The Light of Light



Words of Sri Aurobindo
(12)

Diary 2022

"I do not believe in human judgments because I have always found them fallible – also perhaps because I have myself been so blackened by human judgments that I do not care to be guided by them with regard to others. All this however I write to explain my own point of view; I am not insisting on it as a law for others. I have never been in the habit of insisting that everybody must think as I do – any more than I insist on everybody following me and my yoga.

December 1934"

– Sri Aurobindo
(35: 438)



With Best Compliments From:

The Resurgent India Trust

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"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 chimaera; so too afterwards he would have repeated his mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimaera. 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 do not know that the descent depends on the readiness of the sadhaks of this Asram. It is likely that these things are determined from above rather than from below. That the descent is preparing and progressing is a fact; it is that which you feel and are justified in feeling.

1 December 1935"

– Sri Aurobindo
(35: 357-58)

The Light of lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo
(12)

Diary
2022

Acknowledgement:

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Editorial insertions are in **Bold Letters**. The parentheses at the end of the selections contain the volume and the page numbers of these selections.

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Personal Information

PERSONAL

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Blood Group	
Identity Card Number	
Passport No.	Expiry
Driving Licence No.	Expiry
Car Registration No.	

BUSINESS

Company	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	Fax
E-mail	
Website	

INSURANCE

Personal Insurance	Renewal
Medical Insurance	Renewal
Home Insurance	Renewal
Car Insurance	Renewal

FINANCIAL

Bank	A/c No.
Bank	A/c No.
Income Tax No.	Tax Due Date
Credit Card No.	Expiry
Credit Card No.	Expiry
ATM Card No.	

Important Dates in the Ashram

The Mother's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*21 February*
Foundation of Auroville	*28 February*
The Mother's First Arrival in Pondicherry	*29 March*
Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry	*4 April*
The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry (Darshan Day)	*24 April*
Sri Aurobindo's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*15 August*
The Mother's Mahasamadhi	*17 November*
The Mother's Body Laid To Rest	*20 November*
Siddhi Day (Darshan Day)	*24 November*
Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi	*5 December*
Sri Aurobindo's Body Laid To Rest	*9 December*

List of Holidays

Lohri	*Jan. 13*	*Buddha Poornima*	*May 16*
Makar Sankranti	*Jan. 14*	*Id-Ul-Zuha*	*July. 10*
Pongal	*Jan. 14-17*	*Moharram*	*Aug. 08*
Guru Govind Singh Jayanti	*Jan. 09*	*Raksha Bandhan*	*Aug. 11*
Republic Day	*Jan. 26*	*Independence Day*	*Aug. 15*
Basant Panchami	*Feb. 05*	*Janamashtami*	*Aug. 18*
Ravidaas Jayanti	*Feb. 16*	*Ganesh Chaturthi*	*Aug. 31*
Shiv Ratri	*Mar. 01*	*Anant Chaudas*	*Sep. 09*
Holi	*Mar. 18*	*Gandhi Jayanti*	*Oct. 02*
Dhulendi	*Mar. 19*	*Dashahara*	*Oct. 05*
Ugadi	*Apr. 02*	*Milad -Ul-Nabi*	*Oct. 7-8*
Ram Navami	*Apr. 10*	*Deepawali*	*Oct. 24*
Baisakhi	*Apr. 14*	*Goverdhan Pooja*	*Oct. 25*
Mahavir Jayanti	*Apr. 14*	*Bhaiya Dooj*	*Oct. 26*
Good Friday	*Apr. 15*	*Guru Nanak Jayanti*	*Nov. 08*
Id-Ul-Fitar	*May. 03*	*Christmas Day*	*Dec. 25*
		Guru Govind Singh Jayanti	*Dec. 29*



Sri Krishna and Sri Aurobindo

"You can't expect me to argue about my own spiritual greatness in comparison with Krishna's. The question itself would be relevant only if there were two sectarian religions in opposition, Aurobindoism and Vaishnavism, each insisting on its own God's greatness. That is not the case. And then what Krishna must I challenge, – the Krishna of the Gita who is the transcendent Godhead, Paramatma, Parabrahma, Purushottama, the cosmic Deity, master of the universe, Vasudeva who is all, the immanent in the heart of all creatures, or the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwarka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my Yoga and with whom I realised identity? All that is not to me something philosophical or mental but a matter of daily and hourly realisation and intimate to the stuff of my consciousness. Then from what position can I adjudicate this dispute? X thinks I am superior in greatness, you think there can be nothing greater than Krishna; each is entitled to have his own view or feeling, whether it is itself right or not. It can be left there; it can be no reason for your leaving the Asram.

25 February 1945"

– Sri Aurobindo
(35: 431-32)



"I regard the spiritual history of mankind and especially of India as a constant development of a divine purpose, not a book that is closed, the lines of which have to be constantly repeated. Even the Upanishads and the Gita were not final though everything may be there in seed. In this development the recent spiritual history of India is a very important stage and the names I mentioned had a special prominence in my thought at the time – they seemed to me to indicate the lines from which the future spiritual development had most directly to proceed, not staying but passing on.... I may say that it is far from my purpose to propagate any religion new or old for humanity in the future. A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded, is my conception of the matter.

18 August 1935"

– Sri Aurobindo

(35: 696)

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1. Letters on Himself and the Ashram (CWSA* 35).....12-415

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* *CWSA – Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo.*

Sri Aurobindo on the Attempts to Write His Biography

"I am not interested in my own biography. Who is this Dhurandhar or this Kulkarni?

Is there any reply to be sent to this letter?

I don't think a reply is necessary. If I am to be murdered in cold print, it had better be done without my disciples becoming abettors of the crime.

24 June 1933…

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.

9 February 1936" (35: 5-6)

His Name

"Aurobindo"

"But look at the irony of human decisions and human hopes. My father who wanted all his sons to be great men – and succeeded in a small way with three of them – in a sudden inspiration gave me the name Aurobindo, till then not borne by anyone in India or the wide world, that I might stand out unique among the great by the unique glory of my name. And now look at the swarm of Aurobindos with their mighty deeds in England, Germany and elsewhere! Don't tell me it is my fault because of my indiscretion in becoming famous. When I went to the National College in the Swadeshi days which was my first public step towards the ignominies of fame, there was already an Aurobindo Prakash waiting for me there with the sardonic comment of the gods printed on his learned forehead. Aurobindo Prakash, indeed!" (35: 8)

The Power of Prayer

"As for prayer, no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Some prayers are answered, all are not. An example? The eldest daughter of my Mesho, K. K. Mitra, editor of *Sanjibani*, not by any means a romantic, occult, supraphysical or even imaginative person, was abandoned by the doctors after using every resource, all medicines stopped as useless. The father said "There is only God now, let us pray." He did, and from that moment the girl began to recover, typhoid fever and all its symptoms fled, death also. I know any number of cases like that. Well? You may ask why should not then all prayers be answered? But why should they be? It is not a machinery – put a prayer in the slot and get your asking. Besides, considering all the contradictory things mankind is praying for at the same moment, God would be in a rather awkward hole, if he had to grant all of them – it wouldn't do. 7 October 1936" (35: 14)

> Captain Guha, an Assistant Surgeon, asked me whether there was any proof that Swami Brahmananda of Chandod lived for 400 years. Could you possibly enlighten me?

There is no incontrovertible proof. 400 years is an exaggeration. It is known however that he lived on the banks of the Narmada for 80 years and when he arrived there, he was already in appearance at the age when maturity turns towards overripeness. He was when I met him just before his death a man of magnificent physique showing no signs of old age except white beard and hair, extremely tall, robust, able to walk any number of miles a day and tiring out his younger disciples, walking too so swiftly that they tended to fall behind, a great head and magnificent face that seemed to belong to men of more ancient times. He never spoke of his age or of his past either except for an occasional almost accidental utterance. One of these was spoken to a disciple of his well known to me, a Baroda Sardar, Mazumdar (it was on the top storey of his house by the way that I sat with Lele in Jan. 1908 and had a decisive experience of liberation and Nirvana). Mazumdar learned that he was suffering from a bad tooth and brought him a bottle of Floriline, a toothwash then much in vogue. The Yogi refused saying, "I never use medicines. My one medicine is Narmada water. As for this tooth I have suffered from it since the days of Bhao Girdi." Bhao Girdi was the Maratha general Sadashiv Rao Bhao who disappeared in the battle of Panipat and his body was never found. Many formed the conclusion that Brahmananda was himself Bhao Girdi, but this was an imagination. Nobody who knew Brahmananda would doubt any statement of his – he was a man of perfect simplicity and truthfulness and did not seek fame or to impose himself. When he died he was still in full strength and his death came not by decay but by the accident of blood poisoning through a rusty nail that entered into his foot as he walked on the sands of the Narmada. I had spoken to the Mother about him, that was why she mentioned him in her *Conversations* which were not meant for the public – otherwise she might not have said anything as the longevity of Brahmananda to more than 200 years depends only on his own casual word and is a matter of faith in his word. There is no "legal" proof of it. I may say that three at least of his disciples to my knowledge kept an extraordinary aspect and energy of youth even to a comparatively late or quite advanced age – but this perhaps may be not uncommon among those who practise both Raja and Hatha Yoga together.

1 February 1936

Learning Gujarati

I learned Gujarati not for the literature but because it was the language of Baroda where I had to live for 13 years. I have now picked it up again because there are so many Gujarati sadhaks who do not know English – just as I am picking up Hindi now.

25 December 1935" (35: 15-16)

Gandhi's Movement

> "When I read the speeches you delivered before 1910, it seems to me as if Gandhi had almost copied everything from that – Swaraj, Samiti, Non-cooperation, and so on. If not outwardly he must have received these things from you in an occult way.

The whole of Gandhi's affair is simply our passive resistance movement given an ethical instead of a political form, applied with a rigid thoroughness which human nature except in a minority cannot bear for long and given too a twist which seems to me to make it harmful to the sane balance and many-sided plasticity necessary for national life. What with Gandhi, Hitler and the rest (very different people but all furiously one-sided and one-ideaed) a large part of humanity seems to have gone off its balance in these times.

21 September 1934" (35: 18)

The Swadeshi Movement (1905 – 1910) and Later Developments

"Did you enjoy the article "Fifty Years of Growth" by K. R. Kripalani in the *Visva-Bharati*?* Fifty years of growth refers by the way to the Congress. About the Swadeshi period he writes: "Along time was to elapse before we were to appreciate the infinite possibilities of the muddy waters at hand. In the meantime something startlingly romantic happened. . . .

"The fountain [of undefiled water] was cut by the fiery shafts of Tilak, Vivekananda, and Aurobindo, among others. They gave to Indian Nationalism its fiery basis in India's ancient cultural glory and its modern mission. . . . It is always more beautiful and more inspiring to contemplate the Idea and be drunk with it than to face the actual facts and touch the running sores. . . .

"But this spirit, fiery and beautiful as it was, was fraught with grave dangers. The glory that it invoked and the passion that it

* K. R. Kripalani, "Fifty Years of Growth", *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, vol. I, part IV, New Series (February – April 1936), pp. 53 – 60.

aroused were so intensely Hindu that Muslims were automatically left out. Not that they were deliberately excluded. . . . However that may be, it seems now not unlikely that had the influence of Tilak and Aurobindo lasted in its original intensity, we might have had two Indias today – a Hindu-istan and a Pak-istan, both overlaying and undermining each other. . . .

"However that be, the fact remains that the conditions of our country being what they were, the beneficial effects of Tilak's and of Aurobindo's political personalities were soon exhausted, and might, if prolonged, have proved dangerous, if Gandhiji had not come on the scene. . . ."

Subject, politics, – taboo. Writer Kripalani a "romantic" and "idealistic" visionary without hold on realities, living only in academic ideas – so not worth commenting. All the present Congress lot seem to be men who live in ideas only, mostly secondhand, borrowed from Europe (Socialism, Communism etc.), borrowed from Gandhi, borrowed from tradition or borrowed from anywhere; Kripalani looks down on the old Moderates for being in a different way exactly what he himself is – only they were classics and not romantics. So what is the use of reading their "histories"? However quite privately and within brackets* I will enlighten you on one or two points.

(1) The Swadeshi movement was idealist on one side (no great movement can go without an ideal), but it was perfectly practical in its aims and methods. We were quite aware of the poverty of India and its fallen condition, but we did not try to cure the poverty by Khaddar and Hindi prachar. We advocated the creation of an industrial India and made the movement a Swadeshi movement in order to give that new birth a field and favourable conditions – cottage industries were not omitted in our view, but there were no fads. The Swadeshi movement created the following very practical effects:

(a) It destroyed the Moderate reformist politics and spread the revolutionary mentality (as Jawaharlal now calls it) and the ideal of independence.

(b) It laid the foundations of an industrial India (not of course wholly industrial, that was not our intention) which is however slowly growing today.

(c) It brought in the commercial classes and the whole educated middle class into the political field – and not the middle class only, while Moderatism had touched only a small fringe.

(d) It had not time to bring in the peasantry, but it had begun the work and Gandhi only carried it farther on by his flashy and unsound but exciting methods.

(e) It laid down a method of agitation which Gandhi took up and

* Sri Aurobindo put brackets at the beginning and end of this reply to indicate that it was not to be circulated in the Ashram at that time. – Ed.

continued with three or four startling additions, Khaddar, Hindiism, Satyagraha = getting beaten with joy, Khilafat, Harijan etc. All these had an advertisement value, a power of poking up things which was certainly livelier than anything we put into it. Whether the effects of these things have been good is a more doubtful question.

(2) As a matter of fact the final effects of Gandhi's movement have been

(a) A tremendous fissure between the Hindus and Mahomedans which is going to be kept permanent by communal representation.

(b) A widening fissure between caste Hindus and Harijans, to be made permanent in the same way.

(c) A great confusion in Indian politics which leaves it a huge mass of division, warring tendencies, no clear guide or compass anywhere.

(d) Anew constitution which puts the conservative class in power to serve as a means of maintaining British domination or at least as an intolerable brake on progress – also divides India into five or six Indias, Hindu, Moslem, Pariah, Christian, Sikh etc.

(e) A big fiasco* of the Non-Cooperation movement which is throwing politics back on one side to reformism, on the other to a blatant and insincere Socialism.

That, I think, is the sum and substance of the matter.

As for the Hindu-Moslem affair, I saw no reason why the greatness of India's past or her spirituality should be thrown into the waste-paper basket in order to conciliate the Moslems who would not at all be conciliated by such a stupidity. What has created the Hindu-Moslem split was not Swadeshi, but the acceptance of the communal principle by the Congress, (here Tilak made his great blunder), and the farther attempt by the Khilafat movement to conciliate them and bring them in on wrong lines. The recognition of that communal principle at Lucknow made them permanently a separate *political* entity in India which ought never to have happened; the Khilafat affair made that separate political entity an organised separate political power. It was not Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, Swaraj (our platform) which made this tremendous division, how could it? Tilak whom the Kripalani man blames along with me for it, is responsible not by that, but by his support of the Lucknow affair – for the rest, Gandhi did it with the help of his Ali brothers.

