Indians, although that does not prevent a great activity of a practical and

very operative kind of doubt in the Indian sadhak. But when you speak of indifference to fellow human beings in any deeper aspect, I am unable to follow your meaning. My own experience is that the attachment to persons — to mother, father, wife, children, friends — not out of sense of duty or social relationship, but through close heart-ties is quite as strong as in Europe and often more intense; it is one of the great disturbing forces in the way, some succumbing to the pull and many, even advanced sadhaks, being still unable to get it out of their blood and their vital fibre. The impulse to set up a "spiritual" or a "psychic" relationship with others — very usually covering a vital mixture which distracts them from the one aim — is a persistently common feature. There is no difference here between the Western and Eastern human nature. Only the teaching in India is of long standing that all must be turned towards the Divine and everything else either sacrificed or changed into a subordinate and ancillary movement or made by sublimation a first step only towards the seeking for the Divine. This no doubt helps the Indian sadhak if not to become single-hearted at once, yet to orientate himself more completely towards the goal. It is not always for him the Divine alone, though that is considered the highest state; but the Divine, chief and first, is easily grasped by him as the ideal.

The Indian sadhak has his own difficulties in his approach to the yoga — at least to this yoga — which a Westerner has in less measure. Those of the occidental nature are born of the dominant trend of the European mind in the immediate past. A greater readiness of essential doubt and sceptical reserve; a habit of mental activity as a necessity of the nature which makes it more difficult to achieve a complete mental silence; a stronger turn towards outside things born of the plenitude of active life (while the Indian commonly suffers from defects born rather of a depressed or suppressed vital force); a habit of mental and vital self-assertion and sometimes an aggressively vigilant independence which renders difficult any completeness of internal surrender even to a greater Light and Knowledge, even to the divine Influence — these are frequent obstacles. But these things are not universal in Westerners, and they are, on the other hand,

present in many Indian sadhaks; they are, like the difficulties of the typical Indian nature, superstructural formations, not the very grain of the being. They cannot permanently stand in the way of the soul, if the soul's aspiration is strong and firm, if the spiritual aim is the chief thing in the life. They are impediments which the fire within can easily burn away if the will to get rid of them is strong, and which it will surely burn away in the end, — though less easily, — even if the outer nature clings long to them and justifies them — provided that the fire, the central will, the deeper impulse is behind all, real and sincere.

This conclusion of yours about the incapacity of the non-oriental for Indian yoga is simply born of a too despondently acute sense of your own difficulties; you have not seen those equally great that have long troubled or are still troubling others. Neither to Indian nor to European can the path of yoga be smooth and easy; their common human nature is there to see to that. To each his own difficulties seem enormous and radical and even incurable by their continuity and persistence and induce long periods of despondency and crises of despair. To have faith enough or enough psychic sight to react at once or almost at once and prevent these attacks is given hardly to two or three in a hundred. But one ought not to settle down into a fixed idea of one's own incapacity or allow it to become an obsession; for such an attitude has no true justification and unnecessarily renders the way harder. Where there is a soul that has once become awake, there is surely a capacity within that can outweigh all surface defects and can in the end conquer.

If your conclusion were true, the whole aim of this yoga would be a vain thing; for we are not working for a race or a people or a continent or for a realisation of which only Indians or only orientals are capable. Our aim is not, either, to found a religion or a school of philosophy or a school of yoga, but to create a ground of spiritual growth and experience and a way which will bring down a greater Truth beyond the mind but not inaccessible to the human soul and consciousness. All can pass who are drawn to that Truth, whether they are from India or elsewhere, from the East or from the West. All may find great difficulties in their personal or common human nature; but it is

not their physical origin or their racial temperament that can be an insuperable obstacle to their deliverance.

II

There is one indispensable condition, sincerity.

⁂

Sincere is simply an adjective meaning that the will must be a true will. If you simply think "I aspire" and do things inconsistent with the aspiration, or follow your desires or open yourself to contrary influences, then it is not a sincere will.

⁂

It is true that a central sincerity is not enough except as a beginning and a base; the sincerity must spread as you describe through the whole nature. But still unless there is a double nature (without a central harmonising consciousness), the basis is usually sufficient for that to happen.

⁂

When all is in agreement with the one Truth or an expression of it, that is harmony.

⁂

Sincerity in the vital is the most difficult to have and the most needful.

⁂

You speak of insincerity in your nature. If insincerity means the unwillingness of some part of the being to live according to the highest light one has or to equate the outer with the inner man, then this part is always insincere in all. The only way is to lay

stress on the inner being and develop in it the psychic and spiritual consciousness till that comes down in it which pushes out the darkness from the outer man also.

I have never said that the vital is to have no part in the love for the Divine, only that it must purify and ennoble itself in the light of the psychic being. The results of self-loving love between human beings are so poor and contrary in the end — that is what I mean by the ordinary vital love — that I want something purer and nobler and higher in the vital also for the movement towards the Divine.

Men are always mixed and there are qualities and defects mingled together almost inextricably in their nature. What a man wants to be or wants others to see in him or what he is sometimes on one side of his nature or in some relations can be very different from what he is in the actual fact or in other relations or on another side of his nature. To be absolutely sincere, straightforward, open, is not an easy achievement for human nature. It is only by spiritual endeavour that one can realise it — and to do it needs a severity of introspective self-vision, an unsparing scrutiny of self-observation of which many sadhaks and yogis even are not capable and it is only by an illumining Grace that reveals the sadhak to himself and transforms what is deficient in him that it can be done. And even then only if he himself consents and lends himself wholly to the divine working.

There are certain things that it is absolutely necessary for X to realise in a sincere and straightforward spirit, without self-justification if his sadhana is not to turn about in a constant circle to the end or else fail and fall into pieces.

The aim of this yoga is an opening to a higher Divine Truth beyond life, mind and body and the transformation of these three things into its image. But that transformation cannot take place, and the Truth itself cannot be known in its own unmistakable

spirit, perfect light and real body until the whole of the *ādhāra* has been fundamentally and patiently purified, and made plastic and capable of receiving what is beyond the constructions of the mind, the desires of the vital being and the habits of the physical consciousness and physical being.

His most obvious obstacle, one which he has not in the least got rid of up to now, is a strongly rajasic vital ego for which his mind finds justifications and covers. There is nothing more congenial to the vital ego than to put on the cloak of yoga, and imagine itself free, divinised, spiritualised, siddha and all the rest of it, or advancing towards that end, when it is really doing nothing of the kind, but is just its old self in new forms. If one does not look at oneself with a constant sincerity, it is impossible to get out of this circle.

Along with the exclusion of self-deceiving vital ego, there must go that which accompanies it, usually in the mental parts, mental arrogance, a false sense of superiority and an ostentation of knowledge. All pretence and all pretensions must be given up; all pretence to oneself or others of being what one is not, or of knowing what one does not know, and all idea of being higher than one's own spiritual stature.

Over against the vital ego there is a great coarseness and heaviness of tamas in the physical being and an absence of psychic and spiritual refinement. That must be eliminated or it will stand always in the way of a true and complete change in the vital being and the mind.

Unless these things are radically changed, merely having experiences or establishing a temporary and precarious calmness in the mental and vital parts will not help in the end. There will be no fundamental change, only a constant going from one state to another, sometimes a return of disturbances and always the same defect persisting to the end of the chapter.

The one condition of getting rid of things is an absolute central sincerity in all the parts of the being, and that means an absolute insistence on the Truth and nothing but the Truth. There will then be a readiness for unsparing self-criticism and vigilant openness to the light, an uneasiness when falsehood comes in, which will finally purify the whole being.

The defects mentioned are more or less common in various degrees in almost every sadhak, though there are some who are not touched by them. They can be got rid of, if the requisite sincerity is there. But if they occupy the central parts of the being and vitiate the attitude, then the sadhak will give a constant open or covert support to them, his mind will always be ready to give disguises and justifications and try to elude the searchlight of the self-critical faculty and protests of the psychic being. That means a failure in the yoga at least for this existence.

⁂

It is quite natural that there should be much mixture in the attitude till all is clear — the ordinary nature clings to the action and the transformation in its completeness cannot be sudden. What is necessary is that the basic consciousness should become firmly established in the Divine, then the mixture in the rest can be seen and steadily worked out. To have this outwardly as well as inwardly is a great progress.

⁂

It is difficult for the ordinary Christian to be of a piece, because the teachings of Christ are on quite another plane from the consciousness of the intellectual and vital man trained by the education and society of Europe — the latter, even as a minister or priest, has never been called upon to practise what he preached in entire earnest. But it is difficult for the human nature anywhere to think, feel and act from one centre of true faith, belief or vision. The average Hindu considers the spiritual life the highest, reveres the Sannyasi, is moved by the Bhakta; but if one of the family circle leaves the world for spiritual life, what tears, arguments, remonstrances, lamentations! It is almost worse than if he had died a natural death. It is not conscious mental insincerity — they will argue like Pandits and go to Shastra to prove you in the wrong; it is unconsciousness, a vital insincerity which they are not aware of and which uses the reasoning mind as an accomplice.

That is why we insist so much on sincerity in the yoga — and that means to have all the being consciously turned towards the one Truth, the one Divine. But that for human nature is one of the most difficult of tasks, much more difficult than a rigid asceticism or a fervent piety. Religion itself does not give this complete harmonised sincerity — it is only the psychic being and the one-souled spiritual aspiration that can give it.

III

The aspiration should be for the full descent of the Truth and the victory over falsehood in the world.

Those who come here have an aspiration and a possibility — something in their psychic being pushes and if they follow it they will arrive; but that is not conversion. (Conversion is a turning of the being away from lower things towards the Divine.)

(Aspiration can lead hereafter to conversion, but aspiration is not conversion.)

Mother spoke of three different things: conversion, the turning of the soul decisively towards the Divine, — inner realisation of the Divine, — transformation of the nature. The first two can happen swiftly and suddenly and once for all, the third *always* takes time and cannot be done at one stroke, in a moment. One may become aware of a rapid change in this or that detail of the transformation, but even this is the rapid result of a long working.

(Consecration is a process by which one trains the consciousness to give itself to the Divine.) But conversion is a spontaneous movement of the consciousness, a turning of it away from external things towards the Divine. It comes as well as is the result of a touch from within and above. Self-consecration may help one to open to the touch or the touch may come of itself. But conversion

may also come as the culmination of a long process of aspiration and Tapasya. There is no fixed rule in these things.

If the psychic being comes to the front, then conversion becomes easy or may come instantaneously or the conversion may bring the psychic being to the front. Here, again, there is no rule.

It may be either way, there is a touch and the realisation also and the psychic takes its proper place as the result or the psychic may come to the front and prepare the nature for the realisation.

Transformation is something progressive, but certainly there must be realisation before the aim of the transformation is possible.

⁂

What you say is quite true. A simple, straight and sincere call and aspiration from the heart is the one important thing and more essential and effective than capacities. Also to get the consciousness to turn inwards, not remain outward-going is of great importance — to arrive at the inner call, the inner experience, the inner Presence.

The help you ask will be with you. Let the aspiration grow and open the inner consciousness altogether.

⁂

What "reason" do you need to aspire for peace, purity, freedom from the lower nature, light, strength, Ananda, divine love, divine service? These are things good in themselves and the highest possible aim of human endeavour.

⁂

Yes, that is the way — the intensity of the aspiration brings the intensity of the experience and by repeated intensity of the experience, the change.

⁂

Aspiration is a call to the Divine, — will is the pressure of a conscious force on Nature.

⁂

There is no need of words in aspiration. It can be expressed or unexpressed in words.

⁂

The aspiration need not be in the form of thought — it can be a feeling within that remains even when the mind is attending to the work.

⁂

Aspiration is to call the forces. When the forces have answered, there is a natural state of quiet receptivity concentrated but spontaneous.

⁂

One has to aspire to the Divine and surrender and leave it to the Divine to do what is true and right with the *ādhāra* once it is perfected.

⁂

It depends on the stage which one has reached. Personal aspiration is necessary until there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development.

⁂

Pulling comes usually from a desire to get things for oneself — in aspiration there is a self-giving for the higher consciousness to descend and take possession — the more intense the call the greater the self-giving.

⁂

There is no doubt the mixture of desire in what you do, even in your endeavour. of sadhana, that is the difficulty. The desire brings a movement of impatient effort and a reaction of disappointment and revolt when difficulty is felt and the immediate result is not there and other confusing and disturbing feelings. Aspiration should be not a form of desire, but the feeling of an inner soul's need, and a quiet settled will to turn towards the Divine and seek the Divine. It is certainly not easy to get rid of this mixture of desire entirely — not easy for anyone; but when one has the will to do it, this also can be effected by the help of the sustaining Force.

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

⁂

One should be satisfied with what one gets and still aspire quietly without struggle, for more — till all has come. No desire, no struggle — aspiration, faith, openness — and the grace.

⁂

As for working, it depends on what you mean by the word. Desire often leads either to excess of effort, meaning often much labour and a limited fruit with strain, exhaustion and in case of difficulty or failure, despondence, disbelief or revolt; or else it leads to pulling down the force. That can be done, but except for the yogically strong and experienced, it is not always safe, though it may be often very effective; not safe, first, because it may lead to violent reactions or it brings down contrary or wrong or mixed forces which the sadhak is not experienced enough to distinguish from the true ones. Or else it may substitute the sadhak's own limited power of experience or his mental and vital constructions for the free gift and true leading of the Divine.

Cases differ, each has his own way of sadhana. (But for you what I would recommend is constant openness, a quiet steady aspiration, no over-eagerness, a cheerful trust and patience.)

It is the psychic that gives the true aspiration — if the vital is purified and subjected to the psychic, then the vital gives intensity — but if it is unpurified it brings in a rajasic intensity with impatience and reactions of depression and disappointment. As for the calm and equality needed, it must come down from above through the mind.

That is the psychic aspiration, the psychic fire. Where the vital comes in is in the impatience for result and dissatisfaction if the result is not immediate. That must cease.

It is in the nature of the unregenerated vital part of the surface to do like that. The true vital is different, calm and strong and a powerful instrument submitted to the Divine. But for that to come forward it is necessary first to get this fixed poise above in the mind — when the consciousness is there and the mind calm, free and wide, then the true vital can come forward.

The impatience and restless disquietude come from the vital which brings that even into the aspiration. The aspiration must be intense, calm and strong (that is the nature of the true vital also) and not restless and impatient, — then alone it can be stable.

There can be an intense but quiet aspiration which does not disturb the harmony of the inner being.

No use doing Asanas or Pranayam. It is not necessary to burn with passion. What is necessary is a patient acquiring of the power of concentration and steady aspiration so that the silence you speak of may fix in the heart and spread to the other members. Then the physical mind and the subconscient can be cleared and quieted.

⁂

It is a mistake to think that a constant absence of *vyākulatā* is a sign that the aspiration or will for the Divine is not true. It is only in certain exclusive forms of Bhakti Yoga that a constant *vyākulatā* or weeping or *hāhākāra* (the latter is more often vital than psychic) is the rule. Here though the psychic yearning may come sometimes or often in intense waves, what comes as the basis is a quietude of the being and in that quietude a more and more steady perception of the truth and seeking for the Divine and need of the Divine so that all is turned towards that more and more. It is into this that the experience and growing realisation come. Because the opening is growing in you, you are getting this *ābhāsa* of the presence (beyond form) of the Mother. It is as the inner realisation grows that the presence in the physical form takes its full value.

⁂

Prayers should be full of confidence without sorrow or lamenting.

⁂

Naturally, the more one-pointed the aspiration the swifter the progress. The difficulty comes when either the vital with its desires or the physical with its past habitual movements comes in — as they do with almost everyone. It is then that the dryness and difficulty of spontaneous aspiration come. This dryness is a well-known obstacle in all sadhana. But one has to persist and not be discouraged. If one keeps the will fixed even in these barren periods, they pass and after their passage a greater force of aspiration and experience becomes possible.

⁂

It is a suggestion of the tamasic forces that insist on the difficulty and create it and the physical consciousness accepts it. Aspiration is never really difficult. Rejection may not be immediately effective but to maintain the will of rejection and refusal is always possible.

*
**

No doubt the true and strong aspiration is needed, but it is not a fact that the true thing is not there in you. If it had not been, the Force could not have worked in you. But this true thing was seated in the psychic and in the heart and whenever these were active in the meditation it showed itself. But for the sake of completeness the working had to come down into the physical consciousness and establish the quietude and the openness there. The physical consciousness is always in everybody in its own nature a little inert and in it a constant strong aspiration is not natural, it has to be created. But first there must be the opening, a purification, a fixed quietude, otherwise the physical vital will turn the strong aspiration into over-eagerness and impatience or rather it will try to give it that turn. Do not therefore be troubled if the state of the nature seems to you to be too neutral and quiet, not enough aspiration and movement in it. This is a passage necessary for the progress and the rest will come.

*
**

You are finding it still difficult to bear the interval periods when all is quiet and nothing being done on the surface. But such interval periods come to all and cannot be avoided. You must not cherish the suggestion that it is because of your want of aspiration or any other unfitness that it is so and, if you had the constant ardent aspiration, then there would be no such periods and there would be an uninterrupted stream of experiences. It is not so. Even if the aspiration were there, the interval periods would come. If even in them one can aspire, so much the better — but the main thing is to meet them with quietude and not become restless, depressed or despondent. A constant fire can be there only when a certain stage has been reached, that is when one is

always inside consciously living in the psychic being, but for that all this preparation of the mind, vital, physical is necessary. For this fire belongs to the psychic and one cannot command it always merely by the mind's effort. The psychic has to be fully liberated and that is what the Force is working to make fully possible.

IV

Faith — a dynamic entire belief and acceptance.

Belief — intellectual acceptance only.

Conviction — intellectual belief held on what seems to be good reasons.

Reliance — dependence on another for something, based on trust.

Trust — the feeling of sure expectation of another's help and reliance on his word, character, etc.

Confidence — the sense of security that goes with trust.

*
**

Faith is a feeling in the whole being, belief is mental, confidence means trust in a person or in the Divine or a feeling of surety about the result of one's seeking or endeavour.

*
**

Mental faith combats doubt and helps to open to the true knowledge; vital faith prevents the attacks of the hostile forces or defeats them and helps to open to the true spiritual will and action; physical faith keeps one firm through all physical obscurity, inertia or suffering and helps to open to the foundation of the true consciousness; psychic faith opens to the direct touch of the Divine and helps to bring union and surrender.

*
**

Mental faith is very helpful, but it is a thing that can always be

temporarily shaken or quite clouded — until the higher consciousness and experience get fixed for good. What endures even if concealed is the inner being's aspiration or need for something higher which is the soul's faith. That too may be concealed for a time but it reasserts itself — it undergoes eclipse but not extinction.

⁂

That is the true resolution. Keep it firm inside you even if waves of other consciousness cover on the surface. If one plants a faith or resolution like that firmly in oneself, then it remains and even if the mind for a time gets clouded or the resolution dimmed, yet one finds it re-emerging automatically like a ship out of a covering wave, and goes invincibly on with the journey through all vicissitudes till it reaches the harbour.

⁂

The phrase ["blind faith"] has no real meaning. I suppose they mean they will not believe without proof — but the conclusion formed after proof is not faith, it is knowledge or it is a mental opinion. Faith is something which one has before proof or knowledge and it helps you to arrive at knowledge or experience. There is no proof that God exists, but if I have faith in God, then I can arrive at the experience of the Divine.

⁂

Faith does not depend upon experience; it is something that is there before experience. When one starts the yoga, it is not usually on the strength of experience, but on the strength of faith. It is so not only in yoga and the spiritual life, but in ordinary life also. All men of action, discoverers, inventors, creators of knowledge proceed by faith and, until the proof is made or the thing done, they go on in spite of disappointment, failure, disproof, denial because of something in them that tells them that this is the truth, the thing that must be followed and done. Ramakrishna even went so far as to say, when asked whether

blind faith was not wrong, that blind faith was the only kind to have, for faith is either blind or it is not faith but something else — reasoned inference, proved conviction or ascertained knowledge.

Faith is the soul's witness to something not yet manifested, achieved or realised, but which yet the Knower within us, even in the absence of all indications, feels to be true or supremely worth following or achieving. This thing within us can last even when there is no fixed belief in the mind, even when the vital struggles and revolts and refuses. Who is there that practises the yoga and has not his periods, long periods of disappointment and failure and disbelief and darkness? But there is something that sustains him and even goes on in spite of himself, because it feels that what it followed after was yet true and it more than feels, it knows. The fundamental faith in yoga is this, inherent in the soul, that the Divine exists and the Divine is the one thing to be followed after — nothing else in life is worth having in comparison with that. So long as a man has that faith, he is marked for the spiritual life and I will say that, even if his nature is full of obstacles and crammed with denials and difficulties, and even if he has many years of struggle, he is marked out for success in the spiritual life.

It is this faith that you need to develop — a faith which is in accordance with reason and common sense — that if the Divine exists and has called you to the Path, (as is evident), then there must be a Divine Guidance behind and through and in spite of all difficulties you will arrive. Not to listen to the hostile voices that suggest failure or to the voices of impatient, vital haste that echo them, not to believe that because great difficulties are there, there can be no success or that because the Divine has not yet shown himself he will never show himself, but to take the position that everyone takes when he fixes his mind on a great and difficult goal, "I will go on till I succeed — all difficulties notwithstanding." To which the believer in the Divine adds, "The Divine exists, my following after the Divine cannot fail. I will go on through everything till I find him."

*
**

As for experience being necessary for faith and no faith possible without it, that contradicts human psychology altogether. Thousands of people have faith before they have experience. The doctrine "No belief without experience" would be disastrous in spirituality or for that matter in the field of human action. The saint or bhakta have the faith in God long before they have the experience of God — the man of action has the faith in his cause long before his cause is crowned with success, otherwise they could not have been able to struggle persistently towards their end in spite of defeat, failure and deadly peril. I don't know what X means by true faith. For me faith is not intellectual belief but a fixation of the soul; when my belief has faltered, failed, gone out, the soul has remained steadfast, obstinately insisting, "This path and no other: the Truth I have felt is *the* Truth whatever the mind may believe." On the other hand, experiences do not necessarily lead to faith. One sadhak writes to me: "I feel the grace of the Mother descending into me, but I can't believe it because it may be my vital imagination." Another has experiences for years together, then falls down because he has, he says, "lost faith". All these things are not my imagination, they are facts and tell their own tale.

I certainly did not mean a moral but a spiritual change — a moral man may be chock-full of ego, an ego increased by his own goodness and rectitude. Freedom from ego is spiritually valuable because then one can be centred, no longer in one's personal self, but in the Divine. And that too is the condition of bhakti....

I don't know what is X's objection to emotion; it has its place, only it must not be always thrown outward but pressed inward so as to open fully the psychic doors. What you say is perfectly correct — I am glad you are becoming so lucid and clear-sighted, the result surely of a psychic change. Ego is a very curious thing and in nothing more than in its way of hiding itself and pretending it is not the ego. It can always hide even behind an aspiration to serve the Divine. The only way is to chase it out of all its veils and corners. You are right also in thinking that this is really the most important part of yoga. The Rajayogis are right in putting purification in front of everything — as I was also

right in, putting it in front along with concentration in *The Synthesis of Yoga.* You have only to look about you to see that experiences and even realisations cannot bring one to the goal if this is not done — at any moment they can fall owing to the vital still being impure and full of ego.

*
**

No surrender to the psychic being is demanded, the surrender is to the Divine. One approaches the Divine through faith; concrete experience comes as a result of sadhana. One cannot demand a direct experience without doing anything to prepare the consciousness for it.

If one feels the call, one follows it — if there is no call, then there is no need to seek the Divine. Faith is sufficient to start with — the idea that one must first understand and realise before one can seek is a mental error and, if it were true, would make all sadhana impossible — realisation can come only as a result of sadhana, not as its preliminary.

*
**

I spoke of a strong central and, if possible, complete faith because your attitude seemed to be that you only cared for the full response — that is, realisation, the presence, regarding all else as quite unsatisfactory, — and your prayer was not bringing you that. But prayer in itself does not usually bring that at once — only if there is a burning faith at the centre or a complete faith in all the parts of the being. That does not mean that those whose faith is not so strong or surrender complete cannot arrive, but usually they have at first to go by small steps and to face the difficulties of their nature until by perseverance or tapasya they make a sufficient opening. Even a faltering faith and a slow and partial surrender have their force and their result, otherwise only the rare few could do sadhana at all. What I mean by the central faith is a faith in the soul or the central being behind, a faith which is there even when the mind doubts and the vital despairs and the physical wants to collapse, and after the attack is over

reappears and pushes on the path again. It may be strong and bright, it may be pale and in appearance weak, but if it persists each time in going on, it is the real thing. Fits of depression and darkness and despair are a tradition in the path of sadhana — in all yogas oriental or occidental they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself — but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun. Your dream of the sea was a perfectly true one — in the end the storm and swell do not prevent the arrival of the state of Grace in the sadhak and with it the arrival of the Grace itself. That, I suppose is what something in you is always asking for — the supramental miracle of Grace, something that is impatient of the demand for tapasya and self-perfection and long labour. Well, it can come, it has come to several here after years upon years of flat failure and difficulty or terrible struggles. But it comes usually in that way — as opposed to a slowly developing Grace — after much difficulty and not at once. If you go on asking for it in spite of the apparent failure of response, it is sure to come.

*
**

Until we know the Truth (not mentally but by experience, by change of consciousness) we need the soul's faith to sustain us and hold on to the Truth — but when we live in the knowledge, this faith is changed into knowledge.

Of course I am speaking of direct spiritual knowledge. Mental knowledge cannot replace faith, so long as there is only mental knowledge, faith is still needed.

*
**

Faith is a thing that precedes knowledge, not comes after knowledge. It is a glimpse of a truth which the mind has not yet seized as knowledge.

It is not by the intellect that one can progress in the yoga but by psychic and spiritual receptivity — as for knowledge and true understanding, it grows in sadhana by the growth of the intuition, not of the physical intellect.

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.

Have faith in the Divine, in the Divine Grace, in the truth of the sadhana, in the eventual triumph of the spirit over its mental and vital and physical difficulties, in the Path and the Guru, in the experience of things other than are written in the philosophy of Haeckel or Huxley or Bertrand Russell, because if these things are not true, there is no meaning in yoga.

I do not see how the method of faith in the cells can be likened to eating a slice of the moon. Nobody ever got a slice of the moon, but the healing by faith in the cells is an actual fact and a law of Nature and has been demonstrated often enough even apart from yoga. The way to get faith and all things else is to insist on having them and refuse to flag or despair or give up until one has them — it is the way by which everything has been got since this difficult earth began to have thinking and aspiring creatures upon it. It is to open always, always to the Light and turn one's back on the Darkness. It is to refuse the voices that say persistently, "You cannot, you shall not, you are incapable, you are the puppet of a dream," — for these are the enemy voices, they cut one off from the result that was coming, by their strident clamour and then triumphantly point to the barrenness

of the result as a proof of their thesis. The difficulty of the endeavour is a known thing, but the difficult is not the impossible — it is the difficult that has always been accomplished and the conquest of difficulties makes up all that is valuable in the earth's history. In the spiritual endeavour also it shall be so.

You have only to set about resolutely slaying the Rakshasa and the doors will open to you as they have done to many others who were held up by their own mind or vital nature.

*
**

There are two kinds of faith:

The faith that calls down the equanimity and the faith that calls down the realisation.

These two faiths correspond to two different aspects of the Divine.

There is the Transcendent Divine and there is the Cosmic Divine.

The Will of realisation is that of the Transcendent Divine.

The Cosmic Divine is what is concerned with the actual working out of things under the present circumstances. It is the Will of that Cosmic Divine which is manifested in each circumstance, each movement of this world.

The Cosmic Will is not, to our ordinary consciousness, something that acts as an independent power doing whatever it chooses; it works through all these beings, through the forces at play in the world and the law of these forces and their results — it is only when we open ourselves and get out of the ordinary consciousness that we can feel it intervening as an independent power and overriding the ordinary play of the forces.

Then too we can see that even in the play of the forces and in spite of their distortions the Cosmic Will is working towards the eventual realisation of the Will of the Transcendent Divine.

The supramental Realisation is the Will of the Transcendent Divine which we have to work out. The circumstances under which we have to work it out are those of an inferior consciousness in which things can be distorted by our own ignorance, weaknesses and mistakes, and by the clash of conflicting forces.

That is why faith and equanimity are indispensable.

We have to have the faith that in spite of our ignorance and errors and weaknesses and in spite of the attacks of hostile forces and in spite of any immediate appearance of failure the Divine Will is leading us, through every circumstance, towards the final Realisation. This faith will give us equanimity; it is a faith that accepts what happens, not definitively but as something that has to be gone through on the way. Once equanimity is established there can be established too another kind of faith, supported by it, which can be made dynamic with something from the supramental consciousness and can overcome the present circumstances and determine what will happen and help to bring down the Realisation of the Will of the Transcendent Divine.

The faith that goes to the Cosmic Divine is limited in the power of its action by the necessities of the play.

To get entirely free from these limitations one must reach the Transcendent Divine.

*
**

In the play of the cosmic forces, the will in the cosmos — as one might say — does not always work apparently in favour of a smooth and direct line for the work or the sadhana; it often brings in what seem to be upheavals, sudden turns which break or deflect the line, opposing or upsetting circumstances or perplexing departures from what had been temporarily settled or established. The one thing is to preserve equanimity and make an opportunity and means of progress out of all that happens in the course of the life and the sadhana. There is a higher secret Will transcendent behind the play and will of the cosmic forces — a play which is always a mixture of things favourable and things adverse — and it is that Will which one must wait upon and have faith in; but you must not expect to be able always to understand its workings. The mind wants this or that to be done, the line once taken to be maintained, but what the mind wants is not at all always what is intended in a larger purpose. One has to follow indeed a fixed central aim in the sadhana and not deviate from it, but not to build on outward circumstances,

conditions, etc., as if they were fundamental things.

⁂

To the question in your last letter there can be no reply except that it is only either a single-minded faith or a fixed will that can give you the open road to the yoga. It is because your ideas and your will are in a constant state of flux or of oscillation that you do not succeed. Even with a deficient faith, a fixed mind and will can carry one on and bring the experiences by which an uncertain faith is changed into certitude.

It is the reason why it is difficult for me to answer your questions about the different alternatives. I may say that the way of the Gita is itself a part of the yoga here and those who have followed it, to begin with or as a first stage, have a stronger basis than others for this yoga. To look down on it, therefore, as something separate and inferior is not a right standpoint. But whatever it is, you must yourself choose, nobody can do it for you. Those who go and come, can do so profitably only if or because they have made the decision and keep to it; when they are here, it is for the yoga that they come, when they are elsewhere, the will for the yoga remains with them there. You have to get rid of your constant reasonings and see whether you can do without the impulse towards yoga or not — if you cannot, then it is useless thinking of the ordinary life without yoga — your nature will compel you to seek after it even if you have to seek all your life with a small result. But the small result is mainly due to the mind which always came in the way and the vital weakness which gives it its support for its reasonings. If you fixed your will irrevocably, that would give you a chance — and whether you followed it here or elsewhere would make only a minor difference.

I suggested the Gita method for you because the opening which is necessary for the yoga here seems to be too difficult for you. If you made a less strenuous demand upon yourself, there might be a greater chance. In any case, if you cannot return to the ordinary life, it seems, in the absence of an opening to the Power that is here, the only course for you.

⁂

It is quite sufficient if there is the firm and constant will towards faith and self-offering. It is understood that it is not possible for the human nature to be always without movements of doubt, obscurity or things not yet offered until the inner consciousness has sufficiently grown to make these impossible. It is because it is so that the will is necessary so that the Force may work to remove these things with full consent and will of the mind and heart of the sadhak. To try to reject these things and make the will permanent is sufficient, — for it is this effort that brings eventually the permanence.

The depth of the sleep in your experience was intended to make you go deep inside and, as soon as you did so, you entered into the psychic and spiritual state which takes the figure of the beautiful *maidān* and the flow of white light and the coolness and peace. The staircase was a symbol of the ascent from this psychic and spiritual state into higher and higher levels of the spiritual consciousness where is the source of the light. The Mother's hand was the symbol of her presence and help which will draw you up and lead you to the top of the ladder.

*
**

Faith can be tamasic and ineffective, e.g. "I believe the Mother will do everything, so I will do nothing. When she wants, she will transform me". That is not a dynamic but a static and inert faith.

*
**

Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence, weakness and surrender to the impulses of the lower Nature: it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements or to one's ego or to some Force of the ignorance and

darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine.

⁂

One must rely on the Divine and yet do some enabling sadhana — the Divine gives the fruit not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul's sincerity and its aspiration. (I mean by soul's sincerity its yearning after the Divine and its aspiration towards the higher life.) Also, worrying does no good — "I shall be this, I shall be that, what shall I be?" Say: "I am ready to be not what I want but what the Divine wants me to be," — all the rest should go on that base.

⁂

You have seized the right principle again, to be all for the Mother and to have full confidence that one has only to go on quietly in that confidence and all will come that needs to come and all be done that the Divine wills to be done. The workings of the world are too subtle and strange and complex for the human mind to understand it — it is only when the knowledge comes from above and one is taken into the higher consciousness that the understanding can come. Meanwhile what one has to follow is the dictates of the deeper psychic heart within based on that faith and love which is the only sure guiding star.

⁂

I have already explained all this to you. It is quite true that, left to yourself, you can do nothing; that is why you have to be in contact with the Force which is there to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. The only thing *you* have to do is to allow the force to act and put yourself on its side, which means to have faith in it, to rely upon it, not to trouble and harass yourself, to remember it quietly, to call upon it quietly, to let it act quietly. If you do that, all else will be done for you — not all at once, because there is much to clear away, but still it will be done steadily and more and more.

⁂

The Divine Grace and Power can do everything, but with the full assent of the sadhak. To learn to give that full assent is the whole meaning of the sadhana. It may take time either because of ideas in the mind, desires in the vital or inertia in the physical consciousness, but these things have to be and can be removed with the aid or by calling in the action of the Divine Force.

⁂

Do not allow any discouragement to come upon you and have no distrust of the Divine Grace. Whatever difficulties are outside you, whatever weaknesses are inside you, if you keep firm hold on your faith and your aspiration, the secret Power will carry you through and bring you back here. Even if you are oppressed with opposition and difficulties, even if you stumble, even if the way seems closed to you, keep hold on your aspiration; if faith is clouded for a time, turn always in mind and heart to us and it will be removed. As for outer help in the way of letters we are perfectly ready to give it to you.... But keep firm on the way — then in the end things open out of themselves and circumstances yield to the inner spirit.

⁂

The difficulty must have come from distrust and disobedience. For distrust and disobedience are like falsehood (they are themselves a falsity, based on false ideas and impulses), they interfere in the action of the Power, prevent it from being felt or from working fully and diminish the force of the Protection.

Not only in your inward concentration, but in your outward acts and movements you must take the right attitude. If you do that and put everything under the Mother's guidance, you will find that difficulties begin to diminish or are much more easily got over and things become steadily smoother.

In your work and acts you must do the same as in your concentration. Open to the Mother, put them under her guidance, call in the peace, the supporting Power, the protection and, in order that they may work, reject all wrong influences that might

come in their way by creating wrong, careless or unconscious movements.

Follow this principle and your whole being will become one, under one rule, in the peace and sheltering Power and Light.

⁂

They [faith, surrender and *samatā*] have to be put into every part and atom of the being so that there may be no possibility of a contrary vibration anywhere.

⁂

Whatever adverse things present themselves you must meet them with courage and they will disappear and the help come. Faith and courage are the true attitude to keep in life and work always and in the spiritual experience also.

⁂

In moments of trial faith in the divine protection and the call for that protection; at all times the faith that what the Divine wills is the best.

It is what turns you towards the Divine that must be accepted as good for you — all is bad for you that turns you away from the Divine.

⁂

There is no reason for your trouble other than this readiness to listen to their knock and open the door. If you desire only the Divine, there is an absolute certitude that you will reach the Divine, but all these questionings and repinings at each movement only delay and keep an impending curtain before the heart and the eyes. For at every step, when one makes an advance, the opposite forces will throw these doubts like a rope between the legs and stop one short with a stumble — it is their *métier* to do that.... One must say, "Since I want only the Divine, my success

is sure, I have only to walk forward in all confidence and His own Hand will be there secretly leading me to Him by His own way and at His own time." That is what you must keep as your constant mantra. Anything else one may doubt but that he who desires only the Divine shall reach the Divine is a certitude and more certain than two and two make four. That is the faith every sadhak must have at the bottom of his heart, supporting him through every stumble and blow and ordeal. It is only false ideas still casting their shadows on your mind that prevent you from having it. Push them aside and the back of the difficulty will be broken.

⁂

Keep firm faith in the victory of the Light and face with calm equanimity the resistances of Matter and human personality to their own transformation.

⁂

It is not a hope but a certitude that the complete transformation of the nature will take place.

⁂

Even if there is much darkness — and this world is full of it and the physical nature of man also — yet a ray of the true Light can prevail eventually against a tenfold darkness. Believe that and cleave to it always.

Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine — to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one's own, to obey only the Divine will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego.

⁂

Surrender means to be entirely in the Mother's hands, and not to resist in any way by egoism or otherwise her Light, Knowledge, Will, the working of her Force etc.

*
**

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

*
**

There is no need of all this complication. If the psychic manifests, it will not ask you to surrender to it, but to surrender to the Mother.

*
**

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.

*
**

[1]It is meant in the inner sense only — no outer greatness is meant. All submission is regarded by the ego as lowering and lessening itself, but really submission to the Divine increases and greatens the being, that is what is meant.

*
**

If there is no surrender, there can be no transformation of the whole being.

*
**

If one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the

[1] This is an explanation of the following passage from *Conversations* by the Mother: "Surrender will not diminish, but increase you; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it." (1966 Edition), p. 126.

purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences; it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting oneself in the hands of the Divine rather than relying on one's own efforts alone and this implies one's putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana that I myself followed and it is the central process of yoga as I envisage it. It is, I suppose, what Sri Ramakrishna meant by the method of the baby-cat in his image. But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it — it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet.

What I mean by surrender is this inner surrender of the mind and vital. There is, of course, the outer surrender also: the giving up of all that is found to conflict with the spirit or need of the sadhana, the offering, the obedience to the guidance of the Divine, whether directly, if one has reached that stage, or through the psychic or to the guidance of the Guru. I may say that *prāyopaveśana* (fasting for a long time) has not anything to do with surrender: it is a form of tapasya of a very austere and, in my opinion, very excessive kind, often dangerous.

The core of the inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude: "I want the Divine and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and trust him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done."

That is the attitude into which one must grow; for certainly it cannot be made perfect at once — mental and vital movements

come across — but if one keeps the will to it, it will grow in the being. The rest is a matter of obedience to the guidance when it makes itself manifest, not allowing one's mental and vital movements to interfere.

It is not my intention to say that this way is the only way and sadhana cannot be done otherwise — there are so many others by which one can approach the Divine. But this is the only one I know by which the taking up of sadhana by the Divine becomes a sensible fact before the preparation of the nature is done. In other methods the Divine action may be felt from time to time, but it remains mostly behind the veil till all is ready. In some sadhanas the divine action is not recognised: all must be done by tapasya. In most there is a mixing of the two: the tapasya finally calling the direct help and intervention. The idea and experience of the Divine doing all belong to the yoga based on surrender. But whatever way is followed, the one thing to be done is to be faithful and go on to the end.

All can be done by the Divine, — the heart and nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed, — if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance come and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone.

⁂

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.

⁂

It is not possible to get rid of the stress on personal effort at once — and not always desirable; for personal effort is better than tamasic inertia.

The personal effort has to be transformed progressively into a movement of the Divine Force. If you feel conscious of the Divine Force, then call it in more and more to govern your effort, to take it up, to transform it into something not yours, but the Mother's. There will be a sort of transfer, a taking up of the forces at work in the personal Adhar — a transfer not suddenly complete but progressive.

But the psychic poise is necessary: the discrimination must develop which sees accurately what is the Divine Force, what is the element of personal effort, and what is brought in as a mixture from the lower cosmic forces. And until the transfer is complete which always takes time, there must always be as a personal contribution, a constant consent to the true Force, a constant rejection of any lower mixture.

At present to give up personal effort is not what is wanted, but to call in more and more the Divine Power and govern and guide by it the personal endeavour.

*
**

It is not advisable in the early stages of the sadhana to leave everything to the Divine or expect everything from it without the need of one's own endeavour. That is only possible when the psychic being is in front and influencing the whole action (and even then vigilance and a constant assent are necessary), or else later on in the ultimate stages of the yoga when a direct or almost direct supramental force is taking up the consciousness; but this stage is very far away as yet. Under other conditions this attitude is likely to lead to stagnation and inertia.

It is only the more mechanical parts of the being that can truly say they are helpless: the physical (material) consciousness, especially, is inert in its nature and moved either by the mental and vital or by the higher forces. But one has always the power to put the mental will or vital push at the service of the Divine. One cannot be sure of the immediate result, for the obstruction of the lower Nature or the pressure of the adverse forces can often act successfully for a time, even for a long time, against the necessary change. One has then to persist, to put always the will on the side of the Divine, rejecting what has to be rejected, opening oneself to the true Light and the true Force, calling it down quietly, steadfastly, without tiring, without depression or impatience, until one feels the Divine Force at work and the obstacles beginning to give way.

You say you are conscious of your ignorance and obscurity. If it is only a general consciousness, that is not enough. But if

you are conscious of it in the details, in its actual working, then that is sufficient to start with; you have to reject steadfastly the wrong workings of which you are conscious and make your mind and vital a quiet and clear field for the action of the Divine Force.

⁂

Active surrender is when you associate your will with the Divine Will, reject what is not the Divine, assent to what is the Divine. Passive surrender is when everything is left entirely to the Divine — that few can really do, because in practice it turns out that you surrender to the lower nature under pretext of surrendering to the Divine.

⁂

There are two possibilities, one of purification by personal effort, which takes a long time, another by a direct intervention of the Divine Grace which is usually rapid in its action. For the latter there must be a complete surrender and self-giving and for that again usually it is necessary to have a mind that can remain quite quiet and allow the Divine Force to act supporting it with its complete adhesion at every step, but otherwise remaining still and quiet. This last condition which resembles the baby-cat attitude spoken of by Ramakrishna, is difficult to have. Those who are accustomed to a very active movement of their thought and will in all they do, find it difficult to still the activity and adopt the quietude of mental self-giving. This does not mean that they cannot do the yoga or cannot arrive at self-giving — only the purification and the self-giving take a long time to accomplish and one must have the patience and steady perseverance and resolution to go through.

⁂

A complete surrender is not possible in so short a time, — for a complete surrender means to cut the knot of the ego in each part of the being and offer it, free and whole, to the Divine. The mind,

the vital, the physical consciousness (and even each part of these in all its movements) have one after the other to surrender separately, to give up their own way and to accept the way of the Divine. But what one can do is to make from the beginning a central resolve and self-dedication and to implement it in whatever way one finds open, at each step, taking advantage of each occasion that offers itself to make the self-giving complete. A surrender in one direction makes others easier, more inevitable; but it does not of itself cut or loosen the other knots, and especially those which are very intimately bound up with the present personality and its most cherished formations may often present great difficulties, even after the central will has been fixed and the first seals put on its resolve in practice.

⁂

It [the attitude of surrender] cannot be absolutely complete in the beginning, but it can be true — if the central will is sincere and there is the faith and the Bhakti. There may be contrary movements, but these will be unable to stand for long and the imperfection of the surrender in the lower part will not seriously interfere.

⁂

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.

⁂

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 [the idea that the sadhana is done by the Divine rather than by oneself] is a truth but a truth that does not become effective for the consciousness until or in proportion as it is realised. The people who stagnate because of it are those who accept the idea but do not realise — so they have neither the force of tapasya nor that of the Divine Grace. On the other hand those who can realise it feel even behind their tapasya and in it the action of the Divine Force.

⁂

For those who do not make any effort, — that absence of effort is itself a difficulty — they do not progress.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

The mechanical movements are always more difficult to stop by the mental will, because they do not in the least depend upon reason or any mental justification but are founded upon association or else a mere mechanical memory and habit.

The practice of rejection prevails in the end; but with personal effort only, it may take a long time. If you can feel the Divine Power working in you, then it should become easier.

There should be nothing inert or tamasic in the self-giving to the guidance and it should not be made by any part of the vital into a plea for not rejecting the suggestions of lower impulse and desire.

There are always two ways of doing the yoga — one by the action of a vigilant mind and vital seeing, observing, thinking and deciding what is or is not to be done. Of course it acts with the Divine Force behind it, drawing or calling in that Force — for otherwise nothing much can be done. But still it is the personal effort that is prominent and assumes most of the burden.

The other way is that of the psychic being, the consciousness opening to the Divine, not only opening the psychic and bringing it forward, but opening the mind, the vital and the physical, receiving the Light, perceiving what is to be done, feeling and seeing it done by the Divine Force itself and helping constantly by its own vigilant and conscious assent to and call for the Divine working.

Usually there cannot but be a mixture of these two ways until the consciousness is ready to be entirely open, entirely submitted to the Divine's origination of all its action. It is then that all responsibility disappears and there is no personal burden on the shoulders of the sadhak.

⁂

So long as there is not the full presence and conscious working of the higher Force, some amount of the personal effort is indis-

pensable. To do the sadhana for the sake of the Divine and not for one's own sake is of course the true attitude.

⁂

Everything should be for the sake of the Divine, this also. As for leaving the result to the Divine, it depends on what you mean by the phrase. If it implies dependence on the Divine Grace and equanimity and patience in the persistent aspiration, then it is all right. But it must not be extended to cover slackness and indifference in the aspiration and endeavour.

⁂

I do not see why surrender of any kind would be to go to sleep or close yourself up from all outward things including the Mother. Anyhow, it is a conscious surrender that has to be made; but there need not be any restless struggle in it or laying undue stress on deficiencies and difficulties. As for the Mother's attitude, you have to look within to know it; if you look from outside, you will not be able to understand it.

⁂

Tapasya has predominated in your sadhana, for you have a fervour and active energy which predisposes you to that. No way is entirely easy, and in that of surrender the difficulty is to make a true and complete surrender. Once it is made, it certainly makes things easier — not that things are all done in no time or that there are no difficulties, but there is an assurance, a support, an absence of tension which gives the consciousness rest as well as strength and freedom from the worst forms of resistance.

⁂

Yes, of course you are right. The process of surrender is itself a Tapasya. Not only so, but in fact a double process of Tapasya and increasing surrender persists for a long time even when the

surrender has fairly well begun. But a time comes when one feels the Presence and the force constantly and more and more feels that that is doing everything — so that the worst difficulties cannot disturb this sense and personal effort is no longer necessary, hardly even possible. That is the sign of the full surrender of the nature into the hands of the Divine. There are some who take this position in faith even before there is this experience and if the Bhakti and the faith are strong it carries them through till the experience is there. But all cannot take this position from the beginning — and for some it would be dangerous since they might put themselves into the hand of a wrong Force thinking it to be the Divine. For most it is necessary to grow through Tapasya into surrender.

*
**

Yes, if there is the sense of the Divine Will behind all the Tapasya and receiving it and bestowing the fruit — it is at least a first form of surrender.

*
**

When the will and energy are concentrated and used to control the mind, vital and physical and change them or to bring down the higher consciousness or for any other yogic purpose or high purpose, that is called Tapasya.

*
**

The ways of the Divine are not like those of the human mind or according to our patterns and it is impossible to judge them or to lay down for Him what He shall or shall not do, for the Divine knows better than we can know. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and Bhakti seem to me to be at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender.

*
**

To understand divine movements one must enter into the divine

consciousness, till then faith and surrender are the only right attitude. How can the mind judge what is beyond all its measures?

⁂

Not to impose one's mind and vital will on the Divine but to receive the Divine's will and follow it, is the true attitude of sadhana. Not to say, "This is my right, want, claim, need, requirement, why do I not get it?" but to give oneself, to surrender and to receive with joy whatever the Divine gives, not grieving or revolting, is the better way. Then what you receive will be the right thing for you.

⁂

The Divine is not bound to do that [to give all our real needs], 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 *arrière pensée* in the surrender which is not then complete.

⁂

To be free from all preference and receive joyfully whatever comes from the Divine Will is not possible at first for any human being. What one should have at first is the constant idea that what the Divine wills is always for the best even when the mind does not see how it is so, to accept with resignation what one cannot yet accept with gladness and so to arrive at a calm equality which is not shaken even when on the surface there may be passing movements of a momentary reaction to outward happenings. If that is once firmly founded, the rest can come.

⁂

The essence of surrender is to accept whole-heartedly the influence and the guidance when the joy and peace come down, to accept them without question or cavil and let them grow; when the Force is felt at work, to let it without opposition, when the

Knowledge is given, to receive and follow it, when the Will is revealed, to make oneself its instrument.

The Divine can lead, he does not drive. There is an internal freedom permitted to every mental being called 'man' to assent or not to assent to the Divine leading: how else can any real spiritual evolution be done?

*
**

Each person has his own freedom of choice up to a certain point — unless he makes the full surrender — and as he uses the freedom, has to take the spiritual or other consequences. The help can only be offered, not imposed. Silence, absence of frank confession, means a desire in the vital to go its own way. When there is no longer concealment, when there is the physical self-opening to the Divine, then the Divine can intervene.

*
**

All the play in this world is based on a certain relative free will in the individual being. Even in the sadhana it remains and his consent is necessary at each step — even though it is by surrender to the Divine that he escapes from ignorance and separateness and ego, it must be at every step a free surrender.

One offers to the Divine in order to get rid of the illusion of separation — the very act of offering implies that all belongs to the Divine.

Self-surrender at first comes through love and bhakti more than through *ātmajñāna*. But it is true that with *ātmajñāna* the complete surrender becomes more possible.

*
**

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.

⁂

There can be devotion and surrender in the higher mind experience 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.

⁂

One can have the Brahmic condition without self-giving, because it is the impersonal Brahman to which one turns. Renunciation of desires and of all identification with Nature is its condition. One can have self-giving of the nature to the Divine as well as of the soul and reach by it the Brahmic condition which is not only negative but positive, a release of the nature itself and not only a release from the nature.

⁂

The Brahmic condition brings a negative peace of *śānti* and *mukti* in the soul. Self-giving brings a positive freedom which can become also a dynamic force of action in the nature.

⁂

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.

⁂

When the psychic being and the heart and the thinking mind

have surrendered, the rest is a matter of time and process — and there is no reason for disturbance. The central and effective surrender has been made.

⁂

It is never too early to make the complete surrender. Some things may need to wait, but not that.

⁂

It is on that consciousness of complete surrender that the psychic foundation of sadhana can be made. If once it fixes itself, then, whatever difficulties remain to be overcome, the course of the sadhana becomes perfectly easy, sunlit, natural like the opening of a flower. The feeling you have is an indication of what can and must develop in you.

⁂

If difficulties that arise are in the nature itself, it is inevitable that they should rise and manifest themselves. Surrender is not easy, it is resisted by a large part of the nature. If the mind forms the will to surrender, all these inner obstacles are bound to show themselves; the sadhak has then to observe them and detach himself from them, reject them from his nature and overcome. This may take a very long time but it has to be done. Outer obstacles cannot prevent the inner surrender unless they are supported by a resistance in the nature itself.

⁂

It depends on the sadhak. Some may find it necessary to surrender the external activities first so as to bring the inner surrender.

⁂

The surrender of the vital is always difficult, because of the

unwillingness of the forces of the universal vital Ignorance. But that does not mean a fundamental incapacity.

⁂

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

⁂

The ordinary vital is never willing to surrender. The true inmost vital is different — surrender to the Divine is as necessary to it as to the psychic.

⁂

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

VV
⁂

It was from your description of the reaction that I said there was a vital demand. In the pure psychic or spiritual self-giving there are no reactions of this kind; no despondency or despair, no saying, "What have I gained by seeking the Divine?", no anger, revolt, abhiman, wish to go away — such as you describe here — but an absolute confidence and a persistence in clinging to the Divine under all conditions. That is what I wanted you to have; it is the only basis in which one is free from troubles and reactions and goes steadily forward.

But are such feelings a sign of the soul's self-giving? If there is no vital mixture, how do these things come when I write to you and as the result of my writing and trying to show you the way?

It is the first movement of this part to revolt when it is shown its own nature and asked to change.

Difficult? It is the first principle of our sadhana that surrender is the means of fulfilment and so long as ego or vital demand and desire are cherished, complete surrender is impossible — the self-giving is incomplete. We have never concealed

that. It may be difficult and it is; but it is the very principle of the sadhana. Because it is difficult it has to be done steadily and patiently till the work is complete.

You have to go on rejecting the vital mixture every time it rises. If you are steadfast in rejecting, it will lose more and more of its force and fade out.

That means it is an obstinate but irrational and mechanical survival of the old movement. That in fact is how these things try to survive. It is bound to go if you do not give it fresh life.

I have no doubt of it — you have only to understand it rightly and you can go at once to the right ground.

⁂

Most of the sadhaks have similar thoughts — or had them at one time or another. They rise from the vital ego which either does not want the Divine or wants It for its own purpose and not for the Divine's purpose. It gets furious when it is pressed to change or when its desires are not satisfied — that is at the root of all these things. That is why we insist on surrender in this yoga — because it is only by the surrender (especially of the vital ego) that these things can go — to accept the Divine for the Divine's sake and for no other motive and in the Divine's way and not in one's own way or on one's own conditions.

⁂

It is the psychic surrender in the physical that you have begun to experience.

All the parts are essentially offered, but the surrender has to be made complete by the growth of the psychic self-offering in all of them and in all their movements separately and together.

To be enjoyed by the Divine is to be entirely surrendered so that one feels the Divine Presence, Power, Light, Ananda possessing the whole being rather than oneself possessing these things for one's own satisfaction. It is a much greater ecstasy to be thus surrendered and possessed by the Divine than oneself to be the possessor. At the same time by this surrender there

comes also a calm and happy mastery of self and nature.

⁂

I have said that if one has the principle of surrender and union in the mind and heart there is no difficulty in extending it to the obscurer parts of the physical and the subconscient. As you have this central surrender and union, you can easily complete it everywhere. A quiet aspiration for complete consciousness is all that is needed. Then the material and subconscient will become penetrated by the light like the rest and there will come in a quietude, wideness, harmony free from all reactions that will be the basis of the final change.

⁂

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.

⁂

Opening is a thing that happens by itself by sincerity of will and aspiration. It means to be able to receive the higher forces that come from the Mother.

⁂

The object of the self-opening is to allow the force of the Divine to flow in bringing light, peace, Ananda, etc. and to do the work of transformation. When the being so receives the Divine Shakti and it works in him, produces its results (whether he is entirely

conscious of the process or not,) then he is said to be open.

⁂

These are acts of the mind; openness is a *state* of consciousness which keeps it turned to the Mother, free from other movements expecting and able to receive what may come from the Divine.

⁂

It is by confidence in the Mother that the opening needed will come when your consciousness is ready.

It is not by meditation alone that what is needed will come. It is by faith and openness to the Mother.

⁂

Keep yourself open to the Mother, remember her always and let her Force work in you, rejecting all other influences — that is the rule for yoga.

⁂

In the practice of yoga, what you aim at can only come by the opening of the being to the Mother's force and the persistent rejection of all egoism and demand and desire, all motives except the aspiration for the Divine Truth. If this is rightly done, the Divine Power and Light will begin to work and bring in the peace and equanimity, the inner strength, the purified devotion and the increasing consciousness and self-knowledge which are the necessary foundation for the siddhi of the yoga.

✓✓

⁂

In this yoga the whole principle is to open oneself to the Divine Influence. It is there above you and, if you can once become conscious of it, you have then to call it down into you. It descends into the mind and into the body as Peace, as a Light, as a Force that works, as the Presence of the Divine with or without

form, as Ananda. Before one has this consciousness, one has to have faith and aspire for the opening. Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing and are all effective; you can take the form that comes to you or is easiest to you. The other way is concentration; you concentrate your consciousness in the heart (some do it in the head or above the head) and meditate on the Mother in the heart and call her in there. One can do either and both at different times — whatever comes naturally to you or you are moved to do at the moment. Especially in the beginning the one great necessity is to get the mind quiet, reject at the time of meditation all thoughts and movements that are foreign to the sadhana. In the quiet mind there will be a progressive preparation for the experience. But you must not become impatient, if all is not done at once; it takes time to bring entire quiet into the mind; you have to go on till the consciousness is ready.

In this yoga all depends on whether one can open to the Influence or not. If there is a sincerity in the aspiration and a patient will to arrive at the higher consciousness in spite of all obstacles, then the opening in one form or another is sure to come. But it may take a long or short time according to the prepared or unprepared condition of the mind, heart and body; so if one has not the necessary patience, the effort may be abandoned owing to the difficulty of the beginning. There is no method in this yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of the Mother to take up the being and by the workings of her force transform the consciousness; one can concentrate also in the head or between the eyebrows, but for many this is a too difficult opening. When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence.

Your mind and psychic being are concentrated on the spiritual aim and open to the Divine — that is why the Influence comes down only to the head and as far as the heart. But the vital being and nature and physical consciousness are under the influence of the lower nature. As long as the vital and physical being are not surrendered or do not on their own account call for the higher life, the struggle is likely to continue.

Surrender everything, reject all other desires or interests, call on the Divine Shakti to open the vital nature and bring down calm, peace, light, Ananda into all the centres. Aspire, await with faith and patience the result. All depends on a complete sincerity and an integral consecration and aspiration.

The world will trouble you so long as any part of you belongs to the world. It is only if you belong entirely to the Divine that you can become free.

✓

*
**

The opening is the same for all. It begins with an opening of mind and heart, then of the vital proper — when it reaches the lower vital and the physical the opening is complete. But with the opening there must be the full self-giving to what comes down, which is the condition of the complete change. It is the last stage that is the real difficulty and it is there that everybody stumbles about till it is overcome.

*
**

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.

*
**

1. Offer yourself more and more — all the consciousness, all that happens in it, all your work and action.

2. If you have faults and weaknesses, hold them up before the Divine to be changed or abolished.

3. Try to do what I told you, concentrate in the heart till you constantly feel the Presence there.

⁂

Openness and, whenever needed, passivity, but to the highest consciousness, not to anything that comes.

Therefore, there must be a certain quiet vigilance even in the passivity. Otherwise there may be either wrong movements or inertia.

⁂

To give up restraint would be to give free play to the vital and that would mean leave for all kinds of forces to enter in. So long as there is not the supramental consciousness controlling and penetrating everything, in all the being from the overmind downwards, there is an ambiguous play of forces, and each force, however divine in origin, may be used by the Powers of light or intercepted as it passes through the mind and the vital by the Powers of darkness. Vigilance, discrimination, control cannot be abandoned till the complete victory has been won and the consciousness transmuted.

⁂

Yes; vigilance should not be relaxed. In fact, it is only as the automatic Knowledge and action are established in the being that the constant vigilance ceases to be needed — even then it cannot be given up absolutely until there is the full Light.

⁂

There are three main possibilities for the sadhak — (1) To wait on the Grace and rely on the Divine. (2) To do everything him-

self like the Adwaitin and the Buddhist. (3) To take the middle path, go forward by aspiration and rejection etc. helped by the Force.

⁂

Each mind can have its own way of approaching the supreme Truth and there is an entrance for each as well as a thousand ways for the journey to it. It is not necessary to believe in the Grace or to recognise a Godhead different from one's highest Self — there are ways of yoga that do not accept these things. Also, for many no form of yoga is necessary — they arrive at some realisation by a sort of pressure of the mind or the heart or the will breaking the screen between it and what is at once beyond it and its own source. What happens after the breaking of the screen depends on the play of the Truth on the consciousness and the turn of the nature. There is no reason, therefore, why X's realisation of his being should not come in its own way by growth from within, not by the Divine Grace, if his mind objects to that description, but, let us say, by the spontaneous movement of the Self within him.

For, as to this "Grace", we describe it in that way because we feel in the infinite Spirit or Self-existence a Presence or a Being, a Consciousness that determines, — that is what we speak of as the Divine, — not a separate person, but the one Being of whom our individual self is a portion or a vessel. But it is not necessary for everybody to regard it in that way. Supposing it is the impersonal Self of all only, yet the Upanishad says of this Self and its realisation: "This understanding is not to be gained by reasoning nor by tapasya nor by much learning, but whom this Self chooses, to him it reveals its own body". Well, that is the same thing as what we call the Divine Grace, — it is an action from above or from within independent of mental causes which decides its own movement. We can call it the Divine Grace; we can call it the Self within choosing its own hour and way to manifest to the mental instrument on the surface; we can call it the flowering of the inner being or inner nature into self-realisation and self-knowledge. As something in us approaches it or as it presents itself to us, so the mind sees it. But in reality it is the

same thing and the same process of the being in Nature.

⁂

I should like to say something about the Divine Grace — for you seem to think it should be something like a Divine Reason acting upon lines not very different from those of human intelligence. But it is not that. Also it is not a universal Divine Compassion either, acting impartially on all who approach it and acceding to all prayers. It does not select the righteous and reject the sinner. The Divine Grace came to aid the persecutor (Saul of Tarsus), it came to St. Augustine the profligate, to Jagai and Madhai of infamous fame, to Bilwamangal and many others whose conversion might well scandalise the puritanism of the human moral intelligence; but it can come to the righteous also — curing them of their self-righteousness and leading to a purer consciousness beyond these things. It is a power that is superior to any rule, even to the Cosmic Law — for all spiritual seers have distinguished between the Law and Grace. Yet it is not indiscriminate — only it has a discrimination of its own which sees things and persons and the right times and seasons with another vision than that of the Mind or any other normal Power. A state of Grace is prepared in the individual often behind thick veils by means not calculable by the mind and when the state of Grace comes, then the Grace itself acts. There are these three powers: (1) The Cosmic Law, of Karma or what else; (2) the Divine Compassion acting on as many as it can reach through the nets of the Law and giving them their chance; (3) the Divine Grace which acts more incalculably but also more irresistibly than the others. The only question is whether there is something behind all the anomalies of life which can respond to the call and open itself with whatever difficulty till it is ready for the illumination of the Divine Grace — and that *something* must be not a mental and vital movement but an inner somewhat which can well be seen by the inner eye. If it is there and when it becomes active in front, then the Compassion can act, though the full action of the Grace may still wait attending the decisive decision or change; for this may be postponed to a future hour, because some portion or element

of the being may still come between, something that is not yet ready to receive.

But why allow *anything* to come in the way between you and the Divine, any idea, any incident? When you are in full aspiration and joy, let nothing count, nothing be of any importance except the Divine and your aspiration. If one wants the Divine quickly, absolutely, entirely, that must be the spirit of approach, absolute, all-engrossing, making that the one point with which nothing else must interfere.

What value have mental ideas about the Divine, ideas about what he should be, how he should act, how he should not act — they can only come in the way. Only the Divine himself matters. When your consciousness embraces the Divine, then you can know what the Divine is, not before. Krishna is Krishna, one does not care what he did or did not do: only to see him, meet him, feel the Light, the Presence, the Love and Ananda is what matters. So it is always for the spiritual aspiration — it is the law of the spiritual life.

⁂

"The ordinary action of the Divine is a constant intervention within the actual law of things" — that may or may not be but is not usually called the Divine Grace. The Divine Grace is something not calculable, not bound by anything the intellect can fix as a condition, — though ordinarily some call, aspiration, intensity of the psychic being can awaken it, yet it acts sometimes without any apparent cause even of that kind.

⁂

It is not indispensable that the Grace should work in a way that the human mind can understand, it generally doesn't. It works in its own "mysterious" way. At first usually it works behind the veil, preparing things, not manifesting. Afterwards it may manifest, but the sadhak does not understand very well what is happening; finally, when he is capable of it, he both feels and understands or at least begins to do so. Some feel and under-

stand from the first or very early; but that is not the ordinary case.

⁂

There is nothing unintelligible in what I say about strength and Grace. Strength has a value for spiritual realisation, but to say that it can be done by strength only and by no other means is a violent exaggeration. Grace is not an invention, it is a fact of spiritual experience. Many who would be considered as mere nothings by the wise and strong have attained by Grace; illiterate, without mental power or training, without "strength" of character or will, they have yet aspired and suddenly or rapidly grown into spiritual realisation, because they had faith or because they were sincere. I do not see why these facts which are facts of spiritual history and of quite ordinary spiritual experience should be discussed and denied and argued as if they were mere matters of speculation.

Strength, if it is spiritual, is a power for spiritual realisation; a greater power is sincerity; the greatest power of all is Grace. I have said times without number that if a man is sincere, he will go through in spite of long delay and overwhelming difficulties. I have repeatedly spoken of the Divine Grace. I have referred any number of times to the line of the Gita:

"I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve."[1]

⁂

It is a question to which no clear-cut answer can be given because it puts two sides each of which is a truth. Without the Grace of the Divine nothing can be done, but for the full Grace to manifest the sadhak must make himself ready. If everything depends on the Divine intervention, then man is only a puppet and there is no use of sadhana, and there are no conditions, no law of things — therefore no universe, but only the Divine rolling things about at his pleasure. No doubt in the last resort all can be said to be the Divine cosmic working, but it is through persons, through forces that it works — under the conditions of Nature.

[1] *Aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.*

Special intervention there can be and is, but all cannot be special intervention. As for the experience stated it was probably in the vital plane and such suddennesses and vividnesses of experience are characteristic of the vital — but they are not lasting, they only prepare. It is when one has got into contact with what is beyond mind and vital and body and risen there that the great lasting fundamental realisations usually come.

⁂

Yoga is an endeavour, a tapasya — it can cease to be so only when one surrenders sincerely to a Higher Action and keeps the surrender and makes it complete. It is not a fantasia devoid of all reason and coherence or a mere miracle. It has its laws and conditions and I do not see how you can demand of the Divine to do everything by a violent miracle.

I have never said that this yoga is a safe one — no yoga is. Each has its dangers as has every great attempt in human life. But it can be carried through if one has a central sincerity and a fidelity to the Divine. These are the two necessary conditions.

⁂

What Brahmananda says about tapasya is, of course, true. If one is not prepared for labour and tapasya, control of the mind and vital, one cannot demand big spiritual gains — for the mind and vital will always find tricks and excuses for prolonging their own reign, imposing their likes and dislikes and staving off the day when they will have to become obedient instruments and open channels of the soul and spirit. Grace may sometimes bring undeserved or apparently undeserved fruits, but one can't demand Grace as a right and privilege — for then it would not be Grace. As you have seen, one can't claim that one has only to shout and the answer must come. Besides, I have always seen that there has been really a long unobserved preparation before the Grace intervenes, and also, after it has intervened, one has still to put in a good deal of work to keep and develop what one has got — as it is in all other things until there is the complete

siddhi. Then of course labour finishes and one is in assured possession. So tapasya of one kind or another is not avoidable.

You are right again about the imaginary obstacles.... It is why we always express depreciation of mental constructions and vital formations — because they are the defence-works mind and vital throw up against their capture by the Divine. However, the first thing is to become conscious of all that as you have now become, — the secret is to be firm in knocking it all down and making a *tabula rasa*, a foundation of calm, peace, happy openness for the true building.

⁂

The best possible way is to allow the Divine Grace to work in you, never to oppose it, never to be ungrateful and turn against it — but to follow it always to the goal of Light and Peace and unity and Ananda.

⁂

Few are those from whom the Grace withdraws, but many are those who withdraw from the Grace.

⁂

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.

⁂

Yes, surrender to the impersonal (formless) Divine would leave parts of the being subject to gunas and ego — because the static parts would be free in formlessness but the active nature would be still in the play of the gunas. Many think they are free from ego because they get the sense of the formless existence. They do not see that egoistic elements remain in their action just as before.

⁂

You speak of the Impersonal as if it were a Person. The Impersonal is not He, it is It. How can an It guide or help? The Impersonal Brahman is inactive, aloof, indifferent, not concerned with what happens in the universe. Buddha's Permanent is the same. Whatever impersonal Truth or Light there is, you have to find it, use it, do what you can with it. It does not trouble itself to hunt after you. It is the Buddhist idea that you must do everything for yourself.

*
**

Surrender to the Guru is said to be surrender beyond all surrenders because through it you surrender not only to the impersonal, but to the personal, not only to the Divine in self but to the Divine outside you; you get a chance for the surpassing of the ego not only by retreat into the self where ego does not exist, but in the personal nature where it is the ruler. It is the sign of the will to complete surrender to the total Divine, *samagram mām.... mānuṣīm tanum āśritam.* Of course it must be a genuine spiritual surrender for all this to be true.

*
**

The Guru should be accepted in all ways — transcendent, impersonal, personal.

*
**

The Guru is the Guide in the yoga. When the Divine is accepted as the Guide, He is accepted as the Guru.

*
**

The relation of Guru and disciple is only one of many relations which one can have with the Divine, and in this yoga which aims at a supramental realisation, it is not usual to give it this name; rather, the Divine is regarded as the Source, the living Sun of Light and Knowledge and Consciousness and spiritual realisation, and all that one receives is felt as coming from there and

the whole being remoulded by the Divine Hand. This is a greater and more intimate relation than that of the human Guru and disciple, which is more of a limited mental ideal. Nevertheless, if the mind still needs the more familiar mental conception, it can be kept so long as it is needed; only do not let the soul be bound by it and do not let it limit the inflow of other relations with the Divine and larger forms of experience.

⁂

It is not usual to use the word Guru in the supramental yoga, here everything comes from the Divine himself. But if anybody wants it he can use it for the time being.

⁂

No, surrender to the Divine and surrender to the Guru are not the same thing. In surrendering to the Guru, it is to the Divine in him that one surrenders — if it were only to a human entity, it would be ineffective. But it is the consciousness of the Divine Presence that makes the Guru a real Guru, so that even if the disciple surrenders to him thinking of the human being to whom he surrenders, that Presence will still make it effective.

⁂

All true Gurus are the same, the one Guru, because all are the one Divine. That is a fundamental and universal truth. But there is also a truth of difference; the Divine dwells in different personalities with different minds, teachings, influences so that He may lead different disciples with their special need, character, destiny by different ways to the realisation. Because all Gurus are the same Divine, it does not follow that the disciple does well if he leaves the one meant for him to follow another. Fidelity to the Guru is demanded of every disciple, according to the Indian tradition. "All are the same" is a spiritual truth, but you cannot convert it indiscriminately into action; you cannot deal with all persons in the same way because they are the one Brahman: if

one did, the result pragmatically would be an awful mess. It is a rigid mental logic that makes the difficulty but in spiritual matters mental logic easily blunders; intuition, faith, a plastic spiritual reason are here the only guides.

As for faith, faith in the spiritual sense is not a mental belief which can waver and change. It can wear that form in the mind, but that belief is not the faith itself, it is only its external form. Just as the body, the external form, can change but the spirit remains the same, so it is here. Faith is a certitude in the soul which does not depend on reasoning, on this or that mental idea, on circumstances, on this or that passing condition of the mind or the vital or the body. It may be hidden, eclipsed, may even seem to be quenched, but it reappears again after the storm or the eclipse; it is seen burning still in the soul when one has thought that it was extinguished for ever. The mind may be a shifting sea of doubts and yet that faith may be there within and, if so, it will keep even the doubt-racked mind in the way so that it goes on in spite of itself towards its destined goal. Faith is a spiritual certitude of the spiritual, the divine, the soul's ideal, something that clings to that even when it is not fulfilled in life, even when the immediate facts or the persistent circumstances seem to deny it. This is a common experience in the life of the human being; if it were not so, man would be the plaything of a changing mind or a sport of circumstances.

⁂

It does not strike me that X's letters are admirable as an *aperçu* of current thoughts and general tendencies; it was rather his power to withdraw so completely from these thoughts and tendencies and look from a (for him) new and abiding source of knowledge that impressed me as admirable. If he had remained interested and in touch with these current human movements, I don't suppose he would have done better with them than Romain Rolland or another. But he has got to the yoga-view of them, the summit-view, and it is the readiness with which he has been able to do it that struck me.

I would explain his progressing so far not entirely by his own superiority in the sense of a general fitness for yoga as by the

quickness and completeness with which he has taken inwardly the attitude of the Bhakta and the disciple. That is a rare achievement for a modern mind, be he European or "educated" Indian; for the modern mind is analytic, dubitative, instinctively "independent" even when it wants to be otherwise; it holds itself back and hesitates in front of the Light and Influence that comes to it; it does not plunge into it with a simple directness, crying, "Here I am, ready to throw from me all that was myself or seemed to be, if so I can enter into Thee; remake my consciousness into the Truth in Thy way, the way of the Divine." There is something in us that is ready for it, but there is this element that intervenes and makes a curtain of non-receptivity; I know by my own experience with myself and others how long it can make a road that could never, perhaps for us who seek the entire truth, have been short and easy, but still, we might have spared many wanderings and stand-stills and recoils and detours. All the more I admire the ease with which X seems to have surmounted this formidable obstacle.

I do not know if his Guru falls short in any respect, but with the attitude he has taken, the deficiencies, if any, do not matter. It is not the human defects of the Guru that can stand in the way when there is the psychic opening, confidence and surrender. The Guru is the channel or the representative or the manifestation of the Divine, according to the measure of his personality or his attainment; but whatever he is, it is to the Divine that one opens in opening to him; and if something is determined by the power of the channel, more is determined by the inherent and intrinsic attitude of the receiving consciousness, an element that comes out in the surface mind as simple trust or direct unconditional self-giving, and once that is there, the essential things can be gained even from one who seems to others than the disciple an inferior spiritual source, and the rest will grow up in the sadhak of itself by the Grace of the Divine, even if the human being in the Guru cannot give it. It is this that X appears to have done perhaps from the first; but in most nowadays this attitude seems to come with difficulty after much hesitation and delay and trouble. In my own case I owe the first decisive turn of my inner life to one who was infinitely inferior to me in intellect, edu-

cation and capacity and by no means spiritually perfect or supreme; but, having seen a Power behind him and decided to turn there for help, I gave myself entirely into his hands and followed with an automatic passivity the guidance. He himself was astonished and said to others that he had never met anyone before who could surrender himself so absolutely and without reserve or question to the guidance of the helper. The result was a series of transmuting experiences of such a radical character that he was unable to follow and had to tell me to give myself up in future to the Guide within with the same completeness of surrender as I had shown to the human channel. I give this example to show how these things work; it is not in the calculated way the human reason wants to lay down, but by a more mysterious and greater law.

*
**

One can have a Guru inferior in spiritual capacity (to oneself or to other Gurus) carrying in him many human imperfections and yet, if you have the faith, the bhakti, the right spiritual stuff, you can contact the Divine through him, attain to spiritual experiences, to spiritual realisation, even before the Guru himself. Mark the "If", for that proviso is necessary; it is not every disciple who can do that with every Guru. From a humbug you can acquire nothing but his humbuggery. The Guru must have something in him which makes the contact with the Divine possible, something which works even if he is not in his outer mind quite conscious of its action. If there is nothing at all spiritual in him, he is not a Guru, only a pseudo. Undoubtedly, there can be considerable differences of spiritual realisation between one Guru and another; but much depends on the inner relation between Guru and *śisya*. One can go to a very great spiritual man and get nothing or only a little from him; one can go to a man of less spiritual capacity and get all he has to give — and more. The causes of this disparity are various and subtle; I need not expand on them here. It differs with each man. I believe the Guru is always ready to give what can be given, if the disciple can receive, or it may be, when he is ready to receive. If he refuses to receive or behaves inwardly or outwardly in such a

way as to make reception impossible or if he is not sincere or takes up the wrong attitude, then things become difficult. But if one is sincere and faithful and has the right attitude and if the Guru is a true Guru, then, after whatever time, *it* will come.

⁂

Ramakrishna had the siddhi himself before he began giving to others — so had Buddha. I don't know about the others. By perfection of course is meant siddhi in one's own path — realisation. Ramakrishna always put that as a rule that one should not become a teacher to others until one has the full authority.

⁂

The action of the Force does not exclude tapasya, concentration and the need of sadhana. Its action rather comes as an answer or a help to these things. It is true that it sometimes acts without them; it very often makes a response in those who have not prepared themselves and do not seem to be ready. But it does not always or usually act like that, nor is it a sort of magic that acts in the void or without any process. Nor is it a machine that acts in the same way on everybody or in all conditions and circumstances; it is not a physical but a spiritual Force and its action cannot be reduced to rules.

About the limitation of the power of the Guru to that of a teacher who shows the way but cannot help or guide, that is the conception of certain paths of yoga such as the pure Adwaitin and the Buddhist which say that you must rely upon yourself and that no one can help you; but even the pure Adwaitin does in fact rely upon the Guru and the chief mantra of Buddhism insists on *śaraṇam* to Buddha. For other paths of sadhana, especially those which, like the Gita, accept the reality of the individual soul as an "eternal portion" of the Divine or which believe that Bhagavan and the bhakta are both real, the help of the Guru has always been relied upon as an indispensable aid.

I don't understand the objection to the validity of Vivekananda's experience: it was exactly the realisation which is de-

scribed in the Upanishads as a supreme experience of the Self. It is not a fact that an experience gained in samadhi cannot be prolonged into the waking state.

⁂

Yes, it is a defect in the vital, a lack of will to discipline. One has to learn from the master and act according to his instructions because the master knows the subject and how it is to be learnt — just as in spiritual things one has to follow a Guru who has the knowledge and knows the way. If one learns all by oneself, the chances are that one will learn all wrong. What is the use of a freedom to learn wrongly? Of course, if the pupil is more intelligent than the master, he will learn more than the master, just as a great spiritual capacity may arrive at realisation which the Guru has not — but even so the control and discipline in the early stages is indispensable.

⁂

Up to now no liberated man has objected to the Guruvada; it is usually only people who live in the mind or vital and have the pride of the mind and the arrogance of the vital that find it below their dignity to recognise a Guru.

⁂

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 binder or obstacle but only as superficial imperfections which the working of the grace will remove.

⁂

I think this saying[1] of Ramakrishna expresses a certain charac-

[1] "With the Guru's grace all difficulties can disappear in a flash even as agelong darkness does the moment you strike a match."

teristic happening in sadhana and cannot be interpreted in a general and absolute sense, for in that sense it is hard for it to be true. All difficulties disappearing in a minute? Well, Vivekananda had the grace of Ramakrishna from the beginning, but I think his difficulty of doubt lasted for some time and to the end of his life the difficulty of the control of his anger was there — making him say that all that was good in him was his Guru's gift, but these things (anger etc.) were his own property. But what could be true is that the central difficulty may disappear by a certain touch between the Guru and the disciple. But what is meant by the *kṛpā*? If it is the general compassion and grace of the Guru, that, one would think, is always there on the disciple; his acceptance itself is an act of grace and the help is there for the disciple to receive. But the touch of grace, divine grace, coming directly or through the Guru is a special phenomenon having two sides to it, — the grace of the Guru or the Divine, in fact both together, on one side and a "state of grace" in the disciple on the other. The "state of grace" is often prepared by a long tapasya or purification in which nothing decisive seems to happen, only touches or glimpses or passing experiences at the most, and it comes suddenly without warning. If this is what is spoken of in Ramakrishna's saying, then it is true that when it comes, the fundamental difficulties can in a moment and generally do disappear. Or, at the very least, something happens which makes the rest of the sadhana — however long it may take — sure and secure.

This decisive touch comes most easily to the "baby cat" people, those who have at some point between the psychic and the emotional vital a quick and decisive movement of surrender to the Guru or the Divine. I have seen that when that is there and there is the conscious central dependence compelling the mind also and the rest of the vital, then the fundamental difficulty disappears. If others remain they are not felt as difficulties, but simply as things that have just to be done and need cause no worry. Sometimes no tapasya is necessary — one just refers things to the Power that one feels guiding or doing the sadhana and assents to its action, rejecting all that is contrary to it, and the Power removes what has to be removed or changes what has to

be changed, quickly or slowly — but the quickness or slowness does not seem to matter since one is sure that it will be done. If tapasya is necessary, it is done with so much feeling of a strong support that there is nothing hard or austere in the tapasya.

