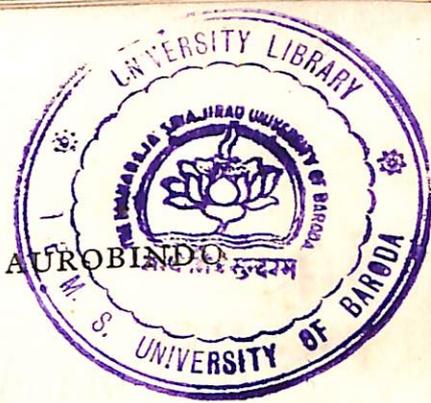


1825

R

⊕

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University  
of Baroda  
Call No. B  
133  
.G5L3 BK-1181



LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University  
of Baroda  
Call No. ~~B  
131  
G-514~~ BK-1181



LETTERS OF SRI

of 2r

Letters  
of  
Sri Aurobindo

1410  
1811-1812



SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE  
BOMBAY

PUBLISHER :

SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE, BOMBAY

Nair Hospital Compound, Near Bombay Central Station

Gift

BK-1181

All Rights Reserved

B

133

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1947

G5 L3



Imprimerie de Sri Aurobindo Ashram  
Pondichéry

## FOREWORD

*THE letters of Sri Aurobindo are a vast literature of very great value. Written mostly to his disciples in answer to their specific inquiries they have also a wider bearing and are likely to prove of great benefit not only to those who are interested in the things of the Spirit but also to all those who, not satisfied with the usual and the ordinary, strive for higher and greater values in life. For, the most significant and central idea of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual metaphysics as well as of his Yoga is that he does not consider human and spiritual values as totally distinct and basically incompatible, but, in their true significance, as related parts of an all-comprehending and all-integrating Reality and as necessary stages in a continuous process of a progressive growth into that Reality. Human values are not false or meaningless; they are incomplete approaches, partial and dim pointers to something to which they strain to arrive but cannot so long as they remain fixed in the human formula; it is only by relaxing the grip and breaking through the narrow and rigid circle of this formula and entering into the domain of the infinite Spirit that their deep urge can be fulfilled and their labour come to a fruitful completion.*

## FOREWORD

It is for this reason that Sri Aurobindo though aiming at the highest spiritual heights yet does not shun or discard the human endeavour as trivial or unreal; however insignificant it might seem as compared to the infinite greatness of the Spirit it is yet a step, the most significant of the many steps which the Spirit has taken to recover itself after losing itself in its apparent opposite which constitutes the riddle of this difficult and complex earth-existence. It is also for this reason that in Sri Aurobindo we find not only a more insistent stress on the original and the eternal verities of existence but also a truer and more adequate appreciation of the significance of all that we consider valuable in human life. Spirit and life forget their age-old quarrel in him and join hands and clasp and coalesce for mutual enrichment and harmonious completeness.

It is therefore not absolutely necessary to be a spiritual seeker to find interest in and derive benefit from the writings of Sri Aurobindo; the only requirement would seem to be a clear perception of the insufficiency of human life even at its best and an urge towards a less circumscribed and uncertain existence; for, at its root this human urge is an indirect expression of the soul's yearning for the Spirit and sooner or later it is sure to convert itself into that yearning, directly and openly. Thus, not only to those who are following the direct call of the soul and are on the spiritual path but also to all who have this deep inner urge or aspiration in them the letters of Sri Aurobindo will prove of incomparable value in as much as intended for direct and intimate help

## FOREWORD

to disciples they are written in a somewhat less lofty and difficult style than his other more metaphysical works and yet they bear that stamp of luminous authenticity and are charged with that High Wisdom that comes from the constant living in the Spirit's complete Truth. It is for this reason that this volume of Sri Aurobindo's letters is brought out on the occasion of his 75th birthday which also significantly coincides with the day of India's achievement of freedom. The first and the most important task that India will have to undertake on gaining this deliverance from the long domination of a foreign influence unsuited to her essential nature and temperament will be to recover her true great soul and spirit and to carry her past glorious spiritual endeavour, after this temporary setback, to its complete and perfect goal. In the accomplishment of this central task the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, who is not only a living embodiment of all the past spiritual achievement of India but also the Master-Leader of her future spiritual destiny, will undoubtedly work as the main shaping influence.

K. H. G.

triples they are written in a somewhat less lofty  
all difficult, rather than the other more metaphysical  
and yet they bear that stamp of luminous wisdom  
and are charged with that high wisdom that  
from the constant being in the spirit's presence  
It is for this reason that the system of Sri  
Aurobindo's letters is brought out on the occasion of his  
birthday, which also signifies coincides with  
the first of India's attainment of freedom. The first  
step is most important, that India will have to  
take as a guide this doctrine from the long  
duration of a foreign influence to be a real  
and supramental will be to recover the great  
and spirit and to carry her own glorious spiritual  
and more; after this temporary setback to the complete  
of a perfect goal. In the accomplishment of the central  
the teaching of Sri Aurobindo who is not only a  
embodiment of all the great spiritual traditions  
in India but also the Master-Teacher of the new  
evolution, will undoubtedly mark a new era in the  
history of the world.

K. H. R.

# CONTENTS

## I

### *Evolution : Material—Spiritual—Supramental*

	PAGE
SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION . . . . .	3
THE MATERIALISTIC PHASE OF EVOLUTION . . . . .	9
DESCENT OF THE SUPERMIND . . . . .	12
THE DIVINE AND ITS OPPOSITES— SUPRAMENTAL EVOLUTION . . . . .	14
SPIRITUAL AND SUPRAMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS	17
SPIRITUALISATION AND SUPRAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION . . . . .	21
THE YOGA OF TRANSFORMATION . . . . .	23
PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION . . . . .	29
THE AIM OF SUPRAMENTAL EVOLUTION . . . . .	31
TECHNIQUE OF WORLD-CHANGING YOGA . . . . .	34
THE DYNAMIC ASPECT OF THE DIVINE . . . . .	37
THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL AND THE SUPRAMENTAL DESCENT . . . . .	39

CONTENTS

II

*Approaches to the Divine :  
Partial — Integral*

	PAGE
DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE DIVINE . . . . .	43
IMPRESSIONS OF THE INFINITE . . . . .	50
ILLUSIONISM AND THE SUPRAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE I . . . . .	52
ILLUSIONISM AND THE SUPRAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE II . . . . .	56
ILLUSIONISM AND REALISTIC ADWAITA— NIRVANA—REBIRTH AND EVOLUTION . . . . .	58

III

*Yoga :  
Its Principle and Process*

THE CENTRAL AIM AND DISCIPLINE OF YOGA . . . . .	71
THE CENTRAL PROCESS OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA . . . . .	77
DIVINE FOR DIVINE'S SAKE . . . . .	80
THE FIRST OBJECT AND THE CHIEF POWER OF SADHANA . . . . .	85
YOGA AND HUMANITY . . . . .	87
OUR CONCEPTION OF THE DIVINE . . . . .	88
THE SPIRITUAL, THE RELIGIOUS AND THE ORDINARY HUMAN LIFE . . . . .	90

CONTENTS

PAGE

MENTAL IDEAS AND YOGA . . . . .	93
YOGA AND ACTION . . . . .	95
DIVINISATION OF LIFE . . . . .	97
VAIRAGYA IN YOGA . . . . .	101
THE ONLY TRUTH . . . . .	102

IV

*Parts of Total Consciousness*

CONSCIOUSNESS I . . . . .	105
CONSCIOUSNESS II . . . . .	109
SUPRACOSMIC REALITY, SUPERMIND AND OVERMIND, COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND NIRVANA . . . . .	113
SUPERMIND AND OVERMIND . . . . .	124
THE JIVATMAN . . . . .	128
JIVA AND JIVATMAN . . . . .	136
THE CENTRAL BEING AND THE SOUL . . . . .	139
JIVATMAN, SPARK-SOUL AND PSYCHIC BEING . . . . .	144
THE PSYCHIC BEING . . . . .	148
PSYCHIC ESSENCE AND PSYCHIC BEING . . . . .	151
CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHIC BEING TO SADHANA . . . . .	154
PSYCHICISATION AND SPIRITUAL CHANGE . . . . .	156
THE PSYCHIC BEING AND THE DESIRE SOUL . . . . .	157

CONTENTS

	PAGE
DUALITY OF BEING . . . . .	159
THE INNER AND THE PSYCHIC BEING . . . . .	161
THE INNER AND THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	163
THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	164
THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	166
PSYCHIC MIND AND SPIRITUAL MIND . . . . .	167
THE HIGHER MIND . . . . .	168
FOUR PARTS OF THE VITAL BEING . . . . .	170
THE EMOTIONAL AND THE HIGHER VITAL . . . . .	171
THE VITAL MIND . . . . .	175
THE PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	178
THE SUBCONSCIENT . . . . .	185

V

*Yogic Visions—  
Experiences — Realisations*

REALISATIONS AND EXPERIENCES . . . . .	191
FEELING AND EXPERIENCE . . . . .	195
VALUE OF THE POWER OF VISION . . . . .	197
SUPRAPHYSICAL VISION . . . . .	200
THE PIERCING OF THE VEIL . . . . .	204
EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER BEING I . . . . .	211
EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER BEING II . . . . .	215
EXPERIENCES OF THE INNER BEING III . . . . .	218

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OPENING OF THE PSYCHIC AND THE INNER BEING . . . . .	223
AWAKENING OF THE KUNDALINI . . . . .	226
THE DIVISION OF BEING . . . . .	228
EXPERIENCE OF THE TRUE SELF . . . . .	230
THE SOLID BASIS OF SADHANA . . . . .	231
THE DOUBLE FOUNDATION OF YOGA . . . . .	232
THE SILENT SELF . . . . .	233
ASCENT INTO NIRVANA AND RETURN . . . . .	234
DESCENT OF PEACE . . . . .	236
NEED OF WAKING REALISATION . . . . .	238
RIGHT ATTITUDE IN WORK . . . . .	239
THE FORCE AND THE INSTRUMENT . . . . .	242
JAPA . . . . .	245
THE MANTRA . . . . .	247

VI

*Love :  
Human to Divine*

THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF LOVE . . . . .	251
BEYOND EMOTION . . . . .	252
LOVE IN SADHANA I . . . . .	254
LOVE IN SADHADA II . . . . .	257
VITAL LOVE . . . . .	260

CONTENTS

	PAGE
LOVE IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS—PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL LOVE . . . .	262
FRIENDSHIP AND PSYCHIC LOVE . . . .	265
THE NATURE OF DIVINE LOVE . . . .	268
THE SECRET OF SADHANA . . . .	269
ON MCTAGGART'S STATEMENTS ABOUT LOVE . . . .	270

VII

*Difficulties of the Path*

DIFFICULTIES AND ORDEALS . . . .	283
SUFFERING IN YOGA . . . .	284
DIFFICULTIES IN SADHANA . . . .	287
DRYNESS IN YOGA . . . .	292
VITAL MOVEMENTS IN ORDINARY LIFE AND IN YOGA . . . .	296
THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN NATURE . . . .	299
NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE SIDE OF SADHANA . . . .	300
THE DARK AND THE SUNLIT PATH . . . .	302
DEPRESSION AND SORROW IN YOGA . . . .	304
PSYCHIC CONVERSION . . . .	307
REMOVAL OF PERPLEXITIES . . . .	309
THE CENTRAL CERTITUDE . . . .	312
THE DECISIVE TOUCH OF GRACE . . . .	314
NEED OF PATIENCE IN YOGA . . . .	317

CONTENTS

	PAGE
IMPORTANCE OF SMALL BEGINNINGS . . . .	319
CHANGE OF NATURE . . . .	321
TWO ELEMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS . . . .	322
EQUALITY I . . . .	324
EQUALITY II . . . .	327
HELPFUL QUALITIES IN YOGA . . . .	328
DIVINE GUIDANCE . . . .	331

VIII

*Science, Reasoning and Yogic Experience, Avatar and Symbols, Yoga-Force, Beauty and Art, etc.*

REPLY TO LEONARD WOOLF'S CRITICISM OF MYSTICISM . . . .	339
REASONING AND YOGIC EXPERIENCE . . . .	345
KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS . . . .	353
CANALISATION OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE—AVATAR AND SYMBOLS . . . .	359
COMMENTS ON PROF. SORLEY'S REMARKS ON "THE RIDDLE OF THIS WORLD" . . . .	364
PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE . . . .	369
FREE-WILL AND DETERMINISM . . . .	375
DIVINE GRACE . . . .	377
MEANING AND VALUE OF SACRIFICE . . . .	379
SUPERSTITION . . . .	381

CONTENTS

	PAGE
YOGA-FORCE I . . . . .	387
YOGA-FORCE II . . . . .	391
SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA . . . . .	394
SPIRITISM . . . . .	397
THE REVOLUTION IN SCIENCE . . . . .	399
COMMENTS ON SIR JAMES JEANS'S SPECULATIONS ABOUT LIFE ON EARTH . . . . .	401
INTELLECT . . . . .	404
BEAUTY . . . . .	407
ART FOR ART'S SAKE . . . . .	409

I

*Evolution:*

*Material-Spiritual-Supramental*

## *Spiritual Evolution*

THERE have been times when the seeking for spiritual attainment was, at least in certain civilisations, more intense and widespread than now or rather than it has been in the world in general during the past few centuries. For now the curve seems to be the beginning of a new turn of seeking which takes its start from what was achieved in the past and projects itself towards a greater future. But always, even in the age of the Vedas or in Egypt, the spiritual achievement or the occult knowledge was confined to a few, it was not spread in the whole mass of humanity. The mass of humanity evolves slowly, containing in itself all stages of the evolution from the material and the vital man to the mental man. A small minority has pushed beyond the barriers, opening the doors to occult and spiritual knowledge and preparing the ascent of the evolution beyond mental man into spiritual and supramental being. Sometimes this minority has exercised an enormous influence as in Vedic India, Egypt or, according to tradition, in Atlantis, and determined

the civilisation of the race, giving it a strong stamp of the spiritual or the occult; sometimes they have stood apart in their secret schools or orders, not directly influencing a civilisation which was sunk in material ignorance or in chaos and darkness or in the hard external enlightenment which rejects spiritual knowledge.

The cycles of evolution tend always upward, but they are cycles and do not ascend in a straight line. The process therefore gives the impression of a series of ascents and descents, but what is essential in the gains of the evolution is kept or, even if eclipsed for a time, re-emerges in new forms suitable to the new ages.

The creation has descended all the degrees of being from the Supermind to Matter and in each degree it has created a world, reign, plane or order proper to that degree. In the creating of the material world there was a plunge of this descending Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience and an emergence of it out of that Inconscience, degree by degree, until it recovers its highest spiritual and supramental summits and manifests their powers here in Matter. But even in the Inconscience there is a secret Consciousness which works, one may say, by an involved and hidden Intuition proper to itself. In each stage of matter, in each stage of life, this Intuition assumes a working proper to that stage and acts from behind the veil, supporting and enforcing the immediate necessities of the creative Force. There is an

Intuition in Matter which holds the action of the material world from the electron to the sun and planets and their contents. There is an Intuition in Life which similarly supports and guides the play and development of Life in matter till it is ready for the mental evolution of which man is the vehicle. In man also the creation follows the same upward process,—the Intuition within develops according to the stage he has reached in his progress. Even the precise intellect of the scientist, who is inclined to deny the separate existence or the superiority of Intuition yet cannot really move forward unless there is behind him a mental Intuition, which enables him to take a forward step or to divine what has to be done. Intuition therefore is present at the beginning of things and in their middle as well as at their consummation.

But Intuition takes its proper form only when one goes beyond the mental into the spiritual domain, for there only it comes fully forward from behind the veil and reveals its true and complete nature. Along with the mental evolution of man there has been going forward the early process of another evolution which prepares the spiritual and supramental being. This has had two lines, one the discovery of the occult forces secret in Nature and of the hidden planes and worlds concealed from us by the world of Matter and the other the discovery of man's soul and spiritual self. If the tradition of Atlantis is correct, it is that of a progress which

went to the extreme of occult knowledge, but could go no farther. In the India of Vedic times we have the record left of the other line of achievement, that of spiritual self-discovery; occult knowledge was there but kept subordinate. We may say that here in India the reign of Intuition came first, intellectual Mind developing afterwards in the later philosophy and science. But in fact the mass of men at the time, it is quite evident, lived entirely on the material plane, worshipped the Godheads of material Nature, sought from them entirely material objects. The effort of the Vedic mystics revealed to them the things behind through a power of inner sight and hearing and experience which was confined to a limited number of seers and sages and kept carefully secret from the mass of humanity—secrecy was always insisted on by the mystic. We may very well attribute this flowering of Intuition on the spiritual plane to a rapid re-emergence of essential gains brought down from a previous cycle. If we analyse the spiritual history of India we shall find that after reaching this height there was a descent which attempted to take up each lower degree of the already evolved consciousness and link it to the spiritual at the summit. The Vedic age was followed by a great outburst of intellect and philosophy which yet took spiritual truth as its basis and tried to reach it anew, not through a direct Intuition or occult process as did the Vedic seers, but by the power of the mind's reflective, speculative, logical thought; at the same time processes

of Yoga were developed which used the thinking mind as a means of arriving at spiritual realisation, spiritualising this mind itself at the same time. Then followed an era of the development of philosophies and Yoga processes which more and more used the emotional and aesthetic being as the means of spiritual realisation and spiritualised the emotional level in man through the heart and feeling. This was accompanied by Tantric and other processes which took up the the mental will, the life-will, the will of sensations and made them at once the instruments and the field of spiritualisation. In the Hathayoga and the various attempts at divinisation of the body there is also a line of endeavour which attempted to arrive at the same achievement with regard to living matter; but this still awaits the discovery of the true characteristic method and power of Spirit in the body. We may say therefore that the universal Consciousness after its descent into Matter has conducted the evolution there along two lines, one of ascent to the discovery of the Self and Spirit, the other of descent through the already evolved levels of mind, life and body so as to bring down the spiritual consciousness into these also and to fulfil thereby some secret intention in the creation of the material universe. Our Yoga is in its principle a taking up and summarising and completing of this process, an endeavour to rise to the highest possible supramental level and bring down its consciousness and power into mind, life and body.

The condition of present-day civilisation, materialistic with an externalised intellect and life-endeavour, which you find so painful, is an episode, but one which was perhaps inevitable. For if the spiritualisation of the mind, life and body is the thing to be achieved, the conscious presence of the Spirit even in the physical consciousness and material body, an age which puts matter and the physical life in the forefront and devotes itself to the effort of the intellect to discover the truth of material existence, had perhaps to come. On one side, by materialising everything up to the intellect itself it has created the extreme difficulty of which you speak for the spiritual seeker, but on the other hand it has given the life in matter an importance which the spirituality of the past was inclined to deny to it. In a way it has made the spiritualisation of it a necessity for spiritual seeking and so aided the descent movement of the evolving spiritual consciousness in the earth nature. More than that we cannot claim for it; its conscious effect has been rather to stifle and almost extinguish the spiritual element in humanity; it is only by the divine use of the pressure of contraries and an intervention from above that there will be the spiritual outcome.

27-12-1935

### *The Materialistic Phase of Evolution*

ALL the phases of human history may be regarded as a working out of the earth-consciousness in which each phase has its place and significance, so this materialistic intellectual phase had to come and has had, no doubt, its purpose and significance. One may also hold that one of its issues was as an experiment to see how far and whither the human consciousness would go through an intellectual and external control of Nature with physical and intellectual means only and without the intervention of any higher consciousness and knowledge—or that it may help by resistance to draw the spiritual consciousness that is growing behind all vicissitudes to attempt the control of Matter and turn it towards the Divine, as the Tantrics and Vaishnavas tried to do with the emotional and lower vital nature, not contenting themselves with the Vedantic turning of the mind towards the Supreme. But it is difficult to go farther than that or to hold that this materialism is itself a spiritual thing or that the dark confused and violent state of contemporary Europe was an indispensable preparation for the

descent of the Spirit. This darkness and violence which seems bent on destroying such light of mental idealism and desire of harmony as had succeeded in establishing itself in the mind of humanity, is obviously due to a descent of fierce and dark vital Powers which seek to possess the human world for their own, not for a spiritual purpose. It is true that such a precipitation of Asuric forces from the darker vital worlds has been predicted by some occultists as the one first result of the pressure of the Divine descent on their vital domain, but it was regarded as a circumstance of the battle, not as something helping towards the Divine Victory. The churning of Matter by the attempt of human intellect to conquer material Nature and use it for its purpose may break something of the passivity and inertia, but it is done for material ends, in a rajasic spirit, with a denial of spirituality as its mental basis. Such an attempt may end, seems to be ending indeed, in chaos and disintegration, while the new attempts at creation and reintegration seem to combine the obscure rigidity of material Nature with a resurgence of the barbaric brutality and violence of a half-animal vital Nature. How are the spiritual forces to deal with all that or make use of such a churning of the energies of the material universe? The way of the Spirit is the way of peace and light and harmony; if it has to battle it is precisely because of the presence of such forces which seek either to extinguish or to prevent the spiritual light. In the spiritual change inertia has to be replaced by the

divine peace and calm, the rajasic troubled energy by a tranquil and potent, pure and liberated dynamis, while the mind must be kept plastic for the workings of a higher Light of knowledge. How will the activity of Materialism lend itself to that change?

Materialism can hardly be spiritual in its basis because its basic method is just the opposite of the spiritual way of doing things. The spiritual works from within outward, the way of materialism is to work from out inwards. It makes the inner a result of the outer, fundamentally a phenomenon of Matter and it works upon that view of things. It seeks to "perfect" humanity by outward means and one of its main efforts is to construct a perfect social machine which will train and oblige men to be what they ought to be. The loss of the ego in the Divine is the spiritual ideal; here it is replaced by the immolation of the individual to the military and industrial State. Where is there any spirituality in all that? Spirituality can only come by opening of the mind, vital and physical to the inmost soul, to the higher Self, to the Divine, and their subordination to the spiritual forces and instrumentation as channels of the inner Light, the higher Knowledge and Power. Other things, mental, aesthetic, vital, are often misnamed 'spirituality,' but they lack the essential character without which the word loses its true significance.

30-6-1937

### *Descent of the Supermind*

THE descent of the Supermind is a long process, or at least a process with a long preparation, and one can only say that the work is going on sometimes with a strong pressure for completion, sometimes retarded by the things that rise from below and have to be dealt with before further progress can be made. The process is a spiritual evolutionary process, concentrated into a brief period; it could be done otherwise (by what men would regard as a miraculous intervention) only if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is. As we envisage it, it must manifest in a few first and then spread, but it is not likely to overpower the earth in a moment. It is not advisable to discuss too much what it will do and how it will do it, because these are things the Supermind itself will fix, acting out of that Divine Truth in it, and the mind must not try to fix for it grooves in which it will run. Naturally, the release from subconscious ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, and a change in the functionings of the body must

be among the ultimate elements of a Supramental change; but the details of these things must be left for the Supramental Energy to work out according to the Truth of its own nature.

The descent of the Supramental is an inevitable necessity in the logic of things and is therefore sure. It is because people do not understand what the Supermind is or realise the significance of the emergence of consciousness in a world of inconscient Matter that they are unable to realise this inevitability. I suppose a matter-of-fact observer, if there had been one at the time of the unrelieved reign of inanimate Matter in the earth's beginning, would have criticised any promise of the emergence of life in a world of dead earth and rock and mineral as an absurdity and a chimera; so too, afterwards he would have repeated this mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimera. It is the same now with the appearance of Supermind in the stumbling mentality of this world of human consciousness and its reasoning ignorance.

I-12-1935

*The Divine and its Opposites—  
Supramental Evolution*

WHAT is meant here is the Divine in its essential manifestation which reveals itself to us as Light and Consciousness, Power, Love and Beauty. But in its actual cosmic manifestation the Supreme, being the Infinite and not bound by any limitation, can manifest in Itself, in its consciousness of innumerable possibilities, something that seems to be the opposite of itself, something in which there can be Darkness, Inconscience, Inertia, Insensibility, Disharmony and Disintegration. It is this that we see at the basis of the material world and speak of nowadays as the Inconscient—the Inconscient Ocean of the Rigveda in which the One was hidden and arose in the form of this universe—or, as it is sometimes called, the non-being, Asat. The Ignorance which is the characteristic of our mind and life is the result of this origin in the Inconscience. Moreover, in the evolution out of inconscient existence there rise up naturally powers and beings which are interested in the maintenance of all negations of the Divine, error

and unconsciousness, pain, suffering, obscurity, death, weakness, illness, disharmony, evil. Hence the perversion of the manifestation here, its inability to reveal the true essence of the Divine. Yet in this very base of this evolution all that is divine is there involved and pressing to evolve, Light, Consciousness, Power, Perfection, Beauty, Love. For in the Inconscient itself and behind the perversions of the Ignorance the Divine Consciousness lies concealed and works and must more and more appear, throwing off in the end its disguises. That is why it is said that the world is called to express the Divine.

Your statement about the supramental evolution is correct except that it does not follow that humanity as a whole will become supramental. What is more likely to happen is that the supramental principle will be established in the evolution by the descent just as the mental principle was established by the appearance of thinking Mind and Man in earthly life. There will be a race of supramental beings on the earth just as now there is a race of mental beings. Man himself will find a greater possibility of rising to the planes intermediary between his mind and Supermind and making their powers effective in his life, which will mean a great change in humanity on earth, but it is not likely that the mental stage will disappear from the ascending ladder and, if so, the continued existence of a mental race will be necessary so as to form a stage between the vital

and the supramental in the evolutionary movement of the Spirit.

Such a descent of higher beings as you suggest may be envisaged as a part of the process of the change. But the main part of the change will be the appearance of the supramental being and the organisation of a supramental nature here, as a mental being has appeared and a mental nature organised itself during the last stage of the evolution. I prefer nowadays not to speak of the descent of the higher beings because my experience is that it leads to a vain and often egoistic romanticism which distracts the attention from the real work, that of the realisation of the Divine and the transformation of the nature.

6-1-1936

### *Spiritual and Supramental Consciousness*

IN the Supramental consciousness, there are no problems—the problem is created by the division set up by the Mind. The Supramental sees the Truth as a single whole and everything falls into its place in that whole. The Supramental is also spiritual, but the old Yogas reach Sachchidananda through the spiritualised mind and depart into the eternally static oneness of Sachchidananda or rather pure Sat (Existence), absolute and eternal or else a pure Non-existence, absolute and eternal. Ours having realised Sachchidananda in the spiritualised mind plane proceeds to realise it in the Supramental plane.

The supreme supra-cosmic Sachchidananda is above all. Supermind may be described as its power of self-awareness and world-awareness, the world being known as within itself and not outside. So to live consciously in the supreme Sachchidananda one must pass through the Supermind. If one is in the supra-cosmic apart from the manifestation, there is no place for problems or solutions. If one lives in

the transcendence and the cosmic view at the same time, that can only be by the Supramental consciousness in the supreme Sachchidananda consciousness—so why should the question arise? Why should there be a difference between the supreme Sachchidananda version of the cosmos and the Supermind's version of it? Your difficulty probably comes from thinking of both in terms of the mind.

The Supermind is an entirely different consciousness not only from the spiritualised Mind, but from the planes above spiritualised Mind which intervene between it and the Supramental plane. Once one passes beyond Overmind to Supermind, one enters into a consciousness to which the norms of the other planes do not at all apply and in which the same Truth, e.g. Sachchidananda and truth of this universe, is seen in quite a different way and has a different dynamic consequence. This necessarily results from the fact that Supermind has an indivisible knowledge, while Overmind proceeds by union in division and Mind by division taking division as the first fact, for that is the natural process of its knowledge.

In all planes the essential experience of Sachchidananda, pure Existence, Consciousness, Bliss is the same and Mind is often contented with it as the sole Truth and dismisses all else as part of the grand Illusion, but there is also a dynamic experience of the Divine or of Existence (e.g. as One and Many, Personal and Impersonal, the Infinite and Finite etc.) which is essential for the integral knowledge. The

dynamic experience is not the same in the lower planes as in the higher, in the intermediate spiritual planes and in the Supramental. In these the oppositions can only be put together and harmonised, in the Supermind they fuse together and are inseparably one; that makes an enormous difference.

The universe is dynamism, movement—the essential experience of Sachchidananda apart from the dynamism and movement is static. The full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe and its consequence cannot be grasped by any other consciousness than the Supermind, because the instrumentation in all other (lower) planes is inferior and there is therefore a disparity between the fullness of the static experience and the incompleteness of the dynamic power, knowledge, result of the inferior light and power of other planes. This is the reason why the consciousness of the other spiritual planes even if it descends can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness, it can only modify or enrich it. The radical transformation needs the descent of a Supramental power and nature.

One cannot speak of two classes of Sachchidananda, for Sachchidananda is the same always—but the knowledge of Sachchidananda and the universe differs according to the degree of the consciousness which has the experience.

The personal realisation of the Divine may be sometimes with Form, sometimes without Form. Without Form, it is the Presence of the living Divine

Person, felt in everything. With Form, it comes with the image of the One to whom worship is offered. The Divine can always manifest himself in a form to the bhakta or seeker. One sees him in the form in which one worships or seeks him or in a form suitable to the Divine Personality who is the object of the adoration. How it manifests depends on many things and it is too various to be reduced to a single rule. Sometimes it is in the heart that the Presence with the form is seen, sometimes in any of the other centres, sometimes above and guiding from there, sometimes it is seen outside and in front as if an embodied Person. Its advantages are an intimate relation and constant guidance or if felt or seen within, a very strong and concrete realisation of the constant Presence. But one must be very sure of the purity of one's adoration and seeking—for the disadvantage of this kind of embodied relation is that other Forces can imitate the Form or counterfeit the voice and the guidance and this gets more force if it is associated with a constructed image which is not the true thing. Several have been misled in this way because pride, vanity or desire was strong in them and robbed them of the finer psychic perception that is not mental and can at once turn the Mother's light on such misleadings or errors.

### *Spiritualisation and Supramental Transformation*

IF spiritual and Supramental were the same thing, as you say my readers imagine, then all the sages and devotees and yogis and sadhakas throughout the ages would have been Supramental beings and all I have written about the Supermind would be so much superfluous stuff, useless and otiose. Anybody who had spiritual experiences would then be a Supramental being; the Ashram would be chockful of Supramental beings and every other Ashram in India also. Spiritual experiences can fix themselves in the inner consciousness and alter it, transform it, if you like; one can realise the Divine everywhere, the Self in all and all in the Self, the universal Shakti doing all things; one can feel merged in the Cosmic Self or full of ecstatic bhakti or Ananda. But one may and usually does still go on in the outer parts of Nature thinking with the intellect or at best the intuitive mind, willing with a mental will, feeling joy and sorrow on the vital surface, undergoing physical afflictions and suffering from the struggle of

life in the body with death and disease. The change then only will be that the inner self will watch all that without getting disturbed or bewildered, with a perfect equality, taking it as an inevitable part of Nature, inevitable at least so long as one does not withdraw to the Self out of Nature. That is not the transformation I envisage. It is quite another power of knowledge, another kind of will, another luminous nature of emotion and aesthesis, another constitution of the physical consciousness that must come in by the Supramental change.

### *The Yoga of Transformation*

BY transformation I do not mean some change of the nature—I do not mean for instance sainthood or ethical perfection or Yogic siddhis (like the Tantric's) or a transcendental (chinmaya) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and Yoga.

Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. Realisation by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or

heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top so as to realise something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakriti. One may have some light of realisation at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. I have seen any number of instances of that. There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical and below before a real transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda. Moreover the descent may be enough to liberate, but not to perfect, or it may be enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, transformation effected by the sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramentalisation of the being. Psychicisation is not enough, it is only a beginning; spiritualisation and the descent of the higher consciousness is not enough, it is only a middle term; the ultimate achievement needs the action of the Supramental Consciousness and Force.

Something less than that may very well be considered enough by the individual, but it is not enough for the earth-consciousness to take the definitive stride forward it must take at one time or another.

I have never said that my Yoga was something brand new in all its elements. I have called it the integral Yoga and that means that it takes up the essence and many processes of the old Yogas—its newness is in its aim, standpoint and the totality of its method. In the earlier stages which is all I deal with in books like the "Riddle" or the "Lights" or in the new book to be published<sup>1</sup> there is nothing in it that distinguishes it from the old Yogas except the aim underlying its comprehensiveness, the spirit in its movements and the ultimate significance it keeps before it—also the scheme of its psychology and its workings: but as that was not and could not be developed systematically or schematically in these letters, it has not been grasped by those who are not already acquainted with it by mental familiarity or some amount of practice. The detail or method of the later stages of the Yoga which go into little known or untrodden regions, I have not made public and I do not at present intend to do so.