There you are. On a tabooed subject – it is, I think, enough. Not at all for circulation you understand and quite confidential.

14 April 1936" (35: 18-21)

** I am referring to my prophecy made at the beginning of the Non-Cooperation movement, "It will end in a great confusion or in a great fiasco." I was not a correct prophet, as I have pointed out before. It should have run, "It will end in a great confusion* and *a great fiasco." But after all I was not speaking from the supramental which alone can be infallible.*

Sister Nivedita

"I knew very well Sister Nivedita (she was for many years a friend and a comrade in the political field) and met Sister Christine, – the two closest European disciples of Vivekananda. Both were Westerners to the core and had nothing at all of the Hindu outlook; although Sister Nivedita, an Irishwoman, had the power of penetrating by an intense sympathy into the ways of life of the people around her, her own nature remained non-Oriental to the end. Yet she found no difficulty in arriving at realisation on the lines of Vedanta." (35: 25)

The Surat Congress (1907)

"…History very seldom records the things that were decisive but took place behind the veil; it records the show in front of the curtain. Very few people know that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress and was responsible for the refusal to join the new-fangled Moderate Convention which were the two decisive happenings at Surat. Even my action in giving the movement in Bengal its militant turn or founding the revolutionary movement is very little known.

22 March 1936" (35: 26)

The Reason for Leaving Politics

"I may also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there; such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga and because I got a very distinct adesh in the matter. I have cut connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others, and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence. There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal. For the rest, I have never known any will of mine for any major event in the conduct of the world affairs to fail in the end, although it may take a long time for the world-forces to fulfil it. As for the possibility of failure in my spiritual work, I shall deal with that another time. Difficulties there are, but I see no cause for pessimism or for the certification of failure.

October 1932" (35: 26-27)

The Reason behind the Prohibition of the Sending of Books and Letters to Sri Aurobindo

"I have not wantonly stopped the books or free letter-writing nor have I become impatient with you or anyone. I am faced with a wanton and brutal attack on my life-work from outside and I need all my time and energy to meet it and do what is necessary to repel it during these days. I hope that I can count not only on the indulgence but on the support of those who have followed me and loved me, while I am thus occupied, much against my will.

I do hope you will not misunderstand me. I have not altered to you in the least and if I wrote laconically it was because I had no time to do otherwise.

My prohibition of long letters was of a general character and I had to issue it so that the stoppage of the books might not result in a flood of long letters which would leave me no time for making the concentration and taking the steps I have to take.… 17 February 1934" (35: 30)

How Things are Dealt with from the Yogic Point of View – Relations with the Government of French India, 1934-35

"Of course, one must use these external means and there one must be careful so as to have as many factors as possible on one's side and give as little handle as possible to adverse forces. But no outward action can be for us sure of success unless behind it is the growing Yogic vision and Yogic power. We have had ourselves serious difficulties from the outside, petitions made against us to the Minister of Colonies in Paris and a report demanded from the Governor here which if acted on would have put the Asram in serious jeopardy. We used outward means of a very slight and simple character, i.e. getting the Mother's brother (Governor in French Equatorial Africa) to intervene with the Ministry (and also an eminent writer in France, a disciple), but for the most part I used a strong inner Force to determine the action of the Colonial Office, to get a favourable report from the Governor here, to turn the minds

of some who were against us here and to nullify the enmity of others. In all these respects I succeeded and our position here is much stronger than before; especially a new and favourable Governor has come. Nevertheless we have to remain vigilant that the situation may not be again threatened. Also one disadvantage has resulted, that we have been asked not to buy or rent more houses, but to build instead. This is difficult without land near here and much money; so we are for the moment unable to expand. In certain respects however this is not a disadvantage, as I have been long wishing to put off farther expansion and consolidate the inward life of the Asram in a more completely spiritual sense. I give this as an example of how things have to be dealt with from the Yogic point of view. 20 March 1935" (35: 31)

Yogic Force and Illnesses

"I may say that I see no reason for alarm or apprehension about my eyesight; it has happened before and I was able to recover, even getting a better reading eyesight than before. These things are for me a question of the working of the Yogic force. Many customary illnesses have passed away from me permanently after an intimation that they would occur no more. In my last days in Calcutta that happened with regard to colds in the head, and when I was in the rue des Missions Étrangères with regard to fever. I had no cold or fever after that. So also with regard to things like the bad cough I had for many years; it was intimated some time ago that these things would fade out, and it has been so happening – only vestiges remain. So it will happen with what ailments remain, I expect. 25 February 1945" (35: 40-41)

The Battle of Life

"But what strange ideas again – that I was born with a supramental temperament and had never any brain or mind or any acquaintance with human mentality – and that I know nothing of hard realities. Good God! my whole life has been a struggle with hard realities, from hardship and semi-starvation in England through the fierce difficulties and perils of revolutionary leadership and organisation and activity in India to the far greater difficulties continually cropping up here in Pondicherry, internal and external. My life has been a battle from its early years and is still a battle, – the fact that I wage it now from a room upstairs and by spiritual means as well as others that are external makes no difference to its character. But of course as we have not been shouting about these things, it is natural, I suppose, for the sadhaks to think I am living in an august, glamorous, lotus-eating dreamland where no hard facts of life or nature present themselves. But what an illusion, all the same!

November 1935" (35: 44)

Change of Nature

"It is perfectly possible to change one's nature. I have proved that in my own case, for I have made myself exactly the opposite in character to what I was when I started life. I have seen it done in many and I have helped myself to do it in many. But certain conditions are needed. At present in this Asram there is an obstinate resistance to the change of nature – not so much in the inner being, for there are a good number who accept change there, but in the outer man which repeats its customary movements like a machine and refuses to budge out of its groove. *X*'s case does not matter – his vital has always wanted to be itself and follow its own way and his mental will cannot prevail over it. The difficulty is far more general than that.

That however would not matter – it would be only a question of a little more or less time, if the divine action were admitted whole-heartedly by the sadhaks. But the conditions laid down by them and the conditions laid down from above seem radically to differ. From above the urge is to lift everything above the human level, the demand of the sadhaks (not all, but so many) is to keep everything on the human level. But the human level means ignorance, disharmony, strife, suffering, death, disease – constant failure. I cannot see what solution there can be for such a contradiction – unless it be Nirvana. But transformation is hardly more difficult than Nirvana.

17 October 1934" (35: 44-45)

Keeping Silence

"I suppose I am silent, first, because I have no "free-will" and, secondly, because I have no Time.

Less metaphysically and more Yogically, there are periods when silence becomes imperative, because to throw oneself outward delays the "work that has to be done".

I suppose someday I will write about Free Will, but for the moment there is no effective will, free or otherwise, to do it.

7 April 1931" (35: 46)

Peace and Ananda

"My own experience is *not* limited to a radiant peace; I know very well what ecstasy and Ananda are from the Brahmananda down to the *śārīra ānanda*, and can experience them at any time. But of these things I prefer to speak only when my work is done – for it is in a transformed consciousness here and not only above where the Ananda always exists that I seek their base of permanence. 4 August 1934" (35: 46)

The Burden of Love

"It is only divine love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness towards the Divine. The Gallio-like "Je m'en fiche"-ism (I do not care) would not carry me one step; it would certainly not be divine. It is quite another thing that enables me to walk unweeping and unlamenting towards the goal. April 1934" (35: 46)

Solid Strength and Rajasic Force and Vehemence

"Fire is the active expression of solid strength. But I feel that this fire is more necessary than solid strength in dynamic work.

I speak from my own experience. I have solid strength, but I have not much of the fire that blazes out against anybody who does not give me lawful rights. Yet I do not find myself weak or a dead man. I have always made it a rule not to be restless in any way, to throw away restlessness – yet I have been able to use my solid strength whenever necessary. You speak as if rajasic force and vehemence were the only strength and all else is deadness and weakness. It is not so – the calm spiritual strength is a hundred times stronger; it does not blaze up and sink again – but is steady and unshakable and perpetually dynamic.

21 November 1933" (35: 47)

Not Grim and Stern

> "The Overmind seems so distant from us, and your Himalayan austerity and grandeur take my breath away, making my heart palpitate!

Orubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! every blasted thing that I never was! I groan in an unAurobindian despair when I hear such things. What has happened to the common sense of all of you people? In order to reach the Overmind it is not at all necessary to take leave of this simple but useful quality. Common sense by the way is not logic (which is the least commonsense-like thing in the world), it is simply looking at things as they are without inflation or deflation – not imagining wild imaginations – or for that matter despairing "I know not why" despairs. 23 February 1935" (35: 48)

Sri Aurobindo: Never Has been Grim and Stern in His Life

"…All this talk about grimness and sternness is sheer rot – you will excuse me for the expression, but there is no other that is adequate. The only truth about it is that I am not demonstrative or expansive in public – but I never was. Nevinson seeing me presiding at the Surat Nationalist Conference – which was not a joke and others were as serious as myself – spoke of me as that most politically dangerous of men – "the man who never smiles" which made people who knew me smile very much. You seem to have somewhere in you a Nevinson impression of me. Or perhaps you agree with *X* who wrote demanding of me why I smiled only with the lips and complained that

it was not a satisfactory smile like the Mother's. All the same, whatever I may have said to *Y* or *Y* may have said to you, I have always given a large place to mirth and laughter and my letters in that style are only the natural outflow of my personality. I have never been "grim" in my life – that is the Stalin-Mussolini style, it is not mine; the only trait I share with the "grim" people is obstinacy in following out my aim in life, but I do it quietly and simply and have always done. Don't set up some gloomy imaginations and take them for the real Aurobindo. February 1935" (35: 48-49)

His Temparament Not Like Gandhi or Tagore

"I do not know that I can say anything in defence of my unlovable marbleness – which is also unintentional, for I feel nothing like marble within me. But obviously I can lay no claims to the expansive charm and grace and lovability of a Gandhi or Tagore. For one thing I have never been able to establish a cheerful hail-fellow contact with the multitude, even when I was a public leader; I have been always reserved and silent except with the few with whom I was intimate or whom I could meet in private. But my reference to Nevinson and the Conference was only casual; I did not mean that I regard the Darshan as I would a political meeting or a public function. But all the same it is not in the nature of a private interview; I feel it is an occasion on which I am less a social person than a receptacle of a certain Power receiving those who come to me. I receive the sadhaks (not *X* or others) with a smile however unsatisfactory or invisible to you – but I suppose it becomes naturally a smile of the silence rather than a radiant substitute for cordial and bubbling laughter. *Que voulez-vous?* I am not Gandhi or Tagore.…

What is there is a great quietude, wideness, light and universal or all-containing oneness. To speak of these things as if they were grim, stern, fierce and repellent or stiff and hard is to present not the fact of my nature but a caricature. I never heard before that peace was something grim, wideness repellent, light stern or fierce or oneness hard and stiff like marble. People have come from outside and felt these things, but they have felt not repelled but attracted. Even those who went out giddy with the onrush of light or fainted like *Y*, had no other wish but to come back and they did not fly away in terror. Even casual visitors have sometimes felt a great peace and quiet in the atmosphere and wished that they could stay here. So even if the sadhaks feel only a terrifying grimness, I am entitled to suppose that my awareness of myself is not an isolated illusion of mine and to question whether grimness is my real character and a hard and cold greatness my fundamental nature.

24 February 1935" (35: 49-50)

Sense of Humour

"The Divine may be difficult, but his difficulties can be overcome if one keeps at Him. Even my smilelessness was overcome which Nevinson had remarked with horror more than twenty years before – "the most dangerous man in India", Aurobindo Ghose "the man who never smiles". He ought to have added, "but who always jokes"; but he did not know that, as I was very solemn with him, or perhaps I had not developed sufficiently on that side then. Anyhow if you could overcome that, you are bound to overcome all the other difficulties also. 11 February 1937" (35: 51-52)

Rising above Depression

"I am still not able to maintain the right attitude in my own sadhana and yet I try to pose as an adviser and instructor.

Well, one can give good advice even when one does not follow it oneself – there is the old adage "Do what I preach and not what I practise." More seriously, there are different personalities in oneself and the one that is eager to advise and help may be quite sincere. I remember in days long past when I still had personal struggles and difficulties, people came to me from outside for advice etc. when I was in black depression and could not see my way out of a sense of hopelessness and failure, yet nothing of that came out and I spoke with an assured conviction. Was that insincerity? I think not, the one who spoke in me was quite sure of what he spoke. The turning of all oneself to the Divine is not an easy matter and one must not be discouraged if it takes time and other movements still intervene. One must note, rectify and go on अनिर्विण्णेन चेतसा. 24 February 1935" (35: 52)

Heredity and Past Lives

"It is true that we bring most of ourselves from past lives. Heredity only affects the external being and all the effects of heredity are not accepted, only those that are in consonance with what we are to be or not preventive of it at least. I may be the son of my father or mother in certain respects, but most of me is as foreign to them as if I had been born in New York or Paraguay.