For the others, the "baby monkey" type or those who are still more independent, following their own ideas, doing their own sadhana, asking only for some instruction or help, the grace of the Guru is there, but it acts according to the nature of the sadhak and waits upon his effort to a greater or less degree; it helps, succours in difficulty, saves in the time of danger, but the disciple is not always, is perhaps hardly at all aware of what is being done as he is absorbed in himself and his endeavour. In such cases the decisive psychological movement, the touch that makes all clear, may take longer to come.

But with all the *kṛpā* is there working in one way or another and it can only abandon the disciple if the disciple himself abandons or rejects it — by decisive and definitive revolt, by rejection of the Guru, by cutting the painter and declaring his independence, or by an act or course of betrayal that severs him from his own psychic being. Even then, except perhaps in the last case if it goes to an extreme, a return to grace is not impossible.

That is my own knowledge and experience of the matter. But as to what lay behind Ramakrishna's saying and whether he himself meant it to be a general and absolute statement — I do not pronounce.

⁂

It has always been said that to take disciples means to take upon yourself the difficulties of the disciples as well as your own. Of course, if the Guru does not identify himself with the disciple, does not take him into his own consciousness, keeps him outside and only gives him *upadeśa* leaving him to do the rest himself, then the chance of these effects is much diminished; made practically nil.

⁂

When one takes sincerely to surrender, nothing must be con-

cealed that is of any importance for the life of the sadhana. Confession helps to purge the consciousness of hampering elements and it clears the inner air and makes for a closer and more intimate and effective relation between the Guru and the disciple.

VI

It is so with all things in the path of sadhana — one must persist however long it takes, so only one can achieve.

⁂

The power needed in yoga is the power to go through effort, difficulty or trouble without getting fatigued, depressed, discouraged or impatient and without breaking off the effort or giving up one's aim or resolution.

⁂

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

⁂

A yoga like this needs patience, because it means a change both of the radical motives and of each part and detail of the nature. It will not do to say — "Yesterday I determined to give myself entirely to the Mother, and look it is not done, on the contrary, all the old opposite things turn up once more." Of course, when you come to the point where you make a resolution of that kind, immediately all that stands in the way does rise up — it invariably happens. The thing to be done is to stand back, observe and reject, not to allow these things to get hold of you, to keep your central will separate from them and call in the Mother's Force to meet them; if one does get involved, as often happens, then to get disinvolved as soon as possible and go forward again.

That is what everybody, every yoga does — to be depressed because one cannot do everything in a rush is quite contrary to the truth of the matter.

The steadiness you have gained is not a personal virtue but depends on your keeping the contact with the Mother — for it is her Force that is behind it and behind all the progress you can make. Learn to rely on that Force, to open to it more completely and to seek spiritual progress even not for your own sake but for the sake of the Divine — then you will go more smoothly.

⁂

It is certain that an ardent aspiration for the Divine helps to progress, but patience is also needed. For it is a very big change that has to be made and, although there can be moments of great rapidity, it is never all the time like that. Old things try to stick as much as possible; the new that come have to develop and the consciousness takes time to assimilate them and make them normal to the nature.

Keep this firm faith in your mind that the thing needed is being done and will be done fully. There can be no doubt about that.

⁂

It is true that a great patience and steadfastness is needed. Be then firm and patient and fixed on the aims of the sadhana, but not over-eager to have them at once. A work has to be done in you and is being done; help it to be done by keeping an attitude of firm faith and confidence. Doubts rise in all, they are natural to the human physical mind — reject them. Impatience and over-eagerness for the result at once are natural to the human vital; it is by firm confidence in the Mother that they will disappear. The love, the belief in her as the Divine to whom your life is given, — oppose with that every contrary feeling and then those contrary feelings will after a time no longer be able to come to you.

⁂

Impatience is always a mistake, it does not help but hinders. A quiet happy faith and confidence is the best foundation for sadhana; for the rest a constant opening wide of oneself to receive with an aspiration which may be intense, but must always be calm and steady. Full yogic realisation does not come all at once, it comes after a long preparation of the Adhar which may take a long time.

⁂

There can be no doubt about the Divine Grace. It is perfectly true also that if a man is sincere, he will reach the Divine. But it does not follow that he will reach immediately, easily and without delay. Your error is there, to fix for God a term, five years, six years, and doubt because the effect is not yet there. A man may be centrally sincere and yet there may be many things that have to be changed in him before realisation can begin. His sincerity must enable him to persevere always — for it is a longing for the Divine that nothing can quench, neither delay nor disappointment nor difficulty nor anything else.

⁂

"I will try again" is not sufficient; what is needed is to try always — steadily, with a heart free from despondency, as the Gita says, *anirviṇṇacetasā*. You speak of five and a half years as if it were a tremendous time for such an object, but a yogi who is able in that time to change radically his nature and get the concrete decisive experience of the Divine would have to be considered as one of the rare gallopers of the spiritual Way. Nobody has ever said that the spiritual change was an easy thing; all spiritual seekers will say that it is difficult but supremely worth doing. If one's desire for the Divine has become the master desire, then surely one can give one's whole life to it without repining and not grudge the time, difficulty or labour.

Again, you speak of your experiences as vague and dream-like. In the first place the scorn of small experiences in the inner life is no part of wisdom, reason or common sense. It is in the beginning of the sadhana and for a long time, the small expe-

riences that come on each other and, if given their full value, prepare the field, build up a preparatory consciousness and one day break open the walls to big experiences. But if you despise them with the ambitious idea that you must have either the big experiences or nothing, it is not surprising that they come once in a blue moon and cannot do their work. Moreover, all your experiences were not small. There were some like the stilling descent of a Power in the body — what you used to call numbness — which anyone with spiritual knowledge would have recognised as a first strong step towards the opening of the consciousness to the higher Peace and Light. But it was not in the line of your expectations and you gave it no special value. As for vague and dream-like, you feel it so because you are looking at them and at everything that happens in you from the standpoint of the outward physical mind and intellect which can take only physical things as real and important and vivid and to it inward phenomena are something unreal, vague and truthless. The spiritual experience does not even despise dreams and visions; it is known to it that many of these things are not dreams at all but experiences on an inner plane and if the experiences of the inner planes which lead to the opening of the inner self into the outer so as to influence and change it are not accepted, the experiences of the subtle consciousness and the trance consciousness, how is the waking consciousness to expand out of the narrow prison of the body and body-mind and the senses? For, to the physical mind untouched by the inner awakened consciousness, even the experience of the cosmic consciousness or the Eternal Self might very well seem merely subjective and unconvincing. It would think, "Curious, no doubt, rather interesting, but very subjective, don't you think? Hallucinations, yes!" The first business of the spiritual seeker is to get away from the outward mind's outlook and to look at inward phenomena with an inward mind to which they soon become powerful and stimulating realities. If one does that, then one begins to see that there is here a wide field of truth and knowledge, in which one can move from discovery to discovery to reach the supreme discovery of all. But the outer physical mind, if it has any ideas about the Divine and spirituality at all, has only hasty *a priori* ideas miles away from the

solid ground of inner truth and experience.

I have not left myself time to deal with other matters at any length. You speak of the Divine's stern demands and hard conditions — but what severe demands and iron conditions you are laying on the Divine! You practically say to him, "I will doubt and deny you at every step, but you must fill me with your unmistakable Presence; I will be full of gloom and despair whenever I think of you or the yoga, but you must flood my gloom with your rapturous irresistible Ananda; I will meet you only with my outer physical mind and consciousness, but you must give me in that the Power that will transform rapidly my whole nature." Well, I don't say that the Divine won't or can't do it, but if such a miracle is to be worked, you must give him some time and just a millionth part of a chance.

⁂

The Divine may be difficult, but his difficulties can be overcome if one keeps at him.

⁂

The sadhana is a difficult one and time should not be grudged; it is only in the last stages that a very great and constant rapidity of progress can be confidently expected.

As for Shakti, the descent of Shakti before the vital is pure and surrendered, has its dangers. It is better for him to pray for purification, knowledge, intensity of the heart's aspiration and as much working of the Power as he can bear and assimilate.

⁂

Always keep within and do things without involving yourself in them, then nothing adverse will happen or, if it does, no serious reaction will come.

The idea of leaving for any reason is, of course, absurd and out of the question. Eight years is a very short time for transformation. Most people spend as much as that or more to get conscious of their defects and acquire the serious will to change

— and after that it takes a long time to get the will turned into full and final accomplishment. Each time one stumbles, one has to get back into the right footing and go on with fresh resolution; by doing that the full change comes.

⁂

What I want of you besides aspiring for faith? Well, just a little thoroughness and persistence in the method! Don't aspire for two days and then go into the dumps, evolving a gospel of earthquake and Schopenhauer plus the ass and all the rest of it. Give the Divine a full sporting chance. When he lights something in you or is preparing a light, don't come in with a wet blanket of despondency and throw it on the poor flame. You will say, "It is a mere candle that is lit — nothing at all!" But in these matters, when the darkness of human mind and life and body has to be dissipated, a candle is always a beginning — a lamp can follow and afterwards a sun; but the beginning must be allowed to have a sequel and not get cut off from its natural sequelae by chunks of sadness and doubt and despair. At the beginning, and for a long time, the experiences do usually come in little quanta with empty spaces between — but, if allowed its way, the spaces will diminish, and the quantum theory give way to the Newtonean continuity of the spirit. But you have never yet given it a real chance. The empty spaces have been peopled with doubts and denials and so the quanta have become rare, the beginning remains a beginning. Other difficulties you have faced and rejected, but this difficulty you have dandled too much for a long time and it has become strong — it must be dealt with by a persevering effort. I do not say that all doubts must disappear before anything comes — that would be to make sadhana impossible, for doubt is the mind's persistent assailant. All I say is, don't allow the assailant to become a companion, don't give him the open door and the fireside seat. Above all, don't drive away the incoming Divine with that dispiriting wet blanket of sadness and despair!

To put it more soberly — accept once and for all that this thing has to be done, that it is the only thing left for yourself or the earth. Outside are earthquakes and Hitlers and a

collapsing civilisation and, generally speaking, the ass and the flood. All the more reason to tend towards the one thing to be done, the thing you have been sent to aid in getting done. It is difficult and the way long and the encouragement given meagre? What then? Why should you expect so great a thing to be easy or that there must be either a swift success or none? The difficulties have to be faced and the more cheerfully they are faced, the sooner they will be overcome. The one thing to do is to keep the mantra of success, the determination of victory, the fixed resolve, "Have it I must and have it I will." Impossible? There is no such thing as impossibility — there are difficulties and things of *longue haleine*, but no impossibles. What one is determined fixedly to do will get done now or later — it becomes possible. Drive out dark despair and go bravely on with your yoga. As the darkness disappears, the inner doors will open.

⁂

Whether by tapasya or surrender does not matter, the one thing is to be firm in setting one's face to the goal. Once one has set one's feet on the way, how can one draw back from it to something inferior? If one keeps firm, falls do not matter, one rises up again and goes forward. If one is firm towards the goal, there can be on the way to the Divine no eventual failure. And if there is something within you that drives as surely there is, falterings or falls or failure of faith make no eventual difference. One has to go on till the struggle is over and there is the straight and open and thornless way before us.

⁂

You have only to remain quiet and firm in your following of the path and your will to go to the end. If you do that circumstances will in the end be obliged to shape themselves to your will, because it will be the Divine Will in you.

⁂

There are always difficulties and a hampered progress in the early stages and a delay in the opening of the inner doors until the being is ready. If you feel whenever you meditate the quiescence and the flashes of the inner Light and if the inward urge is growing so strong that the external hold is decreasing and the vital disturbances are losing their force, that is already a great progress. The road of yoga is long, every inch of ground has to be won against much resistance and no quality is more needed by the sadhak than patience and single-minded perseverance with a faith that remains firm through all difficulties, delays and apparent failures.

⁂

One who fears monotony and wants something new would not be able to do yoga or at least this yoga which needs an inexhaustible perseverance and patience. The fear of death shows a vital weakness which is also contrary to a capacity for yoga. Equally, one who is under the domination of his passions, would find the yoga difficult and, unless supported by a true inner call and a sincere and strong aspiration for the spiritual consciousness and union with the Divine, might very easily fall fatally and his effort come to nothing.

⁂

Determination is needed and a firm patience, not to be discouraged by this or that failure. It is a change in the habit of the physical nature and that needs a long patient work of detail.

⁂

Your attitude towards the change needed and new life is the right one. A quiet vigilant but undistressed persistence is the best way to get it done.

For the intimacy within to be re-established, the quietude must deepen so that the psychic may come out in the physical as it had done in the higher parts.

⁂

One who has not the courage to face patiently and firmly life and its difficulties will never be able to go through the still greater inner difficulties of the sadhana. The very first lesson in this yoga is to face life and its trials with a quiet mind, a firm courage and an entire reliance on the Divine Shakti.

⁂

Remain firm and turned in the one direction — towards the Mother.

Section Four

THE FOUNDATION OF SADHANA

The Foundation of Sadhana

IT is not possible to make a foundation in yoga if the mind is restless. The first thing needed is quiet in the mind. Also to merge the personal consciousness is not the first aim of the yoga: the first aim is to open it to a higher spiritual consciousness and for this also a quiet mind is the first need.

The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. Otherwise you may have experiences, but nothing will be permanent. It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built.

A quiet mind does not mean that there will be no thoughts or mental movements at all, but that these will be on the surface and you will feel your true being within separate from them, observing but not carrried away, able to watch and judge them and reject all that has to be rejected and to accept and keep to all that is true consciousness and true experience.

Passivity of the mind is good, but take care to be passive only to the Truth and to the touch of the Divine Shakti. If you are passive to the suggestions and influences of the lower nature, you will not be able to progress or else you will expose yourself to adverse forces which may take you far away from the true path of yoga.

Aspire to the Mother for this settled quietness and calm of the mind and this constant sense of the inner being in you standing back from the external nature and turned to the Light and Truth.

The forces that stand in the way of sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have

become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine.

The first step is a quiet mind — silence is a further step, but quietude must be there; and by a quiet mind I mean a mental consciousness within which sees thoughts arrive to it and move about but does not itself feel that it is thinking or identifying itself with the thoughts or call them its own. Thoughts, mental movements may pass through it as wayfarers appear and pass from elsewhere through a silent country — the quiet mind observes them or does not care to observe them, but, in either case, does not become active or lose its quietude. Silence is more than quietude; it can be gained by banishing thought altogether from the inner mind keeping it voiceless or quite outside; but more easily it is established by a descent from above — one feels it coming down, entering and occupying or surrounding the personal consciousness which then tends to merge itself in the vast impersonal silence.

To quiet the mind in such a way that no thoughts will come is not easy and usually takes time. The most necessary thing is to feel a quietude in the mind so that if thoughts come they do not disturb or hold the mind or make it follow them, but simply cross and pass away. The mind first becomes the witness of the passage of thought and not the thinker, afterwards it is able not to watch the thoughts but lets them pass unnoticed and concentrates in itself or on the object it chooses without trouble.

There are two main things to be secured as the foundations of sadhana — the opening of the psychic being and the realisation of the Self above. For the opening of the psychic being, concentration on the Mother and self-offering to her are the direct way. The growth of Bhakti which you feel is the first sign of the psychic development. A sense of the Mother's presence or force or the remembrance of her supporting and strengthening you is the next sign. Eventually, the soul within begins to be active in

aspiration and psychic perception guiding the mind to the right thoughts, the vital to the right movements and feelings, showing and rejecting all that has to be put away and turning the whole being in all its movements to the Divine alone. For the self-realisation, peace and silence of the mind are the first condition. Afterwards one begins to feel release, freedom, wideness, to live in a consciousness silent, tranquil, untouched by any or all things, existing everywhere and in all, one with or united with the Divine. Other experiences come on the way, or may come, such as the opening of the inner vision, the sense of the Force working within and various movements and phenomena of the working etc. One may also be conscious of ascents of the consciousness and descents of Force, Peace, Bliss or Light from above.

⁂

Silence is always good; but I do not mean by quietness of mind entire silence. I mean a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to open to the Force that will change the nature. The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily. It should be possible to see things that have to be changed in you without being upset or depressed; the change is the more easily done.

⁂

The difference between a vacant mind and a calm mind is this: that when the mind is vacant, there is no thought, no conception, no mental action of any kind, except an essential perception of things without the formed idea; but in the calm mind, it is the substance of the mental being that is still, so still that nothing disturbs it. If thoughts or activities come, they do not rise at all out of the mind, but they come from outside and cross the mind as a flight of birds crosses the sky in a windless air. It passes,

disturbs nothing, leaving no trace. Even if a thousand images or the most violent events pass across it, the calm stillness remains as if the very texture of the mind were a substance of eternal and indestructible peace. A mind that has achieved this calmness can begin to act, even intensely and powerfully, but it will keep its fundamental stillness — originating nothing from itself but receiving from Above and giving it a mental form without adding anything of its own, calmly, dispassionately, though with the joy of the Truth and the happy power and light of its passage.

⁂

It is not an undesirable thing for the mind to fall silent, to be free from thoughts and still — for it is oftenest when the mind falls silent that there is the full descent of a wide peace from above and in that wide tranquillity the realisation of the silent Self above the mind spread out in its vastness everywhere. Only, when there is the peace and the mental silence, the vital mind tries to rush in and occupy the place or else the mechanical mind tries to raise up for the same purpose its round of trivial habitual thoughts. What the sadhak has to do is to be careful to reject and hush these outsiders, so that during the meditation at least the peace and quietude of the mind and vital may be complete. This can be done best if you keep a strong and silent will. That will is the will of the Purusha behind the mind; when the mind is at peace, when it is silent one can become aware of the Purusha, silent also, separate from the action of the nature.

To be calm, steady, fixed in the spirit, *dhīra, sthira*, this quietude of the mind, this separation of the inner Purusha from the outer Prakriti is very helpful, almost indispensable. So long as the being is subject to the whirl of thoughts or the turmoil of the vital movements, one cannot be thus calm and fixed in the spirit. To detach oneself, to stand back from them, to feel them separate from oneself is indispensable.

For the discovery of the true individuality and building up of it in the nature, two things are necessary, first, to be conscious of one's psychic being behind the heart and, next, this separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti. For the true individual

is behind veiled by the activities of the outer nature.

⁂

It is simply because you are full of mental and vital activities and relations. One must get the power to quiet the mental and vital, if not at first at all times, yet whenever one wills — for it is the mind and vital that cover up the psychic being as well as the self (Atman) and to get at either one must get in through their veil; but if they are always active and you are always identified with their activities, the veil will always be there. It is also possible to detach yourself and look at these activities as if they were not your own but a mechanical action of Nature which you observe as a disinterested witness. One can then become aware of an inner being which is separate, calm and uninvolved in Nature. This may be the inner mental or vital Purusha and not the psychic, but to get at the consciousness of the inner *manomaya* and *prāṇamaya puruṣa* is always a step towards the unveiling of the psychic being.

Yes, it would be better to get full control of the speech — it is an important step towards going inward and developing a true inner and yogic consciousness.

⁂

Remember first that an inner quietude, caused by the purification of the restless mind and vital, is the first condition of a secure sadhana. Remember next, that to feel the Mother's presence while in external action is already a great step and one that cannot be attained without a considerable inner progress. Probably, what you feel you need so much but cannot define is a constant and vivid sense of the Mother's force working in you, descending from above and taking possession of the different planes of your being. That is often a prior condition for the twofold movement of ascent and descent; it will surely come in time. These things can take a long time to begin visibly, especially when the mind is accustomed to be very active and has not the habit of mental silence. When that veiling activity is there, much work

has to be carried on behind the mobile screen of the mind and the sadhak thinks nothing is happening when really much preparation is being done. If you want a more swift and visible progress, it can only be by bringing your psychic to the front through a constant self-offering. Aspire intensely, but without impatience.

⁂

Keep the quietude and do not mind if it is for a time an empty quietude; the consciousness is often like a vessel which has to be emptied of its mixed or undesirable contents; it has to be kept vacant for a while till it can be filled with things new and true, right and pure. The one thing to be avoided is the refilling of the cup with the old turbid contents. Meanwhile wait, open yourself upwards, call very quietly and steadily, not with a too restless eagerness, for the peace to come into the silence and, once the peace is there, for the joy and the presence.

⁂

Calm, even if it seems at first only a negative thing, is so difficult to attain, that to have it at all must be regarded as a great step in advance.

In reality, calm is not a negative thing, it is the very nature of the Sat-Purusha and the positive foundation of the divine consciousness. Whatever else is aspired for and gained, this must be kept. Even Knowledge, Power, Ananda, if they come and do not find this foundation, are unable to remain and have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there.

Aspire for the rest of the divine consciousness, but with a calm and deep aspiration. It can be ardent as well as calm, but not impatient, restless or full of rajasic eagerness.

Only in the quiet mind and being can the supramental Truth build its true creation.

⁂

First aspire and pray to the Mother for quiet in the mind, purity,

calm and peace, an awakened consciousness, intensity of devotion, strength and spiritual capacity to face all inner and outer difficulties and go through to the end of the yoga. If the consciousness awakens and there is devotion and intensity of aspiration, it will be possible for the mind, provided it learns quietude and peace, to grow in knowledge.

⁂

To be calm, undisturbed and quiet is not the first condition for sadhana but for siddhi. It is only a few people (very few, one, two, three, four in a hundred sadhaks) who can get it from the first. Most have to go through a long preparation before they can get anywhere near it. Even afterwards when they begin to feel the peace and calm, it takes time to establish it — they swing between peace and disturbance for a fairly long time until all parts of the nature have accepted the truth and the peace. So there is no reason for you to suppose you cannot progress or arrive. You are finding a great difficulty with one part of your nature which has been accustomed to open itself to these feelings, separation from the Mother and attachment to relatives, and is not willing to give them up — that is all. But everybody finds such obstinate difficulties in that part of the nature, even the most successful sadhaks here. One has to persevere until the light conquers there.

⁂

One can go forward even if there is not peace — quietude and concentration are necessary. Peace is necessary for the higher states to develop.

II

The words "peace, calm, quiet, silence" have each their own shade of meaning, but it is not easy to define them.

Peace — *śānti.*

Calm — *sthiratā.*

Quiet — *acañcalatā.*

Silence — *niścala-nīravatā.*

Quiet is a condition in which there is no restlessness or disturbance.

Calm is a still unmoved condition which no disturbance can affect — it is a less negative condition than quiet.

Peace is a still more positive condition; it carries with it a sense of settled and harmonious rest and deliverance.

Silence is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter.

*
**

Quiet is rather negative — it is the absence of disturbance.

Calm is a positive tranquillity which can exist in spite of superficial disturbances.

Peace is a calm deepened into something that is very positive amounting almost to a tranquil waveless Ananda.

Silence is the absence of all motion of thought or other vibration of activity.

*
**

Calm is a strong and positive quietude, firm and solid — ordinary quietude is mere negation, simply the absence of disturbance.

Peace is a deep quietude where no disturbance can come — a quietude with a sense of established security and release.

In complete silence there are either no thoughts or thoughts come, but they are felt as something coming from outside and not disturbing the silence.

Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things that are very close together and bring each other.

*
**

Quietness is when the mind or vital is not troubled, restless, drawn about by or crowded with thoughts and feelings. Espe-

cially when either is detached and looks at these as a surface movement, we say that the mind or vital is quiet.

Calmness is a more positive condition, not merely an absence of restlessness, over-activity or trouble. When there is a clear or great or strong tranquillity which nothing troubles or can trouble, then we say that calm is established.

⁂

These [tranquillity and stillness] are general words, of a general, not a special yogic significance. Quiet, calm and peace can all be described as tranquillity: silence is akin to what is meant by stillness.

⁂

It is the silence of the mind and vital — silence implying here not only cessation of thoughts but a stillness of the mental and vital substance. There are varying degrees of depth of this stillness.

⁂

The first is the ordinary fundamental calm of the individual Adhar — the second is the fundamental limitless calm of the cosmic consciousness, a calm which abides whether separated from all movements or supporting them.

This is the calm of the Atman, the Self above, silent, immutable and infinite.

⁂

Peace is more positive than calm — there can be a negative calm which is merely an absence of disturbance or trouble, but peace is always something positive bringing not merely a release as calm does but a certain happiness or Ananda of itself.

There is also a positive calm, something that stands against all things that seek to trouble, not thin and neutral like the negative calm, but strong and massive.

⁂

In peace there is besides the sense of stillness a harmony that gives a feeling of liberation and full satisfaction.

⁂

Shanti is peace or calm — it is not Ananda. There can of course be a calm Ananda.

⁂

Peace is a sign of mukti — Ananda moves towards siddhi.

⁂

The peace need not be grave or joyless — there should be nothing grey in it — but the gladness or joy or sense of lightness that comes in the peace must be necessarily something internal, self-existent or due to a deepening of experience — it cannot like the laughter of which you speak be conveyed by an external cause or dependent upon it, e.g. something amusing, exhilarating etc.

⁂

The joy also should be deep within, then it will not conflict with the deeps of peace and inner consciousness.

⁂

They [peace and patience] go together. By having patience under all kinds of pressure you lay the foundations of peace.

⁂

It [purity] is more a condition than a substance. Peace helps to purity — since in peace disturbing influences cease and the essence of purity is to respond only to the Divine Influence and not to have an affinity with other movements.

⁂

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

⁂

Purity means freedom from soil or mixture. The divine Purity is that in which there is no mixture of the turbid ignorant movements of the lower nature. Ordinarily, purity is used to mean (in the common language) freedom from sexual passion and impulse.

⁂

The Divine Purity is a more wide and all-embracing experience than the psychic.

⁂

Purity or impurity depends upon the consciousness; in the divine consciousness everything is pure, in the ignorance everything is subject to impurity, not the body only or part of the body, but mind and vital and all. Only the self and the psychic being remain always pure.

⁂

A pure mind means a mind quiet and free from thoughts of a useless or disturbing character.

⁂

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

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

⁂

Do you imagine that a quiet mind cannot reject anything and it is only the unquiet mind that can do it? It is the quiet mind that can best do it. Quiet does not mean inert and tamasic.

⁂

That is absurd. Doing nothing with the mind is not quiet or silence. It is inactivity that keeps the mind thinking mechanically and discursive instead of concentrating on an object — that is all.

⁂

Passive peace is not supposed to do anything. It is by the complete solid presence of peace alone that all disturbance is pushed out to the surface or outside the consciousness.

⁂

It is not the usual character of passive peace that it can only concentrate in inaction. It can be there and concentrate in or behind action also.

⁂

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 can't be intense. It can be more intense than the aggressive, but its intensity only increases the intensity of the peace.

⁂

Yes, certainly, there is a mental peace, a vital peace, a peace of the physical Nature. It is the peace of a higher consciousness that descends from above.

⁂

It is the same peace — but is felt materially in the material substance, concretely in the physical mind and nervous being, as well as psychologically in the mind and vital or subtly in the subtle body.

⁂

Certainly, peace, purity and silence can be felt in all material things — for the Divine Self is there in all.

⁂

It is on the Silence behind the cosmos that all the movement of the universe is supported.

It is from the Silence that the peace comes; when the peace deepens and deepens, it becomes more and more the Silence.

In a more outward sense the word Silence is applied to the condition in which there is no movement of thought or feeling etc., only a great stillness of the mind.

But there can be an action in the Silence, undisturbed even as the universal action goes on in the cosmic Silence.

⁂

The passive silence is that in which the inner consciousness remains void and at rest, makes no reaction to outer things and forces.

The active silence is that in which there is a great force that goes out on things and forces without disturbing the silence.

⁂

Rest of the being from effort, disturbance etc. The Spirit is eternally at rest even in the midst of action — peace gives this spiritual rest. Tamas is a degradation of it and leads to inaction.

⁂

In the entirely silent mind there is usually the static sense of the Divine without any active movement. But there can come into it all the higher thought and aspiration and movements. There is then no absolute silence but one feels a fundamental silence behind which is not disturbed by any movement.

⁂

You always seem to think that because the silence is there in the consciousness, the whole consciousness must be equally affected by it. The human consciousness is not of one piece like that.

⁂

It is not possible for the spontaneous silent condition to last always at once but that is what must grow in one till there is a constant inner silence — a silence which cannot be disturbed by any outward activity or even by any attempt at attack or disturbance.

The condition you describe shows precisely the growth of this inner silence. It has to fix itself eventually as the basis of all spiritual experience and activity. It does not matter if one does not know what is going on within behind the silence. For there are two conditions in the yoga, one in which all is silent and there is no thought, feeling or movement even though one is acting outwardly as others do — another in which a new consciousness becomes active bringing knowledge, joy, love and other spiritual feelings and inner activities, but yet at the same time there is a fundamental silence or quietude. Both are necessary in the development of the inner being. The absolutely silent state, which is one of lightness, voidness and release, prepares the other and supports it when it comes.

III

Yes, a settled peace and strength supporting the intensity and poise in which everything foreign falls off, is the true basis.

⁂

That is of course how it should be. It should go so far indeed that you will feel this peace and vastness as your very self, the abiding stuff of your consciousness — unchangeably there.

⁂

It is very good indeed. The peace and silence must settle deep in, so deep that whatever comes from outside can only pass over the surface without troubling the settled calm within. It is good also that the meditation comes of itself — it means that the yoga Force is beginning to take up the sadhana.

⁂

When the peace is fully established everywhere in the being, these things [reactions of the lower vital] will not be able to shake it. They may come first as ripples on the surface, then only as suggestions which one looks at or does not care to look at but in either case they don't get inside, affect or disturb at all.

It is difficult to explain, but it is something like a mountain at which one throws stones — if conscious all through the mountain may feel the touch of the stones, but the thing would be so slight and superficial that it would not be in the least affected. In the end even that reaction disappears.

⁂

If the peace or silence is once absolutely established, no amount of movements on the surface can impair or abolish it. It can bear all the movements of the universe and yet be the same.

⁂

Of course. It is quite usual to feel an established peace in the inner being even if there is disturbance on the surface. In fact that is the usual condition of the yogi before he has attained the absolute *samatā* in all the being.

⁂

Even when there is the peace and the wideness, these things [vital physical ego-movements] can float on the surface and try to come in — only then they do not occupy the consciousness but touch it merely. It is what was regarded by the old yogis as

a mechanical remnant of Prakriti, a continuation of its blind habit which remained after the essential liberation of the self. It was treated lightly as of no importance — but that view is not tenable in our sadhana which aims not only at a liberation of the Purusha but at a *complete* transformation of the Prakriti also.

*
**

Yes, the inward move is the right one. To live within in the peace and silence is the first necessity. I spoke of the wideness because in the wideness of silence and peace (which the yogins recognise as the realisation of self at once individual and universal) is the basis for harmonising the inward and the outward. It will come.

*
**

When the peace is deep or wide it is usually in the inner being. The outer parts do not ordinarily go beyond a certain measure of quietude — they get deep peace only when they are flooded with it from the inner being.

*
**

Yes, certainly — the peace starts in the inner being — it is spiritual and psychic but it overflows the outer being — when it is there in the activity, it means either that the ordinary restless mind, vital, physical has been submerged by the flood of the inner peace or, at a more advanced stage, that they have been partially or wholly changed into thoughts, forces, emotions, sensations which have in their very stuff an essence of inner silence and peace.

*
**

The inner spiritual progress does not depend on outer conditions so much as in the way we react to them from within — that has always been the ultimate verdict of spiritual experience. It is why we insist on taking the right attitude and persisting in it, on an inner state not dependent on outer circumstances, a state of

equality and calm, if it cannot be at once of inner happiness, on going more and more within and looking from within outwards instead of living in the surface mind which is always at the mercy of the shocks and blows of life. It is only from that inner state that one can be stronger than life and its disturbing forces and hope to conquer.

To remain quiet within, firm in the will to go through, refusing to be disturbed or discouraged by difficulties or fluctuations, that is one of the first things to be learned in the Path. To do otherwise is to encourage the instability of consciousness, the difficulty of keeping experience of which you complain. It is only if you keep quiet and steady within that the lines of experience can go on with some steadiness — though they are never without periods of interruption and fluctuation; but these, if properly treated, can then become periods of assimilation and exhaustion of difficulty rather than denials of sadhana.

A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress.

*
**

You should realise that while quiet surroundings are desirable, the true quiet is within and no other will give the condition you want.

*
**

Aspire, concentrate in the right spirit and, whatever the difficulties, you are sure to attain the aim you have put before you.

It is in the peace behind and that "something truer" in you that you must learn to live and feel it to be yourself. You must regard the rest as not your real self, but only a flux of changing or recurring movements on the surface which are sure to go as the true self emerges.

Peace is the true remedy; distraction by hard work is only a temporary relief — although a certain amount of work is necessary for the proper balance of the different parts of the being.

To feel the peace above and about your head is a first step; you have to get connected with it and it must descend into you and fill your mind and life and body and surround you so that you live in it — for this peace is the one sign of the Divine's presence with you, and once you have it all the rest will begin to come.

Truth in speech and truth in thought are very important. The more you can feel falsehood as being not part of yourself, as coming on you from outside, the easier it will be to reject and refuse it.

Persevere and what is still crooked will be made straight and you will know and feel constantly the truth of the Divine's presence and your faith will be justified by direct experience.

*
**

When the light and peace are full in the vital and physical consciousness, it is this that remains always as a basis for the right movement of the whole nature.

To remain within, above and untouched, full of the inner consciousness and the inner experience, — listening when need be to one or another with the surface consciousness, but with even that undisturbed, not either pulled outwards or invaded — that is the perfect condition for the sadhana.

*
**

What you have written about your condition seems to be correct as a whole. There is certainly a greater calm within and a freedom of the inner being which was not there once. It is this which gives you the equality you feel there and the capacity to escape from the more serious disturbances. When one has this basis of inner calm, the difficulties and imperfections of the surface can be dealt with without upset, depressions, etc. The power to go among others without any invasion is also due to the same cause.

As for the second question, there is no general rule, but your attitude is the right one for you — for you have not the need of any particular development of capacity, having behind a sincere

attitude of a more general and penetrating and pervasive character. Others who feel the need of a particular development actually ask for it and get it.

⁂

The silence is the silence of the inner consciousness and it is in that silence unmoved by outward things that the true activity of the consciousness can come without disturbing the silence — true perceptions, will, feelings, action. There also one can feel more easily the Mother's working. As for the heat, it must be the heat of Agni, the fire of purification and tapasya; it often feels like that when the inner work is going on.

What you feel about dealing with people is quite correct. It is the psychic way of looking at these things.

⁂

I have read again the message of the yogi quoted in your letter but apart from the context nothing much or very definite can be made out of it. There are two statements which are clear enough:

"In silence is wisdom" — it is in the inner silence of the mind that true knowledge can come; for the ordinary activity of the mind only creates surface ideas and representations which are not true knowledge. Speech is usually the expression of the superficial nature; therefore to throw oneself out too much in such speech wastes the energy and prevents the inward listening which brings the word of true knowledge.... "In listening you will win what you are thinking of" means probably that in silence will come the true thought-formations which can effectuate or realise themselves. Thought can be a force which realises itself, but the ordinary surface thinking is not of that kind; there is in it more waste of energy than in anything else. It is in the thought that comes in a quiet or silent mind that there is power.

"Talk less and gain power" has essentially the same meaning; not only a truer knowledge, but a greater power comes to one in the quietude and silence of a mind that, instead of bubbling on the surface, can go into its own depths and listen for

what comes from a higher consciousness.

It is probably this that is meant; these are things known to all who have some experience of yoga.

⁂

The peace liberates from all dependence on outer contacts — it brings what the Gita calls the *ātmarati.* But at first there is a difficulty in keeping it intact when there is the contact with others because the consciousness has the habit of running outwards in speech or external interchange or else of coming down to the normal level. One must therefore be very careful until it is fixed; once fixed it usually defends itself, for all outer contacts become surface things to a consciousness full of the higher peace.

⁂

You have attained the silent inner consciousness, but that can be covered over by disturbance — the next step is for calm and silence to be established as the basis in the more and more outward consciousness.... Then the play of the ordinary forces will be only on the surface and can be more easily dealt with.

⁂

That is the right way — to keep the peace of the higher consciousness; then even if there is vital disturbance, it will only be on the surface. The foundation will remain till the Force can release the true vital.

⁂

If you get peace, then to clean the vital becomes easy. If you simply clean and clean and do nothing else, you go very slowly — for the vital gets dirty again and has to be cleaned a hundred times. The peace is something that is clean in itself, so to get it is a positive way of securing your object. To look for dirt only and clean is the negative way.

⁂

How can you have peace and quiet when you are always thinking of "lower forces" and "attacks" and "possessions" etc.? If you can look at things naturally and quietly, then only you can have quiet and peace.

*
**

The depression and vital struggle must have been due to some defect of over-eagerness and straining for a result in your former effort — so that when a fall in the consciousness came, it was a distressed, disappointed and confused vital that came to the surface giving full entry to the suggestions of doubt, despair and inertia from the adverse side of Nature. You have to move towards a firm basis of calm and equality in the vital and physical no less than in the mental consciousness; let there be the full downflow of Power and Ananda, but into a firm Adhara capable of containing it — it is complete equality that gives that capacity and firmness.

*
**

The failure is due not to want of capacity but to want of steadiness — a restlessness in the vital and a sort of ardent hastiness that lacks in care of detail and in perseverance. What you need is the inner silence and the solid strength and force that can act through this inner silence, making the vital its instrument but not allowing it to condition the action by its defects.

*
**

It [peace] has to be brought down to the heart and navel first. That gives it a certain kind of inner stability — though not absolute. There is no method other than aspiration, a strong quiet will and a rejection of all that is not turned towards the Divine in those parts into which you call the peace — here the emotional and higher vital.

*
**

The movement of universality by itself cannot prevent the vital from disturbing — it is the complete surrender and the complete descent of peace into all the being down to the most material that can do it.

⁂

The mind and vital are always more open to universal forces than the material. But they can be more restless than the material so long as they are not subjected to the peace from Above.

⁂

The calm from above came to you and established your connection with the Above, and if you hold firmly to it, you will be able to remain calm. But to be rid of these vital disturbances, you have to get down the Power and Will that is also there above — or at least so to be connected with it that it will act whenever you call upon it against the forces of the Ignorance.

⁂

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.

⁂

It is true that through whatever is strongest in him a sadhak can most easily open to the Divine. But...peace is necessary for all; without peace and an increasing purity, even if one opens, one cannot receive perfectly all that comes down through the opening. Light too is necessary for all — without light one cannot take full advantage of all that comes down.

⁂

When the mind is silent there is peace and in the peace all things that are divine can come. When there is not the mind, there is the Self which is greater than the mind.

⁂

The silence and peace are themselves part of the higher consciousness — the rest comes in the silence and peace.

⁂

It is the Vaishnava feeling that the Vedantic peace is not enough, the love and joy of the Divine is more precious. But unless the two things go together, the love and joy felt is perhaps intense, but impermanent, and it is also true that it gets easily mixed, misdirected or turns to something that is not the true thing at all. Peace and purity must be got as the foundation of the consciousness, otherwise there is no firm standing ground for the divine play.

⁂

At last you have the true foundation of the sadhana. This calm, peace and surrender are the right atmosphere for all the rest to come, knowledge, strength, Ananda. Let it become complete.

It does not remain when engaged in work because it is still confined to the mind proper which has only just received the gift of silence. When the new consciousness is fully formed and has taken entire possession of the vital nature and the physical being (the vital as yet is only touched or dominated by the silence, not possessed by it), then this defect will disappear.

The quiet consciousness of peace you now have in the mind must become not only calm but wide. You must feel it everywhere, yourself in it and all in it. This also will help to bring the calm as a basis into the action.

The wider your consciousness becomes, the more you will be able to receive from above. The Shakti will be able to descend and bring strength and light as well as peace into the system. What you feel as narrow and limited in you is the physical

mind; it can only widen if this wider consciousness and the light come down and possess the nature.

The physical inertia from which you suffer is likely to lessen and disappear only when strength from above descends into the system.

Remain quiet, open yourself and call the divine Shakti to confirm the calm and peace, to widen the consciousness and to bring into it as much light and power as it can at present receive and assimilate.

Take care not to be over-eager, as this may disturb again such quiet and balance as has been already established in the vital nature.

Have confidence in the final result and give time for the Power to do its work.

*
**

If not aspiration, at least keep the idea of what is necessary — (1) that the silence and peace shall become a wideness which you can realise as the Self — (2) the extension of the silent consciousness upwards as well so that you may feel its source above you — (3) the presence of peace etc., all the time. These things need not all come at once, but by realising what has to be in your mind, any falling towards a condition of inertia can be avoided.

*
**

Wideness and calmness are the foundation of the yogic consciousness and the best condition for inner growth and experience. If a wide calm can be established in the physical consciousness, occupying and filling the very body and all its cells, that can become the basis for its transformation; in fact, without this wideness and calmness the transformation is hardly possible.

*
**

It is the right fundamental consciousness that you have now got. The tamas and other movements of the lower universal nature are bound to try to come in, but if one has the calm of

the inner being which makes them felt as something external to the being and the light of the psychic which instantly exposes and rejects them, then that is to have the true consciousness which keeps one safe while the more positive transformation is preparing or taking place.

The transformation comes by the descent of the Force, Light, Knowledge, Ananda, etc. from above. So you are right in your feeling that you should open with a quiet aspiration or invocation for the descent of the Light from above. Only it must be an aspiration in this calm and wideness, not disturbing it in the least — and you must be prepared for the result being not immediate — it may be rapid, but also it may take some time.

⁂

The experience of this "solid block" feeling indicates the descent of a solid strength and peace into the external being — but into the vital-physical most. It is this always that is the foundation, the sure basis into which all else (Ananda, light, knowledge, Bhakti) can descend in the future and stand on it or play safely. The numbness was there in the other experience because the movement was inward; but here the Yogashakti is coming *outward* into the fully aware external nature, — as a first step towards the establishment of the yoga and its experience there. So the numbness which was a sign of the consciousness tending to draw back from the external parts is not there.

⁂

To be full of peace, the heart quiet, not troubled by grief, not excited by joy is a very good condition. As for Ananda, it can come not only with its fullest intensity but with a more enduring persistence when the mind is at peace and the heart delivered from ordinary joy and sorrow. If the mind and heart are restless, changeful, unquiet, Ananda of a kind may come, but it is mixed with vital excitement and cannot abide. One must get peace and calm fixed in the consciousness first, then there is a solid basis on which the Ananda can spread itself and in its turn

become an enduring part of the consciousness and the nature.

⁂

A great wave (or sea) of calm and the constant consciousness of a vast and luminous Reality — this is precisely the character of the fundamental realisation of the Supreme Truth in its first touch on the mind and the soul. One could not ask for a better beginning or foundation — it is like a rock on which the rest can be built. It means certainly not only a Presence, but *the* Presence — and it would be a great mistake to weaken the experience by any non-acceptance or doubt of its character.

It is not necessary to define it and one ought not even to try to turn it into an image; for this Presence is in its nature infinite. Whatever it has to manifest of itself or out of itself, it will do inevitably by its own power, if there is a sustained acceptance.

It is quite true that it is a grace sent and the only return needed for such a grace is acceptance, gratitude and to allow the Power that has touched the consciousness to develop what has to be developed in the being — by keeping oneself open to it. The total transformation of the nature cannot be done in a moment; it must take long and proceed through stages; what is now experienced is only an initiation, a foundation for the new consciousness in which that transformation will become possible. The automatic spontaneity of the experience ought by itself to show that it is nothing constructed by the mind, will or emotions; it comes from a Truth that is beyond them.

⁂

If you keep the wideness and calm and also the love for the Mother in the heart, then all is safe, for it means the double foundation of the yoga: the descent of the higher consciousness with its peace, freedom and serenity from above and the openness of the psychic which keeps all the effort or all the spontaneous movement turned towards the true goal.

⁂

The quiétude and silence which you feel and the sense of happiness in it are indeed the very basis of successful sadhana. When one has got that, then one may be sure that the sadhana is placing itself on a sound footing. You are also right in thinking that if this quietude is fully established all that is concealed within will come out. It is true also that the happiness of this peace is far greater than anything outer objects can bring — there can be no comparison. To become indifferent to the attraction of outer objects is one of the first rules of yoga, for this non-attachment liberates the inner being into peace and the true consciousness. It is only when one sees the Divine in all things that objects get a value for the yoga, but even then not for their own sake or as objects of desire, but for the sake of the Divine within and as a means of the divine work and manifestation.

IV

Equality is to remain unmoved within in all conditions.

⁂

Equality is the chief support of the true spiritual consciousness and it is this from which a sadhak deviates when he allows a vital movement to carry him away in feeling or speech or action. Equality is not the same thing as forbearance, — though undoubtedly a settled equality immensely extends, even illimitably, a man's power of endurance and forbearance.

Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you, but to look at them with a straight look, free from the distortions created by personal feeling, and to try to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learnt from them, what is it in oneself which they are cast against and what inner profit or progress one can make out of them; it means self-mastery over the vital movements, — anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the

rest, — not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the spirit. It is not easy to have this equality in any full perfect measure, but one should always try more and more to make it the basis of one's inner state and outer movements.

Equality means another thing — to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgment and even all the mental bias. Personal feeling always distorts and makes one see in men's actions, not only the actions themselves, but things behind them which, more often than not, are not there. Misunderstanding, misjudgment which could have been avoided are the result; things of small consequence assume larger proportions. I have seen that more than half of the untoward happenings of this kind in life are due to this cause. But in ordinary life personal feeling and sensitiveness are a constant part of human nature and may be needed there for self-defence, although, I think, even there, a strong, large and equal attitude towards men and things would be a much better line of defence. But for a sadhak, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the spirit is an essential part of his progress.

The first condition of inner progress is to recognise whatever is or has been a wrong movement in any part of the nature, — wrong idea, wrong feeling, wrong speech, wrong action, — and by wrong is meant what departs from the truth, from the higher consciousness and higher self, from the way of the Divine. Once recognised it is admitted, not glossed over or defended, — and it is offered to the Divine for the Light and Grace to descend and substitute for it the right movement of the true Consciousness.

*
**

There can be no firm foundation in sadhana without equality, *samatā*. Whatever the unpleasantness of circumstances, however

disagreeable the conduct of others, you must learn to receive them with a perfect calm and without any disturbing reaction. These things are the test of equality. It is easy to be calm and equal when things go well and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect.

⁂

It is very good that you have had this experience; for this kind of consciousness full of equality (*samatā*) is just the thing that has to be acquired and the very basis on which a sound yogic consciousness full of the Mother can be built up. If it can be fixed, then most of the trouble and difficulty of sadhana disappears — all necessary changes can proceed quietly without these disturbances and upsettings which break and hamper the progress. Also in it there can grow a right and clear understanding of people and things and how to deal with them without friction which can make work and action much more easy. Once this consciousness has come, it is bound to return and increase.

⁂

It is no use listening to what people say or to suggestions. Both are things by which one must learn not to be affected. A certain *samatā* in these matters is needed in order to get the firm poise. The one thing that matters is the realisation of the Divine.

⁂

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

⁂

Complete *samatā* takes long to establish and it is dependent on three things — the soul's self-giving to the Divine by an inner

surrender, the descent of the spiritual calm and peace from above and the steady, long and persistent rejection of all egoistic, rajasic and other feelings that contradict *samatā.*

The first thing to do is to make the full consecration and offering of the heart — the increase of the spiritual calm and the surrender are the condition for the rejection of ego, *rajoguṇa,* etc. to be effective.

⁂

When the peace of the higher consciousness descends, it brings always with it this tendency towards equality, *samatā,* because without *samatā* peace is always liable to be attacked by the waves of the lower nature.

⁂

Equality is a very important part of this yoga; it is necessary to keep equality under pain and suffering — and that means to endure firmly and calmly, not to be restless or troubled or depressed or despondent, to go on with a steady faith in the Divine Will. But equality does not include inert acceptance. If, for instance, there is temporary failure of some endeavour in the sadhana, one has to keep equality, not to be troubled or despondent, but one has not to accept the failure as an indication of the Divine Will and give up the endeavour. You ought rather to find out the reason and meaning of the failure and go forward in faith towards victory. So with illness — you have not to be troubled, shaken or restless, but you have not to accept illness as the Divine Will, but rather look upon it as an imperfection of the body to be got rid of as you try to get rid of vital imperfections or mental errors.

⁂

Yogic *samatā* is equality of soul, equanimity founded on the sense of the one Self, the one Divine everywhere — seeing the One in spite of all differences, degrees, disparities in the manifestation. The mental principle of equality tries to ignore or else to destroy the differences, degrees and disparities, to act as if all

were equal there or to try and make all equal. It is like Hridaya, the nephew of Ramakrishna, who when he got the touch from Ramakrishna began to shout, "Ramakrishna, you are the Brahman and I too am the Brahman; there is no difference between us", till Ramakrishna, as he refused to be quiet, had to withdraw the power. Or like the disciple who refused to listen to the Mahout and stood before the elephant, saying, "I am Brahman", until the elephant took him up in his trunk and put him aside. When he complained to his Guru, the Guru said, "Yes, but why didn't you listen to the Mahout Brahman? That was why the elephant Brahman had to lift you up and put you out of harm's way." In the manifestation there are two sides to the Truth and you cannot ignore either.

*
**

No doubt, hatred and cursing are not the proper attitude. It is true also that to look upon all things and all people with a calm and clear vision, to be uninvolved and impartial in one's judgments is a quite proper yogic attitude. A condition of perfect *samatā* can be established in which one sees all as equal, friends and enemies included, and is not disturbed by what men do or by what happens. The question is whether this is all that is demanded from us. If so, then the general attitude will be of a neutral indifference to everything. But the Gita, which strongly insists on a perfect and absolute *samatā*, goes on to say, "Fight, destroy the adversary, conquer." If there is no kind of general action wanted, no loyalty to Truth as against Falsehood except for one's personal sadhana, no will for the Truth to conquer, then the *samatā* of indifference will suffice. But here there is a work to be done, a Truth to be established against which immense forces are arranged, invisible forces which can use visible things and persons and actions for their instruments. If one is among the disciples, the seekers of this Truth, one has to take sides for the Truth, to stand against the forces that attack it and seek to stifle it. Arjuna wanted not to stand for either side, to refuse any action of hostility even against assailants; Sri Krishna, who insisted so much on *samatā*, strongly rebuked his attitude and

insisted equally on his fighting the adversary. "Have *samatā*," he said, "and seeing clearly the Truth, fight." Therefore to take sides with the Truth and to refuse to concede anything to the Falsehood that attacks, to be unflinchingly loyal and against the hostiles and the attackers, is not inconsistent with equality. It is personal and egoistic feeling that has to be thrown away; hatred and vital ill-will have to be rejected. But loyalty and refusal to compromise with the assailants and the hostiles or to dally with their ideas and demands and say, "After all, we can compromise with what they ask from us", or to accept them as companions and our own people — these things have a great importance. If the attack were a physical menace to the work and the leaders and doers of the work, one would see this at once. But because the attack is of a subtler kind, can a passive attitude be right? It is a spiritual battle inward and outward; by neutrality and compromise or even passivity one may allow the enemy forces to pass and crush down the Truth and its children. If you look at it from this point, you will see that if the inner spiritual equality is right, the active loyalty and firm taking of sides is as right, and the two cannot be incompatible.

I have, of course, treated it as a general question apart from all particular cases or personal questions. It is a principle of action that has to be seen in its right light and proportions.

Section Five

SADHANA THROUGH WORK

Sadhana through Work

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.

⁂

Men usually work and carry on their affairs from the ordinary motives of the vital being, need, desire of wealth or success or position or power or fame or the push to activity and the pleasure of manifesting their capacities, and they succeed or fail according to their capability, power of work and the good or bad fortune which is the result of their nature and their Karma. When one takes up the yoga and wishes to consecrate one's life to the Divine, these ordinary motives of the vital being have no longer their full and free play; they have to be replaced by another, a mainly psychic and spiritual motive, which will enable the sadhak to work with the same force as before, no longer for himself, but for the Divine. If the ordinary vital motives or vital force can no longer act freely and yet are not replaced by something else, then the push or force put into the work may decline or the power to command success may no longer be there. For the sincere sadhak the difficulty can only be temporary; but he has to see the defect in his consciousness or his attitude and to remove it. Then the Divine Power itself will act through him and use his capacity and vital force for its ends. In your case, it is the psychic being and a part of the mind that have drawn you to the yoga and were predisposed to it, but the vital nature or at least a

large part of it has not yet put itself into line with the psychic movement. There is not as yet the full and undivided consecration of the active vital nature.

The signs of the consecration of the vital in action are these among others:

The feeling (not merely the idea or the aspiration) that all the life and the work are the Mother's and a strong joy of the vital nature in this consecration and surrender. A consequent calm content and disappearance of egoistic attachment to the work and its personal results, but at the same time a great joy in the work and in the use of the capacities for the divine purpose.

The feeling that the Divine Force is working behind one's actions and leading at every moment.

A persistent faith which no circumstance or event can break. If difficulties occur, they raise not mental doubts or an inert acquiescence, but the firm belief that, with sincere consecration, the Divine Shakti will remove the difficulties, and with this belief a greater turning to her and dependence on her for that purpose. When there is full faith and consecration, there comes also a receptivity to the Force which makes one do the right thing and take the right means and then circumstances adapt themselves and the result is visible.

To arrive at this condition the important thing is a persistent aspiration, call and self-offering and a will to reject all in oneself or around that stands in the way. Difficulties there will always be at the beginning and for as long a time as is necessary for the change; but they are bound to disappear if they are met by a settled faith, will and patience.

*
**

That is the ordinary Karmayoga in which the sadhak chooses his own work but offers it to the Divine — it is given to him in the sense that he is moved to it through some impulsion of his mind or heart or vital and feels that there is some cosmic power or *the* cosmic Power behind the impulsion and he tries to train himself to see the One Force behind all actions working out in him and others the cosmic Purpose.

Once he has the ideal of the direct surrender, he has to find the direct moving or Guidance — that is why he rejects all that he sees to be merely mental, vital or physical impulsions coming from his own or universal Nature. Of course the full significance of the surrender comes out only when he is ready.

*
**

I do not know that it is possible for me to give any guidance on the path you have chosen — it is at any rate difficult for me to say anything definite without more precise data than those contained in your letter.

There is no need for you to change the line of life and work you have chosen so long as you feel that to be the way of your nature (*svabhāva*) or dictated to you by your inner being or, for some reason, it is seen to be your proper dharma. These are the three tests and apart from that I do not know if there is any fixed line of conduct or way of work or life that can be laid down for the yoga of the Gita. It is the spirit or consciousness in which the work is done that matters most; the outer form can vary greatly for different natures. This, so long as one does not get the settled experience of the Divine Power taking up one's works and doing them; afterwards it is the Power which determines what is to be done or not done.

The overcoming of all attachments must necessarily be difficult and cannot come except as the fruit of a long sadhana — unless there is a rapid general growth in the inner spiritual experience which is the substance of the Gita's teaching. The cessation of desire of the fruit, of the attachment to the work itself, the growth of equality to all beings, to all happenings, to good repute or ill-repute, praise or blame, to good fortune or ill fortune, the dropping of the ego which are necessary for the loss of all attachments can come completely only when all work becomes a spontaneous sacrifice to the Divine, the heart is offered up to Him and one has the settled experience of the Divine in all things and all beings. This consciousness or experience must come in all parts and movements of the being, *sarvabhāvena*, not only in the mind and idea; then the falling away of all attach-

ments becomes easy. I speak of the Gita's way of yoga, for in the ascetic life one obtains the same object differently, by cutting away from the objects of attachment and the consequent atrophy of the attachment itself through rejection and disuse.

*
**

All I can suggest to him is to practise some kind of Karmayoga — remembering the Supreme in all his actions from the smallest to the greatest, doing them with a quiet mind and without ego-sense or attachment and offering them to Him as a sacrifice. He may also try or aspire to feel the presence of the Divine Shakti behind the world and its forces, distinguish between the lower nature of the Ignorance and the higher divine nature whose character is absolute calm, peace, power, Light and Bliss and aspire to be raised and led gradually from the lower to the higher.

If he can do this, he will become fit in time to dedicate himself to the Divine and lead a wholly spiritual life.

*
**

The line that seems to be natural to him is the Karmayoga and he is therefore right in trying to live according to the teaching of the Gita; for the Gita is the great guide on this path. Purification from egoistic movements and from personal desire and the faithful following of the best light one has are a preliminary training for this path, and so far as he has followed these things, he has been on the right way, but to ask for strength and light in one's action must not be regarded as an egoistic movement, for they are necessary in one's inner development.

Obviously, a more systematic and intensive sadhana is desirable or, in any case, a steady aspiration and a more constant preoccupation with the central aim could bring an established detachment even in the midst of outer things and outer activity and a continuous guidance. The completeness, the Siddhi of this way of yoga — I speak of the separate path of Karma or spiritual action — begins when one is luminously aware of the Guide and the guidance and when one feels the Power working with oneself

as the instrument and the participator in the divine work.

⁂

I gather from his letter to you that he has been following a very sound method in his practice and has attained some good results. The first step in Karmayoga of this kind is to diminish and finally get rid of the ego-centric position in works, the lower vital reactions and the principle of desire. He must certainly go on on this road until he reaches something like its end. I would not wish to deflect him from that in any way.

What I had in view when I spoke of a systematic sadhana was the adoption of a method which would generalise the whole attitude of the consciousness so as to embrace all its movements at a time instead of working only upon details — although that working is always necessary. I may cite as an example the practice of the separation of the Prakriti and the Purusha, the conscious Being standing back detached from all the movements of Nature and observing them as witness and knower and finally as the giver (or refuser) of the sanction and at the highest stage of the development, the Ishwara, the pure will, master of the whole Nature.

By intensive sadhana I meant the endeavour to arrive at one of the great positive realisations which would be a firm base for the whole movement. I observe that he speaks of sometimes getting a glimpse of some wide calm.... A descent of this wide calm permanently into the consciousness is one of the realisations of which I was thinking. That he feels it at such times seems to indicate that he may have the capacity of receiving and retaining it. If that happened or if the Prakriti-Purusha realisation came, the whole sadhana would proceed on a strong permanent base with a new and entirely yogic consciousness instead of the purely mental endeavour which is always difficult and slow. I do not however want to press these things upon him; they come in their own time and to press towards them prematurely does not always hasten their coming. Let him continue with his primary task of self-purification and self-preparation.

⁂

If I have not written to you, it is because I could not add anything to what I had already written before to you. I cannot promise that within a given time you will have a result which will enable you either to go out into the world with a stronger spirit or succeed in the yoga. For the yoga you yourself say that you have not yet the whole mind for it and without the whole mind success is hardly possible in sadhana. For the other, it is hardly the function of sadhana to prepare a man for ordinary life in the world. There is one thing only that could work in a direction which would help you to something which is not that, but still not the whole yoga for which you intimate that you are not wholly ready. It is if you get the spirit of the yoga of works as it is indicated in the Gita — forget yourself and your miseries in the aspiration to a larger consciousness, feel the greater Force working in the world and make yourself an instrument for a work to be done, however small it may be. But, whatever the way may be, you must accept it wholly and put your whole will into it — with a divided and wavering will you cannot hope for success in anything, neither in life nor in yoga.

*
**

Any work can be done as a field for the practice of the spirit of the Gita.

*
**

You used the Force for the work, and it supported you so long as you preferred to stick to that work. What is of first importance is not the religious or non-religious character of the work done, but the inner attitude in which it is done. If the attitude is vital and not psychic, then one throws oneself out in the work and loses the inner contact. If it is psychic, the inner contact remains, the Force is felt supporting or doing the work and the sadhana progresses.

*
**

There are those who have done the lawyer's work with the Mother's force working in them and grown by it in inward con-

sciousnèss. On the other hand religious work can be merely external and vital in its nature or influence.

*
**

I may say, however, that I do not regard business as something evil or tainted, any more than it is so regarded in ancient spiritual India. If I did, I would not be able to receive money from X or from those of our disciples who in Bombay trade with East Africa; nor could we then encourage them to go on with their work but would have to tell them to throw it up and attend to their spiritual progress alone. How are we to reconcile X's seeking after spiritual light and his mill? Ought I not to tell him to leave his mill to itself and to the devil and go into some Ashram to meditate? Even if I myself had had the command to do business as I had the command to do politics I would have done it without the least spiritual or moral compunction. All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principles on which it is built and the use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoram karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarvakarmāṇi*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes further and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capácity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine. He validates the function and dharma of the Vaishya as well as of the Brahmin and Kshatriya. It is in his view quite possible for a man to do business and make money and earn profits and yet be a spiritual man, practise yoga, have an inner life. The Gita is constantly justifying works as a means of spiritual salvation and enjoining a Yoga of Works as well as of Bhakti and Knowledge. Krishna, however, superimposes a higher law also that work must be done

without desire, without attachment to any fruit or reward, without any egoistic attitude or motive, as an offering or sacrifice to the Divine. This is the traditional Indian attitude towards these things, that all work can be done if it is done according to the dharma and, if it is rightly done, it does not prevent the approach to the Divine or the access to spiritual knowledge and the spiritual life.

There is, of course, also the ascetic idea which is necessary for many and has its place in the spiritual order. I would myself say that no man can be spiritually complete if he cannot live ascetically or follow a life as bare as the barest anchorite's. Obviously, greed for wealth and money-making has to be absent from his nature as much as greed for food or any other greed and all attachment to these things must be renounced from his consciousness. But I do not regard the ascetic way of living as indispensable to spiritual perfection or as identical with it. There is the way of spiritual self-mastery and the way of spiritual self-giving and surrender to the Divine, abandoning ego and desire even in the midst of action or of any kind of work or all kinds of work demanded from us by the Divine. If it were not so, there would not have been great spiritual men like Janaka or Vidura in India and even there would have been no Krishna or else Krishna would have been not the Lord of Brindavan and Mathura and Dwarka or a prince and warrior or the charioteer of Kurukshetra, but only one more great anchorite. The Indian scriptures and Indian tradition, in the Mahabharata and elsewhere, make room both for the spirituality of the renunciation of life and for the spiritual life of action. One cannot say that one only is the Indian tradition and that the acceptance of life and works of all kinds, *sarvakarmāṇi*, is un-Indian, European or western and unspiritual.

*
**

All acts are included in action; work is action regulated towards a fixed end and methodically and constantly done; service is work done for the Mother's purpose and under her direction.

II

Recommendation to X not to take you away but to let you realise the Divine first has no meaning. Must one realise the Divine before one can serve him or is not service of the Divine a step towards it? In any case, the service and the realisation are both necessary for a complete yoga and one cannot fix an unalterable rule of precedence between the two.

⁂

Your object is not only to practise yoga for your internal progress and protection but also to do a work for the Divine.

⁂

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.

⁂

The spiritual effectivity of work of course depends on the inner attitude. What is important is the spirit of offering put into the work. If one can in addition remember the Mother in the work or through a certain concentration feel the Mother's presence or force sustaining or doing the work, that carries the spiritual effectivity still farther. But even if one cannot in moments of clouding, depression or struggle do these things, yet there can be behind a love or bhakti which was the original motive power of the work and that can remain behind the cloud and re-emerge like the sun after dark periods. All sadhana is like that and it is

why one should not be discouraged by the dark moments, but realise that the original urge is there and that therefore the dark moments are only an episode in the journey which will lead to greater progress when they are once over.

⁂

To be free from all egoistic motive, careful of truth in speech and action, void of self-will and self-assertion, watchful in all things, is the condition for being a flawless servant.

⁂

There should be no straining after power, no ambition, no egoism of power. The power or powers that come should be considered not as one's own, but as gifts of the Divine for the Divine's purpose. Care should be taken that there should be no ambitious or selfish misuse, no pride or vanity, no sense of superiority, no claim or egoism of the instrument, only a simple and pure psychic instrumentation of the nature in any way in which it is fit for the service of the Divine.

⁂

It is the spirit and the consciousness from which it is done that makes an action yogic — it is not the action itself.

⁂

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.

⁂

Of course the idea of bigness and smallness is quite foreign to the spiritual truth.... Spiritually there is nothing big or small. Such ideas are like those of the literary people who think writing a poem is a high work and making shoes or cooking the dinner is a small and low one. But all is equal in the eyes of the Spirit — and it is only the spirit within with which it is done that matters. It is the same with a particular kind of work, there is nothing big or small.

⁂

I may add that in the wider consciousness one can deal with the small as well as the high things, but one comes to deal with them with a larger as well as a profounder, subtler and more accurate view coming from a more and more understanding and luminous consciousness so that the thoughts about small things also cease to be themselves small or trivial, being more and more part of a higher Knowledge.

⁂

Every artist almost (there can be rare exceptions) has got something of the public man in him in his vital-physical parts, which makes him crave for the stimulus of an audience, social applause, satisfied vanity, appreciation, fame. That must go absolutely if you want to be a yogi, — your art must be a service not of your own ego, not of anyone or anything else but solely of the Divine.

⁂

If you wish to be free from people's expectations and the sense of obligation, it is indeed best not to take from anybody; for the sense of claim will otherwise be there. Not that it will be entirely absent even if you take nothing, but you will not be bound any longer.

What you write about the singing is perfectly correct. You sing your best only when you forget yourself and let it come out from within without thinking of the need of excellence or the impression it may make. The outer singer should indeed dis-

appear into the past, — it is only so that the inner singer can take her place.

⁂

As for your singing, I was not speaking of any new creation from the aesthetic point of view, but of the spiritual change — what form it takes must depend on what you find within you when the deeper basis is there.

I do not see any necessity for giving up singing altogether; I only meant, — it is the logical conclusion from what I have written to you, not now only but before, — that the inner change must be the first consideration and the rest must arise out of that. If singing to an audience pulls you out of the inner condition, then you could postpone that and sing for yourself and the Divine until you are able, even in facing an audience, to forget the audience. If you are troubled by failure or excited by success, that also you must overcome.

⁂

It is not that you have to do what you dislike, but that you have to cease to dislike. To do only what you like is to indulge the vital and maintain its domination over the nature — for that is the very principle of the untransformed nature, to be governed by its likes and dislikes. To be able to do anything with equanimity is the principle of Karmayoga and to do with joy because it is done for the Mother is the true psychic and vital condition in this yoga.

⁂

One must be able to do the same work always with enthusiasm and at the same time be ready to do something else or enlarge one's scope at a moment's notice.

⁂

Yes. It depends on a certain extension and intensifying of the consciousness by which all activity becomes interesting not for

itself but because of the consciousness put into it and, through the intensity of the energy, there is a pleasure in the exercise of the energy, and in the perfect doing of the work, whatever the work may be.

*
* *

As a rule, I mean in their unchanged condition, the lower parts get interested and enthusiastic when the ego mixes with the interest. But the pure enthusiasm can come into them as they get more and more converted and purified and they then become very indispensable forces for the realisation.

*
* *

It is natural for the vital or even the mind to feel energised by something new — but for the physical plane the work always repeated is the foundation — so one has to be able at least to take a steady calm interest in it always. But in this case I think it was a particular strength the Mother sent you when she saw you there.

*
* *

Part of the physical cannot do without work, another part (more material) finds it an infliction. What gives the force and joy of the work is however not physical but vital.

*
* *

The reason of the difference of result between the two moods in work is that the first mood is that of a vital joy, while the other is that of a psychic quiet. Vital joy though it is a very helpful thing for the ordinary human life, is something excited, eager, mobile without a settled basis — that is why it soon gets tired and cannot continue. Vital joy has to be replaced by a quiet settled psychic gladness with the mind and vital very clear and very peaceful. When one works on this basis, then everything becomes glad and easy, in touch with the Mother's force and fatigue or depression do not come.

III

Before things become pucca in the consciousness, the doing of work does carry the consciousness outward unless one has made it a sadhana to feel the "Force greater than oneself" working through one. That I suppose is why the Shankarites considered work to be in its own nature an operation of the Ignorance and incompatible with a condition of realisation. But as a matter of fact there are three stages there: (I) in which the work brings you to a lower as well as outer consciousness so that you have afterwards to recover the realisation. (II) in which the work brings you out, but the realisation remains behind (or above), not felt while you work, but as soon as the work ceases you find it there just as it was. (III) in which the work makes no difference, for the realisation or spiritual condition remains through the work itself. You seem this time to have experienced No. (II).

*
**

It refers to a certain stage when the consciousness is sometimes in activity and when not in activity is withdrawn in itself. Afterwards comes a stage when the Sachchidananda condition is there in work also. There is a still further stage when both are, as it were, one, but that is the supramental. The two states are the silent Brahman and the active Brahman and they can alternate (1st stage), coexist (2nd stage), fuse (3rd stage)....

Certainly, it [the highest Sachchidananda realisation] is realisable in work. Good Lord! How could the integral yoga exist, if it were not?

*
**

The passage describes the state of consciousness when one is aloof from all things even when in their midst and all is felt to be unreal, an illusion. There are then no preferences or desires because things are too unreal to desire or to prefer one to another. But, at the same time, one feels no necessity to flee from the world or not to do any action, because being free from the illusion, action or living in the world does not weigh upon one, one is not

bound or involved. Those who flee from the world or shun action (the Sannyasis) do so because they would be involved or bound; they believe the world to be unreal, but in fact it weighs on them as a reality so long as they are in it. When one is perfectly free from the illusion of the reality of things, then they cannot weigh on one or bind at all.

⁂

Do? Why should he want to do anything if he was in the eternal peace or Ananda or union with the Divine? If a man is spiritual and has gone beyond the vital and mind, he does not need to be always "doing" something. The self or spirit has the joy of its own existence. It is free to do nothing and free to do everything — but not because it is bound to action and unable to exist without it.

⁂

But the Jivanmukta feels no bondage. In all works and action he feels perfectly free, because the work is not done by him personally (there is no sense of limited ego) but by the cosmic Force. The limitations of the work are those put by the cosmic Force itself in its own action. He himself lives in communion of oneness with the Transcendent which is above the cosmos and feels no limitation. That is at least how it is felt in the overmind.

⁂

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 un-

attached everywhere, in the mental, vital, physical action and not only in the silent soul somewhere inside.

⁂

In the liberated state 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 (whatever 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 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.

⁂

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 in 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.

⁂

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 [in the liberated state]. 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 get 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.

⁂

It is more difficult for the Prakriti [to separate from surface action than for the Purusha] 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.

⁂

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

⁂

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 that is only another word for energy, and that it has to go

out when the energy goes out and that it can't 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 sweeps you, it is you who rise and sweep yourself.

⁂

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 world. The mind is a modified consciousness that puts forth a mental energy. But the Divine can stand back from his 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.

⁂

It [consciousness] 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.

⁂

No, without sadhana the object of yoga cannot be attained. Work itself must be taken as part of sadhana. But naturally when you are working, you must think of the work, which you will learn to do from the yogic consciousness as an instrument and with the memory of the Divine.

⁂

It is because the energy is put forward in the work. But as the peace and contact grow, a double consciousness can develop — one engaged in the work, another behind, silent and observing or turned towards the Divine — in this consciousness the aspiration can be maintained even while the external consciousness is turned towards the work.

⁂

One can both aspire and attend to the work and do many other things at the same time when the consciousness is developed by yoga.

⁂

No — it is only if it is an inner absorption that it would come in the way. But what I mean is a sort of stepping backward into something silent and observant within which is not involved in the action, yet sees and can shed its light upon it. There are then two parts of the being, one inner looking at and witnessing and knowing, the other executive and instrumental and doing. This gives not only freedom but power — and in this inner being one can get into touch with the Divine not through mental activity but through the substance of the being, by a certain inward touch, perception, reception, receiving also the right inspiration or intuition of the work.

⁂

If one feels a consciousness not limited by the work, a consciousness behind supporting that which works, then it is easier. That

usually comes either by the wideness and silence fixing and extending itself or by the consciousness of a Force not oneself working through the worker.

⁂

Mother does not disapprove of your writing a book — what she does not like is your being so lost in it that you can do nothing else. You must be master of what you do and not possessed by it. She quite agrees to your finishing and offering the book on your birthday, if that can be done. But you must not be carried away — you must keep your full contact with higher things.

⁂

I repeat that we do not object to your writing — whether it be poetry or short stories or novels. What we felt was that this kind of total absorption and possession by it was not good for your spiritual condition and that it put a lesser thing in front, even occupying the *whole* front of the consciousness for most of the time instead of putting it in its proper place in a sound spiritual harmony.

⁂

You can try [writing a novel], if you like. The difficulty is that the subject matter of a novel belongs mostly to the outer consciousness, so that a lowering or externalising can easily come. This apart from the difficulty of keeping the inner poise when putting the mind into outer work. If you could get an established poise within, then it would be possible to do any work without disturbing or lowering the consciousness.

⁂

It depends upon the plasticity of the consciousness. Some are like that, they get so absorbed they don't want to come out or do anything else. One has to keep a certain balance by which the

fundamental consciousness remains able to turn from one concentration to another with ease.

⁂

The absorption in work is not undesirable — but the difficulty in turning inwards can only be temporary. A certain plasticity in the physical consciousness which is sure to come makes it easy to turn from one concentration to another.

⁂

The resistance you speak of and the insufficient receptivity and the inability to continue in communion while doing work must all be due to some part of the physical consciousness that is still not open to the Light — probably something in the vital-physical and the material subconscient which stands in the way of the physical mind being in its mass free and responsive.

There is no harm in raising the aspiration from below to meet the power from above. All that you have to be careful about is not to raise up the difficulty from below before the descending power is ready to remove it.

There is no necessity of losing consciousness when you meditate. It is the widening and change of the consciousness that is essential. If you mean going inside, you can do that without losing consciousness.

⁂

It is a certain inertia in the physical consciousness which shuts it up in the groove of what it is doing so that it is fixed in that and not free to remember.

⁂

All the difficulties you describe are quite natural things common to most people. It is easy for one, comparatively, to remember and be conscious when one sits quiet in meditation; it is difficult when one has to be busy with work. The remembrance and con-

sciousness in work have to come by degrees, you must not expect to have it all at once; nobody can get it all at once. It comes in two ways, — first, if one practises remembering the Mother and offering the work to her each time one does something (not all the time one is doing, but at the beginning or whenever one can remember,) then that slowly becomes easy and habitual to the nature. Secondly, by the meditation an inner consciousness begins to develop which, after a time, not at once or suddenly, becomes more and more automatically permanent. One feels this as a separate consciousness from that outer which works. At first this separate consciousness is not felt when one is working, but as soon as the work stops one feels it was there all the time watching from behind; afterwards it begins to be felt during the work itself, as if there were two parts of oneself — one watching and supporting from behind and remembering the Mother and offering to her and the other doing the work. When this happens, then to work with the true consciousness becomes more and more easy.

It is the same with all the rest. It is by the development of the inner consciousness that all the things you speak of will be set right. For instance it is a part of the being that has *utsāha* for the work, another that feels the pressure of quietude and is not so disposed to work. Your mood depends on which comes up at the time — it is so with all people. To combine the two is difficult, but a time comes when they do get reconciled — one remains poised in an inner concentration while the other is supported by it in its push towards work. The transformation of the nature, the harmonising of all these discordant things in the being are the work of sadhana. Therefore you need not be discouraged by observing these things in you. There is hardly anybody who has not found these things in himself. All this can be arranged by the action of the inner Force with the constant consent and call of the sadhak. By himself he might not be able to do it, but with the Divine Force working within all can be done.

⁂

It is a little difficult at first to combine the inward condition

with the attention to the outward work and mingling with others, but a time comes when it is possible for the inner being to be in full union with the Mother while the action comes out of that concentrated union and is as easily guided in its details so that some part of the consciousness can attend to everything outside, even be concentrated upon it and yet feel the inward concentration in the Mother.

⁂

It is a very good sign that even in spite of full work the inner working was felt behind and succeeded in establishing the silence. A time comes for the sadhak in the end when the consciousness and the deeper experience go on happening even in full work or in sleep, while speaking or in any kind of activity.

⁂

It is not at first easy to remember the presence in work; but if one revives the sense of the presence immediately after the work is over it is all right. In time the sense of the presence will become automatic even in work.

⁂

The unhappiness is not necessary or inevitable in the sadhana, but it comes because your inner nature feels the touch of the Divine Presence indispensable to it and uneasy when it does not feel it: to feel it always a certain constant detachment within allowing you to remain within and do everything from within is necessary. This can more easily be done in quiet occupations and quiet contacts. For it is quietness and inwardness that enable one to feel the Presence.

⁂

You must learn to act always from within — from your inner being which is in contact with the Divine. The outer should be

a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action.

⁂

All should be done quietly from within — working, speaking, reading, writing as part of the real consciousness — not with the dispersed and unquiet movement of the ordinary consciousness.

⁂

One can work and remain quiet within. Quietude does not mean having an empty mind or doing no action at all.

⁂

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.

IV

It needs a quiet mind to know the Divine Will. In the quiet mind turned towards the Divine the intuition (higher mind) comes of the Divine's Will and the right way to do it.

⁂

When the mind is pure and psychic prominent, then one feels what is according to the Divine Will and what is against it.

⁂

Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work.

⁂

It is good that you were able to observe yourself all the time and see the movements and that the intervention of the new consciousness was frequent and automatic. At a later stage you will no doubt get a guidance in the mind also as to how to do things you want to get done. Evidently your mind was too active — as well as the minds of the others also — and so you missed your objective, owing to the excessive multitude of witnesses! However —

⁂

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.

⁂

If you want the consciousness for true actions very much and aspire for it, it may come in one of several ways:

1. You may get the habit or faculty of watching your movements in such a way that you see the impulse to action coming and can see too its nature.

2. A consciousness may come which feels uneasy whenever a wrong thought or impulse to action or feeling is there.

3. Something within you may warn and stop you when you are going to do the wrong action.

⁂

[To be constantly governed by the Divine:] A constant aspiration for that is the first thing — next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual

feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic.

⁂

As for the feeling from within, it depends on being able to go inside. Sometimes it comes of itself with the deepening of the consciousness by bhakti or otherwise, sometimes it comes by practice — a sort of referring the matter and listening for the answer — listening is, of course, a metaphor but it is difficult to express it otherwise — it doesn't mean that the answer comes necessarily in the shape of words, spoken or unspoken, though it does sometimes or for some; it can take any shape. The main difficulty for many is to be sure of the right answer. For that it is necessary to be able to contact the consciousness of the Guru inwardly — that comes best by bhakti. Otherwise, the attempt to get the feeling from within by practice may become a delicate and ticklish job. Obstacles: (1) normal habit of relying on outward means for everything; (2) ego, substituting its suggestions for the right answer; (3) mental activity; (4) intruder nuisances. I think you need not be eager for this, but rely on the growth of the inner consciousness. The above is only by way of general explanation.

⁂

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 confusion 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.

⁂

To be able to receive the Divine Power and let it act through you in the things of the outward life, there are three necessary conditions:

(i) Quietude, equality — not to be disturbed by anything that happens, to keep the mind still and firm, seeing the play of forces, but itself tranquil.

(ii) Absolute faith — faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one's will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done — *kartavyam karma.*

(iii) Receptivity — the power to receive the Divine Force and to feel its presence and the presence of the Mother in it and allow it to work, guiding one's sight and will and action. If this power and presence can be felt and this plasticity made the habit of the consciousness in action, — but plasticity to the Divine force alone without bringing in any foreign element, — the eventual result is sure.

*
**

What happened to you shows what are the conditions of that state in which the Divine Power takes the place of the ego and directs the action, making the mind, life and body an instrument. A receptive silence of the mind, an effacement of the mental ego and the reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness, a close contact with the Divine Power and an openness of the being to that one Influence and no other are the conditions for becoming an instrument of the Divine, moved by that and that only.

The silence of the mind does not of itself bring in the supramental consciousness; there are many states or planes or levels of consciousness between the human mind and the supermind. The silence opens the mind and the rest of the being to greater things, sometimes to the cosmic consciousness, sometimes to the experience of the silent Self, sometimes to the presence or power of the Divine, sometimes to a higher consciousness than that of the human mind; the mind's silence is the most favourable condition for any of these things to happen. In this yoga it is the most favourable condition (not the only one) for the Divine Power to descend first upon and then into the individual consciousness and there do its work to transform that consciousness, giving it the necessary experiences, altering all its outlook and

movements, leading it from stage to stage till it is ready for the last (supramental) change.