I know very well also that there have been seemingly allied ideals and anticipations—the perfectibility of the race, certain Tantric sadhanas, the effort after a complete physical siddhi by certain schools of Yoga,

<sup>1</sup> The Bases of Yoga

etc., etc. I have alluded to these things myself and have put forth the view that the spiritual past of the race has been a preparation of Nature not merely for attaining the Divine beyond the world, but also for the very step forward which the evolution of the earth-consciousness has still to make. I do not therefore care in the least,—even though these ideals were, up to some extent parallel, yet not identical with mine,—whether this Yoga and its aim and method are accepted as new or not; that is in itself a trifling matter. That it should be recognised as true in itself by those who can accept or practise it and should make itself true by achievement is the one thing important; it does not matter if it is called new or a repetition or revival of the old which was forgotten. I laid emphasis on it as new in a letter to certain sadhakas so as to explain to them that a repetition of the aim and idea of the old Yogas was not enough in my eyes, that I was putting forward a thing to be achieved that has not yet been achieved, not yet clearly visualised, even though it is one natural but still secret outcome of all the past spiritual endeavour.

It is new as compared with the old Yogas:

(1) Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central object. If there is a descent in other Yogas, yet it is only an incident on the way or resulting from the ascent—the ascent is

the real thing. Here the ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent. It is the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana. Even the Tantra and Vaishnavism end in the release from life; here the object is the divine fulfilment of life.

(2) Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

(3) Because a method has been preconized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old Yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out paths and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out,

laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.

5-10-1935

### *Physical Transformation*

WHATEVER may have happened to Chaitanya or Ramalingam, whatever physical transformation they may have gone through is quite irrelevant to the aim of the supramentalisation of the body. Their new body was either a non-physical or subtle physical body not adapted for life on the earth. If it were not so, they would not have disappeared. The object of supramentalisation is a body fitted to embody and express the physical consciousness on earth so long as one remains in the physical life. It is a step in the spiritual evolution on the earth, not a step in the passage towards a supraphysical world. The supramentalisation is the most difficult part of the change arrived at by the Supramental Yoga, and all depends on whether a sufficient change can be achieved in the consciousness at present to make such a step possible, but the nature of the step is different from that aimed at by other Yogas. There is not therefore much utility in these discussions—one has first of all to supramentalise sufficiently the mind and vital and physical consciousness generally—afterwards one

*can think* of supramentalisation of the body. The psychic and spiritual transformation must come first, only afterwards would it be practical or useful to discuss the supramentalisation of the whole being down to the body.

4-6-1937

### *The Aim of Supramental Evolution*

WHAT we are doing, if and when we succeed, will be a beginning, not a completion. It is the foundation of a new consciousness on earth—a consciousness with infinite possibilities of manifestation. The eternal progression is in the manifestation and beyond it there is no progression.

If the redemption of the soul from the physical vesture be the object, then there is no need of supramentalisation. Spiritual Mukti and Nirvana are sufficient. If the object is to rise to supraphysical planes, then also there is no need of supramentalisation. One can enter into some heaven above by devotion to the Lord of that heaven. But that is no progression. The other worlds are typical worlds, each fixed in its own kind and type and law. Evolution takes place on the earth and therefore the earth is the proper field for progression. The beings of the other worlds do not progress from one world to another. They remain fixed to their own type.

The purely monistic Vedantist says, all is Brahman, life is a dream, an unreality, only Brahman exists.

One has Nirvana or Mukti, then one lives only till the body falls—after that there is no such thing as life.

They do not believe in transformation, because mind, life and body are an ignorance, an illusion—the only reality is the featureless, relationless Self or Brahman. Life is a thing of relations; in the pure Self, all life and relations disappear. What would be the use or the possibility of transforming an illusion that can never be anything else (however transformed) than an illusion? There is no such thing for them as a “Nirvanic life”.

It is only some Yogas that aim at a transformation of any kind except that of ignorance into knowledge. The idea varies,—sometimes a divine knowledge or power or else a divine purity or an ethical perfection or a divine love.

What has to be overcome is the opposition of the Ignorance that does not want the transformation of the nature. If that can be overcome, then old spiritual ideas will not form an obstacle.

It is not intended to supramentalise humanity at large, but to establish the principle of the Supramental consciousness in the earth-evolution. If that is done, all that is needed will be evolved by the Supramental Power itself. It is not therefore important that the mission should be widespread. What is important is that the thing should be done at all in however small a number; that is the only difficulty.

If the transformation of the body is complete,

that means no subjection to death—it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change, but how it will be done cannot be said now. The present method is by physical birth—some occultists suppose that a time will come when that will not be necessary—but the question must be left for the Supramental evolution to decide.

The questions about the Supermind cannot be answered profitably now. Supermind cannot be described in terms that the mind will understand, because the terms will be mental and mind will understand them in a mental way and mental sense and miss their true import. It would therefore be a waste of time and energy which should be devoted to the preliminary work—psychicisation and spiritualisation of the being and nature without which no supramentalisation is possible. Let the whole dynamic nature led by the psychic make itself full of the dynamic spiritual light, peace, purity, knowledge, force; let it afterwards get experience of the intermediate spiritual planes and know, feel and act in their sense; then it will be possible to speak last of the Supramental transformation.

### *Technique of World-Changing Yoga*

WHAT is a perfect technique of Yoga or rather of a world-changing or Nature-changing Yoga? Not one that takes a man by a little bit of his somewhere, attaches a hook and pulls him up by a pulley into Nirvana or Paradise. The technique of world-changing Yoga has to be as multiform, sinuous, patient, all-including as the world itself. If it does not deal with all the difficulties or possibilities and carefully deal with each necessary element, has it any chance of success? And can a perfect technique which every body can understand do that? It is not like writing a small poem in a fixed metre with a limited number of modulations. If you take the poem simile, it is the Mahabharata of a Mahabharata that has to be done. And what, compared with the limited Greek perfection, is the technique of the Mahabharata?

Next, what is the use of *vicharabuddhi* in such a case? If one has to get a new consciousness which surpasses the reasoning intellect, can one do it on lines which are to be judged and understood by the reasoning intellect, controlled at every step by it, told by the intellect

what it is to do, what is the measure of its achievements, what its steps must be and what their value? If one does that, will one ever get out of the range of the reasoning intelligence into what is beyond it? And if one does, how shall others judge what one is doing by the intellectual measure? How can one judge what is beyond the ordinary consciousness when one is oneself in the ordinary consciousness? Is it not only by exceeding yourself that you can feel, experience, judge what exceeds you? What is the value of a judgment without the feeling and experience?

What the Supramental will do the mind cannot foresee or lay down. The mind is ignorance seeking for the Truth; the Supramental by its very definition is the Truth-consciousness, Truth in possession of itself and fulfilling itself by its own power. In a Supramental world imperfection and disharmony are bound to disappear. But what we propose just now is not to make the earth a Supramental world but to bring down the Supramental as a power and established consciousness in the midst of the rest—to let it work there and fulfil itself as Mind descended into life and matter and has worked as a Power there to fulfil itself in the midst of the rest. This will be enough to change the world and to change Nature by breaking down her present limits. But what, how, by what degrees it will do, it is a thing that ought not to be said now—when the Light is there, the Light will itself do its work—when the Supramental Will stands on earth, that Will

will decide. It will establish a perfection, a harmony, a Truth creation—for the rest, well, it will be the rest—that is all.

15-11-1933

### *The Dynamic Aspect of the Divine*

THE dynamic aspect of the Divine is the Supreme Brahman, not the Gods. The Gods are Personalities and Powers of the dynamic Divine. You speak as if the evolution were the sole creation; the creation or manifestation is very vast and contains many planes and worlds that existed before the evolution, all different in character and with different kinds of beings. The fact of being prior to the evolution does not make them undifferentiated. The world of the Asuras is prior to the evolution, so are the worlds of the mental, vital or subtle physical Devas—but these beings are all different from each other. The great Gods belong to the Overmind plane; in the Supermind they are unified as aspects of the Divine, in the Overmind they appear as separate personalities. Any godhead can descend by emanation to the physical plane and associate himself with the evolution of a human being with whose line of manifestation he is in affinity. But these are things which cannot be very easily understood by the mind, because the mind has too rigid

an idea of personality—the difficulty only disappears when one enters into a more flexible consciousness above where one is nearer to the experience of One in all and All in one.

13-II-1934

### *The Christian Ideal and the Supramental Descent*

THERE is no connection between the Christian conception (of the Kingdom of Heaven) and the idea of the Supramental descent. The Christian conception supposes a state of things brought about by religious emotion and moral purification; but these things are no more capable of changing the world, whatever value they may have for the individual, than mental idealism or any other power yet called upon for the purpose. The Christian proposes to substitute the sattwic religious ego for the rajasic and tamasic ego, but although this can be done as an individual achievement, it has never succeeded and will never succeed in accomplishing itself in the mass. It has no higher spiritual or psychological knowledge behind it and ignores the foundation of human character and the source of the difficulty—the duality of mind, life and body. Unless there is a descent of a new Power of Consciousness, not subject to the dualities but still dynamic which will provide a new foundation and a

lifting of the centre of consciousness above the mind, the Kingdom of God on earth can only be an ideal, not a fact realised in the general earth-consciousness and earth-life.

28-II-1936

## II

### *Approaches to the Divine : Partial — Integral*

### *Different Approaches to the Divine*

IT seems to me that these differences of valuation come from the mind laying stress on one side or another of the approach to the Divine or exalting one aspect of realisation over another. When there is the approach through the heart, through Love and Bhakti, the highest culmination is in a transcendent Ananda, an unspeakable Bliss or Beatitude of union with the Divine through Love. The school of Chaitanya laid especial and indeed sole emphasis on this way and made this the whole reality of Krishna consciousness. But the transcendent Ananda is there at the origin and end of all existence and this is not and cannot be the sole way to it. One can arrive at it through the Vasudeva consciousness, which is a wider, more mentalised approach—as in the method of the Gita where knowledge, works, bhakti are all centred in Krishna, the One, the Supreme, the All, and arrive through the cosmic consciousness to the luminous transcendence. There is the way too described in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Vedanta's Gospel of Bliss. These are certainly wider methods,

for they take up the whole existence through all its parts and ways of being to the Divine. If less intense at their starting-point, a vaster and slower movement, there is no reason to suppose that they are less intense on their summits of arrival. It is the same transcendence to which all arrive, either with a large movement gathering up everything spiritual in us to take it there in a vast sublimation, or in single intense uplifting from one part, a single exaltation leaving all the rest aside. But who shall say which is profounder of the two? Concentrated love has a profundity of its own which cannot be measured; concentrated wisdom has a wider profundity, but one cannot say that it is deeper.

Cosmic values are only reflections of the truth of the Transcendence in a lesser truth of time experience which is separative and sees diversely a thousand aspects of the One. As one rises through the mind or any part of the manifested being, any one or more of these aspects can become more and more sublimated and tend towards its supreme transcendental intensity, and whatever aspect is so experienced is declared by the spiritualised mental consciousness to be the supreme thing. But when one goes beyond mind all tends not only to sublimate but to fuse together until the separated aspects recover their original unity, indivisible in the absoluteness of all made one. Mind can conceive and have experience of existence without consciousness or Ananda and this receives its utmost expression in the inconscience

attributed to Matter. So also it can conceive of Ananda or Love as a separate principle; it even feels consciousness and existence losing themselves in a trance or swoon of Love or Ananda. So too the limited personal loses itself in the illimitable Person, the lover in the supreme Beloved, or else the personal in the Impersonal—the lover feels himself immersed, losing himself in the transcendental reality of Love and Ananda. The personal and the impersonal are themselves posited and experienced by mind as separate realities and one or other is declared and seen as supreme, so that the personal can have *laya* in the Impersonal or, on the contrary, the impersonal disappears into the absolute reality of the supreme and divine Person—the impersonal in that view is only an attribute or power of the personal Divine. But at the summit of spiritual experience passing beyond mind one begins to feel the fusion of all these things into one. Consciousness, Existence, Ananda return to their indivisible unity, Sachchidananda. The personal and the impersonal become irrevocably one, so that to posit one as against the other appears as an act of ignorance. This tendency of unification is the basis of the Supramental consciousness and experience; for cosmic or creative purposes the Supermind can put forward one aspect prominently where that is needed but it is aware of all the rest behind it or contained in it and does not admit into its view any separation or opposition anywhere. For that reason a Supramental creation would be a manifold harmony, not a

separative process fragmenting or analysing the One into parts and setting these parts over against each other or else putting them contradictorily against each other and having afterwards to synthetise and piece them together in order to arrive at harmony or else to exclude one or all of the parts in order to realise the indivisible One.

You speak of the Vaishnava school emphasising the personal felicities, as in the classification of the *bhavas*, and you say that these are short and quick feelings and lack in vastness or amplitude. No doubt, when they are first felt and as they are felt by the limited consciousness in its ordinary functioning and movement; but that is only because the emotional in man with this imperfect bodily instrument acts largely by spasms of intensity when it wants to sublimate and cannot maintain either the continuity or the extension or the sublimated paroxysm of these things. But as the individual becomes cosmic (the universalising of the individual without his losing his higher individuality as a divine centre is one of the processes which leads towards the Supramental Truth), this disability begins to disappear. The truth behind the *Dasya* or *Madhura* or any other *bhava* or fusion of *bhavas* becomes a vast and ample continuous state,—if, by chance, they lose something of their briefer intensities by this extension of themselves, they recover them a thousandfold in the movement of the universalised individual towards the Transcendence. There is an ever-enlarging experience

which takes up the elements of spiritual realisation and in this uplifting and transforming process they become other and greater things than they were and more and more they take their place by sublimation, first in the spiritual cosmic, then in the all-embracing transcendent whole.

The difference of view between Shankara and Ramanuja and on the other side Chaitanya about Krishna arises from the turn of their experience. Krishna was only an aspect of Vishnu to the others because that ecstatic form of love and bhakti which had become associated with Krishna was not for them the whole. The Gita, like Chaitanya, but from a different view-point regarded Krishna as the Divine himself. To Chaitanya he was Love and Ananda and Love and Ananda being for him the highest transcendental experience, so Krishna too must be the Supreme. For the writer of the Gita, Krishna was the source of Knowledge and Power as well as Love, the Destroyer, Preserver, Creator in one, so necessarily Vishnu was only an aspect of this universal Divine. In the Mahabharata indeed Krishna comes as an incarnation of Vishnu, but that can be turned by taking it that it was through the Vishnu aspect as his frontal appearance that he manifested; for that the greater Godhead can manifest later than others is logical if we consider the manifestation as progressive,—just as Vishnu is in the Veda a Younger Indra, Upendra, but gains upon his elder and subsequently takes place above him in the Trimurti.

I cannot say much about the Vaishnava idea of the form of Krishna. Form is the basic means of manifestation and without it it may be said that the manifestation of anything is not complete. Even if the Formless logically precedes Form, yet it is not illogical to assume that in the Formless, Form is inherent and already existent in a mystic latency, otherwise how could it be manifested? For any other process would be the creation of the non-existent, not manifestation. If so, it would be equally logical to assume that there is an eternal form of Krishna, a spirit body. As for the highest Reality it is no doubt Absolute Existence, but is it only that? Absolute Existence as an abstraction may exclude everything else from itself and amount to a sort of very positive zero; but Absolute Existence as a reality who shall define and say what is or is not in its inconceivable depths, its illimitable Mystery? Mind can ordinarily conceive of the Absolute Existence only as a negation of its own concepts spatial, temporal or other. But it cannot tell what is at the basis of manifestation or what manifestation is or why there is any manifestation at all out of its positive zero—and the Vaishnavas, we must remember, do not admit this conception as the absolute and original truth of the Divine. It is therefore not rigidly impossible that what we conceive and perceive as spatial form may correspond to some power of the spaceless Absolute. I do not say all that as a definite statement of Truth, I am only pointing out that the Vaishnava

position on its own ground is far from being logically or metaphysically untenable.

8-II-1936

energy or light, completely inert is the condition of neutral peace and empty stillness which is or can be a stage of the liberation. But it can afterwards feel itself filled with infinite existence, consciousness (carrying energy in it) and finally Ananda.

31-10-1936

### *Impressions of the Infinite*

THE impressions in the approach to Infinity or the entry into it are not always quite the same; much depends on the way in which the mind approaches it. It is felt first by some as an infinity above, by others as an infinity around into which the mind disappears (as an energy) by losing its limits. Some feel not the absorption of the mind-energy into the infinite, but a falling entirely inactive; others feel it as a lapse or disappearance of energy into pure Existence. Some first feel the infinity as a vast existence into which all sinks or disappears, others as you describe it as an infinite ocean of Light above, others as an infinite ocean of Power above. If certain school of Buddhists felt it in their experience as a limitless Shunya, the Vedantists on the contrary see it as a positive Self-Existence featureless and absolute. No doubt the various experiences were erected into various philosophies each putting its conception as definitive; but behind each conception there was such an experience. What you describe as a completely emptied mind-substance devoid of

## *Illusionism and the Supramental Knowledge*

### I

THE Shankara knowledge is, as your Guru pointed out, only one side of the Truth; it is the knowledge of the Supreme as realised by the spiritual Mind through the static silence of the pure Existence. It was because he went by this side only that Shankara was unable to accept or explain the origin of the universe except as illusion, a creation of Maya. Unless one realises the Supreme on the dynamic as well as the static side, one cannot experience the true origin of things and the equal reality of the active Brahman. The Shakti or Power of the Eternal becomes then a power of illusion only and the world becomes incomprehensible, a mystery of cosmic madness, an eternal delirium of the Eternal. Whatever verbal or ideative logic one may bring to support it, this way of seeing the universe explains nothing; it only erects a mental formula of the inexplicable. It is only if you approach the Supreme through his double aspect of Sat and Chit-Shakti, double but inseparable, that the total truth of things can become

manifest to the inner experience. This other side was developed by the Shakta Tantrics. The two together, the Vedantic and the Tantric truth unified, can arrive at the integral knowledge.

But philosophically this is what your Guru's teaching comes to and it is obviously a completer truth and a wider knowledge than that given by the Shankara formula. It is already indicated in the Gita's teaching of the Purushottama and the Parashakti (Adya Shakti) who become the Jiva and upholds the universe. It is evident that Purushottama and Parashakti are both eternal and are inseparable and one in being; the Parashakti manifests the universe, manifests too the Divine in the universe as the Ishwara and Herself appears at His side as the Ishwari Shakti. Or, we may say, it is the Supreme Conscious Power of the Supreme that manifests or puts forth itself as Ishwara Ishwari, Atma Atmashakti, Purusha Prakriti, Jiva Jagat. That is the truth in its completeness as far as the mind can formulate it. In the Supermind these questions do not even arise: for it is the mind that creates the problem by creating oppositions between aspects of the Divine which are not really opposed to each other but are one and inseparable.

This Supramental knowledge has not yet been attained, because the Supermind itself has not been attained, but the reflection of it in intuitive spiritual consciousness is there and that was what was evidently realised in experience by your Guru and what he was

expressing in mental terms in the quoted passage. It is possible to go towards the knowledge by beginning with the experience of dissolution in the One, but on condition that you do not stop there, taking it as the highest Truth, but proceed to realise the same One as the supreme Mother, the Consciousness-Force of the Eternal. If on the other hand, you approach through the Supreme Mother, she will give you the liberation in the silent One also as well as the realisation of the dynamic One, and from that it is easier to arrive at the Truth in which both are one and inseparable. At the same time, the gulf created by mind between the Supreme and His manifestation is bridged, and there is no longer a fissure in the truth which makes all incomprehensible. If in the light of this you examine what your Guru taught, you will see that it is the same thing in less metaphysical language.

As for Adesh, people speak of Adesh without making the necessary distinctions, but these distinctions have to be made. The Divine speaks to us in many ways and it is not always the imperative Adesh that comes. When it does, it is clear and irresistible, the mind has to obey and there is no question possible, even if what comes is contrary to the preconceived ideas of the mental intelligence. But more often what is said is an intimation or even less, a mere indication, which the mind may not follow because it is not impressed with its imperative necessity. It is something offered but not imposed, perhaps

something not even offered but only suggested from the Truth above.

5-1-1936

## *Illusionism and the Supramental Knowledge*

### II

IF Shankara's conception of the undifferentiated pure Consciousness as the Brahman is your view of it, then it is not the path of this Yoga that you should choose; for here the realisation of pure Consciousness and Being is only a first step and not the goal. But an inner creative urge from within can have no place in an undifferentiated Consciousness—all action and creation must necessarily be foreign to it.

I do not base my Yoga on the insufficient ground that the Self (not soul) is eternally free. That affirmation leads to nothing beyond itself, or, if used as a starting-point, it could equally well lead to the conclusion that action and creation have no significance or value. The question is not that but of the meaning of creation, whether there is a Supreme who is not merely a pure undifferentiated Consciousness and being, but the source and support also of the dynamic energy of creation and whether the cosmic existence has for It a significance and a value. That is a question which cannot be settled by metaphysical

logic which deals in words and ideas, but by a spiritual experience which goes beyond Mind and enters into spiritual realities. Each mind is satisfied with its own reasoning, but for spiritual purposes that satisfaction has no validity, except as an indication of how far and on what line each one is prepared to go in the field of spiritual experience. If your reasoning leads you towards the Shankara idea of the Supreme, that might be an indication that the Vedanta Adwaita (Mayavada) is your way of advance.

This Yoga accepts the value of cosmic existence and holds it to be a reality; its object is to enter into a higher Truth-Consciousness or Divine Supramental Consciousness in which action and creation are the expression not of ignorance and imperfection, but of the Truth, the Light, the Divine Ananda. But for that, surrender of the mortal mind, life and body to that Higher Consciousness is indispensable, since it is too difficult for the mortal human being to pass by its own effort beyond mind to a Supramental consciousness in which the dynamism is no longer mental but of quite another power. Only those who can accept the call to such a change should enter into this Yoga.

2-10-1938

## *Illusionist and Realistic Adwaita — Nirvana — Rebirth and Evolution*

I DON'T know that I can help you very much with an answer to your friend's questions. I can only state my own position with regard to these matters.

### 1. *Shankara's Explanation of the Universe*

It is rather difficult to say nowadays what really was Shankara's philosophy: there are numberless exponents and none of them agrees with any of the others. I have read accounts given by some scores of his exegetes and each followed his own line. We are even told by some that he was no Mayavadin at all although he has always been famed as the greatest exponent of the theory of Maya, but rather, the greatest Realist in philosophical history. One eminent follower of Shankara even declared that my philosophy and Shankara's were identical, a statement which rather took my breath away. One used to think that Shankara's

philosophy was this that the Supreme Reality is a spaceless and timeless Absolute (Parabrahman) which is beyond all feature or quality, beyond all action or creation, and that the world is a creation of Maya, not absolutely unreal but real only in time and while one lives in time; once we get into a knowledge of the Reality we perceive that Maya and world and all in it have no abiding or true existence. It is, if not non-existent, yet false, *jaganmithya*; it is a mistake of the consciousness, it is and it is not; it is an irrational and inexplicable mystery in its origin, though we can see its process or at least how it keeps itself imposed on the consciousness. Brahman is seen in Maya as Ishwara upholding the works of Maya and the apparently individual soul is really nothing but Brahman itself. In the end, however, all this seems to be a myth of Maya, *mithya*, and not anything really true. If that is Shankara's philosophy, it is to me unacceptable and incredible, however brilliantly ingenious it may be and however boldly and incisively reasoned; it does not satisfy my reason and it does not agree with my experience.

I don't know exactly what is meant by this *yukti-vada*. If it is meant that it is merely for the sake of arguing down opponents, then this part of the philosophy has no fundamental validity; Shankara's theory destroys itself. Either he meant it as a sufficient explanation of the universe or he did not. If he did, it is no use dismissing it as *Yukti-vada*. I can understand that thoroughgoing Mayavadin's declaration

that the whole question is illegitimate, because Maya and the world do not really exist; in fact the problem how the world came to existence is only a part of Maya, is like Maya unreal and does not truly arise; but if an explanation is to be given it must be a real and valid satisfying explanation. If there are two planes and in putting the question we are confusing the two planes, that argument can only be of value if both planes have some kind of existence and the reasoning and explanation are true in the lower plane but cease to have any meaning for a consciousness which has passed out of it.

## 2. *Adwaita*

People are apt to speak of the Adwaita, as if it were identical with Mayavada monism, just as they speak of Vedanta as if it were identical with Adwaita only; that is not the case. There are several forms of Indian philosophy which base themselves upon the One Reality, but they admit also the reality of the world, the reality of the Many, the reality of the differences of the Many as well as the sameness of the One (*Bhedabheda*). But the Many exist in the One and by the One, the differences are variations in manifestation of that which is fundamentally ever the same. This we actually see as the universal law of existence where oneness is always the basis with an endless multiplicity and difference in the oneness; as for instance there is one mankind but many

kinds of man, one thing called leaf of flower but many forms, patterns, colours of leaf and flower. Through this we can look back into one of the fundamental secrets of existence, the secret which is contained in the one reality itself. The oneness of the Infinite is not something limited, fettered to its unity; it is capable of an infinite multiplicity. The Supreme Reality is an Absolute not limited by either oneness or multiplicity but simultaneously capable of both; for both are its aspects, although the oneness is fundamental and the multiplicity depends upon the oneness.

There is possible a realistic as well as an illusionist Adwaita. The philosophy of the Life Divine is such a realistic Adwaita. The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience. This is what we nowadays call the Inconscient which seems to have created the material universe by its inconscient Energy; but this is only an appearance, for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret intelligence. The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the

world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a Supra-mental consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman. That is the central idea in the explanation of the universe put forward in the Life Divine.

### 3. *Nirguna and Saguna*

In a realistic Adwaita there is no need to regard the Saguna as a creation from the Nirguna or even secondary or subordinate to it: both are equal aspects of the one Reality, its position of silent status and rest and its position of action and dynamic force; a silence of eternal rest and peace supports an eternal action and movement. The one Reality, the Divine being is bound by neither since it is in no way limited;

it possesses both. There is no incompatibility between the two, as there is none between the Many and the One, the sameness and the difference. They are all eternal aspects of the universe which could not exist if either of them were eliminated, and it is reasonable to suppose that they both came from the Reality which has manifested the universe and are both real. We can only get rid of the apparent contradiction—which is not really a contradiction but only a natural concomitance—by treating one or the other as an illusion. But it is hardly reasonable to suppose that the eternal Reality allows the existence of an eternal illusion with which it has nothing to do or that it supports and enforces on being a vain cosmic illusion and has no power for any other and real action. The force of the Divine is always there in silence as in action, inactive in silence, active in the manifestation. It is hardly possible to suppose that the Divine Reality has no power or force or that its only power is to create a universal falsehood, a cosmic lie—*mithya*.

### 4. *Compounds and Disintegration*

No doubt all compounds, being not integral things in themselves but integrations, can disintegrate. Also it is true of life, though not a physical compound, that it has a curve of birth or integration and, after it reaches a certain point, of disintegration, decay and death. But these ideas or this rule of existence cannot

be safely applied to things in themselves. The soul is not a compound but an integer, a thing in itself; it does not disintegrate, but at most enters into manifestation and goes out of manifestation. That is true even of forms other than constructed physical or constructed life-forms; they do not disintegrate but appear and disappear or at most fade out of manifestation. Mind itself as opposed to particular thoughts is something essential and permanent; it is a power of the divine Consciousness. So is life, as opposed to constructed living bodies; so I think is what we call material energy which is really the force of essential substance in motion, a power of the Spirit. Thoughts, lives, material objects are formations of these energies, constructed or simply manifested according to the habit of the play of the particular energy. As for the elements, what is the pure natural condition of an element? According to modern Science what used to be called elements turn out to be compounds and the pure natural condition, if any, must be a condition of pure energy; it is that pure condition into which compounds including what we call elements must go when they pass by disintegration into Nirvana.

##### 5. Nirvana

What then is Nirvana? In orthodox Buddhism it does mean a disintegration, not of the soul—for that does not exist—but of a mental compound or stream of associations or *samskaras* which we mistake

for ourself. In illusionist Vedanta it means, not a disintegration but a disappearance of a false and unreal individual self into the one real self or Brahman; it is the idea and experience of individuality that so disappears and ceases,—we may say a false light that is extinguished (*nirvana*) in the true Light. In spiritual experience it is sometimes the loss of all sense of individuality in a boundless cosmic consciousness; what was the individual remains only as a centre or a channel for the flow of a cosmic consciousness and a cosmic force and action. Or it may be the experience of the loss of individuality in a transcendent being and consciousness in which the sense of cosmos as well as the individual disappears. Or again, it may be in a transcendence which is aware of and supports the cosmic action. But what do we mean by the individual? What we usually call by that name is a natural ego, a device of nature which holds together her action in the mind and body. This ego has to be extinguished, otherwise there is no complete liberation possible; but the individual self or soul is not this ego. The individual soul is the spiritual being which is sometimes described as an eternal portion of the Divine but can also be described as the Divine himself supporting his manifestation as the Many. This is the true spiritual individual which appears in its complete truth when we get rid of the ego and our false separative sense of individuality, realise our oneness with the transcendent and cosmic Divine and with all beings.

It is this which makes possible the Divine Life. Nirvana is a step towards it; the disappearance of the false separative individuality is a necessary condition for our realising and living in our true eternal being, living divinely in the Divine. But this we can do in the world and in life.

### 6. *Rebirth*

If evolution is a truth and is not only a physical evolution of species, but an evolution of consciousness, it must be a spiritual and not only a physical fact. In that case, it is the individual who evolves and grows into a more and more developed and perfect consciousness and obviously that cannot be done in the course of a brief single human life. If there is the evolution of a conscious individual, then there must be rebirth. Rebirth is a logical necessity and a spiritual fact of which we can have the experience. Proofs of rebirth, sometimes of an overwhelmingly convincing nature, are not lacking, but as yet they have not been carefully registered and brought together.

### 7. *Evolution*

In my explanation of the universe I have put forward this cardinal fact of a spiritual evolution as the meaning of our existence here. It is a series of ascents from the physical being and consciousness to

the vital, the being dominated by the life-self, thence to the mental being realised in the fully developed man and thence into the perfect consciousness which is beyond the mental, into the Supramental consciousness and the Supramental being, the Truth-Consciousness which is the integral consciousness of the spiritual being. Mind cannot be our last conscious expression because mind is fundamentally an ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is only the Supramental Truth-Consciousness that can bring us the true and whole Self-Knowledge and world-Knowledge; it is through that only that we can get to our true being and the fulfilment of our spiritual evolution.



### *The Central Aim and Discipline of Yoga*

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 or 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 to-day 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.

7-9-1936

### *The Central Process of the Integral Yoga*

IF one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the 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 *prayopaveshana* (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 comes 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.

### *Divine for Divine's Sake*

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, vastness, 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 surface. 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.

29-10-1935

### *The First Object and the Chief Power of Sadhana*

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, downrushes 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 *nirananda* (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.

## *Yoga and Humanity*

THE idea of usefulness to humanity is the old confusion due to second-hand ideas imported from the West. Obviously, to be "useful" to humanity there is no need of Yoga; everyone who leads the human life is useful to humanity in one way or another.

Yoga is directed towards God, not towards man. If a divine supramental consciousness and power can be brought down and established in the material world, that obviously would mean an immense change for the earth including humanity and its life. But the effect on humanity would only be one result of the change; it cannot be the object of the sadhana. The object of the sadhana can only be to live in the divine consciousness and to manifest it in life.

26-7-1929

### *Our Conception of the Divine*

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 consciously 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.

13-6-1933

### *The Spiritual, the Religious and the Ordinary Human Life*

THE spiritual life (*adhyatma jivan*), the religious life (*dharma jivan*) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three quite different things and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together. The ordinary life is that of the average human consciousness separated from its own true self and from the Divine and led by the common habits of the mind, life and body which are the laws of the Ignorance. The religious life is a movement of the same ignorant human consciousness, turning or trying to turn away from the earth towards the Divine but as yet without knowledge and led by the dogmatic tenets and rules of some sect or creed which claims to have found the way out of the bonds of the earth-consciousness into some beatific Beyond. The religious life may be the first approach to the spiritual, but very often it is only a turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices or set ideas and forms without any issue. The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds

directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.