3 June 1935" (35: 55)

Speculations about His Past Lives

"Seriously, these historical identifications are a perilous game and open a hundred doors to the play of imagination. Some may, in the nature of things must be true; but once people begin, they don't know where to stop. What is important is the lines, rather than the lives, the incarnation of Forces that explain what one now is – and, as for particular lives or rather personalities, those alone matter which are very definite in one and have powerfully contributed to what one is developing now. But it is not always possible to put a name upon these; for not one hundred thousandth part of what has been has still a name preserved by human Time. 1 April 1932" (35: 56)

Yogic Force and Astroligical Predictions

"Astrologers tell all sorts of things that don't come true. According to one I was to have died last year, according to another I was to have gone out from Pondicherry in March or May last year and wandered about India with my disciples till I disappeared in a river (on a ferry). Even if the prediction were a correct one according to the horoscope it need not fulfil itself, because by entering the spiritual life one opens to a new force which can change one's destiny. 22 August 1937

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It is no doubt possible to draw the illnesses of others upon oneself and even to do it deliberately, the instance of the Greek king Antigonus and his son Dimitrius is a famous historical case in point: Yogis also do this sometimes; or else adverse forces may throw illnesses upon the Yogi, using those round him as a door or a passage or the ill wishes of people as an instrumental force. But all these are special circumstances connected, no doubt, with his practice of Yoga; but they do not establish the general proposition as an absolute rule. A tendency such as *X*'s to desire or welcome or accept death as a release could have a force because of her advanced spiritual consciousness which it would not have in ordinary people. On the other side there can be an opposite use and result of the Yogic consciousness: illness can be repelled from one's own body or cured, even chronic or deep-seated illnesses and long-established constitutional defects remedied or expelled and even a predestined death

delayed for a long period. Narayan Jyotishi, a Calcutta astrologer, who predicted, not knowing then who I was, in the days before my name was politically known, my struggle with Mlechchha enemies and afterwards the three cases against me and my three acquittals, predicted also that though death was prefixed for me in my horoscope at the age of 63, I would prolong my life by Yogic power for a very long period and arrive at a full old age. In fact I have got rid by Yogic pressure of a number of chronic maladies that had got settled in my body, reduced others to a vanishing minimum, brought about steadily progressing diminution of two that remained and on the last produced a considerable effect. But none of these instances either on the favourable or unfavourable side can be made into a rule; there is no validity in the tendency of human reason to transform the relativity of these things into an absolute. 8 December 1949" (35: 58-59)

Avoidance of Certain Subjects

"If I write about these questions from the Yogic point of view, even though on a logical basis, there is bound to be much that is in conflict with your own settled and perhaps cherished opinions, e.g. about "miracles", persons, the limits of judgment by sense data etc. I have avoided as much as possible writing about these subjects because I would have to propound things that cannot be understood except by reference to other data than those of the physical senses or of reason founded on these alone. I might have to speak of laws and forces not recognised by physical reason or science. In my public writings and my writings to sadhaks I have not dwelt on these because they go out of the range of ordinary knowledge and the understanding founded on it. These things are known to some, but they do not usually speak about it, while the public view of such of them as are known is either credulous or incredulous, but in both cases without experience or knowledge. So if the views founded on them are likely to upset, shock or bewilder, the better way is silence. December 1935" (35: 64)

Writing Philosophy

"And philosophy! Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher – although I have written philosophy which is another story altogether. I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry – I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher! How I managed to do it? First, because Richard proposed to me to cooperate in a philosophical review – and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse: and then he had to go to the War and left me in the lurch with 64 pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self. Secondly, I had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily and the philosophy was there, automatically. But that is not being a philosopher! 31 August 1934" (35: 70)

"…I do not care a button about my having my name in any blessed place. I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly known and a "leader". Then again I don't believe in advertisement except for books etc., and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is a poison. It means either a stunt or a boom – and stunts and booms exhaust the thing they carry on their crest and leave it lifeless and broken high and dry on the shores of nowhere – or it means a movement. A movement in the case of a work

like mine means the founding of a school or a sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the "religions" and is the reason of their failure. If I tolerate a little writing about myself, it is only to have a sufficient counterweight in that amorphous chaos, the public mind, to balance the hostility that is always aroused by the presence of a new dynamic Truth in this world of ignorance. But the utility ends there and too much advertisement would defeat that object.…

2 October 1934" (35: 71-72)

Yogic Sadhan

"The Yogi from the North (Uttara Yogi) was my own name given to me because of a prediction made long ago by a famous Tamil Yogi, that thirty years later (agreeing with the time ofmy arrival) a Yogi from the North would come as a fugitive to the South and practise there an integral Yoga (Poorna Yoga), and this would be one sign of the approaching liberty of India. He gave three utterances as the mark by which this Yogi could be recognised and all these were found in the letters to my wife.

As for *Yogic Sadhan* it was not I exactly who wrote it, though it is true that I am not a Mayavadin." (35: 78)

Maya

> "Maya means nothing more than the freedom of Brahman from the circumstances through which he expresses himself" [*p. 89*].

The sentence is rather loose in expression. It does not mean that Maya is Brahman's freedom, but "the doctrine of Maya simply comes to this that Brahman is free from the circumstances through which he expresses himself." This limited play is not He, for He is illimitable; it is only a conditioned (partial) manifestation, but He is not bound by the conditions (circumstances) as the play is bound. The world is a figure of something of Himself which he has put forth into it, but He is more than that figure. The world is not unreal or illusory, but our present seeing or consciousness of it is ignorant, and therefore the world *as seen by us* can be described as an illusion. So far the Maya idea is true. But if we see the world as it really is, a partial and developing manifestation of Brahman, then it can no longer be described as an illusion, but rather as a Lila. He is still more than his Lila, but He is in it and it is in Him; it is not an illusion. 16 October 1931" (35: 86)

No Theology in Yoga

"I must insist that there is no theology in the *Arya*. Nothing there is written to support or to develop any kind of religious belief or dogma or to confirm or enunciate the credo of any old or new religion. No less does he miss the mark when he describes as a scholastic distinction the substance of the passage. The teaching there is not taken from books, nor, although put in philosophic language, is it based upon abstract thought or any formal logic. It expresses a fundamental spiritual experience, dynamic for the growth of the being, confirmed and enlarged and filled with detail by almost thirty years of continuous sadhana, and, as such, it cannot be seriously challenged or invalidated by mere intellectual question or reasoning, but, if at all, then only by a greater and wider spiritual experience. " (35: 88)

The Christian Trinity

"Christ whether as the human Incarnation or the Christos in men or the Godhead proceeding from the Father, seems to me to be quite my individual Divine. The Father has very much the appearance of the One who overstands and is immanent in the cosmos. And although this is more obscure, yet if one can be guided by the indications in the Scripture, the Holy Ghost looks very much like a rather mysterious and inexpressible Transcendence and its descent very much like what I would call the descent of Light, Purity, Peace – that passeth all understanding – or Power of the supramental Spirit. In any case these Christian and Western ideas show surely that my affirmation of a double or a triple Divine is not anything new and ought not to be found startling or upsetting and I do not see why it should be treated as (in itself) obscure and unintelligible." (35: 89)

The Proper Relations between Science, Metaphysics and Spiritual Experience

"And the first thing I would say is that if metaphysics has no right to intervene in spiritual experience, neither has Science. There are here three different domains of knowledge and experience each with its own instrumentation, its own way of approach and seeing, suited for its own task, but not to be imposed or substituted in these other fields of knowledge, – at least unless and until they meet by some kind of supreme reconciling transmutation in something that is at the source of all knowledge. For knowledge may be essentially one, but like the one Divine, it manifests differently in different fields of its play and to abolish their distinctions is not the way to arrive at true understanding of experience.

Science deals effectively with phenomenon and process and the apparent play of forces which determine the process. It cannot deal even intellectually in any adequate way with ultimate truths, that is the province of the higher, less external mind – represented up till now by metaphysics, though metaphysics is not its only possible power. If Science tries to fix metaphysical truth by forcing on this domain its own generalisations in the physical field, as people have been doing for almost the last century, it makes a mess of thought by illegitimately extended conclusions and has in the end to retire from this usurpation as it is now beginning to retire. Its discoveries may be used by philosophy, but on the grounds proper to philosophy and not on the grounds

proper to Science. The philosopher must judge the scientific conceptions of relativity or discontinuity or space-time, for instance, by his own processes and standards of evidence. So too, Science has no instrumentation or process of knowledge which can enable it to discover spiritual truth or to judge or determine the results of spiritual experience. There is a field of knowledge of process in the spiritual and the occult domain, in the discovery of a world of inner forces and their way of action and even of their objective dynamisation in the mind and life and the functioning of the body. But the mathematical exactitudes and rigid formulas of physical Science do not apply here and the mentality created by them would hamper spiritual experience. " (35: 90-91)

> "Often, we see this desire of personal salvation overcome by another attraction which also belongs to the higher turn of our nature and which indicates the essential character of the action the liberated soul must pursue. . . . It is that which inspires a remarkable passage in a letter of Swami Vivekananda. 'I have lost all wish for my salvation,' wrote the great Vedantin, 'may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, – and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship; break all other idols.'
>
> "The last two sentences contain indeed the whole gist of the matter. . . ."*

As to the extract about Vivekananda, the point I make there does not seem to me humanitarian. You will see that I emphasise there the last sentences of the passage quoted from Vivekananda, not the words about God the poor and sinner and criminal. The point is about the Divine in the World, the All, *sarva-bhūtāni* of the Gita. That is not merely humanity, still less only the poor or the wicked; surely even the rich or the good are part of the All and those also who are neither good nor bad nor rich nor poor. Nor is there any question (I mean in my own remarks) of philanthropic service; so neither *daridra* nor *sevā* is the point. I had formerly not the humanitarian but the humanity view – and something of it may have stuck to my expressions in the *Arya.* But I had already altered my viewpoint from the "Our Yoga for the sake of humanity" to "Our Yoga for the sake of the Divine". The Divine includes not only the supracosmic but the cosmic and the individual – not only Nirvana or the Beyond but Life and the All. It is that I stress everywhere. But I shall keep the extracts for a day or two and see what there is, if anything, that smacks too much of a too narrow humanistic standpoint. I stop here for today.

29 December 1934" (35: 94-95)

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* Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, volume 23 of *THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO*, pp. 269 – 70.

The Intermediate Zone

"What precisely is meant by the "intermediate zone" [*pp. 35 – 45*]? Has everyone to pass through it to reach the truth?

The intermediate zone means simply a confused condition or passage in which one is getting out of the personal consciousness and opening into the cosmic (cosmic Mind, cosmic vital, cosmic physical, something perhaps of the cosmic higher Mind) without having yet transcended the human mind levels. One is not in possession of or direct contact with the divine Truth *on its own levels*, but one can receive something from them, even from the Overmind, indirectly. Only, as one is still immersed in the cosmic Ignorance, all that comes from above can be mixed, perverted, taken hold of for their purposes by lower, even by hostile Powers.

It is not necessary for everyone to struggle through the intermediate zone. If one has purified oneself, if there is no abnormal vanity, egoism, ambition or other strong misleading element, or if one is vigilant and on one's guard, or if the psychic is in front, one can either pass rapidly and directly or with a minimum of trouble into the higher zones of consciousness where one is in direct contact with the Divine Truth.

On the other hand the passage through the higher zones – higher Mind, illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind, is obligatory – they are the true Intermediaries between the present consciousness and the Supermind.

28 December 1933" (35: 118-19)

Relationships Extending Over Many Births

"I was also disposed to believe that in cases of pure and unalloyed attachment the relationships of one birth persisted in successive births, the number depending on the strength of attachment.

This is possible, but not a law – as a rule the same relationship would not be constantly repeated – the same people often meet again and again on earth in different lives, but the relations are different. The purpose of rebirth would not be served if the same personality with the same relations and experiences were incessantly repeated." (35: 120-21)

Differences in Various Aspects of the Divine are Truths of the Overmind only. In the Supermind there is No Such Separation.

> "The difference or contrast between the Personal and Impersonal is a truth of the Overmind – there is no separate truth of them in the Supermind, they are inseparably one" [*p. 5*]. If this refers to the Personal and Impersonal Divine, the question of the difference can hardly arise, because the Personal Divine (i.e. the Avatar) is not always there. It is only very rarely that the Divine becomes the Avatar to come on earth.

I do not understand. The Personal Divine does not mean the Avatar. What I said was that the scission between the two aspects of the Divine is a creation of the Overmind which takes various aspects of the Divine and separates them into separate entities. Thus it divides Sat, Chit and Ananda, so that they become three separate aspects different from each other. In fact in the Reality there is no separateness, the three aspects are so fused into each other, so inseparably one that they are a single undivided reality. It is the same with the Personal and Impersonal, the Saguna and Nirguna, the Silent and the Active Brahman. In the Reality they are not contrasted and incompatible aspects; what we call Personality and what we call Impersonality are inseparably fused together in a single Truth. In fact "fused together" even is a wrong phrase, because there they were never separated so that they have to be fused. All the quarrels about either the Impersonal being the only true truth or the Personal being the only highest truth are mind-created quarrels derivative from this dividing aspect of the Overmind. The Overmind does not deny any of the aspects as the Mind does, it admits them all as aspects of the One Truth, but by separating them it originates the quarrel in the more ignorant and more limited and divided Mind, because the Mind cannot see how two opposite things can exist together in one Truth, how the Divine can be *nirguṇo guṇī*; – having no experience of what is behind the two words it takes each in an absolute sense. The Impersonal is Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, not a Person, but a state. The Person is the Existent, the Conscious, the Blissful; consciousness, existence, bliss taken as separate things are only states of his being. But in fact the two (personal being and eternal state) are inseparable and are one reality.

13 October 1935" (35: 123-24)

Difference between the Action of the Conscious Mind and the Subconscient

> "You write in *Lights on Yoga* that the subconscient "receives obscurely the impressions of all things and stores them up in itself" [*p. 11*]. Where then are stored all the words, images and thoughts that we say come out of memory? What is the difference between storing in memory and this subconscient storing?

The clear memory of words, images and thoughts is an action of the conscious mind, not the unconscious. Of course the memory goes behind, so to speak, in the back part of the mind, but it can be brought out. Also the memory can be lost or defaced, so that one remembers wrongly or forgets altogether, but that is still an imperfect action of the conscious mind, not an action of the subconscious. What the subconscious keeps is a mass of impressions, not of clear or exact images and these can come up as in dreams in an incoherent jumble distorted altogether or else in the waking state as a mechanical recurrence or repetition of the same suggestions, impulses (subconscient vital) or sensations. There is a recognisable difference between the two functionings.

26 October 1935" (35: 125-26)

The Difference between External Surface, Vital and the True Vital

> "In the change of the vital nature, is the external surface vital to be entirely effaced and replaced by the true vital or is it to be kept and changed into the nature of the true vital? In either case, what is the need of an external vital at all if the true vital is already there?

The true vital is in the inner consciousness, the external is that which is instrumental for the present play of Prakriti in the surface personality. When the change comes, the true vital rejects what is out of tune with its own truth from the external and makes it a true instrument for its expression, a means of expression of its inner will, not a thing of responses to the suggestions of the lower Nature. The strong distinction between the two practically disappears.

19 October 1935" (35: 126-27)

The Capacities of the True Vital

> "If the true vital is "capable of all power, all knowledge, all Ananda" [*p. 13*], it would seem to be the equal of the supramental vital itself or the vital of the Ishwara. How is it possible for an individual to have such a vital?

It is capable of receiving the movements of the higher consciousness, and afterwards it can be capable of receiving the still greater supramental power and Ananda. If it is not, then the descent of the higher consciousness would be impossible and supramentalisation would be impossible. It is not meant that it possesses these things itself in its own right and that as soon as one is aware of the true vital, one gets all these things as inherent in the true vital.

20 October 1935" (35: 127)

Psychic, Jivatman and the Central Being

> "Again, when one rises from the psychic being below to the Jivatman above, does the psychic being cease to be? And when one rises above the Jivatman does the central being become formless?