⁂

What happened is a thing that often happens and, taking your account of it, it reproduced in your case the usual stages. First, you sat down in prayer, — that means a call to the Above, if I may so express it. Next came the necessary condition for the answer to the prayer to be effective — "little by little a sort of restfulness came", in other words, the quietude of the consciousness which is necessary before the Power that has to act can act. Then the rush of the Force or Power, "a flood of energy and sense of power and glow", and the natural concentration of the being in inspiration and expression, the action of the Power.

The vital is the means of effectuation on the physical plane, so its action and energy are necessary for all work; without it, if the mind only drives without the co-operation and instrumentation of the vital, there is hard and disagreeable labour and effort with results which are usually not at all of the best kind. The ideal state for work is when there is a natural concentration of the consciousness in the special energy, supported by an easeful rest and quiescence of the consciousness as a whole. Distraction of the mind by other activities disturbs this balance of ease and concentrated energy, — fatigue also disturbs or destroys it. The first thing therefore that has to be done is to bring back the supporting restfulness and this is ordinarily done by cessation of work and repose. In the experience you had that was replaced by a restfulness that came from above in answer to your station of prayer and an energy that also came from above. It is the same principle as in sadhana, — the reason why we want people to make the consciousness quiet so that the higher peace may come in and on the basis of that peace a new Force from above.

It is not effort that brought the inspiration. Inspiration comes from above in answer to a state of concentration which is itself a call to it. Effort, on the contrary, fatigues the consciousness and therefore is not favourable to the best work; the only thing is that sometimes — by no means always — effort

culminates in a pull for the inspiration which brings some answer, but it is not usually so good and effective an inspiration as that which comes when there is the easy and intense concentration of the energy in its work. Effort and expenditure of energy are not necessarily the same thing, — the best expenditure of energy is that which flows easily without effort at all, — when the inspiration or Force (any Force) works of itself and the mind and vital and even body are glowing instruments and the Force flows out in an intense and happy working — an almost labourless labour.

*
**

It is true that the Force can work effectively without any effort on your part. It is not the effort, it is the assent of the being that it needs for its work.

*
**

Well, that is the idea in yoga — that by a right passivity one opens oneself to something greater than one's limited self, and effort is only useful for getting that condition. Even in the ordinary life the individual is only an instrument in the hands of a universal Energy, though his ego takes the credit of all he does.

*
**

As you have opened yourself to the Force and made yourself a channel for the energy of work, it is quite natural that when you want to do this work the Force should flow and act in the way that is wanted or the way that is needed and for the effect that is needed. When one has made oneself a channel, the Force is not necessarily bound by the limitations or disabilities of the instrument; it can disregard them and act in its own power. In doing so it may use the human instrument simply as a medium and leave him as soon as the work is finished just what he was before, incapable in his ordinary moments of doing such good work; but also it may by its action set the instrument right, accustom it to the necessary intuitive knowledge and movement so that it can at will command the action of the Force. As for the technique,

there are two different things, the intellectual knowledge which one applies and the intuitive cognition which acts in its own right, even if it is not actually possessed by the worker. Many poets, for instance, have little knowledge of metrical or linguistic technique and cannot explain how they write or what are the qualities and elements of their success, but they write, all the same, things that are perfect in rhythm and language. Intellectual knowledge of technique helps of course, provided one does not make of it a mere device or a rigid fetter. There are some arts that cannot be done well without technical knowledge, e.g. painting, sculpture.

What you write is your own in the sense that you have been the instrument of its manifestation — that is so with every artist or worker, though of course for sadhana it is necessary to recognise that the real Power was not yourself and you were simply the instrument on which it played its tune.

The Ananda of creation is not the pleasure of the ego in having personally done well and being somebody, that is something extraneous which attaches itself to the joy of work and creation. The Ananda comes from the inrush of a greater Power, the thrill of being possessed and used by it, the *āveśa*, the exultation of the uplifting of the consciousness, the illumination and its greatened and heightened action and also the joy of beauty, power or perfection that is being created. How far one feels it depends on the condition of the consciousness at the time, the temperament, the activity of the vital; the yogi, of course, (or even certain strong and calm minds) is not carried away by the Ananda, he holds and watches it and there is no mere excitement mixed with the flow of it through the mind, vital or body. Naturally the Ananda of *samarpaṇa* or spiritual realisation or divine love is something far greater, but the Ananda of creation has its place.

*
**

To observe whether it is really well done or not and feel the Ananda of work done for the Mother. Get rid of the "I". If it is well done, it is the Force that did it and your only part was to be a good or a bad instrument.

*
**

There must be the *rasa* [in the work], but it comes when there is the dynamic descent of the Power.

⁂

What you find happening is a common experience in all work. Mother says it is due to the fact that in beginning the work there is an inspiration of what to do and the mind at first acts as a channel for it and all goes well. Afterwards the mind begins to be acting on its own account, without one's noticing it usually unless one is very conscious and accustomed to scrutinise oneself — and do the thing without the original inspiration by its ordinary means. This is felt very clearly in work like poetry and music — for there one feels the inspiration coming and feels it failing and getting mixed up with the ordinary mind. So long as it goes on, everything is done easily and well, but as soon as the mind begins to interfere or to work in its place, then the work is less well done. In work like cooking one does not directly and vividly feel the inspiration, only a brightness and perceptiveness and confidence perhaps — so also one does not notice when the physical mind becomes active. In a thing like poetry one can break off till the inspiration comes again, but in cooking one can't do that, the work has to be finished there and then. I suppose this can be remedied only by one's becoming more conscious within, as one does in sadhana, till one can see and counteract the wrong movement of inferior mental activity by bringing down of one's will again the right inspiration and perception.

⁂

The Mother can give indications and open out possibilities, but if the mind interferes and if they are not followed up, what can be done?

⁂

Why should you try the same things as the others? What one feels inspired to do, is the best thing for one.

V

During the course of the sadhana one can learn to draw upon the universal Life-Force and replenish the energies from it. But usually the best way is to learn to open oneself to the Mother's Force and become conscious of it supporting and moving or pouring into the system and giving the energy needed for the work whether it be mental, vital or physical.

There is naturally a higher Energy above the present universal forces and it is that which will transform the nature and take up the mental, vital, physical energies and change them into its own likeness.

⁂

It is a Force that comes and pushes to work and is as legitimately a part of the spiritual life as others. It is a special Energy that takes hold of the worker in the being and fulfils itself through him. To work with a full energy like this in one is quite salutary. The only thing is not to overdo it — that is to avoid any exhaustion or recoil to a physical inertia.

As for the dedication make the *saṅkalpa* always of offering it, remember and pray when you can (I mean in connection with the work). This is to fix a certain attitude. Afterwards, the Force can take advantage of this key to open the deeper dedication within.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

In the ordinary course of yoga that physical strength is replaced by a yogic strength or yogic life-force which keeps up the body and makes it work, but in the absence of this force the body is denuded of power, inert and tamasic. This can only be remedied by the whole being opening to Yoga-Shakti in each of its planes — yogic mind-force, yogic life-force, yogic body-force.

⁂

Yes. With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue.

⁂

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.

⁂

When you feel tired, don't overstrain yourself but rest — doing only your ordinary work; restlessly doing something or other all the time is not the way to cure it. To be quiet without and within is what is needed when there is this sense of fatigue. There is always a strength near you which you can call in and will remove these things, but you must learn to be quiet in order to receive it.

⁂

Yes, it is a mistake to overstrain as there is a reaction afterwards. If there is energy, all must not be spent, some must be stored up so as to increase the permanent strength of the system.

⁂

Overstraining brings inertia up. Everybody has inertia in his nature: the question is of its greater or less operation.

⁂

If too much work is done the quality of the work deteriorates in spite of the zest of the worker.

⁂

The idleness must of course go — but sometimes I think you have pulled too much the other way. To be able to work with full energy is necessary — but to be able not to work is also necessary.

What you say about ordinary conversation is quite correct and that all that should fall away is very necessary for the true consciousness.

⁂

If the physical is in this condition and the work creates such reactions in it, it is no use forcing it violently and putting an overstrain upon it. It is better to educate and train the external natural being slowly by bringing calm and peace and light and strength persistently into the nervous system and cells of the body. A violent compulsion on the body may well defeat its own object. Probably your sadhana has been too exclusively internal and subjective; but if it is so, this cannot be remedied in a moment. It is better therefore for you not to do heavy physical work at present.

⁂

It [the cause of fatigue] is probably some desire or vital preference — likes and dislikes in the vital. All work given you must be felt as the Mother's and done with joy, opening yourself for the Mother's force to work through you.

VI

You have been progressing of course, but what Mother told you and tells everyone is true that to be a real artist needs hard work for years together. But your mistake is to put stress on these things and get discouraged by any check or difficulty in them. The one thing to be done is to open your consciousness to what is coming down, to let the change operate in so that the consciousness becomes a consciousness of peace and light and power and joy full of the Divine Presence. When that is there, then what the Divine wants to get done through you or developed in you will be done or developed with a rapidity and perfection which at present is impossible. The one thing needful first, all the rest is only now a field of exercise for the development of the one thing needful.

⁂

As for the French writing, you should not think so much of expressing things — it does not matter whether others have written the same things and done it better. What you should aim at is simply to learn to write French perfectly, to get full use of the French language as an instrument. If the Force wants to express anything through you hereafter or not, is a thing you should leave to the Divine Will; once you give yourself into its hands in the true consciousness, it will know what to do or not to do through you and will make full use of whatever instrumentation you can put at its disposal.

⁂

As I have said already, in all matters, work and study as well as in the inner progress in the yoga, the same thing is needed if you want perfection — quietude of mind, becoming aware of the Force, opening to it, allowing it to work in you. To aim at perfection is all right, but restlessness of mind is not the way towards it. To dwell upon your imperfections and be always thinking how to do and what to do, is not the way either. Remain quiet, open yourself, allow the consciousness to grow — call the Force

to work. As it grows and as the Force works, you will become aware not only of what is imperfect, but of the movement which will take you, (not at one step, but progressively) out of the imperfection and you will then only have to follow that movement.

If you overstrain yourself by too prolonged work or a restless working, that disturbs or weakens the nervous system, the vital-physical, and lays one open to the action of the wrong forces. To work but quietly so as to have a steady progress is the right way.

⁂

The difficulty you find results very much from your always worrying with your mind about things, thinking "This is wrong, that is wrong in me or my work" and, as a result, "I am incompetent, I am bad, nothing can be done with me". Your embroidery work, your lampshades etc. have always been very good, and yet you are always thinking "this is bad work, that is wrong" and by doing so, confuse yourself and get into a muddle. Naturally, you make a mistake now and then, but more when you worry like that than when you do things simply and confidently.

It is better whether with work or with sadhana to go on quietly, allowing the Force to act and doing your best to let it work rightly, but without this self-tormenting and constant restless questioning at every point. Whatever defects there are would go much sooner, if you did not harp on them too much; for by dwelling on them so much you lose confidence in yourself and in your power of openness to the Force — which is there all the same — and put unnecessary difficulties in the way of its working.

⁂

Do not worry about mistakes in work. Often you imagine that things are badly done by you when really you have done them very well; but even if there are mistakes, it is nothing to be sad about. Let the consciousness grow — only in the divine con-

sciousness is there an entire perfection. The more you surrender to the Divine, the more will there be the possibility of perfection in you.

⁂

Do not attach too much importance to such mistakes or get upset about them. It is the nature of the mind to make such mistakes. It is only a higher consciousness that can set them right — the mind can be sure only after a very long training in each particular action and even then it has only to be off-guard for something untoward to occur. Do as well as you can, for the rest let the higher consciousness grow till it can enlighten all the movements of the physical mind.

⁂

Skill in works will come when there is the opening in the physical mind and the body. There is no need to be anxious about that now. Do your best and do not be anxious about it.

⁂

Think of your work only when it is being done, not before and not after.

Do not let your mind go back on a work that is finished. It belongs to the past and all re-handling of it is a waste of power.

Do not let your mind labour in anticipation on a work that has to be done. The Power that acts in you will see to it at its own time.

These two habits of the mind belong to a past functioning that the transforming Force is pressing to remove and the physical mind's persistence in them is the cause of your strain and fatigue. If you can remember to let your mind work only when its action is needed, the strain will lessen and disappear. This is indeed the transitional movement before the supramental working takes possession of the physical mind and brings into it the spontaneous action of the Light.

VII

Yes, obviously, that is one great utility of work that it tests the nature and puts the sadhak in front of the defects of his outer being which might otherwise escape him.

⁂

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 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.

⁂

It will be better to do the work as a sadhana for getting rid of the defects rather than accept the defects as a reason for not doing the work. Instead of accepting these reactions as if they were an unchangeable law of your nature, you should make up your mind that they must come no longer — calling down the aid of the Mother's force to purify the vital and eliminate them altogether. If you believe that the trouble in the body must come, naturally it will come; rather fix in your mind the idea and will that it must not come and will not come. If it tries to come reject it and throw it away from you.

⁂

That is a great error of the human vital — to want compliments for their own sake and to be depressed by their absence and imagine that it means there is no capacity. In this world one starts with ignorance and imperfection in whatever one does — one has to find out one's mistakes and to learn, one has to commit errors and find out by correcting them the right way to do things. Nobody in the world has ever escaped from this law. So what one has to expect from others is not compliments all the time, but praise of what is right or well done and criticism of

errors and mistakes. The more one can bear criticism and see one's mistakes, the more likely one is to arrive at the fullness of one's capacity. Especially when one is very young — before the age of maturity — one cannot easily do perfect work. What is called the juvenile work of poets and painters — work done in their early years is always imperfect, it is a promise and has qualities — but the real perfection and full use of their powers comes afterwards. They themselves know that very well, but they go on writing or painting because they know also that by doing so they will develop their powers.

As for comparison with others, one ought not to do that. Each one has his own lesson to learn, his own work to do and he must concern himself with that, not with the superior or inferior progress of others in comparison with himself. If he is behind today, he can be in full capacity hereafter and it is for that future perfection of his powers that he must labour. You are young and have everything yet to learn — your capacities are yet only in bud, you must wait and work for them to be in full bloom — and you must not mind if it takes months and years even to arrive at something satisfying and perfect. It will come in its proper time, and the work you do now is always a step towards it.

But learn to welcome criticism and the pointing out of imperfections — the more you do so, the more rapidly you will advance.

⁂

Someone who is learning to paint or play music or write and does not like to have his mistakes pointed out by those who already know — how is he to learn at all or reach any perfection of technique?

⁂

We cannot approve of your idea — there are already enough intellectuals in the Ashram and the room-keeping intellectual is not a type whose undue propagation we are disposed to encourage. Outside work is just what is necessary to keep the equilibrium of the nature and you certainly need it for that purpose. Also your presence in the D.R. [Dining Room] is indispensable. For the

rest instead of getting vexed with X or Y you should seek the cause of these things in yourself — that is always the true rule for a sadhak. You are sometimes at your best and then things go on very well; but sometimes you are not at all at your best and then these misunderstandings arise. The remedy therefore is to be at your best always — not to be in your room always, but to be in your best and therefore your true self always.

*
**

The difficulty rises from a certain excess of sensitiveness in the vital nature which feels strongly any want of harmony or opposition in the work or any untoward happening and, when that comes, one is apt to feel it as if a personal opposition and on the other side also a similar feeling arises and so the difficulty becomes prolonged and leads to conflict. As a matter of fact the difficulty often arises from circumstances, e.g. the B.S. [Building Service] with its much reduced staff and a rush of work using up all its men may find it more difficult to accommodate you than before. Or it may arise from people acting according to their view of a matter which does not accord with yours. Or again it may come from the person following his own ideas, view of what is convenient and effective and thus coming up against yours. There need be no personal feeling in all that and it is best not to look for any and not to see it from that point of view. What is needed is always to take a calm view of the thing and a clear vision — not only from one's own standpoint which may be eventually right and yet need modification in detail, but with a vision that sees also the standpoint of others; this broad seeing quiet and impersonal is needed in the full yogic consciousness. Having it one can insist on what has to be insisted on with firmness but at the same time with a consideration and understanding of the other that removes the chance of any clash of personal feeling. Naturally if the other is unreasonable, he may still resent, but then it will be his own fault entirely and it will fall back on him only. It is here that we see the necessity of some change. Loyalty, fidelity, capacity, strength of will and other qualities in the work you have in plenty — a full calm and

equality not only in the inner being where it can exist already, but in the outer nervous parts is a thing you have to get completely.

⁂

There are always defects on both sides which lead to this disharmony. On your side you have...a tendency to too harsh judgment of others, a readiness to see and stress the faults, defects, weak side of others and not to see enough their good sides. This prevents the kindliness of outlook which should be there and gives an impression of harshness and critical severity and creates a tendency to contrariety and revolt, which even when it is not there in the minds of the others, acts through their subconscient and creates all these discordant movements. To take advantage of what is good in others, keeping one's eye always on that, and to deal tactfully with their mistakes, faults and defects is the best way; it does not exclude firmness and maintenance of discipline, even severity when severity is due; but the latter should be rare and the others should not feel it as if it were a permanent attitude.

⁂

The experience of the difference between your inner feelings and your surface reactions shows that you are becoming aware of different parts of your nature which each have their own character. In fact each human being is composed of different personalities that feel and behave in a different way and his action is determined by the one that happens to be prominent at the time. The one that has no feelings against anyone is either the psychic being or the emotional being in the heart, the one that feels anger and is severe is a part of the external vital nature on the surface. This anger and severity is a wrong form of something that in itself has a value, a certain strength of will and force of action and control in the vital being, without which work cannot be done. What is necessary is to get rid of the anger and to keep the force and firm will along with a developed judgment as to what is the right thing to do in any circumstances. For instance, people can be allowed to do things in their own way when that

does not spoil the work, when it is only their way of doing what is necessary to be done; when their way is opposed to the discipline of the work, then they have to be controlled, but it should be done quietly and kindly, not with anger. Very often, if one has developed a silent power of putting the Mother's force on the work with one's own will as instrument, that by itself may be sufficient without having to say anything as the person changes his way of himself as if by his own initiative.

This feeling of not being able to eat and of eating being unnecessary is a sort of suggestion that is coming to several people. It should be rejected and cleared out of the system as it may lead to weakening of the body by taking insufficient food. Often one does not feel weak at first, a vital energy comes which supports the body, but later on the body weakens. This feeling may sometimes come when one is going much inside and there is no insistence on the bodily needs; but it should not be accepted. If it is rejected, it is likely to disappear.

*
**

To discourage anybody is wrong, but to give false encouragement or encouragement of anything wrong is not right. Severity has sometimes to be used (though not overused), when without it an obstinate persistence in what is wrong cannot be set right. Very often, if an inner communication has been established, a silent pressure is more effective than anything else. No absolute rule can be laid down; one has to judge and act for the best in each case.

*
**

That is quite necessary for work; efficiency and discipline are indispensable. They can, however, only partly be maintained by outward means — it really depends in ordinary life on the personality of the superior, his influence on the subordinates, his firmness, tact, kindness in dealing with them. But the sadhak depends on a deeper force, that of his inner consciousness and the force working through him.

*
**

It [disciplining the subordinates] has to be done in the right spirit and the subordinates must be able to feel that it is so — that they are being dealt with in all uprightness and by a man who has sympathy and insight and not only severity and energy. It is a question of vital tact and a strong and large vital finding always the right way to deal with the others.

⁂

We have been very glad to get your letters with the details which prove how great and rapid a progress you have made in sadhana. All that you write shows a clear consciousness and a new orientation in the lower vital. To have seen clearly the instinct of domination and the pride of the instrument there means that that part of the being is in the right way to change; these defects must now be replaced by their true counterparts — the power to act selflessly on others for the Truth and the Right and the power to be a strong and confident but egoless instrument of the Divine. It is clear also that the physical is effectively opening, but the instinctive physical and the vital-physical motions in it, fear in the body, weakness, disposition to ill-health must go also. As to diet, a light quality of food sufficient for the strength and sustenance is the best for you — meat is not advisable.

Let the wide opening that has come in you develop and your whole being down to the material fill with the true consciousness and the true power.

⁂

You know what is the right thing to do — to take and keep the necessary inner attitude — when there is the openness to the Force and the strength, courage and power in action coming from it, outward circumstances can be met and turned in the right direction.

⁂

Whenever anything untoward happens, it is essential not to allow...any vibrations of disturbance or unrest in either the physical mind or the nerves. One must remain calm and open to

the Light and Force, then one will be able to act in the right way.

⁂

From the point of view of sadhana — you must not allow yourself to be in the least disturbed by these things. What you have to do, what is right to be done, should be done in perfect calmness with the support of the Divine Force. All that is necessary for a successful result, can be done — including the securing of the support of those who are able to help you. But if this outer support is not forthcoming, you have not to be disturbed but to proceed calmly on your way. If there is any difficulty or unsuccess anywhere not due to your own fault, you have not to be troubled. Strength, unmoved calm, quiet straight and right dealing with all things you have to deal with must be the rule of your action.

⁂

To keep this equanimity and absence of reactions and from that calm ground to direct the yoga-force on things and persons (not for egoistic aims but for the work to be done) is the position of the yogi.

⁂

Keep unmoved, unoffended, do your work without being discouraged, call on the Force to act for you. It is a field of trial for you – the inward result is more important than the outward.

⁂

A double action is needed, to destroy the ill-will of the inferiors and to change the mind of the superiors — an invisible action, for in the visible they seem to be too much under the control of the Forces of the Ignorance.

⁂

You have to make yourself an instrument of the invisible Force

— to be able in a way to direct it to the required point and for the required purpose. But for that Samata must be entire — for a calm and luminous use of the Force is necessary. Otherwise the use of the Force, if accompanied by ego-reactions, may raise a corresponding ego-resistance and a struggle.

⁂

The increase of Samata is only a first condition. It is when on the basis of Samata an understanding Force can be used to make their attacks nugatory that the attacks will become impossible.

⁂

[External attacks by the adverse powers on persons who co-operate:] That is always a part of their tactics in the physical sphere. They can be averted only by a superior Force being used against them.

⁂

This is the right inner attitude of equality — to remain unmoved whatever may outwardly happen. But what is needed for success in the outward field (if you do not use human means, diplomacy or tactics,) is the power to transmit calmly a Force that can change men's attitude and the circumstances and make any outward action at once the right thing to do and effective.

⁂

For the sadhak outward struggles, troubles, calamities are only a means of surmounting ego and rajasic desire and attaining to complete surrender. So long as one insists on success, one is doing the work partly at least for the ego; difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and to bring complete equality. This does not mean that the power of victory is not to be acquired, but it is not success in the immediate work that is all-important; it is the power to receive and transmit a greater and greater correct vision and inner Force that has to be

developed and this must be done quite coolly and patiently without being elated or disturbed by immediate victory or failure.

⁂

What you have to realise is that your success or failure depends, first and always, on your keeping in the right attitude and in the true psychic and spiritual atmosphere and allowing the Mother's force to act through you....

If I can judge from your letters, you take its support too much for granted and lay the first stress on your own ideas and plans and words about the work; but these whether good or bad, right or mistaken, are bound to fail if they are not instruments of the true Force.... You have to be always concentrated, always referring all difficulties for solution to the force that is being sent from here, always letting it act and not substituting your own mind and separate vital will or impulse....

Proceed with your work, never forgetting the condition of success. Do not lose yourself in the work or in your ideas or plans or forget to keep yourself in constant touch with the true source. Do not allow anybody's mind or vital influence or the influence of the surrounding atmosphere or the ordinary human mentality to come between you and the power and presence of the Mother.

⁂

It is very satisfying to have closed so well the work you undertook for the Mother...overcoming all difficulties and ending in such a satisfactory result.... But your work for the Mother is always sure to be the same, thorough, conscientious and skilful and inspired by a firm faith and openness to her force; where these things are, success is always sure.

VIII

Orderly harmony and organisation in physical things is a neces-

sary part of efficiency and perfection and makes the instrument fit for whatever work is given to it.

⁂

There can be no physical life without an order and rhythm. When this order is changed, it must be in obedience to an inner growth and not for the sake of external novelty. It is only a certain part of the surface lower vital nature which seeks always external change and novelty for its own sake.

It is by a constant inner growth that one can find a constant newness and unfailing interest in life. There is no other satisfying way.

⁂

The impatience of things going wrong is the defect of a quality — an insistence on accuracy and order. The thing is to keep the quality and get rid of the defect.

⁂

In the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with them, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the right way without rules. But in matters of the inner development and the sadhana it is impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say, "Every time you shall stop here, there, in this way, on that line and no other." Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done; there could be no true and effective movement.

⁂

In work there must be a rule and discipline and as much punctuality as possible in regard to time.

What is good work and what is bad or less good work?

All is the Mother's work and equal in the Mother's eyes.

⁂

To be able to be regular is a great force, one becomes master of one's time and one's movements.

⁂

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.

IX

Wanton waste, careless spoiling of physical things in an incredibly short time, loose disorder, misuse of service and materials due either to vital grasping or to tamasic inertia are baneful to prosperity and tend to drive away or discourage the Wealth-Power. These things have long been rampant in the society and, if that continues, an increase in our means might well mean a proportionate increase in the wastage and disorder and neutralise the material advantage. This must be remedied if there is to be any sound progress.

Asceticism for its own sake is not the ideal of this yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are a very important part of it — and even an ascetic discipline is better for our purpose than a loose absence of true control. Mastery of the material does not mean having plenty and profusely throwing it out or spoiling it as fast as it comes or faster. Mastery implies in it the right and careful utilisation of things and also a self-control in their use.

⁂

Material things are not to be despised — without them there

can be no manifestation in the material world.

⁂

There is a consciousness in each physical thing with which one can communicate. Everything has an individuality of a certain kind, houses, cars, furniture etc. The ancient peoples knew that and so they saw a spirit or "genius" in every physical thing.

⁂

What you feel about physical things is true — there is a consciousness in them, a life which is not the life and consciousness of man and animal which we know, but still secret and real. That is why we must have a respect for physical things and use them rightly, not misuse and waste, ill-treat or handle with a careless roughness. This feeling of all being consciousness or alive comes when our own physical consciousness — and not the mind only — awakes out of its obscurity and becomes aware of the One in all things, the Divine everywhere.

⁂

It is very true that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress of consciousness.

⁂

The rough handling and careless breaking or waste and misuse of physical things is a denial of the yogic consciousness and a great hindrance to the bringing down of the Divine Truth to the material plane.

⁂

It was I suppose an idea that came through the physical mind,

suggesting the following of a physical utility only and ignoring all other perceptions and motives. You must be on your guard against the ideas and suggestions of this physical mind and accept none without discrimination and subjection to a higher light.

Section Six

SADHANA THROUGH MEDITATION

Sadhana through Meditation

YOUR questions cover the whole of a very wide field. It is therefore necessary to reply to them with some brevity, touching only on some principal points.

1. *What meditation exactly means.*

There are two words used in English to express the Indian idea of *dhyāna*, "meditation" and "contemplation". Meditation means properly the concentration of the mind on a single train of ideas which work out a single subject. Contemplation means regarding mentally a single object, image, idea so that the knowledge about the object, image or idea may arise naturally in the mind by force of the concentration. Both these things are forms of *dhyāna*, for the principle of *dhyāna* is mental concentration whether in thought, vision or knowledge.

There are other forms of *dhyāna*. There is a passage in which Vivekananda advises you to stand back from your thoughts, let them occur in your mind as they will and simply observe them and see what they are. This may be called concentration in self-observation.

This form leads to another, the emptying of all thought out of the mind so as to leave it a sort of pure vigilant blank on which the divine knowledge may come and imprint itself, undisturbed by the inferior thoughts of the ordinary human mind and with the clearness of a writing in white chalk on a blackboard. You will find that the Gita speaks of this rejection of all mental thought as one of the methods of yoga and even the method it seems to prefer. This may be called the *dhyāna* of liberation, as it frees the mind from slavery to the mechanical process of thinking and allows it to think or not to think, as it pleases and when it pleases, or to choose its own thoughts or else to go beyond thought to the pure perception of Truth called in our philosophy *Vijñāna*.

Meditation is the easiest process for the human mind, but the narrowest in its results; contemplation more difficult, but

greater; self-observation and liberation from the chains of Thought the most difficult of all, but the widest and greatest in its fruits. One can choose any of them according to one's bent and capacity. The perfect method is to use them all, each in its own place and for its own object; but this would need a fixed faith and firm patience and a great energy of Will in the self-application to the yoga.

2. *What should be the object or ideas for meditation?*

Whatever is most consonant with your nature and highest aspirations. But if you ask me for an absolute answer, then I must say that Brahman is always the best object for meditation or contemplation and the idea on which the mind should fix is that of God in all, all in God and all as God. It does not matter essentially whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God, or subjectively, the One Self. But this is the idea I have found the best, because it is the highest and embraces all other truths, whether truths of this world or of the other worlds or beyond all phenomenal existence, — "All this is the Brahman."

In the third issue of *Arya*, at the end of the second instalment of the Analysis of the Isha Upanishad, you will find a description of this vision of the All[1] which may be of help to you in understanding the idea.

3. *Conditions internal and external that are most essential for meditation.*

There are no *essential* external conditions, but solitude and seclusion at the time of meditation as well as stillness of the body are helpful, sometimes almost necessary to the beginner. But one should not be bound by external conditions. Once the habit of meditation is formed, it should be made possible to do it in all circumstances, lying, sitting, walking, alone, in company, in silence or in the midst of noise etc.

The first internal condition necessary is concentration of the will against the obstacles to meditation, i.e. wandering of the mind, forgetfulness, sleep, physical and nervous impatience and restlessness etc.

The second is an increasing purity and calm of the inner consciousness (*citta*) out of which thought and emotion arise,

[1] See Sri Aurobindo, *Isha Upanishad* (1965 Edition), p. 35.

i.e. a freedom from all disturbing reactions, such as anger, grief, depression, anxiety about worldly happenings etc. Mental perfection and moral are always closely allied to each other.

⁂

Concentration is a gathering together of the consciousness and either centralising at one point or turning on a single object, e.g., the Divine; there can also be a gathered condition throughout the whole being, not at a point. In meditation it is not indispensable to gather like this, one can simply remain with a quiet mind thinking of one subject or observing what comes in the consciousness and dealing with it.

⁂

Concentration means fixing the consciousness in one place or on one object and in a single condition. Meditation can be diffusive, e.g., thinking about the Divine, receiving impressions and discriminating, watching what goes on in the nature and acting upon it, etc.

⁂

Concentration, for our yoga, means when the consciousness is fixed in a particular state (e.g. peace) or movement (e.g. aspiration, will, coming into contact with the Mother, taking the Mother's name); meditation is when the inner mind is looking at things to get the right knowledge.

⁂

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.

⁂

One can concentrate in any of the three centres which is easiest to the sadhak or gives most result. The power of the concentration in the heart-centre is to open that centre and by the power of aspiration, love, bhakti, surrender remove the veil which covers and conceals the soul and bring forward the soul or psychic being to govern the mind, life and body and turn and open them all fully to the Divine, removing all that is opposed to that turning and opening.

This is what is called in this yoga the psychic transformation. The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental, vital, physical) consciousness to rise up to meet the higher consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual nature) consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this yoga the spiritual transformation. If one begins with this movement then the Power from above has in its descent to open all the centres (including the lowest centre) and to bring out the psychic being; for until that is done there is likely to be much difficulty and struggle of the lower consciousness obstructing, mixing with or even refusing the Divine Action from above. If the psychic being is once active this struggle and these difficulties can be greatly minimised.

The power of concentration in the eyebrows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind and vision and the inner or yogic consciousness and its experiences and powers. From here also one can open upwards and act also in the lower centres; but the danger of this process is that one may get shut up in one's mental spiritual formations and not come out of them into the free and integral spiritual experience and knowledge and integral change of the being and nature.

⁂

If one concentrates on a thought or a word, one has to dwell on the essential idea contained in the word with the aspiration to feel the thing which it expresses.

⁂

I have not the original chapter before me just now; but from the sentences quoted[1] it seems to be the essential mental Idea. As for instance in the method of Vedantic knowledge one concentrates on the idea of Brahman omnipresent — one looks at a tree or other surrounding object with the idea that Brahman is there and the tree or object is only a form. After a time if the concentration is of the right kind, one begins to become aware of a presence, an existence, the physical tree form becomes a shell and that presence or existence is felt to be the only reality. The idea then drops, it is a direct vision of the thing that takes its place — there is no longer any necessity of concentrating on the idea, one sees with a deeper consciousness, *sa pasyati.* It should be noted that this concentration on the idea is not mere thinking, *mananam* — it is an inner dwelling on the essence of the Idea.

⁂

There is no harm in concentrating sometimes in the heart and sometimes above the head. But concentration in either place does not mean keeping the attention fixed on a particular spot; you have to take your station of consciousness in either place and concentrate there not on the place, but on the Divine. This can be done with eyes shut or with eyes open, according as it best suits you.

[1] "This concentration proceeds by the Idea... for it is through the Idea that the mental being rises beyond all expression to that which is expressed, to that of which the Idea itself is only the instrument. By concentration upon the Idea the mental existence which at present we are breaks open the barrier of our mentality and arrives at the state of consciousness, the state of being, the state of power of conscious-being and bliss of conscious-being to which the Idea corresponds and of which it is the symbol, movement and rhythm." Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Centenary Edition), p. 307.

You can concentrate on the sun, but to concentrate on the Divine is better than to concentrate on the sun.

⁂

Most people associate consciousness with the brain or mind because that is the centre for intellectual thought and mental vision, but consciousness is not limited to that kind of thought or vision. It is everywhere in the system and there are several centres of it, e.g., the centre for inner concentration is not in the brain but in the heart, — the originating centre of vital desire is still lower down.

The two main places where one can centre the consciousness for yoga are in the head and in the heart — the mind-centre and the soul-centre.

⁂

Brain concentration is always a tapasya and necessarily brings a strain. It is only if one is lifted out of the brain mind altogether that the strain of mental concentration disappears.

⁂

At the top of the head or above it is the right place for yogic concentration in reading or thinking.

⁂

The sitting motionless posture is the natural posture for concentrated meditation — walking and standing are active conditions. 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 position 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 *āsana*. One can

accustom oneself to meditate walking, standing, lying but sitting is the first natural position.

⁂

It is better to make the deeper concentration when you are alone or quiet. Outward sounds ought not to disturb you.

⁂

It is certainly much better to remain silent and collected for a time after the meditation. It is a mistake to take the meditation lightly — by doing that one fails to receive or spills what is received or most of it.

⁂

You enter into a condition of deep inwardness and quiet. But if one comes too suddenly out of it into the ordinary consciousness, then there may be a slight nervous shock or a beating of the heart such as you describe, for a short time. It is always best to remain quiet for a few moments before opening the eyes and coming out of this inwardness.

Your new feeling about the work is all right, it is part of the new quietude and shows that the consciousness is getting more poised and free. Laziness is not likely to come.

The open ground you saw is the symbol of the silent inner consciousness free and bright and clear and calm.

The things you see are mostly indications of a working that is going on inside you; there is no fear that they will be merely visions without effect on the consciousness. Already your consciousness has changed much and yet it is only a beginning of the still greater change that is to come.

⁂

What you saw about the outward going movements was certainly not imagination, it was a true and accurate perception and vision of their action. To feel yourself separate from them and

see them is the right inner condition necessary for getting rid of them in the end altogether.

Concentration is very helpful and necessary — the more one concentrates (of course in the limits of the body's capacity without straining it), the more the force of the yoga grows. But you must be prepared for the meditation being sometimes not successful and not get upset by it — for that variability of the meditations happens to everybody. There are different causes for it. But it is mostly something physical that interferes, either the need of the body to take time to assimilate what has come or been done; sometimes inertia or dullness due to causes such as those you mention or others. The best thing is to remain quiet and not get or nervous or dejected — till the force acts again.

*
**

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

*
**

Both the realisation and the subsequent idea have their truth. In the beginning for a long time concentration is necessary even by effort because the nature, the consciousness are not ready. Even then the more quiet and natural the concentration, the better. But when the consciousness and nature are ready, then concentration must become spontaneous and easily possible without effort at all times. Even at last it becomes the natural and permanent condition of the being — it is then no longer concentration, but the settled poise of the soul in the Divine.

It is true that to be concentrated and do an outward action at the same time is not at first possible. But that too becomes possible. Either the consciousness divides into two parts, one the inner poised in the Divine, the other the outer doing the outer work — or else the whole is so poised and the force does the work through the passive instrument.

*
**

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.

⁂

If the mind gets tired, naturally it is difficult to concentrate unless you have become separated from the mind.

⁂

You have to separate yourself from the mind also. You have to feel yourself even in the mental, vital, physical levels (not only above) a consciousness that is neither mind, life, nor body.

⁂

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 over-eagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or over-eagerness, then that is not concentration.

⁂

It was by your personal efforts without guidance that you got into difficulties and into a heated condition in which you could not meditate etc. I asked you to drop the effort and remain quiet and you did so. My intention was that by your remaining quiet it would be possible for the Mother's Force to work in you and establish a better starting-point and a course of initial experiences. It was what was beginning to come; but if your mind again becomes active and tries to arrange the sadhana for itself, then disturbances are likely to come. The Divine Guidance works best when the psychic is open and in front (yours was beginning to open), but it can also work even when the sadhak is either not conscious of it or else knows it only by its results. As for Nirvi-

kalpa Samadhi, even if one wants it, it is only the result of a long sadhana in a consciousness prepared for it — it is no use thinking of it when the inner consciousness is only just beginning to open to yogic experience.

If the difficulty in meditation is that thoughts of all kinds come in, that is not due to hostile forces but to the ordinary nature of the human mind. All sadhaks have this difficulty and with many it lasts for a very long time. There are several ways of getting rid of it. One of them is to look at the thoughts and observe what is the nature of the human mind as they show it but not to give any sanction and to let them run down till they come to a standstill — this is a way recommended by Vivekananda in his Rajayoga. Another is to look at the thoughts as not one's own, to stand back as the witness Purusha and refuse the sanction — the thoughts are regarded as things coming from outside, from Prakriti, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. In this way it usually happens that after a time the mind divides into two, a part which is the mental witness watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet and a part which is the object of observation, the Prakriti part in which the thoughts cross or wander. Afterwards one can proceed to silence or quiet the Prakriti part also. There is a third, an active method by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as it were; if one can detect them coming, then, before they enter, they have to be thrown away altogether. This is perhaps the most difficult way and not all can do it, but if it can be done it is the shortest and most powerful road to silence.

The mind is always in activity, but we do not observe fully what it is doing, but allow ourselves to be carried away in the stream of continual thinking. When we try to concentrate, this stream of

self-made mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is the first normal obstacle (the other is sleep during meditation) to the effort for yoga.

The best thing to do is to realise that the thought-flow is not yourself, it is not you who are thinking, but thought that is going on in the mind. It is Prakriti with its thought-energy that is raising all this whirl of thought in you, imposing it on the Purusha. You as the Purusha must stand back as the witness observing the action, but refusing to identify yourself with it. The next thing is to exercise a control and reject the thoughts — though sometimes by the very act of detachment the thought-habit falls away or diminishes during the meditation and there is a sufficient silence or at any rate a quietude which makes it easy to reject the thoughts that come and fix oneself on the object of meditation. If one becomes aware of the thoughts as coming from outside, from the universal Nature, then one can throw them out before they reach the mind; in that way the mind finally falls silent. If neither of these things happens, a persistent practice of rejection becomes necessary — there should be no struggle or wrestling with the thought, but only a quiet self-separation and refusal. Success does not come at first, but if consent is constantly withheld, the mechanical whirl eventually ceases and begins to die away and one can then have at will an inner quietude or silence.

It should be noted that the result of the yogic processes is not, except in rare cases, immediate and one must apply the will-patience till they give a result which is sometimes long in coming if there is much resistance in the outer nature.

How can you fix the mind on the higher Self so long as you have no consciousness or experience of it? You can only concentrate on the idea of the Self or else one can concentrate on the idea of the Divine or the Divine Mother or on an image or on the feeling of devotion calling the presence in the heart or the Force to work in the mind and heart and body and liberate the consciousness and give the self-realisation. If you concentrate on the idea of the Self, it must be with the conception of the Self as something different from mind and its thoughts, the vital and its feelings, the body and its actions — something standing back from all

these, something that you can come to feel concretely as an Existence-Consciousness, separate from all that yet freely pervading all without being involved in these things.

⁂

If you try to apply everything you read, there will be no end to your new beginnings. One can stop thinking by rejecting the thoughts and in the silence discover oneself. One can do it by letting the thoughts run down while one detaches oneself from them. There are a number of other ways. This one related in X's book seems to me the Adwaita-jnani method of separating oneself from body, vital, mind, by *viveka*, discrimination, "I am not the body, I am not the life, I am not the mind" till he gets to the self, separate from mind, life and body. That also is one way of doing it. There is also the separation of Purusha from Prakriti till one becomes the witness only and feels separate from all the activities as the Witness Consciousness. There are other methods also.

⁂

The method of gathering of the mind is not an easy one. It is better to watch and separate oneself from the thoughts till one becomes aware of a quiet space within into which they come from outside.

⁂

For the buzz of the physical mind, reject it quietly, without getting disturbed, till it feels discouraged and retires shaking its head and saying, "This fellow is too calm and strong for me." There are always two things that can rise up and assail the silence, — vital suggestions, the physical mind's mechanical recurrences. Calm rejection for both is the cure. There is a Purusha within who can dictate to the nature what it shall admit or exclude, but its will is a strong, quiet will; if one gets perturbed or agitated over the difficulties, then the will of the Purusha cannot act effectively as it would otherwise.

The dynamic realisation will probably take place when the

higher consciousness comes fully down into the vital. When it comes into the mental it brings the peace of the Purusha and liberation and it may bring also knowledge. It is when it comes into the vital that the dynamic realisation becomes present and living.

⁂

To be able to detach oneself from the action of the mechanical mind is the first necessity; it is easier then for the quiet and peace of mind to remain undisturbed by this action even if it occurs.

If the peace and silence continue to come down, they usually become so intense as to seize the physical mind also after a time.

⁂

It was rather that the active mind became more quiet so that the movements of the mechanical mind became more evident — that is what often happens. What has to be done in that case is to detach oneself from these movements and concentrate without further attention to them. They are then likely to sink into quietude or fall away.

⁂

That is the nature of the mechanical mind — it is not due to any sensitiveness in it. Only as the other parts of the mind are more silent and under control, this activity looks more prominent and takes more space. It usually wears itself out, if one goes on rejecting it.

⁂

You are probably paying too much attention to them [the thoughts of the mechanical mind]. It is quite possible to concentrate and let the mechanical activity pass unnoticed.

⁂

I am not quite sure about what you propose. It is of course because of the old habit of the mental consciousness that it goes

on receiving the thoughts from outside in spite of its being a fatigue — not that it wants them, but that they are accustomed to come and the mind mechanically lets them in and attends to them by force of habit. This is always one of the chief difficulties in yoga when the experiences have begun and the mind wants to be always either concentrated or quiet. Some do what you propose and after a time succeed in quieting the mind altogether or the silence comes down from above and does it. But often when one tries this, the thoughts become very active and resist the silencing process and that is very troublesome. Therefore many prefer to go on slowly letting the mind quiet down little by little, the quietness spreading and remaining for longer periods until the unwanted thoughts fall away or recede and the mind is left free for knowledge from within and above.

What you might do is to try and see what results — if the thoughts attack too much and trouble, you could stop — if the mind quiets down quickly or more and more, then continue.

⁂

The more the psychic spreads in the outer being, the more all these things [the mechanical activities of the subconscious mind] fall quiet. That is the best way. Direct efforts to still the mind are a difficult method.

⁂

The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother's calm and peace into your mind. It is there above you — only the mind and its centres have to open to it. It is what the Mother is pushing upon you in the evening meditation.

⁂

Chit is the pure consciousness, as in Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Chitta is the stuff of mixed mental-vital-physical consciousness out of which arise the movements of thought, emotion, sensation, impulse, etc. It is these that in the Patanjali system

have to be stilled altogether so that the consciousness may be immobile and go into Samadhi.

Our yoga has a different function. The movements of the ordinary consciousness have to be quieted and into the quietude there has to be brought down a higher consciousness and its powers which will transform the nature.

⁂

If you suppress the Chittavrittis, you will have no movements of the Chitta at all; all will be immobile until you remove the suppression or will be so immobile that there cannot be anything else than immobility.

If you still them, the Chitta will be quiet, whatever movements there are will not disturb the quietude.

If you control or master, then the Chitta will be immobile when you want, active when you want, and its action will be such that what you wish to get rid of, will go, only what you accept as true and useful will come.

⁂

It is not easy to get into the Silence. That is only possible by throwing out all mental-vital activities. It is easier to let the Silence descend into you, i.e., to open yourself and let it descend. The way to do this and the way to call down the higher powers is the same. It is to remain quiet at the time of meditation, not fighting with the mind or making mental efforts to pull down the Power or the Silence but keeping only a silent will and aspiration for them. If the mind is active one has to learn to look at it, drawn back and not giving any sanction from within, until its habitual or mechanical activities begin to fall quiet for want of support from within. If it is too persistent, a steady rejection without strain or struggle is the one thing to be done.

⁂

Let us not exaggerate anything. It is not so much getting rid of

mental activity as converting it into the right thing.... 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". But you can't do that unless the old mental activity becomes a little quiet. A quiet mind does not involve itself in its thoughts or get run away with by them; it stands back, detaches itself, lets them pass, without identifying itself, without making them its own. It becomes the witness mind watching the thoughts when necessary, but able to turn away from them and receive from within and from above. Silence is good, but absolute silence is not indispensable, at least at this stage. I do not know that to wrestle with the mind to make it quiet is of much use, usually the mind gets the better at that game. It is this standing back, detaching oneself, getting the power to listen to something else, other than the thoughts of the external mind that is the easier way. At the same time one can look up as it were, imaging to oneself the Force as there just above and calling it down or quietly expecting its help. That is how most people do it, till the mind falls gradually quiet or silent of itself, or else silence begins to descend from above. But it is important not to allow the depression or despair to come in because there is no immediate success; that can only make things difficult and stop any progress that is preparing.

⁂

The silent mind is a result of yoga; the ordinary mind is never silent.... The thinkers and philosophers do not have the silent mind. It is the active mind they have; only, of course, they concentrate, so the common incoherent mentalising stops and the thoughts that rise or enter and shape themselves are coherently restricted to the subject or activity in hand. But that is quite a different matter from the whole mind falling silent.

⁂

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.

⁂

That is not called meditation — it is a divided state of consciousness; unless the consciousness is really engrossed and the surface thoughts are only things that come across and touch and pass, it can hardly be called meditation (*dhyāna*). I don't see how the inner being can be engrossed while whole thoughts and imaginations of another kind are rambling about in the surface consciousness. One can remain separate and see the thoughts and imaginations pass without being affected, but that is not being plunged or engrossed in meditation.

⁂

It is quite natural that at first there should be the condition of calm and peace only when you sit for concentration. What is important is that there should be this condition whenever you sit and the pressure for it always there. But at other times the result is at first only a certain mental quiet and freedom from thoughts. Afterwards when the condition of peace is quite settled in the inner being — for it is the inner into which you enter whenever you concentrate, then it begins to come out and control the outer, so that the calm and peace remain even when working, mixing with others, talking or other occupations. For then whatever the outer consciousness is doing, one feels the inner being calm within — indeed one feels the inner being as one's real self while the outer is something superficial through which the inner acts on life.

⁂

The ease and peace are felt very deep and far within because they are in the psychic and the psychic is very deep within us, covered over by the mind and vital. When you meditate you open to the psychic, become aware of your psychic consciousness deep within and feel these things. In order that these ease and

peace and happiness may become strong and stable and felt in all the being and in the body, you have to go still deeper within and bring out the full force of the psychic into the physical. This can most easily be done by regular concentration and meditation with the aspiration for this true consciousness. It can be done by work also, by dedication, by doing the work for the Divine only without thought of self and keeping the idea of consecration to the Mother always in the heart. But this is not easy to do perfectly.

⁂

If higher meditation or being above keeps one dull and without any kind of satisfaction or peace in sadhana, these are the only two reasons — ego or inertia — I can think of.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

When one tries to meditate, there is a pressure to go inside, lose the waking consciousness and wake inside, in a deep inner consciousness. But at first the mind takes it for a pressure to go to sleep, since sleep is the only kind of inner consciousness to which it has been accustomed. In yoga by meditation sleep is therefore often the first difficulty — but if one perseveres, then gradually the sleep changes to an inner conscious state.

⁂

The sleep does come like that when one tries to meditate. It has to be dealt with, where that is possible, by turning it into a conscious inner and indrawn state and, where not, by remaining in a quietly concentrated wakefulness open (without effort) to receive.

⁂

No, it is not sleep. 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.

⁂

It is probably that you go inside into a sort of samadhi but are not yet conscious there (hence the idea of sleep). X is not asleep, but he has when he goes inside no control of his body. Many yogis have this difficulty and use a contrivance which is put under the chin to hold up the head and with it the body during this inward-going concentration.

II

In samadhi it is the inner mental, vital, physical which are separated from the outer, no longer covered by it — therefore they can fully 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 mentality that would mean a complete trance without any recorded experiences.

⁂

Nirvikalpa Samadhi according to tradition is simply a trance from which one cannot be awakened even by burning or branding — i.e. a trance in which one has gone completely out of the body. In more scientific parlance it is a trance in which there is no formation or movement of the consciousness and one gets

lost in a state from which one can bring back no report except that one was in bliss. It is supposed to be a complete absorption in the Sushupti or the Turiya.

⁂

"Nirvikalpa Samadhi" properly means a complete trance in which there is no thought or movement of consciousness or awareness of either inward or outward things — all is drawn up into a supracosmic Beyond. But here it cannot mean that — it probably means a trance in a consciousness beyond the Mind.

To break and rebuild is often necessary for the change; but once the fundamental consciousness has come there is no reason why it should be done with trouble and disturbance — it can be done quietly. It is the resistance of the lower parts that brings in trouble and disturbance.

⁂

Immersion in Sachchidananda is a state one can get in the waking condition without samadhi — dissolution can come only after the loss of the body on condition that one has reached the highest state and does not will to return here to help the world.

⁂

It depends on the nature of the physical consciousness you keep. When there is the descent of consciousness into the body one becomes aware of a subtle physical consciousness and that can remain in samadhi — one seems to be aware of the body, but it is really the subtle body and not the outward physical. But also one can go deep within and yet be aware of the physical body also and of working upon it, but not of outward things. Finally one can be absorbed in a deep concentration but strongly aware of the body and the descent of the Force in it. This last is accompanied with consciousness of outward things, though no attention may be paid to them. This last is not usually called samadhi, but it is a kind of waking samadhi. All conditions from the deep

samadhi of complete trance to the working of the Force in the fully waking consciousness are used in this yoga; one need not insist on complete trance always, for the others also are necessary and without them the complete change cannot take place.

It is good that the higher consciousness and its powers are descending into the parts below the head and heart. That is absolutely necessary for the transformation, since the lower vital and the body must also be changed into stuff of the higher consciousness.

⁂

The reason why you remember nothing when you come out of your meditation is that the experience is taking place in the inner being and the outer consciousness is not ready to receive it. Formerly your sadhana was mainly on the vital plane which is often the first to open and the connection of that plane with the body consciousness is easy to establish because they are nearer to each other. Now the sadhana seems to have gone inward into the psychic being. This is a great advance and you need not mind the want of connection with the most external consciousness at present. The work goes on all the same and it is probably necessary that it should be so just now. Afterwards if you keep steadily to the right attitude, it will descend into the outer consciousness.

⁂

The medium trance is of a different kind — they get not into touch with Sachchidananda but with the beings of the lower vital plane. To develop the power of going into this higher kind of trance, one must have done some sadhana. As to purification, entire purification is not necessary, but some part of the being must have turned to higher things.

⁂

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.

⁂

Samadhi is not a thing to be shunned — only it has to be made more and more conscious.

⁂

It is not necessary to be in samadhi to be in contact with the Divine.

⁂

On the contrary, it is in the waking state that this realisation must come and endure in order to be a reality of the life. If experienced in trance it would be a superconscient state true for some part of the inner being, but not real to the whole consciousness. Experiences in trance have their utility for opening the being and preparing it, but it is only when the realisation is constant in the waking state that it is truly possessed. Therefore in this yoga most value is given to the waking realisation and experience.

To work in the calm ever-widening consciousness is at once a sadhana and a siddhi.

⁂

The experience you had is of course the going inside of the consciousness which is usually called trance or samadhi. The most important part of it however is the silence of the mind and vital which is fully extended to the body also. To get the capacity of this silence and peace is a most important step in the sadhana. It comes at first in meditation and may throw the consciousness inward in trance, but it has to come afterwards in the waking state and establish itself as a permanent basis for all the life and action. It is the condition for the realisation of the Self and the spiritual transformation of the nature.

⁂

Yes, they [all the states of higher realisation] can be attained even in full activity. Trance is not essential — it can be used, but by itself it cannot lead to the change of consciousness which is our object, for it gives only an inner subjective experience which need not make any difference in the outer consciousness. There are plenty of instances of sadhaks who have fine experiences in trance but the outer being remains as it was. It is necessary to bring out what is experienced and make it a power for transformation both of the inner and the outer being. But it can be done without going into samadhi in the waking consciousness itself. Concentration of course is indispensable.

*
**

There are two different states, that which the consciousness takes in concentration and that which it takes in relaxation — the latter is the ordinary consciousness (ordinary for the sadhak though not perhaps the ordinary consciousness of the average man), the former is what he is attaining to by Tapas of concentration in sadhana. To go into the Akshara and witness experiences from there is easy for the sadhak who has got so far. He can also concentrate and maintain the unification of the main aspects of his being, although with more difficulty — but a relaxation there brings him back to the relaxed ordinary consciousness. It is only when what is gained by sadhana becomes normal to the ordinary consciousness that this can be avoided. In proportion as this is done, it becomes possible not only to experience the truth subjectively, but make it manifest in action.

*
**

The higher consciousness is a concentrated consciousness, concentrated in the Divine Unity and in the working out of the Divine Will, not dispersed and rushing about after this or that mental idea or vital desire or physical need as is the ordinary human consciousness — also not invaded by a hundred haphazard thoughts, feelings and impulses, but master of itself, centred and harmonious.

III

The japa is usually successful only on one of two conditions — if it is repeated with a sense of its significance, a dwelling of something in the mind on the nature, power, beauty, attraction of the Godhead it signifies and is to bring into the consciousness, — that is the mental way; or if it comes up from the heart or rings in it with a certain sense or feeling of bhakti making it alive, — that is the emotional way. Either the mind or the vital has to give it support or sustenance. But if it makes the mind dry and the vital restless, it must be missing that support and sustenance. There is, of course, a third way, the reliance on the power of the mantra or name in itself; but then one has to go on till that power has sufficiently impressed its vibration on the inner being to make it at a given moment suddenly open to the Presence or the Touch. But if there is a struggling or insistence for the result, then this effect which needs a quiet receptivity in the mind is impeded. That is why I insisted so much on mental quietude and not on too much straining or effort, to give time to allow the psychic and the mind to develop the necessary condition of receptivity — a receptivity as natural as when one receives an inspiration for poetry and music. It is also why I do not want you to discontinue your poetry — it helps and does not hinder the preparation, because it is a means of developing the right position of receptivity and bringing out the bhakti which is there in the inner being. To spend all the energy in japa or meditation is a strain which even those who are accustomed to successful meditation find it difficult to maintain — unless in periods when there is an uninterrupted flow of experiences from above.

*
**

OM is the mantra, the expressive sound-symbol of the Brahman Consciousness in its four domains from the Turiya to the external or material plane. The function of a mantra is to create vibrations in the inner consciousness that will prepare it for the realisation of what the mantra symbolises and is supposed indeed to carry within itself. The mantra OM should therefore lead to-

wards the opening of the consciousness to the sight and feeling of the One Consciousness in all material things, in the inner being and in the supraphysical worlds, in the causal plane above now superconscient to us and, finally, the supreme liberated transcendence above all cosmic existence. The last is usually the main preoccupation with those who use the mantra.

In this yoga there is no fixed mantra, no stress is laid on mantras, although sadhaks can use one if they find it helpful or so long as they find it helpful. The stress is rather on an aspiration in the consciousness and a concentration of the mind, heart, will, all the being. If a mantra is found helpful for that, one uses it. OM if rightly used (not mechanically) might very well help the opening upwards and outwards (cosmic consciousness) as well as the descent.

⁂

As a rule the only mantra used in this sadhana is that of the Mother or of my name and the Mother's. The concentration in the heart and the concentration in the head can both be used — each has its own result. The first opens up the psychic being and brings bhakti, love and union with the Mother, her presence within the heart and the action of her Force in the nature. The other opens the mind to self-realisation, to the consciousness of what is above mind, to the ascent of the consciousness out of the body and the descent of the higher consciousness into the body.

⁂

The name of the Divine is usually called in for protection, for adoration, for increase of bhakti, for the opening up of the inner consciousness, for the realisation of the Divine in that aspect. As far as it is necessary to work in the subconscious for that, the Name must be effective there.

⁂

Namajapa has a great power in it.

⁂

Whatever name is called the Power that answers is the Mother. Each name indicates a certain aspect of the Divine and is limited by that aspect; the Mother's Power is universal.

⁂

I did not encourage the name with the breathing because that seemed like pranayam. Pranayam is a very powerful thing, but if done haphazardly it may lead to the raising of obstructions and even in extreme cases illness in the body.

⁂

The power of Gayatri is the Light of the divine Truth. It is a mantra of Knowledge.

⁂

The Gayatri mantra is the mantra for bringing the light of Truth into all the planes of the being.

⁂

It is not necessary to give up Gayatri Japa or the process which you are following at present. Concentration in the heart is one method, concentration in the head (or above) is another; both are included in this yoga and one has to do whichever one finds easiest and most natural. The object of the concentration in the heart is to open the centre there (heart-lotus), to feel the presence of the Divine Mother in the heart and to become aware of one's soul or psychic being which is a portion of the Divine. The object of the concentration in the head is to rise to the Divine Consciousness and bring down the Light of the Mother or her Force or Ananda into all the centres. This movement of ascent and descent is implied in the process of your japa and it is not therefore necessary to renounce it.

There is a level corresponding to the Satya Loka in the head but the consciousness has at a certain stage to rise above the head

freely to meet the same level in the universal Consciousness above.

⁂

It [Pranava japa] is supposed to have a force of its own although that force cannot fully work without the meditation on the meaning. But my experience is that in these things there is no invariable rule and that most depends on the consciousness or the power of response in the sadhak. With some it has no effect, with some it has a rapid and powerful effect even without meditation — for others the meditation is necessary for any effect to come.

⁂

Verses of the Gita can be used as japa, if the object is to realise the Truth that the verses contain in them. If X's father has taken the salient verses containing the heart of the teaching for that purpose, then it is all right. Everything depends on the selection of the verses. A coherent summary of the Gita's teaching cannot easily be put together by putting together some verses, but that is not necessary for a purpose of this kind which could only be to put the key truths together — not for intellectual exposition but for grasping in realisation which is the object of japa. I have not gone through the book, so I don't know how far it fulfils the object.

⁂

When one repeats a mantra regularly, very often it begins to repeat itself within, which means that it is taken up by the inner being. In that way it is more effective.

⁂

Naturally, whatever name one concentrates on will repeat itself, if any does. But the calling of Mother in sleep is not necessarily a repetition — it is the inner being that often calls to her in difficulty or in need.

⁂

Mantras come to many people in meditation. The Rishis say in the Veda that they heard the Truth by vision and inspiration, "truth-hearing seers", *kavayaḥ satyaśrutaḥ* — Veda is *śruti* got by inner hearing.

Section Seven

SADHANA THROUGH LOVE AND DEVOTION

Sadhana through Love and Devotion

TO BRING the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our yoga. But it has always seemed to me impossible unless there comes as its support and foundation and guard the Divine Truth — what I call the supramental — and its Divine Power. Otherwise Love itself blinded by the confusions of this present consciousness may stumble in its human receptacles and, even otherwise, may find itself unrecognised, rejected or rapidly degenerating and lost in the frailty of man's inferior nature. But when it comes in the divine truth and power, Divine Love descends first as something transcendent and universal and out of that transcendence and universality it applies itself to persons according to the Divine Truth and Will, creating a vaster, greater, purer personal love than any the human mind or heart can now imagine. It is when one has felt this descent that one can be really an instrument for the birth and action of the Divine Love in the world.

⁂

I do not exactly know what you mean by the Divine Love being established down to the subconscious. What love? the soul's love for the Divine? or the principle of the Divine Love and Ananda which is the highest thing that can be reached? To establish the latter down to the subconscient is a thing which would mean the entire transformation of the whole being and it cannot be done except as the result of the supramental change which is as yet far away. The other may be established even now in principle, but to make it living and complete in the whole being would mean the psychic transformation completed and the spiritual also well under way already.

⁂

The Mother did not tell you that love is not an emotion, but that Divine Love is not an emotion, — a very different thing to say. Human love is made up of emotion, passion and desire, — all of them vital movements, therefore bound to the disabilities of the human vital nature. Emotion is an excellent and indispensable thing in human nature, in spite of all its shortcomings and dangers, — just as mental ideas are excellent and indispensable things in their own field in the human stage. But our aim is to go beyond mental ideas into the light of the supramental Truth, which exists not by ideative thought but by direct vision and identity. In the same way our aim is to go beyond emotion to the height and depth and intensity of the Divine Love and there feel through the inner psychic heart an inexhaustible oneness with the Divine which the spasmodic leapings of the vital emotions cannot reach or experience.

As supramental Truth is not merely a sublimation of our mental ideas, so Divine Love is not merely a sublimation of human emotions; it is a different consciousness, with a different quality, movement and substance.

⁂

It [the Divine Love] exists in itself and does not depend on outer contact or outer expression. Whether it shall express itself outwardly or how it will express itself outwardly depends on the spiritual truth that has to be manifested.

⁂

The Divine Love may not be able yet to manifest on the physical plane, humanity being what it is, as fully and freely as it would otherwise do, but that does not make it less close or intense than the human. It is there waiting to be understood and accepted and meanwhile giving all the help you can receive to raise and widen you into the consciousness in which it will be no longer possible for these difficulties and these misunderstandings to recur — the state in which there is possible the full and perfect union.

⁂

And let me say also that, as regards human love and divine Love, I admitted the first as that from which we have to proceed and to arrive at the other, intensifying and transforming into itself, not eliminating, human love. Divine Love, in my view of it, is again not something ethereal, cold and far, but a love absolutely intense, intimate and full of unity, closeness and rapture using all the nature for its expression. Certainly, it is without the confusions and disorders of the present lower vital nature which it will change into something entirely warm, deep and intense; but that is no reason for supposing that it will lose anything that is true and happy in the elements of love.

*
**

Love cannot be cold — for there is no such thing as cold love, but the love of which the Mother speaks in that passage is something very pure, fixed and constant; it does not leap into fire and sink for want of fuel, but is steady and all-embracing and self-existent like the light of the sun. There is also a divine love that is personal, but it is not like the ordinary personal human love dependent on any return from the person — it is personal but not egoistic: it goes from the real being in the one to the real being in the other. But to find that, liberation from the ordinary human way of approach is necessary.

*
**

And first about human love in the sadhana. The soul's turning through love to the Divine must be through a love that is essentially divine, but as the instrument of expression at first is a human nature, it takes the forms of human love and bhakti. It is only as the consciousness deepens, heightens and changes that that greater eternal love can grow in it and openly transform the human into the divine. But in human love itself there are several kinds of motive-forces. There is a psychic human love which rises from deep within and is the result of the meeting of the inner being with that which calls it towards a divine joy and union; it is, once it becomes aware of itself, something lasting, self-

existent, not dependent upon external satisfactions, not capable of diminution by external causes, not self-regarding, not prone to demand or bargain but giving itself simply and spontaneously, not moved to or broken by misunderstandings, disappointments, strife and anger, but pressing always straight towards the inner union. It is this psychic love that is closest to the divine and it is therefore the right and best way of love and bhakti. But that does not mean that the other parts of the being, the vital and physical included, are not to be used as means of expression or that they are not to share in the full play and the whole meaning of love, even of divine love. On the contrary, they are a means and can be a great part of the complete expression of divine love, — provided they have the right and not the wrong movement. There are in the vital itself two kinds of love, — one full of joy and confidence and abandon, generous, unbargaining, ungrudging and very absolute in its dedication and this is akin to the psychic and well-fitted to be its complement and a means of expression of the divine love. And neither does the psychic love or the divine love despise a physical means of expression wherever that is pure and right and possible; it does not depend upon that, it does not diminish, revolt or go out like a snuffed candle when it is deprived of any such means; but when it can use it, it does so with joy and gratitude. Physical means can be and are used in the approach to divine love and worship; they have not been allowed merely as a concession to human weakness, nor is it the fact that in the psychic way there is no place for such things. On the contrary, they are one means of approaching the Divine and receiving the Light and materialising the psychic contact, and so long as it is done in the right spirit and they are used for the true purpose they have their place. It is only if they are misused or the approach is not right, because tainted by indifference and inertia, or revolt or hostility, or some gross desire, that they are out of place and can have a contrary effect.

But there is another way of vital love which is more usually the way of human nature and that is a way of ego and desire. It is full of vital craving, desire and demand; its continuance depends upon the satisfaction of its demands; if it does not get what it craves or even imagines that it is not being treated as it

deserves — for it is full of imaginations, misunderstandings, jealousies, misinterpretations — it at once turns to sorrow, wounded feeling, anger, all kinds of disorder, finally cessation and departure. A love of this kind is in its very nature ephemeral and unreliable and it cannot be made a foundation for divine love.... It is for this reason that we discourage this lower vital way of human love and would like people to reject and eliminate these elements as soon as may be from their nature. Love should be a flowering of joy and union and confidence and self-giving and Ananda, — but this lower vital way is only a source of suffering, trouble, disappointment, disillusion and disunion. Even a slight element of it shakes the foundations of peace and replaces the movement towards Ananda by a fall towards sorrow, discontent and Nirananda.

⁂

The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the yoga. The true love for the Divine is a self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger — for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely — and this represents itself in an inner giving — her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires and gets it there ought to be no room for any other claim or for any disappointed desire. And if one truly aspires, one does unfailingly get it, more and more as the purification

proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

Realise also that the Realisation must come first, the work to be done, not the satisfaction of claim and desire. It is only when the Divine Consciousness in its supramental Light and Power has descended and transformed the physical that other things can be given a prominent place — and then too it will not be the satisfaction of desire, but the fulfilment of the Divine Truth in each and all and in the new life that is to express it. In the divine life all is for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of the ego.

I should perhaps add one or two things to avoid misapprehensions. First, the love for the Divine of which I speak is not a psychic love only; it is the love of all the being, — the vital and vital-physical included, — all are capable of the same self-giving. It is a mistake to believe that if the vital loves, it must be a love that demands and imposes the satisfaction of its desire; it is a mistake to think that it must be either that or else the vital, in order to escape from its "attachment", must draw away altogether from the object of its love. The vital can be as absolute in its unquestioning self-giving as any other part of the nature; nothing can be more generous than its movement when it forgets self for the Beloved. The vital and physical should both give themselves in the true way — the way of true love, not of ego-desire.

*
**

Generally when people speak of vital intimacy they mean something very external which does not need to be brought down since it is common in human life. If it is the inner vital intimacy with the Divine, then of course that makes the union more complete, provided it is based on the psychic.

*
**

When the vital joins in the love for the Divine, it brings into it

heroism, enthusiasm, intensity, absoluteness, exclusiveness, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the total and passionate self-giving of all the nature. It is the vital passion for the Divine that creates the spiritual heroes, conquerors or martyrs.

*
**

I suppose "love" expresses something more intense than goodwill which can include mere liking or affection. But whether love or goodwill the human feeling is always either based on or strongly mixed with ego, — that is why it cannot be pure. It is said in the Upanishad, "One does not love the wife for the sake of the wife", or the child or friend etc. as the case may be, "but for one's self's sake one loves the wife". There is usually a hope of return, of benefit or advantage of some kind, or of certain pleasures and gratifications, mental, vital or physical that the person loved can give. Remove these things and the love very soon sinks, diminishes or disappears or turns into anger, reproach, indifference or even hatred. But there is also an element of habit, something that makes the presence of the person loved a sort of necessity because it has always been there — and this is sometimes so strong that even in spite of entire incompatibility of temper, fierce antagonism, something like hatred, it lasts and even these gulfs of discord are not enough to make the persons part; in other cases, this feeling is more tepid and after a time one gets accustomed to separation or accepts a substitute. There is again often the element of some kind of spontaneous attraction or affinity — mental vital or physical, which gives a stronger cohesion to the love. Lastly, there is in the highest or deepest kind of love the psychic element which comes from the inmost heart and soul, a kind of inner union or self-giving or at least a seeking for that, a tie or an urge independent of other conditions or elements, existing for its own sake and not for any mental, vital or physical pleasure, satisfaction, interest or habit. But usually the psychic element in human love, even where it is present, is so much mixed, overloaded and hidden under the others that it has little chance of fulfilling itself or achieving its own natural purity and fullness. What is called love is therefore sometimes one thing, sometimes

another, most often a confused mixture, and it is impossible to give a general answer to the questions you put as to what is meant by love in such and such a case. It depends on the persons and the circumstances.

When the love goes towards the Divine, there is still this ordinary human element in it. There is the call for a return and if the return does not seem to come, the love may sink; there is the self-interest, the demand for the Divine as a giver of all that the human being wants and, if the demands are not acceded to, *abhimāna* against the Divine, loss of faith, loss of fervour, etc., etc. But the true love for the Divine is in its fundamental nature not of this kind, but psychic and spiritual. The psychic element is the need of the inmost being for self-giving, love, adoration, union which can only be fully satisfied by the Divine. The spiritual element is the need of the being for contact, merging, union with its own highest and whole self and source of being and consciousness and bliss, the Divine. These two are two sides of the same thing. The mind, vital, physical can be the supports and recipients of this love, but they can be fully that only when they become remoulded in harmony with the psychic and spiritual elements of the being and no longer bring in the lower insistences of the ego.

*
**

Why do you need something remarkable? The love of the soul is the true thing, simple and absolute — the rest is good only if it is a means of manifestation of the soul's love.

*
**

The outer being has to learn to love in the psychic way without ego. If it loves in the egoistic vital way, then it only creates difficulties for itself and for the sadhana and for the Mother.

*
**

The relation of the child to the Mother is that of an entire, sincere

and simple trust, love and dependence.

⁂

When you come to the Divine, lean inwardly on the Divine and do not let other things affect you.

⁂

What he describes is a vital demand of the ego for emotional self-satisfaction; it is Maya. It is not true love, for true love seeks for union and self-giving and that is the love one must bring to the Divine. This vital (so-called) love brings only suffering and disappointment; it does not bring happiness; it never gets satisfied and, even if it is granted something that it asks for, it is never satisfied with it.

It is perfectly possible to get rid of this Maya of the vital demand, if one wishes to do it, but the will to do it must be sincere. If he is sincere in his will, he will certainly get help and protection. He must get his basis changed from the vital to the psychic centre.

⁂

It is the ordinary nature of vital love not to last or, if it tries to last, not to satisfy, because it is a passion which Nature has thrown in in order to serve a temporary purpose; it is good enough therefore for a temporary purpose and its normal tendency is to wane when it has sufficiently served Nature's purpose. In mankind, as man is a more complex being, she calls in the aid of imagination and idealism to help her push, gives a sense of ardour, of beauty and fire and glory, but all that wanes after a time. It cannot last, because it is all a borrowed light and power, borrowed in the sense of being a reflection caught from something beyond and not native to the reflecting vital medium which imagination uses for the purpose. Moreover, nothing lasts in the mind and vital, all is a flux there. The one thing that endures is the soul, the spirit. Therefore love can last or satisfy only if it bases itself on the soul and spirit, if it has its roots there. But that

means living no longer in the vital but in the soul and spirit.

The difficulty of the vital giving up is because the vital is not governed by reason or knowledge, but by instinct and impulse and the desire of pleasure. It draws back because it is disappointed, because it realises that the disappointment will always repeat itself, but it does not realise that the whole thing is itself a glamour or, if it does, it repines that it should be so. Where the vairagya is sattwic, born not of disappointment but of the sense of greater and truer things to be attained, this difficulty does not arise. However, the vital can learn by experience, can learn so much as to turn away from its regret of the beauty of the will-o'-the-wisp. Its vairagya can become sattwic and decisive.

*
**

Whatever may be the glamour of a vital love, once it falls away and one gets to a higher level, it should be seen to have been not the great thing one imagined. To keep this exaggerated estimate of it is to hold the consciousness back from the pull towards the greater thing with which that cannot for a moment compare. If one keeps an exaggerated feeling like that for an inferior past it must make it more difficult to develop the entire person for a higher future. It is indeed not the Mother's wish that anybody should look back in a spirit of enthusiastic appreciation to the old vital love. It was indeed "so little" in any true estimate of things. It is not at all a question of comparison or of extolling the vital passion of one at the expense of that of the other. It is the whole thing that must dwindle in its proportions and recede into the shadowy constructions of the past that have no longer any importance.

*
**

Your difficulty is that the vital has not yet arrived at the secret of the self-existent Ananda of love, the Ananda of love's own pure truth, the inner beauty of it for its own sake, the secret of the inner abiding ecstasy; it cannot yet believe that the thing exists. But it is travelling towards it and this feeling was probably

a stage — a groping after a purer vital emotion on the way to the purest of all which is one with the Divine.

⁂

The Divine Love, unlike the human, is deep and vast and silent; one must become quiet and wide to be aware of it and reply to it. He must make it his whole object to be surrendered so that he may become a vessel and instrument — leaving it to the Divine Wisdom and Love to fill him with what is needed. Let him also fix this in the mind not to insist that in a given time he must progress, develop, get realisation; whatever time it takes, he must be prepared to wait and persevere and make his whole life an aspiration and an opening for the one thing only, the Divine. To give oneself is the secret of sadhana, not to demand and acquire. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow. But for that all impatience and revolt must go; all suggestions of not getting, not being helped, not being loved, going away, of abandoning life or the spiritual endeavour must be rejected.

⁂

If the love is absolute and complete and there has never been any vital demand connected with it, then suggestions of revolt cannot come.

⁂

One can love divinely only by becoming divine in nature; there is no other way.

⁂

Love is sufficient for itself — it does not need the support of the blind. In that it is like faith and every other divine force.

⁂

Human love is mostly vital and physical with a mental support

— it can take an unselfish, noble and pure form and expression only if it is touched by the psychic. It is true, as you say, that it is more usually a mixture of ignorance, attachment, passion and desire. But whatever it may be, one who wishes to reach the Divine must not burden himself with human loves and attachments, for they form so many fetters and hamper his steps, turning him away besides from the concentration of his emotions on the one supreme object of love.

There is such a thing as psychic love, pure, without demand, sincere in self-giving, but it is not usually left pure in the attraction of human beings to one another. One must also be on one's guard against the profession of psychic love when one is doing sadhana, — for that is most often a cloak and justification for yielding to a vital attraction or attachment.

Universal love is the spiritual founded on the sense of the One and the Divine everywhere and the change of the personal into a wide universal consciousness, free from attachment and ignorance.

Divine Love is of two kinds — the divine Love for the creation and the souls that are part of itself, and the love of the seeker and love for the Divine Beloved; it has both a personal and impersonal element, but the personal is free here from all lower elements or bondage to the vital and physical instincts.

*
**

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

*
**

The Divine's love is that which comes from above poured down from the Divine Oneness and its Ananda on the being — psychic love is a form taken by divine love in the human being according to the need and possibilities of the human consciousness.

*
**

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

⁂

If love is psychic in its motive, it always brings the sense of oneness or at least of an inner intimate closeness of being. The Divine Love is based upon oneness and the psychic derives from the Divine Love.

⁂

If the psychic unites itself with the Divine, 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.

⁂

Men are necessarily separated by the individualisation of their nature and can only establish contacts there. In the psychic being one gets the sense of oneness by psychic sympathy, but not any unification, for the psychic is the individual soul and must unify itself with the Divine before it can through the Divine unify with others. In spiritual realisation there are two quite opposite forms — one in which one withdraws from all outer things including all material beings in the world to merge in the Divine and one in which one feels the Self or the Divine in all and through that realisation attains to a universal oneness.

⁂

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 go together to make the highest divine love.

⁂

Universal love is always universal — psychic love can individualise itself.

⁂

Cosmic love depends on the realisation of oneness of self with all. Psychic love or feeling for all can exist without this realisation.

⁂

The Intuitive or overmind are more open to the truth of Divine love and more capable of universalising love than the mind ordinarily is — love there is also more calm in its intensity, less ego-bound than in the mental parts. But the mind can also approach their quality of love, if the love in it grows psychic and spiritual.

⁂

I do not quite understand X's question. Does he mean to ask whether one can become conscious of the Divine's Love for all creatures before one is oneself filled with the universal love for others? If that is the meaning, then one can certainly become conscious of the Divine's Love before one has oneself the universal love — one can become conscious of it by contact with the Divine in oneself. Naturally the consciousness of it should lead to the development of a universal love for all. But if he means a love that is divine, not tainted by the lower movements, then it is true that until there comes the peace, purity, freedom from ego, wideness, light of the universal consciousness which is the basis of the universal love, it is difficult to have a love that is free from all the defects, limitations, taints of ordinary human love. The more one has of the universality the more one tends to be freed from these things.

⁂

The oneness with all in its basis is something self-existent and self-content which does not *need* expression. When it does express

itself as love, it is something wide and universal, untroubled and firm even when it is intense. This is in the basic cosmic oneness. There is also the surface cosmic consciousness which is an awareness of the play of cosmic forces — here anything may rise, sex also. It is this part that needs the perfect psychisation, otherwise one cannot hold, contain and deal with it in the proper way.

⁂

The realisation in the mind of the One brings or ought to bring a certain freedom in the mind, but it is possible for the vital and the body under its impulse to go on having the ordinary movements — for they depend only partially on the mind for their action. They can even carry it away, *haranti prasabham manaḥ*, or they can act in spite of the mind's reasoning and disapprobation. "I see the better and approve it, I follow the worse" as the Roman poet puts it — in the language of the Gita, *anicchannapi balādiva niyojitaḥ*. It is necessary therefore that the realisation with its peace and force of purity should come down concretely into the vital and physical itself so that when the vital movements try to rise they are met by it and unable to remain because of its automatic pressure.

⁂

So long as the whole consciousness is not clear of doubtful stuff and the realisation of oneness confirmed in the supreme purity, the expression of the all-love is not advisable. It is by holding it in oneself that it becomes a real part of the nature, established and purified by joining with it the other realisations still to come. At present it is only a first touch and to dissipate it by expression would be very imprudent. The sex and vital might easily become active — I have known cases of very good yogis...in whom the *viśvaprema* became the *viśvakāma*, all-love becoming all-lust. This has happened with many both in Europe and the East. Even apart from that it is always best to solidify or confirm rather than to throw out and disperse. When the sadhana has pro-

gressed and the knowledge from above comes to enlighten and guide the love, then it will be another matter. My insistence on rejection of all untransformed vital movements is based on experience, mine and others' and that of past yogas like the Vaishnava movement of Chaitanya (not to speak of the old Buddhist Sahaja dharma) which ended in much corruption. A wide movement such as that of all-love can only take place when the ground of Nature has been solidly prepared for it. I have no objection to your mixing with others, but only under a continual guard and control by a vigilant mind and will.