Morality is a part of the ordinary life; it is an attempt to govern the outward conduct by certain mental rules or to form the character by these rules in the image of a certain mental ideal. The spiritual life goes beyond the mind; it enters into the deeper consciousness of the Spirit and acts out of the truth of the Spirit. As for the question about the ethical life and the need to realise God, it depends on what is meant by fulfilment of the objects of life. If an entry into the spiritual consciousness is part of it, then mere morality will not give it to you.

Politics as such has nothing to do with the spiritual life. If the spiritual man does anything for his country, it is in order to do the will of the Divine and as part of a divinely appointed work and not from any other common human motive. In none of his acts does he proceed from the common mental and vital motives which move ordinary men but acts out of the truth of the Spirit and from an inner command of which he knows the source.

The kind of worship (*pūja*) spoken of in the letter belongs to the religious life. It can, if rightly done

in the deepest religious spirit, prepare the mind and heart to some extent but no more. But if worship is done as a part of meditation or with a true aspiration to the spiritual reality and the spiritual consciousness and with the yearning for contact and union with the Divine, then it can be spiritually effective.

If you have a sincere aspiration to the spiritual change in your heart and soul, then you will find the way and the Guide. A mere mental seeking and questioning are not enough to open the doors of the Spirit.

### *Mental Ideas and Yoga*

YOGA is not a thing of ideas but of inner spiritual experience. Merely to be attracted to any set of religious or spiritual ideas does not bring with it any realisation. Yoga means a change of consciousness; a mere mental activity will not bring a change of consciousness, it can only bring a change of mind. And if your mind is sufficiently mobile, it will go on changing from one thing to another till the end without arriving at any sure way or any spiritual harbour. The mind can think and doubt and question and accept and withdraw its acceptance, make formations and unmake them, pass decisions and revoke them, judging always on the surface and by surface indications and therefore never coming to any deep and firm experience of Truth, but by itself it can do no more. There are only three ways by which it can make itself a channel or instrument of Truth. Either it must fall silent in the Self and give room for a wider and greater consciousness; or it must make itself passive to an inner Light and allow that Light to use it as a means of expression; or else it must itself change from the questioning

intellectual superficial mind it now is to an intuitive intelligence, a mind of vision fit for the direct perception of the divine Truth.

If you want to do anything in the path of Yoga, you must fix once for all what way you mean to follow. It is no use setting your face towards the future and then always looking back towards the past; in this way you will arrive nowhere. If you are tied to your past, return to it and follow the way you then choose; but if you choose this way instead, you must give yourself to it single-mindedly and not look back at every moment.

11-5-1931

### *Yoga and Action*

ALL this insistence upon action is absurd if one has not the light by which to act. "Yoga must include life and not exclude it" does not mean that we are bound to accept life as it is with all its stumbling ignorance and misery and the obscure confusion of human will and reason and impulse and instinct which it expresses. The advocates of action think that by human intellect and energy making an always new rush, everything can be put right; the present state of the world after a development of the intellect and a stupendous output of energy for which there is no historical parallel is a signal proof of the emptiness of the illusion under which they labour. Yoga takes the stand that it is only by a change of consciousness that the true basis of life can be discovered; from within outward is indeed the rule. But within does not mean some quarter inch behind the surface. One must go deep and find the soul, the self, the Divine Reality within us and only then can life become a true expression of what we can be instead of a blind and always repeated confused blur of the inadequate and imperfect

thing we were. The choice is between remaining in the old jumble and groping about in the [hope of stumbling on some discovery or standing back and seeking the Light within till we discover and can build the God-head within and without us.

16-6-1932

### *Divinisation of Life*

I SEND you the promised letter today; you will see that it is less a reply to the exact terms of your letter than a "defence of the gospel of divinisation of life" against the strictures and the incomprehensions of the mentality (or more often the vitality) that either misunderstands or shrinks from it—or perhaps misunderstands because it shrinks, and shrinks too because it misunderstands both my method and my object. It is not a complete defence, but only raises or answers a main point here and there. The rest will come hereafter.

But all language is open to misunderstanding; so I had better in sending on the letter make or try to make certain things clear.

Although I have laid stress on things divine in answer to an excessive (because contrary) insistence on things human, it must not be understood that I reject every thing human,—human love or worship or any helpful form of human approach as part of the Yoga. I have never done so, otherwise the Ashram could not be in existence. The sadhakas who enter the

Yoga are human beings and if they were not allowed a human approach at the beginning and long after, they would not be able to start the Yoga or would not be able to continue it. The discussion arises only because the word "human" is used in practice, not only as identical with the human vital (and the outward mind), but with certain forms of human vital ego-nature. But the human vital has many other things in it and is full of excellent material. All that is asked by the Yoga is that this material should be utilised in the right way and with the right spiritual attitude and also, that the human approach to the Divine should not be constantly turned into a human revolt and reproach against it. And that too we ask only for the success of the approach itself and of the human being who is making it.

Divinisation itself does not mean the destruction of the human elements; it means taking them up, showing them the way to their own perfection, raising them by purification and perfection to their full power and Ananda and that means the raising of the whole of earthly life to its full power and Ananda.

If there were not a resistance in vital human nature, a pressure of forces adverse to the change, forces which delight in imperfection and even in perversion, this change would effect itself without difficulty by a natural and painless flowering—as, for example, your own powers of poetry and music have flowered out here with rapidity and ease under the light and rain of a spiritual and psychic influence—because every-

thing in you desired that change and your vital was willing to recognise imperfections, to throw away any wrong attitude—e.g. the desire for mere fame, and to be dedicated and perfect. Divinisation of life means, in fact, a greater art of life; for the present art of life produced by ego and ignorance is something comparatively mean, crude and imperfect (like the lower forms of art, music and literature which are yet more attractive to the ordinary human mind and vital), and it is by a spiritual and psychic opening and refinement that it has to reach its true perfection. This can only be done by its being steeped in the divine Light and Flame in which its material will be stripped of all heavy dross and turned into the true metal.

Unfortunately, there is the resistance, a very obscure and obstinate resistance. That necessitates a negative element in the Yoga, an element of rejection of things that stand in the way and—pressure upon those forms that are crude and useless to disappear, on those that are useful but imperfect or have been perverted to retain or to recover their true movement. To the vital this pressure is painful, first, because it is obscure and does not understand and, secondly, because there are parts of it that want to be left to their crude motions and not to change. That is why the intervention of a psychic attitude is so helpful. For the psychic has the happy confidence, the ready understanding and response, the spontaneous surrender; it knows that the touch of the Guru is

meant to help and not to hurt, or, like Radha in the poem, that whatever the Beloved does is meant to lead to the Divine Rapture.

At the same time, it is not from the negative part of the movement that you have to judge the Yoga, but from its positive side; for the negative part is temporary and transitional and will disappear, the positive alone counts for the ideal and for the future. If you take conditions which belong to the negative side and to a transitional movement as the law of the future and the indication of the character of the Yoga, you will commit a serious misjudgement, a grave mistake. This Yoga is not a rejection of life or of closeness and intimacy between the Divine and the sadhakas. Its ideal aims at the greatest closeness and unity on the physical as well as the other planes, at the most divine largeness and fullness and joy of life.

14-1-1932

### *Vairagya in Yoga*

I HAVE objected in the past to vairagya of the ascetic kind and the tamasic kind. . . . The vairagya of one who has tasted the world's gifts or prizes but found them insufficient or tasteless and turns away towards a higher ideal or the vairagya of one who has done his part in life's battles but seen that something greater is demanded of the soul, is perfectly helpful and a good gate to the Yoga. . . . By ascetic vairagya I mean that which denies life and world altogether and wants to disappear into the Indefinable—I object to it because my aim is to bring the Divine into life. But if one is satisfied with life as it is, then there is no reason to seek to bring the Divine into life. So vairagya in the sense of dissatisfaction with life as it is is perfectly admissible and even in a certain sense indispensable for my yoga.

4-5-1934

*The Only Truth*

IT is a lesson of life that always in this world everything fails a man—only the Divine does not fail him, if he turns entirely to the Divine. It is not because there is something bad in you that blows fall on you—blows fall on all human beings because they are full of desire for things that cannot last and they lose them or, even if they get, it brings disappointment and cannot satisfy them. To turn to the Divine is the only truth in life.

21-4-1933

4-2-1934

*IV*

*Parts of Total Consciousness*

*Consciousness*

I

CONSCIOUSNESS is not, to my experience, a phenomenon dependent on the reactions of personality to the forces of Nature and amounting to no more than a seeing or interpretation of these reactions. If that were so, then when the personality becomes silent and immobile and gives no reactions, as there would be no seeing or interpretative action, there would therefore be no consciousness. That contradicts some of the fundamental experiences of Yoga, e.g., a silent and immobile consciousness infinitely spread out, not dependent on the personality but impersonal and universal, not seeing and interpreting contacts but motionlessly self-aware, not dependent on the reactions, but persistent in itself even when no reactions take place. The subjective personality itself is only a formation of consciousness which is a power inherent, not in the activity of the temporary manifested personality, but in the being, the Self or Purusha.

Consciousness is a reality inherent in existence. It is there even when it is not active on the surface,

but silent and immobile; it is there even when it is invisible on the surface, not reacting on outward things or sensible to them, but withdrawn and either active or inactive within; it is there even when it seems to us to be quite absent and the being to our view unconscious and inanimate.

Consciousness is not only power of awareness of self and things, it is or has also a dynamic and creative energy. It can determine its own reactions or abstain from reactions; it can not only answer to forces, but create or put out from itself forces. Consciousness is Chit but also Chit Shakti.

Consciousness is usually identified with mind, but mental consciousness is only the human range which no more exhausts all the possible ranges of consciousness than human sight exhausts all the gradations of colour or human hearing all the gradations of sound—for there is much above or below that is to man invisible and inaudible. So there are ranges of consciousness above and below the human range, with which the normal human has no contact and they seem to it unconscious,—supramental or overmental and submental ranges.

When Yajnavalkya says there is no consciousness in the Brahman state, he is speaking of consciousness as the human being knows it. The Brahman state is that of a supreme existence supremely aware of itself, *swayamprakasha*,—it is Sachchidananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Even if it be spoken of as beyond that, *paratparam*, it does not mean that it is a state

of Non-existence or Non-consciousness, but beyond even the highest spiritual substratum (the “foundation above” in the luminous paradox of the Rig Veda) of cosmic existence and consciousness. As it is evident from the description of Chinese Tao and the Buddhist Shunya that that is a Nothingness in which all is, so with the negation of consciousness here. Superconscious and subconscient are only relative terms; as we rise into the superconscious we see that it is a consciousness greater than the highest we yet have and therefore in our normal state inaccessible to us and, if we can go down into the subconscient, we find there a consciousness other than our own at its lowest mental limit and therefore ordinarily inaccessible to us. The Inconscient itself is only an involved state of consciousness which like the Tao or Shunya, though in a different way, contains all things suppressed within it so that under a pressure from above or within all can evolve out of it—“an inert Soul with a somnambulist Force.”

The gradations of consciousness are universal states not dependent on the outlook of the subjective personality; rather the outlook of the subjective personality is determined by the grade of consciousness in which it is organised according to its typical nature or its evolutionary stage.

It will be evident that by consciousness is meant something which is essentially the same throughout but variable in status, condition and operation, in which in some grades or conditions the activities we call

consciousness can exist either in a suppressed or an unorganised or a differently organised state; while in other states some other activities may manifest which in us are suppressed, unorganised or latent or else are less perfectly manifested, less intensive, extended and powerful than in those higher grades above our highest mental limit.

13-10-1935

## Consciousness

### II

CONSCIOUSNESS has no need of a clear individual "I" to dispose variously the centralising stress,—wherever the stress is put the "I" attaches itself to that, so that one thinks of oneself as a mental being or physical being or whatever it may be. The consciousness in me can dispose its stress in this way or the other way—it may go down into the physical and work there in the physical nature keeping all the rest behind or above for the time or it may go up into the overhead level and stand above mind, life and body seeing them as instrumental lower forms of itself or not seeing them at all and merged in the free undifferentiated Self or it may throw itself into an active dynamic cosmic consciousness and identify with that or do any number of other things without resorting to the help of this much overrated and meddling fly on the wheel which you call the clear individual "I". The real "I"—if you want to use that word—is not "clear individual," that is, a clear-cut limited separative ego, it is as wide as the universe and wider and can

contain the universe in itself, but that is not the Ahankar, it is the Atman.

Consciousness is a fundamental thing, the fundamental thing in existence—it is the energy, the motion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it—not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself. For instance, when consciousness in its movement or rather a certain stress of movement forgets itself in the action it becomes an apparently “unconscious” energy; when it forgets itself in the form it becomes the electron, the atom, the material object. In reality it is still consciousness that works in the energy and determines the form and the evolution of form. When it wants to liberate itself, slowly, evolutionarily, out of matter, but still in the form, it emerges as life, as animal, as man and it can go on evolving itself still farther out of its involution and become something more than mere man. If you can grasp that, then it ought not to be difficult to see further that it can subjectively formulate itself as a physical, a vital, a mental, a psychic consciousness—all these are present in man, but as they are all mixed up together in the external consciousness with their real status behind in the inner being, one can only become fully aware of them by releasing the original limiting stress of the consciousness which makes us live in our external being and become awake and centred within in the inner being. As the consciousness in us, by its external concentration or stress, has to put all these things

behind—behind a wall or veil, it has to break down the wall or veil and get back in its stress into these inner parts of existence—that is what we call living within; then our external being seems to us something small and superficial, we are or can become aware of the large and rich and inexhaustible kingdom within. So also consciousness in us has drawn a lid or covering or whatever one likes to call it between the lower planes of mind, life, body supported by the psychic and the higher plane which contain the spiritual kingdoms where the self is always free and limitless, and it can break or open the lid or covering and ascend there and become the Self free and wide and luminous or else bring down the influence, reflection, finally even the presence and power of the higher consciousness into the lower nature.

Now that is what consciousness is—it is not composed of parts, it is fundamental to being and itself formulates any parts it chooses to manifest—developing them from above downward by a progressive coming down from spiritual levels towards involution in matter or formulating them in an upward working in the front by what we call evolution. If it chooses to work in you through the sense of ego, you think that it is the clear-cut individual “I” that does everything—if it begins to release itself from that limited working, you begin to expand your sense of “I” till it bursts into infinity and no longer exists or you shed it and flower into spiritual wideness. Of course, this is not what is spoken of in modern materialistic thought

as consciousness, because that thought is governed by science and sees consciousness only as a phenomenon that emerges out of inconscient Matter and consists of certain reactions of the system to outward things. But that is a phenomenon of consciousness, it is not consciousness itself, it is even only a very small part of the possible phenomenon of consciousness and can give no clue to Consciousness the Reality which is of the very essence of existence.

That is all at present. You will have to fix yourself in that—for it is fundamental—before it can be useful to go any farther.

18-7-1937

### *Supracosmic Reality, Supermind and Overmind, Cosmic Consciousness and Nirvana*

I MEAN by the supracosmic Reality the supreme Sachchidananda who is above this and all manifestation, not bound by any, yet from whom all manifestation proceeds and all universe.

2. The supramental and the supracosmic are not the same. If it were so there could be no Supramental world and no descent of the Supramental principle into the material world—we would be brought back to the idea that the divine Truth and Reality can only exist beyond and the universe—any universe—can only be half truth or an illusion of ignorance.

3. I mean by the Supramental the Truth Consciousness whether above or in the universe by which the Divine knows not only his own essence and being but his manifestation also. Its fundamental character is knowledge by identity, by that the Self is known, the Divine Sachchidananda is known, but also the truth of manifestation is known because this too is

That—*sarvam khalvidam brahma, vasudevah sarvam*, etc. Mind is an instrument of the Ignorance trying to know—Supermind is the Knower possessing knowledge, because one with it and the known, therefore seeing all things in the light of His own Truth, the light of their true self which is He. It is a dynamic and not only a static Power, not only a Knowledge, but a Will according to Knowledge—there is a Supramental Power or Shakti which can manifest direct its world of Light and Truth in which all is luminously based on the harmony and unity of the One, not disturbed by a veil of Ignorance or any disguise. The Supermind therefore does not transcend all possible manifestation, but it is above the triplicity of mind, life and matter which is our present experience of this manifestation.

4. The Overmind is a sort of delegation from the Supermind (this is a metaphor only) which supports the present evolutionary universe in which we live here in Matter. If Supermind were to start here from the beginning as the direct creative Power, a world of the kind we see now would be impossible; it would have been full of the divine Light from the beginning, there would be no involution in the inconscience of Matter, consequently no gradual striving evolution of consciousness in Matter. A line is therefore drawn between the higher half of the universe of consciousness, *parardha*, and the lower half, *aparardha*. The higher half is constituted of Sat, Chit, Ananda, Mahas (the Supramental)—the lower half

of mind, life, matter. This line is the intermediary Overmind which, though luminous itself, keeps from us the full indivisible Supramental Light, depends on it indeed, but in receiving it, divides, distributes, breaks it up into separated aspects, powers, multiplicities of all kinds, each of which it is possible by a farther diminution of consciousness such as we reach in Mind to regard as the sole or the chief Truth and all the rest as subordinate or contradictory to it. To this action of the Overmind may be applied the words of the Upanishad, "The face of the Truth is covered by a golden Lid", or those of the Vedic *ritena ritam apihitam*. Here there is the working of a sort of *Vidya-avidyamayi Maya* which makes possible the predominance of *Avidya*. It is by this primitive divisional principle that the Mind is enabled to regard, for example, the Impersonal as the Truth, the Personal as only a mask or the personal Divine as the greatest Truth and impersonality as only an aspect; it is so too that all the conflicting philosophies and religions arise, each exalting one aspect or potentiality of Truth presented to Mind as the whole sufficient explanation of things or exalting one of the Divine's Godheads above all others as the true God than whom there can be no other or none so high or higher. This divisional principle pursues man's mental knowledge everywhere and even when he thinks he has arrived at the final unity, it is only a constructed unity, based on an Aspect. It is so that the scientist seeks to found the unity of knowledge

on some original physical aspect of things, Energy or Matter, Electricity or Ether, or the Mayavadin thinks he has arrived at the absolute Adwaita by cutting existence into two, calling the upper side Brahman and the lower side Maya. It is the reason why mental knowledge can never arrive at a final solution of anything, for the aspects of Existence as distributed by Overmind are numberless and one can go on multiplying philosophies and religions for ever.

In the Overmind itself there is not this confusion, for the Overmind knows the One as the support, essence, fundamental power of all things, but in the dynamic play proper to it it lays emphasis on its divisional power of multiplicity and seeks to give each power or Aspect its full chance to manifest, relying on the underlying Oneness to prevent disharmony or conflict. Each Godhead, as it were, creates his own world, but without conflict with others; each Aspect, each Idea, each Force of things can be felt in its full separate energy or splendour and work out its values, but this does not create a disharmony, because the Overmind has the sense of the Infinite and in the true (not spatial) Infinite many concurring Infinites are possible. This peculiar security of Overmind is however not transferable to the lesser planes of consciousness which it supports and governs, because as one descends in the scale the stress on division and multiplicity increases and in the Mind the underlying oneness becomes vague, abstract,

indeterminate and indeterminable and the only apparent concreteness is that of the phenomenal which is by its nature a form and representation—the self-view of the One has already begun to disappear. Mind acts by representations and constructions, by the separation and weaving together of its constructed data; it can make a synthetic construction and see it as the whole, but when it looks for the reality of things, it takes refuge in abstractions—it has not the concrete vision, experience, contact sought by the mystic and the spiritual seeker. To know Self and Reality directly or truly, it has to be silent and reflect some light of these things or undergo self-exceeding and transformation, and this is only possible either by a higher Light descending into it or by its ascent, the taking up or immergence of it into a higher Light of existence. In Matter, descending below Mind, we arrive at the acme of fragmentation and division; the One, though secretly there, is lost to knowledge and we get the fullness of the Ignorance, even a fundamental Inconscience out of which the universe has to evolve consciousness and knowledge.

5. If we regard Vaikuntha or Goloka each as the world of a Divinity, Vishnu or Krishna, we would be naturally led to seek its place or its origin in the Overmind plane. The Overmind is the plane of the highest worlds of the Gods. But Vaikuntha and Goloka are human conceptions of states of being that are beyond humanity. Goloka is evidently a world of Love, Beauty and Ananda full of spiritual

radiances (the cow is the symbol of spiritual Light) of which the souls there are keepers or possessors, Gopas and Gopis. It is not necessary to assign any single plane to this manifestation—in fact there can be a reflection or possession of it or of its conditions on any plane of consciousness—the mental, vital or even the subtle physical plane. The explanation of it which you mention is not therefore excluded, it is quite feasible.

6. It is not possible to situate Nirvana as a world or plane, for the Nirvana push is to a withdrawal from world and world-values; it is therefore a state of consciousness or rather of superconsciousness without habitation or level. There is more than one kind of Nirvana (extinction or dissolution) possible. Man being a mental being in a body, *manomaya purusha*, makes this attempt at retreat from the cosmos through the spiritualised mind, he cannot do otherwise and it is this that gives it the appearance of an extinction or dissolution, *laya, nirvana*; for extinction of the mind and all that depends on it including the separative ego in something Beyond is the natural way, almost the indispensable way for such a withdrawal. In a more affirmative Yoga seeking transcendence but not withdrawal there would not be this indispensability, for there would be the way already alluded to of self-exceeding or transformation of the mental being. But it is possible also to pass to that through a certain experience of Nirvana, an absolute silence of mind and cessation

of activities, constructions, representations, which can be so complete that not only to the silent mind but also to the passive senses the whole world is emptied of its solidity and reality and things appear only as unsubstantial forms without any real habitations or else floating in Something that is a nameless infinite: this infinite or else something still beyond is That which alone is real; an absolute calm, peace liberation would be the resulting state. Action would continue, but no initiation or participation in it by the silent liberated consciousness; a nameless power would do all until there began the descent from above which would transform the consciousness, making its silence and freedom a basis for a luminous knowledge, action, Ananda. But such a passage would be rare; ordinarily a silence of the mind, a liberation of the consciousness, a renunciation of its belief in the final value or truth of the mind's imperfect representations or constructions would be enough for the higher working to be possible.

7. Now about the cosmic consciousness and Nirvana. Cosmic consciousness is a complex matter. To begin with, there are two sides to it, the experience of the Self free, infinite, silent, inactive, one in all and beyond all and the direct experience of the cosmic Energy and its forces, workings and formations, this latter experience not being complete till one has the sense of being commensurate with the universe or pervading, exceeding and containing it. Till then there may be direct contacts, communications,

interchanges with cosmic forces, beings, movements, but not the full unity of mind with the cosmic Mind, of life with the cosmic Life, of body and physical consciousness with the cosmic material Energy and its substance. Again there may be a realisation of the Cosmic Self which is not followed by the realisation of the dynamic universal oneness. Or, on the contrary, there may be some dynamic universalising of consciousness without the experience of the free static Self omnipresent everywhere,—the preoccupation with and pleasure of the greater energies that one would thus experience would stop the way to that liberation. Also the identification or universalisation may be more on one plane or level than on another, predominantly mental or predominantly emotional (through universal sympathy or love) or vital of another kind (experience of the universal life forces) or physical. But in any case, even with the full realisation and experience it should be evident that this cosmic play would be something that one would finally feel as limited, ignorant, imperfect from its very nature. The free soul might regard it untouched and unmoved by its imperfections and vicissitudes, do some appointed work, try to help all or be an instrument of the Divine, but neither the work nor the instrumentation would have anything like the perfection or even the full light, power, bliss of the Divine. This could only be gained by an ascension into higher planes of cosmic existence or their descent into one's consciousness

--and, if this were not envisaged or accepted, the push to Nirvana would still remain as a way of escape. The other way would be the ascent after death into these higher planes—the heavens of the religions signify after all nothing but such an urge to a greater, luminous, beatific Divine Existence.

But, one might ask, if the higher planes or if the Overmind itself were to manifest their consciousness with all their power, light, freedom and vastness and these things were to descend into an individual consciousness here, would not that make unnecessary both the cosmic negation or the Nirvanic push and the urge towards some Divine Transcendence? But in the result though one might live in a union with the Divine in a luminous wide free consciousness embracing the universe in itself and be a channel of great energies or creations, spiritual or external, yet this world here would remain fundamentally the same—there would be a gulf of difference between the Spirit within and its medium and stuff on which it acted, between the inner consciousness and the world in which it is working. The achievement inner, subjective, individual might be perfect, but the dynamic outcome insufficient, disparate, a mixture, not a perfect harmony of the inner and the outer, a new integral rhythm of existence here that could be called truly divine. Only a consciousness like the Supramental, unconditioned and in perfect unity with its source, a Truth-Consciousness empowered to create its own free determinations would

be able to establish some perfect harmony and rhythm of the higher hemisphere in this lowest rung of the lower hemisphere. Whether it is to do so or not depends on the significance of the evolutionary existence; it depends on whether that existence is something imperfect in its very nature and doomed to frustration—in which case either a negative way of transcendence by some kind of Nirvana or a positive way of transcendence, perhaps by breaking the shining shield of Overmind, *hiranmaya patra*, into what is above it, would be the final end of the soul escaping from this meaningless universe; unless indeed like the Amitabha Buddha one were held by compassion or else the Divine Will within to continue helping and sharing the upward struggle towards the Light of those here still in the darkness of the Ignorance. If, on the contrary, this world is a Lila of spiritual involution and evolution in which one power after another upto the highest is to appear as Matter, Life and Mind have already appeared out of an apparent indeterminate Inconscience, then another culmination is possible.

The push to Nirvana has two motive forces behind it. One is the sense of the imperfection, sorrow, death, suffering of this world—the original motive force of the Buddha. But for escape from these afflictions Nirvana might not be necessary, if there are higher worlds into which one can ascend where there is no such imperfection, sorrow, death or suffering. But this other possibility of escape is met by the idea that these higher worlds

too are transient and part of the Ignorance, that one has to return here always till one overcomes the Ignorance, that the Reality and the cosmic existence are as Truth and Falsehood, opposite, incompatible. This brings in the second motive force, that of the call to transcendence. If the Transcendent is not only supracosmic but an aloof Incommunicable, *avyavahar-yam*, which one cannot reach except by a negation of all that is here, then some kind of Nirvana, an absolute Nirvana even is inevitable. If, on the other hand, the Divine is transcendent but not incommunicable, the call will still be there and the soul will leave the chequered cosmic play for the beatitude of the transcendent existence, but an absolute Nirvana would not be indispensable; a beatific union with the Divine offers itself as the way before the seeker. This is the reason why the Cosmic Consciousness is not sufficient and the push away from it is so strong,—it is only if the golden lid of the Overmind is overpassed and opened and the dynamic contact with the Supermind and a descent of its Light and Power here is intended that it can be otherwise.

25-6-1937

### *Supermind and Overmind*

BY the Supermind is meant the full Truth-consciousness of the Divine Nature in which there can be no place for the principle of division and ignorance; it is always a full light and knowledge superior to all mental substance or mental movement. Between the Supermind and the human mind are a number of ranges, planes or layers of consciousness—one can regard it in various ways—in which the element or substance of mind and consequently its movements also become more and more illumined and powerful and wide. The Overmind is the highest of these ranges; it is full of lights and powers; but from the point of view of what is above it, it is the line of the soul's turning away from the complete and indivisible knowledge and its descent towards the Ignorance. For although it draws from the Truth, it is here that begins the separation of aspects of the Truth, the forces and their working out as if they were independent truths and this is a process that ends, as one descends to ordinary Mind, Life and Matter, in a complete division, fragmentation,

separation from the indivisible Truth above. There is no longer the essential, total, perfectly harmonising and unifying knowledge, or rather knowledge for ever harmonious because for ever one, which is the character of Supermind. In the Supermind, mental divisions and oppositions cease, the problems created by our dividing and fragmenting mind disappear and Truth is seen as a luminous whole. In the Overmind there is not yet the actual fall into Ignorance, but the first step is taken which will make the fall inevitable.

\*

\* \*

The Supermind is the One Truth deploying and determining the manifestation of its Powers—all these Powers working as a multiple Oneness, in harmony, without opposition or collision, according to the One Will inherent in all. The Overmind takes these Truths and Powers and sets each working as a force in itself with its necessary consequences—there can be harmony in their action, but it is rather synthetic and mostly partial than inherent and inevitable and as one descends from the highest Overmind, separation, collision and conflict of forces increase, separability dominates, ignorance grows, existence becomes a clash of possibilities, a mixture of conflicting half-truths, an unsolved and apparently unsolvable riddle and puzzle.

\*

\* \*

It is (sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly) by the power of the Overmind releasing the mind from its close partitions that the cosmic consciousness opens in the seeker and he becomes aware of the cosmic spirit and the play of the cosmic forces.

It is from or at least through the Overmind plane that the original pre-arrangement of things in this world is effected; for from it the determining vibrations come. But there are corresponding movements on all the planes, the mind, the vital, the physical even and it is possible in a very clear or illumined condition of the lower consciousness to become aware of these movements and understand the plan of things and be either a conscious instrument or even, to a limited extent, a determinant Will or Force. But the stuff of the lower planes always mixes with the Overmind forces when they descend and diminishes or even falsifies and perverts their truth and power.

It is even possible for the Overmind to transmit to the lower planes of consciousness something of the Supramental Light; but, so long as the Supermind does not directly manifest, its Light is modified in the Overmind itself and still further modified in the application by the needs, the demands, the circumscribing possibilities of the individual nature. The success of this diminished and modified Light e.g. in purifying the physical, cannot be immediate and absolute as the full and direct Supramental action would be; it is still relative, conditioned by

the individual nature and the balance of the universal forces, resisted by adverse powers, balked of its perfect result by the unwillingness of the lower workings to cease, limited either in its scope or in its efficacy by the want of a complete consent in the physical nature.

### *The Jivatman*

WELL, it is a little difficult to explain. Perhaps the best thing is to break up my answer into a number of separate statements, for the whole thing has got too complicated to do otherwise.

1. It is impossible to equate my conception or experience of the Jivatman with the pure "I" of the Adwaita, by which you mean, I suppose, something which says "I am He" and by that perception merges itself into the Brahman. According to the Adwaita of the Mayavadins this Jivatman, like the Ishwara himself, is simply an appearance of the Brahman in illusory Maya. There is no Ishwara, Lord of the world, because there is no world—except in Maya; so too there is no Jivatman, only the Paramatman illusorily perceived as an individual self by the lower (illusory) consciousness in Maya. Those, on the other hand, who wish to unite with the Ishwara, regard or experience the Jiva either as a separate being dependent on the Ishwara or as something one in essence with him, yet different, but this difference like the essential oneness is eternal—and there are

also other ideas of the Jivatman and its relation to the Divine or Supreme. So this pure "I", if that is how it is to be described, presents itself differently, in different aspects, one may say, to different people. If you ask why, I refer you to my answer to X. The Overmind presents the truth of things in all sorts of aspects and the mind, even the spiritual mind, fastens on one or the other as the very truth, the one real truth of the matter. It is the mind that makes these differences, but that does not matter, because, through its own way of seeing and experiencing the soul or individualised consciousness or whatever you may like to call it, the mental being goes where it has to go. I hope this much is clear as the first step in the matter.

2. I do not dispute at all the fact that one can realise the Self, the Brahman or the Ishwara without going into the overhead regions, the dynamic spiritual planes, or stationing oneself permanently above the body as happens in this Yoga. Even if it is done through the Sahasrara, well, the Sahasrara extends to the spiritualised mind and can be felt in the top of the head, so any ascent above is not indispensable. But, apart from that, one can very well, as you say, realise the Atman if one stands back from the mind and heart, detaches oneself from the parts of Prakriti, ceases to identify oneself with mind, life and body, falls into an inner silence. One need not even explore the kingdoms of the inner mind or inner vital, still less is it compulsory to spread one's wings in ranges

above. The Self is everywhere and by entering into full detachment and silence, or even by either detachment or silence, one can get anywhere some glimpse, some reflection, perhaps even a full reflection, or a sense of the Self's presence or of one's own immergence in that which is free, wide, silent, eternal, infinite. Obviously if it is a pure "I", of whatever nature, which gets the experience, it must be looked on by the consciousness that has the realisation as the individual self of the Being, Jivatman.