The evolution or becoming continues, so the psychic also continues, just as the rest of the nature continues, only spiritualised and felt as one being in all planes. It is not a question of formed or formless. As I have said "forms" is not used here in its outward but its inward or metaphysical sense.

11 October 1935" (35: 127-28)

The Jivatman and the Parameshwara

> "The Jivatman . . . knows itself as one centre of the multiple Divine, not as the Parameshwara. It is important to remember the distinction; for, otherwise, if there is the least vital egoism, one may begin to think of oneself as an Avatar or lose balance like Hridaya with Ramakrishna" [*pp. 15 – 16*]. Can the Jivatman status be realised before vital egoism is abolished?

One can get the knowledge or perception in the higher mind "I am That" while the vital is still untransformed, – then the vital ego can take it up and give it a wrong application. 26 November 1935" (35: 128)

The Ego does not Cease With the Body

" "The ego . . . does not cease with the body" [*pp. 16 – 17*]. Does this mean that it is carried by the psychic as a separate principle after death, just as the psychic sometimes carries with it a highly developed mental or vital being, or does it mean that it is taken up in the psychic as a seed-*saṁskāra* or that it exists side by side with the psychic in the after-death state? It is only meant that the separative ego is not a creation of birth in the physical body; the mental and the vital have it also. So long as the mental and vital are subject to ignorance, the ego will last also. When the psychic being goes into rest it naturally takes it with the essence of its past experience and in coming back it takes up a mental, vital and physical existence which has the mark of the ego and the ignorance.

29 October 1935" (35: 128-29)

The Multiple Divine

> "If the multiple Divine is to be taken as an eternal reality, does this not come down to something like Jainism and Sankhya, in which several Purushas exist eternally? This would be a pure Dwaitavada.

It is on the contrary a complete Adwaitavada, more complete than Shankara's who splits Brahman into two incompatible principles – the Brahman and a universe of Maya which is not Brahman and yet somehow exists. In this view which is that of the Gita and some other Vedantic schools the Para Shakti and the Many are also Brahman. Unity and Multiplicity are aspects of the Brahman, just as are Personality and Impersonality, Nirguna and Saguna.

18 March 1936" (35: 129-30)

Conditions for the Survival of the Mental and the Vital Being After Death

> "" . . . if the mental is strongly developed, then the mental being can remain [when the body is dissolved]; so also can the vital, provided they are organised by and centred around the true psychic being; they share the immortality of the psychic" [*p. 18*]. Does this mean that the vital of strong persons like Napoleon is carried forward in the future lives? But how can it be said that their vital was centred around the psychic being? It is only about the Bhaktas and the Jnanis that we can say that their vital was centred around the psychic.

If one has had a strong spiritual development, that makes it easier to retain the developed mental or vital after death. But it is not absolutely necessary that the person should have been a Bhakta or a Jnani. One like Shelley or like Plato for instance could be said to have a developed mental being centred round the psychic – of the vital the same can hardly be said. Napoleon had a strong vital but not one organised round the psychic being.

12 October 1935" (35: 130)

The Efficacy of Shraddha

> " "It is really for the vital part of the being that Shraddha and rites are done – to help the being to get rid of the vital vibrations which still attach it to the earth or to the vital worlds, so that it may pass quickly to its rest in the psychic peace" [*p. 18*]. Does this mean that the Shraddha ceremony performed at present by the Brahmins is correct? Does feeding the caste and the Brahmins fulfil the purpose?

I only said what was originally *meant* by the ceremonies – the rites. I was not referring to the feeding of the caste or the Brahmins which is not a rite or ceremony. Whether the Shraddha as performed is actually effective is another matter – for those who perform it have not either the knowledge or the occult power. 11 April 1935" (35: 130)

How Can the Personal Separative Ego Disappear?

"What has to disappear is the personal separative ego – the dualities of course also. The quickest though not the final way to extinguish ego is to make it disappear in impersonality. When all is one, universal or infinite then there is no place for the sense of ego – the dualities also begin to disappear. But the difficulty is that usually this realisation is confined to the mind or the above-mind while in the vital the stamp of ego remains and is felt in the life and its actions and reactions. Even if full impersonality comes in the vital and physical also, there remains the impossibility, all being impersonal, of having any relation with the Divine. What has therefore to be done is to lose the small personality in impersonality, but also by that loss to discover the true personality which is a portion of the Divine. This person is not separative and limited but is a universal individual, has the sense of uniting with all, but also the power of love and worship for the Divine. That is why I say that to merge the personal consciousness is not the first (or the whole) aim of the Yoga.

November 1935" (35: 133)

The Chemistry of Vital Relations

" "In this Yoga . . . there can be no place for vital relations or interchanges with others. . . . Still worse would it be if this interchange took the form of a sexual relation . . ." [*p. 70*]. The first of these sentences seems to refer to relations between men and men or women and women. But didn't you once say that ordinary interchanges between people are almost unavoidable? Moreover, almost everyone here [*in the Ashram*] has friends. Do friendships fall in the category of "vital relations"?

I suppose I must have been referring to the interchanges which are the result of vital relations. The involuntary vital or other involuntary interchange which takes place by the mere fact of meeting, talking or being together are thosewhich are practically unavoidable. That is to say, they are avoidable only when one has become entirely conscious and is able to put a wall of Force around oneself which nothing can penetrate except the things which one wills to accept. But the reference in the passage cannot be to these, but to the interchange due to vital attachments, passions, vital love or hate etc.

Friendships can be vital relations if there is strong attachment or desire but the friendship which is the nature of comradeship or mental affinity or of a psychic character need not be a vital relation.

4 January 1937" (35: 135-36)

The Resistance of the Lower Nature and the Action of the Hostiles

> "You write in *Bases of Yoga*, in regard to "the waves that recur from the general Nature", that "they return on him [the individual], often with an increased force . . . when they find their influence rejected. But they cannot last long once the environmental consciousness is cleared – unless the 'Hostiles' take a hand" [*p. 90*]. Two questions arise: (1) Whether the Hostiles are something quite different from the waves of Nature? (2) Whether, during the process you describe (the "return" of the forces and so forth), it was not the Hostiles attacking all the time.

There are some who are never touched by the hostile forces.

The normal resistance of the lower Nature in human beings and the action of the Hostiles are two quite different things. The former is natural and occurs in everybody; the latter is an intervention from the non-human world. But this intervention can come in two forms. (1) They use and press on the

lower Nature forces making them resist where they would otherwise be quiescent, making the resistance strong or violent where it would be otherwise slight or moderate, exaggerating its violence when it is violent. There is besides a malignant cleverness, a conscious plan and combination when the Hostiles act on these forces which is not evident in the normal resistance of the forces. (2) They sometimes invade with their own forces. When this happens there is often a temporary possession or at least an irresistible influence which makes the thoughts, feelings, actions of the person abnormal – a black clouding of the brain, a whirl in the vital, all acts as if the person could not help himself and were driven by an overmastering force. On the other hand instead of a possession there may be only a strong Influence; there the symptoms are less marked, but it is easy for anyone acquainted with the ways of these forces to see what has happened. Finally it may be only an attack, not possession or influence; the person then is separate, is not overcome, resists.

24 August 1936" (35: 137)

No Mention of the Overmind in the Synthesis of Yoga

> "In the whole of *The Synthesis of Yoga* [*as originally published in the* Arya] there is nowhere any mention of Overmind. If there is anything in that book similar to what you now call Overmind, it would be in the last seven chapters.

At the time when these chapters were written, the name "overmind" had not been found, so there is no mention of it. What is described in these chapters is the action of the supermind when it descends into the overmind plane and takes up the overmind workings and transforms them.* It was intended in later chapters to show how difficult even this was and how many levels there were between human mind and supermind and how even supermind, descending, could get mixed with the lower action and turned into something that was less than the true Truth. But these later chapters were not written.

13 April 1932" (35: 144)

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* *The highest Supermind or Divine Gnosis existent in itself is something that lies beyond still and quite above.*

The Distinction between the Overmind and the Supermind

"In the *Arya* there is no mention of the Overmind. You have mentioned the supramental or Divine Reason in the gradations of the Supermind, but from its description it is quite different from the Overmind. Why was the Overmind not mentioned and clearly distinguished from the Supermind in the *Arya*?

The distinction has not been made in the *Arya* because at that time what I now call the Overmind was supposed to be an inferior plane of the Supermind. But that was because I was seeing them from the Mind. The true defect of Overmind, the limitation in it which gave rise to a world of Ignorance is seen fully only when one looks at it from the physical consciousness, from the result (Ignorance in Matter) to the cause (Overmind division of the Truth). In

its own plane Overmind seems to be only a divided, many-sided play of the Truth, so can easily be taken by the Mind as a supramental province. Mind also when flooded by the Overmind lights feels itself living in a surprising revelation of divine Truth. The difficulty comes when we deal with the vital and still more with the physical. Then it becomes imperative to face the difficulty and to make a sharp distinction between Overmind and Supermind – for it then becomes evident that the Overmind Power (in spite of its lights and splendours) is not sufficient to overcome the Ignorance because it is itself under the law of Division out of which came the Ignorance. One has to pass beyond and supramentalise Overmind so that mind and all the rest may undergo the final change. 20 November 1933" (35: 145-46)

The Relationships between the Terms Prajna, Karana, Isvara, Turiya and Mahakarana

> "Judging from your description of Overmind [*in the preceding letter*], it would seem that what the Vedantins (especially of the Mayavada School) call *kāraṇa* is Overmind, *īśvara* is the cosmic spirit in Overmind, and *prājña* is individualised being in the Overmind. Supermind would be in *turīya* and *mahākāraṇa*, about which they had only a few glimpses. In *kāraṇa* and *īśvara*, they must have found something wanting of the Highest Truth.

That is evidently what they meant. But they had no clear perception of these things because they lived at the highest in the spiritualised higher mind, and for the rest could only receive things from even the Overmind – they could not enter it except by deep samadhi (सुषुप्ति). Prajna and Ishwara were for them Lord of the *suṣupti*. 20 November 1933" (35: 146)

Possibility of the Birth of Another in One's Karana Deha

"Is it possible for another being to take birth in a human being's কারণ দেহ [*kāraṇa deha*] and see everything from that standpoint?

The কারণ দেহ may be simply a form answering to the higher consciousness (overmental, intuitive etc.) and I suppose a being could be there working in that consciousness and body. It is not likely to be the supramental being and supramental body – for in that case the whole consciousness, thought, action subjective and objective would begin to be faultlessly true and irresistibly effective. Nobody has reached that stage yet, even the overmind is, for all but the Mother and myself, either unrealised or only an influence mostly subjective.

24 March 1934" (35: 146)

Intuition

> "In a recent letter to me you wrote: "But the Intuition sees in flashes and combines through a constant play of light – through revelations, inspirations, intuitions, swift discriminations." Since all these terms connect up with "Intuition", perhaps "intuitions" is unnecessary.

"Intuition" is the word for the general power proper to that plane, but it works through a fourfold process expressed in the four words connected together here. If you like you can substitute "intuitive intimations" for the third. 17 October 1936" (35: 147)

Difference between Thinking and Seeing and Sri Aurobindo's Sadhana

> "Your intuition says everything to you? Have you nothing to think whether right or wrong? Alas! How then can the shishya follow the Guru?

Good heavens! after a life of sadhana you expect me still to "think" and what is worse think what is right or wrong. I don't think, even; I see or I don't see. The difference between intuition and thought is very much like that between seeing a thing and badgering one's brains to find out what the thing can possibly be like. Intuition is truth-sight. The thing seen may not be the truth? Well, in that case it will at least be one of its hundred tails or at least a hair from one of the tails. The very first step in the supramental change is to transform all operations of consciousness from the ordinary mental to the intuitive, only then is there any hope of proceeding farther, – not to, but towards the supramental. I must surely have done this long ago, otherwise how could I be catching the tail of the supramental whale? 7 May 1938" (35: 148)

Psychic, Spiritual and Occult

"Ordinarily, all the more inward and all the abnormal psychological experiences are called psychic. I use the word psychic for the soul as distinguished from the mind and vital. All movements and experiences of the soul would in that sense be called psychic, those which rise from or directly touch the psychic being; where mind and vital predominate, the experience would be called psychological (surface or occult). "Spiritual" has nothing to do with the Absolute, except that the experience of the Absolute is spiritual. All contacts with self, the higher consciousness, the Divine above are spiritual. There are others that could not be so sharply classified and set off against each other.

The spiritual realisation is of primary importance and indispensable. I would consider it best to have the spiritual and psychic development first and have it with the same fullness before entering the occult regions. Those who enter the latter first may find their spiritual realisation much delayed – others fall into the mazy traps of the occult and do not come out in this life. Some no doubt can carry on both together, the occult and the spiritual, and make them help each other; but the process I suggest is the safer.

The governing factors for us must be the spirit and the psychic being united with the Divine – the occult laws and phenomena have to be known but only as an instrumentation, not as the governing principles. The occult is a vast field and complicated and not without its dangers. It need not be abandoned but it should not be given the first place. " (35: 151)

"I am not sure what you mean by the Vaishnava transformation or Ramakrishna's, so I can't say anything about that. I can only say that 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 Tantrik's). 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 consciousness such as and greater 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 it, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation does not meet the demand I make on life and Yoga.

Light of realisation is not the same thing as Descent. I do not think realisation by itself, necessarily transforms anything; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness 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 enough to make a great change in the inner being, while the outer remains an imperfect instrument, clumsy, sick or unexpressive. Finally, the 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.…

5 October 1935" (35: 153-54)

Sri Ramakrishna's Expression of Knowledge was Perfect

"'"An unintellectual mind cannot bring down the Knowledge?" Certainly it can. But don't you think there is a world of difference between the expression of an intellectual mind and an unintellectual one?

Expression is another matter, but Ramakrishana was an uneducated, nonintellectual man, yet his expression of knowledge was so perfect that the biggest intellects bowed down before it. 5 November 1936

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What a difference there is between Ramakrishna's expressions of knowledge and those of a perfectly developed intellect like yourself!

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

> Who preached Ramakrishna's gospel to the world? Vivekananda, a highly developed mind.

And who taught Vivekananda the Truth? Not a logician or highly developed intellect certainly? 13 November 1936

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> I have heard different things about Ramakrishna from different people. Some say he was an Avatar and some that he was not. Do you think he was an Avatar as he said in his autobiography?