*
**

Perception is not enough to transform the nature. *Paśyataḥ* in the spiritual language does not mean only perception. Perception is of the mind and a mental perception is not enough — a substantial and dynamic realisation in all the being is necessary. Otherwise one of three things may happen. (1) The mind perceives oneness but the vital is not affected, it goes on with its impulses, for the vital is governed not by thought or reason but by tendency, impulse, desire-force — it uses reason only as a justification for its tendencies. Or even the vital may say, "All is one so it does not matter what I do. Why should not I seek oneness with others in my own way?" (2) If the mind has a realisation, but the vital does not share in it or distorts it, then also the vital can insist on its own way or even carry the mind along with it. As the Gita says, the senses (vital) carry away the mind even of the sage who sees, as the wind carries away a ship on a stormy sea. (3) The inner being may have the realisation strongly and live in the oneness, calm, peace, but the interior parts of the outer may feel the reactions of desire etc. In this case the reactions are more superficial; but even so rejection is needed till they cease. When all the being lives in the solid realisation of calm, peace, liberation, oneness, then the desires fall away and the necessity of rejection ceases, because there is nothing to reject any longer.

*
**

The mental realisation [of the one self] does not bring this result [immunity from *moha* and *śoka*], the spiritual does. In the Vedantic experience "seeing" means also becoming, one is that one self, identified, — all action of Nature seems to one a movement on that one self which is itself not touched by it. Therefore there is no *moha* or *śoka*. That is when one can keep the experience and when it is complete. Even if one has the experience only as something within while the movements of the vital continue on the surface, yet these movements are felt as external and superficial, not really belonging to oneself — the self within remains untouched, calm, griefless, at peace: If the vital also is transformed into this consciousness, then even on the surface grief becomes impossible.

*
**

The *dynamic* Love cannot go out equally to all — that would create a chaotic disturbance because of the unpreparedness of the majority. It is only the static immutable universal Love that can apply equally to all — that which comes in a still wideness of the heart which corresponds with the still wideness of the mind in which there is the equanimity and infinite peace.

*
**

One can talk to all, unless one has a reason for not doing so. The oneness with all is an internal realisation, but it does not necessarily impose the same dealing with all.... It is the old story of *hāthi brahman* and *māhout brahman*. There is the fundamental realisation and there are the disparities of the Lila — both have to be taken into account.

*
**

It is the vital seeking to pour itself out with the implicit idea of getting a return in interchange. The consciousness of oneness is something behind all life and all forms of affection come no doubt from it, but not consciously, and they get changed, mixed,

perverted when the vital takes up the action of the force of Love of whose true or divine nature it is unconscious.

⁂

That was exactly what X tried to do — to express the love in connection with this or that person. But 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.

⁂

Formerly whenever the opening of the heart came you began to associate it with vital enjoyment and turned it upon others instead of turning the love towards the Divine and keeping its essential purity — so also the higher consciousness when it came down was being dispersed in mental movements. This time they were both coming in a purer form, but the danger of the mental and vital forces catching hold of them is still there and then both are likely to stop or break down. So you must be careful to allow no mental deviation this time.

⁂

I have heard of McTaggart as a philosopher but am totally unacquainted with his thought and his writings, so it is a little difficult for me to answer you with any certitude. Isolated thoughts or sentences may easily be misunderstood if they are not read against the background of the thinker's way of looking at things taken as a whole. There is always, too, the difference of standpoint and approach between the spiritual seeker or mystic who (sometimes) philosophises and the intellectual thinker who (sometimes or partly) mysticises. The one starts from a spiritual or mystic experience or at the least an intuitive realisation and tries to express it and its connection with other spiritual or intuitive truth in the inadequate and too abstract language of

the mind; he looks behind thought and expression for some spiritual or intuitive experience to which it may point and, if he finds none, he is apt to feel the thought, however intellectually fine, or the expression, however intellectually significant, as something unsubstantial, because without spiritual substance. The intellectual thinker starts from ideas and mentalised feelings and other mental or external phenomena and tries to reach the essential truth in or behind them; generally, he stops short at a mental abstraction or only a derivative mental realisation of something that is in its own nature other than mental. But if he has the true mystic somewhere in him, he will sometimes get beyond to at least flashes and glimpses. Is it not the compulsion of this approach (I mean the inadequacy of the method of intellectual philosophy, its fixation to the word and idea, while to the complete mystic, word and idea are useful symbols only or significative flash-lights) that kept McTaggart, as it keeps many, from the unfolding of the mystic within him? If the reviewer is right, that would be why he is abstract and dry, while what is beautiful and moving in his thought might be some light that shines through in spite of the inadequate means of expression to which philosophical thinking condemns us. However, subject to this rather lengthy caveat, I will try to deal with the extracted sentences or summarised thoughts you have placed before me in your letter.

"*Love the main occupation of the selves in absolute reality*": This seems to me a little excessive. If instead of "the main occupation" it were said "an essential power", that might pass. I would myself say that bliss and oneness are the essential condition of the absolute reality, and love as the most characteristic dynamic power of bliss and oneness must support fundamentally and colour their activities; but the activities themselves may not be of one main kind but manifold in character.

Benevolence and sympathy: In mental experience benevolence and sympathy have to be distinguished from love; but it seems to me that beyond the dividing mind, where the true sense of oneness begins, these become at a higher intensity of their movement characteristic values of love. Benevolence becomes an intense compulsion imposed by love to seek always the good

of the loved, sympathy becomes the feeling out of love to contain, participate in and take as part of one's own existence all the movements of the loved and all that concerns him.

"*Love is authentic and justifies itself completely whether its cause be great or trivial*": That is not often true in human practice; for there the destiny of love and its justification depend very much as a rule (though not always) on the nature of the cause or object. For if the object of love is trivial in the sense of its being an inadequate instrument for the dynamic realisation of the sense of oneness which McTaggart says is the essence of love, then love is likely to be baulked of its fulfilment. Unless, of course, it is satisfied with existing, with spending itself in its own fundamental way on the loved without expecting any return for its self-expenditure, any mutual unification. Still, of love in its essence the statement may be true: but then it would point to the fact that Love at its origin is a self-existent force, an absolute, a transcendent (as I have put it), which does not depend upon the objects — it depends only on itself or only on the Divine; for it is a self-existent power of the Divine. If it were not self-existent, it would hardly be independent of the nature or reaction of its objects. It is partly what I mean when I speak of transcendent Love — though this is only one aspect of its transcendence. That self-existent transcendent Love spreading itself over all, turning everywhere to contain, embrace, unite, help, upraise towards love and bliss and oneness, becomes cosmic divine Love; intensely fixing itself on one or other to find itself, to achieve a dynamic unification or to reach here towards the union of the soul with the Divine, it becomes the individual divine Love. But there are unhappily its diminutions in the human mind, human vital, human physical; there the divine essence of Love easily becomes mixed with counterfeits, dimmed, concealed or lost in the twisted movements born of division and ignorance.

Love and self-reverence: It sounds very high, but also rather dry; this "emotion" in the lover does not seem to be very emotional, it is a hill-top syllogising far above the flow of any emotional urges. Self-reverence in this sense or in a deeper sense can come from Love, but it can come equally from a participation in Knowledge, in Power or anything else that one feels to be the

highest good or else of the essence of the Highest. But the passion of love, the adoration of love can bring in a quite different, even an opposite emotion. Especially in love for the Divine or for one whom one feels to be divine, the Bhakta feels an intense reverence for the Loved, a sense of something of immense greatness, beauty or value and for himself a strong impression of his own comparative unworthiness and a passionate desire to *grow* into likeness with that which one adores. What does come very often with the onrush of Love is an exaltation, a feeling of a greatening within, of new powers and high or beautiful possibilities in one's nature or of an intensification of the nature; but that is not exactly self-reverence. There is a deeper self-reverence possible, a true emotion, a sense of the value and even the sacredness of the soul, even the mind, life, body as an offering or itself the temple for the inner presence of the Beloved.

These reactions are intimately connected with the fact that Love, when it is worthy of the name, is always a seeking for union, for oneness, but also in its secret foundation it is a seeking, if sometimes only a dim groping for the Divine. Love in its depths is a contact of the Divine Possibility or Reality in oneself with the Divine Possibility or Reality in the loved. It is the inability to affirm or keep this character that makes human love either transient or baulked of its full significance or condemned to sink into a less exalted movement diminished to the capacity of the human receptacle. But there McTaggart brings in his saving clause, "When I love, I see the other not as he is now (and therefore really is not), but as he really is (that is, as he will be)". The rest of it that "the other with all his faults is somehow infinitely good — at least for his friend" seems to me too mental to convey anything very definite from the standpoint of the spiritual inner values. But the formula quoted also is not over clear. It means, I suppose, something like Vivekananda's distinction between the apparent Man and the real Man; or it coincides up to a point with the saying of one of the early teachers of Vedanta, Yajnavalkya, "Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear (or, friend — for the wife is only the first of a list), but for the sake of the Self (the greater Self, the Spirit within) is she dear". But Yajnavalkya, a seeker of the One (not the plural) Absolute, would not have

accepted the implication in McTaggart's phrase; he would have said that one must go beyond and eventually seek the Self not in the wife or friend — even though sought there for a time, but in its own self-existence. In any case, there seems to be here an avowal that it is not the human being (what he now is), but the Divine or a portion of the Divine within (call it God if you will or call it Absolute) that is the object of the love. But the mystic would not be satisfied like McTaggart with that "will be", — would not consent to remain in love with the finite for the sake of an unrealised Infinite. He would insist on pushing on towards full realisation, towards finding the Divine in Itself or the Divine Manifest; he would not rest satisfied with the Divine unconscious of itself, unmanifested or only distantly *in posse*.

There is where the parallel with the Ishta Devata which you suggest would not hold; for the Ishta Devata on whom the seeker concentrates is a *conscious* Personality of the Divine answering to the needs of his own personality and showing to him as in a representative image what the Divine is or at least pointing him through itself to the Absolute. On the other side, when I spoke of the self-absorption of the Divine Force in its energising, I was trying to explain the possibility in a Divine Cosmic manifestation of this apparently inconscient Matter. I said that in the frontal movement there was something of the Divine that had thrown itself into material form with so much concentration that it became the motion and the form which the motion of Force creates and put all that was not that behind it, — even, but in a greater degree and more permanently, as a man can concentrate and forget his own existence in what he is doing, seeing or making. In man himself, who is not inconscient, this appears in a different way; his frontal being is unaware of what is behind the surface personality and action, like the part of the actor's being which becomes the role and forgets entirely the other more enduring self behind the actor. But in either case there is a larger self behind, "a Conscient in things inconscient", which is aware both of itself and of the self-forgetting frontal form seen as the creature. Does McTaggart recognise this conscious Divine within? He makes too little of this Absolute or Real Self which, as he yet sees, is within the unreal or less real appearance. His

denial of the Divine comes from the insistence of his mind and vital temperament on the friend as he is, even though his higher mind may try to escape from that by the idea of what his friend will be; otherwise it is difficult to understand the stupendous exaggeration of his thesis that the love for friends is the *only* real thing in life and his unwillingness to give God a chance, lest that should take away the friend and leave the Divine in his place.

I do not quite seize what is his conception of the Absolute. How can it be said that a society (?) of distinct selves are collectively the Absolute? If it is meant that where there is a union of conscious liberated selves there is the presence of the Divine and a certain manifestation is possible, — that is intelligible. Or if by society is meant only that the sum or totality of all distinct selves is the Divine and these distinct individual selves are portions of the Divine, that would be an intelligible (pantheistic) solution. Only, it would be a Divine All or some kind of Cosmic Self or Spirit rather than the Absolute. For if there is an Absolute — which intellectually one is not bound to believe except that something in the higher mind seems imperatively to ask for it or feel it is there — it must surely exist in its own absolute right, — not constituted, not dependent for its being on a collectivity of distinct selves, but self-existent. To the intellect such an Absolute may seem an indefinable *x* which it cannot grasp, but mystic or spiritual experience pushed far enough ultimately leads to it, and whatever may be the gate of experience through which one gets the first glimpse of it, it is there even though not fully grasped in that opening experience.

Your own experience of it was, you say, that of an irruption of the Infinite into the finite — of a greater Power descending upon you or uplifting you to itself. That indeed is what it is always to the spiritual experience — and that is why I speak of it as the Transcendent. It reveals itself as such a descending and uplifting Power or a descending and uplifting Love — or Light, Peace, Bliss, Consciousness, Presence; it is not limited by its manifestation in the finite, — one feels it, the Peace, the Power, Love, Light or Bliss or the Presence in which all these are, to be a self-existent infinity, not something constituted by or limited to our first sight of it here. McTaggart's love of friends remained

the *only* real thing for him; I must suppose that he had not this glimpse. But once this irruption has taken place, this descent and uplifting, that is bound to become in the end the one thing real, for by that alone can the rest find its own lasting greater reality. It is the descent of the Divine Consciousness and the ascent or uplifting into it of which we speak in our yoga. All else can only hold, make good, fulfil itself if it can lift itself to be a part of this divine realisation or of its manifestation, and, to do that, it must accept a great transformation and perfection. But the central realisation must be the one central aim and it is that realisation only which will make other things, all that is intended to be made part of it, divinely possible.

II

The nature of Bhakti is adoration, worship, self-offering to what is greater than oneself; the nature of love is a feeling or a seeking for closeness and union. Self-giving is the character of both; both are necessary in the yoga and each gets its full force when supported by the other.

*
**

Bhakti is not an experience, it is a state of the heart and soul. It is a state which comes when the psychic being is awake and prominent.

*
**

In the way of *ahaitukī bhakti*, everything can be made a means — poetry and music, for instance, become not merely poetry and music and not merely even an expression of Bhakti, but themselves a means of bringing the experience of love and Bhakti. Meditation itself becomes not an effort of mental concentration, but a flow of love and adoration and worship.

*
**

There is no restriction in this yoga to inward worship and meditation only. As it is a yoga for the whole being, not for the inner being only, no such restriction could be intended. Old forms of the different religions may fall away, but absence of all forms is not the rule of the sadhana.

⁂

These are the exaggerations made by the mind taking one side of Truth and ignoring the other sides. The inner bhakti is the main thing and without it the external becomes a form and mere ritual, but the external has its place and use when it is straightforward and sincere.

⁂

What is meant by *bāhyapūjā* [external worship]? If it is purely external, then of course it is the lowest form; but if done with the true consciousness, it can bring the greatest possible completeness to the adoration by allowing the body and the most external consciousness to share in the spirit and act of worship.

⁂

The photograph is a vehicle only — but if you have the right consciousness, then you can bring something of the living being into it or become aware of the being for which it stands and can make it a means of contact. It is like the *prāṇapratiṣṭhā* in the image in the temple.

⁂

What you say is no doubt true, but it is better not to take away the support that may still be there for the faith of those who need such supports. These visions and images and ceremonies are meant for that. It is a spiritual principle not to take away any faith or support of faith, unless the persons who have it are able to replace it by something larger and more complete.

If the *prāṇapratiṣṭhā* brings down a powerful Presence, that may remain there long after the one who has brought it has left

his body. Usually it is maintained by the bhakti of the officiant and the sincerity of belief and worship of those who come to the temple for adoration. If these fail, there is likely to be a withdrawal of the Presence.

⁂

Seeing is of many kinds. There is the superficial seeing which only erects or receives momentarily or for some time an image of the Being seen; that brings no change unless the inner bhakti makes it a means for change. There is also the reception of the living image in one of its forms into oneself — let us say, in the heart; that can have an immediate effect or initiate a period of spiritual growth. There is also the seeing outside oneself in a more or less objective and subtle-physical or physical way.

As for the *milana*, the abiding union is within and that can be there at all times; the outer *milana* or contact is not usually abiding. There are some who often or almost invariably have the contact whenever they worship, the Deity may become living to them in the picture or other image they worship, may move and act through it; others may feel him always present, outwardly, subtle-physically, abiding with them where they live or in the very room, but sometimes this is only for a period. Or they may feel the Presence with them, see it frequently in a body (but not materially except sometimes), feel its touch or embrace, converse with it constantly — that is also a kind of *milana*. The greatest *milana* is one in which one is constantly aware of the Deity abiding in oneself, in everything in the world, holding all the world in him, identical with existence and yet supremely beyond the world — but in the world too one sees, hears, feels nothing but him, so that the very senses bear witness to him alone — and this does not exclude such special personal manifestations as those vouchsafed to X and his guru. The more ways there are of the union, the better.

⁂

One can receive the manifestation by any of the senses or by a

feeling in the consciousness, — in the complete objective manifestation there can be sight, hearing, touch, everything.

⁂

I meant that one can feel the divine consciousness as an impersonal spiritual state, a state of peace, light, joy, wideness without feeling in it the Divine Presence. The Divine Presence is felt as that of one who is the living source and essence of that light etc., a Being therefore, not merely a spiritual state. The Mother's Presence is still more concrete, definite, personal — it is not that of Someone unknown, of a Power or Being, but of one who is known, intimate, loved, to whom one can offer all the being in a living concrete way. The image is not indispensable, though it helps — the presence can be inwardly felt without it.

⁂

If the Presence of the Divine is established, it means that the being is ready for the transformation which proceeds naturally.

⁂

Adesh and Darshan are elements of a stage of sadhana in which there is still much distance from the closer state of union. The mind and vital seek the contact through Darshan and the guidance through Adesh. What we aim at in our yoga is the constant union and presence and control of the Divine at every moment. But on the mental and vital level this usually remains imperfect and there is much chance of error. It is by the supramentalisation that the perfect truth of this Divine union in action can come.

III

It is a misunderstanding to suppose that I am against Bhakti or against emotional Bhakti — which comes to the same thing, since without emotion there can be no Bhakti. It is rather the

fact that in my writings on yoga I have given Bhakti the highest place. All that I have said at any time which could account for this misunderstanding was against an *unpurified* emotionalism which, according to my experience, leads to want of balance, agitated and disharmonious expression or even contrary reactions and, at its extreme, nervous disorder. But the insistence on purification does not mean that I condemn true feeling and emotion any more than the insistence on a purified mind or will means that I condemn thought and will. On the contrary, the deeper the emotion, the more intense the Bhakti, the greater is the force for realisation and transformation. It is oftenest through intensity of emotion that the psychic being awakes and there is an opening of the inner doors to the Divine.

⁂

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.

⁂

Emotion is necessary in the yoga and it is only the excessive emotional sensitiveness which makes one enter into despondency over small things that has to be overcome. The very basis of this yoga is bhakti and if one kills one's emotional being, there can be no bhakti. So there can be no possibility of emotion being excluded from the yoga.

⁂

Emotion is a good element in yoga; but emotional desire becomes easily a cause of perturbation and an obstacle.

Turn your emotions towards the Divine, aspire for their

purification; they will then become a help on the way and no longer a cause of suffering.

Not to kill emotion, but to turn it towards the Divine is the right way of the yoga.

But it must become pure, founded upon spiritual peace and joy, capable of being transmuted into Ananda. Equality and calm in the mind and vital parts, an intense psychic emotion in the heart can perfectly go together.

Awake by your aspiration the psychic fire in the heart that burns steadily towards the Divine — that is the one way to liberate and fulfil the emotional nature.

⁂

It is only the ordinary vital emotions which waste the energy and disturb the concentration and peace that have to be discouraged. Emotion itself is not a bad thing; it is a necessary part of the nature, and psychic emotion is one of the most powerful helps to the sadhana. Psychic emotion, bringing tears of love for the Divine or tears of Ananda, ought not to be suppressed: it is only a vital mixture that brings disturbance in the sadhana.

⁂

The emotional [devotion] is more outward than the psychic — it tends towards outward expression. The psychic is inwards and gives the direction to the whole inner and outer life. The emotional can be intense, but is neither so sure in its basis nor powerful enough to change the whole direction of the life.

⁂

It is quite true that by going above one can get out of all problems, for they no longer exist, but the problems are there below and it is difficult to be always above with so much unsolved and calling for solution. But just as one can go high above, so one can go deep within and it is this going deep within that is needed. What happened was at the surface of the emotional being and if

one simply stays there the difficulties of the emotional can come, but what has to be done is not to stay on the surface but go deep within. For the psychic is there behind the emotional surface, deep behind the heart-centre. Once one reaches it, these things can no longer touch; what will be there is the inner peace and happiness, the untroubled aspiration, the presence or nearness of the Mother.

⁂

To indulge in the emotions, love, grief, sorrow, despair, emotional joy, etc. for their own sake with a sort of mental-vital over-emphasis on them is what is called sentimentalism. There should be in deep feeling a calm, a control, a purifying restraint and measure. One should not be at the mercy of one's feelings and sentiments, but master of oneself always.

⁂

When the consciousness indulges in these things and wallows in the excitement of emotional joy or suffering, that is called sentimentalism. There is another kind in which the mind enjoys its perceptions of emotion, love, suffering etc. and plays with them, but that is a less violent and more superficial sentimentalism.

⁂

To know about the sadhana with the mind is not indispensable. If one has bhakti and aspires in the heart's silence, if there is the true love for the Divine, then the nature will open of itself, there will be the true experience and the Mother's power working within you, and the necessary knowledge will come.

⁂

There is always the personal and the impersonal side of the Divine and the Truth and it is a mistake to think the impersonal alone to be true or important, for that leads to a void incomplete-

ness in part of the being, while only one side is given satisfaction. Impersonality belongs to the intellectual mind and the static self, personality to the soul and heart and dynamic being. Those who disregard the personal Divine ignore something which is profound and essential.

In following the heart in its purer impulses one follows something that is at least as precious as the mind's loyalty to its own conceptions of what the Truth may be.

⁂

It is because it is the analysing mind that is active — that always brings a certain dryness; the higher mind or the intuition bring a much more spontaneous and complete knowledge — the beginning of the real Jnana without this effort. The bhakti which you feel is psychic, but with a strong vital tinge; and it is the mind and the vital between them that bring in the opposition between the bhakti and the Jnana. The vital concerned only with emotion finds the mental knowledge dry and without *rasa*, the mind finds the bhakti to be a blind emotion, fully interesting only when its character has been analysed and understood. There is no such opposition when the psychic and the higher-plane knowledge act together predominantly — the psychic welcomes knowledge that supports its emotion, the higher thought consciousness rejoices in the bhakti.

⁂

There can be no such thing as a mechanical and artificial devotion — there is either devotion or there is not. Devotion may be intense or not intense, complete or incomplete, sometimes manifest and sometimes veiled, but mechanical or artificial devotion is a contradiction in terms.

⁂

Your new attitude towards food and outward things is the true attitude, the psychic attitude and shows that the psychic is already

controlling the vital-physical as well as the other parts of the vital nature.

As for the heart, the movement of longing for the Divine, weeping, sorrowing, yearning is not essential in this yoga. A strong aspiration there must be, an intense longing there may very well be, an ardent love and will for union; but there need be no sorrow or disturbance. The quiet and silence you feel in your heart is the result of the pressure of the higher consciousness to come down. That always brings a quietude in mind and heart and as it descends a great peace and silence. In the silent heart and mind, there must be the true attitude, and thus you have the feeling that you are the Mother's child, the faith and the will to be united with her. Along with that there may be an aspiration or silent expectation of what is to come. That also you seem to have. All therefore is well.

As I have written often, there are two transformations in this yoga. The first is when the psychic being comes forward and controls and changes the nature. This is what has happened in you with great rapidity; it must complete itself, but that it will do naturally. The second is the descent of the Mother's consciousness from above the head and its transformation of the whole being and nature. This also is now preparing in you. It is the reason of the pressure, the silence in the heart etc. What you experienced this time when you went above was the wideness of the higher being in that higher consciousness above with the Light coming down through it. That wideness and that light will afterwards come down into you and your consciousness will be changed into the light and wideness and all that is in them.

⁂

Viraha is a transitional experience on the plane of the vital seeking for the Spirit — there is no reason why it should not be possible at a quite early stage. It is the realisations without any uneasiness, realisations in pure Ananda, that belong to the more developed sadhana.

⁂

The pure feeling of *viraha* is psychic — but if rajasic or tamasic movements come in (such as depression, complaint, revolt etc.) then it becomes tamasic or rajasic.

⁂

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

⁂

The sooner you get rid of *abhimāna* the better. Anyone who indulges *abhimāna* puts himself under the influence of the hostile forces. *Abhimāna* has nothing to do with true love; it is, like jealousy, a part of the vital egoism.

⁂

The very object of yoga is a change of consciousness — it is by getting a new consciousness or by unveiling the hidden consciousness of the true being within and progressively manifesting and perfecting it that one gets first the contact and then the union with the Divine. Ananda and Bhakti are part of that deeper consciousness, and it is only when one lives in it and grows in it that Ananda and Bhakti can be permanent. Till then, one can only get experiences of Ananda and Bhakti, but not the constant and permanent state. But the state of Bhakti and constantly growing surrender does not come to all at an early stage of the sadhana; many, most indeed, have a long journey of purification and Tapasya to go through before it opens, and experiences of this kind, at first rare and interspersed, afterwards frequent, are the landmarks of their progress. It depends on certain conditions, which have nothing to do with superior or inferior yoga-capacity, but rather with a predisposition in the heart to open, as you say, to the Sun of the Divine Influence.

⁂

Yes, that was what happened, but also the flow of devotion and love is a thing which the more it repeats or awakens is bound to overflow to all the parts of being and have its effect on them.

⁂

What you felt about replacement is quite true. The transformation proceeds to a large extent by a taking away or throwing out of the old superficial self and its movements and replacing them by a new deeper self and its true action.

It does not matter if the higher feelings, devotion etc. seem to you sometimes like an influence or colouring. It looks like that when you feel yourself in the external physical or outer vital or outer mind. These feelings really are those of your inmost self, your soul, the psychic in you and when you are in the psychic consciousness they become normal and natural. But when your consciousness shifts and becomes more external, then these workings of the soul or of the divine consciousness are felt as themselves external, as merely an influence. All the same, you have to open yourself to them constantly and they will then more and more either soak in steadily or come in successive waves or floods and go on till they have filled the mind, the vital, the body. You will then feel them always as not only normal but as part of your very self and the true substance of your nature.

⁂

If one does not encourage the devotion of the emotional being merely because the lower vital is not yet under control and acts differently, then how is the devotion to grow and how is the lower vital to change? Until the final clarification and harmonising of the nature there are always contradictions in the being, but that is not a reason for in any way suppressing the play of the better movements — on the contrary it is these that should be cultivated and made to increase.

IV

Your whole-hearted acceptance of the Vaishnava idea and Bhakti becomes rather bewildering when it is coupled with an insistence that love cannot be given to the Divine until one has experience of the Divine. For what is more common in the Vaishnava attitude than the joy of Bhakti for its own sake? "Give me Bhakti," it cries, "whatever else you may keep from me. Even if it is long before I can meet you, even if you delay to manifest yourself, let my Bhakti, my seeking for you, my cry, my love, my adoration be always there." How constantly the Bhakta has sung, "All my life I have been seeking you and still you are not there, but still I seek and cannot cease to seek and love and adore." If it were really impossible to love God unless you first experience him, how could this be? In fact, your mind seems to be putting the cart before the horse. One seeks after God first with persistence or with passion, one finds him afterwards, some sooner than others, but most after a long seeking. One does not find him first, then seek after him. Even a glimpse often comes only after long or fervent seeking. One has the love of God or at any rate some heart's desire for him and afterwards one becomes aware of God's love, its reply to the heart's desire, its response of the supreme joy and Ananda. One does not say to God, "Show your love from the first, shower on me the experience of yourself, satisfy my demand, then I will see whether I can love you so long as you deserve it." It is surely the seeker who must seek and love first, follow the quest, become impassioned for the Sought — then only does the veil move aside and the Light appear and the Face manifest that alone can satisfy the soul after its long sojourn in the desert.

Then again you may say, "Yes, but whether I love or not, I want, I have always wanted and now I want more and more, but I get nothing." Yes, but wanting is not all. As you now begin to see, there are conditions that have to be met — like the purification of the heart. Your thesis was, "Once I want God, God must manifest to me, come to me, at least give glimpses of himself to me, the real, solid, concrete experience, not mere vague things which I can't understand or value. God's Grace must

answer my call for it, whether I yet deserve it or not — or else there is no Grace." God's Grace may indeed do that in certain cases, but where does the "must" come in? If God must do it, it is no longer God's Grace, but God's duty or an obligation or a contract or a treaty. The Divine looks into the heart and removes the veil at the moment which he knows to be the right moment to do it. You have laid stress on the Bhakti theory that one has only to call his name and he must reply, he must at once be there. Perhaps, but for whom is this true? For a certain kind of Bhakta surely who feels the power of the Name, who has the passion of the Name and puts it into his cry. If one is like that, then there may be the immediate reply — if not, one has to become like that, then there will be the reply. But some go on using the Name for years, before there is an answer. Ramakrishna himself got it after a few months, but what months! and what a condition he had to pass through before he got it! Still he succeeded quickly because he had a pure heart already — and that divine passion in it.

It is not surely the Bhakta but the man of knowledge who demands experience first. He can say, "How can I know without experience?" but he too goes on seeking like Tota Puri even though for thirty years, striving for the decisive realisation. It is really the man of intellect, the rationalist who says, "Let God, if he exists, prove himself to me first, then I will believe, then I will make some serious and prolonged effort to explore him and see what he is like."

All this does not mean that experience is irrelevant to sadhana — I certainly cannot have said such a stupid thing. What I have said is that the love and seeking of the Divine can be and ordinarily is there before the experience comes — it is an instinct, an inherent longing in the soul and it comes up as soon as certain coverings of the soul disappear or begin to disappear. The next thing I have said is that it is better to get the nature ready first (the purified heart and all that) before the "experiences" begin rather than the other way round and I base that on the many cases there have been of the danger of experiences before the heart and vital are ready for the true experience. Of course, in many cases there is a true experience first, a touch of the

Grace, but it is not something that lasts and is always there but rather something that touches and withdraws and waits for the nature to get ready. But this is not in every case, not even in the majority of cases, I believe. One has to begin with the soul's inherent longing, then the struggle with the nature to get the temple ready, then the unveiling of the Image, the permanent Presence in the sanctuary.

⁂

Peace was the very first thing that the yogis and seekers of old asked for and it was a quiet and silent mind — and that always brings peace — that they declared to be the best condition for realising the Divine. A cheerful and sunlit heart is the fit vessel for the Ananda and who shall say that Ananda, or what prepares it, is an obstacle to the Divine union? As for despondency, it is surely a terrible burden to carry on the way. One has to pass through it sometimes, like Christian of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the Slough of Despond but its constant reiteration cannot be anything but an obstacle. The Gita specially says, "Practise the yoga with an undespondent heart — *anirviṇṇacetasā*." I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and accesses of despair are natural — though not inevitable on the way — not because they are helps but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the incidents you allude to as an example for others to follow — they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in the end in spite of these bad moments.... At any rate Ramakrishna told the story of Narada and the ascetic yogi and Vaishnava Bhakta with approval of its moral. I put it in my own language but keep the substance: Narada on his way to Vaikuntha met a yogi practising hard tapasya on the hills. "O Narada," cried the yogi, "you are going to Vaikuntha and will see Vishnu. I have been practising terrific austerities all my life and yet I have not even now attained to him. Ask him at least for me when I shall reach him." Then Narada met a Vaishnava, a bhakta who was singing songs

to Hari and dancing to his own singing, and he cried also: "O Narada, you will see my Lord Hari. Ask him when I shall reach him and see his face." On his way back Narada came first to the yogi. "I have asked Vishnu," said the sage, "you will realise him after six more lives." The yogi raised a cry of loud lamentation: "What! So many austerities! Such gigantic endeavours! And how hard to me is the Lord Vishnu!" Next Narada met again the bhakta and said to him: "I have no good news for you. You will see the Lord but only after a lakh of lives." But the bhakta leapt up with a great cry of rapture: "Oh, I shall see my Lord Hari! After a lakh of lives I shall see my Lord Hari! How great is the grace of the Lord!" And he began dancing and singing in a renewed ecstasy. Then Narada said, "Thou hast attained. Today thou shalt see the Lord." Well, you may say: "What an extravagant story and how contrary to human nature!" Not so contrary as all that and in any case hardly more extravagant than the stories of Harishchandra and Shivi. Still, I do not hold up the bhakta as an example, for I myself insist on the realisation in this life and not after six or a lakh of births more. But the point of these stories is in the moral and surely when Ramakrishna told it, he was not ignorant that there was a sunlit path of yoga. He even seems to say that it is the quicker way as well as the better. So the possibility of the sunlit path is not a discovery or original invention of mine. The very first books on yoga I read more than thirty years ago spoke of the dark and sunlit way and emphasised the superiority of the latter over the former.

*
**

The true movement is a pure aspiration and surrender. After all, one has not a right to call on the Divine to manifest himself; it can come only as a response to a spiritual or psychic state of consciousness or to a long course of sadhana rightly done; or, if it comes before that or without any apparent reason, it is a Grace; but one cannot demand or compel Grace. Grace is something spontaneous which wells out from the Divine Consciousness as a free flow of its being. The bhakta looks for it, but he is ready to wait in perfect reliance — even if need be, all his life — know-

ing that it will come, never varying in his love and surrender because it does not come now or soon. That is the spirit of so many songs of devotees which you have sung yourself; I heard one such song from you in a record sometime ago and very beautiful it was and beautifully sung — "Even if I have not won Thee, O Lord, still I adore."

What prevents you from having that is the restless element of vital impatience and ever-recurring and persisting disappointment at not having what you want from the Divine. It is the idea, "I wish so much for it, surely I ought to have it, why is it withheld from me?" But wanting, however strongly, is not a passport to getting; there is something more to it than that. Our experience is that too much vital eagerness, too much insistence often blocks the way, it makes a sort of obstructing mass or a whirl of restlessness and disturbance which leaves no quiet space for the Divine to get in or for the thing asked for to come. Often it does come, but when the impatience has been definitely renounced and one waits, quietly open, for whatever may be (or, for the time, not be) given. But so often when you are preparing the way for a greater progress in the true devotion, the habit of this vital element starts up and takes hold and interrupts the progress made.

The joylessness also comes from the vital. It is partly due to the disappointment but not solely; for it is a very common phenomenon that when there is a pressure from the mind and soul on the vital, it often gets a rajasic or tamasic vairagya instead of the sattwic kind, refuses to take joy in anything, becomes dry, listless or unhappy, or it says, "Well, why don't I get the realisation you promised me? I can't wait." To get rid of that, it is best, even while observing it, not to identify oneself with it; if the mind or some part of the mind sanctions or justifies, it will persist or recur. If sorrow there must be, the other kind you described in the previous letter is preferable: the sadness that has a sweetness in it — no despair, only the psychic longing for the true thing to come. That must come by the increase of the pure and true Bhakti.

⁂

As for the way out of the impasse you speak of, I know only of the quieting of the mind which makes meditation effective, purification of the heart which brings the divine touch and in time the divine Presence, humility before the Divine which liberates from egoism and pride of the mind and of the vital, — the pride that imposes its own reasonings on the ways of the Spirit and the pride that refuses or is unable to surrender, — sustained persistence in the call within and reliance on the Grace above. Meditation, japa, prayer or aspiration from the heart can all succeed, if they are attended by these or at least some of these things. I fully believe that one who has the call in him cannot fail to arrive if he follows patiently the way towards the Divine.

I have surely never said that you should not want the divine response. One does yoga for that. What I have said is that you should not expect or insist on it at once or within an early time. It can come early or it can come late, but come it will if one is faithful in one's call: for one has not only to be sincere but to be faithful through all. If I deprecate insistence, it is because I have always found that it creates difficulties and delays owing to a strain and restlessness which are created in the nature and the despondencies and revolts of the vital when the insistence is not satisfied. The Divine knows best and one has to have trust in his wisdom and attune oneself with his will. Length of time is no proof of an ultimate incapacity to arrive: it is only a sign that there is something in oneself which has to be overcome, and if there is the will to reach the Divine, it can be overcome.

If one wishes to escape from life altogether, it can only be by the way of a complete inner renunciation or merging oneself in the Silence of the Absolute or by a bhakti that becomes absolute or by a Karmayoga that gives up one's own will and desires to the will of the Divine. I have said also that Grace can at any moment act suddenly, but over that one has no control, because it comes by an incalculable will which sees things that the mind cannot see. It is precisely the reason why one should never despair, that and also because no sincere aspiration to the Divine can fail in the end.

*
**

There is only one logic in spiritual things: that when a demand is there for the Divine, a sincere call, it is bound one day to have its fulfilment. It is only if there is a strong insincerity somewhere, a hankering after something else — power, ambition, etc. — which counterbalances the inner call that the logic is no longer applicable. In your case it is likely to come through the heart, through increase of bhakti or psychic purification of the heart: that is why I was pressing the psychic way upon you.

Do not allow these wrong ideas and feelings to govern you or your state of depression to dictate your decisions: try to keep a firm central will for the realisation; you can do so if you make up your mind to it, these things are not impossible. You will find that the spiritual difficulty disappears in the end like a mirage. It belongs to the physical self and, where the inner call is sincere, cannot hold even the outer consciousness always: its apparent solidity will dissolve.

You are no doubt right about asking for the bhakti, for I suppose it is the master claim of your nature: for that matter, it is the strongest motive force that sadhana can have and the best means for all else that has to come. It is why I said that it is through the heart that spiritual experience must come to you.

⁂

As for Krishna, why not approach simply and straight? The simple approach means trust. If you pray, trust that he hears. If the reply takes long in coming, trust that he knows and loves and that he is wisest in the choice of the time. Meanwhile quietly clear the ground, so that he may not have to trip over stone and jungle when he comes. That is my suggestion and I know what I am saying — for whatever you may say, I know very well all human difficulties and struggles and I know of the cure. That is why I press always on the things that would minimise and shorten the struggles and difficulties, — the psychic turn, faith, perfect and simple confidence and reliance. These, let me remind you, are tenets of the Vaishnava yoga. Of course, there is the other Vaishnava way which swings between yearning and despair — ardent seeking and the pangs of *viraha*. It is that you seem to

be following and I do not deny that one can arrive by that as one can by almost any way, if followed sincerely. But then those who follow it find a *rasa* even in *viraha*, in the absence and the caprice of the Divine Lover. Some of them have sung that they have followed after him all their lives but always he has slipped away from their vision and even in that they find a *rasa* and never cease following. But you find no *rasa* in it. So you cannot expect me to approve of that for you. Follow after Krishna by all means, but follow with the determination to arrive: don't do it with the expectation of failure or admit any possibility of breaking off half-way.

⁂

I have no objection at all to the worship of Krishna or the Vaishnava form of devotion, nor is there any incompatibility between Vaishnava Bhakti and my supramental yoga. There is in fact no special and exclusive form of supramental yoga: all ways can lead to the supermind, just as all ways can lead to the Divine.

If you persevere, you cannot fail to get the permanent bhakti you want and the realisation you want, but you should learn to put an entire reliance on Krishna to give it when he finds all ready and the time come. If he wants you to clear out imperfections and impurities first, that is, after all, understandable. I don't see why you should not succeed in doing it, now that your attention is being so constantly turned on it. To see them clearly and acknowledge them is the first step, to have the firm will to reject them is the next, to separate yourself from them entirely so that if they enter at all it will be as foreign elements, no longer parts of your normal nature but suggestions from outside, brings their last state; even, once seen and rejected, they may automatically fall away and disappear; but for most the process takes time. These things are not peculiar to you; they are parts of universal human nature; but they can, do and will disappear.

⁂

As to the point that puzzles you, it only arises from a confusion between the feeling of a devotee and the observation of the

observer. Of course, the devotee loves Krishna because Krishna is lovable and not for any other reason: that is his feeling and his true feeling. He has no time to bother his head about what in himself made him able to love; the fact that he does love is sufficient for him and he does not need to analyse his emotions. The Grace of Krishna consists for him in Krishna's lovableness, in his showing himself to the devotee, in his call, the cry of the flute. That is enough for the heart, or if there is anything more, it is the yearning that others or all may hear the flute, see the face, feel all the beauty and rapture of this love.

It is not the heart of the devotee but the mind of the observer that questions how it is that the Gopis were called and responded at once and others — the Brahmin women, for instance — were not called and did not respond at once. Once the mind puts the question, there are two possible answers: the mere will of Krishna without any reason, what the mind would call his absolute divine choice or his arbitrary divine caprice or else the readiness of the heart that is called: and that amounts to *adhikāri-bheda.* A third reply would be: circumstances, as for instance, "the parking off the spiritual ground into close preserves" as X puts it. But then how can circumstances prevent the Grace from acting? In spite of parking off it works: Christians, Mahomedans do answer to the Grace of Krishna. Tigers, ghouls must love if they see him, hear his flute? Yes, but why do some hear it and see him, others not? We are thrown back on two alternatives: Krishna's Grace calls whom it wills to call without any determining reason for the choice or the rejection, it is all his mercy or his withholding or at least delaying of his mercy, or else he calls the hearts that are ready to vibrate and leap up at his call — and even there he waits till the moment has come. To say that it does not depend on outward merit or appearance of fitness is no doubt true: the something that was ready to wake in spite, it may be, of many hard layers in which it was enclosed, may be something visible to Krishna and not to us. It was there perhaps long before the flute began to play, but Krishna was busy melting the hard layers so that the heart in its leap might not be pressed back by them when the awakening notes came. The Gopis heard and rushed out into the forest, the others

did not, — or did they think it was only some rustic music or some rude cowherd-lover fluting to his sweetheart: not a call that learned and cultured or virtuous ears could recognise as the call of the Divine? There is something to be said after all for the *adhikāri-bheda.* But, of course, it must be understood in the large sense: some may have the *adhikāra* for recognising Krishna's flute, some for the call of Christ, some for the dance of Shiva — to each his own way and his nature's answer to the Divine Call. *Adhikāra* cannot be stated in rigid mental terms: it is something spiritual and subtle, something mystic and secret between the called and the Caller.

As for the swelled head, the theory of Grace may no doubt contribute to it, though I should imagine that the said head never felt the Grace but only the magnanimity of its own ego. The swelling may come equally in the road of personal effort as by the craving for Grace. It is fundamentally not due to either, but to a natural predisposition to this kind of oedema.

⁂

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.

⁂

The coming of sex on seeing the image of Krishna and Radha is due to the past association of sex with the cult of Radha-Krishna. But in fact the image has nothing to do with sex. The true symbol for it would not be the human sex-attraction, but the soul, the psychic, hearing the call of the Divine and flowering into the complete love and surrender that brings the supreme Ananda. That is what Radha and Krishna by their divine union bring about in the human consciousness and it is so that you must regard it, throwing aside the old sex-associations.

⁂

The Gopis are not ordinary people in the proper sense of the word: they are embodiments of a spiritual passion, extraordinary by their extremeness of love, personal devotion, unreserved self-giving. Whoever has that, however humble his or her position in other respects (learning, power of presentation, scholarship, external sanctity, etc.) can easily follow after Krishna and reach him: that seems to me the sense of the symbol of the Gopis. There are many other significances, of course — that is only one among the many.

⁂

Certainly, Krishna is credited with much caprice, difficult dealings and a playfulness (Lila!) which the played-with do not always immediately appreciate. But there is a reasoning as well as a hidden method in his caprices, and when he does come out of it and takes a fancy to be nice to you, he has a supreme attractiveness, charm and allurement which compensates and more than compensates for all you have suffered.

⁂

Why should not Krishna ride a horse if he so wants? His actions or habits cannot be fixed by the human mind or by an immutable tradition. Especially Krishna is a law to himself. Perhaps he was in a hurry to get to the place where he wanted to flute.

⁂

If Krishna was always and by nature cold and distant (Lord, what a discovery — Krishna of all people!), how could human devotion and aspiration come near him — he and it would soon be like the North and South Pole, growing icier and icier, always facing each other but never seeing because of the earth's bulge. Also, if Krishna did not want the human Bhakta as well as the Bhakta wanting him, who could get at him? — he would be always sitting on the snows of the Himalayas like Shiva. History

describes him otherwise and he is usually charged with being too warm and sportive.

⁂

I do not know that I can answer your question about what X means by Krishna's light. It is certainly not what is ordinarily meant by knowledge. He may mean the Light of the Divine Consciousness or the light that comes from it or he may mean the luminous being of Krishna in which all things are in their supreme truth, — the truth of knowledge, the truth of Bhakti, the truth of ecstasy and Ananda, everything is there.

There is also a manifestation of Light — the Upanishads speak of *Jyotirbrahma*, the Light that is Brahman. Very often the sadhak feels a flow of light upon him and around him or a flow of light invading his centres or even his whole being and body, penetrating and illumining every cell and in that light there grows the spiritual consciousness and one becomes open to all or many of its workings and realisations. Appositely, I have a review of the book of Ramdas entitled "Vision" before me in which is described such an experience, got by the repetition of the Rama mantra, but, if I understand rightly, after a long and rigorous self-discipline. "The mantra having stopped automatically, he beheld a small circular light before his mental vision. This yielded him thrills of delight. This experience having continued for some days, he felt a dazzling light like lightning flashing his eyes, which ultimately permeated and absorbed him. Now an inexpressible transport of bliss filled every pore of his physical frame." It does not always come like that — very often it comes by stages or at long intervals, at first, working on the consciousness till it is ready.

We speak here also of Krishna's light — Krishna's light in the mind, Krishna's light in the vital, etc. But it is a special light — in the mind it brings clarity, freedom from obscurity, mental error and perversion; in the vital it clears out all perilous stuff and where it is, there is a pure and divine happiness and gladness.

But why limit oneself, insist on one thing alone and shut out every other? Whether it be by Bhakti or by Light or by Ananda

or by Peace or by any other means whatsoever that one gets the initial realisation of the Divine, to get it is the thing and all means are good that bring it.

If it is bhakti that one insists on, it is by the bhakti that it comes and bhakti in its fullness is nothing but an entire self-giving. But then all meditation, all tapasya, all means of prayer or mantra must have that as its end and it is when one has progressed sufficiently in that that the Divine Grace descends and the realisation comes and develops till it is complete. But the moment of its advent is chosen by the wisdom of the Divine alone and one must have the strength to go on till it arrives, for when all is truly ready it cannot fail to come.

Section Eight

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN YOGA

Human Relationships in Yoga

YOU seem not to have understood the principle of this yoga. The old yoga demanded a complete renunciation extending to the giving up of the worldly life itself. This yoga aims instead at a new and transformed life. But it insists as inexorably on a complete throwing away of desire and attachment in the mind, life and body. Its aim is to refound life in the truth of the spirit and for that purpose to transfer the roots of all we are and do from the mind, life and body to a greater consciousness above the mind. That means that in the new life all the connections must be founded on a spiritual intimacy and a truth quite other than any which supports our present connections. One must be prepared to renounce at the higher call what are spoken of as the natural affections. Even if they are kept at all, it can only be with a change which transforms them altogether. But whether they are to be renounced or kept and changed must be decided not by the personal desires but by the truth above. All must be given up to the Supreme Master of the yoga.

The power that works in this yoga is of a thorough-going character and tolerates in the end nothing great or small that is an obstacle to the Truth and its realisation.

⁂

Personal relation is not a part of the yoga. When one has the union with the Divine, then only can there be a true spiritual relation with others.

⁂

The idea that all sadhaks must be aloof from each other and at daggers drawn is itself a preconceived idea that must be abandoned. Harmony and not strife is the law of yogic living. This preconceived idea arises perhaps from the old notion of Nirvana as the aim; but Nirvana is not the aim here. The aim here is

fulfilment of the Divine in life and for that, union and solidarity are indispensable.

The ideal of the yoga is that all should be centred in and around the Divine and the life of the sadhaks must be founded on that firm foundation, their personal relations also should have the Divine for their centre. Moreover, all relations should pass from the vital to the spiritual basis with the vital only as a form and instrument of the spiritual — this means that, from whatever relations they have with each other, all jealousy, strife, hatred, aversion, rancour and other evil vital feelings should be abandoned, for they can be no part of the spiritual life. So, also, all egoistic love and attachment will have to disappear — the love that loves only for the ego's sake and, as soon as the ego is hurt and dissatisfied, ceases to love or even cherishes rancour and hate. There must be a real living and lasting unity behind the love. It is understood of course that such things as sexual impurity must disappear also.

That is the ideal, but as for the way of attainment, it may differ for different people. One way is that in which one leaves everything else to follow the Divine alone. This does not mean an aversion for anybody any more than it means aversion for the world and life. It only means an absorption in one's central aim, with the idea that once that is attained it will be easy to found all relations on the true basis, to become truly united with others in the heart and the spirit and the life, united in the spiritual truth and in the Divine. The other way is to go forward from where one is, seeking the Divine centrally and subordinating all else to that, but not putting everything else aside, rather seeking to transform gradually and progressively whatever is capable of such transformation. All the things that are not wanted in the relation — sex impurity, jealousy, anger, egoistic demand — drop away as the inner being grows purer and is replaced by the unity of soul with soul and the binding together of the social life in the hoop of the Divine.

It is not that one cannot have relations with people outside the circle of the sadhaks, but there too if the spiritual life grows within, it must necessarily affect the relation and spiritualise it on the sadhak's side. And there must be no such attachment as

would make the relation an obstacle or a rival to the Divine. Attachment to family etc. often is like that and, if so, it falls away from the sadhak. That is an exigence which, I think, should not be considered excessive. All that, however, can be progressively done; a severing of existing relations is necessary for some, it is not so for all. A transformation, however gradual, is indispensable, — severance where severance is the right thing to do.

P.S. I must repeat also that each case differs — one rule for all is not practical or practicable. What is needed by each for his spiritual progress is the one desideratum to be held in view.

*
**

Absence of love and fellow-feeling is not necessary for nearness to the Divine; on the contrary, a sense of closeness and oneness with others is a part of the divine consciousness into which the sadhak enters by nearness to the Divine and the feeling of oneness with the Divine. An entire rejection of all relations is indeed the final aim of the Mayavadin, and in the ascetic yoga an entire loss of all relations of friendship and affection and attachment to the world and its living beings would be regarded as a promising sign of advance towards liberation, Moksha; but even there, I think, a feeling of oneness and unattached spiritual sympathy for all is at least a penultimate stage, like the compassion of the Buddhist, before the turning to Moksha or Nirvana. In this yoga the feeling of unity with others, love, universal joy and Ananda are an essential part of the liberation and perfection which are the aim of the sadhana.

On the other hand, human society, human friendship, love, affection, fellow-feeling are mostly and usually — not entirely or in all cases — founded on a vital basis and are ego-held at their centre. It is because of the pleasure of being loved, the pleasure of enlarging the ego by contact, mutual penetration of spirit, with another, the exhilaration of the vital interchange which feeds their personality that men usually love — and there are also other and still more selfish motives that mix with this essential movement. There are of course higher spiritual, psychic, mental, vital

elements that come in or can come in; but the whole thing is very mixed, even at its best. This is the reason why at a certain stage with or without apparent reason the world and life and human society and relations and philanthropy (which is as ego-ridden as the rest) begin to pall. There is sometimes an ostensible reason — a disappointment of the surface vital, the withdrawal of affection by others, the perception that those loved or men generally are not what one thought them to be and a host of other causes; but often the cause is a secret disappointment of some part of the inner being, not translated or not well translated into the mind, because it expected from these things something which they cannot give. It is the case with many who turn or are pushed to the spiritual life. For some it takes the form of a *vairāgya* which drives them towards ascetic indifference and gives the urge towards Moksha. For us, what we hold to be necessary is that the mixture should disappear and that the consciousness should be established on a purer level (not only spiritual and psychic but a purer and higher mental, vital, physical consciousness) in which there is not this mixture. There one would feel the true Ananda of oneness and love and sympathy and fellowship, spiritual and self-existent in its basis but expressing itself through the other parts of the nature. If that is to happen, there must obviously be a change; the old form of these movements must drop off and leave room for a new and higher self to disclose its own way of expression and realisation of itself and of the Divine through these things — that is the inner truth of the matter.

I take it therefore that the condition you describe is a period of transition and change, negative in its beginning, as these movements often are at first, so as to create a vacant space for the new positive to appear and live in it and fill it. But the vital, not having a long continued or at all sufficient or complete experience of what is to fill the vacancy, feels only the loss and regrets it even while another part of the being, another part even of the vital, is ready to let go what is disappearing and does not yearn to keep it. If it were not for this movement of the vital, (which in your case has been very strong and large and avid of life), the disappearance of these things would, at least after the first sense of void, bring only a feeling of peace, relief and a still expectation of

greater things. What is intended in the first place to fill the void was indicated in the peace and joy which came to you as the touch of Shiva — naturally, this would not be all but a beginning, a basis for a new self, a new consciousness, an activity of a greater nature; as I told you, it is a deep spiritual calm and peace that is the only stable foundation for a lasting Bhakti and Ananda. In that new consciousness there would be a new basis for relations with others; for an ascetic dryness or isolated loneliness cannot be your spiritual destiny since it is not consonant with your Swabhava which is made for joy, largeness, expansion, a comprehensive movement of the life-force. Therefore do not be discouraged; wait upon the purifying movement of Shiva.

*
**

I have always said that the vital is indispensable for the divine or spiritual action — without it there can be no complete expression, no realisation in life — hardly even any realisation in sadhana. When I speak of the vital mixture or of the obstructions, revolts, etc. of the vital, it is the unregenerated outer vital full of desire and ego and the lower passions of which I speak. I could say the same against the mind and the physical when they obstruct or oppose, but precisely because the vital is so powerful and indispensable, its obstruction, opposition or refusal of cooperation is most strikingly effective and its wrong mixtures are more dangerous to the sadhana. That is why I have always insisted on the dangers of the unregenerated vital and the necessity of mastery and purification there. It is not because I hold, like the Sannyasis, the vital and its life-power to be a thing to be condemned and rejected in its very nature.

Affection, love, tenderness are in their nature psychic, — the vital has them because the psychic is trying to express itself through the vital. It is through the emotional being that the psychic most easily expresses, for it stands just behind it in the heart centre. But it wants these things to be pure. Not that it rejects the outward expression through the vital and the physical, but as the psychic being is the form of the soul, it naturally feels the attraction of soul to soul, the union of soul with soul as the

things that are to it most abiding and concrete. Mind, vital, body are means of expression and very precious means of expression, but the inner life is for the soul the first thing, the deepest reality, and these have to be subordinated to it and conditioned by it, — its expression, its instruments and channel. I do not think that in my emphasis on the inner things, on the psychic and spiritual, I am saying anything new, strange or unintelligible. These things have always been stressed from the beginning and the more the human being is evolved, the more they take on importance. I do not see how yoga can be possible without this premier stress on the inner life, on the soul and the spirit. The emphasis on the mastery of the vital, its subordination and subjection to the spiritual and the psychic is also nothing new, strange or exorbitant. It has been insisted on always for any kind of spiritual life; even the yogas which seek most to use the vital, like certain forms of Vaishnavism, yet insist on the purification and the total offering of it to the Divine. All realisation of the Divine is an inner realisation, only, here the soul offers itself through the emotional being. The soul or psychic being is not something unheard of or incomprehensible.

⁂

Human affection is obviously unreliable because it is so much based upon selfishness and desire; it is a flame of the ego sometimes turbid and misty, sometimes more clear and brightly coloured — sometimes tamasic based on instinct and habit, sometimes rajasic and fed by passion or the cry for vital interchange, sometimes more sattwic and trying to be or look to itself disinterested. But fundamentally it depends on a personal need or a return of some kind inward or outward and when the need is not satisfied or the return ceases or is not given, it most often diminishes or dies or exists only as a tepid or troubled remnant of habit from the past or else turns for satisfaction elsewhere. The more intense it is, the more it is apt to be troubled by tumults, clashes, quarrels, egoistic disturbances of all kinds, selfishness, exactions, lapses even to rage and hatred, ruptures. It is not that these affections cannot last — tamasic instinctive affections last

because of habit in spite of everything dividing the persons, e.g. certain family affections; rajasic affections can last sometimes in spite of all disturbances and incompatibilities and furious ruptures because one has a vital need of the other and clings because of that or because both have that need and are constantly separating to return and returning to separate or proceeding from quarrel to reconciliation and from reconciliation to quarrel; sattwic affections last very often from duty to the ideal or with some other support though they may lose their keenness or intensity or brightness. But the true reliability is there only when the psychic element in human affections becomes strong enough to colour or dominate the rest. For that reason friendship is or rather can oftenest be the most durable of the human affections because there there is less interference of the vital and even though a flame of the ego it can be a quiet and pure fire giving always its warmth and light. Nevertheless reliable friendship is almost always with a very few; to have a horde of loving, unselfishly faithful friends is a phenomenon so rare that it can be safely taken as an illusion .... In any case human affection whatever its value has its place, because through it the psychic being gets the emotional experiences it needs until it is ready to prefer the true to the apparent, the perfect to the imperfect, the divine to the human. As the consciousness has to rise to the higher level so the activities of the heart also have to rise to that higher level and change their basis and character. Yoga is the founding of all life and consciousness in the Divine, so also love and affection must be rooted in the Divine and a spiritual and psychic oneness in the Divine must be their foundation — to reach the Divine first leaving other things aside or to seek the Divine alone is the straight road towards that change. That means no attachment — it need not mean turning affection into disaffection or chill indifference. But X seems to want to take his vital emotions just as they are — *tels quels* — into the Divine — let him try and don't bother him with criticisms and lectures; if it can't be done he will have to find it out for himself.

*
**

It is not because of your nature or evil destiny that the vital

cannot find the satisfaction it expected from relations with others. These relations can never give a full or permanent satisfaction; if they did, there would be no reason why the human being would ever seek the Divine. He would remain satisfied in the ordinary earth life. It is only when the Divine is found and the consciousness lifted up into the true consciousness that the true relations with others can come.

When I said there was no harm, I meant that it was better to tell the Mother what was in your mind than to keep it moving in yourself. But once told, all should be put away from the mind and it should recover its quietude.

⁂

These movements are part of man's ignorant vital nature. The love which human beings feel for one another is also usually an egoistic vital love and these other movements, claim, demand, jealousy, *abhimāna*, anger, etc., are its common accompaniments. There is no place for them in yoga — nor in true love, psychic or divine. In yoga all love should be turned towards the Divine and to human or other beings only as vessels of the Divine — *abhimāna* and the rest should have no place in it.

⁂

All that of course is not love, but self-love. Jealousy is only an ugly form of self-love. That is what people do not understand — they even think that demands and jealousy and wounded vanity are signs of love or at least natural attendants of it.

⁂

The higher vital movement is more refined and large in motion than that of the ordinary vital. It stresses emotion rather than sensation and desire, but it is not free from demand and the desire of possession.

⁂

Relations which are part of the ordinary vital nature in human life are of no value in the spiritual life — they rather interfere with the progress; for the mind and vital also should be wholly turned towards the Divine. Moreover, the purpose of sadhana is to enter into a spiritual consciousness and base everything on a new spiritual basis which can only be done when one has entered into complete unity with the Divine. Meanwhile one has to have a calm goodwill for all, but relations of a vital kind do not help — for they keep the consciousness down on a vital basis and prevent its rising to a higher level.

⁂

Regarding your question about a complementary soul and marriage, the answer is easy to give; the way of the spiritual life lies for you in one direction and marriage lies in quite another and opposite. All talk about a complementary soul is a camouflage with which the mind tries to cover the sentimental, sensational and physical wants of the lower vital nature. It is that vital nature in you which puts the question and would like an answer reconciling its desires and demands with the call of the true soul in you. But it must not expect a sanction for any such incongruous reconciliation from here. The way of the supramental yoga is clear; it lies not through concession to these things, — not, in your case, through satisfaction, under a spiritual cover if possible, of its craving for the comforts and gratifications of a domestic and conjugal life and the enjoyment of the ordinary emotional desires and physical passions, — but through the purification and transformation of the forces which these movements pervert and misuse. Not these human and animal demands, but the divine Ananda which is above and beyond them and which the indulgence of these degraded forms would prevent from descending, is the great thing that the aspiration of the vital being must demand in the sadhak.

⁂

A human vital interchange cannot be a true support for the

sadhana and is, on the contrary, sure to impair and distort it, leading to self-deception in the consciousness and a wrong turn of the emotional being and vital nature.

⁂

What you write about the family ties is perfectly correct. It creates an unnecessary interchange and comes in the way of a complete turning to the Divine. Relations after taking up yoga should be less based on a physical origin or the habits of the physical consciousness and more and more on the basis of sadhana — of sadhak with sadhaks, of others as souls travelling the same path or children of the Mother than in the ordinary way or with the old viewpoint.

⁂

When one enters the spiritual life, the family ties which belong to the ordinary nature fall away — one becomes indifferent to the old things. This indifference is a release. There need be no harshness in it at all. To remain tied to the old physical affections would mean to remain tied to the ordinary nature and that would prevent the spiritual progress.

⁂

The attachment to parents belongs to the ordinary physical nature — it has nothing to do with Divine Love.

⁂

It [the child's indebtedness to his father for bringing him up] is a law of human society, not a law of Karma. The child did not ask the father to bring him into the world — and if the father has done it for his own pleasure, it is the least he can do to bring up the child. All these are social relations (and it is not at all a one-sided debt of the child to the father, either), but whatever they are, they cease once one takes to the spiritual life. For the

spiritual life does not at all rest on the external physical relations; it is the Divine alone with whom one has then to do.

⁂

The inner being turned to the Divine naturally draws away from old vital relations and outer movements and contacts till it can bring a new consciousness into the external being.

⁂

The movement of which you speak is not psychic but emotive. It is a vital emotive force that you put out and waste. It is also harmful because, while on the one side you try to reject a past vital relation or tie with these people, you by this movement re-establish in another way a vital relation with them. If there was anything wrong in your first movement, this is quite a false way of remedying the defect.

Certainly, it would be better to reject without any violent feeling against any person, because the violence is a sign of a certain weakness in the vital which must be corrected — not for any other reason. The rejection should be quiet, firm, self-assured, decisive; it will then become radical and effective.

⁂

It is as the love of the Divine grows that the other things cease to trouble the mind.

⁂

The influence of the love for the Divine when it takes hold of any part is to turn it towards the Divine — as you describe it "concentration on the Mother" — and in the end all is gathered and harmonised around this central turn of the being. The difficulty is with mechanical parts of the being in which the old thoughts go on recurring by habit. If the concentration continues to grow, this becomes a thing of little importance at the circumference of

the mind and in the end drops away to be replaced by things that belong to the new consciousness.

⁂

The inner loneliness can only be cured by the inner experience of union with the Divine; no human association can fill the void. In the same way, for the spiritual life the harmony with others must be founded not on mental and vital affinities, but on the divine consciousness and the union with the Divine. When one feels the Divine and feels others in the Divine, then the real harmony comes. Meanwhile what there can be is the goodwill and unity founded on the feeling of a common divine goal and the sense of being all children of the Mother.... Real harmony can come only from a psychic or a spiritual basis.

⁂

To be alone with the Divine is the highest of all privileged states for the sadhak, for it is that in which inwardly he comes nearest to the Divine and can make all existence a communion in the chamber of the heart as well as in the temple of the universe. Moreover that is the beginning and base of the real oneness with all, for it establishes that oneness in its true base, on the Divine, for it is in the Divine that he meets and unites with all and no longer in a precarious interchange of the mental and vital ego. So do not fear loneliness but put your trust in the Mother and go forward on the Path in her strength and Grace.

⁂

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.

⁂

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

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

⁂

It cannot be said that these affinities are either bad or good in a general way. It depends on the person, the effects and many other things. As a general rule, all these affinities have to be surrendered to the Divine along with the rest of the old nature, so that only what is in harmony with the Divine Truth can be kept and transformed for its work in you. All relations with others must be relations in the Divine and not of the old personal nature.

⁂

There is a love in which the emotion is turned towards the Divine in an increasing receptivity and growing union. What it receives from the Divine it pours out on others, but freely without demanding a return — if you are capable of that, then that is the highest and most satisfying way to love.

⁂

A personal relation is formed when there is an exclusive mutual looking to each other. The rule about personal relations in this yoga is this: (1) All personal relations to disappear in the single relation between the sadhak and the Divine: (2) All personal (psychic-spiritual) relations to proceed from the Divine Mothèr, determined by her, and to be part of the single relation with the Divine Mother. In so far as it keeps to this double rule and admits no physical indulgence or vital deformation or mixture, a personal relation can be there. But since as yet the supramental has not taken possession but is only descending and there is still struggle in the vital and physical levels, there must be a great carefulness such as would not be necessary if the supramental transformation were already there. Both have to be in direct relation with the Mother and in a total dependence on her and to

see that that remains and that nothing diminishes its totality or cuts across it in the least degree.

⁂

The only relation permissible between a sadhak and sadhika here is the same as between a sadhak and sadhak or between a sadhika and sadhika — a friendly relation as between followers of the same path of yoga and children of the Mother.

⁂

In a general way the only method for succeeding in having between a man and a woman the free and natural yogic relations that should exist between a sadhak and a sadhika in this yoga is to be able to meet each other without thinking at all that one is a man and another a woman — both are simply human beings, both sadhaks, both striving to serve the Divine and seeking the Divine alone and none else. Have that fully in yourself and no difficulty is likely to come.

⁂

It is meant that you should have the relation of sadhaks with each other, one of goodwill and friendly feeling, but not any special relation of a vital character. If there is anyone you cannot meet without such a vital relation coming up, then only it is not advisable to meet him or her.

⁂

As for turning all to the Divine, that is a counsel of perfection for those who don't care to carry any luggage. But otherwise friendship between man and man or man and woman or woman and woman is not forbidden, provided it is the true thing and sex does not come in and also provided it does not turn one away from the goal. If the central aim is strong, that is sufficient.... When I spoke of personal relation, I certainly did not mean pure

indifference, for indifference does not create a relation: it tends to non-relation altogether. Emotional friendship need not be an obstacle.

⁂

It is certainly easier to have friendship between man and man or between woman and woman than between man and woman, because there the sexual intrusion is normally absent. In a friendship between man and woman the sexual turn can at any moment come in a subtle or in a direct way and produce perturbations. But there is no impossibility of friendship between man and woman pure of this element; such friendships can exist and have always existed. All that is needed is that the lower vital should not look in at the back door or be permitted to enter. There is often a harmony between a masculine and a feminine nature, an attraction or an affinity which rests on something other than any open or covert lower vital (sexual) basis — it depends sometimes predominantly on the mental or the psychic or on the higher vital, sometimes on a mixture of these for its substance. In such a case friendship is natural and there is little chance of other elements coming in to pull it downwards or break it.

It is also a mistake to think that the vital alone has warmth and the psychic is something frigid without any flame in it. A clear limpid goodwill is a very good and desirable thing. But that is not what is meant by psychic love. Love is love and not merely goodwill. Psychic love can have a warmth and a flame as intense and more intense than the vital, only it is a pure fire, not dependent on the satisfaction of ego-desire or on the eating up of the fuel it embraces. It is a white flame, not a red one; but white heat is not inferior to the red variety in its ardour. It is true that the psychic love does not usually get its full play in human relations and human nature; it finds the fullness of its fire and ecstasy more easily when it is lifted towards the Divine. In the human relation the psychic love gets mixed up with other elements which seek at once to use it and overshadow it. It gets an outlet for its own full intensities only at rare moments. Otherwise it comes in only as an element, but even so it contributes all the

higher things in a love fundamentally vital — all the finer sweetness, tenderness, fidelity, self-giving, self-sacrifice, reachings of soul to soul, idealising sublimations that lift up human love beyond itself, come from the psychic. If it could dominate and govern and transmute the other elements, mental, vital, physical, of human love, then love could be on the earth some reflection or preparation of the real thing, an integral union of the soul and its instruments in a dual life. But even some imperfect appearance of that is rare.

Our view is that the normal thing is in yoga for the entire flame of the nature to turn towards the Divine and the rest must wait for the true basis: to build higher things on the sand and mire of the ordinary consciousness is not safe. That does not necessarily exclude friendships or comradeships, but these must be subordinate altogether to the central fire. If anyone makes meanwhile the relation with the Divine his one absorbing aim that is quite natural and gives the full force to the sadhana. Psychic love finds itself wholly when it is the radiation of the diviner consciousness for which we are seeking; till then it is difficult for it to put out its undimmed integral self and figure.

P.S. Mind, vital, physical are properly instruments for the soul and spirit; when they work for themselves then they produce ignorant and imperfect things — if they can be made into conscious instruments of the psychic and the spirit, then they get their own diviner fulfilment; that is the idea contained in what we call transformation in this yoga.

*
**

Friendship or affection is not excluded from the yoga. Friendship with the Divine is a recognised relation in the sadhana. Friendships between the sadhaks exist and are encouraged by the Mother. Only, we seek to found them on a surer basis than that on which the bulk of human friendships are insecurely founded. It is precisely because we hold friendship, brotherhood, love to be sacred things that we want this change — because we do not want to see them broken at every moment by the movements of

the ego, soiled and spoiled and destroyed by the passions, jealousies, treacheries to which the vital is prone — it is to make them truly sacred and secure that we want them rooted in the soul, founded on the rock of the Divine. Our yoga is not an ascetic yoga: it aims at purity, but not at a cold austerity. Friendship and love are indispensable notes in the harmony to which we aspire. It is not a vain dream, for we have seen that even in imperfect conditions, when a little of the indispensable element is there at the very root, the thing is possible. It is difficult and the old obstacles still cling obstinately? But no victory can be won without a fixed fidelity to the aim and a long effort. There is no other way than to persevere.

⁂

In yoga friendship can remain but attachment has to fall away or any such engrossing affection as would keep one tied to the ordinary life and consciousness.

⁂

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

⁂

If you expect a return for your kindness, you are bound to be disappointed. It is only those who give love or kindness for its own sake without expecting a return who escape from this experience. A relation also can be established on a sure basis only when it is free from attachment or when it is predominantly psychic on both sides.

⁂

There is a fundamental psychic feeling which is the same for all; but there can also be a special psychic feeling for one or another.

⁂

No — psychic love does not exclude discrimination.

⁂

It depends on what you mean by psychic "love". One can have a psychic feeling for all beings; it does not depend on sex nor has it anything sexual in it.

⁂

Even in the world there have been relations between man and woman in which sex could not intervene — purely psychic relations. The consciousness of sex difference would be there no doubt, but without coming in as a source of desire or disturbance into the relation. But naturally it needs a certain psychic development before that is possible.

⁂

It is difficult to define its limits or to recognise it. For even when there is the psychic love for another person, it gets in the human being so mixed up with the vital that it is the commonest thing to justify a vital love by claiming for it a psychic character. One could say that psychic love is distinguished by an essential purity and selflessness — but the vital can put on a very brilliant imitation of that character, when it likes.

⁂

Our experience is that it is only when both are in the true consciousness centred round the Divine that there is some chance of a true meeting in the Divine. Otherwise, with the personal relation that forms there comes in either disappointment and alienation or else reactions that are not pure.

⁂

But that is the nature of human vital affection, it is all selfishness

disguised as love. Sometimes when there is a strong vital passion, need or tie, then the person is ready to do anything to retain the affection of the other. But it is only when the psychic is able to get into the movement that there is real unselfish affection or at least some element of it.

⁂

The phenomenon of which you speak is normal to human nature. People are drawn together or one is drawn to another by a certain feeling of affinity, of agreement or of attraction between some part of one's own nature and some part of the other's nature. At first this only is felt; one sees all that is good or pleasant to one in the other's nature and even attributes, perhaps, qualities to him that are not there or not so much there as one thinks. But with closer acquaintance other parts of the nature are felt with which one is not in affinity — perhaps there is a clash of ideas or opposition of feelings or conflict of two egos. If there is a strong love or friendship of a lasting character, then one may overcome these difficulties of contact and arrive at a harmonising or accommodation; but very often this is not there or the disagreement is so acute as to counteract the tendency of accommodation or else the ego gets so hurt as to recoil. Then it is quite possible for one to begin to see too much and exaggerate the faults of the other or to attribute things to him of a bad or unpleasant character that are not there. The whole view can change, the good feeling change into ill-feeling, alienation, even enmity or antipathy. This is always happening in human life. The opposite also happens, but less easily — i.e. the change from ill-feeling to good feeling, from opposition to harmony. But of course ill-opinion or ill-feeling towards a person need not arise from this cause alone. It happens from many causes, instinctive dislike, jealousy, conflicting interests, etc.

One must try to look calmly on others, not overstress either virtues or defects, without ill-feeling or misunderstanding or injustice, with a calm mind and vision.

⁂

It is the way that vital love usually takes when there is no strong psychic force to correct and uphold it. After the first vital glow is over, the incompatibility of the two egos begins to show itself and there is more and more strain in the relations — for one or both the demands of the other become intolerable to the vital part, there is constant irritation and the claim is felt as a burden and a yoke. Naturally in a life of sadhana there is no room for vital relations — they are a stumbling-block preventing the wholesale turning of the nature towards the Divine.

II

A quietude in all the parts and an intense aspiration is what came to you. In the inner meditation you felt the contact with the Mother as a result and afterwards your inner being rose up towards the planes of peace and wideness and light above and came back to its central place in the heart.

The inequality of feelings towards others, liking and disliking, is ingrained in the nature of the human vital. This is because some harmonise with one's own vital temperament, others do not; also there is the vital ego which gets displeased when it is hurt or when things do not go or people do not act according to its preferences or its idea of what they should do. In the self above there is a spiritual calm and equality, a goodwill to all or at a certain stage a quiet indifference to all except the Divine; in the psychic there is an equal kindness or love to all fundamentally, but there may be special relations with one — but the vital is always unequal and full of likes and dislikes. By the sadhana the vital must be quieted down; it must receive from the self above its quiet goodwill and equality to all things and from the psychic its general kindness or love. This will come, but it may take time to come. Meanwhile you have to strengthen the ideas which you express in the letter, — for they are true psychic ideas, — and they will help you towards this aim. You must get rid of all inner as well as all outer movements of anger, impatience or dislike. If things go wrong or are done wrongly, you will simply say, "The Mother knows" and go on quietly doing

or getting things done as well as you can without friction. At a later period we will show you how to use the Mother's force so that things may go better, but first you must get your inner poise in a quiet vital, for only so can the Force be used with its full possible success.

⁂

Work is always best done in silence except so far as it is necessary to speak for the work itself. Conversation is best kept for leisure hours. So nobody shall object to your silence during work.

For the rest what you should do is to keep your right attitude towards the others and not allow yourself to be upset, irritated or displeased by anything they may say or do — in other words keep the *samatā* and universal goodwill proper to a sadhak of yoga. If you do that and still others get upset or displeased, you must not mind as you will not be responsible for their wrong reaction.

⁂

I have read your letter and I understand now what it is that you find trying — but they do not seem to us such serious things as to be rightly felt as a cause of disturbance. They are the kind of inconveniences that one always has when people live and work together. It arises from a misunderstanding between two minds or two wills, each pulling his own way and feeling hurt or vexed if the other does not follow. This can only be cured by a change of consciousness — for when one goes into a deeper consciousness, first, one sees the cause of these things and is not troubled, — one acquires an understanding, patience and tolerance that makes one free from vexation and other reactions. If both or all grow in consciousness, then there arises a mental understanding of each other's viewpoints which makes it easier to bring in harmony and smooth working. It is this that should be sought by the change within — to create the same harmony from outside by exterior means is not so easy, as the human mind is stiff in its perceptions and the human vital insistent on its own way of action. Let this be your main will — to grow yourself

within and let the clearer and deeper consciousness come and have a good will for the same change to come in others so that charity and harmony may come in the place of friction and misunderstanding.

⁂

Well, I have said already that quarrels, cuttings are not a part of sadhana: the clashes and friction you speak of are, just as in the outside world, rubbings of the vital ego. Antagonisms, antipathies, dislikes, quarrellings can no more be proclaimed as part of sadhana than sex-impulses or acts can be part of sadhana. Harmony, goodwill, forbearance, equanimity are necessary ideals in the relation of sadhak with sadhak. One is not bound to mix, but if one keeps to oneself, it should be for reasons of sadhana, not out of other motives: moreover, it should be without any sense of superiority or contempt for others.... If somebody finds that association with another for any reason raises undesirable vital feelings in him or her — he or she can certainly withdraw from that association as a matter of prudence until he or she gets over the weakness. But ostentation of avoidance or public cuttings are not included in the necessity and betray feelings that equally ought to be overcome.

⁂

These results are not a punishment, they are a natural result of yielding to egoism. All quarrels proceed from egoism which pushes its own opinion and affirms its own importance, considering that it is right and everybody else wrong and thus creates anger and sense of injury etc. These things must not be indulged, but rejected at once.

⁂

I would ask you not to let resentment or anything else rise or dictate your conduct. Put these things aside and see that peace within and the seeking of the Divine are the one thing important

— these clashes being only spurts of the ego. Turn yourself in the one direction, but for the rest keep a quiet goodwill to all.

⁂

If you want to have knowledge or see all as brothers or have peace, you must think less of yourself, your desires, feelings, people's treatment of you, and think more of the Divine — living for the Divine, not for yourself.

⁂

You have now taken the right attitude, and if you keep it all will go better. It is to the divine Mother that you have come for yoga, not for the old kind of life. You should also regard this as an Ashram, not an ordinary *saṁsāra*, and in your dealings with others here strive to conquer anger, self-assertion and pride, whatever may be their attitude or behaviour towards you; for so long as you keep these moods, you will find it difficult to make progress in the yoga.

⁂

Quarrels and clashes are a proof of the absence of the yogic poise and those who seriously wish to do yoga must learn to grow out of these things. It is easy enough not to clash when there is no cause for strife or dispute or quarrel; it is when there is cause and the other side is impossible and unreasonable that one gets the opportunity of rising above one's vital nature.

⁂

As for your question, it is a sentimental part of the vital nature that quarrels with people and refuses to speak to them and it is the same part in a reaction against that mood that wants to speak and get the relation. So long as there is either of these movements the other also is possible. It is only when you get rid of this sentimentalism and turn all your purified feelings towards the Divine,

that these fluctuations disappear and a calm goodwill to all takes their place.

⁂

There are two attitudes that a sadhak can have: either a quiet equality to all regardless of their friendliness or hostility or a general goodwill.

⁂

Do not dwell much on the defects of others. It is not helpful. Keep always quiet and peace in the attitude.

⁂

That is quite right. Only those who sympathise can help — surely also one should be able to see the faults of others without hatred. Hatred injures both parties, it helps none.

⁂

There is no harm in seeing and observing if it is done with sympathy and impartiality — it is the tendency unnecessarily to criticise, find fault, condemn others (often quite wrongly) which creates a bad atmosphere both for oneself and others. And why this harshness and cocksure condemnation? Has not each man his own faults — why should he be so eager to find fault with others and condemn them? Sometimes one has to judge but it should not be done hastily or in a censorious spirit.

⁂

Men are always more able to criticise sharply the work of others and tell them how to do things or what not to do than skilful to avoid the same mistakes themselves. Often indeed one sees easily in others faults which are there in oneself but which one fails to see. These and other defects such as the last you mention are common to human nature and few escape them. The human mind is not really conscious of itself — that is why in yoga one has

always to look and see what is in oneself and become more and more conscious.

⁂

It is not a question of ordinary life. In ordinary life people always judge wrongly because they judge by mental standards and generally by conventional standards. The human mind is an instrument not of truth but of ignorance and error.

⁂

It is the petty ego in each that likes to discover and talk about the "real or unreal" defects of others — and it does not matter whether they are real or unreal; the ego has no right to judge them, because it has not the right view or the right spirit. It is only the calm, disinterested, dispassionate, all-compassionate and all-loving Spirit that can judge and see rightly the strength and weakness in each being.

⁂

Yes, all that is true. The lower vital takes a mean and petty pleasure in picking out the faults of others and thereby one hampers both one's own progress and that of the subject of the criticism.

⁂

A gossiping spirit is always an obstacle.

⁂

Such reproaches (the stone etc.) are quite usual from those who do not understand, against the sadhak when he remains firm in his path against the ordinary human vital demands upon him. But that should not perturb you. It is better to be a stone on the road to the Divine than soft and weak clay in the muddy paths of the ordinary vital human nature.

⁂

It is not what others think of you that matters, but what you are yourself.

⁂

Even sometimes a malignant (not fair or well-intentioned) criticism can be helpful by some aspect of it, if one can look at it without being affected by the unfairness.