3. One can also have the experience of oneself as not the mind but the thinker, not the heart but the self or "I" which supports the feelings, not the life but that which supports life, not the body but that which assumes a body. This self can be obviously dynamic as well as silent; or else you may say that, even though still and immobile, from its silence it originates the dynamism of Nature. One can also feel this to be the Spirit one in all as well as the true "I" in oneself. All depends on the experience. Very usually, it is the experience of the Purusha, often felt first as the Witness silent, upholding all the nature; but the Purusha can also be experienced as the Knower and the Ishwara. Sometimes it is as or through the mental Purusha in one centre or another, sometimes as or through the vital Purusha that one can become aware of one's self or spirit. It is also possible to become aware of the secret psychic being within by itself as the true individual; or one can be aware of the psychic being as the pure "I" with these others

standing in mind or vital as representatives in these domains or on these levels. According to one's experience one may speak of any of these as the Jiva or pure "I" (this last is a very dubious phrase) or the true Person or true Individual who knows himself as one with or a portion of or wholly dependent on the universal or transcendent Being and seeks to merge himself in that or ascend to that and be it or live in oneness with it. All these things are quite possible without any need of the overhead experience or of the stable overhead Permanence.

4. One may ask, first, why not then say that the Jivatman which can be realised in this way is the pure "I" of which the lower self has the experience and through which it gets its salvation; and, secondly, what need is there of going into the overhead planes at all? Well, in the first place, this pure "I" does not seem to be absolutely necessary as an intermediary of the liberation whether into the impersonal Self or Brahman or into whatever is eternal. The Buddhists do not admit any soul or self or any experience of the pure "I"; they proceed by dissolving the consciousness into a bundle of samskaras, get rid of the samskaras and so are liberated into some Permanent which they refuse to describe or some Shunya. So the experience of a pure "I" or Jivatman is not binding on everyone who wants liberation into the Eternal but is content to get it without rising beyond the spiritualised mind into a higher Light above. I myself had my experience of Nirvana and silence in the

Brahman, etc. long before there was any knowledge of the overhead spiritual planes; it came first simply by an absolute stillness and blotting out as it were of all mental, emotional and other inner activities—the body continued indeed to see, walk, speak and do its other business but as an empty automatic machine and nothing more. I did not become aware of any pure “I” nor even of any self, impersonal or other,—there was only an awareness of That as the sole Reality, all else being quite unsubstantial, void, non-real. As to what realised that Reality, it was a nameless consciousness which was not other than That;\* one could perhaps say this, though hardly even so much as this, since there was no mental concept of it, but not more. Neither was I aware of any lower soul or outer self called by such and such a personal name that was performing this feat of arriving at the consciousness of Nirvana. Well, then what becomes of your pure “I” and lower “I” in all that? Consciousness (not this or that part of consciousness or an “I” of any kind) suddenly emptied itself of all inner contents and remained aware only of unreal surroundings and of Something real but ineffable. You may say that there must have been a consciousness aware of a some perceiving existence, if not of a pure “I”, but, if so, it was something for which these names seem inadequate.

\*Mark that I did not think these things, there were no thoughts or concepts nor did they present themselves like that to any Me; it simply just was so or was self-apparently so.

5. I have said the overhead ascension is not indispensable for the usual spiritual purposes,—but it is indispensable for the purposes of this Yoga. For its aim is to become aware of and liberate and transform and unite all the being in the light of a Truth-consciousness which is above and cannot be reached if there is no entirely inward-going and no transcending and upward-going movement. Hence all the complexity of my psychological statements as a whole, not new in essence—for much of it occurs in the Upanishads and elsewhere, but new in its fullness of collective statement and its developments directed towards an integral Yoga. It is not necessary for anyone to accept it unless he concurs in the aim; for other aims it is unnecessary and may very well be excessive.

6. But when one *has* made the inner exploration and the ascension, when one's consciousness is located above, one cannot be expected to see things precisely as they are seen from below. The Jivatman is for me the Unborn who presides over the individual being and its developments, associated with it but above it and them and who by the very nature of his existence knows himself as universal and transcendent no less than individual and feels the Divine to be his origin, the truth of his being, the master of his nature, the very stuff of his existence. He is plunged in the Divine and one with the Eternal for ever, aware of his own expression and instrumental dynamism which is the Divine's, dependent in love and delight, with adoration

on That with which yet through that love and delight he is one, capable of relation in oneness, harmonic in this many-sidedness without contradiction, because this is another consciousness and existence than that of the mind, even of the spiritualised mind; it is an intrinsic consciousness of the Infinite, infinite not only in essence but in capacity, which can be to its own self-awareness all things and yet forever the same and one. The triune realisation, therefore, full of difficulties for the mind, is quite natural, easy, indisputable to the Supramental consciousness or, generally, to the consciousness of the upper hemisphere. It can be seen and felt as knowledge in all the spiritual planes, but the completely indivisible knowledge, the full dynamics of it can only be realised through the Supramental consciousness itself on its own plane or by its descent here.

7. The description of a pure "I" is quite insufficient to describe the realisation of the Jivatman—it is rather describable as the true Person or Divine Individual, though that too is not adequate. The word "I" always comes with an undersuggestion of ego, of separateness; but there is no separateness in this self-vision, for the individual here is a spiritual living centre of action for the One and feels no separation from all that is the One.

8. The Jivatman has its representative power in the individual nature here; this power is the Purusha upholding the Prakriti—centrally in the psychic, more instrumentally in the mind, vital and

physical being and nature. It is therefore possible to regard these or any of them as if they were the Jiva here. All the same I am obliged to make a distinction not only for clear thinking but because of the necessity of experience and integral dynamic self-knowledge without which it is difficult to carry through this Yoga. It is not indispensable to formulate mentally to oneself all this, one can have the experience and, if one sees clearly with an inner perception, it is sufficient for progress towards the goal. Nevertheless if the mind is clarified without falling into mental rigidity and error, things are easier for the sadhaka of the Yoga. But plasticity must be preserved, for loss of plasticity is the danger of a systematic intellectual formulation; one must look into the thing itself and not get tied up in the idea. Nothing of all this can be really grasped except by the actual spiritual experience.

22-7-1937

### *Jiva and Jivatman*

I HAVE used the words Jiva and Jivatman in these and all passages in exactly the same sense—it never occurred to me that there could be a difference. If I had so intended it, I would have drawn the distinction—the two words being similar—very clearly and not left it to be gathered by inference.

In the passage from the chapter on the triple status of the Supermind I was describing how the Supermind working as a force of the highest self-determination of the Divine manifested it in three poises and what was the consciousness of the Jivatman in a Supramental creation. There is no statement that the place of the Jivatman is in the Supramental plane alone; if that were so man could have no knowledge of his individual Self or Spirit before he rose to the Supramental plane; he could not have any experience of the Self, though he may have the sense of the dissolution of his ego in something Universal. But he can become aware of his unborn non-evolving Self, a centre of the Divine consciousness, long

before that; the Self cosmic or individual is experienced long before rising to Supermind. If it were not so, spiritual experience of that high kind would be impossible to mental man, liberation would be impossible; he would first have to become a Supramental being. As for the Purusha it is there on all planes: there is a mental Purusha, *manomaya*, leader of the life and body, as the Upanishad puts it, a vital, a physical Purusha; there is the psychic being or Chaitya Purusha which supports and carries all these as it were. One may say that these are projections of the Jivatman put there to uphold Prakriti on the various levels of the being. The Upanishad speaks also of a Supramental and a Bliss Purusha, and if the Supramental and the Bliss Nature were organised in the evolution on earth we could become aware of them upholding the movements here.

As for the psychic being, it enters into the evolution, enters into the body at birth and goes out of it at death; but the Jivatman as I know it is unborn and eternal although upholding the manifested personality from above. The psychic being can be described as the Jivatman entering into birth, if you like, but if the distinction is not made, then the nature of the Atman is blurred and a confusion arises. This is a necessary distinction for metaphysical knowledge and for something that is very important in spiritual experience. The word Atman like 'spirit' in English is popularly used in all kinds of senses, but both for spiritual

and philosophical knowledge it is necessary to be clear and precise in one's use of terms so as to avoid confusion of thought and vision by confusion in the words we use to express them.

20-7-1937

### *The Central Being and the Soul*

THE soul, representative of the central being, is a spark of the Divine supporting all individual existence in Nature ; the psychic being is a conscious form of that soul growing in the evolution—in the persistent process that develops first life in matter, mind in life, until finally mind can develop into overmind and overmind into the Supramental Truth. The soul supports the nature in its evolution through these grades, but is itself not any of these things.

The lower Nature, *Apara Prakriti*, is this external objective and superficial subjective apparent Nature which manifests all these minds, lives and bodies. The supreme Nature, *Para Prakriti*, concealed behind it is the very nature of the Divine—a supreme Consciousness-Force which manifests the multiple Divine as the Many. These Many are in themselves eternal selves of the Supreme in his supreme Nature, *Para Prakriti*. Here in relation to this world they appear as the Jivatmas supporting the evolution of the natural existences, *sarva bhutani*, in the mutable Becoming which is the life of the Kshara (mobile or

mutable) Purusha. The Jiva (or Jivatma) and the creatures, *sarva bhutani*, are not the same thing. The Jivatmas really stand above the creation even though concerned in it; the natural existences, *sarva bhutani*, are the creatures of Nature. Man, bird, beast, reptile are natural existences, but the individual Self in them is not even for a moment characteristically man, bird, beast or reptile; in its evolution it is the same through all these changes, a spiritual being that consents to the play of Nature.

What is original and eternal for ever in the Divine is the Being, what is developed in consciousness, conditions, forces, forms, etc., by the Divine Power is the Becoming. The eternal Divine is the Being; the universe in Time and all that is apparent in it is a becoming. The eternal Being in its superior nature, Para Prakriti, is at once One and Many; but the eternal Multiplicity of the Divine when it stands behind the created existences, *sarva bhutani*, appears as (or as we say, becomes) the Jiva. *Para-prakritirjivabhuta*. In the psychic on the other hand there are two aspects, the psychic existence or soul behind and in front the form of individuality it takes in its evolution in Nature.

The soul or psyche is immutable only in the sense that it contains all the possibilities of the Divine within it, but it has to evolve them and in its evolution it assumes the form of a developing psychic individual evolving in the manifestation the individual Prakriti and taking part in the evolution. It is the

spark of the Divine Fire that grows behind the mind, vital and physical by means of the psychic being until it is able to transform the Prakriti of Ignorance into a Prakriti of Knowledge. This evolving psychic being is not therefore at any time all that the soul or essential psychic existence bears within it; it temporalises and individualises what is eternal in potentiality, transcendent in essence, in this projection of the spirit.

The central being is the being which presides over the different births one after the other but is itself unborn, for it does not descend into the being but is above it—it holds together the mental, vital and physical being and all the various parts of the personality and it controls the life either through the mental being and the mental thought and will or through the psychic, whichever may happen to be most in front or most powerful in nature. If it does not exercise its control, then the consciousness is in great disorder and every part of the personality acts for itself so that there is no coherence in the thought, feeling or action.

The psychic is not above but behind—its seat is behind the heart, its power is not knowledge but an essential or spiritual feeling—it has the clearest sense of the Truth and a sort of inherent perception of it which is of the nature of soul-perception and soul-feeling. It is our inmost being and supports all the others, mental, vital, physical, but it is also much veiled by them and has to act upon them as an influence rather than by its sovereign right of direct action; its direct action becomes normal and preponderant only at a

high stage of development or by Yoga. It is not the psychic being which, you feel, gives you the intuitions of things to be or warns you against the results of certain actions; that is some part of the inner being, sometimes the inner mental, sometimes the inner vital, sometimes, it may be, the inner or subtle physical Purusha. The inner being—inner mind, inner vital, inner or subtle physical—knows much that is unknown to the outer mind, the outer vital, the outer physical, for it is in a more direct contact with the secret forces of Nature. The psychic is the inmost being of all; a perception of truth which is inherent in the deepest substance of the consciousness, a sense of the good, true, beautiful, the Divine, is its privilege.

The central being—the Jivatman which is not born nor evolves but presides over the individual birth and evolution—puts forward a representative of himself on each plane of the consciousness. On the mental plane it is the true mental being, *manomaya purusha*, on the vital plane the true vital being, *pranamaya purusha*, on the physical plane the true physical being, *annamaya purusha*. Each being, therefore is, so long as the ignorance lasts, centred round his mental, vital or physical Purusha, according to the plane on which he predominantly lives, and that is to him his central being. But the true representative all the time is concealed behind the mind, vital and physical—it is the psychic, our inmost being.

When the inmost knowledge begins to come, we become aware of the psychic being within us and it comes

forward and leads the sadhana. We become aware also of the Jivatman, the undivided Self or Spirit above the manifestation of which the psychic is the representative here.

### *Jivatman, Spark—Soul and Psychic Being*

THE Jivatman, spark-soul and psychic being are three different forms of the same reality and they must not be mixed up together, as that confuses the clearness of the inner experience.

The Jivatman or spirit, as it is usually called in English, is self-existent above the manifested or instrumental being—it is superior to birth and death, always the same, the individual Self or Atman. It is the eternal true being of the individual.

The soul is a spark of the Divine which is not seated above the manifested being, but comes down into the manifestation to support its evolution in the material world. It is at first an undifferentiated power of the divine consciousness containing all possibilities which have not yet taken form, but to which it is the function of evolution to give form. This spark is there in all living beings from the lowest to the highest.

The psychic being is formed by the soul in its evolution. It supports the mind, vital, body, grows by their experiences, carries the nature from life to life. It is the psychic or *chaitya purusha*. At first it is veiled

by mind, vital and body, but as it grows, it becomes capable of coming forward and dominating the mind, life and body; in the ordinary man it depends on them for expression and is not able to take them up and freely use them. The life of the being is animal or human and not divine. When the psychic being can by sadhana become dominant and freely use its instruments, then the impulse towards the Divine becomes complete and the transformation of mind, vital and body, not merely their liberation, becomes possible.

The Self or Atman being free and superior to birth and death the experience of the Jivatman and its unity with the supreme or universal Self brings the sense of liberation, it is this which is necessary for the supreme spiritual deliverance: but for the transformation of the life and nature the awakening of the psychic being and its rule over the nature are indispensable.

The psychic being realises its oneness with the true being, the Jivatman, but it does not change into it.

The *bindu* seen above may be a symbolic way of seeing the Jivatman, the portion of the Divine; the aspiration there would naturally be for the opening of the higher consciousness so that the being may dwell there and not in the ignorance. The Jivatman is already one with the Divine in reality, but what is needed is that the rest of the consciousness should realise it.

The aspiration of the psychic being is for the

opening of the whole lower nature, mind, vital, body to the Divine, for the love and union with the Divine, for its presence and power within the heart, for the transformation of the mind, life and body by the descent of the higher consciousness into this instrumental being and nature.

Both aspirations are essential and indispensable for the fullness of this Yoga. When the psychic imposes its aspiration on the mind, vital and body, then they too aspire and this is what was felt as the aspiration from the level of the lower being. The aspiration felt above is that of the Jivatman for the higher consciousness with its realisation of the One to manifest in the being. Therefore both aspirations help each other. The seeking of the lower being is necessarily at first intermittent and oppressed by the ordinary consciousness. It has, by sadhana, to become clear, constant, strong and enduring.

The sense of peace, purity and calm is brought about by the union of the lower with the higher consciousness. It is usually either intermittent or else remains in a deeper consciousness, veiled often by the storms and agitations of the surface; it is seldom permanent at first, but it can become permanent by increased frequency and endurance of the calm and peace and finally by the full descent of the eternal peace and calm and silence of the higher consciousness into the lower nature.

\*  
\* \*

The Jiva is realised as the individual Self, Atman, the central being above the Nature, calm, untouched by the movements of Nature but supporting their evolution though not involved in it. Through this realisation silence, freedom, wideness, mastery, purity, a sense of universality in the individual as one centre of this divine universality become the normal experience. The psychic is realised as the Purusha behind the heart. It is not universalised like the Jivatman, but is the individual soul supporting from its place behind the heart-centre the mental, vital, physical, psychic evolution of the being in Nature. Its realisation brings Bhakti, self-giving, surrender, turning of all the movements Godward, discrimination and choice of all that belongs to the Divine Truth, Good, Beauty, rejection of all that is false, evil, ugly, discordant, union through love and sympathy with all existence, openness to the Truth of the Self and the Divine.

8-1-1937

### *The Psychic Being*

THE psychic is not, by definition,\* that part which is in direct touch with the Supramental plane,—although, once the connection with the Supramental is made, it gives to it the readiest response. The psychic part of us is something that comes direct from the Divine and is in touch with divine possibilities that supports this lower triple manifestation of mind, life and body. There is this divine element in all living beings but it stands hidden behind the ordinary consciousness, is not at first developed and,

\*Someone had asked what the psychic being was, whether it could be defined as that part of the being which is always in direct touch with the supramental. I replied that it could not be so defined. For the psychic being in animals or in most human beings is not in direct touch with the supramental—therefore it cannot be so described, by definition.

But once the connection between the supramental and the human consciousness is made, it is the psychic being that gives the *readiest response*—more ready than the mind, the vital or the physical. It may be added that it is also a purer response; the mind, vital and physical can allow other things to mix with their reception of the supramental influence and spoil its truth. The psychic is pure in its response and allows no such mixture.

The supramental change can take place only if the psychic is awake and is made the chief support of the descending supramental power.

even when developed, is not always or often in the front; it expresses itself, so far as the imperfection of the instruments allows, by their means and under their limitations. It grows in the consciousness by Godward experience, gaining strength every time there is a higher movement in us, and, finally, by the accumulation of these deeper and higher movements, there is developed a psychic individuality,—that which we call usually the psychic being. It is always this psychic being that is the real, though often the secret cause of man's turning to the spiritual life and his greatest help in it. It is therefore that which we have to bring from behind to the front in the Yoga.

The word 'soul', as also the word 'psychic', is used very vaguely and in many different senses in the English language. More often than not in ordinary parlance no clear distinction is made between mind and soul and often there is an even more serious confusion, for the vital being of desire—the false soul or desire-soul—is intended by the words soul and psychic and not the true soul, the psychic being. The psychic being is quite different from the mind or vital; it stands behind them where they meet in the heart. Its central place is there, but behind the heart rather than in the heart; for what men call usually the heart is the seat of emotion, and human emotions are mental-vital impulses, not ordinarily psychic in their nature. This mostly secret power behind, other than the mind and the life-force, is the true soul, the psychic being in us. The power

of the psychic, however, can act upon the mind and vital and body, purifying thought and perception and emotion (which then becomes psychic feeling) and sensation and action and everything else in us and preparing them to be divine movements.

The psychic being may be described in Indian language as the Purusha in the heart or the *chaitya purusha*;<sup>\*</sup> but the inner or secret heart must be understood, *hridaye guhayam*, not the outer vital-emotional centre. It is the true psychic entity (distinguished from the vital desire-mind)—the psyche—spoken of in the page of the "Arya" to which you make reference.

<sup>\*</sup>The chitta and the psychic part are not in the least the same. Chitta is a term in a quite different category in which are co-ordinated and put into their place the main functionings of our external consciousness, and to know it we need not go behind our surface or external nature. Category means here another class of psychological factors, *tattva vibhaga*. The psychic belongs to one class—supermind, mind, life, psychic, physical—and covers both the inner and the outer nature. Chitta belongs to quite another class or category—buddhi, manas, chitta, prana, etc.—which is the classification made by ordinary Indian psychology; it covers only the psychology of the external being. In this category it is the main functions of our external consciousness only that are co-ordinated and put in their place by the Indian thinkers; chitta is one of these main functions of the external consciousness and, therefore, to know it we need not go behind the external nature.

### *Psychic Essence and Psychic Being*

A DISTINCTION has to be made between the soul in its essence and the psychic being. Behind each and all there is the soul which is the spark of the Divine—none could exist without that. But it is quite possible to have a vital and physical being without a clearly evolved psychic being behind it. Still, one cannot make general statements that no aboriginal has a soul or there is no display of soul anywhere.

The inner being is composed of the inner mental, inner vital, inner physical,—but that is not the psychic being. The psychic is the inmost being and quite distinct from these. The word psychic is indeed used in English to indicate anything that is other or deeper than the external mind, life and body, anything occult or supraphysical, but that is a use which brings confusion and error and we entirely discard it when we speak or write about Yoga. In ordinary parlance we may sometimes use the word psychic in the looser popular sense or in poetry, which is not bound to intellectual accuracy, we may speak of the soul

sometimes in the ordinary and more external sense or in the sense of the true psyche.

The psychic being is veiled by the surface movements and expresses itself as best it can through these outer instruments which are more governed by the outer forces than by the inner influences of the psychic. But that does not mean that they are entirely isolated from the soul. The soul is in the body in the same way as the mind or vital—but the body it occupies is not this gross physical frame only, but the subtle body also. When the gross sheath falls away, the vital and mental sheaths of the body still remain as the soul's vehicle till these too dissolve.

The soul of a plant or an animal is not altogether dormant—only its means of expression are less developed than those of a human being. There is much that is psychic in the plant, much that is psychic in the animal. The plant has only the vital-physical evolved in its form, so it cannot express itself; the animal has a vital mind and can, but its consciousness is limited and its experiences are limited, so the psychic essence has a less developed consciousness and experience than is present or at least possible in man. All the same, animals have a soul and can respond very readily to the psychic in man.

The ghost is of course not the soul. It is either the man appearing in his vital body or it is a fragment of his vital that is seized on by some vital force or being. The vital part of us normally exists after the dissolution of the body for some time and passes

away into the vital plane where it remains till the vital sheath dissolves. Afterwards it passes, if it is mentally evolved, in the mental sheath to some mental world and finally the psychic leaves its mental sheath also and goes to its place of rest. If the mental is strongly developed, then the mental part of us can remain; so also can the vital, provided they are organised by and centred round the true psychic being—for they then share the immortality of the psychic. Otherwise the psychic draws mind and life into itself and enters into an internatal quiescence.

14-10-1934

### *Contribution of Psychic Being to Sadhana*

THE contribution of the psychic being to the sadhana is: (1) love and bhakti, a love not vital, demanding and egoistic but unconditioned and without claims, self-existent; (2) the contact or the presence of the Mother within; (3) the unerring guidance from within; (4) a quieting and purification of the mind, vital and physical consciousness by their subjection to the psychic influence and guidance; (5) the opening up of all this lower consciousness to the higher spiritual consciousness above for its descent into a nature prepared to receive it with a complete receptivity and right attitude—for the psychic brings in everything right thought, right perception, right feeling, right attitude.

One can raise up one's consciousness from the mental and vital and bring down the power, Ananda, light, knowledge from above; but this is far more difficult and uncertain in its result, even dangerous, if the being is not prepared or not pure enough. To ascend with the psychic for the purpose is by far the best way. If you are thus rising from the

psychic centre, so much the better.

What you say indicates that the psychic and mental centres are in communication and through them you are able to bring down things from the higher consciousness. But you have not changed your head-centre for the above-head centre or for the above-head wideness. That usually comes by a gradual rising of the conscious parts to the top of the head and then above it. But this must not be strained after or forced; it will come of itself.

10-4-1936

### *Psychicisation and Spiritual Change*

PSYCHICISATION means the change of the lower nature bringing right vision into the mind, right impulse and feeling into the vital, right movement and habit into the physical—all turned towards the Divine, all based on love, adoration, bhakti—finally the vision and sense of the Mother everywhere in all as well as in the heart, her Force working in the being, faith, consecration, surrender.

The spiritual change is the established descent of the peace, light, knowledge, power, bliss from above, the awareness of the Self and the Divine and of a higher cosmic consciousness and the change of the whole consciousness to that.

9-7-1937

### *The Psychic Being and the Desire Soul*

THE psychic being is the soul, the Purusha in the secret heart supporting by its presence the action of the mind, life and body. The vital is the *pranamaya purusha* spoken of in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the being behind the Force of Life; in its outer form in the ignorance it generates the desire-soul which governs most men and which they mistake often for the real soul.

The Atman is the Self or Spirit that remains above pure and stainless, unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego and ignorance. It is realised as the true being of the individual, but also more widely as the *same being* in all and as the Self in the cosmos; it has also a self-existence above the individual and cosmos and it is then called the Paramatma, the supreme Divine Being. This distinction has nothing to do with the distinction between the psychic and the vital: the vital being is not what is known as the Atman.

The vital as the desire-soul and desire-nature controls the consciousness to a large extent in most men,

because men are governed by desire. But even in the surface human nature the proper ruler of the consciousness is the mental being, *manomaya purusha prana sharira neta* of the Upanishad. The psychic influences the consciousness from behind, but one has to go in out of the ordinary consciousness into the inmost being to find it and make it the ruler of the consciousness as it should be. To do that is one of the principal aims of the Yoga. The vital should be an instrument of the consciousness, not its ruler.

The vital being is not the I—the ego is mental, vital, physical. Ego implies the identification of our existence with outer self, the ignorance of our true self above and our psychic being within us.

In a certain sense the various Purushas or beings in us, psychic, mental, vital, physical are projections of the Atman, but that gets its full truth only when we get into our inner being and know the inner truth of ourselves. On the surface, in the ignorance, it is the mental, vital, physical Prakriti that acts and the Purusha is disfigured, as it were, in the action of the Prakriti. It is not our true mental being, our true vital being, our true physical being even that we are aware of; these remain behind veiled and silent. It is the mental, vital, physical ego that we take for our being until we get knowledge.

### *Duality of Being*

IN the experience of Yoga the self or being is an essence one with the Divine or at least it is a portion of the Divine and has all the divine potentialities. But in manifestation it takes two aspects, the Purusha and Prakriti, conscious being and Nature. In Nature here the Divine is veiled, and the individual being is subjected to Nature which acts here as the lower Prakriti, a force of Ignorance, Avidya. The Purusha in itself is divine, but exteriorised in the ignorance of Nature it is the individual apparent being imperfect with her imperfection. Thus the soul or psychic essence, which is the Purusha entering into the evolution and supporting it, carries in itself all the divine potentialities; but the individual psychic being which it puts forth as its representative assumes the imperfection of Nature and evolves in it till it has recovered its full psychic essence and united itself with the Self above of which the soul is the individual projection in the evolution. This duality in the being on all its planes,—for it is true in different ways not only of the Self and the

psychic but of the mental, vital and physical Purushas—has to be grasped and accepted before the experiences of the Yoga can be fully understood.

The Being is one throughout, but on each plane of Nature, it is represented by a form of itself which is proper to that plane, the mental Purusha in the mental plane, the vital Purusha in the vital, the physical Purusha in the physical. The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of two other planes of the being, the Knowledge or Truth plane and the Ananda plane each with its Purusha, but although influences may come down from them these are superconscious to the human mind and their nature is not organised here.

8-11-1936

### *The Inner and the Psychic Being*

I DID not mean by the inner being the psychic or inmost being. It is the psychic being that feels love, bhakti and union with the Mother. I was speaking of the inner mental, inner vital, inner physical; in order to reach the hidden seat of the psychic one has first to pass through these things. When one leaves the outer consciousness and goes inside, it is here that one enters—some or most entering into the inner vital first, others into the inner mental or inner physical. It is absolutely necessary for our purpose that one should become conscious in these inner regions, for if they are not awake, then the psychic being has no proper and sufficient instrumentation for its activities; it has then only the outer mind, outer vital and body for its means and these are too small and narrow and obscure. You as yet have been able to enter only the outskirts of the inner vital and are still insufficiently conscious there. By becoming more conscious there and going deeper one can reach the psychic—the safe refuge, *nirapada sthana*, of

which you speak; then you will not be disturbed by the confused visions and experiences of the inner vital outskirts.

### *The Inner and the Higher Consciousness*

THE inner consciousness means the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical and behind them the psychic which is their inmost being. But the inner mind is not the higher mind; it is more in touch with the universal forces and more open to the higher consciousness and capable of an immensely deeper and larger range of action than the outer or surface mind—but it is of the same essential nature. The higher consciousness is above the ordinary mind and different from it in its workings; it ranges from higher mind through illumined mind, intuition and overmind upto the border line of the Supramental.

If the psychic were liberated, free to act in its own way, there would not be all this stumbling in the ignorance. But the psychic is covered up by the ignorant mind, vital and physical and compelled to act through them according to the law of the Ignorance. If it is liberated from this covering, then it can act according to its own nature with a free aspiration, a direct contact with the higher consciousness and a power to change the ignorant nature.

there they try to get in again. Or they go to a distance outside but linger on the outskirts or even perhaps far off, waiting till they get an opportunity to attempt entrance.

### *The Environmental Consciousness*

EACH man has his own personal consciousness entrenched in his body and gets into touch with his surroundings only through his body and senses and the mind using the senses.

Yet all the time the universal forces are pouring into him without his knowing it. He is aware only of thoughts, feelings, etc., that rise to the surface and these he takes for his own. Really they come from outside in mind waves, vital waves, waves of feeling and sensation, etc., which take particular form in him and rise to the surface after they have got inside.

But they do not get into his body at once. He carries about with him an environmental consciousness (called by the Theosophists the Aura) into which they first enter. If you can become conscious of this environmental self of you, then you can catch the thought, passion, suggestion, or force of illness and prevent it from entering into you. If things in you are thrown out, they often do not go altogether but take refuge in this environmental atmosphere and from

## *The Cosmic Consciousness*

**I**T is not possible for the individual mind, so long as it remains shut up in its personality, to understand the workings of the Cosmic Will, for the standards made by the personal consciousness are not applicable to them. A cell in the body, if conscious, might also think that the human being and its actions are only the resultant of the relations and workings of a number of cells like itself and not the action of a unified self. It is only if one enters into the Cosmic Consciousness that one begins to see the forces at work and the lines on which they work and get a glimpse of the Cosmic Self and the Cosmic Mind and Will.

I-2-1937

## *Psychic Mind and Spiritual Mind*

**W**HEN the mind is turned towards the Divine and the Truth and feels and responds to that only or mainly, it can be called a psychic mind—it is something formed by the influence of the psychic being on the mental plane.

The spiritual mind is a mind which, in its fulness, is aware of the Self, reflecting the Divine, seeing and understanding the nature of the Self and its relations with the manifestation, living in that or in contact with it, calm, wide and awake to higher knowledge, not perturbed by the play of the forces. When it gets its full liberated movement, its central station is very usually felt above the head, though its influence can extend downward through all the being and outward through space.

### *The Higher Mind*

THIS must be the psychicised higher mental being—the position above the head points to that. In other words, you have become aware of your higher mental being which is in contact at once with the Divine above and with the psychic behind the heart and is aware of the Truth and has the psychic and spiritual insight and view into things.

Above the head extends the higher consciousness centre, *sahasradala padma*. But usually there is partial working of the forehead centre also when the *sahasradala* opens.

The ordinary mind is at its highest the free intelligence, receiving perhaps intuitions and intimations from above which it intellectualises. It is on the surface and sees things from outside except in so far as it is helped by intuition and other powers to see a little deeper. When this ordinary mind opens within to inner mind and psychic and above to higher mind and higher consciousness generally, then it begins to be spiritualised and its highest ranges merge into the spiritual mind-consciousness of which this higher

mind can be a beginning. This merging is part of the spiritual transformation.

For the mind there are many centres: (1) the *sahasradala* which centralises spiritual mind, higher mind, intuitive mind and acts as a receiving station for the intuition proper and overmind, (2) the centre in the forehead for inner thought, will and vision, (3) the throat centre for the externalising or physical mind.

### *Four Parts of the Vital Being*

THERE are four parts of the vital being—first, the mental vital which gives a mental expression by thought, speech or otherwise to the emotions, desires, passions, sensations and other movements of the vital being; the emotional vital which is the seat of various feelings such as love, joy, sorrow, hatred, and the rest; the central vital which is the seat of the stronger vital longings and reactions, e.g. ambition, pride, fear, love of fame, attractions and repulsions, desires and passions of various kinds and the field of many vital energies; last, the lower vital which is occupied with small desires and feelings, such as make the greater part of daily life, e.g. food desire, sexual desire, small likings, dislikings, vanity, quarrels, love of praise, anger at blame, little wishes of all kinds—and a numberless host of other things. Their respective seats are (1) the region from the throat to the heart, (2) the heart (it is a double centre, belonging in front to the emotional and vital and behind to the psychic), (3) from the heart to the navel, (4) below the navel.