He never wrote an autobiography. What he said was in conversation with his disciples and others. He was certainly quite as much an Avatar as Christ or Chaitanya. 13 November 1936" (35: 162)

Swami Ramatirtha

"I think Ramatirtha's realisations were more mental than anything else. He had opening of the higher mind and a realisation there of the cosmic Self, but I find no evidence of a transformed mind and vital; that transformation is not a result of or object of the Yoga of Knowledge. The realisation of the Yoga of Knowledge is when one feels that one lives in the wideness of something silent, featureless and universal (called the Self) and all else is seen as only forms and names; the Self is real, nothing else. The realisation of "*my* self in other forms" is a part of this or a step towards it, but in the full realisation the "my" should drop so that there is only *the* one Self or rather only the Brahman. For the Self is merely a subjective aspect of the Brahman, just as the Ishwara is its objective aspect. That is the Vedantic "Knowledge". Its result is peace, silence, liberation. As for the active Prakriti, (mind, vital, body), the Yoga of Knowledge does not make it its aim to transform them – that would be no use as the idea is that if the liberation has come, it will all drop off at death. The only change wanted is to get rid of the idea of ego and realise as true only the supreme Self, the Brahman. 25 June 1934" (35: 165-66)

J. Krishnamurti

"At one time I tried to come into imaginative contact with J. Krishnamurti. I imagined as follows: He has acquired a quiet mind and a semi-quiet vital and has glimpses through them of the Self. He receives some things intuitively in his mind. But he goes no further than that. He has neither the knowledge nor the power nor bliss of the higher planes.

What he speaks is all purely mental – if he has any glimpses of realisation, they are in the mind only.

4 September 1933

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I don't think there is much either in this man himself or in his teachings. It does not seem to me that he is a yogi in the true sense of the word but rather a man with some intellectual ability who is posing as a spiritual teacher. His photograph gives an impression of much pretension and vanity and an impression also of much falsity in the character. As for what he teaches, it does not hang together. If all books are worthless, why did he write a book and one of this kind telling people what they should do, what they should not do and if all teachers are unhelpful, why does he take the posture of a teacher since according to his own statement that cannot be helpful to anybody? Krishnamurti was, before he broke away on his own, certainly the disciple of two Gurus, Leadbeater and Annie Besant: if he has denounced Mrs. Besant, Krishnaprem is quite entitled to denounce him as a *gurudrohī*.

9 December 1949" (35: 181-82)

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

> "On reading *La Vie de Mme Blavatsky*, I had the impression that there is nothing but vital occultism in her. Her life and work are concerned mostly with the supraphysical worlds and spirits and miraculous powers and Mahatmas.

You are quite right. She was an occultist, not a spiritual personality. What spiritual teachings she gave, seemed to be based on *intellectual* knowledge, not on realisation. Her attitude was Tibetan Buddhistic. She did not believe in God, but in Nirvana, miraculous powers and the Mahatmas.

31 March 1936" (35: 183)

"As for Gandhi, why should you suppose that I am so tender for the faith of the Mahatma? I do not call it faith at all, but a rigid mental belief, and what he terms soul-force is only a strong vital will which has taken a religious turn. That, of course, can be a tremendous force for action, but unfortunately Gandhi spoils it by his ambition to be a man of reason, while in fact he has no reason in him at all, never was reasonable at any moment in his life and, I suppose, never will be. What he has in its place is a remarkable type of unintentionally sophistic logic. Well, what this reason, this amazingly, precisely unreliable logic brings about is that nobody is ever sure and, I don't think, he is himself really sure what he will do next. He has not only two minds, but three or four minds, and all depends on which will turn up topmost at a particular moment and how it will combine with the others. There would be no harm in that, on the contrary there might be an advantage if there were a central Light somewhere choosing for him and shaping the decision to the need of the action. He thinks there is and calls it God – but it has always seemed to me that it is his own mind that decides and most of the time decides wrongly. Anyhow I cannot imagine Lenin or Mustapha Kemal not knowing their own minds or acting in this way – even their strategic retreats were steps towards an end clearly conceived and executed. But whatever it be, it is all mind-action and vital-force in Gandhi. So why should he be taken as an example of the defeat of the Divine or of a spiritual Power? I quite allow that there has been something behind Gandhi greater than himself and you can call it the Divine or a Cosmic Force which has used him, but then there is that behind everybody who is used as an instrument for world ends, – behind Kemal and Lenin also, – so that is not germane to the matter.

29 July 1932

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> This second fast of Mahatma Gandhi of three weeks has disquieted me a little. There seems to be no way out, for Gandhi asserts that he can break his irrevocable fast only if he is persuaded that the inner voice which enjoins the fast on him is the voice not of God but of the Devil. I wonder whose voice it is though? Can it be anything but disastrous augury?

I don't think it was the voice of God that raged and thundered till Gandhi decided to starve himself on to the danger line – it looks as if it were the other fellow. One can only hope that he will scrape through somehow and that the doctors are wrong as they most often are when they opine in the plural; but the last experiment was not encouraging. And as this time there seems to be no reason whatever for this inspired procedure and no practical or practicable object set before it, there is no tangible means either of bringing it to a timely close. What an extraordinary ignorance of spiritual things to take

any "inner" shout for the command of the Supreme! 5 May 1933…

> In a recent statement, Gandhi criticises the attitude taken by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers at the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes Conference. They passed a resolution recommending the "complete severance of the Depressed Classes from the Hindu fold and their embracing any other religion which guaranteed them equal status and treatment". About this Gandhi says: "But religion is not like a house or a cloak, which can be changed at will. It is more an integral part of one's self than of one's body. Religion is the tie that binds one to one's Creator and whilst the body perishes, as it has to, religion persists even after death."* Is there any truth in what Gandhi says? Why should a particular religion persist after death? Why should one be bound to one form of religion if one feels the necessity of a different approach to Truth?

If it is meant by the statement that the form of religion is something permanent and unchangeable, then that cannot be accepted. But if religion here means one's way of communion with the Divine, then it is true that that is something belonging to the inner being and cannot be changed like a house or a cloak for the sake of some personal, social or worldly convenience. If a change is to be made, it can only be for an inner spiritual reason, because of some development from within. No one can be bound to any form of religion or any particular creed or system, but if he changes the one he has accepted for another, for external reasons, that means he has inwardly no religion at all and both his old and his new religion are only an empty formula. At bottom that is, I suppose, what the statement drives at. Preference for a different approach to the Truth or the desire of inner spiritual self-expression are not the motives of the recommendation of change to which objection is made by the Mahatma here; the object proposed is an enhancement of social status and consideration which is no more a spiritual motive than conversion for the sake of money or marriage. If a man has no religion in himself, he can change his credal profession for any motive; if he has, he cannot; he can only change it in response to an inner spiritual need. If a man has a bhakti for the Divine in the form of Krishna, he can't very well say "I will swap Krishna for Christ so that I may become socially respectable." 19 October 1935

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> Gandhi says the following in a recent article: "I hold that complete realization is impossible in this embodied life. Nor is it necessary. A living immovable faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human beings."* Your opinion on the matter?

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* M. K. Gandhi, "Statement to the Press" (15 October 1935), in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 62 (New Delhi: The Publications Division, 1975), p. 37.

I do not know what Mahatma Gandhi means by complete realisation. If he means a realisation with nothing more to realise, no farther development possible, then I agree – I have myself spoken of farther divine progression, an infinite development.…

I would prefer to avoid all public controversy especially if it touches in the least on politics. Gandhi's theories are like other mental theories built on a basis of one-sided reasoning and claiming for a limited truth (that of non-violence and of passive resistance) a universality which it cannot have. Such theories will always exist so long as the mind is the main instrument of human truth seeking. To spend energy trying to destroy such theories is of little use; if destroyed they are replaced by others equally limited and partial.

As for imperialism, that is no new thing – it is as old as the human vital; there was never a time in known human history when it was not in existence. To get rid of it means to change human nature or at least to curb it by a superior power. Our work is not to fight these things but to bring down a higher nature and a Truth-creation which will make spiritual Light and Power the chief force in terrestrial existence. 10 October 1936

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> Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said: "To be born as a 'Bhangi' was the result of great *puṇya* in previous birth. He [*Gandhi*] did not know what qualifications determined the birth of one man as Bhangi and another as Brahmin, but from the point of view of benefit to society the one was no whit lower than the other."** This seems like nonsense to me. How can he say that through *puṇya* (righteous acts) in previous births people go to a life in the lowest order of human society?

The view taken by the Mahatma in these matters is Christian rather than Hindu – for the Christian self-abasement, humility, the acceptance of a low status to serve humanity or the Divine are things which are highly spiritual and the noblest privilege of the soul. This view does not admit any hierarchy of castes; the Mahatma accepts castes but on the basis that all are equal before the Divine, a bhangi doing his dharma is as good as the Brahmin doing his, there is division of function but no hierarchy of functions. That is one view of things and the hierarchic view is another, both having a standpoint and logic of their own which the mind takes as wholly valid but which only corresponds to a part of the reality. All kinds of work are equal before the Divine and all men have the same Brahman within them, is one truth, but that development is not

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* M. K. Gandhi, "Where Is the Living God?" (13 June 1936), in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 63 (New Delhi: The Publications Division, 1976), p. 58.

** M. K. Gandhi, "Address to Congress Volunteers" (21 December 1936). Reported in the *Hindu* and other newspapers, and reproduced in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 64 (New Delhi: The Publications Division, 1976), pp. 162 – 63.

equal in all is another. The idea that it needs special *punya* to be born as a bhangi is of course one of those forceful exaggerations of an idea which are common with the Mahatma and impress greatly the mind of his hearers. The idea behind is that his function is an indispensable service to the society, quite as much as the Brahmin's, but that being disagreeable it would need a special moral heroism to choose it voluntarily and he thinks as if the soul freely chose it as such a heroic service and as a reward of righteous acts – that is hardly likely. The service of the scavenger is indispensable under certain conditions of society, it is one of those primary necessities without which society can hardly exist and the cultural development of which the Brahmin life is part could not have taken place. But obviously the cultural development is more valuable than the service of the physical needs for the progress of humanity as opposed to its first static condition and that development can even lead to the minimising and perhaps the eventual disappearance by scientific inventions of the need for the functions of the scavenger. But that I suppose the Mahatma would not approve of as it is machinery and a departure from the simple life. In any case it is not true that the bhangi life is superior to the Brahmin life and the reward of especial righteousness. On the other hand the traditional conception that a man is superior to others because he is born a Brahmin is not rational or justifiable. A spiritual or cultured man of Pariah birth is superior in the divine values to an unspiritual and worldly-minded or a crude and uncultured Brahmin. Birth counts, but the basic value is in the man himself, the soul behind and the degree to which it manifests itself in his nature.

23 December 1936" (35: 184-93)

Jawaharlal Nehru

> "I have just finished Jawaharlal's autobiography. I send you some citations which moved me deeply. I caught myself today praying for him that he may have peace. How I wish he could do yoga for a year at least, if only to realise the divine harmony within him – even in this age when times are so grievously "out of joint".

I have not read Jawaharlal's book and know nothing of his life except what is public; now of course I have no time for reading. But he bears on himself the stamp of a very fine character, a nature of the highest sattwic kind, full of rectitude and a high sense of honour: a man of the finest Brahmin type with what is best in European education added – that is the impression he gives. I must say that Mother was struck by his photograph when she first saw it in the papers, singling it out from the mass of ordinary *eminent* people.

But peace? Peace is never easy to get in the life of the world and never constant, unless one lives deep within and bears the external activities as only a surface front of our being. And the work he has to do is the least peaceful of all. If Buddha had to lead the Indian National Congress, well! For the spiritual life there is perhaps no immediate possibility: his mind stands in between, for it has seized strongly the Socialist dream of social perfection by *outward* change as the thing to be striven for and has made that into a sort of religion. The best possible on earth has been made by his mind its credo: the something beyond he does not believe in, the something more here would seem to him a dream without basis, I suppose. But pray for him, of course. He is a man with a strong psychic element and in this life or another that must go beyond the mind to find its source. 13 September 1936" (35: 193-94)

"I have read your correspondence with Subhas Bose.* Your main point is of course quite the right thing to answer; 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 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 godhead within and without us. 16 June 1932

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> I want to send Chapter 1 of "The Yoga of Divine Works" to Subhas. It will, I am sure, be just the aliment for his soul and may work a sort of miracle as it did in me. So unless you have a particular reason, could you see your way to allowing me to send him this chapter by tomorrow's post?

I am not sure that Subhas is prepared to receive any effect from it – it is only because your inner preparation had proceeded to a point at which you could feel something of what was behind the words that it had an effect upon you. All the same – you can send it, if you like. 26 December 1932

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> I received this post-card from Subhas in the last mail. He had written it before starting for Calcutta by aeroplane. Now he is practically a prisoner – a home-internee really – at his residence. I wonder what work he will be doing now. . . . He used once to meditate and see light and had a real bhakti – had even turned a sannyasi once. And now he says that seeking the Divine is useless inactive work!

I had never a very great confidence in Subhas's yoga-turn getting the better of

* All the letters in this group except the one dated 2 July 1938 were written to Dilip Kumar Roy, who was a close friend of Subhas Chandra Bose. – Ed.

his activism – he has two strong ties that prevent it, ambition and need to act and lead in the vital and in the mind a mental idealism – these two things are the great fosterers of illusion. The spiritual path needs a certain amount of realism – one has to see the real value of the things that are – which is very little, except as steps in evolution. Then one can either follow the spiritual static path of rest and release or the spiritual dynamic path of a greater truth to be brought down into life. But otherwise – 12 December 1934

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> I wrote a letter to Subhas this morning in reply to his exhorting me to come away, assuring me that all my friends want me back and that nobody is cross with me etc. etc. I wrote that I must be faithful to the call of my soul and to my Guru whom I do believe to be the Divine incarnate. Perhaps he will smile the well-known "the old old story" smile of our up-to-date rationalism.