⁂

Naturally, praise and blame may have that effect (the human nature is more sensitive to these than to almost anything else, more even than to real benefit or injury), unless either equanimity has been established or else there is so entire a confidence and happy dependence upon someone that both praise and blame are helpful to the nature. There are some men who even without yoga have so balanced a mind that they take and adjudge praise and blame calmly for what they are worth, but that is extremely rare.

III

The idea of helping others is a subtle form of the ego. It is only the Divine Force that can help. One can be its instrument, but you should first learn to be a fit and egoless instrument.

⁂

The idea of helping others is a delusion of the ego. It is only when the Mother commissions and gives her force that one can help and even then only within limits.

⁂

All change must come from within with the felt or the secret support of the Divine Power; it is only by one's own inner open-

ing to that that one can receive help, not by mental, vital or physical contact with others.

⁂

It is a relative and partial help, of course, but it is sometimes useful. A radical help can only come from within through the action of the Divine Force and the assent of the being. It must be said of course that it is not everyone that thinks he is helping who is really doing it; also if the help is accompanied with the exercising of an "influence", that influence may be of a mixed character and harm as well as help if the instrument is not pure.

⁂

Yes, it is always so with human conduct — men want to help each other with a motive behind or a feeling which proceeds from the ego.

It is only when one lives in a higher consciousness that it is otherwise.

⁂

The real failing of the mother-like ambition — at least as it manifests in many as in her — is that it conceals an ego movement, the desire to play a big part, to have people depending on one, to have the motherly reputation etc., etc. Most human altruism has really this ego basis. If one gets rid of that, then the will to help can take its true place as a movement of pure sympathy and psychic feeling.

⁂

You need not trouble yourself much about X's ideas or attach importance to them. The only truth about it is that a vital mixture does very easily get into the movements even of the sadhana, if one is not careful. The one safeguard against that is to turn all towards the Divine and draw all from the Divine, getting rid of attachment, ego and desire. In one's relations with other

sadhaks there should be neither stiffness and hardness nor attachment and sentimental leanings.

As for the motherly feeling — it has to be transformed like everything else. The danger of all these relations when they are untransformed is that they may minister in a subtle way to the ego. To avoid that, one has to make oneself an instrument merely, but without even the ego of the instrument, and to be conscious of the source, not insisting on the action or any relation, but simply allowing it to be useful whenever one can clearly feel that it is intended. Also one must be careful that no force comes through one except the right forces, those which are in harmony with the higher consciousness and help. If one does always in that spirit and with that care, then even if mistakes are made, it does not matter — the growing consciousness will set them right and progress towards a more perfect working.

⁂

Of course it is the disadvantage of helping others that one comes into contact with their consciousness and their difficulties and also gets more externalised.

⁂

Yes, it is dangerous [to sympathise with anyone gone wrong], because it puts one in touch with the adverse Force that upset him and that Force at once tries to touch you and make its suggestions and contaminate by a sort of contagion or infection.

⁂

By the sympathy you get into contact and receive what is in the other — or also you may give or let go or have drawn from you part of your force which goes to the other. It is the vital sympathy which has this effect; a calm spiritual or psychic goodwill does not bring these reactions.

⁂

However the bearing of others' difficulties would, I fear, be a heavy burden for anybody and I doubt the efficacy of the method. What one can do much more usefully is, if one has strength to give out of one's strength to the other, if one has peace to shed the peace on the other etc. This one can do without losing one's strength or peace — if it is done in the right way.

⁂

There are two possible attitudes in the matter and each has something to be said for it. There is much to be said for X's attitude — first, because until one's own siddhi is complete, the help one gives is always a little doubtful and imperfect and, secondly, there is the danger so often emphasised by experienced yogis of taking on oneself the difficulties of those one helps. But all the same to wait for perfection is not always possible.

⁂

To want unwaveringly the welfare of another both in the head and the heart, is the best help one can give.

⁂

If your husband is in a perilous period of his life and suffering from ill-health and you feel for him, the best thing for him is still that you should tranquillise yourself and call the Divine to his help to pass through. Even in the ordinary life disquietude and depression create an unhelpful atmosphere for one who is ill or in difficulties. Once you are a sadhak, then whether for yourself or to help others for whom you still feel, the true spiritual attitude of reliance on the Divine Will and call for the help from above is always the best and most effective course.

⁂

Whatever or whomever you have handed over to the Divine, you should not be any longer attached or anxious about him

or it but leave all to the Divine to do for the best.

*
**

It is very good that the condition you speak of has settled itself — that is a great progress. As for the prayers, the fact of praying and the attitude it brings, especially unselfish prayer for others, itself opens you to the higher Power, even if there is no corresponding result in the person prayed for. Nothing can be positively said about that, for the result must necessarily depend on the persons, whether they are open or receptive or something in them can respond to any Force the prayer brings down.

IV

It is certainly a great help to be able to limit one's contacts provided it is not carried too far. I must note however that even with limited contacts undesirable waves can get in — it is a measure of precaution but does not make you absolutely safe. On the other hand complete withdrawal carries one to another extreme and has its own dangers. The complete safety from "stuff" distracting, disturbing, externalising etc. can only come from a growth of the consciousness within. In the interim absorption and limitation of contacts like that can be a helpful measure if used in a judicious way.

*
**

It is true that one has to try to keep the inner condition under all circumstances, even the most adverse; but that does not mean one has to accept, unnecessarily, unfavourable conditions when there is no good reason for their being allowed to go on. Especially, the nervous system and the physical cannot bear an excessive strain, — the mind too and the higher vital; your fatigue came from the strain of living in the One Consciousness and at the same time exposing yourself too much to prolonged contacts from the ordinary consciousness. A certain amount of self-defence is necessary, so that the consciousness may not be pulled

down or out constantly into the ordinary atmosphere or the physical strained by being forced into activities that have become foreign to you. Those who practise yoga often seek refuge in solitude from these difficulties; that is unnecessary here, but all the same you need not submit to being put under this kind of useless strain always.

*
**

You are quite right. Not to mix with others deprives of the test which contact with them imposes on the consciousness and the chance to progress in these respects. Mixing is unprofitable from the spiritual point of view when it is only to indulge the vital, chat, interchange vital movements etc.; but abstention from all mixing and contact is also not desirable. It is only when the consciousness truly needs full retirement that such retirement can be made and even then it may be full but not absolute. For in the absolute retirement one lives a purely subjective life and the opportunity for extending the spiritual progress to the outer life and testing it thoroughly is not there.

It is good that you got quickly the right attitude to what had happened; that indicates a good progress in the consciousness.

*
**

That [mixing with people, laughing, joking, etc.] is a kind of vital expansiveness, it is not vital strength — this expansiveness is also expensive. For when there is this mixing, the vitally strong get strength from it but the vitally weak expend what strength they have and become weaker.

*
**

I think no rule can be laid down applicable to all. There are some who have the expansive tendency of the vital, others who have the concentrative. The latter are absorbed in their own intensity of endeavour and certainly they gather from that a great force for progress and are saved the expense and loss of energy which frequently comes to the more communicative and also make themselves less open to reactions from others (though this cannot

be altogether avoided). The others need to communicate what is in them and cannot wait for the full fullness before they use what they have. Even they may need to give out as well as to take in in order to progress. The only thing is that they must balance the two tendencies, concentrating to receive from above as much or more than they open sideways to distribute.

*
**

X has a very strong and expansive vital, so it is quite natural that if he likes anybody he can produce this kind of effect on him by meeting. But I do not know that he is conscious of what he gives or receives; it is more likely a spontaneous action. He is not accustomed to give only though, for a strong expansive vital as opposed to a strong self-contained one needs to receive as well as to give.

*
**

It is a matter of temperament. Some are psychically and vitally sensitive and responsive to all that comes from anywhere; others are solid of nerve and walled against invasion. It is not at all a question of strength or weakness. The first have a greater sense of life and answer to life; they suffer more from life and get more from it. It is the difference between the Greek and the Roman. Even without egoism the difference remains because it is of the temperament. In yoga the first type are more able to feel everything directly and know everything in detail by close experience; it is their great advantage. The others have to use the mind to know and their grasp is less intimate.

*
**

It is true that mixing with others too closely tends to lower the condition, if they are not themselves in the right attitude and live very much in the vital. In all contacts what you have to do is to remain within, keep a detached attitude and not allow yourself to be troubled by the difficulties that arise in work or the movements of people, but keep yourself the true movement. Do not

be caught by the desire to "help" others — do and speak yourself the right thing from the inner poise and leave the help to come to them from the Divine. Nobody can really help — only the Divine Grace.

⁂

It [harmony, delight and love] is in you and when it is like that it spreads out in the atmosphere — but naturally only those can share who are open and sensitive to the influence. Still everyone who has peace or love in him becomes an added influence for its increase in the atmosphere.

⁂

When one is with another for sometime talking etc., there is always some vital interchange, unless one rejects what comes from the others instinctively or deliberately. If one is impressionable, there may be a strong impression or influence from the other. Then when one goes to another person it is possible to pass it on to the other. That is a thing which is constantly happening. But this thing happens without the knowledge of the transmitter. When one is conscious, one can prevent it happening.

⁂

It is quite possible for one person to get depressed by talking with another. Talking means a vital interchange, so that can always happen. Whether they have observed rightly in a particular case is another matter.

⁂

Yes, that is the test. When one deals with people there can be always a projection of consciousness to them or a reception of them into the consciousness, but that does not amount to an attachment — something more is needed, a grip of the vital on the person or a grip of the person on one's vital etc.

⁂

It is mainly an inner guard that you must keep. At the same time, if you feel unease in crowds it is better to avoid them — except in case of music if you feel secure there. A crowd of people engaged in purely social interchange is necessarily on a lower level of consciousness in which undesirable forces may move, if there is anyone there open to them, and one who is in a stage of consciousness opening to higher things but not yet fixed in steady and self-supporting calm is safer away from it.

In sadhana one is supposed to keep outward forces at a distance or at least not to allow them to invade one. If one faces a difficulty in the right spirit and overcomes it, naturally one progresses, but that is a different thing from letting alien forces or influences enter into the conscious being. No one need invite that, — they are only too ready to do it without being invited. One can look at and become conscious of all forces, even the worst, darkest and most hostile, provided one remains on guard and refuses all credence or support to their suggestions and rejects all claim of theirs to a place in the consciousness and nature. But all cannot do that in the earlier stages.

*
**

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 cannot concentrate on reading either or any other occupation, you will be fit for nothing except perhaps talking, mixing, flirting with women and similar occupations.

*
**

You are mistaken in thinking that the sadhana of X, Y and Z does not suffer by the dispersion of their minds in all directions. They would have been far farther on the path if they did a concentrated yoga — even, Y who has an enormous receptivity and is eager for progress might have gone thrice as far as he has

done. Moreover, your nature is intense in all it does and it was therefore quite its natural path to take the straight way. Naturally, when once the higher consciousness is settled and both the vital and physical sufficiently ready for the sadhana to go on of itself, strict tapasya will no longer be necessary. But till then we consider it very useful and helpful and in many cases indispensable. But we do not insist on it when the nature is not willing. I see too that those who get into the direct line, (there are not yet very many), get of themselves the tendency to give up these mind-dispersing interests and occupations and throw themselves fully into the sadhana.

⁂

Yes, certainly, dispersion is an inner fact. But certain outer things help the dispersion of the consciousness and if anybody like X says that he is not dispersed when he is wandering about with a companion like Y, I would say he is either not telling the truth or he is deceiving himself. If one is always in the inner consciousness then one can be not dispersed even when doing outward things — or if one is conscious of the Divine at all times and in all one does, then also can one read newspapers or do much correspondence without dispersion. But even then though there is not dispersion, yet there is less intensity of consciousness when reading a newspaper or writing a letter than when one is not putting part of oneself into quite external things. It is only when the consciousness is quite *siddha* that there is not even this difference. That does not mean one should not do external things at all, for then one gets no training in joining the two consciousnesses. But one must recognise that certain things do disperse the consciousness or lower it or externalise it more than others. Especially one should not deceive or pretend to oneself that one is not dispersed by them when one is. As for the people who want to draw others to the yoga, I should say that if they draw themselves nearer to the inner goal that would be a much more fruitful activity. And in the end it would "draw" much more people and in a better way than writing of many letters.

⁂

That is why we are not in favour of correspondence with relatives etc. outside. There is no point of contact unless one comes out or down to their own level which is obviously undesirable from the point of view of yoga. I don't think much inspiration can go through letters because their consciousness is not at all prepared. Words can at most touch only the surface of their minds; what is important is something behind the words, but to that they are not open. If there is already an interest in spiritual things, that is different. Even then it is often better to let people follow their own guru than pull them into this path.

⁂

That is the reason why it is better to drop these things [correspondence with relatives]. People who go on corresponding with their people do not feel it as you do, but nevertheless it is a fact that they maintain and enforce vibrations which keep the old forces active in the vital and maintain their impressions in the subconscient.

⁂

Every letter means an interchange with the person who writes it — for something is there behind the words, something of his person or of the forces he has put out or had around him while writing. Our thoughts and feelings are also forces and can have effects upon others. One has to grow conscious of the movement of these forces and then one can control one's own mental and vital formations and cease to be affected by those of others.

⁂

Yes, one's bad thoughts and good thoughts can have a bad or a good effect on others, though they have not always because they are not strong enough — but still that is the tendency. It is therefore always said by those who have this knowledge that we should abstain from bad thoughts of others for this reason. It is true that both kinds of thought come equally to the mind in its ordinary state; but if the mind and mental will are well deve-

loped, one can establish a control over one's thoughts as well as over one's acts and prevent the bad ones from having their play. But this mental control is not enough for the sadhak. He must attain to a quiet mind and in the silence of the mind receive only the Divine thought-forces or other divine Forces and be their field and instrument.

To silence the mind it is not enough to throw back each thought as it comes, that can only be a subordinate movement. One must get back from all thought and be separate from it, a silent consciousness observing the thoughts if they come, but not oneself thinking or identified with the thoughts. Thoughts must be felt as outside things altogether. It is then easier to reject thoughts or let them pass without their disturbing the quietude of the mind.

Not to be disturbed by either joy or grief, pleasure or displeasure by what people say or do or by any outward things is called in yoga a state of *samatā*, equality to all things. It is of immense importance in sadhana to be able to reach this state. It helps the mental quietude and silence as well as the vital to come. It means indeed that the vital itself and the vital mind are already falling silent and becoming quiet. The thinking mind is sure to follow.

*
**

Talking about somebody may very well have an effect on him; it often does, for it can be an effective formulation of a thought or feeling which, so embodied, will reach him. But I don't suppose mere mechanical thoughts or ill-formed imaginations would do that — at any rate it must be rare and need exceptional conditions or a play of forces in which a trifle counts.

*
**

The portion below the navel is the lower vital, — in your case it has become very sensitive to the condition of the same part in others or perhaps even to their general condition — so that it gives a sort of reflection or an appropriate reaction to that. It is a phase in the development that must be overpassed, because

the lower vital must get a perfect peace in it and even if it feels the condition of others do it as an act of perception or knowledge without any reaction or reflection.

⁂

I suppose it depends upon the person and upon your reactions to him. If he gives sex vibrations or is an appropriator of vital energy, then opening to him may not be good. But in the ordinary superficial interchange one need not lose anything or what is lost is so little and so automatically repaired that it does not matter.

⁂

It is quite possible that he pulls [the vital energy] unconsciously, as he is vitally weak and people who are vitally weak do unconsciously and automatically pull on others.

⁂

When people mix together there is generally some interchange of vital forces which is quite involuntary.... Vampirising is a special phenomenon — a person who lives upon the vital of others and flourishes vitally at their expense.

⁂

The tired feeling which the people felt after seeing this X is a sign of vampirism, but very often there is no such feeling but there is an after-effect on the whole. The nerves get gradually wrong — what is called the nervous envelope becomes weak or in one way or another the vitality becomes weak or gets into an abnormal condition — excitable and irritable. There are many such ways in which the effect shows itself. Sex-vampirism is a different matter — in sex interchange the normal thing is to give and take, but the sex-vampire eats up the other's vital and gives nothing or very little.

⁂

It is not necessary to be so careful as all that. Ordinary vital interchanges are of a slight character. Nobody can take away another's vital, for the very good reason that if that happened, the person from whom it was taken would die. It is possible of course for one person to drain another's vital forces so as to leave him limp or weak or dry, but it is only the vampire kind that do that. It is possible also for one to give out too much of one's vital forces so as to weaken oneself or exhaust of energy, a thing which should not be done, — it is only those who know how to draw or can draw freely from the universal vital Force and replenish their life energies that can give out freely. All of course draw to some extent, otherwise they would not remain alive, for expenditure of vital energy is always going on and one has to replace it; but for most the capacity for drawing is limited and the capacity for giving without exhaustion is also limited.

But the ordinary movements of interchange are harmless provided they are kept within moderate limits. What creates a difficulty in the sadhana is that one may easily draw in undesirable influences or pass them on to others. It is the reason why at certain stages a limitation of talk, intercourse etc. is often advisable. But the true remedy is to become inwardly conscious, to know and be able to repel any undesirable incursion or influence, to be able when speaking, mixing etc. to keep a defence round one and allow to pass in only what one can accept and nothing else. Also to measure what one can give out safely and what one cannot. When one has the consciousness and the practice, this working becomes almost automatic.

*
**

No, people are not conscious of these things, only a few are. The vital exchange is there, but they are not aware of it — because they live in the external mind (physical) and these things go on behind. Even if they feel more energetic after an interchange or depressed or tired, they would not attribute it to the talk or contact, because the interchange is unconscious; their external mind in which they live not being aware of it.

*
**

The utility [of being conscious of the vital interchange] depends upon the development of an inner power based upon peace which will act upon these things and prevent them. So long as one is unconscious, one undergoes the action in the Ignorance and there is no possibility of going out of the circle because there is no knowledge. The consciousness comes with a growing inner development in the being which makes the peace, the liberation a necessity — with that one opens to a higher Force of a new consciousness which puts an end to the vital interchange and creates a new poise for the vital as well as the mental life. If one stops with the increased sensitivity and does not go farther, then of course there is no proper use of it. There are some people like X and Y who got so absorbed in the "occult" knowledge that they stopped there going round and round in it and making all sorts of blunders because the spiritual light was not there. One has not to stop there, but go on and beyond to the spiritual consciousness and the greater light, strength and poise it brings.

*
**

I don't suppose people are at all aware of this occult commerce. Some like Daudet may observe the expenditure or throwing out of forces, but not the pulling or the effect on others. The idea of mental interchange is familiar though only of the superficial kind, not the silent action of mind on mind which is always going on, but the vital impacts are known only to a few occultists. If one becomes very conscious one can become aware of the forces acting in and from all around, e.g. forces of joy or depression or anger.

*
**

There must necessarily be a difference between the vital energy of a cultured and well-educated man and of one who is rough and ignorant. If nothing else, a greater refinement and subtlety in their vital force and therefore in the energy is there. Drinking if excessive affects the substance and quality of the energy —

but probably a moderate drinking and smoking would have a less perceptible effect. I don't think people in ordinary life notice clearly, but they have often a general impression which they can't explain or particularise.

Section Nine

SADHANA IN THE ASHRAM AND OUTSIDE

Sadhana in the Ashram and Outside

THIS Ashram has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit. There is no general rule as to the stage at which one may leave the ordinary life and enter here; in each case it depends on the personal need and impulsion and the possibility or the advisability for one to take the step.

*
**

This is not an Ashram like others — the members are not Sannyasis; it is not *mokṣa* that is the sole aim of the yoga here. What is being done here is a preparation for a work — a work which will be founded on yogic consciousness and Yoga-Shakti, and can have no other foundation. Meanwhile, every member here is expected to do some work in the Ashram as part of this spiritual preparation.

*
**

The difficulty is that she seems to have only *vairāgya* for worldly life without any knowledge or special call for this yoga, and this yoga and the life here are quite different things from ordinary yoga and ordinary Ashrams. It is not a life of meditative retirement as elsewhere. Moreover, it would be impossible for us to demand anything without seeing her and knowing at close hand what she is like. We are not just now for taking more inmates into the Ashram except in a very few cases.

*
**

'Dedication of life" is quite possible for some without their stay-

ing here. It is a question of inward attitude and of the total consecration of the being to the Divine.

⁂

We do not think it would be advisable at this stage [for X to come to stay at the Ashram]. By coming to the Ashram difficulties do not cease — they have to be faced and overcome wherever you are. For certain natures residence in the Ashram from the beginning is helpful — others have to prepare themselves outside.

⁂

I have read and considered your letter and have decided to give you the opportunity you ask for — you can reside in the Ashram for two or three months to begin with and find out whether this is really the place and the path you were seeking and we also can by a closer observation of your spiritual possibilities discern how best we can help you and whether this yoga is the best for you.

This trial is necessary for many reasons, but especially because it is a difficult yoga to follow and not many can really meet the demands it makes on the nature. You have written that you saw in me one who achieved through the perfection of the intellect, its spiritualisation and divinisation; but in fact I arrived through the complete silence of the mind and whatever spiritualisation and divinisation it attained was through the descent of a higher supra-intellectual knowledge into that silence. The book, *Essays on the Gita*, itself was written in that silence of the mind, without intellectual effort and by a free activity of this knowledge from above. This is important because the principle of this yoga is not perfection of the human nature as it is but a psychic and spiritual transformation of all the parts of the being through the action of an inner consciousness and then of a higher consciousness which works on them, throws out their old movements or changes them into the image of its own and so transmutes lower into higher nature. It is not so much the perfection of the intellect as a transcendence of it, a transformation of the mind, the substitution of a larger greater principle of know-

ledge — and so with all the rest of the being.

This is a slow and difficult process; the road is long and it is hard to establish even the necessary basis. The old existing nature resists and obstructs and difficulties rise one after another and repeatedly till they are overcome. It is therefore necessary to be sure that this is the path to which one is called before one finally decides to tread it.

If you wish, we are ready to give you the trial you ask for. On receiving your answer the Mother will make the necessary arrangements for your residence in the Ashram.

*
**

It is not helpful to abandon the ordinary life before the being is ready for the full spiritual life. To do so means to precipitate a struggle between the different elements and exasperate it to a point of intensity which the nature is not ready to bear. The vital elements in you have partly to be met by the discipline and experience of life, while keeping the spiritual aim in view and trying to govern life by it progressively in the spirit of Karmayoga.

It is for this reason that we gave our approval to your marriage.

*
**

No, it is not enough to be in the Ashram; one has to open to the Mother and put away the mind which one was playing with in the world.

*
**

There is no formal initiation, acceptance is sufficient, but I do not usually accept unless I have seen, or the Mother has seen the person or unless there is a clear sign that he is meant for this yoga. Sometimes those who desire to be disciples have seen me in dream or vision before acceptance.

*
**

What you say is right. This attitude that the Divine has need of

the sadhak and not the sadhak of the Divine, is utterly wrong and absurd. When people are accepted here, they are given a chance of a great Divine Grace, of being instruments of a great work. To suppose that the Divine *cannot* do his work without the help of this or that person is surely most arrogant and illogical. They ought to remember the Gita's *ṛte'pi tvām* "even without thee" the work can be done and its *nimittamātram bhava.*

*
**

I was thinking not of Pranam etc. which have a living value, but of old forms which persist although they have no longer any value — e.g. *śrāddha* for the dead. Also here forms which have no relation to this yoga — for instance Christians who cling to the Christian forms or Mahomedans to the Namaz or Hindus to the Sandhyavandana in the old way might soon find them either falling off or else an obstacle to the free development of their sadhana.

II

What you write shows that you had a wrong idea of the work. The work in the Ashram was not meant as a service to humanity or to a section of it called the sadhaks of the Ashram. It was not meant either as an opportunity for a joyful social life and a flow of sentiments and attachments between the sadhaks and an expression of the vital movements, a free vital interchange whether with some or with all. The work was meant as a service to the Divine and as a field for the inner opening to the Divine, surrender to the Divine alone, rejection of ego and all the ordinary vital movements and the training in a psychic elevation, selflessness, obedience, renunciation of all mental, vital or other self-assertion of the limited personality. Self-affirmation is not the aim, the formation of a collective vital ego is also not the aim. The merging of the little ego in union with the Divine, purification, surrender, the substitution of the Divine guidance for one's own ignorant self-guidance based on one's personal ideas and

personal feelings is the aim of Karmayoga, the surrender of one's own will to the Divine Will.

If one feels human beings to be near and the Divine to be far and seeks the Divine through service of and love of human beings and not the direct service and love of the Divine, then one is following a wrong principle — for that is the principle of the mental, vital and moral not the spiritual life.

*
**

["The love of the Divine in all beings and the constant perception and acceptance of its workings in all things."] That is all right in the ordinary Karmayoga which aims at union with the cosmic spirit and stops short at the overmind — but here a special work has to be done and a new realisation achieved for the earth and not for ourselves alone. It is necessary to stand apart from the rest of the world so as to separate ourselves from the ordinary consciousness in order to bring down a new one.

It is not that love for all is not part of the sadhana, but it has not to translate itself at once into a mixing with all — it can only express itself in a general and when need be dynamic universal goodwill, but for the rest it must find vent in this labour of bringing down the higher consciousness with all its effect for the earth. As for accepting the working of the Divine in all things that is necessary here too in the sense of seeing it even behind our struggles and difficulties, but not accepting the nature of man and the world as it is — our aim is to move towards a more divine working which will replace what now is by a greater and happier manifestation. That too is a labour of divine Love.

*
**

As for our own position it is that ordinary life is Maya in this sense, not that it is an illusion, for it exists and is very real, but that it is an Ignorance, a thing founded on what is from the spiritual point of view a falsehood. So it is logical to avoid it or rather we are obliged to have some touch with it but we minimise that as much as possible except in so far as it is useful for

our purpose. We have to turn life from falsehood into spiritual truth, from a life of Ignorance into a life of spiritual knowledge. But until we have succeeded in doing that for ourselves, it is better to keep apart from the life of Ignorance of the world — otherwise our little slowly growing light is likely to be submerged in the seas of darkness all around it. Even as it is, the endeavour is difficult enough — it would be tenfold more difficult if there were no isolation.

*
**

Work here and work done in the world are of course not the same thing. The work there is not in any way a divine work in special — it is ordinary work in the world. But still one must take it as a training and do it in the spirit of Karmayoga — what matters there is not the nature of the work in itself, but the spirit in which it is done. It must be in the spirit of the Gita, without desire, with detachment, without repulsion, but doing it as perfectly as possible, not for the sake of the family or promotion or to please the superiors, but simply because it is the thing that has been given in the hand to do. It is a field of inner training, nothing else. One has to learn in it these things, equality, desirelessness, dedication. It is not the work as a thing for its own sake, but one's doing of it and one's way of doing it that one has to dedicate to the Divine. Done in that spirit, it does not matter what the work is. If one trains oneself spiritually like that, then one will be ready to do in the true way whatever special work directly for the Divine, (such as the Ashram work) one may any day be given to do.

*
**

Obviously the life here is not that of a place where the mind and vital can hope to be satisfied and fulfilled or lead a lively life. It is only if one can live within that it becomes satisfactory.... But for one who has the assured inner life, there is no dullness. Realisation within must be the first object; work for the Divine on the basis of the true inner self and a new consciousness, not on

the basis of the old, is the result that can follow. Till then work and life can be only a means of sadhana, not a "self-fulfilment" or a brilliant and interesting vital life on the old basis.

*
**

Here there is nothing that ministers to the human vital nature; the work is small, silent, shut off from the outside world and its circumstances, of value only as a field for spiritual self-culture. If one is governed by the sole spiritual motive and has the spiritual consciousness, one can take joy and interest in this work. Or if, in spite of his human shortcomings, the worker is mainly bent on spiritual progress and self-perfection, then also he can take interest in the work and both feel its utility for the discovery and purification of his egoistic mental and vital and physical nature and take joy in it as a service of the Divine.

*
**

It is not at all a question of usefulness — although your work is very useful when you put yourself to it. Work is part of the sadhana, and in sadhana the question of usefulness does not arise, that is an outward practical measure of things, — though even in the outward ordinary life utility is not the only measure. The question is of aspiration to the Divine, whether that is your central aim in life, your inner need or not. Sadhana for oneself is another matter — one can take it up or leave it. The real sadhana is for the Divine — it is the soul's need and one cannot give it up even if in moments of despondency one thinks one can.

*
**

The work here is not intended for showing one's capacity or having a position or as a means of physical nearness to the Mother, but as a field and an opportunity for the Karmayoga part of the integral yoga, for learning to work in the true yogic way, dedication through service, practical selflessness, obedience, scrupulousness, discipline, setting the Divine and the

Divine's work first and oneself last, harmony, patience, forbearance, etc. When the workers learn these things and cease to be ego-centric, as most of you now are, then will come the time for work in which capacity can really be shown, although even then the showing of capacity will be an incident and can never be the main consideration or the object of divine work.

*
**

There is no necessity for everybody to become artists or writers or do work of a public character. X and Y have their own capacities and it is sufficient for the present if they train themselves to make them useful for the Mother's work. Others have great capacities which they are content to use in the small and obscure work of the Ashram without figuring before the public in something big. What is important now is to get the true consciousness from above, get rid of the ego (which nobody has yet done) and learn to be an instrument of the Divine Force. After that the manifestation can take place, not before.

*
**

What is called politics is too rajasic, unsound and muddled with all sorts of egoistic motives. Our way is the pressure of the Spirit upon the earth-consciousness to change.

*
**

No, it [politics] is not given as a work to anybody. People go on with that because it is a mental interest or habit they do not like giving up, it is like the vital habit of tea-drinking or anything else of the kind. Politics is not only not given as a work but the discussion of politics is discouraged as much as possible.

*
**

But surely politics is not the only activity possible for the vital — there are hundreds of others. Whenever there is something

to be produced, created, organised, achieved, conquered, it is the vital that is indispensable.

⁂

I have made it a rule not to write anything about politics. Also the question of what to do in a body like the Assembly depends on circumstances, on the practical needs of the situation which can change rapidly. In such a body the work is not of a spiritual character. All kinds of work can be done with the spiritual conciousness behind, but unless one has advanced very far, one must in the fact be guided by the necessities of the work itself and its characteristic nature. Since you have joined this party, its programme must be yours and what you have to do is to bring to it all the conscientiousness, ability and selflessness which you can command. You are right in not taking office, as you have made the promise. In any case a sadhak entering politics should work not for himself but for the country. If he takes office, it should be only when he can do something for the country by it and not until he has proved his character and ability and fitness for position. You should walk by a high standard which will bring you the respect even of opponents and justify the choice of the electors.

⁂

As for propaganda I have seen that it is perfectly useless for us — if there is any effect, it is a very trifling and paltry effect not worth the trouble. If the Truth has to spread itself, it will do it of its own motion; these things are unnecessary.

⁂

Well-known or unknown has absolutely no importance from the spiritual point of view. It is simply the propagandist spirit. We are not a party or a church or religion seeking adherents or proselytes. One man who earnestly pursues the yoga is of more value than a thousand well-known men.

⁂

Fear in these experiences is a thing one must get rid of; if there is any danger, a call to the Mother is sufficient, but in reality there is none — for the protection is there.

It is true that there is in most people here this running after those who come from outside especially if they are well-known or distinguished. It is a common weakness of human nature and, like other weaknesses of human nature, the sadhaks seem not inclined to get rid of it. It is because they do not live sufficiently within, so the vital gets excited or attracted when something important or somebody important (or considered so) comes in from outside.

*
**

What X or others think or say does not matter very much after all as we do not depend on them for our work but on the Divine Will only. So many have said and thought all sorts of things (people outside) about and against us, that has never affected either us or our work in the least; it is of a very minor importance.

III

It is necessary or rather inevitable that in an Ashram which is a "laboratory", as X puts it, for a spiritual and supramental yoga, humanity should be variously represented. For the problem of transformation has to deal with all sorts of elements favourable and unfavourable. The same man indeed carries in him a mixture of these two things. If only sattwic and cultured men come for yoga, men without very much of the vital difficulty in them, then, because the difficulty of the vital element in terrestrial nature has not been faced and overcome, it might well be that the endeavour would fail. There might conceivably be under certain circumstances an overmental layer superimposed on the mental, vital and physical, and influencing them, but hardly anything supramental or a sovereign transmutation of the human being. Those in the Ashram come from all quarters and are of all kinds; it cannot be otherwise.

In the course of the yoga, collectively — though not for each one necessarily — as each plane is dealt with, all its difficulties arise. That will explain much in the Ashram that people do not expect there. When the preliminary work is over in the "laboratory", things must change.

Also, much stress has not been laid on human fellowship of the ordinary kind between the inmates (though good feeling, consideration and courtesy should always be there,) because that is not the aim; it is unity in a new consciousness that is the aim, and the first thing is for each to do his sadhana, to arrive at that new consciousness and realise oneness there.

Whatever faults are there in the sadhaks must be removed by the Light from above — a sattwic rule can only change natures predisposed to a sattwic rule.

⁂

If his faith depends on the perfection of the sadhaks, obviously, it must be a rather shaky thing! Sadhaks and sadhikas are not supposed to be perfect. It is only siddhas for whom one can claim perfection and even then not according to mental standards.... His faith seems to be more mental than otherwise, and mental faith can easily go.

To be by oneself very much needs a certain force of inner life. It may be better to vary solitude with some kind of its opposite. But each has its advantages and disadvantages and it is only by being vigilant and keeping an inner poise that one can avoid the latter.

⁂

The general principle of self-consecration and self-giving is the same for all in this yoga, but each has his own way of consecration and self-giving. The way that X takes is good for X, just as the way that you take is the right one for you, because it is in consonance with your nature. If there were not this plasticity and variety, if all had to be cut in the same pattern, yoga would be a rigid mental machinery, not a living power.

When you can sing out of your inner consciousness in which

you feel the Mother moving all your actions, there is no reason why you should not do it. The development of capacities is not only permissible but right, when it can be made part of the yoga; one can give not only one's soul, but all one's powers to the Divine.

*
**

It is a little difficult for the wider spiritual outlook to answer your question in the way you want and every mental being wants, with a trenchant "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not" — especially when the "thou" is meant to cover "all". For while there is an identity of essential aim, while there are general broad lines of endeavour, yet there is not in detail one common set of rules in inner things that can apply to all seekers. You ask: "Is not such and such a thing harmful?" But what is harmful to one may be helpful to another, what is helpful at a certain stage may cease to be helpful at another, what is harmful under certain conditions may be helpful under other conditions, what is done in a certain spirit may be disastrous, the same thing done in a quite different spirit would be innocuous or even beneficial...there are so many things to be considered: the spirit, the circumstances, the person, the need and cast of the nature, the stage. That is why it is said so often that the Guru must deal with each disciple according to his separate nature and accordingly guide his sadhana; even if it is the same line of sadhana for all, yet at every point for each it differs. That also is the reason why we say that the divine way cannot be understood by the mind, because the mind acts according to hard and fast rules and standards, while the spirit sees the truth of all and the truth of each and acts variously according to its own comprehensive and complex vision. That also is why we say that no one can understand by his personal mental judgment the Mother's actions and reasons for action: it can only be understood by entering into the larger consciousness from which she sees things and acts upon them. That is baffling to the mind because it uses its small measures, but that is the truth of the matter.

So you will see that here there is no mental rule, but in each case the guidance is determined by spiritual reasons which are of a flexible character. There is no other consideration, no rule.

Music, painting, poetry and many other activities which are of the mind and vital can be used as part of spiritual development or of the work and for a spiritual purpose: it depends on the spirit in which they are done.

⁂

Why should the Mother be obliged to treat everybody in the same way? It would be a most imbecile thing for her to do that.

⁂

It is not a fact that all I write is meant equally for everybody. That assumes that everybody is alike and there is no difference between sadhak and sadhak. If it were so everybody would advance alike and have the same experiences and take the same time to progress by the same steps and stages. It is not so at all. In this case the general rules were laid down for one who had made no progress — but everything depends on how the yoga comes to each person.

⁂

It is not always safe to apply practically to oneself what has been written for another. Each sadhak is a case by himself and one cannot always or often take a mental rule and apply it rigidly to all who are practising the yoga. What I wrote to X was meant for X and fits his case, but supposing a sadhak with a different (coarse) vital nature unlike X were in question, I might say to him something that might seem the very opposite, "Sit tight on your lower vital propensities, throw out your greed for food — it is standing as a serious obstacle in your way; it would be better for you to be ascetic in your habits than vulgarly animal in this part as you are now". To one who is not taking enough food or sleep and rest in the eagerness of his spirit, I might say, "Eat more, sleep more, rest more, do not overstrain yourself or bring an ascetic spirit into your tapasya". To another with the opposite excess I might speak a contrary language. Each sadhak has

a nature or turn of nature of his own and the movement of the yoga of two sadhaks, even where there are some resemblances between them, is seldom exactly the same.

Again, in applying some truth that is laid down it is necessary to give it its precise meaning. It is quite true that "in our path the attitude is not one of forceful suppression, *nigraha*"; it is not coercion according to a mental rule or principle on an unpersuaded vital being. But that does not mean either that the vital has to go its own way and do according to its fancy. It is not coercion that is the way, but an inner change in which the lower vital is led, enlightened and transformed by a higher consciousness which is detached from the objects of vital desire. But in order to let this grow an attitude has to be taken in which a decreasing importance has to be attached to the satisfaction of the claims of the lower vital, a certain mastery, *saṁyama*, being above any clamour of these things, limiting such things as food to their proper place. The lower vital has its place, it is not to be crushed or killed, but it has to be changed, "caught hold of by both ends", at the upper end a mastery and control, at the lower end a right use. The main thing is to get rid of attachment and desire; it is then that an entirely right use becomes possible. By what actual steps, in what order, through what processes this mastery of the lower vital shall come depends on the nature, the stress of development, the actual movement of the yoga.

It is not the eating or the not eating of something that is the important point; what is important is how that or any of these food matters affects you, what is your inner condition and how any such indulgence, cooking or eating, stands or does not stand in the way of its progress and change, what is best for you as a yogic discipline. One rule for you I can lay down, "Do not do, say or think anything which you would want to conceal from the Mother". And that answers the objections that rose within you — from your vital, is it not? — against bringing "these petty things" to the Mother's notice. Why should you think that the Mother would be bothered by these things or regard them as petty? If *all* the life is to be yoga what is there that can be called petty or of no importance? Even if the Mother does not answer, to have

brought any matter of your action and self-development before her in the right spirit means to have put it under her protection, in the light of the Truth, under the rays of the Power that is working for the transformation — for immediately those rays begin to play and to act on the thing brought to her notice. Anything within that advises not to do it when the spirit in you moves you to do it, may very well be a device of the vital to avoid the ray of the Light and the working of the Force.

⁂

One must not treat human nature like a machine to be handled according to rigid mental rules — a great plasticity is needed in dealing with its complex motives.

IV

Yes, even in ordinary life there must be a control over the vital and the ego — otherwise life would be impossible. Even many animals, those who live in groups, have their strict rules imposing a control on the play of the ego and those who disobey will have a bad time of it. The Europeans especially understand this and even though they are full of ego, yet when there is a question of team work or group life, they are adepts at keeping it in leash, even if it growls inside; it is the secret of their success. But in yoga life of course it is a question not of controlling ego but of getting rid of it and rising to a higher principle, so demand is much more strongly and insistently discouraged.

⁂

A rule that can be varied by everyone at his pleasure is no rule. In all countries in which organised work is successfully done, (India is not one of them), rules exist and nobody thinks of breaking them, for it is realised that work (or life either) without discipline would soon become a confusion and an anarchic failure. In the great days of India everything was put under rule, even

art and poetry, even yoga. Here in fact rules are much less rigid than in any European organisation. Personal discretion can even in a frame of rules have plenty of play — but discretion must be discreetely used, otherwise it becomes something arbitrary or chaotic.

⁂

The Mother puts her protection round all the sadhaks, but if by their own act or attitude they go out of the circle of the protection there may be undesirable consequences.

⁂

[Discipline:] To act according to a standard of Truth or a rule or law of action (dharma) or in obedience to a superior authority or to the highest principles discovered by the reason and intelligent will and not according to one's own fancy, vital impulses and desires. In yoga obedience to the Guru or to the Divine and the law of the Truth as declared by the Guru is the foundation of discipline.

⁂

You are putting the cart before the horse. It is not the right way to make the condition that if you get what you want you will be obedient and cheerful. But be always obedient and cheerful and then what you want will have a chance of coming to you.

⁂

Rules are indispensable for the orderly management of work; for without order and arrangement nothing can be properly done, all becomes clash, confusion and disorder.

In all such dealings with others, you should see not only your own side of the question but the other side also. There should be no anger, vehement reproach or menace, for these things only raise anger and retort on the other side. I write this because you are trying to rise above yourself and dominate your vital and when one wants to do that, one cannot be too strict

with oneself in these things. It is best even to be severe with one's own mistakes and charitable to the mistakes of others.

*
**

Yes, quite right. It is a deficiency of psychic perception and spiritual discrimination that makes people speak like that and ignore the importance of obedience. It is the mind wanting to follow its own way of thinking and the vital seeking freedom for its desires which argue in this manner. If you do not follow the rules laid down by the spiritual guide or obey one who is leading you to the Divine, then what or whom are you to follow? Only the ideas of the individual mind and the desires of the vital: but these things never lead to siddhi in yoga. The rules are laid down in order to guard against certain influences and their dangers and to keep a right atmosphere in the Ashram favourable to spiritual development; the obedience is necessary so as to get away from one's own mind and vital and learn to follow the Truth.

*
**

Rules like these are intended to help the vital and physical to come under the discipline of sadhana and not get dispersed in fancies, impulses, self-indulgences; but they must be done simply, not with any sense of superiority or ascetic pride, but as a mere matter of course. It is true also that they can be made the occasion of a too great mental rigidity — as if they were things of supreme importance *in themselves* and not only a means. Put in their right place and done in the right spirit, they can be very helpful for their purpose.

*
**

What most want is that things should be done according to their desire without check or reference. The talk of perfection is humbug. Perfection does not consist in everybody being a law to himself. Perfection comes by renunciation of desires and surrender to a higher Will.

*
**

If I said 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.

*
**

In the outside world there is a mental and social control and also the absorption in other things. Here you are left alone with your own consciousness and have to replace the mental and outward control by an inner self-control of the spirit.

*
**

It is no question of fault or punishment — if we have to condemn and punish people for their faults and deal with the sadhaks like a tribunal of justice, no sadhana could be possible. I do not see how your reproach against us is justifiable. Our sole duty to the sadhaks is to take them towards their spiritual realisation — we cannot behave like the head of a family intervening in domestic quarrels, supporting one, putting our weight against the other! However often X may stumble, we have to take him by the hand, lift him up again and get him to move once more towards the Divine. We have always done the same with you. But we could not support any demand of yours upon him. We have always treated it as something between him and the Divine. For you, the one thing we have insisted on and that with your full consent and with your prayers to us to be helped in doing it, is to cut the vital relation with him altogether and to base nothing upon it any more. Yet now you write to us that because we have not approved of your action of what you said to Y, no matter what that might be, — you renounce us forever.

I must ask you to return to your better self and your true consciousness and throw off these moods of vital passion which

are unworthy of your soul. You have repeatedly written of your love for the Mother, the Ananda which you received from her and the number of spiritual experiences. Remember that and remember that that is your true way and your true being and nothing else matters. Get back your poise and throw off the lower nature and its darkness and ignorance.

No one in fact is kept here when his will or decision is to go — although the principle of the spiritual life is against any return to the old one even for a time especially if the deeper urge is there and striving towards a firm foundation of the new consciousness — for the return to the ordinary atmosphere and surroundings and motives disturbs the work and throws back the progress.

⁂

When there is so sharp a difference between the inner and the outer being, it is always the sadhak who has to make his choice. As for coming back, many who have gone out have come back, others have not — for in going out there is always the danger of entering into a current of forces that make return impossible. Whatever decision you make should be clear and deliberate — otherwise you may go out and as soon as you are there want to come back and after coming here again want to go; that would be inadmissible.

⁂

It is well understood that the permission given [to go away from the Ashram] does not exclude the possibility of the experiment ending badly. But the experiment becomes necessary if the pull of the ego or outer being and that of the soul have become too acute for solution otherwise or if the outer being insists on having its experience.

⁂

It is especially when the outer being rejects the Truth and insists on living its life and refuses the rule of the spiritual life that the experiment [of going away from the Ashram] becomes inevitable. I have never said that it is recommendable.

⁂

In some it [the push to go away from the Ashram] is too strong; they have to go and see for themselves. That does not mean that everyone has to go whenever he feels a difficulty. These are exceptional cases.

⁂

There is no such impossibility of your victory over the harder parts of your nature as you imagine. There is only needed the perseverance to go on till this resistance breaks down and the psychic which is not absent nor unmanifest is able to dominate the others. That has to be done whether you stay here or not and to go is likely only to increase the difficulty and imperil the final result — it cannot help you. It is here that the struggle however acute has, because of the immediate presence of the Mother, the best chance and certitude of a solution and successful ending.

⁂

It usually happens like that — when one comes out of the world, the forces that govern the world do all they can to pull you back into their own unquiet movement.

⁂

It is certainly strange. Most people after the atmosphere here cannot tolerate the ordinary atmosphere. If they go outside, they are restless until they return. Even X's aunt who was here only for a few months writes in the same way. But probably when people get into the control of a falsehood as Y and Z did, they are projected into the unregenerated vital nature

and no longer feel the difference of the atmosphere.

⁂

All yoga is difficult, because the aim in every yoga is to reach the Divine, to turn entirely towards the Divine and that means to turn away from the ordinary movements of the nature to something beyond it. But when one aspires with sincerity the strength is given that ends by surmounting the difficulties and reaching the goal.

The Mother was speaking of sadhaks who had entered into the life and atmosphere of the Ashram and felt the touch on the psychic of what is here. It does not apply to those who have come here from the outside world but still belong to the outside. All the ties of X's nature were still with the outside life; her vital was quite unadapted to the Ashram life and recoiled from the idea of living it always. She gave her psychic no time to make that connection and absorb that influence which would have fixed in it the feeling of this as its true home. People can come here like that and stay for a time and go without any difficulty as many have done. The feeling of difficulty or uneasiness in going is on the other hand a sign that the soul has taken root here and finds it painful to uproot itself. There are some who are like that and have had to go but do not feel at ease and are always thinking of how to come back as soon as possible.

To help others without egoism or attachment or leaving the spiritual surroundings and spiritual life is one thing, to be pulled away by personal attachment or the need of helping others to the outside life is different.

⁂

The inability to go [from the Ashram] can come from the psychic which refuses, when it comes to the point, to allow the other parts to budge, or it can come fom the vital which has no longer any pull towards the ordinary life and knows that it will never be satisfied there. It is usually the higher parts of the vital that act like that. What still is capable of turning outwards is pro-

bably the physical vital in which the old tendencies have not been extinguished.

⁂

You ought to be able to see...that the cause of the unrest is in yourself and not in the outward circumstances. It is your vital attachment to family ties and the ordinary social ideas and feelings that has risen in you and creates the difficulty. If you want to practise yoga, you must be able to live in the world, so long as you are there, with a mind set upon the Divine and not bound by the environment. One who does this, can help those around him a hundred times more than one who is bound and attached to the world.

It is not possible for the Mother to tell you to remain, if you are yourself in your mind and vital eager to go. It is from within yourself that there must come the clear will on one side or the other.

⁂

It is easier to feel the presence in the atmosphere of the Ashram than outside it. But that is only an initial difficulty which one can overcome by a steadiness in the call and a constant opening of oneself to the influence.

⁂

The force is there in the atmosphere, but you must receive it in the right way — in the spirit of self-giving, openness, confidence. All the rest depends on that.

⁂

What is true is that there is a strong force going out from here and it is naturally strongest at the centre. But how it affects there, depends on how one receives it. If it is received with simple trust, faith, openness, confidence, then it works as a complete protection. But it can so work too at a distance. It is not the house, it is the inner nearness that matters.

VI

The best way to prepare oneself for the spiritual life when one has to live in the ordinary occupations and surroundings is to cultivate an entire equality and detachment and the *samatā* of the Gita with the faith that the Divine is there and the Divine Will at work in all things even though at present under the conditions of a world of Ignorance. Beyond this are the Light and Ananda towards which life is working, but the best way for their advent and foundation in the individual being and nature is to grow in this spiritual equality. That would also solve your difficulty about things unpleasant and disagreeable. All unpleasantness should be faced with this spirit of *samatā*.

⁂

When one is living in the world, one cannot do as in an Ashram — one has to mix with others and keep up outwardly at least ordinary relations with others. The important thing is to keep the inner consciousness open to the Divine and grow in it. As one does that, more or less rapidly according to the inner intensity of the sadhana, the attitude towards others will change. All will be seen more and more in the Divine and the feelings, actions, etc. will more and more be determined, not by the old external reactions, but by the growing consciousness within you.

⁂

The difficulty which you experience from relatives and others is always one that intervenes as an obstacle when one has to practise the sadhana in ordinary or unfavourable surroundings. The only way to escape from it is to be able to live in oneself in one's inner being — which becomes possible when the responsiveness and luminosity of which you speak in your letter increase and become normal, for then you are constantly aware of your inner being and even live in it — the outer becomes an instrument, a means of communication and action in the outer world. It is then possible to make the relations with people outside free

from tie or necessary reaction — one can determine from within one's own reaction or absence of reaction: there is a fundamental liberation from the external nexuses — of course, if one wills it to be so.

⁂

The life of *saṁsāra* is in its nature a field of unrest — to go through it in the right way one has to offer one's life and actions to the Divine and pray for the peace of the Divine within. When the mind becomes quiet, one can feel the Divine Mother supporting the life and put everything into her hands.

⁂

Peace is never easy to get in the life of the world and never constant, unless one lives deep within and bears the external activities as only a surface front of being.

⁂

In her condition the one thing by which she can enter into the sadhana is to remember the Divine always, taking her difficulties as ordeals to be passed through, to pray constantly and seek the Divine help and protection and ask for the opening of her heart and consciousness to the supporting Divine Presence.

⁂

It is not possible for the Mother to promise to give help in worldly matters. She intervenes only in special cases. There are some of course, who by their openness and their faith get her help in any worldly difficulty or trouble but that is a different thing. They simply remember and call the Mother and in due time some result comes.

⁂

The tendency you speak of, to leave the family and social life for the spiritual life, has been traditional in India for the last

2000 years and more — chiefly among men, it touches only a very small number of women. It must be remembered that Indian social life has subordinated almost entirely the individual to the family. Men and women do not marry according to their free will; their marriages are mostly arranged for them while they are still children. Not only so, but the mould of society has been long of an almost iron fixity putting each individual in his place and expecting him to conform to it. You speak of issues and a courageous solution, but in this life there are no problems and issues and no call for a solution — a courageous solution is only possible where there is freedom of the personal will; but where the only solution (if one remains in this life) is submission to the family will, there can be nothing of the kind. It is a secure life and can be happy if one accommodates oneself to it and has no unusual aspirations beyond it or is fortunate in one's environment; but it has no remedy for or escape from incompatibilities or any kind of individual frustration; it leaves little room for initiative or free movement or any individualism. The only outlet for the individual is his inner spiritual or religious life and the recognised escape is the abandonment of the *saṁsāra*, the family life, by some kind of Sannyasa. The Sannyasi, the Vaishnava Vairagi or the Brahmachari are free; they are dead to the family and can live according to the dictates of the inner spirit. Only if they enter into an order or Ashram, they have to abide by the rules of the order, but that is their own choice. Society recognised this door of escape from itself; religion sanctioned the idea that distaste for the social or worldly life was a legitimate ground for taking up that of the recluse or religious wanderer. But this was mainly for men; women, except in old times among the Buddhists who had their convents and in later times among the Vaishnavas, had little chance of such an escape unless a very strong spiritual impulse drove them which would take no denial. As for the wife and children left behind by the Sannyasi, there was little difficulty, for the joint family was there to take up or rather to continue their maintenance.

At present what has happened is that the old framework remains, but modern ideas have brought a condition of inadaptation, of unrest, the old family system is breaking up and women

are seeking in more numbers the same freedom of escape as men have always had in the past. That would account for the cases you have come across — but I don't think the number of such cases can be as yet at all considerable, it is quite a new phenomenon; the admission of women to Ashrams is itself a novelty. The extreme unhappiness of a mental and vital growth which does not fit in with the surroundings, of marriages imposed that are unsuitable and where there is no meeting-point between husband and wife, of an environment hostile and intolerant of one's inner life, and on the other hand the innate tendency of the Indian mind to seek a refuge in the spiritual or religious escape will sufficiently account for the new development. If society wants to prevent it, it must itself change. As to individuals, each case must be judged on its own merits; there is too much complexity in the problem and too much variation of nature, position, motives for a general rule.

I have spoken of the social problem in general terms only. In the conduct of the Ashram, we have had many applications obviously dictated by an unwillingness to face the difficulties and responsibilities of life — naturally ignored or refused by us, but these have been mostly from men; there have been recently only one or two cases of women. Otherwise women have not applied usually on the ground of an unhappy marriage or difficult environment. Most of the married sadhikas have followed or accompanied their husbands on the ground of having already begun to practise yoga; others have come fulfilling sufficiently the responsibilities of married life; in two or three cases there has been a separation from the husband but that was before their coming here. In some cases there have been no children, in others the children have been left with the family. These cases do not really fall in the category of those you mention. Some of the sadhaks have left wife and family behind, but I do not think in any case the difficulties of life were the motive of their departure. It was rather the idea that they had felt the call and must leave all to follow it.

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE

Section One

EXPERIENCES AND REALISATIONS

5.4.37.

Hallow references of which you speak belong to this same moment as the change of your spiritual life; they are mutual moments, like an common theme of your inner being, wheel as veiled, as in mist, by the ordinary selfs. There are, we might say, two beings in us, near the surface, our ordinary external mind, life, body as conscious, a deep behind the veil, an inner mind, inner life, an inner Physical as conscious and vitalising entities or inner self. Our inner self as another opens in its turn on the real and eternal self or Self as openly to the soul, called in the language of the Yoga the psychic being which supports our successive births and absorbs their essence, gradually its open above to the Self or spirit which is unborn and by eternity many spirit are because the change personality and achieve freedom and full mastery over our nature.

You don't quite right in first developing the external qualities and building of perfect inner relations with fellow creatures. How possible by extension relations only when all of these endeavour to open down into the inner being or we break down some of the walls between the inner and outer self before finishing or even entirely getting rid of self-defence, but it is not always even to do it, that ingrained habit of resilience which may be very terrible, churches hardened unconscious dangers. Hopefully the more patient course you have opened also finish divided the door of the inner being has begun almost automatically to swing open. Not both processes can go on side by side, but as necessary to keep the outside questions, between, explanations, etc. being nothing, not blocked away by explanations we call the attachments things which is overlapping before you even that it is the right call. Difficulties may always fall from the forces of the inner planes which it is not safe to follow.

Your first experience is an opening into the inner mental self — the opens between the eyebrows or the centre of the inner mind, vision, will and the blue light you saw, this is the higher mental plane; a spiritual mind, naught, and is above the ordinary human mental intelligence. An opening into this higher mind is usually accompanied by a widening of the ordinary mental thought. Our thoughts are not really united within ourselves independently, with no collaboration like geometric mark on mind; in fact they come to us from a vast mental space or other cosmic mind-stuff or waves of mind-force that bring to us significances which take shape in our personal mind as thought-formations really made about us or left out to us. Our mind is then to this process of Nature, but by this widening of the inner mind we can become aware of it. What you observe, the receding of this constant mental movement and the silence of the thought-forms bring us to a region of the wider inner spiritual Nature. You felt the hunger to be in yourself ourselves, to handle it as a larger self-force which

even in its own limited field just between the upper and lower you felt to be living in the overflowing physical space. Before thought the inner mind opens to longer, wider, subtler beyond it reaches a longing - illimitable. The inner mind is swelling very wide forgetting itself into the infinite and finding itself into the infinity of universal Mind. When we break out of the narrow limits of the external physical mind we begin to see wonderful to feel this endless, wide and this immense self and infinity of the mental self-space. Thoughts and this entire world of mind being, they are of a similarly unreal nature: of this wide-open, silent space in the thought-free consciousness which [illegible] is not a blank or void but a really existent, substantial, infinite vastness - a real all-being that exists itself, wide, and contains in itself a full of consciousness and reality as well as the Will-force, Power, Ananda of that field and its action. Fearful to frighten, avoid, all this is because their observation is untrained and insufficient and lazy of real experience that the mind is blank; on the contrary there is but it is on a plane of the ordinary activities, not a plane of consciousness.

The [illegible] of the experience of the vanishing away of thoughts, the cessation of the thought-perceiving mechanism and its replacement by the mental self-space, as normal and as it should be; for this silence or utter, realise the capacity for it has to grow until one can live it at will or one is established in an automatic permanence. For this silence of the ordinary mind-mechanism is necessary in order that the higher mentality may manifest, descend, occupy the place of the present imperfect mentality and transform the activities of the latter into its own fuller movements. The difficulty of its coming when you are at work is only at the beginning - afterwards when it is more settled one finds that one can carry in all the activities of life either a the pervading silence itself or at least with that as the support and background. The silence remains behind and there is the necessary action on the surface or the silence is ever inside self and ever there as a background. Even in the works of Nature a total disturbing the silence. It is therefore quite right to suspend the work while the visitation of the experience is there - the development of this silent consciousness is sufficiently important to justify a brief interruption or pause.

In the complete day two experiences, or the entry of the Presence. The deep-experience need not be allowed to take hold of the waking hours and spoil the consciousness active, it need only be [illegible] in better hours of sleep. So too there should be no fixed or prisoned to break down the wall between the inner self and the outer I - the Presence must be allowed to take place by a developing in outward in its own natural time. I shall explain why in another letter

Sri Aurobindo

Facsimile of a letter on pp. 1020-1023

Experiences and Realisations

EXPERIENCE is a word that covers almost all the happenings in yoga; only when something gets settled, then it is no longer an experience but part of the siddhi; e.g. peace when it comes and goes is an experience — when it is settled and goes no more it is a siddhi. Realisation is different — it is when something for which you are aspiring becomes real to you; e.g. you have the idea of the Divine in all, but it is only an idea, a belief; when you feel or see the Divine in all, it becomes a realisation.

*
**

All this is to make unnecessary distinctions. An experience of a truth in the substance of mind, in the vital or the physical, wherever it may be, is the beginning of realisation. When I experience peace, I begin to realise what it is. Repetition of the experience leads to a fuller and more permanent realisation. When it is settled anywhere, that is the full realisation of it in that place or that part of the being.

*
**

It is spirituality when you begin to become aware of another consciousness than the ego and begin to live in it or under its influence more and more. It is that consciousness wide, infinite, self-existent, pure of ego etc. which is called Spirit (Self, Brahman, Divine), so this necessarily must be the meaning of spirituality. Realisation is this and all else that the experience and growth of this greater consciousness brings with it.

*
**

The yogi is one who is already established in realisation — the

sadhak is one who is getting or still trying to get realisation.

⁂

There is no law that a feeling cannot be an experience; experiences are of all kinds and take all forms in the consciousness. When the consciousness undergoes, sees or feels anything spiritual or psychic or even occult, that is an experience — in the technical yogic sense, for there are of course all sorts of experiences that are not of that character. The feelings themselves are of many kinds. The word feeling is often used for an emotion, and there can be psychic or spiritual emotions which are numbered among yogic experiences, such as a wave of *śuddhā bhakti* or the rising of love towards the Divine. A feeling also means a perception of something felt — a perception in the vital or psychic or in the essential substance of the consciousness. I find even often a mental perception when it is very vivid described as a feeling. If you exclude all these feelings and kindred ones and say that they are feelings, not experiences, then there is very little room left for experiences at all. Feeling and vision are the main forms of spiritual experience. One sees and feels the Brahman everywhere; one feels a force enter or go out from one; one feels or sees the presence of the Divine within or around one; one feels or sees the descent of Light; one feels the descent of Peace or Ananda. Kick out all that on the ground that it is only a feeling and you make a clean sweep of most of the things that we call experience. Again, we feel a change in the substance of the consciousness or the state of consciousness. We feel ourselves spreading in wideness and the body as a small thing in the wideness (this can be seen also); we feel the heart-consciousness being wide instead of narrow, soft instead of hard, illumined instead of obscure, the head-consciousness also, the vital, even the physical; we feel thousands of things of all kinds and why are we not to call them experience? Of course it is an inner sight, an inner feeling, subtle feeling, not material, like the feeling of a cold wind or a stone or any other object, but as the inner consciousness deepens it is not less vivid or concrete, it is even more so.

⁂

An experience is an unmistakable thing and must be given its proper value. The mind may exaggerate in thinking about it but that does not deprive it of its value.

*
**

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.

*
**

In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the consciousness than any physical thing can be. Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few. But to expect and demand it so soon would be taken in the eyes of any experienced yogi or sadhak as a rather rash and abnormal impatience. Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come. To some rapid preparatory experiences can come at a comparatively early stage, but even they cannot escape the labour of the consciousness which will make these experiences culminate in the realisation that is enduring and complete. It is not a question of liking or disliking, it is a matter of fact and truth and experience. It is the fact that people who are cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste. It is what I have always seen.

*
**

It [self-realisation] is not a long process! The whole life and seve-

ral lives more are often not enough to achieve it. Ramakrishna's Guru took 30 years to arrive and even then he did not claim that he had realised it.

⁂

Your supposition [that you can't love the Divine until you experience him in some way] conflicts with the experience of many sadhaks. I think Ramakrishna indicated somewhere that the love and joy and ardour of seeking was much more intense than that of fulfilment. I don't agree, but that shows at least that intense love is possible before realisation.

⁂

My point is that there are hundreds of Bhaktas who have the love and seeking without any concrete experience, with only a mental conception or emotional belief in the Divine to support them. The whole point is that it is untrue to say that one must have a decisive or concrete experience before one can have love for the Divine. It is contrary to the facts and the quite ordinary facts of the spiritual experience.

⁂

The ordinary Bhakta is not a lion heart. The lion hearts get experiences comparatively soon but the ordinary Bhakta has often to feed on his own love or yearning for years and years — and he does it.

⁂

What I meant about the experiences was simply this that you have created your own ideas about what you want from the yoga and have always been measuring what began to come by that standard and because it was not according to expectations or up to that standard, telling yourself after a moment, "It is nothing, it is nothing". That dissatisfaction laid you open at every step to a reaction or a recoil which prevented any continuous development. The yogin who has experience knows that

the small beginnings are of the greatest importance and have to be cherished and allowed with great patience to develop. He knows, for instance, that the neutral quiet so dissatisfying to the vital eagerness of the sadhak is the first step towards the peace that passeth all understanding, the small current or thrill of inner delight the first trickling of the ocean of Ananda, the play of lights or colours the key of the doors of the inner vision and experience, the descent that stiffens the body into a concentrated stillness the first touch of something at the end of which is the presence of the Divine. He is not impatient; he is rather careful not to disturb the evolution that is beginning. Certainly some sadhaks have strong and decisive experiences at the beginning, but these are followed by long labour in which there are many empty periods and periods of struggle.

⁂

There is no room certainly for despair. The bliss always comes in drops at first, or a broken trickle. You have to go on cheerfully and in full confidence, till there is the cascade.

⁂

If you truly decide in all your consciousness to offer your being to the Divine to mould it as He wills, then most of your personal difficulty will disappear — I mean that which still remains, and there will be only the lesser difficulties of the transformation of the ordinary into the yogic consciousness, normal to all sadhana. Your mental difficulty has been all along that you wanted to mould the sadhana and the reception of experience and the response of the Divine according to your own preconceived mental ideas and left no freedom to the Divine to act or manifest according to His own truth and reality and the need not of your mind and vital but of your soul and spirit. It is as if your vital were to present a coloured glass to the Divine and tell Him, "Now pour yourself into that and I will shut you up there and look at you through the colours", or, from the mental point of view, as if you were to offer a test-tube in a similar way and

say, "Get in there and I will test you and see what you are" But the Divine is shy about such processes and His objections are not altogether unintelligible.

At any rate I am glad the experience has come back again — it has come as the result of your effort and mine for the last days and is practically a reminder that the door of entry into yogic experience is still there and can open at the right touch. You taxed me the other day with making a mistake about your experience of breathing with the name in it and reproached me for drawing a big inference from a very small phenomenon — a thing, by the way, which the scientists are doing daily without the least objection from your reason. You had the same idea, I believe, about my acceptance of your former experiences, this current and the descent of stillness in the body, as signs of the yogi in you. But these ideas spring from an ignorance of the spiritual realm and its phenomena and only show the incapacity of the outer intellectual reason to play the role you want it to play, that of a supreme judge of spiritual truth and inner experience — a quite natural incapacity because it does not know even the A.B.C. of these things and it passes my comprehension how one can be a judge about a thing of which one knows nothing. I know that the "scientists" are continually doing it with supraphysical phenomena outside their province — those who never had a spiritual or occult experience laying down the law about occult phenomena and yoga; but that does not make it any more reasonable or excusable. Any yogi who knows something about Pranayama or Japa can tell you that the running of the name in the breath is not a small phenomenon but of great importance in these practices and, if it comes naturally, a sign that something in the inner being has done that kind of sadhana in the past. As for the current it is the familiar sign of a first touch of the higher consciousness flowing down in the form of a stream — like the "wave" of light of the scientist — to prepare its possession of mind, vital and physical in the body. So is the stillness and rigidity of the body in your former experience a sign of the same descent of the higher consciousness in its form or tendency of stillness and silence. It is a perfectly sound conclusion that one who gets these experiences at the beginning has the capa-

city of yoga in him and can open, even if opening is delayed by other movements belonging to his ordinary nature. These things are part of the science of yoga, as familiar as the crucial experiences of physical science are to the scientific seeker.

As for the impression of swooning, it is simply because you were not in sleep, as you imagined, but in a first condition of what is usually called *svapna-samādhi*, dream trance. What you felt like swooning was only the tendency to go deeper in, into a more profound *svapna-samādhi* or else into a *suṣupti* trance — the latter being what the word trance usually means in English, but it can be extended to the *svapna* kind also. To the outer mind this deep loss of the outer consciousness seems like a swoon, though it is really nothing of the kind — hence the impression. Many sadhaks here get at times or sometimes for a long period this deeper *svapna-samādhi* in what began as sleep — with the result that a conscious sadhana goes on in their sleeping as in their waking hours. This is different from the dream experiences that one has on the vital or mental plane which are themselves not ordinary dreams but actual experiences on the mental, vital, psychic or subtle physical planes. You have had several dreams which were vital dream experiences, those in which you met the Mother and recently you had one such contact on the mental plane which, for those who understand these things, means that the inner consciousness is preparing in the mind as well as in the vital, which is a great advance.

You will ask why these things take place either in sleep or in an indrawn meditation and not in the waking state. There is a twofold reason. First, that usually in yoga these things begin in an indrawn state and not in the waking condition — it is only if or when the waking mind is ready that they come as readily in the waking state. Again in you the waking mind has been too active in its insistence on the ideas and operations of the outer consciousness to give the inner mind a chance to project itself into the waking state. But it is through the inner consciousness and primarily through the inner mind that these things come; so, if there is not a clear passage from the inner to the outer, it must be in the inner states that they first appear. If the waking mind is subject or surrendered to the inner consciousness and willing to

become its instrument, then even from the beginning these openings can come through the waking consciousness. That again is a familiar law of the yoga.

I may add that when you complain of the want of response, you are probably expecting immediately some kind of direct manifestation of the Divine which, as a rule, though there are exceptions, comes only when previous experiences have prepared the consciousness so that it may feel, understand, recognise the response. Ordinarily, the spiritual or divine consciousness comes first — what I have called the higher consciousness — the presence or manifestation comes afterwards. But this descent of the higher consciousness is really the touch or influx of the Divine itself, though not at first recognised by the lower nature.

*
**

I don't say that these experiences are always of no value, but they are so mixed and confused that if one runs after them without any discrimination at all they end by either leading astray, sometimes tragically astray, or by bringing one into a confused nowhere.

That does not mean that all such experiences are useless or without value. There are those that are sound as well as those that are unsound; those that are helpful, in the true line, sometimes sign-posts, sometimes stages on the way to realisation, sometimes stuff and material of the realisation. These naturally and rightly one seeks for, calls, strives after, or at least one opens oneself in the confident expectation that they will sooner or later arrive. Your own main experiences may have been few or not continuous, but I cannot say that they were not sound or unhelpful. I would say that it is better to have a few of these than a multitude of others. My only meaning in what I wrote was not to be impressed by mere wealth of experiences or to think that that is sufficient to constitute a great sadhak or that not to have this wealth is necessarily an inferiority, a lamentable deprivation or a poverty of the one thing desirable.

There are two classes of things that happen in yoga, realisations and experiences. Realisations are the reception in the con-

sciousness and the establishment there of the fundamental truths of the Divine, of the Higher or Divine Nature, of the world-consciousness and the play of its forces, of one's own self and real nature and the inner nature of things, the power of these things growing in one till they are a part of one's inner life and existence, — as for instance, the realisation of the Divine Presence, the descent and settling of the higher Peace, Light, Force, Ananda in the consciousness, their workings there, the realisation of the divine or spiritual love, the perception of one's own psychic being, the discovery of one's own true mental being, true vital being, true physical being, the realisation of the overmind or the supramental consciousness, the clear perception of the relation of all these things to our present inferior nature and their action on it to change that lower nature. The list, of course, might be infinitely longer. These things also are often called experiences when they only come in flashes, snatches or rare visitations; they are spoken of as full realisations only when they become very positive or frequent or continuous or normal.

Then there are experiences that help or lead towards the realisation of things spiritual or divine or bring openings or progressions in the sadhana or are supports on the way, — experiences of a symbolic character, visions, contacts of one kind or another with the Divine or with the workings of higher Truth, things like the waking of the Kundalini, the opening of the Chakras, messages, intuitions, openings of the inner powers, etc. The one thing that one has to be careful about is to see that they are genuine and sincere and that depends on one's own sincerity — for if one is not sincere, if one is more concerned with the ego or being a big yogi or becoming a superman than with meeting the Divine or getting the Divine consciousness which enables one to live in or with the Divine, then a flood of pseudos or mixtures comes in, one is led into the mazes of the intermediate zone or spins in the grooves of one's own formations. There is the truth of the whole matter.

Then why does X say that one should not hunt after experiences, but only love and seek the Divine? It simply means that you have not to make experiences your main aim, but the Divine only your aim, and if you do that, you are more likely to get the

true helpful experiences and avoid the wrong ones. If one seeks mainly after experiences, his yoga may become a mere self-indulgence in the lesser things of mental, vital and subtle physical worlds or in spiritual secondaries, or it may bring down a turmoil or maelstrom of the mixed and the whole or half-pseudo and stand between the soul and the Divine. That is a very sound rule of sadhana. But all these rules and statements must be taken with a sense of measure and in their proper limits, — it does not mean that one should not welcome helpful experiences or that they have no value. Also when a sound line of experience opens, it is perfectly permissible to follow it out, keeping always the central aim in view. All helpful or supporting contacts in dream or vision, such as those you speak of, are to be welcomed and accepted. Experiences of the right kind are a support and help towards the realisation; they are in every way acceptable.

*
**

Do not be over-eager for experiences; for experiences you can always get, having once broken the barrier between the physical mind and the subtle planes. What you have to aspire for most is the improved quality of the recipient consciousness in you, discrimination in the mind, the unattached impersonal Witness look on all that goes on in you and around you, purity in the vital, calm equanimity, enduring patience, absence of pride and the sense of greatness — and more especially, the development of the psychic being in you — surrender, self-giving, psychic humility, devotion. It is a consciousness made up of these things, cast in this mould, that can bear without breaking, stumbling or deviation into error the rush of lights, power and experiences from the supraphysical planes. An entire perfection in these respects is hardly possible until the whole nature from the higher mind to the subconscient physical is made one in the light that is greater than the mind, but a sufficient foundation and a consciousness always self-observant, vigilant and growing in these things is indispensable — for perfect purification is the basis of the perfect Siddhi.

*
**

As for sadhana what is necessary is to arrive at a certain quiet of the inner mind which makes meditation fruitful or a quietude of the heart which creates the psychic opening. It is only by regular concentration, constant aspiration and a will to purify the mind and heart of the things that disquiet and agitate them that this can be done. When a certain basis has been established in these two centres the experiences come of themselves. Many, no doubt, may get some kind of experiences such as visions etc. before the basis is well laid by a sort of mental or vital aptitude for these things, but such experiences do not of themselves lead to transformation or realisation — it is by the quietude of the mind and the psychic opening that these greater things can come.

*
**

It is necessary to lay stress on three things:

(1) an entire quietness and calm of the mind and the whole being.

(2) a continuance of the movement of purification described in the Post Scriptum so that the psychic being (the soul) may govern the whole nature.

(3) the maintenance in all conditions and through all experiences of the attitude of adoration and bhakti for the Mother.

These are the conditions in which one can grow through all experiences with security and have the right development of the complete realisation without disturbance to the system or being carried away by the intensity of the experiences. Calm, psychic purity, bhakti and spiritual humility before the Divine are the three conditions. The experiences in themselves are right and helpful.

*
**

I don't think there is any cause for dissatisfaction with the progress made by you. Experiences come to many before the nature is ready to make full profit from them; to others a more or less prolonged period of purification and preparation of the stuff of the nature or the instruments comes first, while experiences are

held up till this process is largely or wholly over. The latter method which seems to be adopted in your case is the safer and sounder of the two. In this respect we think it is evident that you have made considerable progress, for instance, in control over the violence and impatience and heat natural to the volcanic energy of your temperament, in sincerity also curbing the devious and errant impulses of an enormously active mind and temperament, in a greater quiet and harmony in the being as a whole. No doubt, the process has to be completed, but something very fundamental seems to have been done. It is more important to look at the thing from the positive rather than the negative side. The things that have to be established are — *brahmacaryam śamaḥ satyam praśāntir ātmasaṁyamaḥ*: *brahmacaryam*, complete sex-purity; *śamaḥ*, quiet and harmony in the being, its forces maintained but controlled, harmonised, disciplined; *satyam*, truth and sincerity in the whole nature; *praśāntiḥ*, a general state of peace and calm; *ātmasaṁyamaḥ*, the power and habit to control whatever needs control in the movements of the nature When these are fairly established, one has laid a foundation on which one can develop the yogic consciousness and with the yogic consciousness there comes an easy opening to realisation and experience.

*
**

You have had experiences which are signs of a future possibility. To have more within the first one and a half years it would be necessary to have the complete attitude of the sadhak and give up that of the man of the world. It is only then that progress can be rapid from the beginning.

*
**

All these [giving up indulgence in food, tea, etc.] are external things that have their use, but what I mean [by "the complete attitude of the sadhak"] is something more inward. I mean not to be interested in outward things for their own sake, following after them with desire, but at all times to be intent on one's soul,

living centrally in the inner being and its progress, taking outward things and action only as a means for the inner progress.

⁂

But why be overwhelmed by any wealth of any kind of experiences? What does it amount to, after all? The quality of a sadhak does not depend on that; one great spiritual realisation direct and at the centre will often make a great sadhak or yogi, an army of intermediate yogic experiences will not, that has been amply proved by a host of instances.... You need not therefore compare that wealth to your poverty. To open yourself to the descent of the higher consciousness (the true being) is the one thing needed and that, even if that comes after long effort and many failures, is better than a hectic gallop leading nowhere.

⁂

Experience in the sadhana is bound to begin with the mental plane, — all that is necessary is that the experience should be sound and genuine. The pressure of understanding and will in the mind and the Godward emotional urge in the heart are the two first agents of yoga, and peace, purity and calm (with a lulling of the lower unrest) are precisely the first basis that has to be laid; to get that is much more important in the beginning than to get a glimpse of the supraphysical worlds or to have visions, voices and powers. Purification and calm are the first needs in the yoga. One may have a great wealth of experiences of that kind (worlds, visions, voices, etc.) without them, but these experiences occurring in an unpurified and troubled consciousness are usually full of disorder and mixture.

At first the peace and calm are not continuous, they come and go, and it usually takes a long time to get them settled in the nature. It is better therefore to avoid impatience and to go on steadily with what is being done. If you wish to have something beyond the peace and calm, let it be the full opening of the inner being and the consciousness of the Divine Power working in you.

Aspire for that sincerely and with a great intensity but without impatience and it will come.

⁂

Quite correct. Unless the Adhar is made pure, neither the higher truth (intuitive, illumined, spiritual) nor the overmental nor the supramental can manifest; whatever forces come down from them get mixed with the inferior consciousness and the half-truth takes the place of the Truth or even sometimes a dangerous error.

⁂

At a certain stage of the sadhana, in the beginning (or near it) of the more intense experiences, it sometimes happens that there is the intense realisation of some aspect of the Divine, a sort of communion with it, and that is seen everywhere and all as that. It is a transitory phase and afterwards one gets the larger experience of the (personal) Divine in all its aspects and beyond all aspects. Throughout the experience there should be one part of the being that observes and understands — for, sometimes ignorant sadhaks are carried away by their experience and stop short there or fall into extravagance. It must be taken as an experience through which you are passing.

⁂

The special experiences you are having are glimpses of what is to be and what is growing and preparing and are helping to make the consciousness ready for it. It is not therefore surprising that they change and are replaced by others — that is what usually happens; for it is not these forms that are to be perpetuated, but the essence of the thing which they are bringing. Thus the one thing that has to grow most now is the silence, the quietude, the peace, the free emptiness into which experiences can come, the sense of coolness and release. When that is in possession of the consciousness fully, then something else will come into it which is also essential to the true consciousness and fix itself — it pro-

ceeds usually like that. There is nothing strange therefore in the special forms of experience ceasing and being followed by others after you have written about or brought them to the Mother. When the more permanent forms of realisation begin to come, it will no longer be like that.

*
**

I do not question at all the personal intensity or concreteness of your internal experiences, but experiences can be intense and yet be very mixed in their truth and their character. In your experience your own subjectivity, sometimes your ego-pushes interfere very much and give them their form and the impression they create on you. It is only if there is a pure psychic response that the form given to the experience is likely to be the right one and the mental and vital movements will then present themselves in their true nature. Otherwise the mind, the vital, the ego give their own colour to what happens, their own turn, very usually their own deformation. *Intensity* is not a guarantee of entire truth and correctness in an experience; it is only *purity* of the consciousness that can give an entire truth and correctness.

The Mother's presence is always there; but if you decide to act on your own — your own idea, your own notion of things, your own will and demand upon things, then it is quite likely that her presence will get veiled; it is not she who withdraws from you, but you who draw back from her. But your mind and vital don't want to admit that, because it is always their preoccupation to justify their own movements. If the psychic were allowed its full predominance, this would not happen; it would have felt the veiling, but it would at once have said, "There must have been some mistake in me, a mist has arisen in me," and it would have looked and found the cause.

It is perfectly true that so long as there is not an unreserved self-giving in both the internal and external, there will always be veilings, dark periods and difficulties. But if there is unreserved self-giving in the internal, the unreserved self-giving in the external would naturally follow; if it does not, it means that the internal is not unreservedly surrendered; there are reserva-

tions in some part of the mind insisting on its own ideas and notions; reservations in some part of the vital insisting on its own demands, impulses, movements, ego-ideas, formations; reservations in the internal physical insisting on its own old habits of many kinds, and all claiming consciously, half-consciously or subconsciously that these should be upheld, respected, satisfied, taken as an important element in the work, the "creation" or the yoga.

*
**

Experiences on the mental and vital and subtle physical planes or thought formations and vital formations are often represented as if they were concrete external happenings; true experiences are in the same way distorted by mental and vital accretions and additions. One of the first needs in our yoga is a discrimination and a psychic tact distinguishing the false from the true, putting each thing in its place and giving it its true value or absence of value, not carried away by the excitement of the mind or the vital being.

II

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.

*
**

The difficulty of the yoga is not in getting experiences or a subjective realisation of the Truth; it is in objectivising the Truth, that is in making the outer consciousness down to the material

an expression of the inner Truth. So long as that is not done the attacks of the lower Nature can always intervene.