### *The Emotional and the Higher Vital*

THE point about the emotional and the higher vital is a rather difficult one. In the classification in which the mind is taken as something more than the thinking, perceiving and willing intelligence, the emotional can be reckoned as part of the mind, the vital in the mental. In another classification it is rather the most mentalised part of the vital nature. In the first case, the term higher vital is confined to that larger movement of the conscious life-force which is concerned with creation, with power and force and conquest, with giving and self-giving and gathering from the world for further action and expenditure of power, throwing itself out in the wider movements of life, responsive to the greater objects of Nature. In the second arrangement, the emotional being stands at the top of the vital nature and the two together make the higher vital. As against them stands the lower vital which is concerned with the pettier movements of action and desire and stretches down into the vital physical where it supports the life of the more external activities and all physical

sensations, hungers, cravings, satisfactions. The term lower must not be considered in a pejorative sense; it refers only to the position in the hierarchy of the planes. For although this part of the nature in earthly beings tends to be very obscure and is full of perversions,—lust, greed of all kinds, vanity, small ambitions, petty anger, envy, jealousy are its ordinary guests,—still there is another side to it which makes it an indispensable mediator between the inner being and the outer life.

It is not a fact that every psychic experience embodies itself in a purified and rightly directed vital current; it does that when it has to externalise itself in action. Psychic experience is in itself a quite independent thing and has its own characteristic forms. The psychic being stands behind all the others; its force is the true soul-power. But if it comes to the front, it can suffuse all the rest; mind, vital, the physical consciousness can take its stamp and be transformed by its influence. When the nature is properly developed there is a psychic in the mental, a psychic in the vital, a psychic in the physical. It is when that is there and strong, that we can say of someone that he evidently has a soul. But there are some in whom this element is so lacking that we have to use faith in order to believe that they have a soul at all. The centre of the psychic being is behind the centre of the emotional being; it is the emotional that is nearest dynamically to the psychic and in most men it is through the emotional centre

that the psychic can be most easily reached and through the psychicised emotion that it can be most easily expressed. Many therefore mistake the one for the other; but there is a world of difference between the two. The emotions normally are vital in their character and not part of the psychic nature.

It must be remembered that while this classification is indispensable for psychological self-knowledge and discipline and practice it can be used best when it is not made too rigid and cutting a formula. For things run very much into each other and a synthetical sense of these powers is as necessary as the analysis. Mind for instance is everywhere. The physical mind is technically placed below the vital and yet it is a prolongation of the mind proper and one that can act in its own sphere by direct touch with the higher mental intelligence. And there is too an obscure mind of the body, of the very cells, molecules, corpuscles. Haeckel, the German materialist, spoke somewhere of the will in the atom, and recent science, dealing with the incalculable individual variation in the activity of the electrons, comes near to perceiving that this is not a figure but the shadow thrown by a secret reality. This body-mind is a very tangible truth; owing to its obscurity and mechanical clinging to past movements, and facile oblivion and rejection of the new, we find in it one of the chief obstacles to permeation by the Supermind Force and the transformation of the functioning of the body. On the other hand, once effectively converted, it will

be one of the most precious instruments for the stabilisation of the Supramental Light and Force in material nature.

3-9-1930

### The Vital Mind

THERE is a part of the nature which I have called the vital mind; the function of this mind is not to think and reason, to perceive, consider and find out or value things, for that is the function of the thinking mind proper, *buddhi*,—but to plan or dream or imagine what can be done. It makes formations for the future which the will can try to carry out if opportunity and circumstances become favourable or even it can work to make them favourable. In men of action this faculty is prominent and a leader of their nature; great men of action always have it in a very high measure. But even if one is not a man of action or practical realisation or if circumstances are not favourable or one can do only small and ordinary things, this vital mind is there. It acts in them on a small scale, or if it needs some sense of largeness, what it does very often is to plan in the void knowing that it cannot realise its plans or else to imagine big things, stories, adventures, great doings in which oneself is the hero or the creator. What you describe as happening in

you is the rush of this vital mind or imagination making its formations; its action is not peculiar to you but works pretty much in the same way in most people—but in each according to his turn of fancy, interest, favourite ideas or desires. You have to become master of its action and not to allow it to seize your mind and carry it away when and where it wants. In sadhana when the experiences begin to come, it is exceedingly important not to allow this power to do what it likes with you; for it then creates false experiences according to its nature and persuades the sadhaka that these experiences are true or it builds unreal formations and persuades him that this is what he has to do. Some have been taken away by this misleading force used by powers of Falsehood who persuaded them through it that they had a great spiritual, political or social work to do in the world and led them away to disappointment and failure. It is rising in you in order that you may understand what it is and reject it. For there are several things you had to get out of the vital plane before the deeper or greater spiritual experiences could safely begin or safely continue.

The descent of the peace is often one of the first major positive experiences of the sadhana. In this state of peace the normal thought-mind (*buddhi*) is apt to fall silent or abate most of its activity and when it does, very often either this vital mind can rush in, if one is not on one's guard, or else a kind of mechanical physical or random subconscious mind

can begin to come up and act; these are the chief disturbers of the silence. Or else the lower vital mind can try to disturb; that brings up the ego and passions and their play. All these are signs of elements that have to be got rid of, because if they remain and other of the higher powers begin to descend, Power and Force, Knowledge, Love or Ananda, those lower things may come across with the result that either the higher consciousness retires or its descent is covered up and the stimulation it gives is misused for the purposes of the lower nature. This is the reason why many sadhakas after having big experiences fall into the clutch of a magnified ego, upheavals, ambition, exaggerated sex or other vital passions or distortions. It is always well therefore if a complete purification of the vital can either precede or keep pace with the positive experience—at least in natures in which the vital is strongly active.

24-6-1935

### *The Physical Consciousness*

**E**ACH plane of our being—mental, vital, physical—has its own consciousness, separate though interconnected and interacting; but to our outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together. The body, for instance, has its own consciousness and acts from it, even without any mental will of our own or even against that will, and our surface mind knows very little about this body consciousness, feels it only in an imperfect way, sees only its results and has the greatest difficulty in finding out their causes. It is part of the Yoga to become aware of this separate consciousness of the body, to see and feel its movements and the forces that act upon it from inside or outside and to learn how to control and direct it even in its most hidden and (to us) subconscious processes. But the body-consciousness itself is only part of the individualised physical consciousness in us which we gather and build out of the secretly conscious forces of universal physical Nature.

There is the universal physical consciousness of

Nature and there is our own which is a part of it, moved by it, and used by the central being for the support of its expression in the physical world and for a direct dealing with all these external objects and movements and forces. This physical consciousness-plane receives from the other planes their powers and influences and makes formations of them in its own province. Therefore we have a physical mind as well as a vital mind and the mind proper; we have a vital-physical part in us—the nervous being—as well as the vital proper; and both are largely conditioned by the gross material bodily part which is almost entirely subconscious to our experience.

The physical mind is that which is fixed on physical objects and happenings, sees and understands these only, and deals with them according to their own nature, but can with difficulty respond to the higher forces. Left to itself, it is sceptical of the existence of supraphysical things, of which it has no direct experience and to which it can find no clue; even when it has spiritual experiences, it forgets them easily, loses the impression and result and finds it difficult to believe. To enlighten the physical mind by the consciousness of the higher spiritual and Supramental planes is one object of this Yoga, just as to enlighten it by the power of the higher vital and higher mental elements of the being is the greatest part of human self-development, civilisation and culture.

The vital physical, on the other hand, is the vehicle

of the nervous responses of our physical nature; it is the field and instrument of the smaller sensations, desires, reactions of all kinds to the impacts of the outer physical and gross material life. This vital-physical part (supported by the lowest part of the vital proper) is therefore the agent of most of the lesser movements of our external life; its habitual reactions and obstinate pettinesses are the chief stumbling-block in the way of transformation of the outer consciousness by the Yoga. It is also largely responsible for most of the suffering and disease of mind or body to which the physical being is subject in Nature.

As to the gross material part, it is not necessary to specify its place, for that is obvious; but it must be remembered that this too has a consciousness of its own, the obscure consciousness proper to the limbs, cells, tissues, glands, organs. To make this obscurity luminous and directly instrumental to the higher planes and to the divine movement is what we mean in our Yoga by making the body conscious,—that is to say, full of a true, awake and responsive awareness instead of its own obscure, limited half-subconscience.

There is an inner as well as an outer consciousness all through our being, upon all its levels. The ordinary man is aware only of his surface self and quite unaware of all that is concealed by the surface. And yet what is on the surface, what we know or think we know of ourselves and even believe that that is

all we are, is only a small part of our being and far the larger part of us is below the surface. Or, more accurately, it is behind the frontal consciousness, behind the veil, occult and known only by an occult knowledge. Modern psychology and psychic science have begun to perceive this truth just a little. Materialistic psychology calls this hidden part the Inconscient, although practically admitting that it is far greater, more powerful and profound than the surface conscious self,—very much as the Upanishads called the superconscient in us the Sleep-self, although this Sleep-self is said to be an infinitely greater Intelligence, omniscient, omnipotent, Prajna, the Ishwara. Psychic science calls this hidden consciousness the subliminal self, and here too it is seen that this subliminal self has more powers, more knowledge, a freer field of movement than the smaller self that is on the surface. But the truth is that all this that is behind, this sea of which our waking consciousness is only a wave or series of waves, cannot be described by any one term, for it is very complex. Part of it is subconscious, lower than our waking consciousness, part of it is on a level with it but behind and much larger than it; part is above and superconscient to us. What we call our mind is only an outer mind, a surface mental action, instrumental for the partial expression of a larger mind behind of which we are not ordinarily aware and can only know by going inside ourselves. So too what we know of the vital in us is only the outer vital, a surface activity partially

expressing a larger secret vital which we can only know by going within. Equally, what we call our physical being is only a visible projection of a greater and subtler invisible physical consciousness which is much more complex, much more aware, much wider in its receptiveness, much more open and plastic and free.

If you understand and experience this truth, then only you will be able to realise what is meant by the inner mental, the inner vital, the inner physical consciousness. But it must be noted that this term inner is used in two different senses. Sometimes it denotes the consciousness behind the veil of the outer being, the mental or vital or physical within, which is in direct touch with the universal mind, the universal life-forces, the universal physical forces. Sometimes, on the other hand, we mean an inmost mental, vital, physical, more specifically called the true mind, the true vital, the true physical consciousness which is nearer to the soul and can most easily and directly respond to the Divine Light and Power. There is no real Yoga possible, still less any integral Yoga, if we do not go back from the outer self and become aware of all this inner being and inner nature. For then alone can we break the limitations of the ignorant external self which receives consciously only the outer touches and knows things indirectly through the outer mind and senses, and become directly aware of the universal consciousness and the universal forces that play through us and around us. And then only too can we hope to be directly aware of the Divine in

us and directly in touch with the Divine Light and the Divine Force. Otherwise we can feel the Divine only through external signs and external results and that is a difficult and uncertain way and very occasional and inconstant, and it leads only to belief and not to knowledge, not to the direct consciousness and awareness of the constant presence.

As for instances of the difference, I may give you two from the opposite poles of experience, one from the most external phenomena showing how the inward opens to the awareness of the universal forces, one of spiritual experience indicating how the inward opens to the Divine. Take illness. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, we do not usually know that we are going to be ill until the symptoms of the malady declare themselves in the body. But if we develop the inward physical consciousness, we become aware of a subtle environmental physical atmosphere and can feel the forces of illness coming towards us through it, feel them even at a distance and, if we have learnt how to do it, we can stop them by the will or otherwise. We sense too around us a vital physical or nervous envelope which radiates from the body and protects it, and we can feel the adverse forces trying to break through it and can interfere, stop them or reinforce the nervous envelope. Or we can feel the symptoms of illness, fever or cold for instance, in the subtle physical sheath before they are manifest in the gross body and destroy them there, preventing them from manifesting

in the body. Take now the call for the Divine Power, Light, Ananda. If we live only in the outward physical consciousness, it may descend and work behind the veil, but we shall feel nothing and only see certain results after a long time. Or at most we feel a certain clarity and peace in the mind, a joy in the vital, a happy state in the physical and infer the touch of the Divine. But if we are awake in the physical, we shall feel the light, power or Ananda flowing through the body, the limbs, nerves, blood, breath and, through the subtle body, affecting the most material cells and making them conscious and blissful and we shall sense directly the Divine Power and Presence. These are only two instances out of a thousand that are possible and can be constantly experienced by the sadhaka.

\*  
\* \*

The individual is not limited to the physical body—it is only the external consciousness which feels like that. As soon as one gets over this feeling of limitation, one can feel first the inner consciousness which is connected with the body, but does not belong to it, afterwards the planes of consciousness above the body, also a consciousness surrounding the body, but part of oneself, part of the individual being, through which one is in contact with the cosmic forces and with other beings. The last is what I have called the environmental consciousness.

### *The Subconscious*

THE subconscious is not the whole foundation of the nature; it is only the lower basis of the Ignorance and affects mostly the lower vital and physical exterior consciousness and these again affect the higher parts of the nature. While it is well to see what it is and how it acts, one must not be too preoccupied with this dark side or this apparent aspect of the instrumental being. One should rather regard it as something not oneself, a mask of false nature imposed on the true being by the Ignorance. The true being is the inner with all its vast possibilities of reaching and expressing the Divine and especially the inmost, the soul, the psychic Purusha which is always in its essence pure, divine, turned to all that is good and true and beautiful. The exterior being has to be taken hold of by the inner being and turned into an instrument no longer of the upsurging of the ignorant subconscious Nature, but of the Divine. It is by remembering always that and opening the nature upwards that the Divine Consciousness can be reached and descend from above into the whole

inner and outer existence, mental, vital, physical, the subconscious, the subliminal, all that we overtly or secretly are. This should be the main preoccupation. To dwell solely on the subconscious and the aspect of imperfection creates depression and should be avoided. One has to keep a right balance and stress on the positive side most, recognising the other but only to reject and change it. This and a constant faith and reliance on the Mother are what is needed for the transformation to come.

14-7-1936

PS. It is certainly the abrupt and decisive breaking that is the easiest and best way for these things—vital habits.

\*  
\* \*

The subconscious is a concealed and unexpressed inarticulate consciousness which works below all our conscious physical activities. Just as what we call the superconscious is really a higher consciousness above from which things descend into the being, so the subconscious is below the body consciousness and things come up into the physical, the vital and the mind-nature from there.

Just as the higher consciousness is superconscious to us and supports all our spiritual possibilities and nature, so the subconscious is the basis of our material being and supports all that comes up in the physical nature.

Men are not ordinarily conscious of either of these planes of their own being, but by sadhana they can become aware.

The subconscious retains the impression of all our past experiences of life and they can come up from there in dream forms: most dreams in ordinary sleep are formations made from subconscious impressions.

The habit of strong recurrence of the same things in our physical consciousness so that it is difficult to get rid of its habits is largely due to a subconscious support. The subconscious is full of irrational habits.

When things are rejected from all other parts of the nature, they go either into the environmental consciousness around us through which we communicate with others and with universal Nature and try to return from there or they sink into the subconscious and can come up from there even after lying long quiescent so that we think they are gone.

When the physical consciousness is being changed, the chief resistance comes from the subconscious. It is constantly maintaining or bringing back the inertia, weakness, obscurity, lack of intelligence which afflict the physical mind and vital or the obscure fears, desires, angers, lusts of the physical vital, or the illnesses, dullnesses, pains, incapacities to which the body-nature is prone.

If light, strength, the Mother's consciousness is brought down into the body it can penetrate the subconscious also and convert its obscurity and resistance.

When something is erased from the subconscious so completely that it leaves no seed and thrown out of the circumconscient so completely that it can return no more, then only can we be sure that we have finished with it for ever.

\*

\* \*

About the subconscious—it is the sub-mental base of the being and is made up of impressions, instincts, habitual movements that are stored there. Whatever movement is impressed in it, it keeps. If one impresses the right movement in it, it will keep and send up that. That is why it has to be cleared of old movements before there can be a permanent and total change in nature. When the higher consciousness is once established in the waking parts, it goes down into the subconscious and changes that also, makes a bedrock of itself there also. Then no further trouble from the subconscious will be possible. But even before that one can minimise the trouble by putting the right will and the right habit of reaction in the subconscious parts.

3-12-1936

Just as one can concentrate the thought on an object or the vision on a point, so one can concentrate will on a particular part or point of the body and give an order to the consciousness there. That order reaches the subconscious.

1-12-36.

## V

### *Yogic Visions — Experiences — Realisations*

### Experiences -- Realisations

### Realisations and Experiences

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 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 sadhaka 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 consciousness 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 maelstorm 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.

13-3-1934

### *Feeling and Experience*

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 *shuddha bhakti* or the rising of love towards the Divine. A feeling also means a perception of some thing 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.

1-6-1936

### *Value of the Power of Vision*

**V**ISIONS 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 supra-physical 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 imagination (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 of 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.

2-6-1935

### *Supraphysical Vision*

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 mis-called sleep or simply and easily in the waking state. This faculty of sensing supra-physical things inter-

nally 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 *sadhaka*. 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 *tratak*, concentrating the vision on a single point or object—preferably a luminous object. Your looking at the star was precisely

an exercise in *tratak* 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 pre-historic 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.

19-2-1932

### *The Piercing of the Veil*

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 *asana*. 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 (*chakras*) 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 *samadhi* 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 within, to enter the inner mental depths, the inner go 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 sadhaka 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 prepared 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 sadhaka 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.

5-9-1931

### *Three Experiences of the Inner Being*

#### I

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, and 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 sattvic 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.

5-4-1937

## II

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 subconsciousness. On the surface of this subconsciousness 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 subconscious 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 under-

stand 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 supra-physical 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.

8-4-1937

### III

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 motivated 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.

16-4-1937

### *Opening of the Psychic and the Inner Being*

YOUR first experience was that of the opening of the psychic; you became aware of the psychic being and its aspirations and experiences and of the external being in front, as two separate parts of your consciousness. You were not able to keep this experience because the vital was not purified and pulled you out into the ordinary external consciousness. Afterwards, you got back into the psychic and were at the same time able to see your ordinary vital nature, to become aware of its defects and to work by the power of the psychic for its purification. I wrote to you at the beginning that this was the way; for if the psychic is awake and in front, it becomes easy to remain conscious of the things that have to be changed in the external nature and it is comparatively easy too to change them. But if the psychic gets veiled and retires in the background, the outer nature left to itself finds it difficult to remain conscious of its own wrong movements and even with great effort cannot succeed in getting rid of them. You can see yourself, as in the matter of the food, that with the psychic

active and awake the right attitude comes naturally and whatever difficulty there was soon diminishes or even disappears.

I told you also at that time that there was a third part of the nature, the inner being (inner mind, inner vital, inner physical) of which you were not yet aware, but which must also open in turn. It is this that has happened in your last experience. What you felt as a part of you, yourself but not your physical self, rising to meet the higher consciousness above, was this inner being; it was your (inner) higher vital being which rose in that way to join the highest Self above—and it was able to do so because the work of purifying the outer vital nature had begun in earnest. Each time there is a purification of the outer nature, it becomes more possible for the inner being to reveal itself, to become free and to open to the higher consciousness above.

When this happens, several other things happen at the same time. First, one becomes aware of the silent Self above—free, wide, without limits, pure, untroubled by the mental, vital and physical movements, empty of ego and limited personality,—this is what you have described in your letter. Secondly, the Divine Power descends through this silence and freedom of the Self and begins to work in the Adhara. This is what you felt as a pressure; its coming through the top of the head, the forehead and eyes and nose meant that it was working to open the mental centres—especially the two higher centres of thought and

will and vision—in the inner mental being. These two centres are called the thousand-petalled lotus and the *ajna chakra* between the eyebrows. Thirdly, by this working the inner parts of the being are opened and freed; you are liberated from the limitations of the ordinary personal mind, vital and physical and become aware of a wider consciousness in which you can be more capable of the needed transformation. But that is necessarily a matter of time and long working and you are only taking the first steps in this way.

When one goes into the inner being, the tendency is to go entirely inside and lose consciousness of the outside world—this is what people call Samadhi. But it is also necessary to be able to have the same experiences (of the Self, the workings in the inner consciousness, etc.) in the waking state. The best rule for you will be to allow the entire going inside only when you are alone and not likely to be disturbed, and at other times to accustom yourself to have these experiences with the physical consciousness awake and participating in them or at least aware of them.

5-8-1931

### *Awakening of the Kundalini*

THE sensation in the spine and on both sides of it is a sign of the awakening of the Kundalini Power. It is felt as a descending and an ascending current. There are two main nerve-channels for the currents, one on each side of the central channel in the spine. The descending current is the energy from the above coming down to touch the sleeping Power in the lowest nerve-centre at the bottom of the spine; the ascending current is the release of the energy going up from the awakened Kundalini. This movement as it proceeds opens up the six centres of the subtle nervous system and by the opening one escapes from the limitations of the surface consciousness bound to the gross body and great ranges of experiences proper to the subliminal self, mental, vital, subtle physical are shown to the sadhaka. When the Kundalini meets the higher Consciousness as it ascends through the summit of the head, there is an opening of the higher superconscient reaches above the normal mind. It is by ascending through these in our consciousness and receiving a descent of their energies that it is possible

ultimately to reach the Supermind. This is the method of the Tantra. In our Yoga it is not necessary to go through the systematised method. It takes place spontaneously according to the need by the force of the aspiration. As soon as there is an opening the Divine Power descends and conducts the necessary working, does what is needed, each thing in its time and the Yogic Consciousness begins to be born in the sadhaka.

15-7-1930

in touch with the Divine and moved by the Divine  
in all it is and feels and does.

7-4-1931

### *The Division of Being*

THE division of the being of which you speak is a necessary stage in the Yogic development and experience. One feels that there is a twofold being, the inner psychic which is the true one and the other, the outer human being which is instrumental for the outward life. To live in the inner psychic being in union with the Divine while doing the outward work, as you feel, is the first stage in Karmayoga. There is nothing wrong in these experiences; they are indispensable and normal at this stage.

If you feel no bridge between the two, it is possibly because you are not yet conscious of what connects the two. There is an inner mental, an inner vital, an inner physical which connects the psychic and the external being. About this, however, you need not be anxious at present.

The important thing is to keep what you have and let it grow, to live always in the psychic being, your true being. The psychic will, in due time, awaken and turn to the Divine all the rest of the nature, so that even the outer being will feel itself

### *Experience of the True Self*

THE experience you have is the experience of the true Self, untouched by grief and joy, desire, anxiety or trouble; vast and calm and full of peace, it observes the agitations of the outer being as one might the play of children. It is indeed the divine element in you. The more you can remain in that, the firmer will be the foundation of the sadhana. In this Self will come all the higher experiences, oneness with the Divine, light, knowledge, strength, Ananda, the play of the Mother's higher forces. It does not always become stable from the first, though for some it does; but the experience comes more and more frequently and lasts more till it is no longer covered by the ordinary nature.

### *The Solid Basis of Sadhana*

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.

## *The Double Foundation of Yoga*

**I**F 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.

10-10-1934

## *The Silent Self*

**I**T must have been the descent of the higher silence, the silence of the Self or Atman. In this silence one perceives, but the mind is not active,—things are sensed, but without any responsive connection or vibration. The silent Self is there as a separate reality, not bound or involved in the activity of Nature, aloof, detached and self-existent. Even if thoughts come across this silence, they do not disturb it; the Self is separate from the thinking mind also. In this connection the feeling “I think” is a survival from the old consciousness; in the full silence what one feels is “thought occurs in me”—the identification with thoughts as well as with the perception of objects ceases.

27-11-1935

formation. However high one goes one can always return, unless one has the will not to do so.

29-10-1936

### *Ascent into Nirvana and Return*

ONCE the being or its different parts begin to ascend to the planes above, any part of the being may do it, frontal or other. The *samskar* that one cannot come back must be got rid of. One can have the experience of Nirvana at the summit of the mind or anywhere in those planes that are now superconscient to the mind; the mind spiritualised by the ascent into Self has the sense of *laya*, dissolution of itself, its thoughts, movements, *samskaras* into a superconscient Silence and Infinity which it is unable to grasp,—the Unknowable. But this would bring or lead to some form of Nirvana, only if one makes Nirvana the goal, if one is tied to the mind and accepts its dissolution into the Infinite as one's own dissolution or if one has not the capacity to reorganise experience on a higher than the mental plane. But otherwise what was superconscient becomes conscient, one begins to possess or else be the instrument of the dynamis of the higher planes and there is a movement, not of liberation into Nirvana but of liberation and trans-

### *Descent of Peace*

**Y**OUR description of the solid cool block of peace pressing on the body and making it immobile makes it certain that it is what we call in this Yoga the descent of the higher consciousness. A deep, intense or massive substance of peace and stillness is very commonly the first of its powers that descends and many experience it in that way. At first it comes and stays only during meditation or, without the sense of physical inertness or immobility, a little while longer and afterwards is lost; but if the sadhana follows its normal course, it comes more and more, lasting longer and in the end as an enduring deep peace and inner stillness and release becomes a normal character of the consciousness, the foundation indeed of a new consciousness, calm and liberated.

Your idea of psychic is certainly a mental construction which should be avoided. The psychic has indeed the quality of peace—but that is not its main character as it is of the Self or Atman. The psychic is the Divine element in the individual being and its characteristic power is to turn everything towards

the Divine, to bring a fire of purification, aspiration, devotion, true light of discernment, feeling, will, action which transforms by degrees the whole nature. Quietude, peace and silence in the heart and therefore in the vital part of the being are necessary to reach the psychic, to plunge in it, for the perturbations of the vital nature, desire, emotion turned ego-wards or world-wards are the main part of the screen that hides the soul from the nature. It is better therefore to be free from the mental constructions when you take the plunge and to have only the sense of aspiration, of devotion, of self-giving to the Divine.

24-2-1937

### *Need of Waking Realisation*

ON the contrary it is in waking state that this realisation must come and endure in order to be a reality of the life. If experienced in trance it will be a superconscient state only for some part of the inner being but not real to the whole consciousness. Experience and 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 much 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.

27-5-1937

### *Right Attitude in Work*

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 of the physical plane, so its action and energy are necessary for all work; without it, if the mind only drives without the cooperation 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.

March 1936

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 *avesh*, 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 *samarpana* or spiritual realisation or divine

### *The Force and the Instrument*

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

love is something far greater, but the Ananda of creation has its place.

14-5-1936

to develop the necessary condition of receptivity—receptivity as natural as when one receives an invitation 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 that 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

### Japa

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 on not 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.

use it. Om is rightly used (not mechanically) unless  
very well help the opening upwards and outward  
(cosmic consciousness) as well as the descent.

### The Mantra

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 towards 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 sadhakas 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.

## VI

*Love:*

*Human to Divine*

### *The True Foundation of Love*

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.

sublimation of human emotions; it is a different consciousness, with a different quality, movement and substance.

26-5-1930

### *Beyond Emotion . . .*

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 leavings of the vital emotion cannot reach or experience.

As Supramental Truth is not merely a sublimation of our mental ideas, so Divine Love is not merely a

## *Love in Sadhana*

### I

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.

## *Love in Sadhana*

### II

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.

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.

5-7-1936

### *Vital Love*

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

### *Love in Human Relationships—Psychic and Spiritual Love*

II 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 question 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, *abhimān* 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.

22-10-1935

### *Friendship and Psychic Love*

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 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 any one 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.

PS. 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.

7-7-1936

### *The Nature of Divine 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.

November 1936

### *The Secret of Sadhana*

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.

I-9-1936

### *On McTaggart's Statements about Love*

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 significant 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 causes 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 balked 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.

21-1-1932

*Difficulties of the Path*



*Difficulties and Ordeals*

ALL who enter the spiritual path have to face the difficulties and ordeals of the path, those which rise from their own nature and those which come in from outside. The difficulties in the nature always rise again and again till you overcome them; they must be faced with both strength and patience. But the vital part is prone to depression when ordeals and difficulties rise. This is not peculiar to you, but comes to all sadhakas—it does not imply an unfitness for the sadhana or justify a sense of helplessness. But you must train yourself to overcome this reaction of depression calling in the Mother's Force to aid you.

All who cleave to the path steadfastly can be sure of their spiritual destiny. If any one fails to reach it, it can only be for one of the two reasons, either because they leave the path or because for some lure of ambition, vanity, desire, etc. they go astray from the sincere dependence on the Divine.

10-8-1936

### *Suffering in Yoga*

THERE is no invariable rule of such suffering. It is not the soul that suffers; the Self is calm and equal to all things and the only sorrow of the psychic being is the sorrow of the resistance of Nature to the Divine Will or the resistance of things and people to the call of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. What is affected by suffering is the vital nature and the body. When the soul draws towards the Divine, there may be a resistance in the mind and the common form of that is denial and doubt—which may create mental and vital suffering. There may again be a resistance in the vital nature whose principal character is desire and the attachment to the objects of desire, and if in this field there is conflict between the soul and the vital nature, between the Divine Attraction and the pull of the Ignorance, then obviously there may be much suffering of the mind and vital parts. The physical consciousness also may offer a resistance which is usually that of a fundamental inertia, an obscurity in the very stuff of the physical, an incomprehension, an inability to

respond to the higher consciousness, a habit of helplessly responding to the lower mechanically, even when it does not want to do so; both vital and physical suffering may be the consequence. There is moreover the resistance of the Universal Nature which does not want the being to escape from the Ignorance into the Light. This may take the form of a vehement insistence in the continuation of the old movements, waves of them thrown on the mind and vital and body so that old ideas, impulses, desires, feelings, responses continue even after they are thrown out and rejected, and can return like an invading army from outside, until the whole nature, given to the Divine, refuses to admit them. This is the subjective form of the universal resistance, but it may also take an objective form,—opposition, calumny, attacks, persecution, misfortunes of many kinds, adverse conditions and circumstances, pain, illness, assaults from men or forces. There too the possibility of suffering is evident. There are two ways to meet all that—first that of the Self, calm, equality, a spirit, a will, a mind, a vital, a physical consciousness that remain resolutely turned towards the Divine and unshaken by all suggestion of doubt, desire, attachment, depression, sorrow, pain, inertia. This is possible when the inner being awakens, when one becomes conscious of the Self, of the inner Mind, the inner Vital, the inner Physical, for that can more easily attune itself to the divine Will, and then there is a division in the being as if there were two beings, one

within calm, strong, equal, unperturbed, a channel of the Divine Consciousness and Force, one without still encroached on by the lower Nature; but then the disturbances of the latter become something superficial which are no more than an outer ripple,—until these under the inner pressure fade and sink away and the outer being too remains calm, concentrated, un-attackable. There is also the way of the psychic,—when the psychic being comes out in its inherent power, its consecration, adoration, love of the Divine, self-giving, surrender and imposes these on the mind, vital and physical consciousness and compels them to turn all their movements Godward. If the psychic is strong and master throughout, then there is no or little subjective suffering and the objective cannot affect either the soul or the other parts of the consciousness—the way is sunlit and a great joy and sweetness are the note of the whole sadhana. As for the outer attacks and adverse circumstances, that depends on the action of the Force transforming the relations of the being with the outer Nature; as the victory of the Force proceeds, they will be eliminated; but however long they last, they cannot impede the sadhana, for then even adverse things and happenings become a means for its advance and for the growth of the spirit.

3-1-1937

### *Difficulties in Sadhana*

THE difficulties that remain, although not identical, are similar in their cause and their fundamental nature to those you have either largely or completely overcome, and they can be conquered in the same way; it is a question of time and of acquiescence within yourself in the pressure from the Divine which makes man change.

Human nature and the character of the individual are a formation that has arisen in and out of the inconscience of the material world and can never get entirely free from the pressure of that Inconscience. As consciousness grows in the being born into this material world, it takes the form of an Ignorance slowly admitting or striving with difficulty after knowledge and human nature is made of that Ignorance and the character of the individual is made from the elements of the Ignorance. It is largely mechanistic like everything else in material Nature and there is almost invariably a resistance and, more often than not, a strong and stubborn resistance to any change demanded from it. The character is made up of habits and it

clings to them, is disposed to think them the very law of its being and it is a hard job to get it to change at all except under a strong pressure of circumstances. Especially in the physical parts, the body, the physical mind, the physical life movements, there is this resistance; the tamasic element in Nature is powerful there, what the Gita describes as *aprakasha*, absence of light, and *apavritti*, a tendency to inertia, inactivity, unwillingness to make an effort and, as a result, even when the effort is made, a constant readiness to doubt, to despond and despair, to give up, renounce the aim and the endeavour, collapse. Fortunately, there is also in human nature a *sattwic* element which turns towards light and a *rajasic* or kinetic element which desires and needs to act and can be made to desire not only change but constant progress. But these too owing to the limitations of human ignorance and the obstructions of the fundamental inconscience suffer from pettiness and division and can resist as well as assist the spiritual endeavour. The spiritual change which Yoga demands from human nature and individual character is, therefore, full of difficulties, one may almost say that it is the most difficult of all human aspirations and efforts. In so far as it can get the *sattwic* and the *rajasic* (kinetic) elements to assist it, its path is made easier but even the *sattwic* element can resist by attachment to old ideas, to preconceived notions, to mental preferences and partial judgments, to opinions and reasonings which come in the way of higher truth and to which it is attached: the kinetic

element resists by its egoism, its passions, desires and strong attachments, its vanity and self-esteem, its constant habit of demand and many other obstacles. The resistance of the vital has a more violent character than the others and it brings to the aid of the others its own violence and passion and that is a source of all the acute difficulty, revolt, upheavals and disorders which mar the course of the yoga. The Divine is there, but He does not ignore the conditions, the laws, the circumstances of Nature; it is under these conditions that He does all His work, His work in the world and in man and consequently also in the *sadhaka*, the aspirant, even in the God-knower and God-lover; even the saint and the sage continue to have difficulties and to be limited by their human nature. A complete liberation and a complete perfection or the complete possession of the Divine and possession by the Divine is possible but it does not usually happen by an easy miracle or a series of miracles. The miracle can and does happen but only when there is the full call and complete self-giving of the soul and the entire widest opening of the nature.