Well, his also is the old old story repeated without any satisfactory result or liberating end. 20 August 1935

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> Here is Subhas the despairer: "It is no use trying to argue with you. You are quite blind. Reason is but the slave of your faith. When I think how a person of your calibre can surrender his reasoning in this way, I feel like despairing of my country. Everywhere we find the same thing. You regard Sri Aurobindo as God Incarnate. So many regard Mahatma Gandhi in the same light. My own mother – whose sincerity I cannot doubt – has a guru whom she regards as God incarnate." – *Extract from a letter of Subhas Chandra Bose to Dilip Kumar Roy, dated Vienna, 23 December 1935.*

As for the desperate Subhas, why the deuce does he want everybody to agree with him and follow his line of conduct or belief? That is the never realised dream of the politician; we, incarnate Gods, Gurus, spiritual men, are more modest in our hopes and are satisfied with a handful or, if you like, an Asramful of disciples, and even we don't ask for that, – they come, they come. So are we not nearer to reason and wisdom than the political leaders? Unless of course we make the mistake of founding a universal religion, but that is not our case. Moreover, Subhas upbraids you for losing your reason in blind faith, but what is his view of things except a reasoned faith; you believe according to your faith, which is quite natural, he believes according to his opinion, which is natural also but no better so far as the likelihood of getting at the true truth of things is in question. His opinion is according to his reason? So is the opinion of his political opponents according to their reason, yet they affirm the very opposite idea to his. How is reason going to show which is right? The opposite parties can argue till they are blue in the face, they won't be anywhere nearer a decision. In the end he prevails whom the greater force or whom the trend of things favours. But who can look at the world and say

that the trend of things is always (or ever) according to right reason – whatever this thing called right reason may be? As a matter of fact there is no universal infallible reason which can decide and be the umpire between conflicting opinions, there is only my reason, your reason, x's, y's, z's reason multiplied up to the discordant innumerable. Each reasons according to his view of things, his opinion, that is, his mental constitution and mental preference. So what's the use of running down faith which after all gives something to hold on to amidst the contradictions of an enigmatic universe? If one can get at a knowledge that knows, it is another matter; but so long as we have only an ignorance that argues, well, there is a place still left for faith – even, faith may be a glint from the knowledge that knows, however far off, and meanwhile there is not the slightest doubt that it helps to get things done. There's a bit of reasoning for you! just like all other reasoning too, convincing to the convinced, but not to the unconvincible, i.e., who don't agree with the ground upon which the reasoning dances. Logic after all is only a measured dance of the mind, nothing else.…

> In another essay, Russell writes: "When the indemnities were imposed, the Allies regarded themselves as consumers: they considered that it would be pleasant to have the Germans work for them as temporary slaves, and to be able themselves to consume, without labour, what the Germans had produced. Then, after the Treaty of Versailles had been concluded, they suddenly remembered that they were also producers, and that the influx of German goods which they had been demanding would ruin their industries. . . . The plain fact is that the governing classes of the world are too ignorant and stupid to be able to think through such a problem, and too conceited to ask advice of those who might help them" [*pp. 66 – 67*]. Well, what would Subhas as a ruling patriot say to this? How support his reason? All these meeting-makers are reasonable people, aren't they?

Yes, but human reason is a very convenient and accommodating instrument and works only in the circle set for it by interest, partiality and prejudice. The politicians reason wrongly or insincerely and have power to enforce the results of their reasoning, so make a mess of the world's affairs, – the intellectuals reason and see what their minds show them, which is far from being always the truth, for it is generally decided by intellectual preference and the mind's inborn or education-inculcated angle of vision, – but even when they see it, they have no power to enforce it. So between blind power and seeing impotence the world moves, achieving destiny through a mental muddle.

> To conclude, Russell writes in the same essay: "When a nation, instead of an individual, is seized with lunacy, it is thought to be displaying remarkable industrial wisdom" [*p. 67*]. *Qu'en dites-vous*?

Seized with lunacy? But that implies the nation is ordinarily led by reason? Is it so? Or even by common sense? Masses of men act upon their vital push, not

according to reason – individuals too mostly, though they frequently call in their reason as a lawyer to plead the vital's case. 30 January 1936

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> Sarojini Naidu's daughter Padmaja told me today that when Subhas issued his manifesto from Europe to the effect that he and Jawaharlal were great friends and at one on every point, he actually had been scheming from Europe to bring J. down in the public eye. I could not believe this, I told her point blank. She averred it was absolutely true. I am very pained to hear it. For though I feel there is not a little exaggeration in this business, I fear there may be substance of truth somewhere in this dirty story.

I would certainly not hang anybody on the testimony of Padmaja: she has too much of a delight in scandal-mongering of the worst kind; but I suppose she would not cite Jawaharlal as a witness if there were nothing in it. The question is: how much exaggeration? I am afraid it is not at all impossible that Subhas should say one thing to Jawaharlal and quite another to somebody else. Politics is like that, a dirty and corrupting business full of "policy", "strategy", "tactics", "diplomacy": in other words, lying, tricking, manoeuvring of all kinds. A few escape the corruption but most don't. It has after all always been a trade or art of Kautilya from the beginning, and to touch it and not be corrupted is far from easy. For it is a field in which people fix their eyes on the thing to be achieved and soon become careless about the character of the means, while ambition, ego and self-interest come pouring in to aid the process. Human nature is prone enough to crookedness as it is, but here the ordinary restraints put upon it fail to be at all effective. That however is general: in a particular case one can't pronounce without knowing the circumstances more at first hand or before having seen the documents cited. 20 October 1936

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> For Subhas Bose, country is the one thing that matters and nothing else.

Excuse me – country is not the only thing for Subhas Bose – there is also Subhas Bose and he looms very large. You have illusions about these political heroes – I have seen them close and have none. 2 July 1938…

In all this imbroglio about the book on Subhas* one thing is positive that I never gave any such order and it ought to have been evident to everybody that I could not have done it since I permitted the publication of your book and the prohibition of it would have been too outrageous a self-contradiction to be even thinkable. . . .

Behind all that is an old story which may account for everything. You will remember that both the Mother and I were very angry against Subhas for having brought the Japanese into India and reproached him with it as a treason

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* *The Subhash I Knew*, by Dilip Kumar Roy (Bombay, Nalanda Publications, 1946).

and crime against the Motherland. For if they had got in, it would have been almost impossible to get them out. The Mother knows the Japanese nation well and was positive about that. Okawa, the leader of the Black Dragon (the one who shammed mad and got off at the Tokyo trial) told her that if India revolted against the British, Japan would send her Navy to help, but he said that he would not like the Japanese to land because if they once got hold of Indian soil they would never leave it, and it was true enough. If the Japanese had overrun India, and they would have done it if a powerful Divine intervention had not prevented it and turned the tables on them, they would have joined the Germans in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus and nothing could have saved Europe and Asia from being overrun. This would have meant the destruction of our work and a horrible fate for this country and for the world. You can understand therefore the bitterness of our feelings at that time against Subhas and his association with the Axis and the disaster to his country for which he would have been responsible. Incidentally, instead of being liberated in 1948, India would have had to spend a century or several centuries in a renewed servitude. When therefore the Mother heard that you were writing a book eulogising Subhas, she disapproved strongly of any such thing issuing out of the Ashram and she wanted that you should be asked not to publish it. . . .

. . . Subsequently she met one of the chief lieutenants of Subhas, a man from Hyderabad who had been his secretary and companion in the submarine by which he came from Germany to Japan, and he recounted his daily talks in the submarine and strongly defended his action. From what he said it was evident although we still regarded Subhas's action as a reckless and dangerous folly, that the aspect of a crime against the country disappeared from it. Since then Mother modified her attitude towards Subhas; moreover, the war was receding into the past and there was no longer any room for the poignancy of the feeling it had raised and it was better that all that should be forgotten. But although almost a year had passed, the impressions made at that time have remained in the minds of many and account for the attitude of *X* and *Y* to your book and must also be the psychological source of *X*'s misunderstanding about the supposed order.

We regret that a blow should have fallen on you and the pain accompanying it when no blow was really given or intended. Anyhow, the matter has been rectified; the library has been informed that there has been a misunderstanding, no prohibition was actually made and the book must be issued to sadhaks. 5 April 1947" (35: 194-202)

The Kaiser, Hitler and His Lieutenants

"Hitler and his chief lieutenants Goering and Goebbels are certainly vital beings or possessed by vital beings, so you can't expect common sense from them. The Kaiser, though ill-balanced, was a much more human person; these people are hardly human at all. The nineteenth century in Europe was a preeminently human era – now the vital world seems to be descending there.

18 September 1936" (35: 203)

Stalin, Lenin and Trotsky

> "From what I read about Stalin's life, it seems that it was he who saved Bolshevism (even when Lenin was there) and turned several catastrophes into successes either by military operations or tactics. If Lenin was the mind of the Bolshevist Revolution, Stalin was its vital – a very solid, steadfast and intuitive vital.

But where did you read that? It must be someone who since Stalin became powerful has exaggerated his share in the work. When Lenin lived he alone was all-powerful and dictated the whole policy changing it whenever that was needed. As for military operations, the man who saved Bolshevism in history was Trotsky who organised the Red Army, created it out of nothing and directed its operations. Stalin was not so much the vital as the physical mind working out details; after Lenin's death he took charge and arranged everything by this faculty. 25 January 1937" (35: 203-04)

Edward Windsor

"…Why should there be a ferment about this affair among the "most"? What is Edward Windsor to them or they to Edward Windsor? He has very sensibly kicked over the traces and chucked the unpleasant work of being a King who can do nothing except nod his head like a marionette to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and preferred to have his own life as a man and not a pseudo-king. Quite natural. What is said is that he was too democratic and socialistic for the British Parliamentarians, wanted to create a free and united Ireland, give full Dominion autonomy without reserve to India, do something for the workers etc. and generally made himself a vigorous nuisance to Baldwin and Co. Hence they took the first opportunity to put him in the dilemma "Be a puppet or go." It is very probable. Anyhow it seems that the new George will suit them very well. So all is for the best in the best possible of all possible Baldwinian worlds and there is nothing to be in a ferment over.

12 December 1936" (35: 204)

Indian Independence and Its Aftermath

"In your scheme of things do you definitely see a free India? You have stated that for the spreading of spirituality in the world India must be free. I suppose you must be working for it! You are the only one who can do something really effective by the use of your spiritual Force.

That is all settled. It is a question of working out only. The question is what is India going to do with her independence? The above kind of affair? Bolshevism? Goonda-raj? Things look ominous.

16 September 1935" (35: 207)

The Communal Problem

"As regards Bengal, things are certainly very bad; the conditions of the Hindus there are terrible and they may even get worse in spite of the interim *mariage de convenance* at Delhi. But we must not let our reaction to it become excessive or suggest despair. There must be at least 20 million Hindus in Bengal and they are not going to be exterminated, – even Hitler with his scientific methods of massacre could not exterminate the Jews who are still showing themselves very much alive and, as for Hindu culture, it is not such a weak and fluffy thing as to be easily stamped out; it has lasted through something like 5 millenniums at least and is going to carry on much longer and has accumulated quite enough power to survive. What is happening did not come to me as a surprise. I foresaw it when I was in Bengal and warned people that it was probable and almost inevitable and that they should be prepared for it. At that time no one attached any value to what I said although some afterwards remembered and admitted, when the trouble first began, that I have been right; only C. R. Das

had grave apprehensions and he even told me when he came to Pondicherry that he would not like the British to go out until this dangerous problem had been settled. But I have not been discouraged by what is happening, because I know and have experienced hundreds of times that beyond the blackest darkness there lies for one who is a divine instrument the light of God's victory. I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world – I am not speaking of personal things – which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster. There was a time when Hitler was victorious everywhere and it seemed certain that a black yoke of the Asura would be imposed on the whole world; but where is Hitler now and where is his rule? Berlin and Nuremberg have marked the end of that dreadful chapter in human history. Other blacknesses threaten to overshadow or even engulf mankind, but they too will end as that nightmare has ended. I cannot write fully in this letter of all things which justify my confidence – some day perhaps I shall be able to do it. 19 October 1946" (35: 208)

World Events

"…As for what is happening in the world, it does not upset me because I knew all along that things would happen in that fashion. I never had any illusions about Gandhi's satyagraha – it has only fulfilled my prediction that it would end in a great confusion or a great fiasco and my only mistake was that I put an "or" where there should have been an "and" – and as for the hopes of the intellectual idealists I have not shared them, so I am not disappointed.

10 August 1933" (35: 209)

"You have said that you have begun to doubt whether it was the Mother's war and ask me to make you feel again that it is. I affirm again to you most strongly that this is the Mother's war. You should not think of it as a fight for certain nations against others or even for India; it is a struggle for an ideal that has to establish itself on earth in the life of humanity, for a Truth that has yet to realise itself fully and against a darkness and falsehood that are trying to overwhelm the earth and mankind in the immediate future. It is the forces behind the battle that have to be seen and not this or that superficial circumstance. It is no use concentrating on the defects or mistakes of nations; all have defects and commit serious mistakes; but what matters is on what side they have ranged themselves in the struggle. It is a struggle for the liberty of mankind to develop, for conditions in which men have freedom and room to think and act according to the light in them and grow in the Truth, grow in the Spirit. There cannot be the slightest doubt that if one side wins, there will be an end of all such freedom and hope of light and truth and the work that has to be done will be subjected to conditions which would make it humanly impossible; there would be a reign of falsehood and darkness, a cruel oppression and degradation for most of the human race such as people in this country do not dream of and cannot yet at all realise. If the other side that has declared itself for the free future of humanity triumphs, this terrible danger will have been averted and conditions will have been created in which there will be a chance for the Ideal to grow, for the Divine Work to be done, for the spiritual Truth for which we stand to establish itself on the earth. Those who fight for this cause are fighting for the Divine and against the threatened reign of the Asura.

29 July 1942

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I just received a long letter from Krishnaprem. He evidently wants to qualify his statement about violence. For myself I have no doubt as *you* who *know* have said so. Only one point gave rise to doubts in me, in regard to what Nolini wrote in his masterly analysis of the values at stake, comparing this war to Kurukshetra. This is exactly what troubles Krishnaprem. How can the Allied Powers be compared to the Pandavas? I never doubted the wisdom of all efforts being directed against Hitler, but is it not unwise to compare him to Duryodhana and the Allied Powers to the Pandavas? I have received of late from correspondents and friends objections to that effect – that the Allies can hardly be dubbed "modern Pandavas". The Pandavas were protagonists of virtue and unselfishness, which can hardly be said of the Allies who are all

selfish (more or less) and exploiters of weaker races and imperialistic.