⁂

The cosmic consciousness, the overmind knowledge and experience is an inner knowledge — but its effect is subjective. As long as one has that one can be free in soul, but to transform the external nature more is necessary.

⁂

Subjective does not mean false. It only means that the Truth is experienced within, but it has not yet taken hold of the dynamic relations with the outside existence. It is an inner experience of the cosmic consciousness and the overmind knowledge.

⁂

I have told you once before that your experiences are subjective — and in the subjective sphere they are correct in substance so far as they go. But to enter the supermind, subjective experience is not sufficient. Some sufficient application of intuition and overmind to life must first be done.

⁂

What do you mean by true? You have a subjective experience belonging to a higher plane of consciousness. When you descend, you come down with it into the material and the whole of existence is seen by you in the truth of that consciousness — just as when a man sees the vision of the Divine everywhere, he sees all down to the material world as the Divine.

⁂

It happens so in the sadhak's own subjective consciousness. Of course it does not mean that the whole world becomes like

that — everybody's consciousness.... If your experience were objective, then that would mean that the world had changed, everybody became conscious, no sorrow or suffering anywhere. Needless to say, the material world has not changed objectively in that way, only in your own consciousness subjectively you see the Divine everywhere, all disharmony disappears, sorrow and suffering become impossible for the time at least — that is a subjective experience.

*
**

It depends on what you mean by subjective and objective. Knowledge and Ignorance are in their nature subjective. But from the personal point of view, the Force of Ignorance may manifest as something objective outside oneself so that even when one has Knowledge for oneself one cannot remove the environing Ignorance. If that is so, Ignorance is not merely a subjective force in oneself, it is there in the world.

*
**

It seems to have been a series of experiences of the different Bhavas of bhakti and it came for experience only — or for a manifold development of the bhakti. These, of course, are purely subjective experiences meant to educate the consciousness and have no definite value for the actual manifestation. It is merely for subjective experience and knowledge.

*
**

The golden light is usually a light from the supermind — a light of Truth-Knowledge (it may sometimes be the supramental Truth-Knowledge turned into overmind or intuitive truth). Orange often indicates occult power. You have a strong power of (subjective) creative formation, mostly, I think, in the mental but partly too on the vital plane. This kind of formative faculty can be used for objective results if accompanied by a sound knowledge of the occult forces and their workings; but by itself

it results more often in one's building up an inner world of one's own in which you can live very well satisfied, as long as you live in yourself, apart from any close contact with external physical life; but it does not stand the test of objective experience.

⁂

In each plane there is an objective as well as a subjective side. It is not the physical plane and life alone that are objective.

When you have the power of formation of which I spoke, whatever is suggested to the mind, the mind constructs and establishes a form of it in itself. But this power can cut two ways; it may tempt the mind to construct mere images of the reality and mistake them for the reality itself. It is one of the many dangers of a too active mind.

You make a formation in your mind or on the vital plane in yourself — it is a kind of creation, but subjective only; it affects only your own mental or vital being. You can create by ideas, thought-forms, images, a whole world in yourself or for yourself; but it stops there.

Some have the power of making consciously formations that go out and affect the mind, actions, vital movements, external lives of others. These formations may be destructive as well as creative.

Finally, there is the power to make formations that become effective realities in the earth-consciousness here, in its mind, life, physical existence. That is what we usually mean by creation.

III

Mental realisation is useful at the beginning and prepares spiritual experience.

It can help too at the beginning — but also it can hinder. It depends on the sadhak.

⁂

Wordsworth's experience also was mental. Mental experiences are of course a good preparation, but to stop there leaves one far away from the real thing.

⁂

It [the realisation of the Divine in the mind] is a certain kind of living cognition — of which there are two parts — the living perception in thought rising as far as intuition or revelation, the vivid mental feeling and reproduction of what is thus known in the substance of mind. Thus the One in all is felt, seen, realised by the mind by a sort of inner mental sense. The spiritual realisation is more concrete than that — one has the knowledge by a kind of identity in one's very substance.

⁂

You have to know by experience. The mental perception and mental realisation are different from each other — the first is only an idea, in the second the mind in its very substance reflects or reproduces the truth. The spiritual experience is more than the mental — it is in the very substance of the being that the experience takes place.

⁂

A mental or vital sense of oneness has not the same essentiality or the same effect as a spiritual realisation of oneness — just as the mental perception of the Divine is not the same thing as the spiritual realisation. The consciousness of one plane is different from the consciousness of another. Spiritual and psychic love are different from mental, vital or physical love — so with everything else. So too with the perception of oneness and its effects. That is why the different planes have their importance; otherwise their existence would have no meaning.

⁂

Your experience is the beginning of the fundamental and decisive

realisation which carries the consciousness out of the limited mental into the true spiritual vision and experience in which all is one and all is the Divine. It is this constant and living experience that is the true foundation of spiritual life. There can be no doubt about its truth and value, for it is evidently something living and dynamic and goes beyond a mental realisation. It may add to itself in future different aspects, but the essential fundamental realisation you now have. When this is permanent, one can be said to have passed out of the twilight of the mind into the light of the Spirit.

What you have now to do is to allow the realisation to grow and develop. The necessary movements will probably come of themselves as these have come — provided you keep your will single and faithful towards this Light and Truth. Already it has brought you the guidance towards the next step, cessation of the flow of thought, the inner mind's silence. Once that is won, there is likely to come a settled peace, liberation, wideness. The sense of the need of simplicity and transparency is also a true movement and comes from the same inner guidance. That is necessary for the deepest inmost divine element within behind the mind, life and body to come forward fully in you — when it does you will be able to become aware of the inner guide within you and of a Force working for the full spiritual change. This simplicity comes by a separation from the manifold devious mental and vital movements which lead one in all directions — a quiet, a detachment in the heart which turns one singly towards the one Truth and the one Light till it takes up the whole being and the whole life.

Put your trust in the grace of the One and Divine which has already touched you and opened its door and rely on it for all that is to come.

*
**

I have read the record of X's experiences. It appears from it that he has made the right start to a certain extent and has been able to establish the beginning of a mental calm and some kind of psychic opening but neither of these has as yet been able to go very far. The reason probably is that he has done everything

by a strong mental control and forcible stilling of the mind and emotional and vital movements, but has not yet established the true spiritual calm which can only come by experience of or surrender to the higher being above the mind. It is this that he has to get in order to make a foundation for a more substantial progress.

1. He is right in thinking that an inner calm and silence must be the foundation, not only of external work but of all inner and outer activities. But the quieting of the mind in a mental silence or inactivity, although often useful as a first step, is not sufficient. The mental calm must be changed first into a deeper spiritual peace, Shanti, and then into the supramental calm and silence full of the higher light and strength and Ananda. Moreover, the quieting of the mind only is not enough. The vital and physical consciousness have to be opened up and the same foundation established there. Also the spirit of devotion of which he speaks must be not merely a mental feeling but an aspiration of the deeper heart and will to the truth above, that the being may rise up into it and that it may descend and govern all the activities.

2. The void he feels in the mind is often a necessary condition for the clearing of it from its ordinary movements so that it may open to a higher consciousness and a new experience, but in itself it is merely negative, a mental calm without anything positive in it and, if one stops there, then the dullness and inertia of which he complains must come. What he needs is, in the void and silence of the mind, to open himself to, to wait or to call for, the action of the higher power, light and peace from above the mind.

3. The survival of the evil habits in sleep is easily explained and is a thing of common experience. It is a known psychological law that whatever is suppressed in the conscious mind remains in the subconscient being and recurs either in the waking state when the control is removed or else in sleep. Mental control by itself cannot eradicate anything entirely out of the being. The subconscient in the ordinary man includes the larger part of the vital being and the physical mind and also the secret body-consciousness. In order to make a true and complete change,

one has to make all these conscious, to see clearly what is still there and to reject them from one layer after another till they have been entirely thrown out from the personal existence. Even then, they may remain and come back on the being from the surrounding universal forces and it is only when no part of the consciousness makes any response to these forces of the lower plane that the victory and transformation are absolutely complete.

4. His experience that whenever he gains a conquest in the mental plane the forces of past Karma, — that is to say, really of the old nature, — come back upon him with a double vigour is again a common experience. The psychological explanation is to be found in the preceding paragraph. All attempt at transformation of the being is a fight with universal forces which have long been in possession and it is vain to expect that they will give up the struggle at the first defeat. As long as they can, they seek to retain possession and even when they are cast out they will, as long as there is any chance of response in the conscious or subconscious being, try to recur and regain their hold. It is no use being discouraged by these attacks. What has to be done is to see that they are made more and more external and all assent refused until they weaken and fade away. Not only the Chitta and Buddhi must refuse consent but also the lower parts of the being, the vital and physico-vital, the physical mind and the body consciousness.

5. The defects of the receiving mind and the discriminating Buddhi spoken of are general defects of the intellect and cannot be entirely got rid of so long as the intellectual action is not replaced by a higher supra-intellectual action and finally by the harmonising light of the supramental being.

Next as regards the psychic experiences. The region of glory felt in the crown of the head is simply the touch or reflection of the supramental sunlight on the higher part of the mind. The whole mind and being must open to this light and it must descend and fill the whole system. The lightning and the electric currents are the (*vaidyuta*) Agni force of the supramental sun touching and trying to pour into the body. The other signs are promises of the future psychic and other experiences. But none

of these things can establish themselves until the opening to the higher force has been made. The mental yoga can only be a preparation for this truer starting-point.

What I have said is merely an explanation of these experiences but it seems to me that he has advanced far enough to make a foundation for the beginning of the higher yoga. If he wishes to do that he must replace his mental control by a belief in and a surrender to the Supreme Presence and Force above the mind, an aspiration in the heart and a will in the higher mind to the supreme truth and the transformation of the whole conscious being by its descent and power. He must, in his meditation, open himself silently to it and call down first a deeper calm and silence, next the strength from above working in the whole system and last the higher glory of which he had a glimpse pouring through his whole being and illuminating it with the divine truth-movement.

*
**

Yes, so long as the attitude is mental it is insecure because it is something imposed on the nature — a mental direction and control. But with the spiritual experience what begins is a change in the stuff of the consciousness itself and by that, as it proceeds to settle and confirm itself, begins naturally what we call the transformation of the nature.

*
**

No, the phrase ["stuff of consciousness"] simply means "substance of consciousness", the consciousness in itself.

As the yogic experience develops, consciousness is felt as something quite concrete in which there are movements and formations which are what we call thoughts, feelings etc.

*
**

Your feeling is quite correct. All spiritual experience is a substantial experience — consciousness, Ananda even are felt as something substantial. It is also true that it is felt so by some-

thing deeper than mind; it is the mind that turns concrete realities into abstractions.

⁂

These disadvantages of mental knowledge no doubt exist. But I doubt whether anybody could mentally simulate to himself the experience of the One everywhere or the downflow of peace. He might mistake a first mental realisation for the deeper spiritual one or think the descent was in his physical when it was in his mental influencing the body through the mental sheath of the subtle body — but those who have no mental knowledge can also make these mistakes. The disadvantage of the one who does not know mentally is that he gets the experience without understanding it and this may be a hindrance or at least retardatory to development while he would not get so easily out of a mistake as one more mentally enlightened.

⁂

Usually they [who do not have the mental knowledge about the universal Self] feel first through the psychic centre by union with the Mother and do not call it the Self — or else they simply feel a wideness and peace in the head or in the heart. Previous mental knowledge is not indispensable. I have seen in more cases than one sadhaks getting the Brahman realisation and asking "what is this?" — describing it with great vividness and exactness but without any of the known terms.

Just after writing this I read a letter from a sadhika in which she writes "I see that my head is becoming very quiet, pure, luminous, *universal, viśvamaya.*" Well that is the beginning of the realisation of the universal Brahman — Self in the mind, but if I put it to her in that language she would understand nothing.

⁂

Even imagined experiences (honestly imagined) can help to

mental realisation and mental realisation can be a step to total realisation.

*
**

When one is living in the physical mind, the only way to escape from it is imagination. Incidentally, that is why poetry and art, etc. have so strong a hold. But these imaginations are often really shadows of supraphysical experience and once the barrier of the physical mind is broken or even swung a little open, there come the experiences themselves, if the temperament is favourable. Hence are born visions and other such phenomena — all those that are miscalled psychic phenomena.

As for prayer, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Some prayers are answered, all are not. You may ask, why should not then all prayers be answered? But why should they be? it is not a machinery: put a prayer in the slot and get your asking. Besides, considering all the contradictory things mankind is praying for at the same moment, God would be in a rather awkward hole if he had to grant all of them; it wouldn't do.

IV

There is no impossibility in the purification of the heart which was the thing you were trying for, and when the heart is purified, other things which seemed impossible before become easy — even the inner surrender which now seems to you impracticable.

It is the usual experience that if the humility and resignation are firmly founded in the heart, other things like trust come naturally afterwards. If once the psychic light and happiness which is the boon of these things is founded, it is not easy for other forces to cloud that state and not possible for them to destroy it. That is the common experience.

Purification and consecration are two great necessities of sadhana. Those who have experiences before purification run a great risk: it is much better to have the heart pure first, for then the way becomes safe. That is why I advocate the psychic

change of the nature first — for that means the purification of the heart: the turning of it wholly to the Divine, the subjection of the mind and the vital to the control of the inner being, the soul. Always, when the soul is in front, one gets the right guidance from within as to what is to be done, what avoided, what is the wrong thing or the true thing in thought, feeling, action. But this inner intimation emerges in proportion as the consciousness grows more and more pure.

The stumbling-block of X was ambition, pride, vanity — the desire to be a big yogi with occult powers. To try to bring down occult powers into an unpurified mind, heart and body — well, you can do it if you want to dance on the edge of a precipice. Or you can do it if your aim is not to be spiritual but to be an occultist, for then you can follow the necessary methods and get the help of the occult powers. On the other hand, the true occult spiritual forces and mysteries can be called down or can come down without calling, but this must be made secondary to the one true thing, the seeking for the Divine, and if it is part of the Divine plan in you. Occult powers can only be for the spiritual man an instrumentation of the Divine Power that uses him: they cannot be the aim or an aim of his sadhana. Many people have a habit of doing yoga according to their own ideas without caring for the guidance of the Guru — from whom, however, they expect an entire protection and success in sadhana even if they prance or gambol into the wrongest paths possible.

What I mean by subtle methods is psychological, non-mechanical processes, e.g., concentration in the heart, surrender, self-purification, working out by inner means the change of the consciousness. This does not mean that there is no outer change: the outer change is necessary but as a part of the inner change. If there is impurity or insincerity within, the outer change will not be effective, but if there is a sincere inner working, the outer change will help it and accelerate the process.... The most important thing for the purification of the heart is an absolute sincerity. No pretence with oneself, no concealment from the Divine, or oneself, or the Guru, a straight look at one's movements, a straight will to make them straight. It does not so much matter if it takes time: one must be prepared to make it one's

whole life-task to seek the Divine. Purifying the heart means after all a pretty considerable achievement and it is no use getting despondent, despairful, etc., because one finds things in oneself that still need to be changed. If one keeps the true will and true attitude, then the intuitions or intimations from within will begin to grow, become clear, precise, unmistakable and the strength to follow them will grow also: and then before even you are satisfied with yourself, the Divine will be satisfied with you and begin to withdraw the veil by which he protects himself and his seekers against a premature and perilous grasping of the greatest thing to which humanity can aspire.

*
**

The automatic tendency is a good sign as it shows that it is the inner being opening to the Truth which is pressing forward the necessary changes.

As you say, it is the failure of the right attitude that comes in the way of passing through ordeals to a change of nature. The pressure is becoming greater now for this change of character even more than for decisive yoga experience — for if the experience comes, it fails to be decisive because of the want of the requisite change of nature. The mind, for instance, gets the experience of One in all, but the vital cannot follow, because it is dominated by ego-reaction and ego-motive or the habits of the outer nature keep up a way of thinking, feeling, acting, living which is quite out of harmony with the experience. Or the psychic and part of the mind and emotional being feel frequently the closeness of the Mother, but the rest of the nature is unoffered and goes its own way prolonging division from her nearness, creating distance. It is not enough — and there is great need that this should change.

*
**

I do not know what X said or in which article, I do not have it with me. But if the statement is that nobody can have a successful meditation or realise anything till he is pure and perfect, I fail to follow it: it contradicts my own experience. I have always had

realisation by meditation first and the purification started afterwards as a result. I have seen many get important, even fundamental realisations by meditation who could not be said to have a great inner development. Are all yogis who have meditated with effect and had great realisations in their inner consciousness perfect in their nature? It does not look like it to me. I am unable to believe in absolute generalisations in this field, because the development of spiritual consciousness is an exceedingly vast and complex affair in which all sorts of things can happen and one might almost say that for each man it is different according to his nature and that the one thing that is essential is the inner call and aspiration and the perseverance to follow always after it, no matter how long it takes, what are the difficulties or impediments, because nothing else will satisfy the soul within us.

It is quite true that a certain amount of purification is indispensable for going on, that the more complete the purification the better, because then when the realisations begin they can continue without big difficulties or relapses and without any possibility of fall or failure. It is also true that with many purification is the first need, — certain things have to be got out of the way before one can begin any consecutive inner experience. But the main need is a certain preparation of the consciousness so that it may be able to respond more and more freely to the higher Force. In this preparation many things are useful — the poetry and music you are doing can help, for it all acts as a sort of *śravaṇa* and *manana*, even, if the feeling roused is intense, a sort of natural *nididhyāsana*. Psychic preparation, clearing out of the grosser forms of mental and vital ego, opening mind and heart to the Guru and many other things help greatly — it is not perfection or a complete freedom from the dualities or ego that is the indispensable preliminary, but preparedness, a fitness of the inner being which makes spiritual responses and receiving possible.

There is no reason therefore to take as gospel truth these demands which may have been right for X on the way he has trod, but cannot be imposed on all — the law of the spirit is not so exacting and inexorable.

⁂

X has...a day or two ago had the experience of the ascent above and of the wideness of peace and joy of the Infinite (free from the bodily sense and limitation) as also the descent down to the Muladhara. She does not know the names or technicalities of these things but her description which was minute and full of details was unmistakable. There are three or four others who have had this experience recently so that we may suppose the working of the Force is not altogether in vain as this experience is a very big affair and is supposed to be, if stabilised, the summit of the old yogas, for us it is only a beginning of spiritual transformation. I have said this though it is personal so that you may understand that outside defects and obstacles in the nature or the appearance of unyogicness does not necessarily mean that a person can do or is doing no sadhana.

*
**

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.

*
**

To change the nature is not easy and always takes time, but if there is no inner experience, no gradual emergence of the other purer consciousness that is concealed by all these things you now see, it would be almost impossible even for the strongest will. You

say that first you must get rid of all these things, then have the inner experiences. But how is that to be done? These things, anger, jealousy, desire are the very stuff of the ordinary human vital consciousness. They could not be changed if there were not a deeper consciousness within which is of quite another character. There is within you a psychic being which is divine, directly a part of the Mother, pure of all these defects. It is covered and concealed by the ordinary consciousness and nature, but when it is unveiled and able to come forward and govern the being, then it changes the ordinary consciousness, throws all these undivine things out and changes the outer nature altogether. That is why we want the sadhaks to concentrate, to open this concealed consciousness — it is by concentration of whatever kind and the experiences it brings that one opens and becomes aware within and the new consciousness and nature begin to grow and come out. Of course we want them also to use their will and reject the desires and wrong movements of the vital, for by doing that the emergence of the true consciousness becomes possible. But rejection alone cannot succeed; it is by rejection and by inner experience and growth that it is done.

You say that all these things were hidden within you. No, they were not deep within, they were in the outer or surface nature, only you were not sufficiently conscious of them because the other true consciousness had not opened and grown within you. Now by the experiences you have had the psychic has been growing and it is because of this new psychic consciousness that you are able to see clearly all that has to go. It does not go at once because the vital had so much the habit of them in the past, but they will now have to go because your soul wants to get rid of them and your soul is growing stronger in you. So you must both use your will aided by the Mother's force to get rid of these things, and go on with your inner psychic experiences — it is by the two together that all will be done.

*
**

Once these experiences begin, they repeat themselves usually, whether the general condition is good or not. But naturally

they cannot make a radical change until they settle themselves and become normal in the whole being or at least in the inner part of it. In the latter case the old movements can still come, but they are felt as something quite superficial and the sadhana increases in spite of them. There is no question of good or wicked. If some part of the being even has been opened the experiences come.

*
**

Yes, that is the truth of the working. At first what has to be established comes with difficulty and is felt as if abnormal, an experience that one loses easily — afterwards it comes of itself, but does not yet stay; finally it becomes a frequent and intimate state of the being and makes itself constant and normal. On the other hand all the confusions and errors once habitual to the nature are pushed out; at first they return frequently, but afterwards they in their turn become abnormal and foreign to the nature and lose frequency and finally disappear.

V

The up and down movement which you speak of is common to all ways of yoga. It is there in the path of bhakti, but there are equally alternations of states of light and states of darkness, sometimes sheer and prolonged darkness, when one follows the path of knowledge. Those who have occult experiences come to periods when all experiences cease and even seem finished for ever. Even when there have been many and permanent realisations, these seem to go behind the veil and leave nothing in front except a dull blank, filled, if at all, only with recurrent attacks and difficulties. These alternations are the result of the nature of human consciousness and are not a proof of unfitness or of predestined failure. One has to be prepared for them and pass through. They are the "day and night" of the Vedic mystics.

As for surrender, everyone has his own first way of approach towards it; but if it is due to fear, "form" or sense of duty, then certainly that is not surrender at all; these things have nothing to

do with surrender. Also, complete and total surrender is not so easy as some seem to imagine. There are always many and large reservations; even if one is not conscious of them, they are there. Complete surrender can best come by a complete love and bhakti. Bhakti, on the other hand, can begin without surrender, but it naturally leads, as it forms itself, to surrender.

You are surely mistaken in thinking that the difficulty of giving up intellectual convictions is a special stumbling-block in you more than in others. The attachment to one's own ideas and convictions, the insistence on them is a common characteristic. It can be removed by a light of knowledge from above which gives one the direct touch of Truth or the luminous experience of it and takes away all value from mere intellectual opinion, ideas or conviction and removes the necessity for it, or by a right consciousness which brings with it right ideas, right feeling, right action and right everything else. Or else it must come by a spiritual and mental humility which is rare in human nature — especially the mental, for the mind is always apt to think its own ideas, true or false, are the right ideas. Eventually, it is the psychic growth that makes this surrender too possible and that again comes most easily by bhakti. In any case, the existence of this difficulty is not in itself a good cause for forecasting failure in yoga.

*
**

The reason why there are these alternations of which you complain is that the nature of the consciousness is like that; after a little spell of wakefulness it feels the need of a little sleep. Very often in the beginning the wakings are brief, the sleeps long; afterwards it becomes more equal and later on the sleep periods are shorter and shorter. Another cause of these alternations, when one is receiving, is the nature's need of closing up to assimilate. It can take perhaps a great deal, but while the experience is going on it cannot absorb properly what it brings, so it closes down for assimilation. A third cause comes in the period of transformation, — one part of the nature changes and one feels for a time as if there had been a complete and permanent change. But one is disappointed to find it cease and a period of barrenness

or lowered consciousness follow. This is because another part of the consciousness comes up for change and a period of preparation and veiled working follows which seems to be one of unenlightenment or worse. These things alarm, disappoint or perplex the eagerness and impatience of the sadhak; but if one takes them quietly and knows how to use them or adopt the right attitude, one can make these unenlightened periods also a part of the conscious sadhana. So the Vedic Rishis speak of the alternation of "Day and Night both suckling the divine Child." What you feel in the head is probably the first conscious descent into the body of the divine Force from above. Up to now it must have been working unfelt by you from behind the heart. If the concentration takes place naturally in the head you must allow it to do so, but the possibility of this has been prepared by the previous concentration in the heart, so that also need not be discontinued unless the force working in you insists on the upper concentration only. Aspiration can be continued in the same way until the conduct of the sadhana by the Mother's power is clearly felt and becomes to you the normal thing.

*
**

Yes, it is right. Everyone has these alternations because the total consciousness is not able to remain always in the above experience. The point is that in the intervals there should be quietude, at least in the inner being, no restlessness, dissatisfaction or struggle. If that point is attained, then the sadhana can go on smoothly — not that there will be no difficulties but there will be no disquietude or dissatisfaction etc. etc.

*
**

The Vaishnava Bhajan is one that easily excites the vital being and if there are people there of a low nature, all sorts of dark and low forces come in to feed upon the excitement.... The spiritual fulfilment will come in its time by a steady development of the being and the nature. It does not depend on seizing upon this or that opportunity.

There is another thing which you must learn. If you are interrupted in sadhana...you must simply remain inwardly quiet and allow the interruption to pass. If you learn to do this, the inner state or experience will go on afterwards just as if nothing had happened. If you attach undue importance and get upset, on the contrary, you change the interruption into a disturbance and the inner state or experience ceases. Always keep the inner quiet and confidence in every circumstance; allow nothing to disturb it or to excite you. A steady inner calm and quiet will and psychic faith and bhakti are the one true foundation for your sadhana.

*
**

A quiet and even basis means a condition of the sadhana in which there is no tossing about between eager bursts of experience and a depressed inert or half inert condition, but whether in progress or in difficulty there is always a quiet consciousness behind turned in confidence and faith towards the Divine.

*
**

An occasional sinking of the consciousness happens to everybody. The causes are various, some touch from outside, something not yet changed or not sufficiently changed in the vital, especially the lower vital, some inertia or obscurity rising up from the physical parts of nature. When it comes, remain quiet, open yourself to the Mother and call back the true conditions and aspire for a clear and undisturbed discrimination showing you from within yourself the cause of the thing that needs to be set right.

*
**

There are always pauses of preparation and assimilation between two movements. You must not regard these with fretfulness or impatience as if they were untoward gaps in the sadhana. Besides, the Force rises up lifting part of the nature on a higher level and then comes down to a lower layer to raise it;

this motion of ascent and descent is often extremely trying because the mind partial to an ascent in a straight line and the vital eager for rapid fulfilment cannot understand or follow the intricate movement and are apt to be distressed by it or resent it. But the transformation of the whole nature is not an easy thing to accomplish and the Force that does it knows better than our mental ignorance or our vital impatience.

⁂

Everything once gained is there and can be regained. Yoga is not a thing that goes by one decisive rush one way or the other — it is a building up of a new consciousness and is full of ups and downs. But if one keeps to it the ups have a habit of resulting by accumulation in a decisive change — therefore the one thing to do is to keep at it. After a fall don't wail and say, "I'm done for," but get up, dust yourself and proceed farther on the right path.

⁂

The entire oblivion of the experience means merely that there is still no sufficient bridge between the inner consciousness which has the experience in a kind of samadhi and the exterior waking consciousness. It is when the higher consciousness has made the bridge between them that the outer also begins to remember.

⁂

Fluctuations of this kind cannot but come and when they come, one has to remain very quiet and detach oneself from the surface condition and wait for it to pass while calling the Mother's force. A neutral condition of this kind serves a certain purpose in the economy of the purification and change — it brings up things that have to be transformed or rejected, lifts up some part of the being in order to expose it to the transforming force. If one can understand, remain quiet and detached from the surface movements, not identified, then it goes sooner, the Force can quickly

clear out what rises and afterwards it is found that something has been gained and a progress made.

⁂

These fluctuations in the force of the aspiration and the power of the sadhana are unavoidable and common to all sadhaks until the whole being has been made ready for the transformation. When the psychic is in front or active and the mind and vital consent, then there is the intensity. When the psychic is less prominent and the lower vital has its ordinary movements or the mind its ignorant action, then the opposing forces can come in unless the sadhak is very vigilant. Inertia comes usually from the ordinary physical consciousness, especially when the vital is not actively supporting the sadhana. These things can only be cured by a persistent bringing down of the higher spiritual consciousness into all the parts of the being.

⁂

Fall of the concentration happens to everybody — it has not to be taken as if it were something tragic or allowed to be the cause of depression.

⁂

These variations in the consciousness during the day are a thing that is common to almost everybody in the sadhana. The principle of oscillation, relaxation, relapse to a normal or a past lower condition from a higher state that is experienced but not yet perfectly stable, becomes very strong and marked when the working of the sadhana is in the physical consciousness. For there is an inertia in the physical nature that does not easily allow the intensity natural to the higher consciousness to remain constant, — the physical is always sinking back to something more ordinary; the higher consciousness and its force have to work long and come again and again before they can become constant and normal in the physical nature. Do not be disturbed or discouraged by these variations or this delay, however long

and tedious; remain careful only to be quiet always with an inner quietude and as open as possible to the higher Power, not allowing any really adverse condition to get hold of you. If there is no adverse wave, then the rest is only a persistence of imperfections which all have in abundance; that imperfection and persistence the Force must work out and eliminate, but for the elimination time is needed.

*
**

That is a frequent experience, (though I suppose it is not general) — not only with peace, but other things; there is a tendency towards a lowering of the consciousness in the evening. On the other with some it is the opposite. I don't know that it actually depends on work and mixing, though these may have a wearing effect — I find more often that it is a sort of rhythm of rise and fall in the consciousness during the day. Even when peace is perfectly established, there may be this rhythm for other things that are being developed.

*
**

There is no mentally definite and rigidly effective reason for the thing [the fall into inertia] coming in the evening rather than at 2 p.m. or in the midnight or in 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.

*
**

[Reason for fluctuations in sadhana:] I don't know. Time 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.

⁂

I can only say as before, that there is "no specific" reason [for fluctuations in the working of the Force] 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.

⁂

There are no fixed rules [for fluctuations in the working of the Force]. 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.

⁂

The falling down of consciousness comes usually by some inertia coming in the consciousness through fatigue or through mere habit of relaxation or it comes through some vital reaction which one may or may not notice or it comes through a wrong movement of the mind. These are the positive lowering causes, but at the back of them is the fact that these alternations are almost inevitable so long as the consciousness is in any way subject to the old nature. The intervals of non-sadhana may, however, be long or short according to inner circumstances (mainly the power of the will or the psychic or the higher being to restore quickly the true poise).

⁂

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.

⁂

Yes — if the peace is established, then the falls are only on the surface, and do not affect the inner consciousness.

⁂

Even if there is physical fatigue sometimes, it is not inevitable that it should interfere with the sadhana. The inner movement can always go on.

⁂

Usually it is when something in the mind and vital accepts and indulges the lower forces that this inability to re-enter the true consciousness remains so obstinate. Physical tamas can produce long interregnums of obscure consciousness, but not usually with such a violent obstruction, but it is usually dull and obstinate.

⁂

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.

⁂

After one has got to a certain stage the things gained are never lost — they may be covered over but they return — they have only gone inside and come back to the surface.

⁂

When the physical consciousness prevails, often one does not feel any sign or effect even if the experiences are there.

⁂

How do you expect anything so obtuse and forgetful as the physical consciousness to have the effect if the experiences are not repeated? It is as when you learn a lesson, you have to repeat it till the physical mind gets hold of it — otherwise it does not become a part of consciousness.

VI

The emptiness that you described in your letter yesterday was not a bad thing — it is this emptiness inward and outward that often in yoga becomes the first step towards a new consciousness. Man's nature is like a cup of dirty water — the water has to be thrown out, the cup left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it. The difficulty is that the human physical consciousness feels it difficult to bear this emptiness — it is accustomed to be occupied by all sorts of little mental and vital movements which keep it interested and amused or even if in trouble and sorrow still active. The cessation of these things is hard to bear for it. It begins to feel dull and restless and eager for the old interests and movements. But by this restlessness it disturbs the quietude and brings back the things that had been thrown out. It is this that is creating the difficulty and the

obstruction for the moment. If you can accept emptiness as a passage to the true consciousness and true movements, then it will be easier to get rid of the obstacle.

All in the Ashram are not suffering from the sense of dullness and want of interest, but many are because the Force that is descending is discouraging the old movements of the physical and vital mind which they call life and they are not accustomed to accept the renunciation of these things, or to admit the peace or joy of silence.

*
**

Emptiness is not in itself a bad condition, only if it is a sad and restless emptiness of the dissatisfied vital. In sadhana emptiness is very usually a necessary transition from one state to another. When mind and vital fall quiet and their restless movements, thoughts and desires cease, then one feels empty. This is at first often a neutral emptiness with nothing in it, nothing in it either good or bad, happy or unhappy, no impulse or movement. This neutral state is often or even usually followed by the opening to inner experience. There is also an emptiness made of peace and silence, when the peace and silence come out from the psychic within or descend from the higher consciousness above. This is not neutral, for in it there is the sense of peace, often also of wideness and freedom. There is also a happy emptiness with the sense of something close or drawing near which is not yet there, e.g. the closeness of the Mother or some other preparing experience. What you describe is the neutral quiet. There is no need for anxiety. When it comes, one has only to remain quiet and open and turned to the Mother till something develops from within.

*
**

To be an empty vessel is a very good thing if one knows how to make use of the emptiness.

*
**

If it is only emptiness, there is nothing wrong. Alternations of

emptiness and fullness are a quite normal feature of experience in sadhana.

⁂

The voidness (if by that you mean silence and emptiness of thoughts, movements etc.) is the basic condition into which the higher consciousness can flow.

⁂

The voidness is the best condition for a full receptivity.

⁂

Voidness can come from anywhere, mind, vital or from above.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

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 spirtual emptiness as opposed to the dull and inert emptiness of complete tamas which is not spiritual.

*
**

Emptiness is a state of quietude of the mental or vital or all the consciousness not visited by any mind or vital movements, but open to the Pure Existence and ready or tending to be that or already that but not yet realised in its full power of being. Which of these conditions it happens to be depends on the particular case. The Self state or the state of pure existence is sometimes also called emptiness, but only in the sense that it is a state of sheer static rest of being without any contacts of mobile Nature.

*
**

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.

*
**

The void is the condition of the Self — free, wide and silent. It seems void to the mind but in reality it is simply a state of pure existence and consciousness, Sat and Chit with Shanti.

*
**

Voidness may be of different kinds — a certain kind of spiritual voidness, or the emptiness that is a preparation for new experience. But an exhaustion of life energy is a very different thing. It may come 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 happening only then.

*
**

The usual result of voidness is to quiet down any vital disturbance although it does not, unless it is complete, stop the mechanical recurrent action of the mind.

⁂

If it is a real emptiness, one can rest 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 could 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.

⁂

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.

⁂

You have written about 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 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 and 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.

⁂

Silence of the being is the first natural aim of the yoga. X and

some others do not find satisfaction in it because they have not overcome the vital mind which wants always some kind of activity, change, doing something, something to happen. The eternal immobility of the silent Brahman is a thing it does not relish. So when emptiness comes, it finds it dull, inert, monotonous.

⁂

Certainly, the vital cannot take an interest in a blank condition. If you depend on your vital you cannot prolong it. It is the spirit that feels a release in the silence empty of all mental or other activities, for in that silence it becomes self-aware. For the blankness to be real one must have got into the Purusha or Witness Consciousness. If you are looking at it with your mind or vital, then there is not blankness, for even if there are not distinct thoughts then there must be a mental attitude or mental vibrations — e.g. the not feeling interest.

⁂

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.

⁂

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

⁂

It is the tendency of the physical to substitute its own inertia for the emptiness. The true emptiness is the beginning of what I call in the *Arya* "*śama*" — the rest, calm, peace of the eternal Self — which has finally to replace tamas, the physical inertia. Tamas is the degradation of *sama*, as rajas is the degradation of Tapas, the Divine Force. The physical consciousness is always

trying to substitute its own inertia for the calm, peace or rest of the true consciousness, just as the vital is always trying to substitute its rajas for the true action of the Force.

⁂

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

⁂

In the course of the sadhana a state of blankness, of "neutral quiet" like this often comes — especially when the sadhana is in the physical consciousness. It is not that the aspiration is gone, but that it does not manifest for the time being, because all has become neutrally quiet. This condition is trying for the human mind and vital which are accustomed to be in some kind of activity always and regard this as a lifeless state. But one must not feel disturbed or disappointed when this comes, but remain calm in the full confidence that it is a stage only, a ground that has to be crossed in the sadhana. In whatever condition, the faith and the fixed idea of surrender must be kept before the mind. As for the brief movements of restlessness, they will still down if this is kept and the quiet mind and vital reassert themselves quickly.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

If it is the spiritual emptiness then it will not be felt as interfering with the sadhana.

⁂

What you describe is the same neutral condition that you had before. It is a transitional state in which the old consciousness has ceased to be active, the new is preparing behind a neutral quietude. One must take it quietly and wait for it to turn into the spiritual peace and the psychic happiness which is quite different from vital joy and grief. To have neither vital joy nor vital grief is considered by the yogins to be a very desirable release, — it makes it possible to pass from the ordinary human vital feelings to the true and constant inner peace, joy or happiness. I suppose you have no time just now for sitting in meditation. The pressure of sleep is a pressure to go inside and the habit of meditation makes it possible to turn the sleep that comes into a

kind of sleep-samadhi in which one is conscious of various experiences and progresses in the inner being.

⁂

The condition which you feel is one which is very well known in sadhana. It is a sort of passage or transition, a state of inwardness which is growing but not yet completed — at that time to speak or throw oneself outward is painful. What is necessary is to be very quiet and remain within oneself all the time until the movement is completed, — one should not speak or only a little and in a low quiet way nor concentrate the mind on outward things. You should also not mind what people say or question, — although they are practising sadhana, they know nothing about these conditions and if one becomes quiet or withdrawn they think one must be sad or ill. The Mother did not find you at all like that, sad or ill; it is simply a phase or temporary state in the sadhana that she has experience of and knows very well.

The condition lasts often for a number of days, sometimes many, until something definite begins. Remain confident and quiet.

VII

The usual rule given by yogis is that one should not speak of one's experience to others except of course the Guru while the sadhana is going on because it wastes the experience, there is what they call *kṣaya* of the tapasya. It is only long past experiences that they speak of and even that not too freely.

⁂

The Light left you because you spoke of it to someone who was not an *adhikārī*. It is safest not to speak of these experiences except to a Guru or to one who can help you. The passing away of an experience as soon as it is spoken of is a frequent happening and for that reason many yogis make it a rule never to speak of

what happens within them, unless it is a thing of the past or a settled realisation that nothing can take away. A settled permanent realisation abides, but these were rather things that come to make possible an opening in the consciousness to something more complete — to prepare it for realisation.

⁂

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 of 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.

⁂

If you want to keep the joy, it will be wise not to speak of it to others. Things spoken about get wings and try to escape.

⁂

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.

⁂

General knowledge is another matter, it is intellectual and the intellect gains by the intellectual activity of teaching. Also if in yoga it were only a matter of imparting intellectually one's mental knowledge of the subject, that rule would perhaps hold; but this mental aspect is only a small part of yoga. There is something more complex which forms the bigger part of it. In teaching yoga to another one becomes to some extent a master with disciples. The yogis have always said that one who takes

disciples, takes upon himself the difficulties of his disciples as well as one's own — that is why it is recommended not to take disciples unless and until one is siddha and even then only if one receives the Divine authority to do it — what Ramakrishna called getting the *chaprās.* Secondly, there is the danger of egoism — when one is free from that, then the objection no longer holds. There is a separate question and that is the telling of one's own experiences to others. That too is very much discouraged by most yogis — they say it is harmful to the sadhana. I have certainly seen and heard of any number of instances in which people were having a flow of experiences and, when they told it, the flow was lost — so there must be something in this objection. I suppose however it ceases to apply after one has reached a certain long-established stability in the experience, that is to say when the experience amounts to a definite and permanent realisation, something finally and irrevocably added to the consciousness. I notice that those who keep their experiences to themselves and do not put themselves out on others seem to have a more steady sadhana than others, but I don't know whether it is an invariable rule. It would probably not apply any longer after a certain stage of realisation.

Section Two

VISIONS AND SYMBOLS

Visions and Symbols

ALL visions have a significance of one kind or another. This power of vision is very important for the yoga and should not be rejected although it is not the most important thing — for the most important thing is the change of the consciousness. All other powers like this of vision should be developed without attachment as parts and aids of the yoga.

⁂

Visions are not indispensable — they are a help, that is all, when they are of the right kind.

⁂

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.

⁂

The visions you describe are those which come in the earliest stages of sadhana. At this stage most of the things seen are formations of the mental plane and it is not always possible to put on them a precise significance, for they depend on the individual mind of the sadhak. At a later stage the power of vision becomes important for the sadhana, but at first one has to go on without attaching excessive importance to the details — until the consciousness develops more. The opening of the consciousness to the Divine Light and Truth and Presence is always the one important thing in the yoga.

⁂

The frequent seeing of lights such as those he writes of in his letter is usually a sign that the seer is not limited by his outward surface or waking consciousness but has a latent capacity (which can be perfected by training and practice) for entering into the experiences of the inner consciousness of which most people are unaware but which opens by the practice of yoga. By this opening one becomes aware of subtle planes of experience and worlds of existence other than the material. For the spiritual life a still further opening is required into an inmost consciousness by which one becomes aware of the Self and Spirit, the Eternal and the Divine.

⁂

Visions do not come from the spiritual plane — they come from the subtle physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic or from the planes above the Mind. What comes from the spiritual plane are experiences of the Divine, e.g. the experience of self everywhere, of the Divine in all, etc.

⁂

Visions and experiences (especially experiences) are all right; but you cannot expect every vision to translate itself in a corresponding physical fact. Some do, the majority don't, others belong to the supraphysical entirely and indicate realities, possibilities or tendencies that have their seat there. How far these will influence the life or realise themselves in it or whether they will do so at all depends upon the nature of the vision, the power in it, sometimes on the will or the formative power of the seer.

People value visions for one thing because they are one key (there are others) to contact with the other worlds or with the inner worlds and all that is there and these are regions of immense riches which far surpass the physical plane as it is at present. One enters into a larger freer self and a larger more plastic world; of course individual visions only give a contact, not an actual entrance, but the power of vision accompanied with the power of other subtle senses (hearing, touch, etc.) as it expands does give this entrance. These things have not the effect of a mere imagina-

tion (as a poet's or artist's, though that can be strong enough) but if fully followed out bring a constant growth of the being and the consciousness and its richness of experience and its scope.

People also value the power of vision for a greater reason than that: it can give a first contact with the Divine in his forms and powers; it can be the opening of a communion with the Divine, of the hearing of the Voice that guides, of the Presence as well as the Image in the heart, of many other things that bring what man seeks through religion or yoga.

Further, vision is of value because it is often a first key to inner planes of one's own being and one's own consciousness as distinguished from worlds or planes of the cosmic consciousness. Yoga-experience often begins with some opening of the third eye in the forehead (the centre of vision in the brows) or with some kind of beginning and extension of subtle seeing which may seem unimportant at first but is the vestibule to deeper experience. Even when it is not that, — for one can go to experience direct, — it can come in afterwards as a powerful aid to experience; it can be full of indications which help to self-knowledge or knowledge of things or knowledge of people; it can be veridical and lead to prevision, premonition and other openings of less importance but very useful to a yogi. In short, vision is a great instrument though not absolutely indispensable.

But, as I have suggested, there are visions and visions, just as there are dreams and dreams, and one has to develop discrimination and a sense of values and things and know how to understand and make use of these powers. But that is too big and intricate a matter to be pursued now.

*
**

He made a mistake when he stopped the visions that were coming. Vision and hallucination are not the same thing. The inner vision is an open door on higher planes of consciousness beyond the physical mind which gives room for a wider truth and experience to enter and act upon the mind. It is not the only or the most important door, but it is one which comes readiest to very many if not most and can be a very powerful help. It does

not come as easily to intellectuals as it does to men with a strong life-power or the emotional and the imaginative. It is true that the field of vision, like every other field of activity of the human mind, is a mixed world and there is in it not only truth but much half-truth and error. It is also true that for the rash and unwary to enter into it may bring confusion and misleading inspirations and false voices, and it is safer to have some sure guidance from those who know and have spiritual and psychic experience. One must look at this field calmly and with discrimination, but to shut the gates and reject this or other supraphysical experiences is to limit oneself and arrest the inner development.

⁂

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.

⁂

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.

⁂

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

their faculties or misuse them or give them excessive value or nourish their ego by them, does it follow that the faculties themselves have no yogic use or value?

⁂

Even by itself it [the development of the occult faculty] is a progress in the development of the consciousness though it may not carry with it any spiritualisation of the nature.

⁂

People who have the occult faculty always tend to give too large a place to it.

⁂

He [R.M.] discouraged his disciples [from having any dealings with the occult faculty] 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 by false visions and false voices. That does not mean that visions and voices have no value.

⁂

Visions come from all planes and are of all kinds and different values. Some are of very great value and importance, others are a play of the mind or vital and are good only for their own special purpose, others are formations of the mind and vital plane some of which may have truth, while others are false and misleading, or they may be a sort of artistry of that plane. They can have considerable importance in the development of the first yogic consciousness, that of the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical or for an occult understanding of the universe. Visions which are real can help the spiritual progress, I mean, those which show us inner realities: one can, for instance, meet Krishna, speak

with him and hear his voice in an inner "real" vision, quite as real as anything on the outer plane. Merely seeing his image is not the same thing, any more than seeing his picture on the wall is the same thing as meeting him in person. But the picture on the wall need not be useless for the spiritual life. All one can say is that one must not attach oneself too much to this gift and what it shows us, but neither is it necessary to belittle it. It has its value and sometimes a considerable spiritual utility. But, naturally, it is not supreme — the supreme thing is the realisation, the contact, the union with the Divine, bhakti, change of nature, etc.

⁂

These lights and visions are not hallucinations. They indicate an opening of the inner vision whose centre is in the forehead between the eyebrows. Lights are very often the first thing seen. Lights indicate the action or movement of subtle forces belonging to the different planes of being — the nature of the force depending on the colour and shade of the light. The sun is the symbol and power of the inner or higher Truth; to see it in meditation is a good sign. The sea is also often symbolic, indicating usually the vital nature, sometimes the expanse of consciousness in movement. The opening of vision must be allowed to develop, but too much importance need not be given to the individual visions unless or until they become evidently symbolic or significant or shed light on things in the sadhana.

⁂

Visions and voices are not meant for creating faith, they are effective only if one has faith already.

⁂

No, it was neither optical illusion nor hallucination nor coincidence nor auto-suggestion nor any of the other ponderous and vacant polysyllables by which physical science tries to explain away or rather avoid explaining the scientifically inexplicable.

In these matters the scientist is always doing what he is always blaming the layman for doing when the latter lays down the law on things about which he is profoundly ignorant without investigation or experiment, without ascertained knowledge — simply by evolving a theory or *a priori* idea out of his own mind and plastering it as a label on the unexplained phenomena.

There is, as I have told you, a whole range or many inexhaustible ranges of sensory phenomena other than the outward physical which one can become conscious of, see, hear, feel, smell, touch, mentally contact — to use the new established Americanism — either in trance or sleep or an inward state miscalled sleep or simply and easily in the waking state. This faculty of sensing supraphysical things internally or externalising them, so to speak, so that they become visible, audible, sensible to the outward eye, ear, even touch, just as are gross physical objects, this power or gift is not a freak or an abnormality; it is a universal faculty present in all human beings, but latent in most, in some rarely or intermittently active, occurring as if by accident in others, frequent or normally active in a few. But just as anyone can, with some training, learn science and do things which would have seemed miracles to his forefathers, so almost anyone, if he wants, can with a little concentration and training develop the faculty of supraphysical vision. When one starts yoga, this power is often, though not invariably — for some find it difficult — one of the first to come out from its latent condition and manifest itself, most often without any effort, intention or previous knowledge on the part of the sadhak. It comes more easily with the eyes shut than with the eyes open, but it does come in both ways. The first sign of its opening in the externalised way is very often that seeing of "sparkles" or small luminous dots, shapes, etc., which was your first introduction to the matter; a second is, often enough, most easily, round luminous objects like a star; seeing of colours is a third initial experience — but they do not always come in that order. The yogis in India very often in order to develop the power use the method of *trāṭak*, concentrating the vision on a single point or object — preferably a luminous object. Your looking at the star was precisely an exercise in *trāṭak* and had the effect which any yogi in India would have told you is

normal. For all this is not fancy or delusion, it is part of an occult science which has been practised throughout the historic and prehistoric ages in all countries and it has always been known to be not merely auto-suggestive or hallucinatory in its results, but, if one can get the key, veridical and verifiable. Your scepticism may be natural in a "modern" man plunging into these things of the past, present and future — natural but not justifiable, because very obviously inadequate to the facts observed; but once you have seen, the first thing you should do is to throw all this vapid pseudo-science behind you, this vain attempt to stick physical explanations on supraphysical things, and take the only rational course. Develop the power, get more and more experience, develop the consciousness by which these things come; as the consciousness develops, you will begin to understand and get the intuition of the significance. Or if you want their science too, then learn and apply the occult science which can alone deal with supraphysical phenomena. As for what showed itself to you, it was not mere curious phenomena, not even merely symbolic colour, but things that have a considerable importance.

Develop this power of inner sense and all that it brings you. These first seeings are only an outer fringe — behind lie whole worlds of experience which fill what seems to the natural man the gap (your Russell's inner void) between the earth-consciousness and the Eternal and Infinite.

⁂

There is a physical aspect of things and there is an occult supraphysical aspect — one need not get in the way of the other. All physical things are the expression of the supraphysical. The existence of a body with physical instruments and processes does not, as the 19th century wrongly imagined, disprove the existence of a soul which uses the body even if it is also conditioned by it. Laws of Nature do not disprove the existence of God. The fact of a material world to which our instruments are accorded does not disprove the existence of less material worlds which certain subtler instruments can show to us.

⁂

Is the Presence of a physical nature or a spiritual fact? And is the physical sense accustomed or able to see or feel spiritual things — a spiritual Presence, a non-material Form? To see the Brahman everywhere is not possible unless you develop the inner vision — to do that you have to concentrate. To see non-material forms is indeed possible for a few, because they have the gift by nature, but most can't do it without developing the subtle sight. It is absurd to expect the Divine to manifest his Presence without your taking any trouble to see it, you have to concentrate.

It simply means you have a subjective sense of Presence. But must a subjective sense of things be necessarily a vain imagination? If so, no yoga is possible. One has to take it as an axiom that subjective things can be as real as objective things. No doubt there may be and are such things as mental formations — but, to begin with, mental formations are or can be very powerful things, producing concrete results; secondly whether what one sees or hears is a mental formation or a real subjective object can only be determined when one has sufficient experience in these inward things.

*
**

Subjective visions can be as real as objective sight — the only difference is that one is of real things in material space, while the others are of real things belonging to other planes down to the subtle physical; even symbolic visions are real in so far as they are symbols of realities. Even dreams can have a reality in the subtle domain. Visions are unreal only when these are merely imaginative mental formations, not representing anything that is true or was true or is going to be true.

This power of vision is sometimes inborn and habitual even without any effort of development, sometimes it wakes up of itself and becomes abundant or needs only a little practice to develop; it is not necessarily a sign of spiritual attainment, but usually when by practice of yoga one begins to go inside or live within, the power of subtle vision awakes to a greater or less extent; but this does not always happen easily, especially if one has been

habituated to live much in the intellect or in an outward vital consciousness.

I suppose what you are thinking of is "darshan", the self-revelation of the Deity to the devotee; but that is different, it is an unveiling of his presence, temporary or permanent, and may come as a vision or may come as a close feeling of his presence which is more intimate than sight and a frequent or constant communication with him; that happens by deepening of the being into its inner self and growth of consciousness or by growth of the intensity of bhakti. When the crust of external consciousness is sufficiently broken by the pressure of increasing and engrossing bhakti, the contact comes.

⁂

The visions he has between the eyebrows are not imaginations — they could be so only if he thought them first and his thoughts took shape, but as they came independent of his thoughts, they are not visual imagination but vision. This faculty is a useful one in yoga and it can be allowed to develop; it should not be discouraged. I do not know what he means by not having *śraddhā* in them. What he sees now are probably only images of subtle (*sūkṣma*) scenes and objects; but, when developed, this can become a power of symbolic, representative or real vision, showing the truths of things or realities of this or other worlds or representations of the past, present or future.

If the concentration goes naturally to the centre between the eyebrows which is the centre of inner mind and its thought, will and vision, there is no harm in that.

There is no utility in his coming here now. He has first to go through the process of purification and preparation of the nature and at least an initial development of the positive yogic consciousness without which his coming here would be useless.

⁂

What was developed in you is a power of true inner vision — this will help you to enter through it into touch with the Divine;

you have only to let it develop. Two other things have to develop — the feeling of the Divine Presence and power and inspiration behind your actions, and the inner contact with myself and the Mother. Aspire with faith and sincerity and these will come. I do not wish to give any more precise instructions until I see what happens in you during your stay here; for although the path is common to all, each man has his own way of following it.

II

When you see Light, that is vision; when you feel Light entering into you, that is experience; when Light settles in you and brings illumination and knowledge, that is a realisation. But ordinarily visions are also called experiences.

⁂

Usually the visions precede realisation, in a way they prepare it.

⁂

The vision of the higher planes or the idea of what they are can be had long before the transformation. If that were not possible, how could the transformation take place — the lower nature cannot change by itself, it changes by the growing vision, perception, descent of the higher consciousness belonging to the higher planes? It is through aspiration, through an increasing opening that these visions and perceptions begin to come — the realisation comes afterwards.

⁂

Yes, it [the higher consciousness] can come down into the mind plane bringing peace, wideness, the cosmic consciousness, the realisation of the Divine, the sense of the cosmic forces and other things — without any breaking of the veil through vision.

Ordinarily, however, with most people the inner vision comes first.

⁂

I said the realisation of the Divine in the mind. If there is to be the total realisation, the breaking of the veil is indispensable.

⁂

Sometimes a vision accompanies an experience and is as it were a visual rendering of it or accompaniment to it, but the experience itself is a separate thing.

⁂

That does not follow. By going deep a person may see visions, another may fall in deeper consciousness and see no vision and so on. The result varies with the nature.

III

Inner vision is vivid like actual sight, always precise and contains a truth in it. In mental vision the images are invented by the mind and are partly true, partly a play of possibilities. Or a mental vision like the vital may be only a suggestion, — that is a formation of some possibility on the mental or vital plane which presents itself to the sadhak in the hope of being accepted and helped to realise itself.

⁂

The mental visions are meant to bring in the mind the influence of the things they represent.

⁂

Cosmic vision is the seeing of the universal movements — it has

nothing to do with the psychic necessarily. It can be in the universal mind, the universal vital, the universal physical or anywhere.

What do you mean here by psychic vision? Inner vision means the vision with the inner seeing as opposed to outer vision, the external sight with the surface mind in the surface eyes. Psychic, in the language of this yoga, is confined to the soul, the psychic being — it is not as in the ordinary language in which if you see a ghost it is called a "psychic vision"; we speak of the inner vision or the subtle sight — not the psychic 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.

*
**

The inner vision can see objects, but it can see instead the vibration of the forces which act through the object.

*
**

Visions are of all kinds — some are merely suggestions of what wants to be or is trying to be, some indicate some approach of the thing or movement towards it, some indicate that the thing is being done.

*
**

Nothing has to be done to develop the images seen in the vision. They develop of themselves by the growing practice of seeing, — what was faint becomes clear, what was incomplete becomes complete. One cannot say in a general way that they are real

or unreal. Some are formations of the mind, some are images that come to the sight of themselves, some are images of real things that show themselves directly to the sight — others are true pictures, not merely images.

⁂

This realm (whose centre is between the eyebrows) is the realm of inner thought, will, vision — the motor-car indicates a rapid progress in this part of the consciousness. The motor-car is a symbolic image, these images do not refer to anything physical.

These things take place in the inner mind or inner vital and usually there is a truth behind them, but the form in which they come into the mind may be imperfect — i.e. the meaning may be something not perfectly revealed in the words.

⁂

These are not mental images. There is an inner vision that opens when one does sadhana and all sorts of images rise before it or pass. Their coming does not depend upon your thought or will; it is real and automatic. Just as your physical eyes see things in the physical world, so the inner eyes see things and images that belong to the other worlds and subtle images of things of this physical world also.

⁂

Things inside can be seen as distinctly as outward things whether in an image by the subtle vision or in their essence by a still more subtle and powerful way of seeing; but all these things have to develop in order to get their full power and intensity.

⁂

Subtle images can be images of all things in all worlds.

⁂

Everything not physical is seen by an inner vision.

⁂

The seeing of colours is the beginning of inner vision, what is called *sūkṣmadṛṣṭi*. Afterwards this vision opens and one begins to see figures and scenes and people. It is good that the seeing began with an image of the Mother.

⁂

When the inner vision opens, there can come before it all that ever was or is now in the world, even it can open to things that will be hereafter — so there is nothing impossible in seeing thus the figures and the things of the past.

⁂

When one tries to meditate, the first obstacle in the beginning is sleep. When you get over this obstacle, there comes a condition in which, with the eyes closed, you begin to see things, people, scenes of all kinds. This is not a bad thing, it is a good sign and means that you are making progress in the yoga. There is, besides the outer physical sight which sees external objects, an inner sight in us which can see things yet unseen and unknown, things at a distance, things belonging to another place or time or to other worlds; it is the inner sight which is opening in you. It is the working of the Mother's force which is opening it in you, and you should not try to stop it. Remember the Mother always, call on her and aspire to feel her presence and her power working in you; but you do not need, for that, to reject this or other developments that may come in you by her working hereafter. It is only desire, egoism, restlessness and other wrong movements that have to be rejected.

⁂

This gazing on a flame or a bright spot is the traditional means

used by yogis for concentration or for awakening of the inner consciousness and vision. You seem to have gone by the gazing into a kind of surface (not deep) trance, which is indeed one of its first results, and begun to see things probably on the vital plane. I do not know what were the "dreadful objects" you saw but that dreadfulness is the character of many things first seen on that plane, especially when crossing its threshold by such means. You should not employ these means, I think, for they are quite unnecessary and besides, they may lead to a passive concentration in which one is open to all sorts of things and cannot choose the right ones.

⁂

I did not quite understand from your letter what is the nature of these sights and objects that pass like a cinema film before you. If they are things seen by the inner vision, then there is no need to drive them away — one has only to let them pass. When one does sadhana an inner mind which is within us awakes and sees by an inner vision images of all things in this world and other worlds — this power of vision has its use, though one has not to be attached to it; one can let them pass with a quiet mind, neither fixing on them nor driving them away. It is the thoughts of the outer mind that have to be refused, the suggestions and ideas that end by disturbing the sadhana. There are also a number of thoughts of all kinds that have no interest, but which the mind was accustomed to allow to come as a habit, mechanically, — these sometimes come up when one tries to be quiet. They must be allowed to pass away without attending to them until they run down and the mind becomes still; to struggle with them and try to stop them is no use, there must be only a quiet rejection. On the other hand if thoughts come up from within, from the psychic, thoughts of the Mother, of divine love and joy, perceptions of truth etc., these of course must be permitted, as they help to make the psychic active.

⁂

Dreams or visions on the vital plane are usually either:

(1) symbolic vital visions;

(2) actual occurrences on the vital plane;

(3) formations of the vital mind, either of the dreamer or of someone else with whom he contacts in sleep or of powers or beings of that plane. No great reliance can be put on this kind of experience, even the first having only a relative or suggestive value, while the second and third are often quite misleading.

These are visions of the vital world and the vital planes and one sees hundreds of them there.... All the parts of the consciousness are like fields into which forces from the same planes of consciousness in the universal Nature are constantly entering or passing. The best thing is to observe without getting affected in either way and without attaching too much importance — for these are minor experiences and one's own concentration must call the major ones.

As you were concentrating your attention on the electric light, it may have been the god of electricity you saw, Vaidyuta Agni. There is no reason why he should have many faces — the many-headed or many-armed figures belong usually to the vital plane — and it may not have been in his vital form that he was manifesting. As for the colours, colours are symbols of forces and Agni need not be pure red — the principle of Fire can manifest all the colours and the pure white fire is that which contains in itself all the colours.

The gods in the overmental plane have not many heads and arms — this is a vital symbolism, it is not necessary in other planes. This figure may have belonged to the subtle physical plane.

The world you see is in some subtle physical plane where men see the gods according to their own idea and images of them.

⁂

It is the vital plane — probably the vital physical. It is mostly there that the beings of the vital world appear with animal heads or features. A human figure with a dog's face means a very coarse and material sexual energy. Of course, all such energies can be transformed and cease to be sexual — turned into material strength of some kind, just as the seminal force can be turned by *brahmacarya* into *ojas.*

⁂

It depends on the nature of the symbolic vision whether it is merely representative, presenting to the inner vision and nature (even though the outer mind has not the understanding, the inner can receive its effect) the thing symbolised in its figure or whether it is dynamic. The Sun symbol, for instance, is usually dynamic. Again, among the dynamic symbols some may bring simply the influence of the thing symbolised, some indicate what is being done but not yet finished, some a formative experience that visits the consciousness, some a prophecy of something that may or will or is soon about to happen. There are others that are not merely symbols but present actualities seen by the vision in a symbolic figure.

⁂

When the colours begin to take definite shapes in the visions, it is a sign of some dynamic work of formation in the consciousness: a square, for instance, means that some kind of creation is in process in some field of the being; the square indicates that the creation is to be complete in itself; while the rectangle indicates something partial and preliminary. The waves of colour mean a dynamic rush of forces and the star in such a context indicates the promise of the new being that is to be formed.

The blue colour must here be the Krishna light, so it is a creation under the stress of Krishna consciousness. All these are symbols of what is going on in the inner being, in the consciousness behind and the results well up from time to time in the external or surface consciousness in such feeling as the awareness of a softening and opening which you had, devotion, joy, peace, Ananda, etc. When the opening is complete, there is likely to be a more direct consciousness of the working that is going on behind, till it is no longer behind but in the front of the nature.

⁂

When you see a square, that is a symbol of complete creation; when you see a buffalo rushing upon you and missing and feel you have escaped a great danger, that is a transcription. Something actually happened of which the buffalo's ineffectual rush was your mind's transcription — the rush of some hostile force represented by the buffalo.

⁂

All that can be seen with closed eyes can be seen with open eyes also; it is sufficient that the inner sight should extend to the subtle physical consciousness for that to happen.

⁂

1. The vision was seen through the physical eyes but by the subtle physical consciousness; in other words, there was an imposition of one consciousness upon another. After a certain stage of development, this capacity of living in the ordinary physical consciousness and yet having superadded to it another and more subtle sense, vision, experience becomes quite normal. A little concentration is enough to bring it; or, even, it happens automatically without any concentration.

As the flower was a subtle physical object, not entirely material in the ordinary sense of the word (though quite substantial and material in its own plane, not an illusion), a camera would

not be able to detect it — except in the case of one of those abnormal interventions by which a subtle form has been thrown upon the material plate.

It could be sensed in a dark room, though not so easily, and it would not then have so vivid an appearance — unless you are able to bring out something of the light of the subtle physical plane to surround it and give it its natural medium.

If seen with the eyes shut, it would be no longer a subtle physical form, but an object or formation of the vital, mental or other plane — unless, indeed, the inner consciousness had proggressed so far as to be able to project itself into the physical planes; but this is a rare and, in most cases, a late development.

2. It is not, usually, the object that vanishes; it is the consciousness that changes. Owing to lack of sustained capacity or lack of training, one is not able to keep the subtle physical vision which is what was really seeing the object. This subtle physical vision comes easiest in the moment between light sleep and waking — either when one just comes out of the sleep or when one is just going into it. But one can train oneself to have it when one is quite wide awake.

At first when one begins to see, it is quite usual for the more ill-defined and imprecise figures to last longer while those which are successful, complete, precise in detail and outline are apt to be quite momentary and disappear in an instant. It is only when the subtle vision is well developed that the precise and full seeing lasts for a long time. This results from the difficulty of keeping what is still an abnormal consciousness and also, in this case, from the difficulty of keeping the two momentarily superimposed consciousnesses together.

3. There are all kinds in the experiences of each plane — symbolic forms, figures of suggestion, thought-figures, desire-formations or will-formations, constructions of all kinds, things real and lasting in the plane to which they belong and things fictitious and misleading. The haphazardness belongs to the consciousness that sees with its limited and imperfect way of cognizing the other worlds, not to the phenomena themselves Each plane is a world or a conglomeration or series of worlds, each organized in its own way, but organized, not haphazard;

only, of course, the subtler planes are more plastic and less rigid in their organisation than the material plane.

⁂

The power of occult seeing is there in everyone, mostly latent, often near the surface sometimes but much more rarely already on the surface. If one practises *trātak*, it is pretty certain to come out sooner or later, — though some have a difficulty and with them it takes time; those in whom it comes out at once have had all the time this power of occult vision near the surface and it emerges at the first direct pressure.

The rays which you saw the trees giving out are there always, only they are veiled to the ordinary material vision. I said the blue and gold together indicated the combined presence of Krishna and Durga-Mahakali; but gold and yellow have different significances. Yellow in the indication of forces signifies the thinking mind, *buddhi*, and the pink (modified here into a light vermilion) is a psychic colour; the combination probably meant the psychic in the mental.

In interpreting these phenomena you must remember that all depends on the order of things which the colours indicate in any particular case. There is an order of significances in which they indicate various psychological dynamisms, e.g., faith, love, protection, etc. There is another order of significances in which they indicate the aura or the activity of divine beings, Krishna, Mahakali, Radha or else of other superhuman beings; there is another in which they indicate the aura around objects or living persons — and that does not exhaust the list of possibilities. A certain knowledge, experiences, growing intuition are necessary to perceive in each case the true significance. Observation and exact description are also very necessary; for sometimes people say, for instance, yellow when they mean gold or *vice versa*; there are besides different possible meanings for different shades of the same colour. Again, if you see colour near or round a person or by looking at him or her, it does not necessarily indicate that person's aura; it may be something else near him or around him. In some cases it may have nothing to do with the person or

object you look at, which may serve merely the purpose of a background or a point of concentration — as when you see colours on a wall or by looking at a bright object.

⁂

The seeing of the body (at least one's own) in its internal parts is a yogic power developed by the Raja and Hathayogins — I suppose it could be extended to the body of others. There is also the sense of subtle smells and I have noticed that sometimes one smell persists.

IV

The sounds of bells and the seeing of lights and colours are signs of the opening of the inner consciousness which brings with it an opening also to sights and sounds of other planes than the physical. Some of these things like the sound of bells, crickets, etc. seem even to help the opening. The Upanishad speaks of them as *brahmavyaktikarāṇi yoge.*

The lights represent forces — or sometimes a formed light like that you saw may be the light of a being of the supraphysical planes.

⁂

The sounds or voices you hear are like the sights (persons, objects) you see. As there is an inner sight other than the physical, so there is an inner hearing other than that of the external ear, and it can listen to voices and sounds and words of other worlds, other times and places, or those which come from supraphysical beings. But here you must be careful. If conflicting voices try to tell you what to do or not to do, you should not listen to them or reply. It is only myself and the Mother who can tell you what you should or should not do or guide or advise you.

⁂

When the inner senses open, or any of them, one sees or hears things belonging to the other planes automatically. What one sees or hears of the other planes depends on the development of the inner sense. It depends on what you hear whether these are the symbol sounds only which have a connection with the sadhana or simply other plane sounds of an ordinary character.

⁂

It depends on the nature of the sounds. Some have a connection [with sadhana], others are merely the sounds of the other planes.

⁂

They [subtle sounds connected with sadhana] are the signs of a working going on to prepare something — but as that is a general thing it cannot be said from the sounds themselves what the preparation is.

⁂

An inner voice is a voice only — it may give the 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.

⁂

It [subtle smells and tastes] is not an opening of occult knowledge and powers, but simply an opening of the inner consciousness.

⁂

The [subtle] smell [coming from a person] 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.

... 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.

V

A symbol, as I understand it, is the form on one plane that represents a truth of another. For instance, a flag is the symbol of a nation.... But generally all forms are symbols. This body of ours is a symbol of our real being and everything is a symbol of some higher reality. There are, however, different kinds of symbols:

1. Conventional symbols, such as the Vedic Rishis formed with objects taken from their surroundings. The cow stood for light because the same word '*go*' meant both ray and cow, and because the cow was their most precious possession which maintained their life and was constantly in danger of being robbed and concealed. But once created, such a symbol becomes alive. The Rishis vitalised it and it became a part of their realisation. It appeared in their visions as an image of spiritual light. The horse also was one of their favourite symbols, and a more easily adaptable one, since its force and energy were quite evident.

2. What we might call Life-symbols, such as are not artificially chosen or mentally interpreted in a conscious deliberate way, but derive naturally from our day-to-day life and grow out of the surroundings which condition our normal path of living. To the ancients the mountain was a symbol of the path of yoga, level above level, peak upon peak. A journey, involving the crossing of rivers and the facing of lurking enemies, both animal and human, conveyed a similar idea. Nowadays I dare say we would liken yoga to a motor-ride or a railway-trip.

3. Symbols that have an inherent appositeness and power of their own. Akasha or etheric space is a symbol of the infinite all-pervading eternal Brahman. In any nationality it would convey the same meaning. Also, the Sun stands universally for the supramental Light, the divine Gnosis.

4. Mental symbols, instances of which are numbers or alphabets. Once they are accepted, they too become active and may be useful. Thus geometrical figures have been variously interpreted. In my experience the square symbolises the supermind. I cannot say how it came to do so. Somebody or some force may have built it before it came to my mind. Of the

triangle, too, there are different explanations. In one position it can symbolise the three lower planes, in another the symbol is of the three higher ones: so both can be combined together in a single sign. The ancients liked to indulge in similar speculations concerning numbers, but their systems were mostly mental. It is no doubt true that supramental realities exist which we translate into mental formulas such as Karma, Psychic evolution, etc. But they are, so to speak, infinite realities which cannot be limited by these symbolic forms, though they may be somewhat expressed by them; they might be expressed as well by other symbols, and the same symbol may also express many different ideas.

⁂

In one form or another all these ideas have existed in the past. The significance of numbers was one of the chief elements in the teaching of Pythagoras 5 centuries before Christ.

⁂

Fire, lights, sun, moon are usual symbols and seen by most in sadhana. They indicate movement or action of inner forces. The Sun means the inner truth.

⁂

One sometimes sees the Light in masses, sometimes in forms and the most common forms are sun, moon, star or fire.

⁂

The light, colours, flowers are always seen when there is a working of the forces within at a certain stage of the sadhana. The light of course indicates an illumination of the consciousness, the colour the play of forces mental (yellow), physical and vital, but forces making for enlightenment of these parts of the being. The flowers usually indicate a psychic activity.

⁂

It is not necessary to have the mind quiet in order to see the lights — that depends only on the opening of the subtle vision in the centre which is in the forehead between the eyebrows. Many people get that as soon as they start sadhana. It can even be developed by effort and concentration without sadhana by some who have it to a small extent as an inborn faculty. The quietude of the mind is needed for other things, such as the feeling of the presence of the Mother etc.

⁂

A concentrated mind is not always necessary for seeing the light — if there is an opening anywhere in the consciousness, that is sufficient.

⁂

The light outside means a touch or influence of the force indicated by the light (golden is Truth-light, blue some spiritual force from the upper plane) while the light within means that it has penetrated or is established or frequently active in the nature itself. Light above means a force descending upon the mind, light around a general enveloping influence.

⁂

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

⁂

The Light is often seen in front before the centre of inner vision, mind and will which is between the eyebrows in the forehead. The sun means the formed Light of the Divine Truth, the starry light is the same Light acting as a suffused Power on the ordinary consciousness which is seen as the night of Ignorance. The call brought the Light streaming down into the inner being.

⁂

The sun is the symbol of the concentrated light of Truth.

⁂

The Sun is the Truth from above, in the last resort the supramental Truth.

⁂

Supermind is not mind at all, it is something different. The Sun indicates Truth directly perceived in whatever plane it may be. It is the symbol of supermind but the Truth may come down into the other planes and then that is no longer supramental but modified to the substance of the other planes — still it is the direct Light of Truth.

⁂

There are different suns in the different planes each with its own colour. But there are also suns of a similar colour above, only more bright, from which these minor suns derive their light and power.

⁂

The red sun is a symbol of the true, illumined physical consciousness which is to replace the obscure and ignorant physical consciousness in which men now live. Red is the colour of the physical; the red diamond is the Mother's consciousness in the physical.

⁂

The moon indicates spirituality, sometimes also spiritual Ananda.

⁂

The moon as a symbol in vision signifies usually spirituality in the mind or, simply, the spiritual consciousness. It can also indicate the flow of spiritual Ananda (nectar is in the moon according to the old tradition).

⁂

It [the spiritual Mind symbolised by the moon] is Mind in contact with truths of the spirit and reflecting them. The Sun is the light of the Truth, the Moon only reflects the light of the Truth — that is the difference.

⁂

Golden light means the light of the higher Truth — the moon is the symbol of spirituality. A golden moon means a power of spirituality full of the light of higher Truth.

⁂

The star signifies a creation or formation or the promise or power of a creation or formation.

⁂

The star is always a promise of the Light to come; the star changes into a sun when there is the descent of the Light.

⁂

Stars indicate points of light in the ignorant mental consciousness.
Moon = spiritual light.
Sun = The higher Truth Light.

⁂

A well-formed illumined thought can be seen as a spark of light.

⁂

Sparks or movements of light indicate the play of forces in the consciousness or around it.

⁂

The fire indicates a dynamic action.

VI

Colour and light are always close to each other — colour being more indicative, light more dynamic. Colour incandescent becomes light.

Gold indicates at its most intense something from the supramental, otherwise overmind truth or intuitive truth deriving ultimately from the supramental Truth-Consciousness.

⁂

As for the exact symbolism of colours, it is not always easy to define exactly, because it is not rigid and precise, but complex, the meaning varying with the field, the combinations, the character and shades of the colour, the play of forces. A certain kind of yellow, for instance, is supposed by many occultists to indicate the *buddhi*, the intellect, and it often has that sense, but occurring among a play of vital forces it could not always be so interpreted — that would be too rigid. Here all one can say is that the blue (the particular blue seen, not every blue) indicated the response to the Truth; the green — or *this* green — is very usually associated with Life and a generous emanation or action of forces — often of emotional life-force, and it is probably this that it would indicate here.

⁂

There are no separate colours of the beings. There is a characteristic colour of mind, yellow; of the psychic, pink or pale rose; of the vital, purple; but these are colours corresponding to the main forces of mind, psychic, vital — they are not the colours of the beings. Also other colours can play, e.g. in the vital, green and deep red as well as purple and there are other colours for the hostile vital forces.

⁂

The Lights one sees in concentration are the lights of various powers or forces and often lights that come down from the higher consciousness.

The violet light is that of the Divine Compassion (*karuṇā* — Grace) — the white light is the light of the Mother (the Divine Consciousness) in which all others are contained and from which they can be manifested.

Purple is the colour of vital power. "Red" depends on the character of the colour, for there are many reds — this may be the colour of the physical consciousness.

⁂

The four lights were the lights of the Truth, — white the purity and power of the divine Truth, green its active energy for work, blue the spiritual consciousness of the divine Truth, the gold its knowledge.

The arrow is the symbol of the force which goes to its aim.

Blue is the higher mind.

Bells heard are usually a sign of progress in sadhana, progress to come.

The snake form is a symbol of Energy and the white blue light may be that of the Mother's consciousness in the higher mind, or if it is not two separate colours but whitish blue then it is Sri Aurobindo's light. The light is a manifestation of Force, the nature of the force being indicated by the colour of the Light.

⁂

Blue is the normal colour of the spiritual planes; moonlight indicates the spiritual mind and its light.

⁂

The lights indicate the action of certain forces, usually indicated by the colour of the light. Whitish blue is known as Sri Aurobindo's light or sometimes Sri Krishna's light.

⁂

The meaning of blue light depends on the exact character of colour, its shade and nature. A whitish blue like moonlight is known as Krishna's light or Sri Aurobindo's light — light blue is often that of Illumined Mind — there is another deeper blue that is of the Higher Mind ; another, near to purple, which is the light of a power in the vital.

⁂

The pale whitish blue light is "Sri Aurobindo's Light" — it is the blue light modified by the white light of the Mother.

⁂

The pale blue light is mine, the white light is the Mother's. The world you saw above the head was the plane of the Illumined Mind which is a level of consciousness much higher than the human intelligence. It is there that the Divine Light and Power come down to be transmitted to the human consciousness and from there they work and prepare the transformation of the human consciousness and even the physical nature.

⁂

If the blue lights were of different shades it might mean the overhead planes, overmind, Intuition, Illumined Mind, Higher Mind.

⁂

There are different Krishna lights — pale diamond blue, lavender blue, deep blue etc. It depends on the plane in which it manifests....

There is one blue that is the higher mind, a deeper blue belongs to the mind — Krishna's light in the mind....

All blue is not Krishna's light....

Diamond blue, Krishna's light in the overmind — lavender blue in intuitive mind.

Blue is also the Radha's colour.

⁂

White light indicates the divine consciousness.

⁂

They have always the same meaning. The white light is that of the pure conscious force from which all the rest come. The golden light is that of the Divine Truth on the higher planes.

⁂

White indicates a force of purity.

⁂

Diamonds may indicate the Mother's Light at its intensest, for that is diamond white light.

⁂

The Sunlight is the light of the Truth itself — whatever power of Truth it may be — while the other lights derive from the Truth.

⁂

The Sunlight is the direct light of the Truth; when it gets fused into the vital, it takes the mixed colour — here gold and green — just as in the physical it becomes golden red or in the mental golden yellow.

⁂

The golden light is the light of the Divine Truth which comes out from the supramental sunlight and modified according to the level it crosses, creates the ranges from overmind to higher Mind.

⁂

The golden light is that of the modified (overmentalised) supramental, i.e., the supramental Light passing through the overmind, Intuition, etc., and becoming the Light of Truth in each of these things. When it is golden red it means the same modified supramental-physical Light, — the Light of Divine Truth in the physical.

⁂

Golden Light always means the light of Truth — but the nature of the Truth varies according to the plane to which it belongs. Light is the light of Consciousness, Truth, Knowledge — the Sun is the concentration or source of the Light.

⁂

It is again the ascent into one of the higher planes of mind illumined with the light of the Divine Truth. Yellow is the light of mind growing brighter as one goes higher till it meets the golden light of the Divine Truth.

⁂

The spiritual Power is naturally more free on its own level than in the body. The golden colour indicates here Mahakali force which is the strongest for the working in the body.

⁂

It is not clear yet. Golden red is the colour of the supramental physical light — so this yellow red may indicate some plane of the overmind in which there is a nearer special connection with that. The golden red light has a strong transforming power.

⁂

Orange or red gold is supposed, by the way, to be the light of the supramental in the physical.

⁂

Orange is the true light manifested in the physical consciousness and being.

⁂

The deep red light is a light that comes down into the physical for its change. It is associated with the sunlight and the golden light.

⁂

The deep red is the light of the Power that descended before the 24th [November, 1933] for the transformation of the physical.

⁂

Deep red is the Divine Love — rosy is the psychic love.

⁂

It seems to be an opening of various powers and the peace, light and wideness of the spiritual consciousness. The red Purusha may be the Power of the true physical — red being the colour of the physical.

⁂

Orange is the colour of occult knowledge or occult experience.

⁂

Yellow is the thinking mind. The shades indicate different intensities of mental light.

⁂

The colour of the psychic light is according to what it manifests — e.g., psychic love is pink or rose, the psychic purity is white, etc.

⁂

Reddish pink rose = psychic love or surrender.
White rose = pure spiritual surrender.

⁂

The rosy light is that of love — so probably you entered the psychic worlds — or at least one of them.

As for the experiences described in the other letter, it seems to have been a passage through worlds of neutral peace which to the mind are a darkness and stand in the way to the full light.

⁂

The violet is the light of Divine Grace and Compassion.

⁂

"Violet" is the colour of benevolence or compassion, but also more vividly of the Divine Grace — represented in the vision as flowing from the heights of the spiritual consciousness down on the earth. The golden cup is I suppose the Truth Consciousness.