Still, if the call of the soul is there, although not yet full, however great and obstinate the difficulties, there can be no final and irretrievable failure; even when the thread is broken it is taken up again and reunited and carried to its end. There is a working in the nature itself in response to the inner need which, however slowly, brings about the result. But a certain inner consent is needed; the progress that you have

marked in yourself is due to the fact that there was this consent in the soul and also in part of the nature; the change was insisted on by the mind and desired by part of the vital; the resistance in part of the mind and part of the vital made it slow and difficult but could not prevent it.

You ask what I want you to do. What I want is that you should persist and give more and more that assent in you which brought about the progress you have made so that here too the resistance may diminish and eventually disappear.

And get rid of an exaggerated insistence on the use of reason and the correctness of your individual reasoning and its right to decide in all matters. The reason has its place especially with regard to certain physical things and general worldly questions—though even there it is a very fallible judge—or in the formation of metaphysical conclusions and generalisations; but its claim to be the decisive authority in matters of Yoga or in spiritual things is untenable. The activities of the outward intellect there lead only to the formation of personal opinions, not to the discovery of Truth. It has always been understood in India that the reason and its logic or its judgment cannot give you the realisation of spiritual truths but can only assist in an intellectual presentation of ideas; realisation comes by intuition and inner experience. Reason and intellectuality cannot make you see the Divine, it is the soul that sees. Mind and the other instruments can only share in the vision when it is imparted to

them by the soul and welcome and rejoice in it. But also the mind may prevent it or at least stand long in the way of the realisation or the vision. For its prepossessions, preconceived opinions and mental preferences may build a wall of arguments against the spiritual truth that has to be realised and refuse to accept it if it presents itself in a form which does not conform to its own previous ideas: so also it may prevent one from recognising the Divine if the Divine presents himself in a form for which the intellect is not prepared or which in any detail runs counter to its prejudgments and prejudices. One can depend on one's reason in other matters provided the mind tries to be open and impartial and free from undue passion and is prepared to concede that it is not always right and may err; but it is not safe to depend on it alone in matters which escape its jurisdiction, specially in spiritual realisation and in matters of Yoga which belong to a different order of knowledge.

9-4-1947

### Dryness in Yoga

THIS Yoga is certainly difficult, but is any Yoga really easy? You speak of the lure of liberation into the extra-cosmic Absolute, but how many who set out on the Path of Nirvana attain to it in this life or without a long, strenuous and difficult endeavour? Which of the paths has not to pass through the dry desert in order to reach the promised land? Even the path of Bhakti which is said to be the easiest is full of the lamentations of the bhaktas complaining that they call but the Beloved eludes their grasp, the place of meeting is prepared but even now Krishna does not come. Even if there is the joy of a brief glimpse or the passion of *milan* it is followed by long periods of *viraha*. It is a mistake to think that any path of Yoga is facile, that any is a royal road or short cut to the Divine, or that there can be, like a system of "French made easy" or "French without tears", also a system of "Yoga made easy" or "Yoga without tears". A few great souls prepared by past lives or otherwise lifted beyond the ordinary spiritual capacity may attain realisation more swiftly; some may have uplifting experiences at

an early stage, but for most the *siddhi* of the path, whatever it is, must be the end of a long, difficult and persevering endeavour. One cannot have the crown of spiritual victory without the struggle or reach the heights without the ascent and its labour. Of all it can be said "Difficult is that road hard to tread like the edge of a razor".

You find the path dry precisely because you have not yet touched the fringe of it. But all paths have their dry periods and for most though not for all it is at the beginning. There is a long stage of preparation necessary in order to arrive at the inner psychological condition in which the doors of experience can open and one can walk from vista to vista—though even then new gates may present themselves and refuse to open until all is ready. This period can be dry and desert-like unless one has the ardour of self-introspection and self-conquest and finds every step of the effort and struggle interesting or unless one has or gets the secret of trust and self-giving which sees the hand of the Divine in every step of the path and even in the difficulty the grace or the guidance. The description of Yoga as "bitter like poison in the beginning" because of the difficulty and struggle, "but in the end sweet as nectar" because of the joy of realisation, the peace of liberation or the divine Ananda and the frequent description by sadhakas and bhaktas of the periods of dryness shows sufficiently that it is no unique peculiarity of this Yoga. All the old disciplines recognised this and it is why the Gita

says that Yoga should be practised patiently and steadily with a heart that refuses to be overcome by despondency. It is a recommendation applicable to this path, but also to the way of the Gita and to the hard "razor path" of the Vedanta, to every other. It is quite natural that the higher the Ananda to come down, the more difficult may be the beginning, the drier the deserts that have to be crossed on the way.

Certainly, the Supramental manifestation does not bring peace, purity, force, power of knowledge only; these give the necessary conditions for the final realisation, are part of it, but Love, Beauty and Ananda are the essence of its fulfilment. And although the supreme Ananda comes with the supreme fulfilment, there is no real reason why there should not be the Love and Ananda and Beauty on the way also. Some have found that even at an early stage before there was any other experience. But the secret of it is in the heart, not in the mind—the heart that opens its inner door and through it the radiance of the soul looks out in a blaze of trust and self-giving. Before that inner fire the debates of the mind and its difficulties wither away and the path however long or arduous becomes a sunlit road not only towards but through love and Ananda.

Nevertheless, even if that does not come at first, one can arrive at it by a patient perseverance—the psychic change is indeed the indispensable preliminary of any approach to the Supramental path and this change has for its very core the blossoming of the

inner love, joy, bhakti. Some may find a mental opening first and the mental opening may bring peace, light, a beginning of knowledge first, but this opening from above is incomplete unless it is followed by an opening inward of the heart. To suppose that the Yoga is dry and joyless because the struggles of your mind and vital have made your first approach to it dry is a misunderstanding and an error. The hidden springs of sweetness will reveal themselves if you persevere, even if now they are guarded by the dragons of doubt and unsatisfied longing. Grumble, if your nature compels you to it, but persevere.

### *Vital Movements in Ordinary Life and in Yoga*

IN the ordinary life people accept the vital movements, anger, desire, greed, sex, etc. as natural, allowable and legitimate things, part of the human nature. Only so far as society discourages them or insists to keep them within fixed limits or subject to a decent restraint or measure, people try to control them so as to conform to the social standard of morality or rule of conduct. Here, on the contrary, as in all spiritual life, the conquest and complete mastery of these things is demanded. That is why the struggle is more felt, not because these things rise more strongly in sadhakas than in ordinary men, but because of the intensity of the struggle between the spiritual mind which demands control and the vital movements which rebel and want to continue in the new as they did in the old life. As for the idea that the sadhana raises up things of the kind, the only truth in that is this that, first, there are many things in the ordinary man of which he is not conscious, because the vital hides them from the mind and gratifies them without

the mind realising what is the force that is moving the action—thus things that are done under the plea of altruism, philanthropy, service, etc. are largely moved by ego which hides itself behind these justifications; in Yoga the secret motive has to be pulled out from behind the veil, exposed and got rid of. Secondly, some things are suppressed in the ordinary life and remain lying in the nature, suppressed but not eliminated; they may rise up any day or they may express themselves in various nervous forms or other disorders of the mind or vital or body without it being evident what is their real cause. This has been recently discovered by European psychologists and much emphasised, even exaggerated in a new science called psycho-analysis. Here again, in sadhana one has to become conscious of these suppressed impulses and eliminate them—this may be called rising up, but that does not mean that they have to be raised up into action but only raised up before the consciousness so as to be cleared out of the being.

As for some men being able to control themselves and others being swept away, that is due to difference of temperament. Some men are sattvic and control comes easy to them, up to a certain point at least; others are more rajasic and find control difficult and often impossible. Some have a strong mind and mental will and others are vital men in whom the vital passions are stronger and more on the surface. Some do not think control necessary and let themselves go. In sadhana the mental or moral control has to be

replaced by the spiritual mastery—for that mental control is only partial and it controls but does not liberate; it is only the psychic and spiritual that can do that. That is the main difference in this respect between the ordinary and the spiritual life.

26-3-1936

### *The Complexity of Human Nature*

**M**EN 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 sadhakas and Yogis even are not capable and it is only by an illumining Grace that reveals the sadhaka 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.

30-3-1933

### *Negative and Positive Side of Sadhana*

II THINK you still give an exaggerated importance and attention to the ego and other elements that are interwoven in the nature of humanity and cannot be entirely got rid of except by the coming of a new consciousness which replaces them by higher movements. If one rejects centrally and with all sincerity the ego and rajas, their roots get loosened and sattwa can prevail in the nature, but the expulsion of all ego and rajas cannot be done by the will and its effort. After a certain stage of preparation therefore one must stress more on the positive side of the sadhana than on the negative side of rejection, —though this of course must remain to help the other. Still what is important is to develop the psychic within and bring down the higher consciousness from above. The psychic, as it grows and manifests, detects immediately all wrong movements or elements and at the same time supplies almost automatically the true element or movement which will replace them—this process is much easier and more effective than that of a severe tapasya of purification. The

higher consciousness in descending brings peace and purity into all the inner parts; the inner being separates itself from the imperfect outer consciousness and at the same time the peace that comes carries in it a Power which can throw out what contradicts the peace and purity. Ego can then slowly or swiftly but surely disappear—rajas and tamas change into their divine substitutes.

19-3-1937

nobody should follow on whom the necessity does not lie.

So many have done Yoga relying on Tapasya or anything else, but not confident of any Divine Grace. It is not that, but the soul's demand for a higher Truth or a higher Life that is indispensable. Where that is, the Divine Grace whether believed in or not will intervene. If you believe, that hastens and facilitates things; if you cannot yet believe, still the soul's aspiration will justify itself, with whatever difficulty and struggle.

### *The Dark and the Sunlit Path*

THE Supramental is not, as you imagine, something cold, hard and rock-like. It bears within it the presence of the Divine Love as well as the Divine Truth, and its reign here means for those who accept it, the straight and thornless path in which there is no wall or obstacle, of which the ancient Rishis saw the far-off promise.

The dark path is there and there are many who make, like the Christians, a Gospel of spiritual suffering; many hold it to be the unavoidable price of victory. It may be so under certain circumstances, as it has been in so many lives at the beginning, or one may choose to make it so. But then the price has to be paid with resignation, fortitude or a tenacious resilience. I admit that, if borne in that way, the attacks of the dark forces or the ordeals they impose have a meaning. After each victory gained over them, there is then a sensible advance; often they seem to show us the difficulties in ourselves which we have to overcome and to say: "Here you must conquer"; but all the same it is a too dark and difficult way which

### *Depression and Sorrow in Yoga*

THIRST for the Divine is one thing and depression is quite another, nor is depression a necessary consequence of the thirst being unsatisfied; that may lead to a more ardent thirst or to a fixed resolution and persistent effort or to a more yearning call or to a psychic sorrow which is not at all identical with depression and despair. Depression is a clouded grey state in its nature and it is more difficult for light to come through clouds and greyness than through a clear atmosphere. That depression obstructs the inner light is a matter of general experience. The Gita says expressly "Yoga should be practised persistently with a heart free from depression"—*anirvinnena chetasa*. Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* symbolises it as the Slough of Despond, one of the perils of the way that has to be overcome. It is no doubt impossible to escape from attacks of depression, almost all sadhakas go through these attacks, but the principle is that one should react against them and not allow them by any kind of mental encouragement or acceptance of their suggestions to persist

or grow chronic.

It is hardly a fact that sorrow is *necessary* in order to make the soul seek the Divine. It is the call of the soul within for the Divine that makes it turn and that may come under any circumstances—in full prosperity and enjoyment, at the height of outward conquest and victory without any sorrow or disappointment but by a sudden or growing enlightenment, by a flash of light in the midst of sensuous passion, as in Bilwamangal, by the perception that there is something greater and truer than this outward life lived in ego and ignorance. None of these turns need be accompanied by sorrow and depression. Often one turns saying "Life is all very well and interesting enough as a game, but it is only a game, the spiritual reality is greater than the life of the mind and senses." In whatever way it comes, it is the call of the Divine or the soul's call to the Divine that matters, the attraction of it is something far greater than the things that usually hold the nature. Certainly if one is satisfied with life, entranced by it so that it shuts out the sense of the soul within or hampers the attraction to the Divine, then a period of *vairagya*, sorrow, depression, a painful breaking of the vital ties may be necessary and many go through that. But once the turn made, it should be to the one direction and a perpetual *vairagya* is not needed. Nor when we speak of cheerfulness as the best condition, do we mean a cheerful following of the vital life, but a cheerful following of the path to the Divine

which is not impossible if the mind and heart take the right view and posture. At any rate if positive cheerfulness is not possible in one's case, still one should not acquiesce in or mentally support a constant depression and sadness. That is not at all indispensable for keeping turned to the Divine.

In speaking of the Buddhist and his nine years of the wall and other instances, the Mother was only disproving the view that not having succeeded in seven or eight years meant unfitness and debarred all hope for the future. The man of the wall stands among the greatest names in Japanese Buddhism and his long sterility did not mean incapacity or spiritual unfitness; but apart from that there are many who have gone on persisting for long periods and finally prevailed. It is a common, not an uncommon experience.

6-7-1936

### *Psychic Conversion*

THE conversion which keeps the consciousness turned towards the light and makes the right attitude spontaneous and natural and abiding and rejection also spontaneous is the psychic conversion. That is to say, man usually lives in his vital and the body is its instrument and the mind its counsellor and minister (except for the few mental men who live mostly for the things of the mind, but even they are in subjection to the vital in their ordinary movements). The spiritual conversion begins when the soul begins to insist on a deeper life and is complete when the psychic being becomes the basis or the leader of the consciousness, and mind and vital and body are led by it and obey it. Of course if that once happens fully, doubt, depression and despair cannot come any longer, although there may be and are difficulties still. If it is not fully, still fundamentally accomplished, even then these things either do not come or are brief passing clouds on the surface—for there is a rock of support and certitude at the base, which even if partially covered cannot disappear altogether.

Mostly however, the constant recurrence of depression and despair or of doubt and revolt is due to a mental or vital formation which takes hold of the vital mind and makes it run round always in the same circle at the slightest provoking cause or even without cause. It is like an illness to which the body consents from habit and from belief in the illness even though it suffers from it, and once started the illness runs its habitual course unless it is cut short by some strong counteracting force. If once the body can withdraw its consent, the illness immediately or quickly ceases,—that was the secret of the Coué system. So too if the vital mind withdraws its consent, refuses to be dominated by the habitual suggestions and the habitual movement, these recurrences of depression and despair can be made soon to cease. But it is not easy for this mind, once it has got into the habit of consent, even a quite passive and suffering and reluctant consent, to cancel the habit and get rid of the black circle. It can be done easily only when the mind refuses any longer to believe in the suggestions or accept the ideas or feelings that start the circle.

13-3-1936

### *Removal of Perplexities*

**D**IFFICULTIES and perplexities can never be got rid of by the mind brooding on them and trying in that way to get out of them; this habit of the mind only makes them recur without a solution and keeps up by brooding the persistent tangle. It is from something above and outside the perplexities that the solution must come. The difficulty of the physical mind—not the true thinking intelligence—is that it does not want to believe in this larger consciousness outside itself because it is not aware of it; and it remains shut like a box in itself, not admitting the light that is all round it and pressing to get in. It is a subtle law of the action of consciousness that if you stress difficulties—you have to observe them, of course, but not stress them, they will quite sufficiently do that for themselves—the difficulties tend to stick or even increase; on the contrary, if you put your whole stress on faith and aspiration and concentrate steadily on what you aspire to, that will sooner or later tend towards realisation. It is this change of stress, a change in the poise and attitude of the mind that will be the

more helpful process.

As for details, the method of the mind concentrating on details and trying to put them right is a slow and tardy one; it has to be done, but as a subordinate process, not the chief one. If it succeeds at all, it is because after some period of struggle and stress, something is released and there is an opening and the larger consciousness of which I speak gets through and produces some general result. But the progress is much more rapid if one can make the opening the main thing and keep the dealing with details, as something resultant and subordinate. When there is this opening, some essential (therefore general) progress can be made and, as you yourself say, "express and translate itself into details". The mind is always trying to handle details and construct out of them some general result; but what is above mind and even the best powers of the higher ranges of mind tend rather to bring about some *essential* change and make it or let it express itself, translate itself in the necessary details.

I may add, however, that one can feel the essential change without its expressing itself in details; e.g., one can feel a wide silent peace or a state of freedom and joy and rest silent and secure in it without needing to translate it into sundry details in order to feel the progress made.

It is not a theory but a constant experience and very tangible when it comes that there is above us, above the consciousness in the physical body, a

great supporting extension as it were of peace, light, power, joy—that we can become aware of it, and bring it down into the physical consciousness and that that, at first for a time, afterwards more frequently and for a longer time, in the end for good, can remain and change the whole basis of our daily consciousness. Even before we are aware of it above, we can suddenly feel it coming down and entering into us. The need is to have an aspiration towards it, make the mind quiet so that what we call the opening is rendered possible. A quieted mind (not necessarily motionless or silent, though it is good if one can have that at will) and a persistent aspiration in the heart are the two main keys of the Yoga. Activity of the mind is a much slower process and does not by itself lead to these decisive results. It is the difference between a straight road and an approach through constant circles, spirals or meanders.

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.

### *The Central Certitude*

**T**H**ERE** 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 moment 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 *metier* 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 sadhaka must have at the bottom of his heart, supporting him through every stumble and blow and ordeal.

### The Decisive Touch of Grace

I THINK this saying\* of Ramakrishna expresses a certain characteristic 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 *kripa*? 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 him to receive. But the touch of grace, divine grace, coming directly

\* With the Guru's Grace all difficulties can disappear in a flash even as a long darkness does the moment you strike a match.

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 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 sadhaka and counts upon his effort to a greater or less degree; it helps, succours in difficulty, saves in the time of danger; 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 *kripa* 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.

10-12-1935

### *Need of Patience in Yoga*

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 sadhaka 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.

### *Importance of Small Beginnings*

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 sadhaka 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 sadhakas have strong and decisive experiences at the beginning but these are followed by a long labour in which there are many empty periods and periods of struggle.

### *Change of Nature*

AS to the change of nature, the first step is to become conscious and separate from the old surface nature. For, this rajasic vital nature is a surface creation of Prakriti, it is not the true being; however persistent it seems, it is only a temporary combination of vital movements. Behind is the true mental and vital being supported by the psychic. The true being is calm wide, peaceful. By drawing back and becoming separate one creates the possibility of living in the peace of this inner Purusha and no longer identified with the surface Prakriti. Afterwards it will be much easier to change by the force of the psychic perception and the Peace and Power and Light from above the surface being.

27-4-37

work done is imperfect and not definitive. It is only in the Supermind that Awareness, Will, Force are always one movement and automatically effective.

### *Two Elements of Consciousness*

CONSCIOUSNESS is made up of two elements, awareness of self and things and forces and conscious-power. Awareness is the first thing necessary, you have to be aware of things in the right consciousness, in the right way, seeing them in their truth; but awareness by itself is not enough. There must be a Will and a Force that make the consciousness effective. Somebody may have the full consciousness of what has to be changed, what has to go and what has to come in its place, but may be helpless to make the change. Another may have the will-force, but for want of a right awareness may be unable to apply it in the right way at the right place. The advantage of being in the true consciousness is that you have the right awareness and its will being in harmony with the Mother's will, you can call in the Mother's Force to make the change. Those who live in the mind and the vital are not so well able to do this; they are obliged to use mostly their personal effort and as the awareness and will and force of the mind and vital are divided and imperfect, the

## *Equality*

### I

**E**QUALITY is the chief support of the true spiritual consciousness and it is this from which a Sadhaka 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 truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgement 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, misjudgement 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 Sadhaka, 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.

20-5-1931

## Equality

### II

COMPLETE samata 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 samata.

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, *rajoguna* etc. to be effective.

3-3-1938

### *Helpful Qualities in Yoga*

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 *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.

13-10-1935

### *Divine Guidance*

THE question you have put raises one of the most difficult and complicated of all problems and to deal with it at all adequately would need an answer as long as the longest chapter of *The Life Divine*. I can only state my own knowledge founded not on reasoning but on experience that there is such a guidance and that nothing is in vain in this universe.

If we look only at outward facts in their surface appearance or if we regard what we see happening around us as definitive, not as processes of a moment in a developing whole, the guidance is not apparent; at most we see interventions occasional or sometimes frequent. The guidance can become evident only if we go behind appearances and begin to understand the forces at work and the way of their working and their secret significance. After all, real knowledge—even scientific knowledge—comes by going behind the surface phenomena to their hidden processes and causes. It is quite obvious that this world is full of suffering, and afflicted with transience to a

degree that seems to justify the Gita's description of it as "this unhappy and transient world", *anityam asukham*. The question is whether it is a mere creation of Chance or governed by a mechanical inconscient law or whether there is a meaning in it and something beyond its present appearance towards which we move. If there is a meaning and if there is something towards which things are evolving, then inevitably there must be a guidance—and that means that a supporting Consciousness and Will is there with which we can come into inner contact. If there is such a Consciousness and Will, it is not likely that it would stultify itself by annulling the world's meaning or turning it into a perpetual or eventual failure.

This world has a double aspect, it seems to be based on a material inconscience and an ignorant mind and life full of that Inconscience: error and sorrow, death and suffering are the necessary consequences. But there is evidently too a partially successful endeavour and an imperfect growth towards Light, Knowledge, Truth, Good, Happiness, Harmony, Beauty, at least a partial flowering of these things. The meaning of this world must evidently lie in this opposition; it must be an evolution which is leading or struggling towards higher things out of a first darker appearance. Whatever guidance there is must be given under these conditions of opposition and struggle and must be leading towards that higher state of things. It is leading the indivi-

dual, certainly, and the world, presumably, towards the higher state, but through the double terms of knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness, death and life, pain and pleasure, happiness and suffering; none of the terms can be excluded until the higher state is reached and established. It is not and cannot be ordinarily a guidance which at once rejects the darker terms; still less a guidance which brings us solely and always nothing but happiness, success and good fortune. Its main concern is with the growth of our being and consciousness, the growth towards a higher self, towards the Divine, eventually towards a higher Light, Truth and Bliss; the rest is secondary, sometimes a means, sometimes a result, not a primary purpose.

The true sense of the guidance becomes clearer when we can go deep within and see from there more intimately the play of the forces and receive intimations of the Will behind them. The surface mind can get only an imperfect glimpse. When we are in contact with the Divine or in contact with an inner knowledge or vision, we begin to see all the circumstances of our life in the new light and observe how they all tended, without our knowing it, towards the growth of our being and consciousness, towards the work we had to do, towards some development that had to be made,—not only what seemed good, fortunate or successful but also the struggles, failures, difficulties, upheavals. But with each person the guidance works differently according to his

nature, the conditions of his life, his cast of consciousness, his stage of development, his need of further experience. We are not automata but conscious beings and our mentality, our will and its decisions, our attitude to life and demand on it, our motives and movements help to determine our course: they may lead to much suffering and evil, but through it all, the guidance makes use of them for our growth in experience and consequently the development of our being and consciousness. All advance, by however devious ways, even in spite of what seems a going backwards or going astray, gathering whatever experience, is necessary for the soul's destiny. When we are in close contact with the Divine, a protection can come which helps or directly guides or moves us; it does not throw aside all difficulties, sufferings or dangers, but it carries us through them and out of them—except where for a special purpose there is need of the opposite.

It is the same thing though on a larger scale and in a more complex way with the world movement. That seems to move according to the conditions and laws or forces of the movement through constant vicissitudes, but still there is something in it that drives towards the evolutionary purpose, although it is more difficult to see, understand and follow than in the smaller and more intimate field of the individual consciousness and life. What happens at a particular juncture of the world-action or the life of humanity, however catastrophic, is not ultimately

determinative. Here too one has to see not only the outward play of forces in a particular or at a particular time but also the inner and secret play, the far-off outcome, the event that lies behind it all. Falsehood and Darkness are strong everywhere on the earth, and have always been so and at times they seem to dominate; but there have also been not only gleams but outbursts of the Light. In the maze of things and the long course of Time, whatever may be the appearance of this or that epoch or movement, the growth of Light is there and the struggle towards better things does not cease. At the present time Falsehood and Darkness have gathered their forces and are extremely powerful; but even if we reject the assertion of the mystics and prophets since early times that such a condition of things must precede the Manifestation and is even a sign of its approach, yet it does not necessarily indicate the decisive victory—even temporary—of the Falsehood. It merely means that the struggle between the forces is at its acme. The result may very well be the stronger emergence of the best that can be; for the world-movement often works in that way. I leave it at that and say nothing more.

17-2-1942

...the outward... particular... the in-off... the earth... they seem... not only... vast of things... that may... of movement... strength... the present... gathered... but even... and prophet... of things... than a sign... indicate... the falsehood... obscure... very well... can do; for... that I have... 17-19 1917

### VIII

## *Science, Reasoning and Yogic Experience, Avatar and Symbols, Yoga Force, Beauty and Art, etc.*

*Reply to Leonard Woolf's Criticism of  
Mysticism*

I HAVE read Leonard Woolf's article, but I do not propose to deal with it in my comments on Professor Sorley's letter—for apart from the ignorant denunciation and cheap satire in which it deals, there is nothing much in its statement of the case against spiritual thought or experience; its reasoning is superficial and springs from an entire misunderstanding of the case for the mystic. There are four main arguments he sets against it and none of them has any value.

Argument number one. Mysticism and mystics have always risen in times of decadence, of the ebb of life and their loud quacking is a symptom of the decadence. This argument is absolutely untrue. In the East the great spiritual movements have arisen in the full flood of a people's life and culture or on a rising tide and they have themselves given a powerful impulse of expression and richness to its thought and Art and life; in Greece the mystics and the mysteries were there at the prehistoric beginning and

in the middle (Pythagoras was one of the greatest of mystics) and not only in the ebb and decline; the mystic cults flourished in Rome when its culture was at high tide; many great spiritual personalities of Italy, France, Spain sprang up in a life that was rich, vivid and not in the least touched with decadence. This hasty and stupid generalisation has no truth in it and therefore no value.

Argument number two. A spiritual experience cannot be taken as a truth (it is a chimera) unless it is proved just as the presence of a chair in the next room can be proved by showing it to the eye. Of course, a spiritual experience cannot be proved in that way, for it does not belong to the order of physical facts and is not physically visible or touchable. The writer's proposition would amount to this that only what is or can easily be evident to everybody without any need of training, development, equipment or personal discovery is to be taken as true. This is a position which, if accepted, would confine knowledge or truth within very narrow limits and get rid of a great deal of human culture. A spiritual peace—the peace that passeth all understanding—is a common experience of the mystics all over the world—it is a fact but a spiritual fact, a fact of the invisible and when one enters it or it enters into one, one knows that it is a truth of existence and is there all the time behind life and visible things. But how am I to prove these invisible facts to Mr. Leonard Woolf? He will turn away saying that this is the

usual decadent quack quack and pass contemptuously on—perhaps to write another cleverly shallow article on some subject of which he has no personal knowledge or experience.

Argument number three. The generalisations based on spiritual experience are irrational as well as unproven. Irrational in what way? Are they merely foolish and inconceivable or do they belong to a supra-rational order of experience to which the ordinary intellectual canons do not apply because these are founded on phenomena as they appear to the external mind and sense and not to an inner realisation which surpasses these phenomena? That is the contention of the mystics and it cannot be dismissed by merely saying that as these generalisations do not agree with the ordinary experience, therefore they are nonsense and false. I do not undertake to defend all that Joad or Radhakrishnan may have written—such as the statement that the “universe is good”—but I cannot admit about many of these statements condemned by the writer that they are irrational at all. “Integrating the personality” may have no meaning to him, it has a very clear meaning to me, for it is a truth of experience—and, if modern psychology is to be believed, it is not irrational, since there is in our being not only a conscious but an unconscious or subconscious or concealed subliminal part and it is not impossible to become aware of both and make some kind of integration. To transcend both also may have a rational meaning if

we admit that as there is a subconscious so there may be a superconscious part of our being; to reconcile disparate parts of our nature or our experience is also not such a ridiculous or meaningless phrase. It is not absurd to say that the doctrine of Karma reconciles determinism and free-willism, since it supposes that our own past action and therefore our past will determine to a great extent the present results but not so as to exclude a present will modifying them and creating a fresh determinism of our existence yet to be. The phrase about the value of the world is quite intelligible when we see that it refers to a progressive value, not determined by the good or bad experience of the moment, a value of existence developing through time and taken as a whole. As for the statement about God, it has no meaning if it is taken in connection with the superficial idea of the Divine current in popular religion, but it is a perfectly logical result of the premises that there is an Infinite and Eternal which is manifesting in itself Time and things that are phenomenally finite. One may accept or reject this complex idea of the Divine which is founded on co-ordination of the data of long spiritual experience passed through by thousands of seekers in all times, but I fail to see why it should be considered unreasonable. If it is because that means "to have it not only in both ways but in every way", I do not see why that should be so reprehensible and inadmissible. There can be after all a synthetic and global view and consciousness of

things which is not bound by the oppositions and divisions of a mere analytical and selective or dissecting intelligence.

Argument number four. The plea of intuition is only a cover for the inability to explain or establish by the use of reason—Joad and Radhakrishnan reason, but take refuge in intuition where their reasoning fails. Can the issue be settled in so easy and trenchant a way? The fact is that the mystic depends on an inner knowledge, an inner experience; but if he philosophises, he must try to explain to the reason, though not necessarily always by the reason alone, what he has seen to be the Truth. He cannot but say "I am explaining a truth which is beyond outer phenomena and the intelligence which depends on phenomena; it really depends on a certain kind of direct experience and the intuitive knowledge which arises from that experience, it cannot be adequately communicated by symbols appropriate to the world of outer phenomena, yet I am obliged to do as well as I can with these to help me towards some statement which will be intellectually acceptable to you. There is no wickedness or deceitful cunning therefore in using metaphors and symbols with a cautionary "as it were", as in the simile of the focus, which is surely not intended as an argument but as a suggestive image. I may observe in passing that the writer himself takes refuge in metaphor frequently, beginning with the quack quack and Joad might well reply that he does so in order to damn the opposite side

while avoiding the necessity of a sound philosophical reply to the philosophy he dislikes and repudiates. An intensity of belief is not the measure of truth, but neither is an intensity of unbelief the right measure.

As to the real nature of intuition and its relation to the intellectual mind, that is quite another and very large and complex question which I cannot deal with here. I have confined myself to pointing out that this article is quite inadequate and superficial criticism. A case can be made against spiritual experience and spiritual philosophy and its positions, but to deserve a serious reply it must be put forward by a better advocate.