What I have said is not that the Allies have never done wrong things, but that they stand on the side of the evolutionary forces. I have not said that at random, but on what to me are clear grounds of fact. What you speak of is the dark side. All nations and governments have shown that side in their dealings with each other, – at least all who had the strength or got the chance. I hope you are not expecting me to believe that there are or have been virtuous Governments and unselfish and sinless peoples? It is only individuals and not too many of them who can be described in that style. But there is the other side also. Your correspondents are condemning the Allies on grounds that people in the past would have stared at, on the basis of modern ideals of international conduct; but looked at like that, all big nations and many small ones have black records. But who created these ideals or did most to create them (liberty, democracy, equality, international justice and the rest)? Well, America, France, England – the present Allied nations. They have all been imperialistic and still bear the burden of their past, but they have also deliberately spread these ideals and introduced self-governing bodies and parliamentary institutions where they did not exist; and whatever the relative worth of these things, they have been a stage, even if a still imperfect stage, in a forward evolution. (What of the others? What about the Axis' new order? Hitler swears it is a crime to educate the coloured peoples, they must be kept as serfs and labourers.) England has helped certain nations to be free without seeking any personal gain; she has conceded independence to Egypt and Eire after a struggle, to Iraq without a struggle. On the whole she has been for some time moving away steadily from Imperialism towards a principle of free association and cooperation; the British Commonwealth of England and the Dominions is something unique and unprecedented, a beginning of new things in that direction. She is turning in spirit in the direction of a world-union of some kind after the war; her new generation no longer believes in an "imperial mission"; she has offered India Dominion Independence (even, if she prefers it, she can choose or pass on to isolated independence) after the war, on the base of an agreed free constitution to be chosen by Indians themselves; though this, it has been feared, leaves a loophole for reactionary delay, it is in itself extremely reasonable and it is the Indians themselves with their inveterate habit of disunion who will be responsible if they are imbecile enough to reject the opportunity. All that is what I call evolution in the right direction – however slow and imperfect and hesitating. As for America she has forsworn her past imperialistic policies in regard to Central and South America, in Cuba, the Philippines, – everywhere apart from some islands in the Pacific which would go plop into other hands, if she withdrew from them. It is perhaps possible, some suggest, that she may be tempted towards a sort of financial imperialism, the rule of the Almighty

American Dollar, by her new sense of international power, or led into other mistakes, but if so we may fairly assume from her other strong tendencies that she will soon withdraw from it. The greater danger is that she may retire again into a selfish isolationism after the war and so destroy or delay the chance of a possible beginning that may lead eventually to some beginning of a free world-union. But still there again is the evolutionary force. Is there a similar trend on the part of the Axis? The answer is plain enough both from their own declarations and their behaviour. Avowedly and openly, Nazi Germany today stands for the reversal of this evolutionary tendency, for the destruction of the new international outlook, the new Dharma, for a reversion not only to the past, but to a far-back primitive and barbaric ideal. She fully intended to reimpose it on the whole earth, but would have done so if she had had, as for a time she seemed to have, the strength to conquer. There can be no doubt or hesitation here; if we are for the evolutionary future of mankind, we must recognise that it is only the victory of the Allies that can save it. At the very least, they are at the moment the instruments of the evolutionary Forces to save mankind's future, and these declarations of their own show that they are conscious of it. Other elements and motives there are, but the main issue is here. One has to look at things on all sides, to see them steadily and whole. Once more, it is the forces working behind that I have to look at, I don't want to go blind among surface details. The future has first to be safeguarded; only then can present problems and contradictions have a chance to be solved and eliminated.

> Krishnaprem too has become doubtful about the Allies being compared to the Pandavas. Would you kindly throw some light on the question?

For us the question put by you does not arise. The Mother made it plain in a letter which has been made public that we did not consider the war as a fight between nations or governments (still less between good people and bad people) but between two forces, the Divine and the Asuric. What we have to see is on which side men and nations put themselves; if they put themselves on the right side, they at once make themselves instruments of the Divine purpose in spite of all defects, errors, wrong movements and actions (past or present or possible backslidings in the future) which are common to human nature and to all human collectivities. The victory of one side (the Allies) would keep the path open for the evolutionary forces; the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degrade it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished. That is the whole question and all other considerations are either irrelevant or of a minor importance. The Allies at least stand for human values, though they may often have acted against their own best ideals (human beings always do that); Hitler stands for diabolical values or for human values exaggerated

in the wrong way until they become diabolical (e.g. the "virtues" of the *Herrenvolk*, the master race). That does not make the English or Americans nations of spotless angels nor the Germans a wicked and sinful race, but as an indicator it has a decisive importance.

2 September 1943" (35: 211-16)

Support to the Allies

"Even if I knew that the Allies (I am speaking of the "big" nations, America, Britain, China) would misuse their victory or bungle the peace or partially at least spoil the opportunities opened to the human world by that victory, I would still put my force behind them. At any rate, things could not be one hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler. The ways of the Lord would still be open – to keep them open is what matters. Let us stick to the real issue and leave for a later time all side-issues and minor issues or hypothetical problems that would cloud the one all-important and tragic issue before us.

2 September 1943" (35: 219)

The Present Human Civilisation

"All that [*answers to various questions*] is however another matter than the question about the present human civilisation. It is not this which has to be saved; it is the world that has to be saved, and that will surely be done, though it may not be so easily or so soon as some wish or imagine or in the way that they imagine. The present civilisation must surely change, but whether by a destruction or a new construction on the basis of a greater truth, is the issue. The Mother has left the question hanging and I can only do the same. After all, the wise man, unless he is a prophet or the Director of the Madras Astrological Bureau, must often be content to take the Asquithian position. Neither optimism nor pessimism is the truth, they are only modes of the mind or moods of the temperament. Let us then, without either excessive optimism or excessive pessimism, "wait and see". 2 September 1945" (35: 221)

Supraphysical Experiences and Powers

"I suppose I have had myself an even more completely European education than you and I have had too my period of agnostic denial, but from the moment I looked at these things I could never take the attitude of doubt and disbelief which was for so long fashionable in Europe. Abnormal, otherwise supraphysical experiences and powers, occult or Yogic, have always seemed to me something perfectly natural and credible. Consciousness in its very nature could not be limited by the ordinary physical human-animal consciousness; it must have other ranges. Yogic or occult powers are no more supernatural or incredible than is supernatural or incredible the power to write a great poem

or compose great music. Few people can do it, as things are, – not even one in a million; for poetry and music come from the inner being and to write or to compose true and great things one has to have the passage clear between the outer mind and something in the inner being. That is why you got the poetic power as soon as you began Yoga – Yoga-force made the passage clear. It is the same with Yogic consciousness and its powers; the thing is to get the passage clear, – for they are already there within you. Of course the first thing is to believe, aspire and, with the true urge within, make the endeavour.

2 September 1931" (35: 227-28)

Absolute Generalisations not Believable in the Spiritual Field

"In an article Krishnaprem says that meditation can't be fruitful for those who have not achieved a high degree of inner development and purification.

I do not know what Krishnaprem said or in which article, I do not have it with me. But if the statement is that nobody can have a successful meditation or realise anything till he is pure and perfect, I fail to follow it; it contradicts my own experience. I have always had realisation by meditation first and the purification started afterwards as a result. I have seen many get important, even fundamental realisations by meditation who could not be said to have a

great inner development. Are all Yogis who have meditated to effect and had great realisations in their inner consciousness perfect in their nature? It does not look like it to me. I am unable to believe in absolute generalisations in this field, because the development of spiritual consciousness is an exceedingly vast and complex affair in which all sorts of things can happen and one might almost say that for each man it is different according to his nature and that the one thing that is essential is the inner call and aspiration and the perseverance to follow always after it no matter how long it takes or what are the difficulties or impediments – because nothing else will satisfy the soul within us.

17 May 1936" (35: 229-30)

Spiritual Experience – The Logic of Its Coming Exceeds Reason

"…Upanishad says of the 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 the Nature.

I could illustrate my meaning more concretely from my own first experience of the Self, long before I knew even what Yoga was or that there was such a thing, at a time when I had no religious feeling, no wish for spiritual knowledge, no aspiration beyond the mind, only a contented agnosticism and the impulse towards poetry and politics. But it would be too long a story, so I do not tell it here. 29 October 1935" (35: 231-32)

"…My own life and my Yoga have always been, since my coming to India, both this-worldly and other-worldly without any exclusiveness on either side. All human interests are, I suppose, this-worldly and most of them have entered into my mental field and some, like politics, into my life, but at the same time, since I set foot on Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and intimate bearing on it, such as a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time I found myself entering supraphysical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane, so I could make no sharp divorce or irreconcilable opposition between what I have called the two ends of existence and all that lies between them. For me all is the Brahman and I find the Divine everywhere. Everyone has the right to throw away this-worldliness and choose other-worldliness only and if he finds peace by that choice he is greatly blessed. I, personally, have not found it necessary to do this in order to have peace. In my Yoga also I found myself moved to include both worlds in my purview, the spiritual and the material, and to try to establish the divine Consciousness and the divine Power in men's hearts and in earthly life, not for personal salvation only but for a life divine here. This seems to me as spiritual an aim as any and the fact of this life taking up earthly pursuits and earthly things into its scope cannot, I believe, tarnish its spirituality or alter its Indian character. This at least has always been my view and experience of the reality and nature of the world and things and the Divine: it seemed to me as nearly as possible the integral truth about them and I have therefore spoken of the pursuit of it as the integral Yoga. Everyone is, of course, free to reject and disbelieve in this kind of integrality or to believe in the spiritual necessity of an entire other-worldliness excluding any kind of this-worldliness altogether, but that would make the exercise of my Yoga impossible. My Yoga can include indeed a full experience of the other worlds, the plane of the supreme Spirit and the other planes in between and their possible effects upon our life and material world; but it will be quite possible to insist only on the realisation of the supreme Being or Ishwara even in one aspect, Shiva, Krishna as Lord of the world and Master of ourselves and our works or else the universal Sachchidananda, and attain to the essential results of this Yoga and afterwards to proceed from them to the integral results if one accepted the ideal of the divine life and this material world conquered by the Spirit. It is this view and experience of things and of the truth of existence that enabled me to write *The Life Divine* and *Savitri*. The realisation of the Supreme, the Ishwara, is certainly the essential thing; but to approach him with love and devotion and bhakti, to serve him with one's works and to know him, not necessarily by the intellectual cognition, but in a spiritual experience, is also essential in the path of the integral Yoga. 28 April 1949" (35: 233-35)

Occult Faculty

> "If seeing the Divine depended on the developed occult faculty, how do you explain people's seeing Ram, Krishna, Shiva, etc. in you at Darshan? – I mean by people who have apparently no such faculty. We've heard about Krishna presenting himself before small boys, taking them to school, etc. – fables?

With many people the faculty of this kind of occult vision is the first to develop when they begin sadhana. With others it is there naturally or comes on occasions without any practice of Yoga. But with people who live mainly in the intellect (a few excepted) this faculty is not usually there by nature and most have much difficulty in developing it. It was so even with me.

30 July 1935" (35: 236)

Sri Aurobindo's Practice of Pranayama

"By the way what is this story about my four or five hours' concentration a day for several years before anything came down? Such a thing never happened, if by concentration you mean laborious meditation. What I did was four or five hours a day pranayam – which is quite another matter. And what flow do you speak of? The flow of poetry came down while I was doing pranayam, not some years afterwards. If it is the flow of experiences, that did come after some years, but after I had stopped the pranayam for a long time and was doing nothing and did not know what to do or where to turn once all my efforts had failed. And it came as a result not of years of pranayam or concentration, but in a ridiculously easy way, by the grace either of a temporary guru (but it wasn't that, for he was himself bewildered by it) or by the grace of the eternal Brahman and afterwards by the grace of Mahakali and Krishna. So don't try to turn me into an argument against the Divine; that attempt will be perfectly ineffective. 20 January 1936" (35: 237)

Beginning of the Practice of Yoga

"How did your intellect become so powerful even before you started Yoga?

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

13 November 1936" (35: 238)

"It is not that there is anything peculiar to you in these difficulties; every sadhaka entering this Way has to get over similar impediments. It took me four years of inner striving to find a real Way, even though the Divine help was with me all the time, and even then it seemed to come by an accident; and it took me ten more years of intense Yoga under a supreme inner guidance to find *the* Way – and that was because I had my past and the world's Past to assimilate and overpass before I could find and found the future.

5 May 1932

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I think you have made too much play with my phrase "an accident" [*in the preceding letter*], ignoring the important qualification, "it *seemed* to come by an accident". After four years of *prāṇāyāma* and other practices on my own, with no other result than an increased health and energy, some psycho-physical phenomena, a great outflow of poetic creation, a limited power of subtle sight (luminous patterns and figures etc.) mostly with the waking eye, I had a complete arrest and was at a loss. At this juncture I was induced to meet a man without fame whom I did not know, a bhakta with a limited mind but some experience and evocative power. We sat together and I followed with an absolute fidelity what he instructed me to do, not myself in the least understanding where he was leading me or where I was myself going. The first result was a series of tremendously powerful experiences and radical changes of consciousness which he never intended – for they were Adwaitic and Vedantic and he was against Adwaita Vedanta – and which were quite contrary to my own ideas, for they made me see with a stupendous intensity the world as a cinematographic play of vacant forms in the impersonal universality of the Absolute Brahman. The final upshot was that he was made by a Voice within him to hand me over to the Divine within me enjoining an absolute surrender to its will, a principle or rather a seed-force to which I kept unswervingly and increasingly till it led me through all the mazes of an incalculable Yogic development bound by no single rule or system or dogma or Shastra to where and what I am now and towards what shall be hereafter. Yet he understood so little what he was doing that when he met me a month or two later, he was alarmed, tried to undo what he had done and told me that it was not the Divine but the Devil that had got hold of me. Does not all that justify my phrase "it seemed to come by an accident"? But my meaning is that the ways of the Divine are not like that of the human mind or according to our patterns and it is impossible to judge them or to lay down for Him what He shall or shall not do, for the Divine knows better than we do. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and bhakti seem to me to be at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender. I do not see how without them there can be *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti* (one-pointed adoration).

7 May 1932" (35: 239-40)

Guru's Human Defects – No Hindrance in the Sadhana

"It is not the human defects of the Guru that can stand in the way when there is the psychic opening, confidence and surrender. The Guru is the channel or the representative or the manifestation of the Divine, according to the measure of his personality or his attainment; but whatever he is, it is to the Divine that one opens in opening to him, and if something is determined by the power of the channel, more is determined by the inherent and intrinsic attitude of the receiving consciousness, an element that comes out in the surface mind as simple trust or direct unconditional self-giving, and once that is there, the essential things can be gained even from one who seems to others than the disciple an inferior spiritual source and the rest will grow up in the sadhak of itself by the grace of the Divine, even if the human being in the Guru cannot give it. It is this that Krishnaprem appears to have done perhaps from the first; but in most nowadays this attitude seems to come with difficulty, after

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

23 March 1932" (35: 242)

Possibility and Indispensability of Mental Control and Mastery over One's Mind

"To reject doubts means control of one's thoughts – very certainly so. But the control of one's thoughts is as necessary as the control of one's vital desires and passions or the control of the movements of one's body – for the Yoga, and not for the Yoga only. One cannot be a fully developed mental being even, if one has not control of the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master, – the mental Purusha, *manomaya puruṣa*, *sākṣī*, *anumantā*, *īśvara*. It is no more proper for the mental being to be the tennis ball of unruly and uncontrollable thoughts than to be a rudderless ship in the storm of the desires and passions or a slave of either the inertia or the impulses of the body. I know it is more difficult because man being primarily a creature of mental Prakriti identifies himself with the movements of his mind and cannot at once dissociate himself and stand free from the swirl and eddies of the mind whirlpool. It is comparatively easy for him to put a control on his body, at least a certain part of its movements: it is less easy but still very possible after a struggle to put a mental control on his vital impulsions and desires; but to sit, like the Tantrik Yogi on the river, above the whirlpool of his thoughts is less facile. Nevertheless it can be done; all developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *svārājya*.