⁂

Violet is the colour of the light of Divine Compassion, as also of Krishna's Grace. It is also the radiance of Krishna's protection. Blue is his special and significant colour, the colour of his aura when he manifests — that is why he is called *Nīla Krishna.* The adjective does not mean that he was blue or dark in his physical body.

⁂

Purple is the colour of the vital force — crimson is usually physical.

⁂

The crimson colour is the light of Love in the vital and physical.

⁂

Both [purple and crimson] are vital lights, but when seen above they represent the original forces of which the vital are the derivations.

⁂

Green light can signify various things according to the context — in the emotional vital it is the colour of a certain form of emotional generosity, in the vital proper an activity with vital abundance or vital generosity behind it — in the vital physical it signifies a force of health.

⁂

Yes. The green light is a vital force, a dynamic force of the emotional vital which has the power to purify, harmonise or cure.

⁂

Green is a vital energy of work and action.

VII

The sky is a symbol of the mental consciousness (or the psychic) or other consciousnesses above the mind — e.g. the higher mind, intuition, overmind, etc. Sky as the ether indicates also the infinite.

⁂

The higher consciousness in any of its levels is seen usually as a

sky or ether, but when felt through the vital it is often perceived as a sea.

⁂

Sat, Chit, Ananda, Supermind, Mind, Life, Matter are the seven planes described in the Veda — but in this yoga one sees many levels of consciousness which appear as skies or else as seas.

⁂

The blue sky is that of the Higher Mind — the nearest of the planes between human mentality and the supermind. The moon here is the symbol of spirituality in the mental planes. The world of the Higher Mind is above those directly connected with the body-consciousness.

⁂

The sky is always some mental plane. The stars indicate beginnings or promises of Light — the various lights indicating various powers of the consciousness; gold = Truth, blue = higher spiritualised mind, violet = sympathy, unity or universal compassion.

⁂

The first sea is the ordinary consciousness, the second sea is the higher consciousness over which is the Sun of Truth. The mountain represents the ascending planes of the higher consciousness. The journey in the train is the passage from one consciousness to another.

⁂

The sea with the sun over it is a plane of consciousness lit by the Truth. To enter into the rays is to be no longer merely lit by it, but in one's own conscious being to begin to become a part of the Truth.

⁂

The blue ocean is often a symbol of the spiritual consciousness in the higher Mind one and indivisible.

⁂

Dawn always means an opening of some kind — the coming of something that is not yet fully there.

⁂

The Night is the symbol of the Ignorance or Avidya in which men live just as Light is the symbol of Truth and Knowledge.

⁂

The mountain is the symbol of the embodied consciousness based upon earth but rising up towards the Divine.

⁂

The mountain always represents the ascending hill of existence with the Divine to be reached on the summits.

⁂

The mountain is a very usual symbol of the consciousness with its ascending levels. The flowing of water from the peak indicates some flow from the higher consciousness above.

⁂

The vision you saw of the snow is probably a symbol of the consciousness in a condition of purity, silence and peace like a snowy ground; in that a new life (psychic, spiritual as indicated by the flowers) appears in place of the old mental and vital life which has been covered by that mantle of snowy whiteness.

⁂

The river represents some movement of the consciousness.

⁂

Water is the symbol of a state of consciousness or a plane.

⁂

When the water is symbolic [of a plane of consciousness] it is a big expanse of water — but a river or a pond are not large enough to symbolise a plane.

⁂

Sometimes a part of the consciousness is seen in the image of a pond, lake or sea. The fish must be the vital mind.

⁂

The lake is the being in its individual consciousness, the sea is the same being with a universalised consciousness which can hold the universe and its cosmic forces in itself — the one (individual) merges into the other (the universal). The boat is the formation of the Mother's consciousness in you in which you are preparing to sail in this sea.

⁂

The rain is the symbol of the descent of Grace or of the higher consciousness which is the cause of the riches, the spiritual plenty.

⁂

The rainbow is the sign of peace and deliverance.

⁂

Clouds are symbols of obscurity.

⁂

Patala simply means the subconscient below the Earth — the Earth being the conscious physical plane.

⁂

The jungle must be some unregenerated part of the vital nature and the serpent a wrong force emerging out of it.

⁂

The tree is the symbol of subconscient vital.

⁂

A bird is a very frequent symbol of the soul, and the tree is the standing image of the universe — The Tree of Life.

⁂

The Aswattha usually symbolises the cosmic manifestation.

⁂

Flowers indicate a blossoming in the consciousness, sometimes with special reference to the psychic or the psychicised vital, mental and physical consciousness.

⁂

It is usually when the psychic is active that this seeing of flowers becomes abundant.

⁂

Red flowers would ordinarily indicate an opening of the consciousness either in the physical or some part of the vital according to the shade.

⁂

The [flower named] eternal smile means the self-existent joy and gladness of the Spirit.

⁂

In sadhana [the flower named] vital intimacy would ordinarily signify inner intimacy with the Divine on the vital plane.

⁂

The fruits are the results of the sadhana.

⁂

The cow in the occult symbolism indicates Light or the consciousness — white indicates the purified or spiritual consciousness — the white Light.

⁂

It is quite clear; it is the Vedic image. In the Veda the Cow is the Divine Light — the white cow is the pure consciousness in which there is the Light. The milk is the Knowledge and Power descending from the Divine Consciousness.

⁂

The Cow usually means the Higher Consciousness. Perhaps the calf indicates the truth of the higher consciousness (white) in the physical (red).

⁂

The vision of the cows must have taken place in the psychic world. It has also a symbolic significance. The sun is the symbol of the Divine Truth, the cows are its powers, rays of the sun, source of true knowledge, true feeling, true experience.

The descent you felt must have been into some depth of light, probably in the psychic nature.

⁂

Milk is always the symbol of the flow of the higher consciousness.

⁂

The Horse is Power, usually Life-Power, but also it may mean Mind-Power or Tapas if it is dynamic and mobile.

⁂

Dark horse — means a horse whose qualities are unknown whether it is good or bad, will win the race or lose it — an obscure and unknown factor.

⁂

As for the two dreams you wrote about in your shorter letter of the 1st May, the one about the horses is not so clear as the other about the white calf. But the horse is always the symbol of Power; it must be then a Power which you were trying to catch and make your own while sometimes it was trying to come up with you, perhaps to use you. This is what happens in the vital where there are these uncertain and elusive movements. The high platform was evidently the level of a higher Consciousness which stilled this fluctuating movement and made control of the Power more possible, as it became still and clear.

The white calf is the sign of a pure and clear consciousness, — the cow or calf being the symbol of Light in the consciousness, something psychic or spiritual that you felt natural and intimate to you and inseparable.

⁂

The horse is a force acting for progress. The railway train at full speed means rapid progress.

⁂

The ass is the symbol of the inertia and obstruction in the body.

The horse is the symbol of force or power. The tunnel of water must be the vital physical and the arch is a passage out, by which, if the ass can cross it or rather be pulled across, then it becomes a horse. In other words, the inertia and obstruction in the physical will be changed into Power and Force of Progress.

⁂

The elephant is Strength — sometimes Strength illumined with Wisdom.

⁂

The elephant is strength — sometimes strength removing obstacles.

⁂

The lion means vital force, strength, courage — here full of the light, illumined by the spiritual consciousness.

⁂

The lion indicates force and courage, and strength and power. The lower vital is not lion-like.

⁂

It all depends on the attitude of the tiger. If fierce and hostile, it may be a form of an adverse force, otherwise it is simply a power of vital nature which may be friendly.

⁂

The bull is an emblem of strength and force. It is also in the Veda an image of the Gods, the male power in Nature. Again, the bull is *vāhana* of Shiva. It may be a dream or an experience of any of these symbols, but is probably the first here.

⁂

It [the boar] is rajasic strength and vehemence. Much, however, depends on the context, — these figures have also other meanings.

⁂

Yes, buffaloes indicate rash and obscure vital forces.

⁂

A buffalo conveys the idea often of an obscure violence in the nature — here it seems tied up — i.e. under control but not eliminated. But it is not clear to what it refers — if it is symbolic at all.

⁂

The goat in vision is often symbolic of lust.

⁂

The dog is the symbol of devoted affection and obedience.

⁂

The dog usually indicates fidelity and as it is yellow, it would be fidelity in the mind to the Divine — but the other black and white one is difficult to interpret — it is something in the vital, but the meaning of the black spots is not clear.

⁂

The deer is perhaps a symbol of speed in the spiritual progress.

⁂

Hanuman = complete bhakti.
The deer = speed in the spiritual path.

⁂

Frog = modest usefulness.

⁂

The fish is always the moving vital mind making all sorts of formations.

⁂

[Flies:] Something small in the smaller vital.

⁂

Obviously it [white ants] must have been symbolic of small but destructive forces in the lower vital or physical.

⁂

The image of the spider in the Upanishads is used for the Brahman creating the world out of itself, dwelling in it and withdrawing it into itself. But what matters in a symbol is what it means for you. It may mean for you success or successful formations.

⁂

The snake indicates some kind of energy always — oftener bad, but it also can indicate some luminous or divine energy. In this experience it is an ascent of some force from the physical upwards. The other details are not clear.

⁂

The serpent is a symbol of force, very often a hostile or evil force of the vital plane.

The sea is a symbol of a plane of consciousness.

The white light is a manifestation of pure divine force descending from one of the truth-planes leading to the supramental.

⁂

The opening of the hood indicates the victorious or successful activity of the Energy indicated by the snake.

⁂

The serpent with the hood over the head generally indicates future siddhi.

⁂

The cobra is a symbol of the Energy in Nature — the upraised hood and light indicate the illumination and victorious position of the emerged Energy.

⁂

It is in answer to your aspiration that the Mahakali force descended — the serpent is the Energy from above working in the vital answering to the Serpent Kundalini which rises from below. The white fire is the fire of aspiration, the red fire is the fire of renunciation and tapasya, the blue fire is the fire of spirituality and spiritual knowledge which purifies and dispels the Ignorance.

⁂

The serpent is the symbol of energy — especially of the Kundalini Shakti which is the divine Force coiled up in the lowest (physical) centre, Muladhara, and when it rises it goes up through the spine and joins the higher consciousness above. Energies are of all kinds and the snakes can also symbolise the evil powers of the unregenerate vital nature — but here it is not that.

⁂

The Lotus is the symbol of the opening of the centres to the Light. The Swan is the Indian symbol of the individual soul, the central being, the divine part which is turned towards the Divine, descending from there and ascending to it.

The two serpents interlaced are the two chanels in the

spine, through which the Shakti moves upward and downward.

The serpent with the six hoods is the Kundalini Shakti, the divine power asleep in the lowest physical centre which, awakened in the yoga, ascends in light through the opening centres to meet the Divine in the highest centre and so connect the manifest and the unmanifested, joining spirit and Matter.

⁂

1. Narayana is usually taken as a name of Vishnu — to the Vaishnavas He is the Supreme as Shiva is to the Shaivas. Both are cosmic Personalities of the Divine and both like Brahma have their original place in the overmind, although they take different forms to the human consciousness in the mental, vital and subtle physical planes.

2. Lakshmi is usually golden, not white. Saraswati is white.

3. The snake is simply a symbol of Energy or Power. Narayana in your vision is clearly Vishnu as is shown by the presence of Lakshmi and the single many-hooded snake.

4. Vishnu or Narayana in this image which is a normal Puranic image is the Lord of the waters of Space and Time — the Preserver of the principle of the Universe which he maintains as a seed in himself even in intervals between one creation and another. Out of that seed on his navel (the navel is the central seat of the Vital, the Life Principle) Brahma the creator arises in the Lotus (cosmic consciousness) which grows from it when Vishnu awakens from the intra-cyclic sleep. The snake Ananta is the Energy of the cosmic manifestation of the Infinite in Space-Time.

⁂

The serpent Ananta is the infinite energy in infinite Time-Space which supports the universe.

⁂

About the snake you saw in your meditation — serpents indicate always energies of Nature and very often bad energies of the

vital plane; but they can also indicate luminous or divine energies like the snake of Vishnu. The one you saw was evidently of this latter type — a luminous divine energy and therefore there was no cause for alarm, it was a good sign.

⁂

A lotus flower indicates the open consciousness.

⁂

The red lotus is the presence of the Divine on earth; the sun is the Divine Truth. It indicates the Divine manifestation on earth raising earth consciousness towards the Truth.

⁂

The white lotus is the symbol of the Mother's consciousness, — it does not indicate any part of the individual consciousness.

⁂

The opening of the lotuses in your experience means, I suppose, the opening of the true vital and physical consciousness in which the spiritual being (the Swan) can manifest with all the consequences of that opening.

⁂

The Swan is a symbol of the soul on the higher plane.

⁂

The swan is the liberated soul, the lotus is either the consciousness reddening to the colour of Divine Love or else the symbol of the Divine Presence on earth.

⁂

The Hansa is the symbol of the being — it regains its original purity as it rises until it becomes luminous in the Highest Truth.

⁂

The duck is the symbol of the soul; silvery colour, the spiritual consciousness; golden wings, the power of the Divine Truth.

⁂

The duck is usually a symbol of the soul or inner being — perhaps it was the four beings — mental, psychic, vital and physical that you saw.

⁂

Both [the goose and the swan] are symbols of the beings in a man — but the goose or ordinary Hansa usually refers to the *mano-maya puruṣa*.

⁂

The bird is a symbol of the individual soul.

⁂

The bird is usually a symbol of some soul power when it is not the soul itself — here it is a power (awakened in the soul) of the whitish blue light — Sri Aurobindo's light.

⁂

Birds often indicate either mind-powers or soul-powers.

⁂

The dove signifies peace. The colours indicate the vital — green would be self-giving in the vital, blue the higher consciousness

in the vital. So it must be peace casting its influence from above on the vital.

⁂

The white pigeon must be peace.

⁂

The peacock is the bird of victory.

⁂

A peacock is the symbol of spiritual victory.

⁂

The peacock signifies victory in yoga, the divine victory. The clear sky would indicate perhaps the mental part cleared of obscurities.

⁂

Krishna with Radha is the symbol of the Divine Love. The flute is the call of the Divine Love; the peacock is victory.

⁂

The crane is the messenger of happiness.

⁂

The ostrich may mean rapidity of movement.

⁂

A dream like this of a child — especially a new-born child — usually signifies the birth (or the awakening) of the soul or psychic being in the outward nature.

⁂

It is not a fact that the psychic being always appears as a baby — it is sometimes seen symbolically as a new-born baby; many see it as a child of varying ages — it is a very common and usual experience; it is not peculiar to emotional natures. It has several significances such as the new birth of the consciousness into the true psychic nature, the still young growth of this new being, the trust, reliance, dependence of the child on the Mother.

⁂

The child usually signifies the psychic being — new-born in the sense that it at last comes to the surface. The colour of the cloth would mean that it comes with health (internal and external or both) and the spiritual riches.

⁂

The child (when it does not mean the psychic being) is usually the symbol of something new-born in some part of the consciousness. Red indicates many different things according to the shade.

⁂

I suppose the golden child is the Truth-Soul which follows after the silver light of the spiritual. When it plunges into the black waters of the subconscient, it releases from it the spiritual light and the sevenfold streams of the Divine Energy and, clearing itself of the stains of the subconscient, it prepares its flight towards the supreme Divine (the Mother).

⁂

The flute is the symbol of a call — usually the spiritual call.

⁂

The flute is the call of the Divine.

⁂

The conch is the symbol of the spiritual call.

⁂

The conch is the call to realisation.

⁂

The conch is perhaps the proclamation of victory.

⁂

It [a pearl] may be a representation of the "bindu", which is a symbol of the infinite in the exceedingly small, the individual point which is yet the Universal.

⁂

[*Viṇā*:] Harmony.

⁂

The crown is the sign of fulfilment.

⁂

The crown indicates the higher consciousness in its static condition, the wheel its dynamic action. The red light is the Power sent down to change the physical.

⁂

The book indicates some kind of knowledge.

⁂

The ears signify usually the place of inspired knowledge or else

of inspired expression — red and gold mean truth and power joined together.

⁂

The building is the symbol of a new creation.

⁂

The pyramid is usually a symbol of aspiration — reddish perhaps because it is in the physical.

⁂

The Sphinx is a symbol of the eternal quest that can only be answered by the secret knowledge.

⁂

The cross is the sign of the triple being, transcendent, universal and individual.

⁂

The cross indicates the triple Divine (transcendent, universal, individual); the shield means protection.

⁂

Yes, the circular movement and the Chakra are always signs of energy in action, generally creative action.

⁂

The [Sudarshan] Chakra symbolises the action of Sri Krishna's force.

⁂

A revolving disc means a force in action on the nature. The whitish blue light is known as Krishna's light, also as Sri

Aurobindo's light. White is the Mother's. Perhaps here it is a combination.

⁂

The wheel is the sign of an action of Force (whatever force may be indicated by the nature of the symbol) and as it was surging upwards it must be the fire of aspiration rising from the vital (navel centre) to the Higher Consciousness above.

⁂

The bow is a symbol of the force sent out to reach its mark.

⁂

The incense stick is the symbol of self-consecration.

⁂

Tobacco is associated with tamas and incense-sticks with adoration.

⁂

The image of journeying always signifies a movement in life or a progress in sadhana.

⁂

A journey in a boat or other conveyance means always a movement in the yoga — often an advance or progress.

⁂

Journeying on a horse or in a conveyance, if symbolic, means a progress or a movement in life, work or sadhana.

⁂

A journey in carriage, train, motor car, steamer, boat, aeroplane etc. indicates a movement in the sadhana. The white horse may be the sattwic mind and the red horse the vital rajas giving energy and both combining to make a progress.

⁂

Aeroplane, steamer and train are always symbols of a rapid progress or forward movement.

⁂

The railway line is a symbol of rapid progress.

⁂

When you find yourself flying it is always the vital being in the subtle body in the vital world that is doing it.

⁂

The piece of flesh indicates something restless in the physical being which stands by its restlessness and excessive irritability in the way of the full flow of the Ananda. In the dreams this became active and was eliminated by the pressure of the psychic.

⁂

Yes. The robbers are as in the Veda vital beings who come to steal away the good condition or else to steal the gains of the sadhana.

⁂

These vital dreams are not interpretable unless there is an evident clue. Aunt or mother usually indicates the ordinary physical Nature, a closed room would be some part of the physical nature that was not open to the light, bats would mean forces of the

night i.e. ignorant movements finding a lodging in the obscurity of the unenlightened nature.

⁂

Symbolically, if the dream is symbolic, the falling of teeth means the disappearance of old or fixed mental habits belonging to the physical mind.

⁂

The feeling of being dead in a vision or dream experience comes when something in the being is to be silenced into entire inactivity and ceases to exist as a part of the nature. It may be a very small part, but as during the process the consciousness is concentrated in it and identified with it for the purpose of the working, the feeling is that "I am dead". When you said "I am dead, now let me get up and go", it simply meant "The thing is done and the process is over. There is no need to identify myself with this part any longer." There is no indication in the experience as to what the thing was that passed through this experience.

⁂

It is the purification of the physical that is usually indicated in the symbol of burning.

⁂

The vision you saw was a symbol of the outward physical consciousness obscured by the ordinary movements (clouds), but with the spirituality (the moon) still spreading its light everywhere from behind the ordinary human ignorance. The dog indicates something in the physical (the part that is faithful, obedient etc.) waiting confidently for the Light to come.

The fire you felt was the fire of purification and the heat came because it was burning up some resistance, — after that is burnt out there was coolness and peace and quietude. The voices and sounds and impression of X being there indicate a confused

activity of the occult sense in the vital which hears things other than the physical. When this kind of thing comes, there has to be a quiet rejection in the being and the thing will pass away. Some people get interested and have a lot of trouble because they get into the habit of hearing voices and seeing and feeling things which are only partly or sometimes true but mixed with much that is false and misleading. It is good that there was something in your vital being which rejected it.

*
**

The separate images are very usual symbols of the inner experience, but they have been combined together here in a rather difficult way. The fire of course is the psychic fire which wells up from the veiled psychic source. The bird is the soul and the flower is the rose of love and surrender. The moon is the symbol of spirituality. As the star is within it is described as piercing through the knots of the inner darkness and worsting the vital growths that are like clouds enwrapping it. The boat also is a usual symbol in the inner visions. The elephant is the spiritual strength that removes obstacles and the horse the force of tapasya that gallops to the summits of the spiritual realisation. The sun is the symbol of the higher Truth. The lotus is the symbol of the inner consciousness.

*
**

The dream is evidently an indication of the difficulty you are experiencing. The sea is the sea of the vital nature whose flood is pursuing you (desires are the sea water) on your road of sadhana. The Mother is there in your heart but sleeping — i.e. her power has not become conscious in your inner consciousness because she is surrounded by the thin curtain of skin (the obscurity of the physical nature). It is this (it is not thick any longer but still effective to veil her from you) which has to go so that she may awake. It is a matter of persistence in the will and the endeavour — the response from within, the awaking of the Mother in the heart will come.

*
**

It is probably a symbol of three stages or developments or planes of spiritualised life. A star means creation, the triangle a triple principle. The tree is life in a new creation. Green is the colour of the emotional vital, the moon governs a spiritualised emotional life; blue is the colour of the higher mind, the moon there governs a spiritualised higher mind life; the gold colour is that of the Divine Truth, whether intuitive or overmind — the moon here is the spiritualised Truth life. As the *stambha* is *sphaṭika*-coloured, the triangle may indicate Sachchidananda principle. The butterflies and birds are, of course, life-forces and soul forces, powers or beings. Probably it indicates three stages of transformation before the supramental can reign altogether or else three that will exist as the steps leading to the supramental.

Section Three

EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER AND THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Experiences of the Inner and the Cosmic Consciousness

THE piercing of the veil between the outer consciousness and the inner being is one of the crucial movements in yoga. For yoga means union with the Divine, but it also means awaking first to your inner self and then to your higher self, — a movement inward and a movement upward. It is, in fact, only through the awakening and coming to the front of the inner being that you can get into union with the Divine. The outer physical man is only an instrumental personality and by himself he cannot arrive at this union, — he can only get occasional touches, religious feelings, imperfect intimations. And even these come not from the outer consciousness but from what is within us.

There are two mutually complementary movements; in one the inner being comes to the front and impresses its own normal motions on the outer consciousness to which they are unusual and abnormal; the other is to draw back from the outer consciousness, to go inside into the inner planes, enter the world of your inner self and wake in the hidden parts of your being. When that plunge has once been taken, you are marked for the yogic, the spiritual life and nothing can efface the seal that has been put upon you.

This inward movement takes place in many different ways and there is sometimes a complex experience combining all the signs of the complete plunge. There is a sense of going in or deep down, a feeling of the movement towards inner depths; there is often a stillness, a pleasant numbness, a stiffness of the limbs. This is the sign of the consciousness retiring from the body inwards under the pressure of a force from above, — that pressure stabilising the body into an immobile support of the inner life, in a kind of strong and still spontaneous *āsana*. There is a feeling of waves surging up, mounting to the head, which brings an outer unconsciousness and an inner waking. It is the ascending

of the lower consciousness in the Adhara to meet the greater consciousness above. It is a movement analogous to that on which so much stress is laid in the Tantric process, the awakening of the Kundalini, the Energy coiled up and latent in the body and its mounting through the spinal cord and the centres (*cakras*) and the Brahmarandhra to meet the Divine above. In our yoga it is not a specialised process, but a spontaneous uprush of the whole lower consciousness sometimes in currents or waves, sometimes in a less concrete motion, and on the other side a descent of the Divine Consciousness and its Force into the body. This descent is felt as a pouring in of calm and peace, of force and power, of light, of joy and ecstasy, of wideness and freedom and knowledge, of a Divine Being or a Presence — sometimes one of these, sometimes several of them or all together. The movement of ascension has different results; it may liberate the consciousness so that one feels no longer in the body, but above it or else spread in wideness with the body either almost non-existent or only a point in one's free expanse. It may enable the being or some part of the being to go out from the body and move elsewhere, and this action is usually accompanied by some kind of partial *samādhi* or else a complete trance. Or, it may result in empowering the consciousness, no longer limited by the body and the habits of the external nature, to go within, to enter the inner mental depths, the inner vital, the inner (subtle) physical, the psychic, to become aware of its inmost psychic self or its inner mental, vital and subtle physical being and, it may be, to move and live in the domains, the planes, the worlds that correspond to these parts of the nature. It is the repeated and constant ascent of the lower consciousness that enables the mind, the vital, the physical to come into touch with the higher planes up to the supramental and get impregnated with their light and power and influence. And it is the repeated and constant descent of the Divine Consciousness and its Force that is the means for the transformation of the whole being and the whole nature. Once this descent becomes habitual, the Divine Force, the Power of the Mother, begins to work, no longer from above only or from behind the veil, but consciously in the Adhara itself, and deals with its difficulties and possibilities and carries on the yoga.

Last comes the crossing of the border. It is not a falling asleep or a loss of consciousness, for the consciousness is there all the time; only it shifts from the outer and physical, becomes closed to external things and recedes into the inner psychic and vital part of the being. There it passes through many experiences and of these some can and should be felt in the waking state also; for both movements are necessary, the coming out of the inner being to the front as well as the going in of the consciousness to become aware of the inner self and nature. But for many purposes the ingoing movement is indispensable. Its effect is to break or at least to open and pass the barrier between this outer instrumental consciousness and that inner being which it very partially strives to express, and to make possible in future a conscious awareness of all the endless riches of possibility and experience and new being and new life that lie untapped behind the veil of this small and very blind and limited material personality which men erroneously think to be the whole of themselves. It is the beginning and constant enlarging of this deeper and fuller and richer awareness that is accomplished between the inward plunge and the return from this inner world to the waking state.

The sadhak must understand that these experiences are not mere imaginations or dreams but actual happenings, for even when, as often occurs, they are formations only of a wrong or misleading or adverse kind, they have still their power as formations and must be understood before they can be rejected and abolished. Each inner experience is perfectly real in its own way, although the values of different experiences differ greatly, but it is real with the reality of the inner self and the inner planes. It is a mistake to think that we live physically only, with the outer mind and life. We are all the time living and acting on other planes of consciousness, meeting others there and acting upon them, and what we do and feel and think there, the forces we gather, the results we prepare have an incalculable importance and effect, unknown to us, upon our outer life. Not all of it comes through, and what comes through takes another form in the physical — though sometimes there is an exact correspondence; but this little is at the basis of our outward existence. All that we become and do and bear in the physical life is pre-

pared behind the veil within us. It is therefore of immense importance for a yoga which aims at the transformation of life to grow conscious of what goes on within these domains, to be master there and be able to feel, know and deal with the secret forces that determine our destiny and our internal and external growth or decline.

It is equally important for those who want that union with the Divine without which the transformation is impossible. The aspiration could not be realised if you remained bound by your external self, tied to the physical mind and its petty movements. It is not the outer being which is the source of the spiritual urge; the outer being only undergoes the inner drive from behind the veil. It is the inner psychic being in you that is the bhakta, the seeker after the union and the Ananda, and what is impossible for the outer nature left to itself becomes perfectly possible when the barrier is down and the inner self in the front. For, the moment this comes strongly to the front or draws the consciousness powerfully into itself, peace, ecstasy, freedom, wideness, the opening to light and a higher knowledge begin to become natural, spontaneous, often immediate in their emergence.

Once the barrier breaks by the one movement or the other, you begin to find that all the processes and movements necessary to the yoga are within your reach and not, as it seems in the outer mind, difficult or impossible. The inmost psychic self in you has already in it the yogin and the bhakta and if it can fully emerge and take the lead, the spiritual turn of your outward life is predestined and inevitable. In the initially successful sadhak it has already built a deep inner life, yogic and spiritual, which is veiled only because of some strong outward turn the education and past activities have given to the thinking mind and lower vital parts. It is precisely to correct this outward orientation and take away the veil that he has to practise more strenuously the yoga. Once the inner being has manifested strongly whether by the inward-going or the outward-coming movement, it is bound to renew its pressure, to clear the passage and finally come by its kingdom. A beginning of this kind is the indication of what is to happen on a greater scale hereafter.

⁂

The cry you heard was not in the physical heart, but in the emotional centre. The breaking of the wall meant the breaking of the obstacle or at least of some obstacle there between your inner and your outer being. Most people live in their ordinary outer ignorant personality which does not easily open to the Divine; but there is an inner being within them of which they do not know, which can easily open to the Truth and the Light. But there is a wall which divides them from it, a wall of obscurity and unconsciousness. When it breaks down, then there is a release; the feelings of calm, Ananda, joy which you had immediately afterwards were due to that release. The cry you heard was the cry of the vital part in you overcome by the suddenness of the breaking of the wall and the opening.

⁂

It is not possible to distinguish the psychic being at first. What has to be done is to grow conscious of an inner being which is separate from the external personality and nature — a consciousness or Purusha calm and detached from the outer actions of the Prakriti.

The experiences you describe are psycho-physical of which the only important one is the current going up which is the beginning of an attempt to create a path of connection between the mental centre (inner mind, will, vision) in the forehead and the higher centre above.

The obstacles can only be got rid of gradually by persistent sadhana. The alternation of dark and bright states is normal and inevitable.

The light in your experience indicates an action of force (bluish probably indicates the spiritual mind-force) — the rest was a working to open the higher spiritual centre (*sahasradala*).

⁂

It is rather a pity that the fear came in and spoiled the inward movement — for this inward movement is exceedingly important for the sadhana. The increasing frequency and completeness

of the psychic consciousness in you coming in and replacing the ordinary one has hitherto been the most hopeful sign of progress — but the establishment of an inward movement would be a still greater thing; for its natural result would be to liberate the soul within and to give you a stand in the inner being so that you would be able to regard any fluctuations in the outer consciousness without being subjugated by them and without any interruption of the inner poise and freedom. But the movement is bound to come back and fulfil itself. It is very good that the help comes when you call and that you can shake yourself free — it is another sign of the psychic growth.

⁂

What you say was not what is in yourself, but a symbol of the things that are in vital Nature. Scorpions and usually snakes also are symbols of harmful energies; the vital nature of earth is full of these energies and that is why the purification of man's outer vital nature also is so difficult and there are so many wrong movements and happenings in him, — because his vital is easily open to all these earth movements. In order to get rid of them, the inner being must wake and grow and its nature replace the outer nature. Sometimes serpents indicate energies simply, not harmful ones; but more often it is the other way. On the other hand, the peacocks you saw were powers of victory, the victory of the energies of light over the energies of darkness.

What you say about the outer being is correct, it must change and manifest what is within in the inner nature. But for that one must have experiences in the inner nature and through these the power of the inner nature grows till it can influence wholly and possess the outer being. To change the outer consciousness entirely without developing this inner consciousness would be too difficult. That is why these inner experiences are going on to prepare the growth of the inner consciousness. There is an inner mind, an inner vital, an inner physical consciousness which can more easily than the outer receive the higher consciousness above and put itself into harmony with the psychic being; when that is done the outer nature is felt as only a fringe on the surface,

not as oneself, and is more easily transformed altogether.

Whatever difficulties there may still be in the outer nature, they will not make any difference to the fact that you are now awake within, the Mother's force working in you and you her true child destined to be perfectly that in all ways. Put your faith and your thought entirely on her and you will get through all safely.

⁂

It is on the surface that the transformation is done. One comes up to the surface with what one has gained in the depths to change it. It may be your need to go in again and find it difficult to make the movement back quickly. When the whole being becomes plastic you will be able to make whatever movement is needed more quickly.

⁂

It takes time of course to make the transition from one state of consciousness to another. The depth of feeling will come more and more as your consciousness draws back from the claim of external things and goes deeper in into the heart region seeing and feeling from there with the psychic to prompt and enlighten it. Faith also will increase with that movement — for it is the outer intellect that is infirm or deficient in faith, the inner being in the heart has it always.

⁂

What you express in the letter is the right way of thinking and seeing. The self-will of the mind wanting things in its own way and not in the Divine's way was a great obstacle. With that gone, the way should become much less rough and hard to follow.

The outer being can grow in faith, fidelity to the Divine, reverence, love, worship and adoration, great things in themselves, — though in fact these things too come from within, — but realisation can only take place when the inner being is awake with its vision and feeling of things unseen. Till then, one

can feel the results of the divine help and, if one has faith, know that they are the work of the Divine; but it is only then that one can feel clearly the Force at work, the divine Presence, the direct communion.

⁂

Silence does not mean absence of experiences. It is an inner silence and quietude in which all experiences can happen without producing any disturbance. It would be a great mistake to interfere with the images rising in you. It does not matter whether they are mental or psychic. One must have experience not only of the true psychic, but of the inner mental, inner vital and subtle physical worlds or planes of consciousness. The occurrence of the images is a sign that these are opening and to inhibit them would mean to inhibit the expansion of the consciousness and experience without which this yoga cannot be done.

⁂

All experiences come in the silence but they do not come all pell-mell in a crowd at the beginning. The inner silence and peace have first to be established.

⁂

The difficulty indicated by you in your last (long) letter indicates that you enter into the inner being and begin to have experiences there, but there is a difficulty in organising them or seeing them coherently. The difficulty is because the inner mind is not yet sufficiently habituated to act and see the inside things and therefore the ordinary outer mind interferes and tries to arrange them; but the outer mind is unable to see the meaning of inner things. When the outer mind is left outside altogether, the things inside begin to be seen vividly and clearly, but the inner mind not being active, either their coherence is not seen or the consciousness lingers in the confused experiences of the lower vital plane and does not get through to the deeper, more coherent and significant experiences. A development of the inner consciousness is

needed — when that development takes place, then all will become more clear and coherent. This development will take place if, without getting disturbed, you quietly aspire and go on calling the Mother's Force to do what is needed.

Your call will always reach the Mother. If you remain quiet and confident, you will in time become aware of the answer. The more the mind becomes quiet, the clearer will it become to you and you will feel her working. From time to time you can write of your experiences, wherever an answer is needed, I will answer.

⁂

That is what is meant by contact and that is how it comes.

As for not having it always, it is because there are parts of the being that are still unconscious or perhaps states of unconsciousness come. For instance, people write letters to each other, but they are quite unconscious that they are exchanging forces in doing so. You have become conscious of it, because of the development of your inner consciousness by yoga — and yet there are likely to be times when you still write from the external awareness only, and then you will see the words only without being aware of what is behind. So, owing to the development of the inner consciousness, you are able to understand what contacts are and get the true contact, but at times the external consciousness may be stronger than the inner one, then you are no longer (for the time being) able to get the contact.

⁂

It is not that anything has been taken from you, but as you say at the end, your being is seen by you in two parts. That is a thing that happens as the sadhana proceeds and must happen in order that one may have completely the knowledge of oneself and the true consciousness. These two parts are the inner being and the outer being. The outer being (mind, vital and physical) has now become capable of quietude and it gets in meditation in a free, happy, vacant quietude which is the first step towards the true consciousness. The inner being (inner mind, vital, physical)

is not lost but gone inside — the outer part does not know where — but probably gone inside into union with the psychic. The only thing that can have gone is something of the old nature that was standing in the way of this experience.

⁂

There is an inner being and an inmost being which we call the psychic. When one meditates, one tries to go into the inner being. If one does it then one feels very well that one has gone inside. What can be realised in meditation can also become the ordinary consciousness in which one lives. Then one feels what is now the ordinary consciousness to be something quite external and on the surface, not one's real self.

⁂

What you feel as the new life is the growth of the inner being in you; the inner being is the true being and as it grows the whole consciousness begins to change. This feeling and your new attitude towards people are signs of the change. The seeing of inner things also usually comes with this growth of the inner being and consciousness; it is an inner vision which awakes in most sadhaks when they enter this stage.

It is also a characteristic of this inner consciousness that even when it is active, there is felt behind the action or containing it a complete quietude or silence. The more one concentrates, the more this quietude and silence increases. That is why there seems to be all quiet within even though all sorts of things may be taking place within.

It is also quite usual that what takes place in the inner consciousness should not express itself at present in the outer physical. It at first creates changes outside, but takes possession of the outer instruments only afterwards.

⁂

It is a very good sign that when the thoughts and the attempt at

disturbance come there is something that remains calm and cool — for that, like the psychic reply from within, shows that the inner consciousness is fixed or fixing itself in part of the being. This is a well recognised stage of the inner change in sadhana. Equally good is the emerging of the self-existent Ananda from within not dependent on outward things. It is a fact that this inner gladness and happiness is something peaceful and happy at once — it is not an excited movement like the vital outward pleasure, though it can be more ardent and intense. Another good result is the fading out of the feeling that "the work is mine" and the power to do it with the outward consciousness not engaging the inner being.

The sense of release as if from jail always accompanies the emergence of the psychic being or the realisation of the self above. It is therefore spoken of as a liberation, *mukti*. It is a release into peace, happiness, the soul's freedom not tied down by the thousand ties and cares of the outward ignorant existence.

It was of course the Mother's face you saw in your vision, but probably in one of her supraphysical, not her physical form and face — that is also indicated by the great light that came from the form and rendered it invisible.

⁂

The absence of thought is quite the right thing — for the true inner consciousness is a silent consciousness which has not to think out things, but gets the right perception, understanding and knowledge in a spontaneous way from within and speaks or acts according to that. It is the outer consciousness which has to depend on outside things and to think about them because it has not this spontaneous guidance. When one is fixed in this inner consciousness, then one can indeed go back to the old action by an effort of will, but it is no longer a natural movement and, if long maintained, becomes fatiguing. As for the dreams, that is different. Dreams about old bygone things come up from the subconscient which retains the old impressions and the seeds of the old movements and habits long after the waking consciousness has dropped them. Abandoned by the waking conscious-

ness, they still come up in dreams; for in sleep the outer physical consciousness goes down into the subconscient or towards it and many dreams come up from there.

The silence in which all is quiet and one remains as a witness while something in the consciousness spontaneously calls down the higher things is the complete silence which comes when the full force of the higher consciousness is upon mind and vital and body.

Things inside can be seen as distinctly as outward things whether in an image by the subtle vision or in their essence by a still more subtle and powerful way of seeing; but all these things have to develop in order to get their full power and intensity.

II

There is a stage in the sadhana in which the inner being begins to awake. Often the first result is the condition made up of the following elements:

1. A sort of witness attitude in which the inner consciousness looks at all that happens as a spectator or observer, observing things but taking no active interest or pleasure in them.

2. A state of neutral equanimity in which there is neither joy nor sorrow, only quietude.

3. A sense of being something separate from all that happens, observing it but not part of it.

4. An absence of attachment to things, people or events.

It seems as if this condition were trying to come in you; but it is still imperfect. For instance, in this condition (1) there should be no disgust or impatience or anger when people talk, only indifference and an inner peace and silence. Also, (2) there should not be a mere neutral quiet and indifference, but a positive sense of calm, detachment and peace. Again, (3) there should be no going out of the body so that you do not know what is happening or what you are doing. There may be a sense of not being the body but something else, — that is good; but

there should be a perfect awareness of all that is going on in or around you.

Moreover, this condition even when it is perfect is only a transitional stage — it is intended to bring a certain state of freedom and liberation. But in that peace there must come the feeling of the Divine Presence, the sense of the Mother's power working on you, the joy or Ananda.

If you can concentrate in the heart as well as in the head, then these things can more easily come.

⁂

The experience you have of a division in the being with the inner void and indifferent, *udāsīna*, — not sorrowful, but neutral and indifferent, is an experience which many pass through and is highly valued by the Sannyasins. For us it is a passage only to something larger and more positive. In it the old small human feelings fall away and a sort of calm neutral void is made for a higher nature to manifest. It must be fulfilled and replaced by a sense of large silence and freedom into which the Mother's consciousness can flow from above.

⁂

The condition in which all movements become superficial and empty with no connection with the soul is a stage in the withdrawal from the surface consciousness to the inner consciousness. When one goes into the inner consciousness, it is felt as a calm, pure existence without any movement, but eternally tranquil, unmoved and separate from the outer nature. This comes as a result of detaching oneself from the movements, standing back from them and is a very important movement of the sadhana. The first result of it is an entire quietude but afterwards that quietude begins (without the quietude ceasing) to fill with the psychic and other inner movements which create a true inner and spiritual life behind the outer life and nature. It is then easier to govern and change the latter.

At present there are fluctuations in your consciousness be-

cause this inner state is not yet fully developed and established. When it is, there will still be fluctuations in the outer consciousness, but the inner quiet, force, love etc. will be constant and the superficial fluctuations will be watched by the inner being without its being shaken or troubled, until they are removed by the complete outer change.

As for X, it is best to let it pass and try to remain steady within and detached; one can't separate from all contacts; one must become more and more superior to their customary reactions.

⁂

The condition you describe in your work means that the inner being is awake and that there is now the double consciousness. It is the inner being which has the inner happiness, the calm and quiet, the silence free from any ripple of thought, the inwardly silent repetition of the name. The automatic repetition of the *mantra* is part of the same phenomenon — that is what ought to happen to the *mantra*, it must become a conscious but spontaneous thing repeating itself in the very substance of the consciousness itself, no longer needing any effort of the mind. All these doubts and questionings of the mind are useless. What has to happen is that this inner consciousness should be always there not troubled by any disturbance with the constant silence, inner happiness and quietude etc., while the outer consciousness does what is necessary in the way of work etc. or, what is better, has that done through it — it is this latter experience that you have some days as someone pushing the work with so much continuous force without your feeling tired.

If you feel more quiet and the surrender feeling more intense, then that is a good, not a bad condition — and if it makes the mind an empty room receiving the light, so much the better. Experiences and descents are very good for preparation, but change of the consciousness is the thing wanted — it is the proof that the experiences and descents have had an effect. Descents of peace are good, but an increasingly stable quietude and silence of the mind is something more valuable. When that is there, then other things can come — usually one at a time, light or strength

and force or knowledge or Ananda. It is not necessary to go on forever having always the same preparatory experiences — a time comes when the consciousness begins to take a new poise and another state.

⁂

It is simply because you are full of mental and vital activities and relations. One must get the power to quiet the mental and vital, if not at first at all times, yet whenever one wills — for it is the mind and vital that cover up the psychic being as well as the self (Atman) and to get at either one must get in through their veil; but if they are always active and you are always identified with their activities, the veil will always be there. It is also possible to detach yourself and look at these activities as if they were not your own but a mechanical action of Nature which you observe as a disinterested witness. One can then become aware of an inner being which is separate, calm and uninvolved in Nature. This may be the inner mental or vital Purusha and not the psychic, but to get at the consciousness of the inner *manomaya* and *prāṇamaya* Purusha is always a step towards the unveiling of the psychic being.

Yes, it would be better to get full control of the speech — it is an important step towards going inward and developing a true inner and yogic consciousness.

⁂

The inner being is composed of the inner mental, the inner vital, the inner physical. The psychic is the inmost supporting all the others. Usually it is in the inner mental that this separation first happens and it is the inner mental Purusha who remains silent, observing the Prakriti as separate from himself. But it may also be the inner vital Purusha or inner physical or else without location simply the whole Purusha consciousness separate from the whole Prakriti. Sometimes it is felt above the head, but then it is usually spoken of as the Atman and the realisation is that of the silent Self.

⁂

The consciousness you speak of would be described in the Gita as the witness Purusha. The Purusha or basic consciousness is the true being or at least, in whatever plane it manifests, represents the true being. But in the ordinary nature of man it is covered up by the ego and the ignorant play of the Prakriti and remains veiled behind as the unseen Witness supporting the play of the Ignorance. When it emerges, you feel it as a consciousness behind, calm, central, unidentified with the play which depends upon it. It may be covered over, but it is always there. The emergence of the Purusha is the beginning of liberation. But it can also become slowly the Master — slowly because the whole habit of the ego and the play of the lower forces is against that. Still it can dictate what higher play is to replace the lower movement and then there is the process of that replacement, the higher coming, the lower struggling to remain and push away the higher movement. You say rightly that the offering to the Divine shortens the whole thing and is more effective, but usually it cannot be done completely at once owing to the past habit and the two methods continue together until the complete surrender is possible.

⁂

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

⁂

The witness being does not always remain as a point. It becomes something extended supporting the rest.

⁂

The attitude of the witness consciousness within — I do not think it necessarily involves an external seclusion, though one may do that also — is a very necessary stage in the progress. It helps the liberation from the lower Prakriti — not getting in-

volved in the ordinary nature movements; it helps the establishment of a perfect calm and peace within, for there is then one part of the being which remains detached and sees without being disturbed the perturbations of the surface; it helps also the ascent into the higher consciousness and the descent of the higher consciousness, for it is through this calm, detached and liberated inner being that the ascent and descent can easily be done. Also, to have the same witness look on the movements of Prakriti in others, seeing, understanding but not perturbed by them in any way is a very great help towards both the liberation and the universalisation of the being. I could not therefore possibly object to this movement in a sadhak.

As for the surrender it is not inconsistent with the witness attitude. On the contrary by liberating from the ordinary Prakriti, it makes easier the surrender to the higher or divine Power. Very often when this witness attitude has not been taken but there is a successful calling in of the Force to act in one, one of the first things the Force does is to establish the witness attitude so as to be able to act with less interference or immixture from the movements of the lower Prakriti.

There remains the question of the avoidance of contact with others and there there is some difficulty or incertitude. Part of your nature has a strong turn towards contact with others, action on others, interchange, almost a need of it. This brings about some fluctuation between the turn to an inner isolation and the turn towards contact and action. There is the same double and fluctuating movement in others here like X. In such cases I generally do not stress upon either tendency but leave the consciousness to find its own poise, because I have seen that to press too much on the isolation tendency when the nature is not mainly contemplative does not succeed very well — unless of course the sadhak himself gets a strong and fixed determination that way. This may be the cause of what you felt. But the question between witness attitude and surrender does not arise, for the reason I have explained — one can very well aid or lead to the other as ours is a yoga which joins these things together and does not keep them always separate.

⁂

The silence descends into the inner being first — as also other things from the higher consciousness. One can become aware of this inner being calm, silent, untouched by the movements of Nature, full of knowledge or light, and at the same time be aware of another lesser being, the small personality on the surface which is made up of the movements of Nature or else still subject to them or else, if not subject to them, still open to invasion by them. This is a condition that any number of sadhaks and yogis have experienced. The inner being means the psychic, the inner mind, the inner vital, the inner physical. In this condition none of these can be even touched, so there has been an essential purification. All need not feel this division into two consciousnesses, but most do. When it is there, the will that decides the action is in the inner being, not in the outer — so the invasion of the outer by vital movements can in no way compel the action. It is on the contrary a very favourable stage in the transformation because the inner being can bring the whole force of the higher consciousness in it to change the nature wholly, observing the action of Nature without being affected by it, putting the force for change wherever needed and setting the whole being right as one does with a machine. That is if one wants a transformation. For many Vedantins don't think it necessary — they say the inner being is *mukta*, the rest is simply a mechanical continuation of the impetus of Nature in the physical man and will drop away with the body so that one can depart into Nirvana.

⁂

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

⁂

You can certainly go on developing the consciousness of the Witness Purusha above, but if it is only a witness and the lower Prakriti is allowed to have its own way, there would be no reason

why these conditions should ever stop. Many take that attitude — that the Purusha has to liberate itself by standing apart, and the Prakriti can be allowed to go on till the end of the life doing its own business — it is *prārabdha karma*; when the body falls away, the Prakriti will drop also and the Purusha go off into the featureless Brahman! This is a comfortable theory, but of more than doubtful truth; I don't think liberation is so simple and facile a matter as that. In any case, the transformation which is the object of our yoga would not take place.

The Purusha above is not only a Witness, he is the giver (or withholder) of the sanction; if he persistently refuses the sanction to a movement of Prakriti, keeping himself detached, then, even if it goes on for a time by its past momentum, it usually loses its hold after a time, becomes more feeble, less persistent, less concrete and in the end fades away. If you take the Purusha consciousness, it should be not only as the Witness but as the Anumanta, refusing sanction to the disturbing movements, sanctioning only peace, calm, purity and whatever else is part of the divine nature. This refusal of sanction need not mean a struggle with the lower Prakriti; it should be a quiet, persistent, detached refusal leaving unsupported, unassented to, without meaning or justification, the contrary action of the nature.

⁂

When one follows after the impersonal Self, one is moving between two opposite principles — the silence and purity of the impersonal inactive Atman and the activity of the ignorant Prakriti. One can pass into the Self, leaving the ignorant nature or reducing it to silence. Or else, one can live in the peace and freedom of the Self and watch the action of Nature as a witness. Even one may put some sattwic control, by tapasya, over the action of the Prakriti; but the impersonal Self has no power to change or divinise the nature. For that one has to go beyond the impersonal Self and seek after the Divine who is both personal and impersonal and beyond these two aspects. If, however, you practise living in the impersonal Self and can achieve a certain spiritual impersonality, then you grow in equality, purity,

peace, detachment, you get the power of living in an inner freedom not touched by the surface movement or struggle of the mental, vital and physical nature, and this becomes a great help when you have to go beyond the impersonal and to change the troubled nature also into something divine.

As for the offering of the actions to the Divine and the vital difficulty it raises, it is not possible to avoid the difficulty — you have to go through and conquer it. For, the moment you make this attempt, the vital arises with all its restless imperfections to oppose the change. However, there are three things you can do to alleviate and shorten the difficulty:

1. Detach yourself from this vital-physical — observe it as something not yourself; reject it, refuse your consent to its claims and impulses, but quietly as the witness Purusha whose refusal of sanction must ultimately prevail. This ought not to be difficult for you, if you have already learned to live more and more in the impersonal Self.

2. When you are not in this impersonality, still use your mental will and its power of assent or refusal, — not with a painful struggle, but in the same way, quietly, denying the claims of Desire, till these claims by loss of sanction and assent lose their force of return and become more and more faint and external.

3. If you become aware of the Divine above you or in your heart, call for help, for light and power from there to change the vital itself, and at the same time insist upon this vital till it itself learns to pray for the change.

Finally, the difficulty will be reduced to its smallest proportions the moment you can by the sincerity of your aspiration to the Divine and your surrender awaken the psychic being in you (the Purusha in the secret heart) so that it will come forward and remain in front and pour its influence on all the movements of the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness. The work of transformation will still have to be done, but from that moment it will no longer be so hard and painful.

*
**

Obviously not. The witness attitude is not meant as a convenient

means for disowning the responsibility of one's defects and thereby refusing to mend them. It is meant for self-knowledge and, in our yoga, as a convenient station (detached and uninvolved, therefore not subject to Prakriti) from which one can act on the wrong movements by refusal of assent and by substituting for them the action of the true consciousness from within or above.

III

It is a very serious difficulty in one's yoga — the absence of a central will always superior to the waves of the Prakriti forces, always in touch with the Mother, imposing its central aim and aspiration on the nature. That is because you have not yet learned to live in your central being; you have been accustomed to run with every wave of Force, no matter of what kind, that rushed upon you and to identify yourself with it for the time being. It is one of the things that has to be unlearned; you must find your central being with the psychic as its basis and live in it.

⁂

So long as the mind is jumping about or rushing out to outside things, it is not possible to be inward, collected, conscious within.

⁂

To be aware of one's central consciousness and to know the action of the forces is the first definite step towards self-mastery.

⁂

It [consciousness] means both. One must be conscious of all one's states and movements and the causes and influences that bring them about and conscious too of the Divine — the memory,

presence, power, peace, light, knowledge, love, Ananda of the Divine.

⁂

Detachment is the beginning of mastery, but for complete mastery there should be no reactions at all. When there is something within undisturbed by the reactions that means the inner being is free and master of itself, but it is not yet master of the whole nature. When it is master, it allows no wrong reactions — if any come they are at once repelled and shaken off, and finally none come at all.

⁂

You must gather yourself within more firmly. If you disperse yourself constantly, go out of the inner circle, you will constantly move about in the pettiness of the ordinary outer nature and under the influences to which it is open. Learn to live within, to act always from within, from a constant communion with the Mother. It may be difficult at first to do it always and completely, but it can be done if one sticks to it — and it is at that price, by learning to do that, that one can have the siddhi in the yoga.

⁂

You must have somehow externalised yourself too much. It is only by living in one's inner consciousness and doing everything from there that the right psychic condition can be kept. Otherwise it goes inside and the external covers it up. It is not lost, but hidden — one must go inside again to recover it.

⁂

It is the past habit of the vital that makes you repeatedly go out into the external part; you must persist and establish the opposite habit of living in your inner being which is your true being and of looking at everything from there. It is from there that

you get the true thought, the true vision and understanding of things and of your own self and nature.

⁂

Yes. When one is in the right consciousness, then there is the right movement, the right happiness, everything in harmony with the Truth.

When there is the wrong consciousness, there is demand, dissatisfaction, doubt, all kinds of disharmony.

⁂

The difference is when a thing is done with the inner mind and when it is done only with the outer brain. What you feel is the inner mind taking it up — then it becomes part of the consciousness and things are really learned — the working of the outer mind is always difficult and superficial.

It is evident that the inner being in you is beginning to come more and more forward. As it does so, these outer difficulties will be more and more pushed out and the consciousness will keep the peace and force at first in the greater part of it, afterwards in the whole.

⁂

Yes, that is all right. Relying on outer methods mainly never succeeds very well. It is only when there is the inner poise that the outer movement is really effective and then it comes of itself.

⁂

It is good. Fasten on the true thing, the concentration in the inner being and the inner life. All these outer things are of minor importance and it is only when the inner life is well established that the difficulties with which they are hampered can get their true solution. That you have seen several times when you went inside. To be too much occupied in mind with the outer diffi-

culties keeps it externalised. Living inwardly you will find the Mother close to you and realise her will and her action.

⁂

The difficulty is that you attach so much importance to things that are of quite a small value. You behave as if to have or have not a table is something of supreme importance and worry and excite yourself so much about the rights and wrongs of the matter that you allow it to upset your whole peace of mind and make you fall from the true condition. These things are small and relative — you may have a new table or you may not have a new table, neither way is of any very great importance and it makes no difference to the Divine Purpose in you. The one thing important is to increase calm and peace and the descent of the Divine Force, to grow in equality and inward light and consciousness. Outward things have to be done with a great quiet, doing whatever is necessary but not exciting or upsetting yourself about anything. It is only so that you can advance steadily and quickly. When you feel the Mother's Force about you, the peace closely round you that is the one thing of importance — these small outward things can be settled in a hundred different ways, it does not really matter.

IV

The dream about X was of course a continuation of the process of clearing out remnants of the old movement from the subconscious vital.

The experience you relate, the stillness, the emptiness of mind and vital and cessation of thoughts and other movements was the coming of the state called "samadhi" in which the consciousness goes inside in a deep stillness and silence. This condition is favourable to inner experience, realisation, the vision of the unseen truth of things, though one can get these in the waking condition also. It is not sleep but the state in which one feels conscious within, no longer outside.

The diamond in your heart was a formation of the light of Mother's consciousness there, — for the Mother's light is of a white and at its most intense of a diamond radiance. The light is a sign of the Mother's presence in your heart and that is what you saw once and felt for a moment.

The inability to read books or papers is often felt when the consciousness is getting the tendency to go inside.

⁂

The experience you had is of course the going inside of the consciousness which is usually called trance or *samādhi*. The most important part of it however is the silence of the mind and vital which is fully extended to the body also. To get the capacity of this silence and peace is a most important step in the sadhana. It comes at first in meditation and may throw the consciousness inward in trance, but it has to come afterwards in the waking state and establish itself as a permanent basis for all the life and action. It is the condition for the realisation of the Self and the spiritual transformation of the nature.

⁂

1. No, it was not sleep. You went inside into an inner consciousness; in this inner consciousness one is awake inside, but not outside, not conscious of external things but of inner things only. Your inner consciousness was busy doing what your outer mind had been trying to do, that is to work upon the thoughts and suggestions that bring restlessness and to put them right; it can be done much more easily by the inner consciousness than by the outer mind.

2. As for the things that are necessary to be done, they can be done much more easily by the Force and Peace descending (bringing the solid strength) than by your own mental effort.

⁂

There is no reason why one should not have a burning aspiration

in sleep, provided one is conscious in sleep. In fact, the condition you describe was not sleep — it was simply that the consciousness was trying to go inside in a sort of indrawn condition (a kind of half-samadhi) while the external mind was constantly coming out of it. What you have, if you go into this indrawn condition, is not dreams but spiritual experiences or visions or experiences in other supraphysical planes of consciousness. Your burning aspiration was just such a spiritual experience.

⁂

About your experiences:

1. The sleep which you felt when meditating was not sleep but an inward condition of the consciousness. When this inward condition is not very deep, one can be aware of various scenes, voices, etc. which belong not to the physical but to some inner plane of consciousness — their value or truth depends on the plane to which one reaches. Those of the surface are of no importance and one has simply to pass through them till one gets deeper.

2. The fear, anger, depression, etc. which used to rise when making the Japa of the names came from a vital resistance in the nature (this resistance exists in everyone) which threw up these things because of the pressure on the vital part to change which is implied in sadhana. These resistances rise and then, if one takes the right attitude, slowly or quickly clear away. One has to observe them and separate oneself from them, persisting in the concentration and sadhana till the vital becomes quiet and clear.

3. The things you saw (moon, sky, etc.) are due to the opening of the inner vision; this usually comes when the concentration begins to open up the inner consciousness of which this subtle vision is a part. This faculty of vision has its importance in the development of the inner being, and need not be discouraged, even though too much importance should not be attached to the things seen in the earlier stages.

4. There are some, however, that are part of the growing spiritual experience, such as the sun you saw overhead and the piece of golden light — for these are signs of an opening within

and symbolic. Both are symbols of the Divine Truth and Light and of one action of their influence.

5. The most important experience, however, is that of the peace and quiet which comes with a good concentration. It is this that must grow and fix itself in the mind and vital and body — for it is this peace and quiet that make a firm basis for the sadhana.

⁂

1. All these thoughts and influences come really from outside, from universal Nature — they create formations in us or get habitual responses from the individual being. When they are rejected, they go back into the external universal Nature and if one becomes conscious, one can feel them coming from outside and trying to get a lodging inside again or reawaken the habitual response. One has to reject them persistently till no possibility of response remains any longer. This is hastened much if a certain inner calm, purity and silence can be established from which these things fall away without being able to touch it.

2. It is a common obstacle with all who practice yoga at the beginning. The sleep disappears gradually in two ways: (a) by the intensifying of the fire of concentration, (b) by the sleep itself becoming a kind of *svapna-samādhi* in which one is conscious of inner experiences that are not dreams (i.e. the waking consciousness is lost for the time but it is replaced not by sleep but by an inward conscious state in which one moves in the supraphysical or the mental or vital being).

3. About unconsciousness coming in in sleep: This is quite usual. Consciousness in sleep can only be gradually established with the growth of the true consciousness in the waking state.

4. The cardiac centre and the heart centre are the same.

5. A concrete imagery, such as you use, can help to bring about the descent.

⁂

As to the dream, it was not a dream but an experience of the inner being in a conscious dream-state, *svapna-samādhi*. The

numbness and the feeling of being about to lose consciousness are always due to the pressure or descent of a Force to which the body is not accustomed but feels strongly. Here it was not the physical body that was being directly pressed, but the subtle body, *sūkṣma śarīra*, in which the inner being more intimately dwells and in which it goes out in sleep or trance or at the moment of death. But the physical body in these vivid experiences feels as if it was itself that was having the experience; the numbness was the effect in it of the pressure. The pressure on the whole body would mean a pressure on the whole inner consciousness, perhaps for some modification or change which would make it more ready for knowledge or experience; the third or fourth rib would indicate a region which belongs to the vital nature, the domain of the life-force, some pressure for a change there.

⁂

There is no need of the question. At this stage you have only to watch the experiences and observe their significance. It is only when the experiences are in the vital realm that some are likely to be false formations. These of which you write are simply the common experiences of an opening yogic consciousness and they have to be understood, simply.

Here it is the breaking up of the small surface vital into the largeness of the true or inner vital being which can at once open to the Higher Consciousness, its power, light and Ananda. There is also begun a similar breaking of the small physical mind and sense into the wideness of the inner physical consciousness. The inner planes are always wide and open into the Universal, while the outer surface parts are shut up in themselves and full of narrow and ignorant movements.

⁂

Your series of experiences are very interesting by the constant (though interspaced) development they illustrate. These two new significant elements have been added to the previous substance of the experience. The first is the very precise localisation of the

uprush of the consciousness from the pit of the stomach — that is to say, from above the navel, the movement itself starting from the navel itself, even below it. The navel-centre (*nābhi-padma*) is the main seat of the centralised vital consciousness (dynamic centre) which ranges from the heart level (emotional) to the centre below the navel (lower vital, sensational desire centre). These three make the domain of the vital being. It is therefore clear that it was your inner vital being which had this experience, and its intensity and vehemence was probably due to the whole vital (or most of it) being awake and sharing in it this time. The experience itself was psychic in its origin, but was given a strong emotional-vital form in its expression. I may add, for completeness, that the centre of the psychic is behind the heart and it is through the purified emotions that the psychic most easily finds an outlet. All from the heart above is connected with the mental-vital and above it is the mind with its three centres. One in the throat (the outward-going or externalising mind), one between the eyes or rather in the middle of the forehead (the centre of vision and will) and one above, communicating with the brain, which is called the thousand-petalled lotus, and where are centralised the highest thought and intelligence, communicating with the greater mind planes (illumined mind, intuition, over-mind) above.

The second new significant feature is the self-manifestation of the inner mind; for it was your inner mind that was watching, observing and criticising the vital being's psychic experience. You found this clear division in you curious, but it will no longer seem curious once you know the perfectly normal divisibility of the different parts of the being. In the outer surface nature, mind, psychic, vital, physical are all jumbled together and it needs a strong power of introspection, self-analysis, close observation and disentanglement of the threads of thought, feeling and impulse to find out the composition of our nature and the relation and interaction of these parts upon each other. But when one goes inside as you have done, we find the sources of all this surface action and there the parts of our being are quite separate and clearly distinct from each other. We feel them indeed as different beings in us, and just as two people in a joint action can do,

they too are seen to observe, criticise, help or oppose and restrain each other; it is as if we were a group-being, each member of the group with its separate place and function, and all directed by a central being who is sometimes in front above the others, sometimes behind the scenes. Your mental being was observing the vital and not quite easy about its vehemence, for the natural base of the mental being is calm, thoughtfulness, restraint, control and balance, while the natural turn of the vital is dynamism, energy thrown into emotion, sensation and action. All therefore was perfectly natural and in order.

⁂

The explanation of your experience is plain. The lower being (vital and physical) was receiving an influence (mental light, yellow) from the thinking mind and higher vital which was clearing it of the old habitual lower vital reactions: very often in the sadhana one feels the inner being speaking to the outer or the mind or higher vital speaking to the lower so as to enlighten it.

⁂

The important experience is that of the white ray in the heart — the white light and the illumining of the heart by the light is a thing of great power in this sadhana. The intuitions she speaks of are a sign of the inner consciousness growing in her — the consciousness which is necessary for yoga.

⁂

The three experiences of which you speak belong all to the same movement or the same stage of your spiritual life: they are initial movements of the consciousness to become aware of your inner being which was veiled, as in most, by the outer waking self. There are, we might say, two beings in us, one on the surface, our ordinary exterior mind, life, body consciousness, another behind the veil, an inner mind, an inner life, an inner physical

consciousness constituting another or inner self. This inner self once awake opens in its turn to our true real eternal self. It opens inwardly to the soul, called in the language of this yoga the psychic being which supports our successive births and at each birth assumes a new mind, life and body. It opens above to the Self or Spirit which is unborn and by conscious recovery of it we transcend the changing personality and achieve freedom and full mastery over our nature.

You did quite right in first developing the sattwic qualities and building up the inner meditative quietude. It is possible by strenuous meditation or by certain methods of tense endeavour to open doors on to the inner being or even break down some of the walls between the inner and outer self before finishing or even undertaking this preliminary self-discipline, but it is not always wise to do it as that may lead to conditions of sadhana which may be very turbid, chaotic, beset with unnecessary dangers. By adopting the more patient course you have arrived at a point at which the doors of the inner being have begun almost automatically to swing open. Now both processes can go on side by side, but it is necessary to keep the sattwic quietude, patience, vigilance, — to hurry nothing, to force nothing, not to be led away by any strong lure or call of the intermediate stage which is now beginning, before you are sure that it is the right call. For there are many vehement pulls from the forces of the inner planes which it is not safe to follow.

Your first experience is an opening into the inner mental self — the space between the eyebrows is the centre of the inner mind, vision, will and the blue light you saw was that of a higher mental plane, a spiritual mind, one might say, which is above the ordinary human mental intelligence. An opening into this higher mind is usually accompanied by a silence of the ordinary mental thought. Our thoughts are not really created within ourselves independently in the small narrow thinking machine we call our mind; in fact, they come to us from a vast mental space or ether either as mind-waves or waves of mind-force that carry a significance which takes shape in our personal mind or as thought-formations ready-made which we adopt and call ours. Our outer mind is blind to this process of Nature; but by the

awakening of the inner mind we can become aware of it. What you saw was the receding of this constant mental invasion and the retreat of the thought-forms beyond the horizon of the wide space of mental Nature. You felt this horizon to be in yourself somewhere, but evidently it was in that larger self-space which even in its more limited field just between the eyebrows you felt to be bigger than the corresponding physical space. In fact, though the inner mind-spaces have horizons, they stretch beyond those horizons — illimitably. The inner mind is something very wide projecting itself into the infinite and finally identifying itself with the infinity of universal Mind. When we break out of the narrow limits of the external physical mind we begin to see inwardly and to feel this wideness, in the end this universality and infinity of the mental self-space. Thoughts are not the essence of mind-being, they are only an activity of mental nature; if that activity ceases, what appears then as a thought-free existence that manifests in its place is not a blank or void but something very real, substantial, concrete we may say — a mental being that extends itself widely and can be its own field of existence silent or active as well as the Witness, Knower, Master of that field and its action. Some feel it first as a void, but that is because their observation is untrained and insufficient and loss of activity gives them the sense of blank; an emptiness there is, but it is an emptiness of the ordinary activities, not a blank of existence.

The recurrence of the experience of the receding away of thoughts, the cessation of the thought-generating mechanism and its replacement by the mental self-space, is normal and as it should be; for this silence or at any rate the capacity for it has to grow until one can have it at will or even established in an automatic permanence. For this silence of the ordinary mind-mechanism is necessary in order that the higher mentality may manifest, descend, occupy by degrees the place of the present imperfect mentality and transform the activities of the latter into its own fuller movements. The difficulty of its coming when you are at work is only at the beginning — afterwards, when it is more settled, one finds that one can carry on all the activities of life either in the pervading silence itself or at least with that as

the support and background. The silence remains behind and there is the necessary action on the surface or the silence is our wide self and somewhere in it an active Power does the works of Nature without disturbing the silence. It is therefore quite right to suspend the work while the visitation of the experience is there — the development of this inner silent consciousness is sufficiently important to justify a brief interruption or pause.

In the case of the other two experiences, on the contrary, it is otherwise. The dream experience must not be allowed to take hold of the waking hours and pull the consciousness within; it must confine its operation to the hours of sleep. So too there should be no push or pressure to break down the wall between the inner self and the outer "I" — the fusion must be allowed to take place by a developing inner action in its own natural time. I shall explain why in another letter.

*
**

Your second experience is a first movement of the awakening of the inner being in sleep. Ordinarily when one sleeps a complex phenomenon happens. The waking consciousness is no longer there, for all has been withdrawn within into the inner realms of which we are not aware when we are awake, though they exist; for then all that is put behind a veil by the waking mind and nothing remains except the surface self and the outward world — much as the veil of the sunlight hides from us the vast worlds of the stars that are behind it. Sleep is a going inward in which the surface self and the outside world are put away from our sense and vision. But in ordinary sleep we do not become aware of the worlds within; the being seems submerged in a deep subconscience. On the surface of this subconscience floats an obscure layer in which dreams take place, as it seems to us, but, more correctly it may be said, are recorded. When we go very deeply asleep, we have what appears to us as a dreamless slumber; but, in fact, dreams are going on, but they are either too deep down to reach the recording surface or are forgotten, all recollection of their having existed even is wiped out in the transition to the waking consciousness. Ordinary dreams are

for the most part or seem to be incoherent, because they are either woven by the subconscient out of deep-lying impressions left in it by our past inner and outer life, woven in a fantastic way which does not easily yield any clue of meaning to the waking mind's remembrance, or are fragmentary records, mostly distorted, of experiences which are going on behind the veil of sleep — very largely indeed these two elements get mixed up together. For, in fact, a large part of our consciousness in sleep does not get sunk into this subconscious state; it passes beyond the veil into other planes of being which are connected with our own inner planes, planes of supraphysical existence, worlds of a larger life, mind or psyche which are there behind and whose influences come to us without our knowledge. Occasionally we get a dream from these planes, something more than a dream, — a dream experience which is a record direct or symbolic of what happens to us or around us there. As the inner consciousness grows by sadhana, these dream experiences increase in number, clearness, coherence, accuracy and after some growth of experience and consciousness, we can, if we observe, come to understand them and their significance to our inner life. Even we can by training become so conscious as to follow our own passage, usually veiled to our awareness and memory, through many realms and the process of the return to the waking state. At a certain pitch of this inner wakefulness this kind of sleep, a sleep of experiences, can replace the ordinary subconscious slumber.

It is of course an inner being or consciousness or something of the inner self that grows in this way, not as usually it is, behind the veil of sleep, but in the sleep itself. In the condition which you describe, it is just becoming aware of sleep and dream and observing them — but as yet nothing farther — unless there is something in the nature of your dreams that has escaped you. But it is sufficiently awake for the surface consciousness to remember this state, that is to say, to receive and keep the report of it even in the transition from the sleep to the waking state which usually abolishes by oblivion all but fragments of the record of sleep happenings. You are right in feeling that the waking consciousness and this which is awake in sleep are not the same — they are different parts of the being.

When this growth of the inner sleep consciousness begins, there is often a pull to go inside and pursue the development even when there is no fatigue or need of sleep. Another cause aids this pull. It is usually the vital part of the inner being that first wakes in sleep and the first dream experiences (as opposed to ordinary dreams) are usually, in the great mass, experiences of the vital plane, a world of supraphysical life, full of variety and interest, with many provinces, luminous or obscure, beautiful or perilous, often extremely attractive, where we can get much knowledge too both of our concealed parts of nature and of things happening to us behind the veil and of others which are of concern for the development of our parts of nature. The vital being in us then may get very much attracted to this range of experience, may want to live more in it and less in the outer life. This would be the source of that wanting to get back to something interesting and enthralling which accompanies the desire to fall into sleep. But this must not be encouraged in waking hours, it should be kept for hours set apart for sleep where it gets its natural field. Otherwise there may be an unbalancing, a tendency to live more and too much in the visions of the supraphysical realms and a decrease of the hold on outer realities. The knowledge, the enlargement of our consciousness of these fields of inner nature is very desirable, but it must be kept in its own place and limits.

⁂

In my last letter I had postponed the explanation of your third experience. What you have felt is indeed a touch of the Self, not the unborn Self above, the Atman of the Upanishads, for that is differently experienced through the silence of the thinking mind, but the inner being, the psychic supporting the inner mental, vital, physical being, of which I have spoken. A time must come for every seeker of complete self-knowledge when he is thus aware of living in two worlds, two consciousnesses at the same time, two parts of the same existence. At present he lives in the outer self, but he will go more and more inward, till the position is reversed and he lives within in this new inner consciousness, inner self and feels the outer as something on the

surface formed as an instrumental personality for the inner's self-expression in the material world. Then from within a Power works on the outer to make it a conscious plastic instrument so that finally the inner and the outer may become fused into one. The wall you feel is indeed the wall of the ego which is based on the insistent identification of oneself with the outer personality and its movements. It is that identification which is the keystone of the limitation and bondage from which the outer being suffers, preventing expansion, self-knowledge, spiritual freedom. But still the wall must not be prematurely broken down, because that may lead to a disruption or confusion or invasion of either part by the movements of the two separated worlds before they are ready to harmonise. A certain separation is necessary for some time after one has become aware of these two parts of the being as existing together. The force of the yoga must be given time to make the necessary adjustments and openings and to take the being inward and then from this inward poise to work on the outer nature.

This does not mean that one should not allow the consciousness to go inward so that as soon as possible it should live in the inward world of being and see all anew from there. That inward going is most desirable and necessary and that change of vision also. I mean only that all should be done by a natural movement without haste. The movement of going inward may come rapidly, but even after that something of the wall of ego will be there and it will have to be steadily and patiently taken down so that no stone of it may abide. My warning against allowing the sleep world to encroach on the waking hours is limited to that alone and does not refer to the inward movement in waking concentration or ordinary waking consciousness. The waking movement carries us finally into the inner self and by that inner self we grow into contact with and knowledge of the supra-physical worlds, but this contact and knowledge need not and should not lead to an excessive preoccupation with them or a subjection to their beings and forces. In sleep we actually enter into these worlds and there is the danger, if the attraction of the sleep consciousness is too great and encroaches on the waking consciousness, of this excessive preoccupation and influence.

It is quite true that an inner purity and sincerity, in which one is motived only by the higher call, is one's best safeguard against the lures of the intermediate stage. It keeps one on the right track and guards from deviation, until the psychic being is fully awake and in front and, once that happens, there is no further danger. If, in addition to this purity and sincerity, there is a clear mind with a power of discrimination, that increases the safety in the earlier stages. I do not think I need or should specify too fully or exactly the forms the lure or pull is likely to take. It may be better not to call up these forces by an attention to them which may not be necessary. I do not suppose you are likely to be drawn away from the path by any of the greater perilous attractions. As for the minor inconveniences of the intermediate stage, they are not dangerous and can easily be set right as one goes by the growth of consciousness, discrimination and sure experience.

As I have said, the inward pull, the pull towards going inward is not undesirable and need not be resisted. At a particular stage it may be accompanied by an abundance of visions due to the growth of the inner sight which sees things belonging to all the planes of existence. That is a valuable power helpful in the sadhana and should not be discouraged. But one must see and observe without attachment, keeping always the main object in front, realisation of the inner Self and the Divine — these things should only be regarded as incidental to the growth of consciousness and helpful to it, not as objects in themselves to be followed for their own sake. There should also be a discriminating mind which puts each thing in its place and can pause to understand its field and nature. There are some who become so eager after these subsidiary experiences that they begin to lose all sense of the true distinction and demarcation between different fields of reality. All that takes place in these experiences must not be taken as true — one has to discriminate, see what is mental formation or subjective construction and what is true, what is only suggestion from the larger mental and vital planes or what has reality only there and what is of value for help or guidance in inner sadhana or outer life.

⁂

X's experiences are those which usually attend the withdrawal from the outer consciousness into an inner plane of experience. The feeling of coldness of the body in the first is one of the signs — like the immobility and stiffness of Y's experience — that the consciousness is withdrawing from the outer or physical sheath and retiring inside. The crystallisation was the form in which he felt the organisation of an inner consciousness which could receive at once firmly and freely from above. The crystals at once indicate organised formation and a firm transparence in which the greater vision and experience descending from the higher planes could be clearly reflected.

As for the other experience, his rejection of the waking consciousness evidently had the result of throwing him into an inner awareness in which he began to have contact with the supraphysical planes. What was meant by the sea of red colour and stars depends on the character of the red colour. If it was crimson, what he saw was the sea of the physical consciousness and physical life as it is represented to the inner symbolic vision; if it was purple red, then it was the sea of the vital consciousness and the vital life-force. Perhaps, if he had not stopped his sense of the Mother's presence, it would have been better, — he should rather, if he can, take it with him into the inner planes, then he would have had no occasion to fear.

In any case, if he wants to go into the inner consciousness and move in the inner planes — which will inevitably happen if he shuts off the waking consciousness in his meditation — he must cast away fear. Probably he expected to get the silence or the touch of the Divine Consciousness by following out the suggestion of the Gita. But the silence or the touch of the Divine Consciousness can be equally and for some more easily got in the waking meditation through the Mother's presence and the descent from above. The inward movement, however, is probably unavoidable and he should try to understand and, not shrinking or afraid, to go to it with the same confidence and faith in the Mother as he has in the waking meditation. His dreams are, of course, experiences on the inner (vital) plane; I need not repeat the explanation I have already given to Y.

P.S. The dream about the Mahadeva image may mean that someone (not of this world, of course) wanted to mislead him and make him confuse some narrower traditional form of the past with the greater living Truth that he is seeking.

⁂

The things you feel are due to the fact that the consciousness goes inside, so physical things are felt as if they were at a distance. The same phenomenon can happen when one goes into another plane of consciousness and sees physical things from there. But it is probably the first that is happening with you. When one goes quite inside, then physical things disappear, — when some connection is kept, then they become distant. But this is a transitory change. Afterwards, you will be able to have the two consciousnesses together, be in your psychic in one part of yourself with all the experience and activities of the psychic being and nature and yet with your surface self fully awake and active in physical things with the psychic support and influence behind this outer action.

⁂

It is evidently in a subtle world, not the physical that you move; that is evident from the different arrangement of things, but such details as the third arm and the book-marker removed yet there show that it is a subtle world very near to the physical; it is either a subtle-physical world or a very material vital domain. In all the subtle domains the physical is reproduced with a change, the change growing freer and more elastic as one gets farther away. Such details as the lameness show the same thing, — the hold of the physical is still there. It is possible to move about in the physical world, but usually that can only be done by drawing on the atmosphere of other physical beings for a stronger materialisation of the form — when that happens one moves among them and sees them and all the surroundings exactly as they are at that time in the physical world and one can verify the accuracy of the details if immediately after returning to the body (which is

usually done with a clear consciousness of the whole process of getting into it) one can traverse the same scene in the physical body. But this is rare; the subtle wandering is on the contrary a frequent phenomenon, only when it is near to the physical world all seems very material and concrete and the association of physical habits and physical mental movements with the subtle events is closer.

⁂

It was a partial exteriorisation, part of the consciousness going out to the scene and surroundings described by you while the rest remained in the body and was aware both of the normal surroundings and, by communication or indirect participation, of what the other was experiencing. This is quite possible and for that no form of trance or loss of external consciousness is necessary. As for the cause of such an experience, it does not depend at all on one's own ordinary mental or other interests; it comes by a sort of attraction or touch from someone who is there on the scene and who feels the need of sympathy, support or help of some kind, a need so strong that it forms a sort of call; it is very usually somebody quite unknown and it just depends on whom the call happens to touch because he is open at the time and receives the vibration and has the capacity to answer. Usually there is a sort of identification of consciousness with that of the person calling so that one can see the surroundings and the things happening through him. It is the physical that becomes nervous at these experiences and this must be overcome; as the inner mental, vital, physical consciousness opens to things behind the thick physical veil all kinds of experiences may happen that are strange to the physical mind and its tendency to be apprehensive or nervous at these things must disappear. It must be able to face even formidable things without fear.

For the eyes, that experience had got a certain hold and it was not to be expected that it would altogether disappear all at once. These things try to persist, but if the refusal is firm and unchanging, they fade away after a time or cease. The lessening of the intensity of the Ananda is already a sign that the rejection

is having its effect. You have only to persist and after a timet vital consciousness will be free.

⁂

The place where you were is as much a world of fact and reality as is the material world and its happenings have sometimes a great effect on this world. What an ignorant lot of disciples you all are! Too much modernisation and Europeanisation by half!

These things are meetings on the vital plane, but very often in the transcription of what happened some details get in that are contributed by the subconscient. The rest seems all right. The writing on the forehead means of course something that is fixed in you in the vital plane and has to come out hereafter in the physical consciousness.

⁂

You are too physically matter of fact. Besides you are quite ignorant of occult things. The vital is part of what European psychologists sometimes call the subliminal, and the subliminal, as everybody ought to know, can do things the physical cannot do — e.g. solve a problem in a few minutes over which the physical has spent days in vain etc. etc.

What is the use of the same things happening on both planes? It would be superfluous and otiose. The vital plane is a field where things can be done which for some reason or other can't be done now on the physical.