31-12-1933

### *Reasoning and Yogic Experience*

YOU ask me whether you have to give up your predilection for testing before accepting and to accept everything in Yoga *a priori*—and by testing you mean testing by the ordinary reason. The only answer I can give to that is that the experiences of Yoga belong to an inner domain and go according to a law of their own, have their own method of perception, criteria and all the rest of it which are neither those of the domain of the physical senses nor of the domain of rational or scientific enquiry. Just as scientific enquiry passes beyond that of the physical senses and enters the domain of the infinite and infinitesimal about which the senses can say nothing and test nothing—for one cannot see and touch an electron or know by the evidence of the sense-mind whether it exists or not or decide by that evidence whether the earth really turns round the sun and not rather the sun round the earth as our senses and all our physical experience daily tell us—so the spiritual search passes beyond the domain of scientific or rational enquiry and it is impossible

by the aid of the ordinary positive reason to test the data of spiritual experience and decide whether those things exist or not or what is their law and nature. As in science, so here you have to accumulate experience on experience, following faithfully the methods laid down by the Guru or by the systems of the past, you have to develop an intuitive discrimination which compares the experiences, see what they mean, how far and in what field each is valid, what is the place of each in the whole, how it can be reconciled or related with others that at first might seem to contradict it, etc. etc. until you can move with a secure knowledge in the vast field of spiritual phenomena. That is the only way to test spiritual experience. I have myself tried the other method and I have found it absolutely incapable and inapplicable. On the other hand if you are not prepared to go through all that yourself—as few can do except those of extraordinary spiritual stature—you have to accept the leading of a Master, as in Science you accept a teacher instead of going through the whole field of Science and its experimentation all by yourself—at least until you have accumulated sufficient experience and knowledge. If that is accepting things *a priori*, well, you have to accept *a priori*. For I am unable to see by what valid tests you propose to make the ordinary reason the judge of what is beyond it.

You quote the sayings of V or X. I would like to know before assigning a value to these utterances what they actually did for the testing of their spiritual

perceptions and experiences. How did V test the *value of his spiritual experiences—some of them not easily credible to the ordinary positive mind any more* than the miracles attributed to some famous Yogis? I know nothing about X, but what were his tests and how did he apply them? What are his methods? his criteria? It seems to me that no ordinary mind will accept the apparition of Buddha out of a wall or the half hour's talk with Hayagriva as valid facts by any kind of testing. It would either have to accept them *a priori* or on the sole evidence of V which comes to the same thing or to reject them *a priori* as hallucinations or mere mental images accompanied in one case by an auditive hallucination. I fail to see how it could "test" them. Or how was I to test by the ordinary mind my experience of Nirvana? To what conclusion could I come about it by the aid of the ordinary positive reason? How could I test its validity? I am at a loss to imagine. I did the only thing I could—to accept it as a strong and valid truth of experience, let it have its full play and produce its full experimental consequences until I had sufficient Yogic knowledge to put it in its place. Finally, how without inner knowledge or experience can you or any one else test the inner knowledge and experience of others?

I have often said that discrimination is not only perfectly admissible but indispensable in spiritual experience. But it must be a discrimination founded on knowledge, not a reasoning founded on ignorance. Otherwise you tie up your mind and hamper

experience by preconceived ideas which are as much *a priori* as any acceptance of a spiritual truth or experience can be. Your idea that surrender can only come by love is a point in instance. It is perfectly true in Yogic experience that surrender by true love which means psychic and spiritual love is the most powerful, simple and effective of all, but one cannot, putting that forward as a dictum arrived at by the ordinary reason, shut up the whole of possible experience of surrender into that formula or announce on its strength that one must wait till one loves perfectly before one can surrender. Yogic experience shows that surrender can also be made by the mind and will, a clear and sincere mind seeing the necessity of surrender and a clear and sincere will enforcing it on the recalcitrant members. Also experience shows that not only can surrender come by love, but love also can come by surrender or grow with it from an imperfect to a perfect love. One starts by an intense idea and will to know or reach the Divine and surrenders more and more one's ordinary personal ideas, desires, attachments, urges to action or habits of action so that the Divine may take up everything. Surrender means that, to give up our little mind and its mental ideas and preferences into a divine Light and a greater knowledge, our petty personal troubled blind stumbling will into a great calm, tranquil, luminous Will and Force, our little, restless, tormented feelings into a wide intense divine Love and Ananda, our small suffering personality into the one Person of which it

is an obscure outcome. If one insists on one's own ideas and reasonings, the greater Light and Knowledge cannot come or else is marred and obstructed in the coming at every step by a lower interference; if one insists on one's desires and fancies, that great luminous Will and Force cannot act in its own true power—for you ask it to be the servant of your desires; if one refuses to give up one's petty ways of feeling, eternal Love and supreme Ananda cannot descend or are mixed and spilt from the effervescing crude emotional vessel. No amount of ordinary reasoning can get rid of the necessity of surmounting the lower in order that the higher may be there.

And if some find that retirement is the best way of giving oneself to the Higher, to the Divine by avoiding as much as possible occasions for the bubbling up of the lower, why not? The aim they have come for is that and why blame or look with distrust and suspicion on the means they find best or daub it with disparaging adjectives to discredit it—grim, inhuman and the rest? It is your vital that shrinks from it and your vital mind that supplies these epithets which express only your shrinking and not what the retirement really is. For it is the vital or its social part that shrink from solitude; the thinking mind does not but rather courts it. The poet seeks solitude with himself or with Nature to listen to his inspiration; the thinker plunges into solitude to meditate on things and commune with a deeper knowledge; the scientist shuts himself up in his laboratory to probe by experiment into

the secrets of Nature; these retirements are not grim and inhuman. Neither is the retirement of the sadhaka into the exclusive concentration of which he feels the need; it is a means to the end—to the end on which his whole heart is set. As for the Yogin or Bhakta who has already begun to have the fundamental experience, he is not in a grim and inhuman solitude. The Divine and all the world are there in the being of the one, the supreme Beloved or his Ananda is there in the heart of the other.

I say this as against your depreciation of retirement founded on ignorance of what it really is; but I do not, as I have often said, recommend a total seclusion, for I hold that to be a dangerous expedient which may lead to morbidity and much error. Nor do I impose retirement on any one as a method or approve of it unless the person himself seeks it, feels its necessity, has the joy of it and the proof that it helps to the spiritual experience. It is not to be imposed on any one as a principle, for that is the mental way of doing things, the way of the ordinary mind—it is as a need that it has to be accepted, when it is felt as a need, not as a general law or rule.

What you describe in your letter as the response of the Divine would not be called that in the language of Yogic experience—this feeling of great peace, light, ease, trust, difficulties lessening, certitude would rather be called a response of your own nature to the Divine. There is a Peace or Light which is the response of the Divine, but that is a wide Peace, a

great Light which is felt as a presence other than one's personal self, not part of one's personal nature, but something that comes from above, though in the end it possesses the nature—or there is the Presence itself which carries with it indeed the absolute liberation, happiness, certitude. But the first responses of the Divine are not often like that—they come rather as a touch, a pressure one must be in a condition to recognise and to accept, or it is a voice of assurance, sometimes a very "still small voice", a momentary Image or Presence, a whisper of Guidance sometimes, there are many forms it may take. Then it withdraws and the preparation of the nature goes on till it is possible for the touch to come again and again, to last longer, to change into something more pressing and near and intimate. The Divine in the beginning does not impose himself—he asks for recognition, for acceptance. That is one reason why the mind must fall silent, not put tests, not make claims—there must be room for the true intuition which recognises at once the true touch and accepts it.

Then for the tumultuous activity of the mind which prevents your concentration. But that or else a more tiresome, obstinate, grinding, mechanical activity is always the difficulty when one tries to concentrate and it takes a long time to get the better of it. That or the habit of sleep which prevents either the waking concentration or the conscious samadhi or the absorbed and all-excluding trance which are the three forms that Yogic concentration takes. But it is surely ignorance

of Yoga, its process and its difficulties that makes you feel desperate and pronounce yourself unfit for ever because of this quite ordinary obstacle. The insistence of the ordinary mind and its wrong reasonings, sentiments and judgments, the random activity of the thinking mind in concentration or its mechanical activity, the slowness of response to the veiled or the initial touch are the ordinary obstacles the mind imposes, just as pride, ambition, vanity, sex, greed, grasping of things for one's own ego are the difficulties and obstacles offered by the vital. As the vital difficulties can be fought down and conquered, so can the mental. Only one has to see that these are inevitable obstacles and neither cling to them nor be terrified or overwhelmed because they are there. One has to persevere till one can stand back from the mind as from the vital and feel the deeper and larger mental and vital Purushas within one which are capable of silence, capable of a straight receptivity of the true Word and Force as of the true silence. If the nature takes the way of fighting down the difficulties first, then the first half of the way is long and tedious and the complaint of the want of the response of the Divine arises. But really the Divine is there all the time, working behind the veil as well as waiting for the recognition of his response and for the response to the response to be possible.

18-11-1934

### *Krishna Consciousness*

THE answer to the question depends on what value we attach to spiritual experience and to the data of other planes of consciousness other than the physical, as also on the nature of the relations between the cosmic consciousness and the individual and collective consciousness of man. From the point of view of spiritual and occult Truth, what takes shape in the consciousness of man is a reflection and particular kind of formation, in a difficult medium, of things much greater in their light, power and beauty or in their force and range which came to it from the cosmic consciousness of which man is a limited, and, in his present state of evolution, a still ignorant part. All this explanation about the genius of the race, of a consciousness of a nation creating the Gods and their forms is a very partial, somewhat superficial and in itself a misleading truth. Man's mind is not an original creator, it is an intermediary; to start creating it must receive an initiating "inspiration", a transmission or a suggestion from the cosmic consciousness and with that it does what it can. God is, but man's

conceptions of God are reflections in his own mentality, sometimes of the Divine, sometimes of other Beings and Powers and they are what his mentality can make of the suggestions that come to him, generally very partial and imperfect so long as they are still mental, so long as he has not arrived at a higher and truer, a spiritual or mystic knowledge. The Gods already exist, they are not created by man even though he does seem to conceive them in his own image;—fundamentally, he formulates as best he can what truth about them he receives from the cosmic Reality. An artist or a bhakta may have a vision of the God and it may get stabilised and generalised in the consciousness of the race and in that sense it may be true that man gives their forms to the Gods; but he does not invent these forms, he records what he sees; the forms that he gives are given to him. In the “conventional” form of Krishna men have embodied what they could see of his eternal beauty and what they have seen may be true as well as beautiful, it conveys something of the form, but it is fairly certain that if there is an eternal form of that eternal beauty, it is a thousand times more beautiful than what man had as yet been able to see of it. Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead, for all nations have such a *Devi* supporting their separate existence and keeping it in being. Such beings are as real and more permanently real than the men they influence but they belong to a higher plane, are part of the cosmic consciousness

and being and act here on earth by shaping the human consciousness on which they exercise their influence. It is natural for man who sees only his own consciousness individual, national or racial at work and does not see what works upon it and shapes it, to think that all is created by him and there is nothing cosmic and greater behind it. The Krishna consciousness is a reality, but if there were no Krishna, there could be no Krishna consciousness; except in arbitrary metaphysical abstractions there can be no consciousness without a Being who is conscious. It is the person who gives value and reality to the personality, he expresses himself in it and is not constituted by it. Krishna is a being, a person and it is as the Divine Person that we meet him, hear his voice, speak with him and feel his presence. To speak of the consciousness of Krishna as something separate from Krishna is an error of the mind, which is always separating the inseparable and which also tends to regard the impersonal, because it is abstract, as greater, more real and more enduring than the person. Such divisions may be useful to the mind for its own purposes, but it is not the real truth; in the real truth the being or person and its impersonality or state of being are one reality.

The historicity of Krishna is of less spiritual importance and is not essential but it has still a considerable value. It does not seem to me that there can be any reasonable doubt that Krishna the man was not a legend or a poetic invention but actually

existed upon earth and played a part in the Indian past. Two facts emerge clearly that he was regarded as an important spiritual figure, one whose spiritual illumination was recorded in one of the Upanishads and that he was traditionally regarded as a divine man, one worshipped after his death as a deity; this is apart from the story in the Mahabharata and the Puranas. There is no reason to suppose that the connection of his name with the development of the Bhagavata religion, an important current in the stream of Indian spirituality was founded on a mere legend or poetic invention. The Mahabharata is a poem and not history, but it is clearly a poem founded on a great historical event, traditionally preserved in memory; some of the figures connected with it, Dhritarashtra, Parikshit for instance, certainly existed and the story of the part played by Krishna as leader, warrior and statesman can be accepted as probable in itself and to all appearance founded on a tradition which can be given a historical value and has not the air of a myth or a sheer poetical invention. That is as much as can be positively said from the point of view of the theoretical reason as to the historic figure of the man Krishna; but in my view there is much more than that in it and I have always regarded the incarnation as a fact and accepted the historicity of Krishna as I accept the historicity of Christ.

The story of Brindavan is another matter; it does not enter into the main story of the Mahabharata

and has a Puranic origin and it could be maintained that it was intended all along to have a symbolic character. At one time I accepted that explanation but I had to abandon it afterwards; there is nothing in the Puranas that betrays any such intention. It seems to me that it is related as something that actually occurred or occurs somewhere. The Gopis are to them realities and not symbols. It was for them at the least an occult truth and occult and symbolic are not the same thing; the symbol may be only a significant mental construction or only a fanciful invention, but the occult is a reality which is actual somewhere, behind the material scene as it were and can have its truth for the terrestrial life and its influence upon it may even embody itself there. The *lila* of the Gopis seems to be conceived as something which is always going on in a divine Gokul and which projected itself in an earthly Brindavan and can always be realised and its meaning made actual in the soul. It is to be presumed that the writers of the Puranas took it as having been actually projected on earth in the life of the incarnate Krishna and it has been so accepted by the religious mind of India.

These questions and the speculations to which they have given rise have no indispensable connection with the spiritual life. There what matters is the contact with Krishna and the growth towards the Krishna consciousness, the presence, the spiritual relation, the union in the soul and till that is

reached, the aspiration, the growth in bhakti and whatever illumination one can get on the way. To one who has had these things, lived in the presence, heard the voice, known Krishna as Friend or Lover, Guide, Teacher, Master or, still more, has had his whole consciousness changed by the contact, or felt the presence within him, all such questions have only an outer and superficial interest. So also one who has had contact with the inner Brindavan and the *lila* of the Gopis, made the surrender and undergone the spell of the joy and the beauty or even only turned to the sound of the flute, the rest hardly matters. But from another point of view, if one can accept the historical reality of the incarnation, there is this great spiritual gain that one has a *point d'appui* for a more concrete realisation in the conviction that once at least the Divine has visibly touched the earth, made the complete manifestation possible, made it possible for the divine supernature to descend into this evolving but still very imperfect terrestrial nature.

2-12-1946

### *Canalisation of Spiritual Experience — Avatar and Symbols*

OF course, X's view about the canalisation of Niagara is my standpoint also. But for the human mind it is difficult to get across the border between mind and spirit without making a forceful rush or push along one line only and that must be some line of pure experience in which, especially if it is the bhakti way, one gets easily swallowed up in the rapids (did not Chaitanya at last disappear in the waters?) and goes no farther. The first thing is to break into the spiritual consciousness, any part of it, anyhow and anywhere, afterwards one can explore the country, to which exploration there can hardly be a limit; one is always going higher and higher, getting wider and wider but there is a certain intense ecstasy about the first complete plunge which is extraordinarily seizing. It is not only the Bhakta's rapture, but the Jnani's plunge into the Brahma-Nirvana or Brahmananda or release into the still eternity of the Self that is of that seizing and absorbing character—it does not look at first as if one could or would care or need to get beyond into

anything else. One cannot find fault with the Sannyasi lost in his *laya* or the Bhakta lost in his ecstasy; they remain there probably because they are constituted for that and it is the limit of their leap. But all the same it has always appeared to me that it is a stage and not the end; I subscribe fully to the canalisation of the Niagara.

Adhikara is of course a matter of the psychology and the soul and the nature, it has nothing to do with any outer or artificial standards.

Then as to the Avatar and the symbols. There is, it seems to me, a cardinal error in the modern insistence on the biographical and historical, that is to say, the external factuality of the Avatar, the incidents of his outward life. What matters is the spiritual Reality, the Power, the Influence that come with him or that he brought down by his action and his existence. First of all what matters in a spiritual man's life is not what he did or what he was outside to the view of the men of his time (that is what historicity or biography comes to, does it not?) but what he was and did within; it is only that that gives any value to his outer life at all. It is the inner life that gives to the outer any power it may have and the inner life of a spiritual man is something vast and full and, at least, in the great figures, so crowded and teeming with significant things that no biographer or historian could ever hope to seize it all or tell it. Whatever is significant in the outward life is so because it is symbolical of what has been realised within himself and one may go on and say that the

inner life also is only significant as an expression, a living representation of the movement of the Divinity behind it. That is why we need not enquire whether the stories about Krishna were transcripts, however loose, of his acts on earth or are symbol-representations of what Krishna was and is for men, of the Divinity expressing itself in the figure of Krishna. Buddha's renunciation, his temptation by Mara, his enlightenment under the Bo-tree are such symbols, so too the virgin birth, the temptation in the desert, the crucifixion of Christ are such symbols, true by what they signify, even if they are not scrupulously recorded historical events. The outward facts as related of Christ or Buddha are not much more than what has happened in many other lives—what is it that gives Buddha or Christ their enormous place in the spiritual world? It was because something manifested through them that was more than any outward event or any teaching. The verifiable historicity gives us very little of that, yet it is that only that matters. So it seems to me that X is fundamentally right in what he says of the symbols. To the physical mind only the words and facts and acts of a man matter; to the inner mind it is the spiritual happenings in him that matter. Even the teachings of Buddha and Christ are spiritually true not as mere mental teachings but as the expression of spiritual states or happenings in them which by their life on earth they made possible (or even dynamically potential) in others. Also evidently sectarian walls are a

mistake, an accretion, a mental limiting of the Truth which may serve a mental, but not a spiritual purpose. The Avatar, the Guru have no meaning if they do not stand for the Eternal; it is that that makes them what they are for the worshipper or the disciple.

It is also a fact that nobody can give you any spiritual realisation which does not come from something in one's true Self, it is always the Divine who reveals himself and the Divine is within you; so He who reveals must be felt in your own heart. Your query here simply suggests that this is a truth which can be misinterpreted or misused, but so can every spiritual truth if it is taken hold of in the wrong way—and the human mind has a great penchant for taking Truth by the wrong end and arriving at falsehood. All statements about these things are, after all, mental statements and at the mercy of any mind that interprets them. There is a snag in every such statement created not by the Truth that it expresses but by the mind's interpretation. The snag (what you call the slip) lies not in the statement itself which is quite correct, but in the deflected sense in which it may be taken by ignorant or self-sufficient minds enamoured of their ego. Many have put forward the "own self" gospel without taking the trouble to see whether it is the true Self, have pitted the ignorance of their "own self"—in fact, their ego—against the knowledge of the Guru or made their ego or something that flattered and fostered it the Ishta Devata. The snag in the worship of Guru or Avatar is a sectarian bias

which insists on the Representative or the Manifestation but loses sight of the Manifested; the snag in the emphasis on the other side is the ignoring of the need or belittling of the value of the Representative or Manifestation and the substitution not of the true Self one in all but of one's "own self" as the guide and light. How many have done that and lost the way through the pull of the magnified ego which is one of the great perils on the way! However that does not lessen the truth of the things said by X,—only in looking at the many sides of Truth one must put each thing in its place in the harmony of the All which is for us the expression of the Supreme.

8-2-1936

*Comments on Prof. Sorley's Remarks on  
"The Riddle of This World"*

IN reference to what Prof. Sorley has written on "The Riddle of This World", the book of course was not meant as a full or direct statement of my thought and, as it was written to sadhakas mostly, many things were taken for granted there. Most of the major ideas, e.g. Overmind—were left without elucidation. To make the ideas implied clear to the intellect, they must be put with precision in an intellectual form—so far as that is possible with supra-intellectual things. What is written in the book can be clear to those who have gone far enough in experience, but for most it can only be suggestive.

I do not think, however, that the statement of supra-intellectual things necessarily involves a making of distinctions in the terms of the intellect. For, fundamentally, it is not an expression of ideas arrived at by speculative thinking. One has to arrive at spiritual knowledge through experience and a consciousness of things which arises directly out of that experience or else underlies or is involved in it.

This kind of knowledge, then, is fundamentally a consciousness and not a thought or formulated idea. For instance, my first major experience—radical and overwhelming, though not, as it turned out, final and exhaustive—came after and by the exclusion and silencing of all thought—there was, first, what might be called a spiritually substantial or concrete consciousness of stillness and silence, then the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality in whose presence things existed only as forms but forms not at all substantial or real or concrete; but this was all apparent to a spiritual perception and essential and impersonal sense and there was not the least concept or idea of reality or unreality or any other notion, for all concept or idea was hushed or rather entirely absent in the absolute stillness. These things were known directly through the pure consciousness and not through the mind, so there was no need of concepts or words or names. At the same time this fundamental character of spiritual experience is not absolutely limitative; it can do without thought, but it can do with thought also. Of course, the first idea of the mind would be that the resort to thought brings one back at once to the domain of the intellect—and at first and for a long time it may be so; but it is not my experience that this is unavoidable. It happens so when one tries to make an intellectual statement of what one has experienced; but there is another kind of thought that springs out as if it were a body or form of the experience or of the consciousness involved in it—or of a part of that consciousness—

and this does not seem to me to be intellectual in its character. It has another light, another power in it, a sense within the sense. It is very clearly so with those thoughts that come without the need of words to embody them, thoughts that are of the nature of a direct seeing in the consciousness, even a kind of intimate sense or contact formulating itself into a precise expression of its awareness (I hope this is not too mystic or unintelligible); but it might be said that directly the thoughts turn into words they belong to the kingdom of intellect—for words are a coinage of the intellect. But is it so really or inevitably? It has always seemed to me that words came originally from somewhere else than the thinking mind, although the thinking mind secured hold of them, turned them to its use and coined them freely for its purposes. But even otherwise, is it not possible to use words for the expression of something that is not intellectual? Housman contends that poetry is perfectly poetical only when it is non-intellectual, when it is nonsense. That is too paradoxical, but I suppose what he means is that if it is put to the strict test of the intellect it appears extravagant because it conveys something that expresses, and is real to, some other kind of seeing than that which intellectual thought brings to us. Is it not possible that words may spring from, that language may be used to express—at least up to a certain point and in a certain way—the supra-intellectual consciousness which is the essential power of spiritual experience?

This however is by the way—when one tries to explain spiritual experience to the intellect itself, then it is a different matter.

The interpenetration of the planes is indeed for me a capital and fundamental part of spiritual experience without which Yoga as I practise it and its aim could not exist. For that aim is to manifest, reach or embody a higher consciousness upon earth and not to get away from earth into a higher world or some supreme Absolute. The old Yogas (not quite all of them) tended the other way—but that was, I think, because they found the earth as it is a rather impossible place for any spiritual being and the resistance to change too obstinate to be borne; earth-nature looked to them in Vivekananda's simile like the dog's tail which every time you straighten it goes back to its original curl. But the fundamental proposition in this matter was proclaimed very definitely in the Upanishads which went so far as to say that the Earth is the foundation and all the worlds are on the earth and to imagine a clean-cut or irreconcilable difference between them is ignorance: here and not elsewhere, not by going to some other world the divine realisation must come. This statement was used to justify a purely individual realisation, but it can equally be the basis of a wider endeavour.

About polytheism, I certainly accept the truth of the many forms and personalities of the One which since the Vedic times has been the spiritual essence of Indian polytheism—a secondary aspect in the seeking

for the One and only Divine. But the passage referred to by Professor Sorley (p.56) is concerned with something else—the little godlings and Titans spoken of there are supraphysical beings of other planes. It is not meant to be suggested that they are real Godheads and entitled to worship—on the contrary it is indicated that to accept their influence is to move towards error and confusion or a deviation from the true spiritual way. No doubt they have some power to create, they are makers of forms in their own way and in their limited domain, but so are men too creators of outward and of inward things in their own domain and limits—and, even, man's creative powers can have repercussions on the supraphysical levels.

I agree that asceticism can be overdone. It has its place as one means—not the only one—of self-mastery; but asceticism that cuts away life is an exaggeration though one that had many remarkable results which perhaps could hardly have come otherwise. The play of forces in this world is enigmatic, escaping from any rigid rule of the reason, and even an exaggeration like that is often employed to bring about something needed for the full development of human achievement and knowledge and experience. But it was an exaggeration all the same and not, as it claimed to be, the indispensable path to the true goal.

14-1-1934

### *Psychology of St. Augustine*

ST. Augustine was a man of God and a great saint, but great saints are not always—or often—great psychologists or great thinkers. The psychology here is that of the most superficial schools, if not that of the man in the street; there are as many errors in it as there are psychological statements—and more, for several are not expressed but involved in what he writes. I am aware that these errors are practically universal, for psychological enquiry in Europe (and without enquiry there can be no sound knowledge) is only beginning and has not gone very far, and what has reigned in men's minds up to now is a superficial statement of the superficial appearances of our consciousness as they look to us at first view and nothing more. But knowledge only begins when we get away from the surface phenomena and look behind them for their true operations and causes. To the superficial view of the outer mind and senses the sun is a little fiery ball circling in mid air round the earth and the stars twinkling little things stuck in the sky for our benefit at night. Scientific enquiry

comes and knocks this infantile first-view to pieces. The sun is a huge affair (millions of miles away from our air) around which the small earth circles and the stars are huge members of huge systems indescribably distant which have nothing apparently to do with the tiny earth and her creatures. All science is like that, a contradiction of the sense-view or superficial appearances of things and an assertion of truths which are unguessed by the common and the uninstructed reason. The same process has to be followed in psychology if we are really to know what our consciousness is, how it is built and made and what is the secret of its functionings or the way out of its disorder.

There are several capital and common errors here:—

1. That mind and spirit are the same thing.
2. That all consciousness can be spoken of as "mind".
3. That all consciousness therefore is of a spiritual substance.
4. That the body is merely matter, not conscious, therefore something quite different from the spiritual part of the nature.

First, the spirit and the mind are two different things and should not be confused together. The mind is an instrumental entity or instrumental consciousness whose function is to think and perceive—the spirit is an essential entity or consciousness which does not need to think or perceive either in

the mental or the sensory way, because whatever knowledge it has is direct or essential knowledge, *svayamprakash*.

Next, it follows that all consciousness is not necessarily of a spiritual make and it need not be true and is not true that the thing commanding and the thing commanded are the same, are not at all different, are of the same substance and therefore are bound or at least ought to agree together.

Third, it is not even true that it is the mind which is commanding the mind and finds itself disobeyed by itself. First there are many parts of the mind, each a force in itself with its formations, functionings, interests, and they may not agree. One part of the mind may be spiritually influenced and like to think of the Divine and obey the spiritual impulse, another part may be rational or scientific or literary and prefer to follow the formations, beliefs or doubts, mental preferences and interests which are in conformity with its education and its nature. But quite apart from that, what was commanding in St. Augustine may very well have been the thinking mind or reason while what was commanded was the vital, and mind and vital, whatever anybody may say, are not the same. The thinking mind or *buddhi* lives, however imperfectly in man, by intelligence and reason. Vital, on the other hand, is a thing of desires, impulses, force-pushes, emotions, sensations, seekings after life-fulfilment, possession and enjoyment; these are its functions and its nature;—it is that part of us which seeks after life and its

movements for their own sake and it does not want to leave hold of them if they bring it suffering as well as or more than pleasure; it is even capable of luxuriating in tears and suffering as part of the drama of life. What then is there in common between the thinking intelligence and the vital and why should the latter obey the mind and not follow its own nature? The disobedience is perfectly normal instead of being, as Augustine suggests, unintelligible. Of course man can establish a mental control over his vital and in so far as he does it he is a man,—because the thinking mind is a nobler and more enlightened entity and consciousness than the vital and ought, therefore, to rule and, if the mental will is strong, *can* rule. But this rule is precarious, incomplete and held only by much self-discipline. For if the mind is more enlightened, the vital is nearer to earth, more intense, vehement, more directly able to touch the body. There is too a vital mind which lives by imagination, thoughts or desire, will to act and enjoy from its own impulse and this is able to seize on the reason itself and make it its auxiliary and its justifying counsel and supplier of pleas and excuses. There is also the sheer force of Desire in man which is the vital's principal support and strong enough to sweep off the reason as the Gita says "like a boat on stormy waters", *navamivambhasi*.

Finally, the body obeys the mind automatically in those things in which it is formed or trained to obey it, but the relation of the body to the mind is not in all things that of an automatic perfect instrument. The

body also has a consciousness of its own and, though it is a submental instrument or servant consciousness, it can disobey or fail to obey as well. In many things, in matters of health and illness for instance, in all automatic functionings, the body acts on its own and is not a servant of the mind. If it is fatigued, it can offer a passive resistance to the mind's will. It can cloud the mind with *tamas*, inertia, dullness, fumes of the subconscious so that the mind cannot act. The arm lifts no doubt when it gets the suggestion, but at first the legs do not obey when they are asked to walk; they have to learn how to leave the crawling attitude and movement and take up the erect and ambulatory habit. When you first ask the hand to draw a straight line or to play music, it can't do it and won't do it. It has to be schooled, trained, taught, and afterwards it does automatically what is required of it. All this proves that there is a body-consciousness which can do things at the mind's order but has to be awakened, trained, made a good and conscious instrument. It can even be so trained that a mental will or suggestion can cure the illness of the body. But all these things, these relations of mind and body, stand on the same footing in essence as the relation of mind to vital and it is not so easy or primary a matter as Augustine would have it.

This puts the problem on another footing with the causes more clear and, if we are prepared to go far enough, it suggests the way out, the way of Yoga.

PS. All this is quite apart from the contributing and very important factor of plural personality of which psychological enquiry is just beginning rather obscurely to take account. That is a more complex affair.

### *Free-Will and Determinism*

AFTER reading X's cogent exposition, I saw what might be said from the intellectual point of view on this question so as to link the reality of the supreme Freedom with the phenomenon of the Determinism of Nature—in a different way from his but to the same purpose. In reality, the freedom and the determination are only two sides of the same thing—for the fundamental truth is self-determination of the cosmos and in it a secret self-determination of the individual. The difficulty arises from the fact that we live in the surface mind of ignorance, do not know what is going on behind and see only the phenomenal process of Nature. There the apparent fact is an overwhelming determinism of Nature and as our surface-consciousness is part of that process we are unable to see the other term of the biune reality. For practical purposes on the surface there is an entire determinism in Matter—though this is now disputed by the latest school of Science. As life emerges a certain plasticity sets in, so that it is difficult to predict anything exactly as one predicts material things that obey a rigid law.

The plasticity increases with the growth of Mind so that man can have at least a sense of free-will, of a choice of his action, of a self-movement which at least helps to determine circumstances. But this freedom is dubious because it can be declared to be an illusion, a device of Nature, part of its machinery of determination, only a seeming freedom or at most a restricted, relative and subject independence. It is only when one goes behind away from Prakriti to Purusha and upward away from Mind to spiritual Self that the side of freedom comes to be first evident and then, by unison with the Will which is above Nature, complete.

23-9-1934

### *Divine Grace*

**E**ACH 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. One can 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 or 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.

### *Meaning and Value of Sacrifice*

**S**ACRIFICE has a moral and psychological value always. This value is the same no matter what may be the cause for which the sacrifice is made, provided the one who makes it believes in the truth or justice or other worthiness of his cause. If one makes the sacrifice for a cause one knows to be wrong or unworthy, all depends on the motive and spirit of the sacrifice. Bhishma accepting death in a cause he knew to be unjust, obeyed the call of loyalty to what he felt to be his personal duty. Many have done that in the past, and the moral and psychic value of their act lies, irrespective of the nature of the cause, in the nobility of the motive.

As to the other question, in this sense of the word sacrifice there is none for the man who gives up something which he does not value, except in so far as he undergoes loss, defies social ban or obloquy or otherwise pays a price for his liberation. I may say, however, that without being cold and unloving a man may be so seized by a spiritual call or the call of a great human cause that the family or other ties.

count for nothing beside it, and he leaves all joyfully, without a pang, to follow the summoning Voice.

In the spiritual sense, however, sacrifice has a different meaning—it does not so much indicate giving up what is held dear as an offering of oneself, one's being, one's mind, heart, will, body, life, actions to the Divine. It has the original sense of "making sacred" and is used as an equivalent of the word *Yajna*. When the Gita speaks of the "sacrifice of knowledge", it does not mean a giving up of anything, but a turning of the mind towards the Divine in the search for knowledge and an offering of oneself through it. It is in this sense, too, that one speaks of the offering or sacrifice of works. The Mother has written somewhere that the spiritual sacrifice is joyful and not painful in its nature. On the spiritual path, very commonly, if a seeker still feels the old ties and responsibilities strongly he is not asked to sever or leave them, but to let the call in him grow till all within is ready. Many, indeed, come away earlier because they feel that to cut loose is their only chance, and these have to go sometimes through a struggle. But the pain, the struggle, is not the essential character of this spiritual self-offering.

16-10-1935

### *Superstition*

IT is quite true that the word "superstition" has been habitually used as a convenient club to beat down any belief that does not agree with the ideas of the materialistic reason, that is to say, the physical mind dealing with the apparent law of physical process and seeing no further. It has also been used to dismiss ideas and beliefs not in agreement with one's own idea of what is the rational norm of supraphysical truths as well. For many ages man cherished beliefs that implied a force behind which acted on principles unknown to the physical mind and beyond the witness of the outward reason and the senses. Science came in with a method of knowledge which extended the evidence of this outer field of consciousness and thought that by this method all existence would become explicable. It swept away at once without examination all the ancient beliefs as so many "superstitions"—true, half-true or false, all went into the dust-bin in one impartial sweep, because they did not rely on the method of physical Science and lay outside its data or were or seemed

incompatible with its standpoint. Even in the field of supraphysical experience only so much was admitted as could give a mentally rational explanation of itself according to a certain range of ideas—all the rest, everything that seemed to demand an occult, mystic or below-the-surface origin to explain it was put aside as so much superstition. Popular beliefs that were the fruit sometimes of imagination but sometimes also of a traditional empirical knowledge or of a right instinct shared naturally the same fate. That all this was a hasty and illegitimate operation, itself based on the “superstition” of the all-sufficiency of the new method which really applies only to a limited field, is now becoming more and more evident. I agree with you that the word superstition is one which should be used either not at all or with great caution. It is evidently an anachronism to apply it to beliefs not accepted by the form of religion one happens oneself to follow or favour.

The growing reversal of opinion with regard to many things that were then condemned but are now coming into favour once more is very striking. In addition to the instances you quote a hundred others might be added. One does not quite know why a belief in graphology should be condemned as irrational or superstitious; it seems to me quite rational to believe that a man's handwriting is the result of or consistent with his temperament and nature and, if so, it may very well prove on examination to be an index of character. It is now a known fact that

each man is an individual by himself with his own peculiar formation different from others and made by minute variations in the general human plan,—this is true of small physical characteristics, it is evidently equally true of psychological characteristics; it is not unreasonable to suppose a correlation between the two. On that basis cheiromancy may very well have a truth in it, for it is a known fact that the lines in an individual hand are different from the lines in others and that this, as well as differences of physiognomy, may carry in it psychological indications is not impossible. The difficulty for minds trained under rationalistic influences becomes greater when these lines or the data of astrology are interpreted as signs of destiny, because modern rationalism resolutely refused to admit that the future was determined or could be determinable. But this looks more and more like one of the “superstitions” of the modern mind, a belief curiously contradictory of the fundamental notions of Science. For Science has believed, at least until yesterday, that everything is determined in Nature and it attempts to find the laws of that determination and to predict future physical happenings on that basis. If so, it is reasonable to suppose that there are unseen connections determining human events in the world and that future happening may therefore be predictable. Whether it can be done on the lines of astrology or cheiromancy is a matter of enquiry and one does not get any further by dismissing the possibility with a summary denial. The case for

astrology is fairly strong; a case seems to exist for cheiromancy also.

On the other hand, it is not safe to go too hastily in the other direction. There is the opposite tendency to believe everything in these fields and not keep one's eyes open to the element of limitation or error in these difficult branches of knowledge—it was the excess of belief that helped to discredit them, because their errors were patent. It does not seem to me established that the stars determine the future—though that is possible, but it does look as if they indicate it—or rather, some certitudes and potentialities of the future. Even the astrologers admit that there is another element of determination in man himself which limits the field of astrological prediction and may even alter many of its ascertained results. There is a very tangled and difficult complex of forces making up any determination of things in the world and when we have disentangled one thread of the skein and follow it we may get many striking results, but we cannot rely on it as the one wholly reliable clue. The mind's methods are too rigid and conveniently simple to unravel the true or whole truth whether of the Reality or of its separate phenomena.

I would accept your statement about the possibility of knowing much about a man from observations of a small part of his being, physical or psychological, but I think it is to go too far to say that one can reconstruct a whole man from one minute particle of

a hair. I should say from my knowledge of the complexity and multiplicity of elements in the human being that such a procedure would be hazardous and would leave a large part of the Unknown overshadowing the excessive certitude of this inferential structure.

\*

\* \*

I suppose we cannot go so far as to deny that there is such a thing as superstition—a fixed belief without any ground in something that is quite unsound and does not hang together. The human mind readily claps on such beliefs to things which can be or are in themselves true, and this is a mixture which very badly confuses the search for knowledge. But precisely because of this mixture, because somewhere behind the superstition or not far off from it there is very usually some real truth, one ought to be cautious in using the word or sweeping away with it as a convenient broom the true, the partly true and the unfounded together and claiming that the bare ground left is the only truth of the matter.

17-1-1937

\*

\* \*

When I wrote that sentence about “a fixed blind belief”, I was not thinking really of religious beliefs, but of common popular ideas and beliefs.

Your feeling about the matter, in any case, is quite sound. One can and ought to believe and follow one's own path without condemning or looking down on others for having beliefs different from those one thinks or sees to be the best or the largest in truth. The spiritual field is many-sided and full of complexities and there is room for an immense variety of experiences. Besides, all mental egoism—and spiritual egoism—has to be surmounted and this sense of superiority should therefore not be cherished.

21-1-1937

PS. A sincere, whole-hearted and one-pointed following of this Yoga should lead to a level where these rigid mental divisions do not exist for they are mental walls put round one part of Truth and Knowledge, so as to cut it off from the rest, but this view from above the mind is comprehensive and everything falls into its place in the whole.

### Yoga-Force

I

ALL the world, according to Science, is nothing but a play of Energy—a material Energy it used to be called, but it is now doubted whether Matter scientifically speaking, exists except as a phenomenon of Energy. All the world, according to Vedanta, is a play of a power of a spiritual entity, the power of an original consciousness, whether it be Maya or Shakti, and the result an illusion or real. In the world so far as man is concerned we are aware only of mind energy, life energy, energy in matter; but it is supposed that there is a spiritual energy or force also behind them from which they originate. All things, in either case, are the results of a Shakti, energy or force. There is no action without a Force or Energy doing the action and bringing about its consequence. Further, anything that has no Force in it is either something dead or something unreal or something inert and without consequence. If there is no such thing as spiritual consciousness, there can be no reality of Yoga, and if there is no Yoga-force, spiritual force, Yoga Shakti,

then also there can be no effectivity in Yoga. A Yoga consciousness or spiritual consciousness which has no power or force in it, may not be dead or unreal but it is evidently something inert and without effect or consequence. Equally a man who sets out to be a Yogi or Guru and has no spiritual consciousness or no power in his spiritual consciousness—a Yoga-force or spiritual force—is making a false claim and is either a charlatan or a self-deluded imbecile; still more is he so if having no spiritual force he claims to have made a path others can follow. If Yoga is a reality, if spirituality is anything better than a delusion, there must be such a thing as Yoga-force or spiritual force.

It is evident that if spiritual force exists, it must be able to produce spiritual results—therefore there is no irrationality in the claim of those sadhakas who say that they feel the force of the Guru or the force of the Divine working in them leading towards spiritual fulfilment and experience. Whether it is so or not in a particular case is a personal question, but the statement cannot be denounced as *per se* incredible and manifestly false because such things cannot be. Further, if it be true that spiritual force is the original one and the others are derivative from it, then there is no irrationality in supposing that spiritual force can produce mental results, vital results, physical results. It may act through mental, vital or physical energies and through the means which these energies use or it may act directly on mind, life or matter as the

field of its own special and immediate action. Either way is *prima facie* possible. In a case of cure or illness someone is ill for two days, weak, suffering from pains and fever; he takes no medicine, but finally asks for cure from his Guru; the next morning he rises well, strong and energetic. He has at least some justification for thinking that a force has been used on him and put into him and that it was a spiritual power that acted. But in another case, medicines may be used, while at the same time the invisible force may be called for to aid the material means, for it is a known fact that medicines may or may not succeed—there is no certitude. Here for the reason of an outside observer (one who is neither the user of the force nor the doctor nor the patient) it remains uncertain whether the patient was cured by the medicines only or by the spiritual force with the medicines as an instrument. Either is possible, and it cannot be said that because medicines were used, therefore the working of spiritual force is *per se* incredible and demonstrably false. On the other hand it is possible for the doctor to have felt a force working in him and guiding him or he may see the patient improving with a rapidity which according to medical science, is incredible. The patient may feel the force working in himself bringing health, energy, rapid cure. The user of the force may watch the results, see the symptoms he works on diminishing, those he did not work upon increasing till he does work on them and then immediately diminishing, the doctor working according to his unspoken suggestions etc.

etc., until the cure is done. (On the other hand he may see forces working against the cure and conclude that the spiritual force has to be contented with a withdrawal or an imperfect success.) In all that the doctor, the patient or the user of force is justified in believing that the cure is at least partly or even fundamentally due to the spiritual force. Their experience is valid of course for themselves only, not for the outside rationalising observer. But the latter is not logically entitled to say that their experience is incredible and must be false.

Another point, it does not follow that a spiritual force must either succeed in all cases or, if it does not, that proves its non-existence. Of no force can that be said. The force of fire is to burn, but there are things it does not burn; under certain circumstances it does not burn even the feet of the man who walks barefoot on red-hot coals. That does not prove that fire cannot burn or that there is no such thing as force of fire, Agni Shakti.

I have no time to write more; it is not necessary either. My object was not to show that spiritual force must be believed in, but that the belief in it is not necessarily a delusion and that this belief can be rational as well as possible.

7-12-1935

## Yoga-Force

### II

THE invisible Force producing tangible results both inward and outward is the whole meaning of the Yogic consciousness. Your question about Yoga bringing merely a feeling of Power without any result was really very strange. Who would be satisfied with such a meaningless hallucination and call it Power? If we had not had thousands of experiences showing that the Power within could alter the mind, develop its powers, add new ones, bring in new ranges of knowledge, master the vital movements, change the character, influence men and things, control the conditions and functionings of the body, work as a concrete dynamic Force on other forces, modify events etc. etc., we would not speak of it as we do. Moreover, it is not only in its results but in its movements that the Force is tangible and concrete. When I speak of feeling Force or Power, I do not mean simply having a vague sense of it, but feeling it concretely and consequently being able to direct it, manipulate it, watch its movement, be conscious of its mass and intensity and in

the same way of that of other perhaps opposing forces; all these things are possible and usual by the development of Yoga.

It is not, unless it is Supramental Force, a Power that acts without conditions and limits. The conditions and limits under which Yoga or sadhana has to be worked out are not arbitrary or capricious; they arise from the nature of things. These—including the will, receptivity, assent, self-opening and surrender of the sadhaka have to be respected by the Yoga-force—unless it receives a sanction from the Supreme to override everything and get something done, but that sanction is sparingly given. It is only if the Supramental Power came fully down, not merely sent its influences through the Overmind that things could be very radically directed towards that object—for then the sanction would not be rare! For the Law of the Truth would be at work not constantly balanced by the law of the Ignorance.

Still the Yoga-force is always tangible and concrete in the way I have described and has tangible results. But it is invisible—not like a blow given or the rush of a motor car knocking somebody down which the physical senses can at once perceive. How is the mere physical mind to know that it is there and working? By its results? but how can it know that the results were that of the Yogic force and not of something else? One of two things it must be. Either it must allow the consciousness to go inside, to become aware of inner things, to believe in the experience of the invisible and

the supraphysical, and then by experience, by the opening of new capacities, it becomes conscious of these forces and can see, follow and use their workings just as the Scientist uses the unseen forces of Nature. Or one must have faith and watch and open oneself and then it will begin to see how things happen, it will notice that when the Force was called in, there began after a time to be a result, then repetitions, more repetitions, more clear and tangible results, increasing frequency, increasing consistency of results, a feeling and awareness of the Force at work—until the experience becomes daily, regular, normal, complete. These are the two main methods, one internal, working from in outward, the other external, working from outside and calling the inner force out till it penetrates and is visible in the exterior consciousness. But neither can be done if one insists always on the extrovert attitude, the external concrete only and refuses to join to it the internal concrete—or if the physical mind at every step raises a dance of doubts which refuses to allow the nascent experience to develop. Even the Scientist carrying on a new experiment would never succeed if he allowed his mind to behave in that way.

2-8-1932

### *Supernatural Phenomena*

THESE extraordinary occurrences which go outside the ordinary course of physical Nature, happen frequently in India and are not unknown elsewhere; they are akin to what is called poltergeist phenomena in Europe. Scientists do not speak or think about such supernormal happenings except to poohpooch them or to prove that they are simply the tricks of children simulating supernatural manifestations.

Scientific laws only give a schematic account of material process of Nature—as a valid scheme they can be used for reproducing or extending at will a material process, but obviously they cannot give an account of the thing itself. Water for instance is not merely so much oxygen and hydrogen put together—the combination is simply a process or device for enabling the materialisation of a new thing called water; what that new thing really is is quite another matter. In fact there are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called causal (Karana) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state;

that accounts for dematerialisation and rematerialisation. These are occult processes and are vulgarly regarded as magic. Ordinarily the magician knows nothing of the why and wherefore of what he is doing, he has simply learned the formula or process or else controls elemental beings of the subtler states (planes or worlds) who do the thing for him. The Tibetans indulge widely in occult processes; if you see the books of Madame David Neel who has lived in Tibet you will get an idea of their expertness in these things. But also the Tibetan Lamas know something of the laws of occult (mental and vital) energy and how it can be made to act on physical things. That is something which goes beyond mere magic. The direct power of mind-force or life-force upon matter can be extended to an almost illimitable degree. It must be remembered that Energy is fundamentally one in all the planes, only taking more and more dense forms, so there is nothing *a priori* impossible in mind-energy or life-energy acting directly on material energy and substance; if they do they can make a material object do things or rather can do things with a material object which would be to that object in its ordinary poise or “law” unhabitual and therefore apparently impossible.

I do not see how cosmic rays can explain the origination of matter; it is like Sir Oliver Lodge’s explanation of life on earth that it comes from another planet; it only pushes the problem one step farther back—for how do the cosmic rays come into existence? But it is a fact that Agni is the basis of forms as the

Sankhya pointed out long ago, i.e. the fiery principle in the three powers radiant, electric and gaseous (the Vedic trinity of Agni) is the agent in producing liquid and solid forms of what is called matter.

Obviously a layman cannot do these things, unless he has a native "psychic" (that is, occult) faculty and even then he will have to learn the law of the thing before he can use it at will. It is always possible to use spiritual force or mind-power or will-power or a certain kind of vital energy to produce effects in men, things and happenings; but knowledge and much practice is needed before this possibility ceases to be occasional and haphazard and can be used quite consciously, at will or to perfection. Even then to have "a control over the whole material world" is too big a proposition, a local and partial control is more possible or, more widely, certain kinds of control over matter.

24-10-1938

### *Spiritism*

ABOUT spiritism, I think, I can say this much for the present. It is quite possible for the dead or rather the departed—for they are not dead—who are still in regions near the earth to have communication with the living; sometimes it happens automatically, sometimes by an effort at communication on one side of the curtain or the other. There is no impossibility of such communication by the means used by the spiritists; usually however, genuine communications or a contact can only be with those who are yet in a world which is a sort of idealised replica of the earth-consciousness and in which the same personality, ideas, memories persist that the person had here. But all that pretends to be communications with departed souls is not genuine, especially when it is done through a paid professional medium. There is there an enormous amount of mixture of a very undesirable kind—for apart from the great mass of unconscious suggestions from the sitters or the contributions of the medium's subliminal consciousness one gets into contact with a world of

beings which is of a very deceptive or self-deceptive illusory nature. Many of these come and claim to be the departed souls of relatives, acquaintances, well-known men, famous personalities, etc. There are also beings who pick up the discarded feelings and memories of the dead and masquerade with them. There are a great number of beings who come to such seances only to play with the consciousness of men or exercise their powers through this contact with the earth and who dope the mediums and sitters with their falsehoods, tricks and illusions. (I am supposing, of course, the case of mediums who are not themselves tricksters.) A contact with such a plane of spirits can be harmful (most mediums become nervously or morally unbalanced) and spiritually dangerous. Of course all pretended communications with the famous dead of long-past times are in their very nature deceptive and most of those with the recent ones also—that is evident from the character of these communications. Through conscientious mediums one may get sound results (in the matter of the dead) but even these are very ignorant of the nature of the forces they are handling and have no discrimination which can guard them against trickery from the other side of the veil. Very little genuine knowledge of the nature of the after-life can be gathered from these seances; a true knowledge is more often gained by the experience of individuals who make serious contact or are able in one way or another to cross the border.

### *The Revolution in Science*

THE defect in what X writes about Science seems to be that he is insisting vehemently on the idea that Science is still materialistic or at least that scientists, Jeans and Eddington excepted, are still fundamentally materialists. This is not the fact. Most continental scientists have now renounced the idea that Science can explain the fundamentals of existence. They hold that Science is only concerned with process and not with fundamentals. They declare that it is not the business of Science nor is it within its means to decide anything about the great questions which concern philosophy and religion. This is the enormous change which the latest developments of Science have brought about. Science itself nowadays is neither materialistic nor idealistic. The rock on which materialism was built and which in the 19th Century seemed unshakeable has now been shattered. Materialism has now become a philosophical speculation just like any other theory; it cannot claim to found itself on a sort of infallible Biblical authority, based on the facts and conclusions of

Science. This change can be felt by one like myself who grew up in the hey-day of absolute rule of scientific materialism in the 19th Century. The way which had been almost entirely barred except by rebellion now lies wide open to spiritual truths, spiritual ideas, spiritual experiences. That is the real revolution. Mentalism is only a half-way house but mentalism and vitalism are now perfectly possible as hypotheses based on the facts of existence, scientific facts as well as any others. The facts of Science do not compel any one to take any particular philosophical direction. They are now neutral and can even be used on one side or another though most scientists do not consider such a use as admissible. Nobody here ever said that the new discoveries of Physics supported the ideas of religion or churches; they merely contended that Science had lost its old materialistic dogmatism and moved away by a revolutionary change from its old moorings.

It is this change which I expected and prophesied in my poems in the first *Ahana* volume, "A Vision of Science" and "In the Moonlight".

### *Comments on Sir James Jeans's Speculations about Life on Earth*

**H**OW does Sir James Jeans or any other scientist know that it was by a "mere accident" that life came into existence or that there is no life anywhere else in the universe or that life elsewhere must either be exactly the same as life here under the same conditions or not existent at all? These are mere mental speculations without any conclusiveness in them. Life can be an accident only if the whole world also is an accident—a thing created by Chance and governed by Chance. It is not worthwhile to waste time on this kind of speculation, for it is only the bubble of a moment.

The material universe is only the façade of an immense building which has other structures behind it and it is only if one knows the whole that one can have some knowledge of the truth of the material universe. There are vital, mental and spiritual ranges behind which give the material its significance. If the earth is the only field of the spiritual evolution in matter—(assuming that)—then it must be as part

of the total design. The idea that all the rest must be a waste is a human idea which would not trouble the vast Cosmic Spirit—whose consciousness and life are everywhere, in the slime and dust as much as in the human intelligence. But this is a speculative question which is quite alien to our practical purpose. For us it is the development of the spiritual consciousness in the human body that matters.

In this development there are stages—the whole truth cannot be known till all are passed and the final stage is there. The stage in which you are is one in which the self is beginning to be realised, the self free from all embodiment and not depending on embodiment for its perpetual existence. It is therefore natural that you should feel the embodiment to be something quite subordinate and like the earth-life of Jeans almost accidental. It is because of this stage that the Mayavadins, taking it for final, thought the world to be an illusion. But this is only a stage of the journey. Beyond this Self which is static, separate, formless, there is a greater consciousness in which the Silence and the Cosmic Activity are united but in another knowledge than the walled-in ignorance of the embodied human being. This Self is only one aspect of the Divine Reality. It is when one gets to that greater Consciousness that cosmic existence and form and life and mind no longer appear to be an accident but find their significance. Even there are two stages, the overmental and the Supramental and it is not till one gets to the last that the

full truth of existence can become entirely real to the consciousness. Observe what you experience and know that it has its value and is indispensable as a stage, but do not take the experience as the final knowledge.

28-8-1936

## *Intellect*

ALL depends on the meaning you attach to words used; it is a matter of nomenclature. Ordinarily one says a man has intellect if he can think well; the nature and process and field of the thought do not matter. If you take intellect in that sense, then you can say that intellect has different strata and Ford belongs to one stratum of intellect, Einstein to another—Ford has a practical and executive business intellect, Einstein a scientific discovering and theorising intellect. But Ford too in his own field theorises, invents, discovers. Yet would you call Ford an intellectual or a man of intellect? I would prefer to use for the general faculty of mind the word intelligence. Ford has a great and forceful practical intelligence, keen, quick, successful, dynamic. He has a brain that can deal with thoughts also, but even there his drive is towards practicality. He believes in rebirth (metempsychosis), for instance, not for any philosophic reason, but because it explains life as a school of experience in which one gathers more and more experience and develops by it. Einstein has on the other hand a great discovering

scientific intellect, not, like Marconi, a powerful practical inventive intelligence for the application of scientific discovery. All men have of course an "intellect" of a kind; all, for instance, can discuss and debate (for which you say rightly intellect is needed); but it is only when one rises to the realm of ideas and moves freely in it that you say "This man has an intellect". Address an assembly of peasants, you will find if you give them scope that they can put to you points and questions which may often leave the parliamentary debater panting. But we are content to say that these peasants have much practical intelligence.

The power to discuss and debate is, as I say, a common human faculty—and habit. Perhaps it is here that man begins to diverge from the animal; for animals have much intelligence, many animals and even insects have some rudimentary power of practical reasoning, but so far as we know, they do not meet and put their ideas about things side by side or sling them at each other in a debate\* as even the most ignorant human can do and very animatedly does.

But this, though a general faculty of the race, is very often specialised, so much so that a man whom it is dangerous to cross in debate in the field of literature or of science or of philosophy may yet make a fool of himself and wallow contentedly in a quagmire of blunders and fallacies if he discusses politics or economics or, let us say, spirituality

\* Perhaps the crows do in the Crow-Parliament sometimes!

or Yoga. His only salvation is the blissful depth of his ignorance which prevents him from seeing what a mess he has made. Again a man may be a keen legal or political debater, the two very commonly go together, yet no intellectual. I admit that a man must have some logical intellect to debate well. But, after all, the object of debate is to win, to make your point and you may do that even if your point is false; success, not truth, is the aim of debate. So I admit what you say with reservations.

I agree also that labels, even when applied to less developed persons, are unsatisfactory. What we really do is to pick out something prominent and label with that as if it were all the person. But classification is impossible without that and man's intellect is driven always to classify, fix distinctions, set apart with a label. The philosophers have pointed out that Science does it too rigidly and in doing so cuts falsely across the truth of Nature. But if we do not do that we cannot have any Science.

23-6-1939

### Beauty

BEAUTY is not the same as Delight, but like love it is an expression, a form of Ananda, created by Ananda, and composed of Ananda; it conveys to the mind that delight of which it is made. Aesthetically the delight takes the appearance of *Rasa* and the enjoyment of this *Rasa* is the mind's and the vital's reaction to the perception of beauty. The spiritual realisation has a sight, a perception, a feeling which is not that of the mind and vital, it passes beyond the aesthetic limit, sees the universal beauty, sees behind the object what the eye cannot see, feels what the emotion of the heart cannot feel and passes beyond *Rasa* and *Bhoga* to pure Ananda,—a thing more deep, intense, rapturous than any mental or vital or any physical *Rasa*, reaction can be. It sees the One everywhere, the Divine everywhere, the Beloved everywhere, the original bliss of existence everywhere and all these can create an inexpressible Ananda of beauty, the beauty of the One, the beauty of the Divine, the beauty of the Beloved, the beauty of the eternal Existence in things. It can see also the

beauty of forms and objects, but with a seeing other than the mind's, other than that of a limited physical vision,—what was not beautiful to the eye becomes beautiful, what was beautiful to the eye wears now a greater marvellous and ineffable beauty. The spiritual realisation can bring the vision and the rapture of the All-Beautiful everywhere.

26-10-1935

### *Art for Art's Sake*

**A**RT for Art's sake? But what after all is meant by this slogan and what is the real issue behind it? Is it meant, as I think it was when the slogan first came into use, that the technique, the artistry is all in all? The contention would then be that it does not matter what you write or paint or sculpt or what music you make or about what you make it so long as it is beautiful writing, competent painting, good sculpture, fine music. It is very evidently true in a certain sense,—in this sense that whatever is perfectly expressed or represented or interpreted under the conditions of a given art proves itself by that very fact to be legitimate material for the artist's labour. But that free admission cannot be confined only to all objects, however common or deemed to be vulgar—an apple, a kitchen pail, a donkey, a dish of carrots,—it can give a right of citizenship in the domain of art to a moral theme or thesis, a philosophic conclusion, a social experiment; even the Five Years' Plan or the proceedings of a District Board or the success of a drainage scheme, an electric factory or a big

hotel can be brought after the most modern or the still more robustious Bolshevnik mode into the artist's province. For, technique being all, the sole question would be whether he as poet, novelist, dramatist, painter or sculptor has been able to triumph over the difficulties and bring out creatively the possibilities of his subject. There is no logical basis here for accepting an apple and rejecting the (Shavian) Applecart. But still you may say that at least the object of the artist must be art only,—even if he treats ethical, social or political questions, he must not make it his main object to wing with the enthusiasm of aesthetic creation a moral, social or political aim. But if in doing it he satisfies the conditions of his art, shows a perfect technique and in it beauty, power, perfection, why not? The moralist, preacher, philosopher, social or political enthusiast is often doubled with an artist—as shining proofs and examples there are Plato and Shelley, to go no farther. Only, you can say of him on the basis of this theory that as a work of art his creation should be judged by its success of craftsmanship and not by its contents; it is not made greater by the value of his ethical ideas, his enthusiasms or his metaphysical seekings.

But then the theory itself is true only up to a certain point. The technique is only a means of expression; one does not write merely to use beautiful words or paint for the sole sake of line and colour; there is something that one is trying through these means to express or to discover. What is that something? The

first answer would be—it is the creation, it is the discovery of Beauty. Art is for that alone and can be judged only by its revelation or discovery of Beauty. Whatever is capable of being manifested as Beauty is the material of the artist. But there is not only physical beauty in the world—there is moral, intellectual, spiritual beauty also. Still one might say that Art for Art's sake means that only what is aesthetically beautiful must be expressed and all that contradicts the aesthetic sense of beauty must be avoided. Art has nothing to do with Life in itself, things in themselves, Good, Truth or the Divine for their own sake, but only in so far as they appeal to some aesthetic sense of beauty. And that would seem to be a sound basis for excluding the Five Years' Plan, a moral sermon or a philosophical treatise. But here again, what after all is Beauty? How much is it in the thing itself and how much in the consciousness that perceives it? Is not the eye of the artist constantly catching some element of aesthetic value in the plain, the ugly, the sordid, the repellent and triumphantly conveying it through his material,—through the word, through line and colour, through the sculptured shape?

There is a certain state of Yogic consciousness in which all things become beautiful to the eye of the seer simply because they spiritually are—because they are a rendering in line and form and quality and force of existence, of consciousness, of the Ananda that rules the worlds,—of the hidden Divine.

What a thing is to the exterior sense may not be, often is not beautiful for the ordinary aesthetic vision, but the Yogin sees in it the something More which the external eye does not see, he sees the soul behind, the self and spirit, he sees too lines, hues, harmonies and expressive dispositions which are not to the first surface sight visible or seizable. It may be said that he brings into the object something that is in himself, transmutes it by adding out of his own being to it—as the artist too does something of the same kind but in another way. It is not quite that however; what the Yogin sees, what the artist sees, is there, his is a transmuting vision because it is a revealing vision. He discovers behind what the object appears to be, the something More that it is. And so from this point of view of a realised supreme harmony all is or can be subject-matter for the artist because in all he can discover and reveal the Beauty that is everywhere. Again we land ourselves in a devastating catholicity; for here too one cannot pull up short at any given line. It may be a hard saying that one must or may discover and reveal beauty in a pig or its poke or in a parish pump or an advertisement of somebody's pills, and yet something like that seems to be what modern Art and literature are trying with vigour and a conscientious labour to do. By extension one ought to be able to extract beauty equally well out of morality or social reform or a political caucus or allow at least that all these things can, if he wills, become

legitimate subjects for the artist. Here too one cannot say that it is on condition he thinks of beauty only and does not make moralising or social reform or a political idea his main object. For if with that idea foremost in his mind he still produces a great work of art, discovering Beauty as he moves to his aim, proving himself in spite of his unaesthetic preoccupations a great artist, it is all we can justly ask from him, whatever his starting-point, to be a creator of Beauty. Art is discovery and revelation of Beauty and we can say nothing more by way of prohibitive or limiting rule.

But there is one thing more that can be said and that makes a big difference. In the Yogin's vision of universal beauty, all becomes beautiful, but all is not reduced to a single level. There are gradations, there is a hierarchy in this All-Beauty and we see that it depends on the ascending power (vibhuti) of consciousness and Ananda that expresses itself in the object. All is the Divine, but some things are more divine than others. In the artist's vision too there are or can be gradations, a hierarchy of values. Shakespeare can get dramatic and therefore aesthetic values out of Dogberry and Malvolio and he is as thorough a creative artist in his treatment of them as in his handling of Macbeth or Lear. But if we had only Dogberry or Malvolio to testify to Shakespeare's genius, no Macbeth, no Lear, would he be so great a dramatic artist and creator as he now is? It is in the varying possibilities of one subject or

another that there lies an immense difference. Apelles' grapes deceived the birds that came to peck at them, but there was more aesthetic content in the Zeus of Phidias, a greater content of consciousness and therefore of Ananda to express and to fill in with it the essential principle of Beauty, even though the essence of beauty may be realised perhaps with equal aesthetic perfection by either artist and in either theme.

And that is because just as technique is not all, so even Beauty is not all in Art. Art is not only technique or form of Beauty, not only the discovery or the expression of Beauty—it is a self-expression of Consciousness under the conditions of aesthetic vision and a perfect execution. Or, to put it otherwise, there are not only aesthetic values, but life values, mind values, soul values that enter into Art. The artist puts out into form not only the powers of his own consciousness, but the powers of the Consciousness that has made the worlds and their objects. And if that Consciousness according to the Vedantic view is fundamentally equal everywhere, it is still in manifestation not an equal power in all things. There is more of the Divine expression in the Vibhuti than in the common man, *prakrito janah*; in some forms of life there are less potentialities for the self-expression of the Spirit than in others. And there are also gradations of consciousness which make a difference if not in the aesthetic value or greatness of a work of art, yet in its contents-value. Homer

makes beauty out of man's outward life and action and stops there. Shakespeare rises one step and reveals to us a life-soul and life-forces and life-values to which Homer had no access. In Valmiki and Vyas there is the constant presence of great Idea-Forces and Ideals supporting life and its movements which were beyond the scope of Homer and Shakespeare. And beyond the Ideals and Idea-Forces even there are other presences, more inner or inmost realities, a soul behind things and beings, the spirit and its powers, which could be the subject-matter of an art still more rich and deep and abundant in its interest than any of these could be. A poet finding these and giving them a voice with a genius equal to that of the poets of the past might not be greater than they in a purely aesthetic valuation, but his art's contents-value, its consciousness-values could be deeper and higher and much fuller than in any achievement before him. There is something here that goes beyond any consideration of Art for Art's sake or Art for Beauty's sake; for while these stress usefully sometimes the indispensable first elements of artistic creation, they would limit too much the creation itself if they stood for the exclusion of the something More that compels Art to change always in its constant seeking for more and more that must be expressed of the concealed or the revealed Divine, of the individual and the universal or the transcendent Spirit.

If we take these three elements as making the whole

of Art, perfection of expressive form, discovery of beauty, revelation of the soul and essence of things and the powers of creative consciousness and Ananda of which they are the vehicles, then we shall get perhaps a solution which includes the two sides of the controversy and reconciles their difference. Art for Art's sake certainly; Art as a perfect form and discovery of Beauty; but also Art for the soul's sake, the spirit's sake and the expression of all that the soul, the spirit wants to seize through the medium of beauty. In that self-expression there are grades and hierarchies, widenings and steps that lead to the summits. And not only to enlarge Art towards the widest wideness but to ascend with it to the heights climbing towards the Highest is and must be part both of our aesthetic and our spiritual endeavour.

This book may be kept a fortnight.

28 NOV 1956

B Letters of Sri Anro-  
133 bindo  
G5L3  
Signature

Issue Date

Signature	Issue Date

B  
133  
G5L3

~~B  
131  
G5L4~~

BK-1181