There are of course hundreds of varieties of things in the vital as it is a much richer and more plastic field of consciousness than the physical, and all are not of equal validity and value. I am speaking above of the things that are valid. By the way, without this vital plane there would be no art, poetry or literature — these things come through the vital before they can manifest here.

⁂

What you say about the different vital worlds is no doubt inte-

resting and has a certain truth, but you must remember that these worlds, which are different from the true or divine vital, are full of enchantments and illusions and they present appearances of beauty which allure only to mislead or destroy. They are worlds of 'Rakshasimaya' and their heavens are more dangerous than their hells. They have to be known and their powers met when need be but not accepted; our business is with the supramental and with the vital only when it is supramentalised and until then we have always to be on our guard against any lures from that other quarter. I think the worlds of which you speak are those which have a special attraction and a special danger for poets, imaginative people and some artists. There is, specially, a strain of aestheticised vital susceptibility or sentiment or even sentimentalism through which they affect the being and it is one of the things that have to be purified before one can rise to the highest poetry, art and imaginative creation.

⁂

When the vital being goes out, it moves on the vital plane and in the vital consciousness and, even if it is aware of physical scenes and things, it is not with a physical vision. It is possible for one who has trained his faculties to enter into touch with physical things although he is moving about in the vital body, to see and sense them accurately, even to act on them and physically move them. But the ordinary sadhak who has no knowledge or organised experience or training in these things cannot do it. He must understand that the vital plane is different from the physical and that things that happen there are not physical happenings, though, if they are of the right kind and properly understood and used, they may have a meaning and value for the earth life. But also the vital consciousness is full of false formations and many confusions and it is not safe to move among them without knowledge and without a direct protection and guidance.

⁂

You must have gone out of your body leaving it unprotected

and there was an attack which you got rid of after coming into the body. This part of the head from the ears down to the neck is the seat of the physical mind — the centre of the physical or externalising mind is in the throat joining the spine at the back. It was an attack on the physical mind.

⁂

Your three experiences related in your letter mean that you are going out in your vital body into the vital worlds and meeting the beings and formations of these worlds. The old man of the temple and the girls you saw are hostile beings of the vital plane.

It is better not to go in this way unless one has the protection of someone (physically present) who has knowledge and power on the vital world. As there is no one there who can do this for you, you should draw back from this movement. Aspire for perfect surrender, calm, peace, light, consciousness and strength in the mind and the heart. When the mental being and the psychic being are thus open, luminous and surrendered, then the vital can open and receive the same illumination. Till then premature adventures on the vital plane are not advisable.

If the movement cannot be stopped, then observe the following instructions:

1. Never allow any fear to enter into you. Face all you meet and see in this world with detachment and courage.

2. Ask for our protection before you sleep or meditate. Use our names when you are attacked or tempted.

3. Do not indulge in this world in any kind of sympathy for the old man in the temple or accept such suggestions, e.g., that he was your spiritual preceptor, which was obviously false since you could have no other spiritual preceptor than us. It was because of this sympathy and the accepted suggestion that he was able to go inside you and create the pain you felt.

4. Do not allow any foreign personality to enter into you, only the Light, Power etc. from above.

⁂

It looks as if it were an exteriorisation in which she goes out in her vital body. When one does so consciously and at will, it is all right, but this unconscious exteriorisation is not always safe. The important question is what effect it has on her. If she comes out of it strong and refreshed or quite normal, there is no cause for distress or anxiety; if she comes out exhausted or depressed, then there are forces that are pulling her out into the vital world to the detriment of her vital sheath and it should not continue.

⁂

Among X's experiences there is one paper headed "surface consciousness". What is described there is the nervous or physico-vital envelope. This is the thing observed by the mediums and it is by exteriorising it to a less or greater extent that they produce their phenomena. How did X come to know of it? Was it by intuition, by vision or by personal experience? If the latter, warn him not to exteriorise this vital envelope, for to do so without adequate protection, which must be that of a person acquainted with these things and physically present at the time, may bring about serious psychical dangers and also injuries to the nervous being and the body or even worse.

⁂

There is no utility in such experiences; they may happen on the vital plane so long as one has still to pass through the vital range of experiences, but the aim should be to get beyond them and live in a pure psychic and spiritual experience. To admit or call the invasion of others into one's own being is to remain always in the confusions of the intermediate zone. Only the Divine should be called into one's personal Adhar — by which is not meant the loss of one's personal being or any idea of becoming the Divine, for that should be avoided. The ego has to be overcome, but the central personal being (which is not the ego but the individual self, soul, a portion of the Divine) has to remain a channel and instrument of the Divine Shakti. As for others, sadhaks, etc. one can feel them in one's universalised consciousness, be aware of

their movements, live in harmony with them in the Divine All, but not allow or call their presence within the personal Adhar. Very often that leads to the invasion of the consciousness by vital powers or presences which assume the forms of those who are so admitted — and that is most undesirable. The sadhak must make his basic consciousness silent, calm, pure, peaceful and preserve or attain an absolute control over what he shall or shall not admit into it — otherwise, if he does not keep this control, he is in danger of becoming a field of confused and disorderly experiences or a plaything of all sorts of mental and vital beings and forces. Only one rule or influence other than one's own should be admitted, the rule of the Divine Shakti over the Adhar.

*
**

I am not very sure of the significance of your friend's statement about experiences. The 'double' voice is a frequent phenomenon; it happens very often when one has been long repeating a mantra that a voice or consciousness within begins to repeat it automatically — also prayer can be taken up in the same way from within. It is usually by an awakening of the inner consciousness or by the going in of the consciousness more deeply within from its outward poise that this happens. This is supported in his case by the fact that he feels himself half way to trance, his body seems to melt away, he does not feel the weight of the book etc.; all these are well-known signs of the inner consciousness getting awake and largely replacing the outer. The moral effects of his new condition would also indicate an awakening of the inner consciousness, the psychic or psychic-mental perhaps. But on the other hand he seems to feel this other voice as if outside him and to have the sense of another being than himself, an invisible presence in the room. The inner being is often felt as someone separate from or other than the ordinary self, but it is not usually felt outside. So it may be that in this state of withdrawal he comes into contact with another plane or world and attracts to himself one of its beings who wants to share in his sadhana and govern it. The last is not a very safe phenomenon, for it is difficult to say from the data what kind of

being it is and the handing over of the government of one's inner development to any other than the Divine, the Guru or one's own psychic being may bring with it serious peril. That is all I can say at present.

⁂

It is evident from your description that it was a vital force trying to take violent possession of the body. Nothing can be more dangerous than to allow this kind of loss of control and intrusion of an alien influence. In your present condition of ignorance, the vital being not yet sufficiently open, the psychic not yet sufficiently awake, a hostile power can easily intrude and pass itself off as the Divine Force. Remember that no personality and no power is to be allowed to possess you. The Divine Force will not act in this way; it will work first to purify, to widen and enlighten the consciousness, to open it to Light and Truth, to awake the heart and the psychic being. Only afterwards will it take gradual and quiet control through a pure and conscious surrender.

You must also understand that there is only one Power at work and neither you nor he nor anybody else matters. Let each one open himself to the workings of that Power in him and let there be no attempt at forming a body of sadhaks with somebody leading or intervening between the one Power and the sadhaks.

⁂

All the other circumstances which you relate are normal and would be the phenomena of an invasion of Ananda occupying the whole instrumental being while the silent inner being within remains separate as it does usually from all that comes from outside. The circumstance that is not clear is the Presence. There is nothing to indicate who or what it is. If it were an undesirable vital Presence producing a vital joy, there would usually be vital phenomena which would enable you to detect their origin, but these are not apparent here. In the circumstances the only course is to observe the experience without accepting any occupation of the being by what comes, taking it as only an experience which

the inner being looks on as a witness, until the point that remains veiled is made clear.

P.S. There are several possible explanations but I do not speak of them as that might influence and interfere with the pure observation of the experience by bringing in a mental suggestion.

⁂

I have read your letter and I have also read it to the Mother. My conclusion about the experience — I had suspended judgement till now — is the same as hers.

We consider that it will be wiser for you to be on your guard about it in future. In the first place it cannot be the Buddha — the Buddha's presence would bring peace but could never give this kind of Ananda. Next, the suggestion based on an old subjective feeling of yours seems to be thrown on you to make you more readily admit some *emprise* that the experience is a means of establishing on you. Again the feeling you have that the Ananda is more than you can bear is a sign not favourable to the experience; you suppose that it is a want of adaptation that gives you the feeling, but it is more likely that it is something foreign thrown on you through the vital with which the psychic being in you does not feel at home. Finally, it is not safe to admit while you are doing the yoga here another influence, *whatever it may be*, which is not ours or part of the movement of this sadhana. If that takes place anything might happen and we would not be able to protect you against it because you would have stepped out of the circle of protection. You have hitherto been proceeding on a very sound line of development; a diversion of this kind which seems to be on the vital level might be a serious interference. No trust can be put on the beauty of the eyes or the face. There are many Beings of the inferior planes who have a captivating beauty and can enthral with it and they can give too an Ananda which is not of the highest and may on the contrary by its lure take away from the path altogether. When you have reached the stage of clear discernment where the highest Light is turned on all things that come, then experiences of many kinds

may be safely faced, but now a strict vigilance must be exercised and all diversions rejected. It is necessary to keep one's steps firmly on the straight road to the Highest; all else must wait for the proper time.

⁂

I have no doubt that the action of this force once rejected will disappear in time. It is something with which you have been brought into contact, not something intimate to yourself to which part of your being is naturally responsive. That is shown by the inability to catch what the being who manifested wanted to convey to you. It seems to have been an onslaught, as you say, an attempted invasion by force and ruse. It is quite true that when there is the opening to the Light, the adverse Forces as well as the lower forces become active when they can do so. The consciousness of the seeker has come out of its normal limits and is opening to the universal as well as upwards to the Self above and they take advantage of that to attempt an entrance. Such onslaughts however are not inevitable and you are probably right in thinking that you caught it in the atmosphere of X. He has made experiments of many kinds in the occult field and there one comes easily into contact with forces and beings of a darker nature and one needs a great power and light and purity — one's own or a helping Power's — to face them and overcome. There are also deficiencies or errors in one's own nature which can open the door to these beings. But the best is if one can have nothing to do with them; for the conquest of the forces of the lower nature is a sufficiently heavy task without that complication. If the work one has to do necessitates the contact and conflict with them, that is another matter. In your case I think this has been something of an accident and not a necessity of the development of your sadhana.

⁂

No, there was no special concentration or call from the Mother at that time. It was at a time when she never sees anyone, so

evidently she would not have put such a force upon you, nor does she usually exercise her power in this way. You did well to resist the impulsion. It is always necessary to keep the inner perception and will clear, conscious and in perfect balance and never to allow any force of impulsion, however it may present itself, to sweep without their discerning consent the vital or the body into action. Whatever appearance they may assume, such forces cannot be trusted; once the discriminating intelligence gives up its control, any kind of force can intervene in this way and a path is opened for unbalanced vital impulses to be used to the detriment of the sadhana. A psychic or spiritual control replacing the mental would not act in this way, — but whatever intensity or ardour it may give, would maintain a clear perception of things, a perfect discrimination, a harmony between the inward and the outward reality. It is only the vital that is swept by these impulses; the vital must always be kept under the control of the intelligence, the psychic or when that becomes dynamic, the higher spiritual consciousness.

All these experiences are of the same nature and what applies to one applies to another. Apart from some experiences of a personal character, the rest are either idea-truths, such as pour down into the consciousness from above when one gets into touch with certain planes of being, or strong formations from the larger mental and vital worlds which, when one is directly open to these worlds, rush in and want to use the sadhak for their fulfilment. These things, when they pour down or come in, present themselves with a great force, a vivid sense of inspiration or illumination, much sensation of light and joy, an impression of widening and power. The sadhak feels himself freed from the normal limits, projected into a wonderful new world of experience, filled and enlarged and exalted; what comes associates itself, besides, with his aspirations, ambitions, notions of spiritual fulfilment and yogic siddhi; it is represented even as itself that realisation and fulfilment. Very easily he is carried away by the

splendour and the rush, and thinks that he has realised more than he has truly done, something final or at least something sovereignly true. At this stage the necessary knowledge and experience are usually lacking which would tell him that this is only a very uncertain and mixed beginning; he may not realise at once that he is still in the cosmic Ignorance, not in the cosmic Truth, much less in the Transcendental Truth, and that whatever formative or dynamic idea-truths may have come down into him are partial only and yet further diminished by their presentation to him by a still mixed consciousness. He may fail to realise also that if he rushes to apply what he is realising or receiving as if it were something definitive, he may either fall into confusion and error or else get shut up in some partial formation in which there may be an element of spiritual Truth but it is likely to be outweighted by more dubious mental and vital accretions that deform it altogether. It is only when he is able to draw back (whether at once or after a time) from his experiences, stand above them with the dispassionate witness consciousness, observe their real nature, limitations, composition, mixture that he can proceed on his way towards a real freedom and a higher, larger and truer siddhi. At each step this has to be done. For whatever comes in this way to the sadhak of this yoga, whether it be from overmind or Intuition or Illumined Mind or some exalted Life Plane or from all these together, it is not definitive and final; it is not the supreme Truth in which he can rest, but only a stage. And yet these stages have to be passed through, for the supramental or the Supreme Truth cannot be reached in one bound or even in many bounds; one has to pursue a calm patient steady progress through many intervening stages without getting bound or attached to their lesser Truth or Light or Power or Ananda.

This is in fact an intermediary state, a zone of transition between the ordinary consciousness in mind and the true yoga knowledge. One may cross without hurt through it, perceiving at once or at an early stage its real nature and refusing to be detained by its half-lights and tempting but imperfect and often mixed and misleading experiences; one may go astray in it, follow false voices and mendacious guidance, and that ends

in a spiritual disaster; or one may take up one's abode in this intermediate zone, care to go no farther and build there some half-truth which one takes for the whole truth or become the instrument of the powers of these transitional planes, — that is what happens to many sadhaks and yogis. Overwhelmed by the first rush and sense of power of a supernormal condition, they get dazzled with a little light which seems to them a tremendous illumination or a touch of force which they mistake for the full Divine Force or at least a very great yoga Shakti; or they accept some intermediate Power (not always a Power of the Divine) as the Supreme and an intermediate consciousness as the supreme realisation. Very readily they come to think that they are in the full cosmic consciousness when it is only some front or small part of it or some larger Mind, Life-Power or subtle physical ranges with which they have entered into dynamic connection. Or they feel themselves to be in an entirely illumined consciousness, while in reality they are receiving imperfectly things from above through a partial illumination of some mental or vital plane; for what comes is diminished and often deformed in the course of transmission through these planes; the receiving mind and vital of the sadhak also often understands or transcribes ill what has been received or throws up to mix with it its own ideas, feelings, desires, which it yet takes to be not its own but part of the Truth it is receiving because they are mixed with it, imitate its form, are lit up by its illumination and get from this association and borrowed light an exaggerated value.

There are worse dangers in this intermediate zone of experience. For the planes to which the sadhak has now opened his consciousness, — not as before getting glimpses of them and some influences, but directly, receiving their full impact, — send a host of ideas, impulses, suggestions, formations of all kinds, often the most opposite to each other, inconsistent or incompatible, but presented in such a way as to slur over their insufficiencies and differences, with great force, plausibility and wealth of argument or a convincing sense of certitude. Overpowered by this sense of certitude, vividness, appearance of profusion and richness, the mind of the sadhak enters into a great confusion which it takes for some larger organisation and order; or else it

whirls about in incessant shiftings and changes which it takes for a rapid progress but which lead nowhere. Or there is the opposite danger that he may become the instrument of some apparently brilliant but ignorant formation; for these intermediate planes are full of little Gods or strong Daityas or smaller beings who want to create, to materialise something or to enforce a mental and vital formation in the earth life and are eager to use or influence or even possess the thought and will of the sadhak and make him their instrument for the purpose. This is quite apart from the well-known danger of actually hostile beings whose sole purpose is to create confusion, falsehood, corruption of the sadhana and disastrous unspiritual error. Anyone allowing himself to be taken hold of by one of these beings, who often take a divine Name, will lose his way in the yoga. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the sadhak may be met at his entrance into this zone by a Power of the Divine which helps and leads him till he is ready for greater things; but still that itself is no surety against the errors and stumblings of this zone; for nothing is easier than for the powers of these zones or hostile powers to imitate the guiding Voice or Image and deceive and mislead the sadhak or for himself to attribute the creations and formations of his own mind, vital or ego to the Divine.

For this intermediate zone is a region of half-truths — and that by itself would not matter, for there is no complete truth below the supermind; but the half-truth here is often so partial or else ambiguous in its application that it leaves a wide field for confusion, delusion and error. The sadhak thinks that he is no longer in the old small consciousness at all, because he feels in contact with something larger or more powerful, and yet the old consciousness is still there, not really abolished. He feels the control or influence of some Power, Being or Force greater than himself, aspires to be its instrument and thinks he has got rid of ego; but this delusion of egolessness often covers an exaggerated ego. Ideas seize upon him and drive his mind which are only partially true and by over-confident misapplication are turned into falsehoods; this vitiates the movements of the consciousness and opens the door to delusion. Suggestions are made, some-

times of a romantic character, which flatter the importance of the sadhak or are agreeable to his wishes and he accepts them without examination or discriminating control. Even what is true, is so exalted or extended beyond its true pitch and limit and measure that it becomes the parent of error. This is a zone which many sadhaks have to cross, in which many wander for a long time and out of which a great many never emerge. Especially if their sadhana is mainly in the mental and vital, they have to meet here many difficulties and much danger; only those who follow scrupulously a strict guidance or have the psychic being prominent in their nature pass easily as if on a sure and clearly marked road across this intermediate region. A central sincerity, a fundamental humility also save from much danger and trouble. One can then pass quickly beyond into a clearer Light where if there is still much mixture, incertitude and struggle, yet the orientation is towards the cosmic Truth and not to a half-illumined prolongation of Maya and ignorance.

I have described in general terms with its main features and possibilities this state of consciousness just across the border of the normal consciousness, because it is here that these experiences seem to move. But different sadhaks comport themselves differently in it and respond sometimes to one class of possibilities, sometimes to another. In this case it seems to have been entered through an attempt to call down or force a way into the cosmic consciousness — it does not matter which way it is put or whether one is quite aware of what one is doing or aware of it in these terms, it comes to that in substance. It is not the overmind which was entered, for to go straight into the overmind is impossible. The overmind is indeed above and behind the whole action of the cosmic consciousness, but one can at first have only an indirect connection with it; things come down from it through intermediate ranges into a larger mind-plane, life-plane, subtle physical plane and come very much changed and diminished in the transmission, without anything like the full power and truth they have in the overmind itself on its native levels. Most of the movements come not from the overmind, but down from higher mind ranges. The ideas with which these experiences are penetrated and on which they seem to rest their claim to truth are not

of the overmind, but of the higher Mind or sometimes of the illumined Mind; but they are mixed with suggestions from the lower mind and vital regions and badly diminished in their application or misapplied in many places. All this would not matter; it is usual and normal, and one has to pass through it and come into a clearer atmosphere where things are better organised and placed on a surer basis. But the movement was made in a spirit of excessive hurry and eagerness, of exaggerated self-esteem and self-confidence, of a premature certitude, relying on no other guidance than that of one's own mind or of the "Divine" as conceived or experienced in a stage of very limited knowledge. But the sadhak's conception and experience of the Divine, even if it is fundamentally genuine, is never in such a stage complete and pure; it is mixed with all sorts of mental and vital ascriptions and all sorts of things are associated with this Divine guidance and believed to be part of it which come from quite other sources. Even supposing there is any direct guidance, — most often in these conditions the Divine acts mostly from behind the veil, — it is only occasional and the rest is done through a play of forces; error and stumbling and mixture of Ignorance take place freely and these things are allowed because the sadhak has to be tested by the world-forces, to learn by experience, to grow through imperfection towards perfection — if he is capable of it, if he is willing to learn, to open his eyes to his own mistakes and errors, to learn and profit by them so as to grow towards a purer Truth, Light and Knowledge.

The result of this state of mind is that one begins to affirm everything that comes in this mixed and dubious region as if it were all the Truth and the sheer Divine Will; the ideas or the suggestions that constantly repeat themselves are expressed with a self-assertive absoluteness as if they were Truth entire and undeniable. There is an impression that one has become impersonal and free from ego, while the whole tone of the mind, its utterance and spirit are full of vehement self-assertiveness justified by the affirmation that one is thinking and acting as an instrument and under the inspiration of the Divine. Ideas are put forward very aggressively that can be valid to the mind, but are not spiritually valid; yet they are stated as if they were spiritual

absolutes. For instance, equality, which in that sense — for yogic Samata is a quite different thing — is a mere mental principle, the claim to a sacred independence, the refusal to accept anyone as Guru or the opposition made between the Divine and the human Divine etc., etc. All these ideas are positions that can be taken by the mind and the vital and turned into principles which they try to enforce on the religious or even the spiritual life, but they are not and cannot be spiritual in their nature. There also begin to come in suggestions from the vital planes, a pullulation of imaginations romantic, fanciful or ingenious, hidden interpretations, pseudo-intuitions, would-be initiations into things beyond, which excite or bemuse the mind and are often so turned as to flatter and magnify ego and self-importance, but are not founded on any well-ascertained spiritual or occult realities of a true order. This region is full of elements of this kind and, if allowed, they begin to crowd on the sadhak; but if he seriously means to reach the Highest, he must simply observe them and pass on. It is not that there is never any truth in such things, but for one that is true there are nine imitative falsehoods presented and only a trained occultist with the infallible tact born of long experience can guide himself without stumbling or being caught through the maze. It is possible for the whole attitude and action and utterance to be so surcharged with the errors of this intermediate zone that to go farther on this route would be to travel far away from the Divine and from the yoga.

Here the choice is still open whether to follow the very mixed guidance one gets in the midst of these experiences or to accept the true guidance. Each man who enters the realms of yogic experience is free to follow his own way; but this yoga is not a path for anyone to follow, but only for those who accept to seek the aim, pursue the way pointed out upon which a sure guidance is indispensable. It is idle for anyone to expect that he can follow this road far, — much less go to the end by his own inner strength and knowledge without the true aid or influence. Even the ordinary long-practised yogas are hard to follow without the aid of the Guru; in this which as it advances goes through untrodden countries and unknown entangled regions, it is quite impossible. As for the work to be done it also is not a work for any sadhak of

any path; it is not, either, the work of the "Impersonal" Divine who, for that matter, is not an active Power but supports impartially all work in the universe. It is a training ground for those who have to pass through the difficult and complex way of this yoga and none other. All work here must be done in a spirit of acceptance, discipline and surrender, not with personal demands and conditions, but with a vigilant conscious submission to control and guidance. Work done in any other spirit results in an unspiritual disorder, confusion and disturbance of the atmosphere. In it too difficulties, errors, stumblings are frequent, because in this yoga people have to be led patiently and with some field for their own effort, by experience, out of the ignorance natural to Mind and Life to a wider spirit and a luminous knowledge. But the danger of an unguided wandering in the regions across the border is that the very basis of the yoga may be contradicted and the conditions under which alone the work can be done may be lost altogether. The transition through this intermediate zone — not obligatory, for many pass by a narrower but surer way — is a crucial passage; what comes out of it is likely to be a very wide or rich creation; but when one founders there, recovery is difficult, painful, assured only after a long struggle and endeavour.

*
**

I have seen all the experiences that you have written down, and sent to me and received yours and X's letter. It is no doubt true as you say that your sadhana has gone on different lines from that of the others. But it does not follow that you are entirely right in insisting on your own ideas about it. I shall tell you briefly what I have observed about your experiences.

The first things you sent were very interesting and valuable psycho-spiritual and psycho-mental experiences and messages. Later ones lean more to the psychic-emotional and have in them a certain one-sidedness and mixture and there are also psycho-vital and psycho-physical developments of a double nature. I do not mean that all is false in them but that there are many strong partial truths which need to be corrected by others which

they seem to ignore and even to exclude. Besides there are suggestions from the intellect and the vital being and also suggestions from external sources which you ought not to accept so easily as you seem to do. This mixture is inevitable in the earlier stages and there is no need to be disheartened about it. But if you insist on preserving it, it may deflect you from your true path and injure your sadhana.

As yet you have no sufficient experience of the nature of the psychic being and the psychic worlds. Therefore it is not possible for you to put the true value on all that comes to you. When the psychic consciousness opens, especially so freely and rapidly as it has done in your case, it opens to all kinds of things and to suggestions and messages from all sorts of planes and worlds and forces and beings. There is the true psychic which is always good and there is the psychic opening to mental, vital and other worlds which contain all kinds of things good, bad and indifferent, true, false and half true, thought-suggestions which are of all kinds, and messages also which are of all kinds. What is needed is not to give yourself impartially to all of them but to develop both a sufficient knowledge and experience and a sufficient discrimination to be able to keep your balance and eliminate falsehood, half-truths and mixtures. It will not do to dismiss impatiently the necessity for discrimination on the ground that that is mere intellectualism. The discrimination need not be intellectual, although that also is a thing not to be despised. But it may be a psychic discrimination or one that comes from the higher supra-intellectual mind and from the higher being. If you have not this, then you have need of constant protection and guidance from those who have it, and who have also long psychic experience, and it may be disastrous for you to rely entirely on yourself and to reject such guidance.

In the meantime there are three rules of the sadhana which are very necessary in an earlier stage and which you should remember. First, open yourself to experience but do not take the *bhoga* of the experiences. Do not attach yourself to any particular kind of experience. Do not take all ideas and suggestions as true and do not take any knowledge, voice or thought-message as absolutely final and definitive. Truth itself is only true

when complete and it changes its meaning as one rises and sees it from a higher level.

I must put you on your guard against the suggestions of hostile influences which attack all sadhaks in this yoga. The vision you had of the European is itself an intimation to you that these forces have their eye on you, and are prepared to act if they are not already acting against you. It is their subtler suggestions, which take the figure of truth, and not their more open attacks, that are the most dangerous. I will mention some of the most usual of them.

Be on your guard against any suggestion that tries to raise up your egoism, as for instance that you are a greater sadhak than others or that your sadhana is unique or of an exceptionally high kind. There seems to be some suggestion of this kind to you already. You had a rich and rapid development of psychic experiences, but so precisely have some others who have meditated here and none of yours are unique in their kind or degree or unknown to our experience. Even if it were otherwise, egoism is the greatest danger of the sadhana and is never spiritually justifiable. All greatness is God's: it belongs to no other.

Be on your guard against anything that suggests to you to keep or cling to any impurity or imperfection, confusion in the mind, attachment in the heart, desire and passion in the *prāṇa*, or disease in the body. To keep up these things by ingenious justifications and coverings, is one of the usual devices of the hostile forces.

Be on your guard against any idea which will make you admit these hostile forces on the same terms as the divine forces. I understand you have said that you must admit all because all is a manifestation of God. All is a manifestation of God in a certain sense but if misunderstood, as it often is, this Vedantic truth can be turned to the purposes of falsehood. There are many things which are partial manifestations and have to be replaced by fuller truer manifestations. There are others which belong to the ignorance and fall away when we move to the knowledge. There are others which are of the darkness and have to be combated and destroyed or exiled. This manifestation is one which has been freely used by the force represented by the European you

saw in your vision and it has ruined the yoga of many. You yourself wished to reject the intellect and yet the intellect is a manifestation of God as well as the other things you have accepted.

If you really accept and give yourself to me, you must accept my truth. My truth is one that rejects ignorance and falsehood and moves to the knowledge, rejects darkness and moves to the light, rejects egoism and moves to the Divine Self, rejects imperfections and moves to perfection. My truth is not only the truth of Bhakti or of psychic development but also of knowledge, purity, divine strength and calm and of the raising of all these things from their mental, emotional and vital forms to their supramental reality.

I say all these things not to undervalue your sadhana but to turn your mind towards the way of its increasing completion and perfection.

It is not possible for me to have you here just now. First because the necessary conditions are not there and secondly because you must be fully prepared to accept my guidance before you come here. If, as I suppose you must under the present circumstances, you have to go home, meditate there, turning yourself to me and try to prepare yourself so that you may come here hereafter. What you need now is not so much psychic development, which you will always be able to have (I do not ask you to stop it altogether), but an inner calm and quiet as the true basis and atmosphere of your future development and experience, calm in the mind, in the purified vital being and in the physical consciousness. A psycho-vital or psycho-physical yoga will not be safe for you until you have this calm and an assured purity of being and a complete and always present vital and physical protection.

⁂

I have read carefully X's letter and I think the best thing is first to explain his present condition as he describes it. For he does not seem to me to understand the true causes and the meaning.

The present condition of passivity and indifference is a reaction from a former abnormal state to which he was brought by an internal effort not properly guided from without or from

within. The effort brought about a breaking of the veils which divide the physical from the psychic and vital worlds. But his mind was unprepared and unable to understand his experiences and judged them by the light of fancy and imagination and erroneous mental and vital suggestions. His vital being full of rajasic and egoistic energy rushed up violently to enjoy these new fields and use the force that was working for its own lower ends. This gave an opportunity for a hostile power from the vital world to break in and take partial possession and the result was disorganisation of the nervous and physical system and some of the brain centres. The attack and possession seem to have passed out and left behind the present reaction of passivity with a strong hold of tamas and indifference. The tamas and indifference are not in themselves desirable things but they are temporarily useful as a rest from the past unnatural tension. The passivity is desirable and a good basis for a new and right working of the Shakti.

It is not a true interpretation of his condition that he is dead within and there is only an outside activity. What is true is that the centre of vital egoism that thinks itself the actor has been crushed and he now feels all the thought and activity playing outside him. This is a state of knowledge; for the real truth is that all these thoughts and activities are Nature's and come into us or pass through us as waves from the universal Nature. It is our egoism and our limitation in the body and individual physical mind which prevent us from feeling and experiencing this truth. It is a great step to be able to see and feel the truth as he is now doing. This is not of course the complete knowledge. As the knowledge becomes more complete and the psychic being opens upwards one feels all the activities descending from above and can get at their true source and transform them.

The light playing in his head means that there has been an opening to the higher force and knowledge which is descending as light from above and working on the mind to illumine it. The electrical current is the force descending in order to work in the lower centres and prepare them for the light. The right condition will come when instead of the vital forces trying to push upward the Prana becomes calm and surrendered and waiting

with full assent for the light and when instead of the chasm in between there is a constant aspiration of the heart towards the truth above. The light must descend into these lower centres so as to transform the emotional and vital and physical being as well as the mental thought and will.

The utility of psychic experiences and knowledge of the invisible worlds as of other yogic experiences is not to be measured by our narrow human notions of what may be useful for the present physical life of man. In the first place these things are necessary for the fulness of the consciousness and the completeness of the being. In the second place these other worlds are actually working upon us. And if you know and can enter into them then instead of being the victims and puppets of these powers we can consciously deal with, control and use them. Thirdly, in my yoga, the yoga of the supramental, the opening of the psychic consciousness to which these experiences belong is quite indispensable. For it is only through the psychic opening that the supramental can fully descend with a strong and concrete grasp and transform the mental, vital and physical being.

This is the present condition and its value. For the future if he wishes to accept my yoga the conditions are a steady resolve and aspiration towards the truth I am bringing down, a calm passivity and an opening upward towards the source from which the light is coming. The Shakti is already working in him and if he takes and keeps this attitude and has a complete confidence in me there is no reason why he should not advance safely in the sadhana in spite of the physical and vital damage that has been done to his system. As for his coming here to see me I am not yet quite ready but we will speak of it after your return to Pondicherry.

*
**

As for the letter, I suppose you will have to tell the writer that his father committed a mistake when he took up yoga without a Guru — for the mental idea about a Guru cannot take the place of the actual living influence. This yoga especially, as I have written in my books, needs the help of the Guru and cannot be done without it. The condition into which his father got was a break-

down, not a state of siddhi. He passed out of the normal mental consciousness into a contact with some intermediate zone of consciousness (not the spiritual) where one can be subjected to all sorts of voices, suggestions, ideas, so called inspirations which are not genuine. I have warned against the dangers of this intermediate zone in one of my books.[1] The sadhak can avoid entering into this zone — if he enters, he has to look with indifference on all these things and observe them without lending any credence, — by so doing he can safely pass into the true spiritual light. If he takes them all as true or real without discrimination, he is likely to land himself in a great mental confusion and if there is in addition a lesion or weakness of the brain — the latter is quite possible in one who has been subject to apoplexy — it may have serious consequences and even lead to a disturbance of the reason. If there is ambition, or other motive of the kind mixed up in the spiritual seeking, it may lead to a fall in the yoga and the growth of an exaggerated egoism or megalomania — of this there are several symptoms in the utterances of his father during the crisis. In fact one cannot or ought not to plunge into the experiences of this sadhana without a fairly long period of preparation and purification (unless one has already a great spiritual strength and elevation). Sri Aurobindo himself does not care to accept many into his path and rejects many more than he accepts. It would be well if he can get his father to pursue the sadhana no farther — for what he is doing is not really Sri Aurobindo's yoga but something he has constructed in his own mind and once there has been an upset of this kind, the wisest course is discontinuance.

*
**

The intermediate zone means simply a confused condition or passage in which one is getting out of the personal consciousness and opening into the cosmic (cosmic Mind, cosmic vital, cosmic physical, something perhaps of the cosmic higher Mind) without

[1] This warning against the dangers of the intermediate zone was given by Sri Aurobindo in a long letter which was first published in 1933 in the book *The Riddle of this World*. This letter is now included in the present Volume. See pp. 1039-1046.

having yet transcended the human mind levels. One is not in possession of or direct contact with the divine Truth *on its own levels*, but one can receive something from them, even from the overmind, indirectly. Only, as one is still immersed in the cosmic Ignorance, all that comes from above can be mixed, perverted, taken hold of for their purposes by lower, even by hostile Powers.

It is not necessary for everyone to struggle through the intermediate zone. If one has purified oneself, if there is no abnormal vanity, egoism, ambition or other strong misleading element, or if one is vigilant and on one's guard, or if the psychic is in front, one can either pass rapidly and directly or with a minimum of trouble into the higher zones of consciousness where one is in direct contact with the Divine Truth.

On the other hand the passage through the higher zones — higher Mind, illumined Mind, Intuition, overmind is obligatory — they are the true Intermediaries between the present consciousness and the supermind.

*
**

I mean by it [the intermediate zone] that when the sadhak gets beyond the barriers of his own embodied personal mind he enters into a wide range of experiences which are not the limited solid physical truth of things and not yet either the spiritual truth of things. It is a zone of formations, mental, vital, subtle physical, and whatever one forms or is formed by the forces of these worlds in us becomes for the sadhak for a time the truth — unless he is guided and listens to his guide. Afterwards if he gets through he discovers what it was and passes on into the subtle truth of things. It is a borderland where all the worlds meet, mental, vital, subtle physical, pseudo-spiritual — but there is no order or firm foothold — a passage between the physical and the true spiritual realms.

*
**

You are taking the first steps towards the cosmic consciousness in which there are all things good and bad, true and false, the cosmic Truth and the cosmic Ignorance. I was not thinking so

much of ego as of these thousand voices, possibilities, suggestions. If you avoid these, then there is no necessity of passing through the intermediate zone. By avoid I mean really not admit — one can take cognizance of their nature and pass on.

⁂

Anyone passing the border of ordinary consciousness can enter into this [intermediate] zone, if he does not take care to enter into the psychic. In itself there is no harm in passing through, provided one does not stop there. But ego, sex, ambition, etc., if they get exaggerated, can easily lead to a dangerous downfall.

⁂

It [the breaking of the veil] comes of itself with the pressure of the sadhana. It can also be brought about by specific concentration and effort.

It is certainly better if the psychic is conscious and active before there is the removing of the veil or screen between the individual and the universal consciousness which comes when the inner being is brought forward in all its wideness. For then there is much less danger of the difficulties of what I have called the Intermediate Zone.

⁂

All these experiences of yours belong to what I have called the intermediate zone; a large proportion of them are of the vital plane. In the vital plane there are all kinds of things, good and bad, helpful and dangerous, true, half true and false, genuine and deceptive. One has therefore to be very careful and be always vigilant and turned towards the true source of Light. The difficulty is that here one may have a true spiritual experience and afterwards all sorts of imitative deceptions come in and bring with them the danger of a false experience. One has to watch, observe one's experiences and try to discriminate and understand, — waiting for two things, the opening of a wider higher

consciousness from above and the coming forward of the psychic being from behind. When these two things happen, the chance of error is diminished and the true inner guidance begins to make itself more and more felt in the sadhana.

Lights are of all kinds, supramental, mental, vital, physical, divine or Asuric — one has to watch, grow in experience and learn to know one from another. The true lights however are by their clarity and beauty not difficult to recognise.

The current from above and the current from below are familiar features of yogic experience. It is the energy of the higher Nature and the energy of the lower Nature that become active and turned towards each other and move to meet, one descending, the other ascending. What happens when they meet depends on the sadhak. If his constant will is for the purification of the lower by the higher consciousness, then the meeting results in that and in spiritual progress. If his mind and vital are turbid and clouded, there is a clash, an impure mixture and much disturbance.

The division of the being into two parts — one a large consciousness behind, the other a smaller consciousness in front, is also a familiar feature of sadhana. In itself it is a necessary movement; it should naturally result in the growth of a larger yogic consciousness prevailing over the small external consciousness and becoming a means for transformation under the pressure of the Divine Shakti. But here too it is possible for error to take place — especially an outside Force may come in and replace the larger consciousness behind by a larger vital ego which pretends to be that. One must be on one's guard against any such intrusion; for many sadhaks suffer long and severely owing to such an intrusion which spoils the course of the sadhana.

On the whole aspire for the growth of the psychic and its control of the rest of the nature and for the opening not to a larger vital consciousness, but to the higher consciousness above. And at all stages open yourself to the protection of the Mother and her grace and call that for your safeguard and your guidance.

This kind of manifestation (Adesh) comes very often at a certain stage of the practice of yoga. My experience is that it does not come from the highest source and cannot be relied upon and it is better to wait until one is able to enter a higher consciousness and a greater truth than any that these communications represent. Sometimes they come from beings of an intermediate plane who want to use the sadhak for some work or purpose. Many sadhaks accept and some, though by no means all, succeed in doing something, but it is often at the cost of the greater aims of yoga. In other cases they come from beings who are hostile to the sadhana and wish to bring it to nothing by exciting ambition, the illusion of a great work or some other form of ego. Each sadhak must decide for himself (unless he has a Guru to guide him) whether to treat it as a temptation or a mission.

⁂

These voices are sometimes one's own mental formations, sometimes suggestions from outside. Good or bad depends on what they say and on the quarter from which they come.

⁂

Anybody can get "voices" — there are first the movements of one's nature that take upon themselves a voice — then there are all sorts of beings who either for a joke or for a serious purpose invade with their voices.

⁂

There is in this condition more a sense of having power than real power. There are some mixed and quite relative powers — sometimes a little effective, sometimes ineffective — which could be developed into something real if put under the control of the Divine, surrendered. But the ego comes in, exaggerates these small things, and represents them as something huge and unique, and refuses to surrender. Then the sadhak makes no progress — he wanders about in the jungle of his own imaginations

without any discrimination or critical sense, or brings in a play of confused forces he is unable to understand or master.

⁂

The first result of the downflow of the overmind forces is very often to exaggerate the ego, which feels itself strong, almost irresistible (though it is not really so), divinised, luminous. The first thing to do, after some experience of the thing, is to get rid of this magnified ego. For that you have to stand back, not allow yourself to be swept in by the movement, but to watch, understand, reject all mixtures, aspire for a purer and yet purer light and action. This can only be done perfectly if the psychic comes forward. The mind and vital, especially the vital, receiving these forces, can with difficulty resist the tendency to seize on and use them for their ego's objects or, which comes practically to the same thing, they mix the demands of the ego with the service of a higher object.

⁂

In the first place one is not obliged to believe all that X's disciples have written about him after his death. Besides, the experiences they relate about him are of the intermediate planes, not of the highest spiritual consciousness. Whatever experience he had of the highest was hidden by them in a jungle of miraculous and romantic legends. It is probable that in trying to make him out a great Siddha, they have lowered him below what he really was.

⁂

To have the true intuition one must get rid of the mind's self-will, and the vital's also, their preferences, fancies, fantasies, strong insistences and eliminate the mental and vital ego's pressure which sets the consciousness to work in the service of its own claims and desires. Otherwise these things will come in with force and claim to be intuitions, inspirations and the rest of

it. Or if any intuitions come, they can be twisted and spoiled by the mixture of these forces of the Ignorance.

⁂

No, these indications of time and these voices were not commands from the Mother. I have indicated to you the truth of this matter; you must follow the rules laid down by the Mother for the physical life; if any change has to be made, either she herself will let you know or you have to get sanction for it from her. No voice heard within can prevail against her word and no intimation that comes through your mind can be accepted as binding unless it is confirmed by her.

You have made a confusion which is often made at the beginning of this kind of experience. It is no doubt the Mother's Force that was working within you or upon you, and some of the experiences, such as that of feeling the Mother in your heart, were perfectly genuine. But when the pressure of the Force works upon the consciousness, then in the plane on which it happens to be working, a great activity of different forces is set in play, e.g. if it is the mind, various mental forces, if it is the vital, various vital forces. It is not safe to take all these for true things, to be accepted without question and followed as commands of the Mother. You received a pressure of a force so strong that it made your head shake for a long time; if the head shook like that, it is a sign that the mind or at least the mental physical was not able yet to receive all the force and assimilate it; if it had done so, there would have been no movement of the head, all would have been perfectly at ease, calm and still. But your mind started working, interpreting, beginning to put its own meaning on this particular phenomenon and again on others, trying to make a system by which to regulate your conduct and to give it authority, put it as the command of the Mother. The action of the Force was a fact, the interpretation you put on its details of coming and going was a mental formation and had no very positive value.

If you look at it carefully — as I have looked at the details reported by you — you will see that these suggestions were of a

very shifting and changeful character, now one thing, now the other; only your mind adapted itself to the changes, adjusted its interpretation to suit them and tried to keep the consistency of a system. But in fact all was irregular and chaotic and it tended to make your action and conduct irregular and chaotic. True intuition would not do that; it would at least tend to balance, harmony, order.

You speak of intuition as regards the indication of time. There is an intuition of Time which is not of the mind and when it plays is always accurate to the very minute and if need be to the very second; but this was not that Intuition, — for it was not always accurate; it came right perhaps several times, then it began to be deceptive, it made you late for Pranam; it began to push toward lateness for the noon meal, make you clash with the convenience of the dining-room workers. It pushed you to be late for the evening and abandoned you altogether, so that in the end you had no evening meal. But your mind had got attached to its own formations and tried to justify, to put a meaning on these chaotic caprices, to explain them by the (very changeful) will of the Mother. All this is well-known to those experienced in yoga and it means that these things were not intuitions, but constructions of the mind, mental formations. If there was an intuition at all, it was a movement of the intuitive mind, but what the intuitive mind gives to us is the intuition of possibilities, some of which realise themselves, some do not or do it partly only, others miss altogether. Behind these mental constructions are Forces that want to realise themselves and try to use men as their instruments of realisation. These Forces need not be hostile, but they play for their own hand, they want to rule, use, justify themselves, create their own results. If they can do it by getting the Mother's sanction or passing themselves off as commands of the Mother, they are ready to do so; if they cannot get the embodied Mother's sanction, they are ready to represent themselves as sanctions of the Mother in her subtle unseen universal Form or Presence. Some they persuade to make not only a distinction but an opposition between their inner Mother who always tells them what they want to hear and the embodied Mother who, they find, is not so complaisant, checks them, corrects their fancies and

their errors. At this stage there is the danger of a more serious invasion of Falsehood, of a hostile vital Force coming in, taking advantage of the mind's errors, which either tries to take the place of the Mother, using her name or else creates revolt against her. A persuasion not to come to Pranam, not to keep her acquainted with your experiences and submit to correction, not to accord the life with her expressed will is a danger-signal at this stage — for it means that the intruding Force wants space to work free from control — and that was why I felt compelled to call your attention to the peril of a hostile Maya.

As for voices, there are many voices; each Force, each movement of the mental, vital, physical plane may equip itself with a voice. Your voices were not even at one with each other; one said one thing, when it did not work out, another said something inconsistent with it; but you were attached to your mental formation and still tried to follow.

All this happens because the mind and vital in these exaltations of the stress of the sadhana become very active. That is why it is necessary, first to found your sadhana on a great calm, a great equality, not eagerly rushing after experiences or their fruit, but looking at them, observing, calling always for more and more Light, trying to be more and more wide, open, quietly and discerningly receptive. If the psychic being is always at the front, then these difficulties are greatly lessened, because there is here a light which the mind and vital have not, a spontaneous and natural psychic perception of the divine and the undivine, the true and the false, the imitation and the genuine guidance. It is also the reason why I insist on your referring your experiences to us, because, apart from anything else, we have the knowledge and experience of these things and can immediately put a check on any tendency to error.

Keep yourself open to the Mother's Force, but do not trust all forces. As you go on, if you keep straight, you will come to a time when the psychic becomes more predominantly active and the Light from above prevails more purely and strongly so that the chance of mental constructions and vital formations mixing with the true experience diminishes. As I have told you, these are not and cannot be the supramental Forces; it is a work of

preparation which is only making things ready for a future yoga-siddhi.

⁂

How can the people in this Ashram judge whether a man has progressed in yoga or not? They judge from outward appearances — if a sadhak secludes himself, sits much in meditation, gets voices and experiences, etc. etc., they think he is a great sadhak! X was always a very poor Adhar. He had a few experiences of an elementary kind — confused and uncertain, but at every step he was getting into trouble and going off on a side-path and we had to pull him up. At last he began to get voices and inspirations which he declared to be ours — I wrote to him many letters of serious warning and explanation but he refused to listen, was too much attached to his false voices and inspirations and, to avoid rebuke and correction, ceased to write or inform us. So he went wholly wrong and finally became hostile. You can tell this by my authority to anybody who is puzzled like yourself about this matter.

⁂

I mean what happened to X and others like Y, Z and others. Higher experiences hurt nobody — the question is what is meant by higher? Y for instance thought his experiences to be the highest Truth itself — I told him they were all imaginations but only with the result that he became furious with me. There are imitation higher experiences when the mind or vital catches hold of an idea or suggestion and turns it into a feeling, and while there is a rush of forces, a feeling of exultation and power etc. All sorts of "imperatives" come, visions, perhaps "voices". There is nothing more dangerous than these voices — when I hear from somebody that he has a "voice", I always feel uneasy, though there can be genuine and helpful voices, and feel inclined to say "No voices please, — silence, silence and a clear discriminating brain". I have hinted about this region of imitation experiences, false inspirations, false voices into which hundreds of yogins enter and some never get out of it in my letter about the intermediate zone. If a man has a strong clear head and a certain

kind of spiritual scepticism, he can go through and does — but people without discrimination like Y or Z get lost. Especially ego enters in and makes them so attached to their splendid (?) condition that they absolutely refuse to come out. Now a retirement into seclusion gives free scope for this kind of action, as it makes one live entirely in one's own subjective being without any control except what one's own native discernment can bring in — and if that is not strong? Ego is of course the strong support of these subjective falsehoods, but there are other supports also. Work and mixing with others — with the contact of the objective that that brings — is not an absolute defence against these things, but it is a defence and serves as a check and as a kind of corrective balance. I notice that those who enter into this region of the intermediate zone usually make for retirement and seclusion and insist on it. These are the reasons why I prefer usually that sadhaks should not take to an absolute retirement but keep a certain poise between silence and action, the inner and the outer together.

⁂

As to the dangers, the one real danger in these retirements (apart from the pride) is the becoming a prey of subjective influences and imaginations and losing the hold of reality which work and contact with others help to keep up. Of course one can lose that even while keeping contact as happened to X and others. But I suppose you have a sufficiently cool and critical head to avoid that danger.

⁂

Retirement is not necessary for passing from one plane to another. It is necessary only in rare cases and with certain temperaments for a time.

⁂

We have no objection to your doing this for a week, as you propose. I understand that it is not a retirement, but a cessation of social visits. My objection to retirement is that so many have

"gone morbid" by it or gone astray into zones of false vital experiences; secondly, that absolute retirement is not necessary for the spiritual life. It is different however for people like X who are to the manner born or at least perfectly trained. A "restriction of publicity" is quite another matter. Also to be capable of solitude and to have the Ananda of solitude can always be helpful to sadhana, and a power of inner solitude is natural to the yogi.

We will give our help and hope you will succeed — at least, you will have established a precedent for withdrawing whenever you want in the future.

⁂

To live in the self is of course the proper object of withdrawal and to live in the self brings the higher experiences which must obviously be helpful and not harmful. What I wrote was only to explain what I meant by the danger of too complete retirement and why it turned out to be harmful to X, Y and others. There are some like Z who derived unmixed profit from it. It altogether depends on one's temperament and on one's attitude and aim and inner poise during the silence.

⁂

The impulse to retire comes from some push to concentrate within — but the cause of the push varies in different cases. There are certain cases in which there was a desire to isolate oneself from the Mother's influence (Pranam, meditation etc.) and follow one's own fancies, e.g. A, B, also perhaps with a sense of superiority—"no need of these things for so great a yogi as I". In other cases there was a marked desire for isolation, but that was where the brain was already upset (C) or a wrong influence at work (D). It is to these I suppose that E was referring. But others have simply desired concentration or wished not to spend themselves in externalisation (F, G in their period of retirement). So all cannot come under one sentence.

⁂

Not speaking or contacting when one is in the intensity of the peace is one thing — that can be done. Remaining isolated at other times as a rule of life does not seem to me necessary — it is safe only for those who can live entirely within without losing their hold on outer reality. If one has always a solid poise of peace one can do that or a clear mind balanced and discriminating along with constant experiences which it is able to put in the right place. But some get absorbed in inner experiences which they get lost in and get passionately attached to and this inner life becomes for them the sole reality without the outer to poise it and keep it under check and test — there lies a danger. Again if one remains isolated without the support of a settled inner poise and constant experience over which one has a discriminating control, then in periods of emptiness the vital can arise bringing struggles, difficulties, unrest, suggestions of all kinds, a troubled and turbid state — rather than spend the time in that, as some do, it is better to mix with others or do some work or otherwise externalise oneself in a healthy way.

⁂

To be too sensitive and upset by any contact is excessive; but to have too many contacts and be always dispersing oneself prevents the sadhana from growing and solidifying in the inner being, since one is always being pulled out into the ordinary outer consciousness.

⁂

In your relations with people, act simply and naturally. Get rid of these nervous shrinkings which are a weakness. The important thing is to have the right inner attitude, calm and without attachment. If you do that all details become trifling matters which will arrange themselves according to convenience and common sense.

⁂

How are you going to find the right external relations by withdrawing altogether from external relations? And how do you

propose to be thoroughly transformed and unified by living only in the internal life, without any test of the transformation and unity by external contact and the ordeals of the external work and life? Thoroughness includes external work and relations and not a retired inner life only.

It is only by the vital ego giving up its demands and claims and the reactions these produce when not satisfied, that the transformation and unification can come, and there is no other way.

⁂

I told you you were not to try to decide by your mind. You persistently go on repeating, "*I* must decide. *I* must decide. *I* must take a decision. *I* must take a resolution." You are always repeating this *I, I, I* must decide, as if you knew better than myself and the Mother! "*I* must understand, *I* must decide!" And always you find that your mind can decide nothing and understand nothing. And yet you go on repeating the same falsehood.

I tell you plainly once again that all your so-called experiences are worth nothing, mere vital ignorance and confusion. The only experience you need is the experience of the presence of the Mother, the Mother's light, the Mother's force, and the change they bring on you.

You have to throw away all other influences and open yourself only to the Mother's influence.

You have to think and talk no longer about energies flowing out and your energies and others' energies. The only energy you have to feel is the descent and inflow and action of the Mother's force.

These were my instructions and so long as you carried them out, you were progressing rapidly.

Throw all these incoherent false experiences away. Go back to the single rule I gave you. Open to the Mother's presence, influence, light, force — reject everything else. Only so will you get back clearness (instead of this confusion), peace, psychic perception and progress in the sadhana.

⁂

You are persisting in a wrong effort which prevents the very object that you have in view. You want to have what you call "divinisation"; but you cannot have it in the way you are trying.

I will point out your mistake; please read carefully and try to understand rightly. Especially understand my words in their plain sense and do not put into them any "hidden meaning"or any other meaning which might be favourable to your present ideas.

The Divine Consciousness we are trying to bring down is a Truth-Consciousness. It shows us all the truth of our being and nature on all the planes — mind, life and body. It does not throw them away or make an impatient effort to get rid of them immediately and substitute something fantastic and wonderful in their place. It works upon them patiently and slowly to perfect and raise in them all that is capable of perfection and to change all that is obscure and imperfect.

Your first mistake is to imagine that it is possible to become divine in a moment. You imagine that the higher consciousness has only to descend in you and remain there and all is finished. You imagine that no time is needed, no long, hard or careful work, and that all will be done for you in a moment by the Divine Grace. This is quite wrong. It is not done in that way; and so long as you persist in this error, there can be no permanent divinisation, and you will only disturb the Truth that is trying to come, and disturb your own mind and body by a fruitless struggle.

Secondly, you are mistaken in thinking that because you feel a certain force and presence, therefore you are at once divine. It is not so easy to become divine. There must be to whatever force or presence comes, a right interpretation and response, a right knowledg in the mind, a right preparation of the vital and physical being. But what you are feeling is an abnormal vital force and exaltation due to the impatience of your desire, and with this there come suggestions born of your desire, which you mistake for truth and call inspirations and intuitions.

I will point out some of the mistakes you make in this condition.

You immediately begin to think that there is no further need

of my instructions or guidance, because you imagine you are henceforth one with me. Not only so, but the suggestions which you want to accept go quite against my instructions. How can this be if you are one with me? It is obvious that these ideas that go against my instructions come from your mind and impulses and not from me or from any Divine Consciousness or from anything that can be called the Sri Aurobindo Consciousness.

In this connection you write, "I see the difficulty that even when I am filled with you, the idea of obeying and following your instructions still works — even when you have made me yourself. I pray for the needful." The idea of following and obeying my instructions is not a difficulty, it is the only thing that can help you. That obedience is the thing that is needful.

What do you mean by saying, "You have made me yourself"? The words seem to have no meaning. You cannot mean that you become the same individual self as I; there cannot be two Aurobindos; even if it were possible it would be absurd and useless. You cannot mean that you have become the Supreme Being, for you cannot be God or the Ishwara. If it is in the ordinary (Vedantic) sense, then everyone is myself, since every Jiva is a portion of the One. You may perhaps have become conscious for a time of this unity; but that consciousness is not sufficient by itself to transform you or to make you divine.

You begin to imagine that you can do without food and sleep and disregard the needs of the body; and you forget my instructions and mistakenly call these needs a disturbance or the play of the hostile material and physical forces. This idea is false. What you feel is only a vital force, not the highest truth, and the body remains what it was; it will suffer and break down if it is not given food, rest and sleep.

It is the same mistaken vital exaltation that made you feel your body to see if it was of supramental substance. Understand clearly that the body cannot be transformed in that way into something quite unphysical. The physical being and the body, in order to be perfected, have to go through a long preparation and gradual change. This cannot be done, if you do not come out of this mistaken vital exaltation and come down

into the ordinary physical consciousness first, with a clear sense of physical realities.

Finally, if you want the real change and transformation, you must clearly and resolutely recognise that you have made and are still making mistakes and have entered into a condition that is unfavourable to your object. You have tried to get rid of your thinking mind, instead of perfecting and enlightening it, and have tried to replace it by artificial "inspirations and intuitions."

You have developed a dislike and shrinking for the body and the physical being and its movements; and therefore you do not want to come down into the normal physical consciousness and do patiently there what is necessary for the change. You have left yourself only with a vital consciousness which feels sometimes a great force and Ananda and at others falls into bad depressions because it is not supported either by the mind above or by the body below.

You must absolutely change all this, if you want the real transformation.

You must not mind losing the vital exaltation; you must not mind coming into a normal physical consciousness, with a clear practical mind, looking at physical conditions and physical realities. You must accept them first, or you will never be able to change and perfect them.

You must recover a quiet mind and intelligence. If you can once firmly do these things, the Greater Truth and Consciousness can come back in its proper time, in the right way and under the right conditions.

⁂

You must have full power of will and action in order to succeed.

It is not sufficient to strengthen your body, you must also strengthen your mind; you must absolutely get rid of these ideas about sin, this brooding upon suggestions of sexual impulse and this habit of seeing dark vital forces everywhere. Your people are quite ordinary human beings, they are not evil spirits or forces. Your attitude to them must be one neither of attachment

nor of fear, horror and shrinking but of quiet detachment.

Do not seek for inspiration, but act quietly and rationally according to our instructions, with a calm mind and a quiet will. Get rid of your obsession about coming here and falling at our feet. This and the other suggestions and voices are not inspirations but merely things created by your own mind and its impulses. Your safety lies in remaining quiet and doing what we tell you quietly and persistently, with a perfect confidence, until you are entirely recovered.

⁂

It will be very good for you to read and translate the *Arya*.... I will send you a copy of the *Essays on the Gita*, first series; it will be best for you to begin with this and translate it. Accustom yourself to translate only a little every day and do it very carefully. Do not write in haste; go several times through what you have written and see whether it accurately represents the spirit of the original and whether the language cannot be improved. In all things, in the mental and physical plane, it should be your aim, at present, not to go fast and finish quickly, but to do everything carefully, perfectly, and in the right manner.

We wish you to understand and keep henceforth the right attitude with regard to the physico-vital impulses of which you complain; that is as regards food, money, sexual impulses etc. You have been adopting the moral and ascetic attitude which is entirely wrong and cannot help you to master these powers of the nature.

For food, it is a need of the body and you must use it to keep the body fit and strong. You must replace attachment by the Ananda of food. If you have this Ananda and the right sense of taste etc. and of the right use of food, the attachment, if there is any, will of itself, after a time, disappear.

As regards money, that too is a need for life and work.... Money represents a great power of life which must be conquered for divine uses. Therefore you must have no attachment to it but also no disgust or horror of it.

As to the sexual impulse, for this also you must have no

moral horror or puritanic or ascetic repulsion. This also is a power of life and while you have to throw away the present form of this power (that is the physical act), the force itself has to be mastered and transformed. It is often strongest in people with a strong vital nature and this strong vital nature can be made a great instrument for the physical realisation of the Divine Life. If the sexual impulse comes, do not be sorry or troubled but look at it calmly, quiet it down, reject all wrong suggestions connected with it and wait for the Higher Consciousness to transform it into the true force and Ananda.

All these things we have told you are necessary for your being in the physical consciousness and having the right relations with physical life.

VI

The cosmic consciousness does not belong to overmind in especial; it covers all the planes.

Man is shut up at present in his surface individual consciousness and knows the world (or rather the surface of it) only through his outward mind and senses and by interpreting their contacts with the world. By yoga there can open in him a consciousness which becomes one with that of the world; he becomes directly aware of a universal Being, universal states, universal Force and Power, universal Mind, Life, Matter and lives in conscious relations with these things. He is then said to have cosmic consciousness.

⁂

The overmind is the basis of the total cosmic consciousness, but the cosmic consciousness itself can be felt on any plane, not only above mind, but in mind, life, matter.

⁂

There are in the cosmic consciousness two sides — one the contact with and perception of the ordinary cosmic forces and the

beings behind these forces, that is what I call the cosmic Ignorance — the other is the perception of the cosmic Truths, the realisation of the one universal, the one universal Force, all the Vedantic truths of the One in all and all in one, all the various aspects of the Divine in the cosmic and a host of other things can come which do help to realisation and knowledge — provided they are taken in the right way. However all that can be best dealt with when it actually comes. It does not always come as soon as there is the widening — many pass through the widening of the consciousness to what is beyond the cosmic and take the cosmic in detail afterwards — and it is perhaps the safest order.

⁂

When one has the cosmic consciousness, one can feel the cosmic Self as one's own self, one can feel one with other beings in the cosmos, one can feel all the forces of Nature as moving in oneself, all selves as one's own self.

There is no why except that it is so, since all is the One.

⁂

All is in the Self; when identified with the universal self all is in you. Also the microcosm reproduces the macrocosm — so all is present in each, though all is not expressed (and cannot be) in the surface consciousness.

⁂

Everything acts in the self. The whole play of Nature takes place in the self, in the Divine. The self contains the universe.

⁂

The Self is being, not a being. By Self is meant the conscious essential existence, one in all.

⁂

The original substance of all spirit is pure existence carrying in it pure self-existent consciousness (or consciousness-force) and pure self-existent Ananda.

⁂

Substance and being are the same thing. In the creation they can be looked upon as two aspects of the spirit.

⁂

The Self is essentially universal; the individualised self is only the universal experienced from or in an individual centre. If what you have realised is not felt to be one in all, then it is not the Atman; it is the central being not yet revealing its universal aspect as Atman.

⁂

The self is felt either as universal, one in all, or as universalised individual the same in essence as others, extended everywhere from each being but centred here. Of course centre is a way of speaking, because no physical centre is usually felt — only all the actions take place around the individual.

⁂

The usual experience of the Impersonal is that It is everywhere without form or limitation in any place or time.

⁂

The impersonal Divine has no abode and cannot have; it is all-pervading. If anybody says the impersonal Divine has its abode in the heart he can be asked what he means by the impersonal Divine.

⁂

In the cosmic consciousness the personal 'I' disappears into the

one Self of all. The 'I' which alone exists is not that of the person, the individualised 'I', but the universalised 'I' identical with all and with the cosmic Self (Atman).

⁂

What will remain after liberation is the central being — not the ego. The central being will live in the consciousness of the Divine everywhere and in all other beings also; so it will not have the consciousness of a separate ego but of one centre among many of the Divine Multiplicity.

⁂

What you feel is the normal condition when the liberation takes place. The work of the senses etc. goes on as before, but the consciousness is different, so that one feels not only the sense of liberation, separation, etc., but that one is living in quite another world than that of the ordinary mind, life or senses. It is another consciousness with another knowledge and way of looking at things that begins. Afterwards as this consciousness takes possession of the instruments, there is a harmony of it with the sense and life; but these too become different, with a changed outlook, seeing the world no more as before but as if made of another substance with another significance.

⁂

Liberation is the first necessity, to live in the peace, silence, purity, freedom of the self. Along with that or afterwards if one wakens to the cosmic consciousness, then one can be free, yet one with all things.

To have the cosmic consciousness without liberation is possible, but then there is no freedom anywhere in the being from the lower nature and one may become in one's extended consciousness the playground of all kinds of forces without being able to be either free or master.

On the other hand, if there has been Self-realisation, there

is one part of the being that remains untouched amid the play of the cosmic forces — while if the peace and purity of the self has been established in the whole inner consciousness, then the outer touches of the lower nature can't come in or overpower. This is the advantage of Self-realisation preceding the cosmic consciousness and supporting it.

⁂

When there is the development of the Self-realisation or of the cosmic consciousness or if there is the emptiness which is the preliminary condition for these things, there comes an automatic tendency for a unity with all — their affections, mental, vital, physical may easily touch. One has to keep oneself free.

⁂

You had a mental and the beginning of a vital opening to the cosmic consciousness — kept on the spiritualised level, the vision or feeling of the Divine Ananda without seeking for possession or a gross outer enjoyment, it would have established a yogic consciousness and made a base for knowledge and peace and power and psychic love and surrender to come down.

⁂

It is very good. The widening of the consciousness so as to be at one with the universal Infinite is an important stage in the sadhana.

⁂

Yes, your experience was a very good one and your feeling about it was correct. When the consciousness is narrow and personal or shut in the body, it is difficult to receive from the Divine — the wider it expands, the more it can receive. A time comes when it feels as wide as the world and able to receive all the Divine into itself.

⁂

It is an experience of the extension of consciousness. In yoga experience the consciousness widens in every direction, around, below, above, in each direction stretching to infinity. When the consciousness of the yogi becomes liberated, it is not in the body, but in this infinite height, depth, and wideness that he lives always. Its basis is an infinite void or silence, but in that all can manifest — Peace, Freedom, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda. This consciousness is usually called the consciousness of the Self or Atman, for it is a pure existence or self that is the source of all things and contains all things.

⁂

Yes — it [wideness] is felt as if a great substantial vastness full of power and giving the sense of oneness free and infinite and the same from top to bottom.

⁂

At the beginning the experience of wideness like other experiences comes only from time to time. It is only afterwards that it becomes frequent and remains long, till finally it settles and the consciousness remains always wide.

⁂

You must dismiss the fear of the concentration. The emptiness you feel coming on you is the silence of the great peace in which you become aware of your self, not as the small ego shut up in the body, but as the spiritual self wide as the universe. Consciousness is not dissolved; it is the limits of the consciousness that are dissolved. In that silence thoughts may cease for a time, there may be nothing but a great limitless freedom and wideness, but into that silence, that empty wideness descends the vast peace from above, light, bliss, knowledge, the higher Consciousness in which you feel the oneness of the Divine. It is the beginning of the transformation and there is nothing in it to fear.

⁂

It means the liberation from the body sense in which one can truly say, "I am not the body". This liberation is part of the cosmic consciousness — as is also the realisation of the cosmic Will.

It is the liberation from the body sense only. That is quite different from the control of the body.

⁂

What you felt as a strong subtle air was the concrete expression of consciousness or conscious existence in itself independent of the body. As yet the experience is still limited by the body, but when it is felt without that limit then it is a sense of a wide ether filling all space, Akasha Brahman. As this grows, the body sense disappears and when the mind also is quite inactive, one feels oneself to be that spreading out to all Infinity.

⁂

If these were imaginations, you would be able to reproduce them exactly each time you thought of them. The idea that it is imagination comes from the physical mind which cannot believe in any thing supraphysical.

This opening of the chest into the void (not really the void, but the infinite Akasha of the Chit universal and illimitable) is always the sign of an opening of the emotional being into the wideness of the Universal Divine. The image of the Akasha is often seen by sadhaks in Dhyana. When the consciousness is liberated, whether in the mind or other part, there is always this sense of the wide infinite emptiness. From the top of the head to the throat is the mental plane of the being — a similar opening and emptiness or wideness here is the sign of the mind being freed into the Universal. From the throat to the stomach is the higher vital or emotional region. Below is the lower vital plane.

⁂

It is more, I think, forgetting the body than non-identification

with it. In an intense mentalisation or an intense vital activity, the body takes a second place and becomes more outward and the same may happen to a certain extent more constantly in a man who lives in his mind or his vital and is identified more closely with that. But still it is the mental in the body, the vital in the body. There is no release, no getting entirely separate as in the spiritual liberation.

⁂

Yes, it is not possible for the human mind to live entirely in itself to such a degree as to ignore the body altogether — a real or complete liberation or non-identification is not possible without the spiritual release. All that is possible to the mind is a constant absorption in itself and an ignoring or forgetfulness as much as possible of the body. That one finds often in people who live a retired mental life (scholars, thinkers etc.) without the need to trouble themselves about their livelihood, family etc.

⁂

The sun rising on the horizon is the direct light of the Divine Truth rising in the being — the ray upwards opens the being to the Truth as it is above mind, the ray in front opens it to what we call the cosmic consciousness, it becomes released from the personal limitation and opens and becomes aware of the universal mind, universal physical, universal vital. The action on the heart was the pressure of this Sun on it to have this direct opening, so that the consciousness may become free, wide and wholly at peace.

It is a great thing that you have been able to keep untroubled and undisturbed in the presence of the adverse pressure and kept the consciousness of the Peace still there behind. It is a sign that it is becoming more consolidated and effective.

⁂

The wideness comes when one exceeds or begins to exceed the

individual consciousness and spread out towards the universal. But the psychic can be active even in the individual consciousness.

⁂

The psychic is the support of the individual evolution; it is connected with the universal both by direct contact and through the mind, vital and body.

⁂

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

⁂

The Self or Atman is inactive; Nature (Prakriti) or Shakti acts. When the Self is felt it is first an infinite existence, silence, freedom, peace that is felt — that is called Atman or Self. What action takes place in it is according to the realisation either felt as forces of Nature working in that wideness, as the Divine Shakti working or as the cosmic Divine or various powers of them working. It is not felt that the Self is acting.

⁂

As for the spectator and the coils of the dragon, it is the Chino-Japanese image for the world-force extending itself in the course of the universe and this expresses the attitude of the witness seeing it all and observing in its unfolding the unrolling of the play of the Divine Lila. It is this attitude that gives the greatest calm, peace, *samatā* in face of the riddle of the cosmic workings. It is not meant that action and movement are not accepted but they are accepted as the Divine Working which is leading to ends which the mind may not always see at once, but the soul divines through all the supreme purpose and the hidden guidance.

Of course, there is afterwards an experience in which the two sides of the Divine Whole, the Witness and the Player, blend

together; but this poise of the spectator comes first and leads to that fuller experience. It gives the balance, the calm, the increasing understanding of soul and life and their deeper significances without which the full supramental experience cannot come.

⁂

The universal forces move by their own force and the consciousness within them — but there is also the Cosmic Spirit who supports them and determines by his onlook and disposing will their play — although the direct action is left to the forces — it is the play of universal Prakriti with the universal Purusha watching behind it. In the individual also there is the individual Purusha who can, if he wills, not merely assent to the play of Prakriti, but accept or reject or will for its change. All that is in the play itself as we see it here. There is something above — but the action of that is an intervention rather than a moment to moment control; it can become a constant direct control only when one replaces the play of the forces by the government of the Divine.

⁂

It is the true yogic consciousness in which one feels the oneness and lives in it, not touched by the outer being and its inferior movements, but looking on them with a smile at their ignorance and smallness. It will become much more possible to deal with these outer things if that separateness is maintained always.

⁂

It is the Purusha and Prakriti sides of the nature — one leading to pure conscious existence, static, the other to pure conscious force, dynamic. The past darkness they have come out of is that of ignorance, the future darkness that is felt above is superconscience. But, of course, the superconscience is really luminous — only its light is not seen. The three forms of consciousness are the three sides of Nature represented by the three gunas — force of subconscious tamas, Inertia, which is the law of

Matter, force of half-conscious desire, Kinesis, which is rajas, which is the law of Life, and force of sattwic Prakasha, which is the law of Intelligence.

⁂

There is one Purusha — its action is according to the position and need of the consciousness at the time.

It is the nature of the action above the ordinary mind or in the cosmic consciousness which is many-sided.

⁂

Prakriti is only the executive or working force — the Power behind the Prakriti is Shakti. It is the Chit-Shakti in manifestation: that is the spiritual consciousness.

⁂

This is true of mental knowledge and will, but not of the higher knowledge-will. In the supermind, knowledge and will are one.

All energies derive from the Chit-Shakti, but they differentiate from it as they descend.

This much is true that Life is characteristically Force — the Physical is characteristically substance, but the dynamism of both derives from Chit — mind dynamism also, all dynamism.

⁂

There is one common Force working in all and a vibration of that Force or any one of its movements can awake (it does not always) the same vibration in another.

There is a constant movement (Prakriti) and a constant silence (Purusha).

It is a statement of the Upanishad that there is an ether of Ananda in which all breathe and live; if it were not there, none could breathe or live.

⁂

The force "created" is not yours — it is Prakriti's — your will sets it in motion, it does not really create it; but once set in motion, it tends to fulfil itself so far as the play of other forces will allow it. So, naturally, if you want to stop it, you have to set a contrary force in motion which will be strong enough to prevail against its momentum.

⁂

This vision is the perception of cosmic movement of things developing from state to state and in that the individual movements which make it up. There is also possible a sense of the All as Time in flow or of the same as a dimension interwoven with Space like warp and woof of a cloth, etc.

⁂

The world is the form, the reality is the Divine. One must see the presence in the form.

⁂

The Divine is the Supreme Truth because it is the Supreme Being from whom all have come and in whom all are.

⁂

The Divine is that from which all comes, in which all lives, and to return to the truth of the Divine now clouded over by Ignorance is the soul's aim in life. In its supreme Truth, the Divine is absolute and infinite peace, consciousness, existence, power and Ananda.

⁂

The Supreme cannot create through the Transcendent because the Transcendent is the Supreme. It is through the Cosmic Shakti that the Divine creates.

⁂

The cosmic Force is under the control of the overmind. The supermind does not act on it directly — whatever comes down from there is modified so as to pass through the overmind and take a lesser form suitable to the plane on which it acts, mental, vital or physical. But this intervention is exceptional in the ordinary play of the cosmic forces.

⁂

The cosmic spirit contains the supermind, but it keeps it above and works for the present between the overmind and the physical. It is only when the Ignorance is removed that the supramental becomes directly a dynamic part of the workings of cosmic Nature here. Till then there are only reflections of it.

⁂

It [the Cosmic Spirit] uses Truth and Falsehood, Knowledge and Ignorance and all the other dualities as elements in the manifestation and works out what has to be worked out till all is ready for a higher working.

⁂

The cosmic forces here whether good or bad are forces of the Ignorance. Above them is the Truth-Consciousness that can only manifest when ego and desire are overcome — it is the force from the Divine Truth-Consciousness that must descend; the higher Peace, Light, Knowledge, Purity, Ananda must work upon the cosmic forces in the individual so as to change them and substitute the Truth-Force in place of the ordinary working.

⁂

A cosmos or universe is always a harmony, otherwise it could not exist, it would fly to pieces. But as there are musical harmonies which are built out of discords partly or even predominantly, so this universe (the material) is disharmonious in its separate

elements — the individual elements are at discord with each other to a large extent; it is only owing to the sustaining Divine Will behind that the whole is still a harmony to those who look at it with the cosmic vision. But it is a harmony in evolution in progress — that is, all is combined to strive towards a goal which is not yet reached, and the object of our yoga is to hasten the arrival to this goal. When it is reached, there will be a harmony of harmonies substituted for the present harmony built up on discords. This is the explanation of the present appearance of things.

⁂

Everything here is not perfect but all works out the cosmic Will in the course of the ages.

⁂

The harmony of the lower consciousness is a harmony of discords brought about by a clash and mixture of forces.

⁂

This vision is a representation in sound of the cosmic harmony from which the Ignorance is a fall and a discord.

⁂

There is a rhythm in everything unheard by the physical ear and by that rhythm things exist.

⁂

Both of these [OM and the sound of church-bells] are usually sounds that indicate the opening or attempt to open to the cosmic consciousness.

⁂

It is when you feel the universal or divine beauty or presence in things that the senses are open to the Divine.

⁂

One can live in contact with the Divine even amidst the universal forces — but to live in the Divine one must be able to rise beyond the lower universal Nature or to call down the Divine consciousness here. The beginnings are difficult for most — and at no time is it really easy.

⁂

To be always merged in the Divine is not so easy. It can be done only by an absorption in one's own inner self or by a consciousness that sees all in the Divine and the Divine in all and is *always* in that condition. There is none who has attained to that yet.

⁂

The Cosmic Spirit or Self contains everything in the cosmos — it upholds cosmic Mind, universal Life, universal Matter as well as the overmind. The Self is more than all these things which are its formulations in Nature.

⁂

[The results of the opening to the cosmic Mind:] One is aware of the cosmic Mind and the mental forces that move there and how they work on one's mind and that of others and one is able to deal with one's own mind with a greater knowledge and effective power. There are many other results, but this is the fundamental one. This is of course if one opens in the right way and does not merely become a passive field of all sorts of ideas and mental forces.

⁂

The opening to cosmic Mind makes the experience of the Divine everywhere for instance more easy — but it is not essentially

spiritual; if there is not a coming of wider spiritual experiences, then it need not be spiritual at all.

⁂

What is happening is that you have got into touch with the cosmic Mind where all sorts of ideas, possibilities, formations are moving about. The individual mind takes up those which appeal to it or perhaps come into distinct form when they touch it. But these are possibilities, not truths, so it is better not to let them run free like that.

⁂

Mind has its own realms and life has its own realms just as matter has. In the mental realms life and substance are entirely subordinated to Mind and obey its dictates. Here on earth there is the evolution with matter as the starting-point, life as the medium, mind emerging from it. There are many grades, realms, combinations in the cosmos — there are even many universes. Ours is only one of many.

⁂

[The effect of opening to the cosmic Life:] One becomes aware of all the life-forces and of how they act upon oneself and others, upon mind, upon body — also the force movements behind events. One becomes too directly aware of the vital plane, its worlds, its beings, and the direct action of their formations on the earth-life. One has to become aware also at the same time of one's own true vital being and act from it and not from the surface or desire vital in relation to all these things. All this effect does not come at once, — it develops as the contact with the cosmic Life increases.

⁂

In the universal vital especially there is a deceptive attraction and an exhilarating rush of power (not true quiet power but mere force) which those who yield to it cling to as a drunkard to his

intoxicants. It gives them a sense of being strong and great and full of interesting things — when it is taken from them, they feel "like ordinary people" and ask for it back again.

⁂

Universal forces means all forces good or bad, favourable or hostile, of light and darkness that move in the cosmos.

⁂

The earth is the place of evolution in which all these forces meet and try to manifest and out of their working something has to develop. On the other planes (the mental, vital etc.) there is not the evolution — there each acts separately according to its own law.

⁂

Universal applies to everything in the universe — there are individual beings everywhere, but not physical in the terrestrial sense — the composition being different.

⁂

No, they [the hostile beings] do not create universal forces; they are themselves moved by them and move them.

⁂

Yes, of course, there is always a fight between the forces of Light and Darkness.

In sadhana it becomes concentrated and conscious to us.

As for the hostile beings, they are always in battle with each other; but they make common cause against the Truth and Light.

⁂

The forces are conscious. There are besides individualised beings

who represent the forces or use them. The wall between consciousness and force, impersonality and personality becomes much thinner when one goes behind the veil of matter. If one looks at a working from the side of impersonal force one sees a force or energy at work acting for a purpose or with a result, if one looks from the side of being one sees a being possessing, guiding and using or else representative of and used by a conscious force as its instrument of specialised action and expression. You speak of the wave, but in modern science it has been found that if you look at the movement of energy, it appears on one side to be a wave and act as a wave, on the other as a mass of particles and to act as a mass of particles each acting in its own way. It is somewhat the same principle here.

⁂

Nature-Forces are conscious forces — they can very well combine all that is necessary for an action or a purpose and when one means fails, take another.

⁂

Yes. They [the forces] are able to act with a greater force if they can make a special formation than by general psychological action common to all human nature.

⁂

They [the cosmic forces] act on everyone, according to the person's nature — and his will and consciousness.

⁂

Egoism is part of the machinery — a chief part — of universal Nature, first to develop individuality out of indiscriminate force and substance of Nature and, secondly, to make the individual (through the machinery of egoistic thought, feeling, will and desire) a tool of the universal forces. It is only when one gets

into touch with a higher Nature that it is possible to get free of this rule of ego and subjection to these forces.

⁂

Yes, if there is the solid experience [that all one's energies and capacities come from the universal forces], the ego habit is much diminished, but it does not go altogether. It takes refuge in the sense of being an instrument and — if there is not the psychic turn — it may easily prefer to be the instrument of some Force that feeds the satisfaction of the ego. In such cases the ego may still remain strong although it feels itself instrumental and not the primary actor.

⁂

If the psychic is active — or in so far as it is active, there is something in it which is like an automatic test for the universal forces — warning against, (not by thought so much as by an essential feeling) and rejecting what should not be, accepting and transmuting what should be.

⁂

Yes, it is so. The universal forces act very often through the subconscient — especially when the force they send is something the person has been in the habit of obeying and of which the seeds, impressions, "complexes" are strongly rooted in the subconscient — or, even if that is no longer the case, of which there is a memory still in the subconscient.

⁂

There is no rule for that. The human being is ordinarily conscious only on the surface — but the surface records only the results of subliminal agencies at work. It is often through the centres that the forces come in, for then they get the greatest power to act on the nature — but they can enter anywhere.

⁂

They [pain and grief] are perhaps rather the result of the action of universal forces — but in a certain sense grief and pain may be said to be universal forces — for there are waves of these things that arrive and invade the being often without apparent cause.

⁂

It [death] is a universal force — the happening or change called death is simply one result of the working of the force.

END OF PART THREE