The Yogi goes still farther; he is not only a master there, but even while in mind in a way, he gets out of it, as it were, and stands above or quite back from it and free. For him the image of the factory of thoughts is no longer quite valid; for he sees that thoughts come from outside, from the universal Mind or universal Nature, sometimes formed and distinct, sometimes unformed and then they are given shape somewhere in us. The principal business of our mind is either a response of acceptance or refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the environing Nature- Force. It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*; before they can enter throw them away from you till your mind is capable of entire silence." I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think of either questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw a thought and then another thought coming in a concrete way

from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought or a labourer in a thought-factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free too to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought empire.

I mention this only to emphasise that the possibilities of the mental being are not limited and that it can be the free Witness and Master in its own house. It is not to say that everybody can do it in the way I did and with the same rapidity of the decisive movement (for of course the later fullest development of this new untrammelled mental Power took time, many years); but a progressive freedom and mastery over one's mind is perfectly within the possibilities of anyone who has the faith and will to undertake it.

5 August 1932" (35: 242-44)

Nirvana and Mayavada

"About Nirvana:

When I wrote in the *Arya*, I was setting forth an overmind view of things to the mind and putting it in mental terms, that was why I had sometimes to use logic. For in such a work – mediating between the intellect and the supra-intellectual – logic has a place, though it cannot have the chief place it occupies in purely mental philosophies. The Mayavadin himself labours to establish his point of view or his experience by a rigorous logical reasoning. Only, when it comes to an explanation of Maya he, like the scientist dealing with Nature, can do no more than arrange and organise his ideas of the process of this universal mystification; he cannot explain how or why his illusionary mystifying Maya came into existence. He can only say, "Well, but it is there."

Of course, it is there. But the question is, first, "What is it? is it really an illusionary Power and nothing else, or is the Mayavadin's idea of it a mistaken first view, a mental imperfect reading, even perhaps itself an illusion?" And next, "Is illusion the sole or the highest Power which the Divine Consciousness or Superconsciousness possesses?" The Absolute is an absolute Truth free from Maya, otherwise liberation would not be possible. Has then the supreme and absolute Truth no other active Power than a power of falsehood and with it, no doubt, for the two go together, a power of dissolving or disowning the falsehood, – which is yet there for ever? I suggested that this sounded a little queer. But queer or not, if it is so, it is so – for as you point out, the Ineffable cannot be subjected to the laws of logic.

But who is to decide whether it is so? You will say, those who get there. But get where? To the Perfect and the Highest, *pūṇaṁ param*. Is the Mayavadin's featureless Brahman that Perfect, that Complete – is it the very Highest? Is there not or can there not be a higher than that highest, *parātparam*? That is not a question of logic, it is a question of spiritual fact, of a supreme and complete experience. The solution of the matter must rest not upon logic, but upon a growing, ever heightening, widening spiritual experience – an experience which must of course include or have passed through that of Nirvana and Maya, otherwise it would not be complete and would have no decisive value.

Now to reach Nirvana was the first radical result of my own Yoga. It threw me suddenly into a condition above and without thought, unstained by any mental or vital movement; there was no ego, no real world – only when one looked through the immobile senses, something perceived or bore upon its sheer silence a world of empty forms, materialised shadows without true substance. There was no One or many even, only just absolutely That, featureless, relationless, sheer, indescribable, unthinkable, absolute, yet supremely real and solely real. This was no mental realisation nor something glimpsed somewhere above, – no abstraction – it was positive, the only positive reality – although

not a spatial physical world, pervading, occupying or rather flooding and drowning this semblance of a physical world, leaving no room or space for any reality but itself, allowing nothing else to seem at all actual, positive or substantial. I cannot say there was anything exhilarating or rapturous in the experience, as it then came to me, – the ineffable Ananda I had years afterwards, – but what it brought was an inexpressible Peace, a stupendous silence, an infinity of release and freedom. I lived in that Nirvana day and night before it began to admit other things into itself or modify itself at all, and the inner heart of experience, a constant memory of it and its power to return remained until in the end it began to disappear into a greater Superconsciousness from above. But meanwhile realisation added itself to realisation and fused itself with this original experience. At an early stage the aspect of an illusionary world gave place to one in which illusion* is only a small surface phenomenon with an immense Divine Reality behind it and a supreme Divine Reality above it and an intense Divine Reality in the heart of everything that had seemed at first only a cinematic shape or shadow. And this was no reimprisonment in the senses, no diminution or fall from supreme experience, it came rather as a constant heightening and widening of the Truth; it was the spirit that saw objects, not the senses, and the Peace, the Silence, the freedom in Infinity remained always with the world or all worlds only as a continuous incident in the timeless eternity of the Divine.

Now that is the whole trouble in my approach to Mayavada. Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, a first step towards the complete thing, not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale. It came unasked, unsought for, though quite welcome. I had no least idea about it before, no aspiration towards it, in fact my aspiration was towards just the opposite, spiritual power to help the world and do my work in it, yet it came – without even a "May I come in" or a "By your leave". It just happened and settled in as if for all eternity or as if it had been really there always. And then it slowly grew into something not less but greater than its first self! How then could I accept Mayavada or persuade myself to pit against the Truth imposed on me from above the logic of Shankara?

But I do not insist on everybody passing through my experience or following the Truth that is its consequence. I have no objection to anybody accepting Mayavada as his soul's truth or his mind's truth or their way out of the cosmic difficulty. I object to it only if somebody tries to push it down my throat or the world's throat as the sole possible, satisfying and all comprehensive

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* *In fact it is not an illusion in the sense of an imposition of something baseless and unreal on the consciousness, but a misinterpretation by the conscious mind and sense and a falsifying misuse of manifested existence.*

explanation of things. For it is not that at all. There are many other possible explanations; it is not at all satisfactory, for in the end it explains nothing; and it is – and must be unless it departs from its own logic – all-exclusive, not in the least all-comprehensive. But that does not matter. A theory may be wrong or at least one-sided and imperfect and yet extremely practical and useful. That has been amply shown by the history of science. In fact a theory whether philosophical or scientific is nothing else than a support for the mind, a practical device to help it to deal with its object, a staff to uphold it and make it walk more confidently and get along on its difficult journey. The very exclusiveness and one-sidedness of the Mayavada make it a strong staff or a forceful stimulus for a spiritual endeavour which means to be one-sided, radical and exclusive. It supports the effort of the Mind to get away from itself and from Life by a short cut into superconscience. Or rather it is the Purusha in Mind that wants to get away from the limitations of Mind and Life into the superconscient Infinite. Theoretically, the most radical way for that is for the mind to deny all its perceptions and all the preoccupations of the vital and see and treat them as illusions. Practically, when the mind draws back from itself, it enters easily into a relationless peace in which nothing matters – for in its absoluteness there are no mental or vital values – and from which the mind can rapidly move towards that great short cut to the Superconscient, mindless trance, *suṣupti*. In proportion to the thoroughness of that movement all the perceptions it had once accepted become unreal to it – illusion, Maya. It is on its road towards immergence.

Mayavada, therefore, with its sole stress on Nirvana, quite apart from its defects as a mental theory of things, serves a great spiritual end and, as a path, can lead very high and far. Even, if the Mind were the last word and there were nothing beyond it except the pure Spirit, I would not be averse to accepting it as the only way out. For what the mind with its perceptions and the vital with its desires have made of life in this world, is a very bad mess, and if there were nothing better to be hoped for, the shortest cut to an exit would be the best. But my experience is that there is something beyond Mind; Mind is not the last word here of the Spirit. Mind is an ignorance-consciousness and its perceptions cannot be anything else than either false, mixed or imperfect – even when "true", a partial reflection of the Truth and not the very body of Truth herself. But there is a Truth- Consciousness, not static only and self-introspective, but also dynamic and creative, and I prefer to get at that and see what it says about things and can do rather than take the short cut away from things offered as its own end by the Ignorance.

14 January 1934" (35: 248-51)

Sri Aurobindo on the Quietistic Yogas

"I believe I have as many hours of hard external work to do as almost anyone in the Asram and I am not aware that I have any leisure or spend even the very short time I have for concentration in a blissful quietism communing with the silent Brahman. Even my concentration is of the nature of action and it is not an airy quietistic contemplation as your informants seem to imagine.

I may add that I have not spent my life shouting down the quietistic ideal and sadhana without knowing why they followed it. All the experiences that the quietistic sadhana can give, I have had, the realisation of the featureless Parabrahman, Maya, Sunya, the illusoriness of the world, the Akshara Purusha. I know also perfectly well why they turned away from the world and have gone through all the million difficulties which they did not care to face. None of the difficulties of which you enumerate one or two are strange to me – only I did not put the blame of them on anybody or on the Yoga and I overcame them.

Anybody can do the quietistic Yoga, who wants to do it. But if anyone imagines that they [*the quietistic yogas*] are easy and that these difficulties do not occur there or that the sadhakas of these paths are all of them perfected saints free from the human passions and defects which you see here among the sadhakas, he is labouring under a great delusion. No path of Yoga is easy and to imagine that by leaving the world and plunging inside oneself one automatically shuffles off the vital and external nature is an illusion. If I ask you to develop equanimity and egolessness by work done with opening to the Divine, it is because it is so that I did it and it is so that it can best be done and not by retiring into oneself and shutting oneself away from all that can disturb equanimity and excite the ego. As for concentration and perfection of the being and the finding of the inner self, I did as much of it walking in the streets of Calcutta to my work or in dealing with men during my work as alone and in solitude." (35: 261-62)

Pain and Pleasure – Conventions of the Senses

"As for divine rapture, a knock on head or foot or elsewhere *can* be received with the physical Ananda of pain or pain + Ananda or pure physical Ananda – for I have often, quite involuntarily, made the experiment myself and passed with honours. It began, by the way, as far back as in Alipur jail when I got bitten in my cell by some very red and ferocious looking warrior ants and found to my surprise that pain and pleasure are conventions of our senses. …

13 February 1932" (35: 263)

The Principle of Levitation

> "You told me [*in a private interview*]: "I haven't had the experience of levitation itself but an experience I had could not have been true if there was no levitation." Could you kindly tell me what the experience was if, that is, it is tellable. I remember *X* once told me that it was at Alipur you found your body in equilibrium in a lifted angle. Is that it?

There were other things but not at present tellable! You can put it like this. "I take levitation as an acceptable idea, because I have had myself experience of the natural energies which if developed would bring it about and also physical experiences which would not have been possible if the principle of levitation were untrue." 11 March 1943" (35: 263)

Opening to Painting

"The capacity for it can come with the inner knowledge. E.g. I understood nothing about painting before I did Yoga. A moment's illumination in Alipur jail opened my vision and since then I have understood with the intuitive perception and vision. I do not know the technique of course but I can catch it at once if anybody with knowledge speaks of it. That would have been impossible to me before. 29 December 1934

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Don't be desperate about your incapacity as a connoisseur of painting. I was worse in this respect, knew something about sculpture, but blind to painting. Suddenly one day in the Alipur jail, while meditating saw some "pictures" on the wall of the cell and lo and behold, the artistic eye in me opened and I knew all about painting except of course the more material side of the technique. I don't always know how to express though, because I lack the knowledge of the proper expressions, but that does not stand in the way of a keen and understanding appreciation. So, there you are. All things are possible.

25 July 1936" (35: 264)

Contact with Vivekananda

"I was wondering if you had seen or met Vivekananda somewhere.

No, not in the body. My contact with him was in the jail when he was speaking with me for about 15 days, giving me the first insight into the Intuition plane (not the intuitive mind which is mental and not supramental) as the first opening to Supermind. 21 October 1934

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Sri Aurobindo says that Vivekananda came to him not in a visible form but as a presence which was with him for a fortnight during which V. spoke certain things about the processes of the higher Truth-Consciousness.

21 December 1938" (35: 264-65)

Sadhana before the Mother's Coming

"Before the Mother came all were living in the mind with only some mental realisations and experiences. The vital and everything else were unregenerated and the psychic behind the veil. I am not aware that anyone of them at that time entered the cosmic consciousness. At that time I was still seeking my way for the transformation and the passage to the supramental (all the part of the Yoga that goes beyond the ordinary Vedanta) and acted very much on a principle of *laissez faire* with the few sadhaks who were there. *X* is one of those who have never ceased regretting that *laissez faire* – he regrets the vital liberty and absence of discipline they then had. 27 July 1934" (35: 269)

The Significance of the 24th November

> "*X* seems to have declared on that day that you had conquered sleep, food, disease and death. On what authority did she proclaim it then?

I am not aware of this gorgeous proclamation. What was said was that the Divine (Krishna or the Divine Presence or whatever you like) had come down into the material. It was also proclaimed that I was retiring – obviously to work things out. If all that was achieved on the 24th [November] 1926, what on earth remained to work out, and if the Supramental was there, for what blazing purpose did I need to retire? Besides are these things achieved in a single day? If *X* said anything like that she must have been in a prophetic mood and seen the future in the present! 29 August 1935" (35: 271)

> "Some say November 24th is a day of victory. By that some mean that the Supermind (supramental consciousness) descended into the physical consciousness of Sri Aurobindo. Others say it was the coming down of Krishna into the physical consciousness. If it was the descent of Krishna, does that mean the descent of the supramental light?

Krishna is not the supramental light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya, he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards his Ananda.

2 November 1935" (35: 272)

The Creation Postponed

"…Things are no longer what they were before, when you were last here. At that time the Mother was bringing down a rapid (collective as well as individual) transformation and creation into the mental, vital and physical planes from above, by the power of a supramental Light and Force acting through the higher illumined mind and the psychic being. For that purpose she was calling down beings of a higher plane (like the one of which you speak) as an indispensable aid in that process. All went on well enough so long as the work was on the mental, psychic and higher vital levels. But as soon as it began in the lower vital, it appeared at once that the lower vital and physical nature of human beings (at least of those here) was too small, obscure and full of rebellious impurities to admit of so great a working. One after another failed in the test and you were among the first to fall. The creation had to be postponed, the process changed, and, instead of doing all from above, it became necessary to come down into the lower vital and material nature for a long, slow, patient and difficult work of opening and change.

27 September 1929" (35: 275)

The Supermind – After Greater Truth

" "A far greater Truth" has nothing to do with Avatarhood or anything of the kind. I meant by it the descent of the supramental Consciousness upon earth; all truths below the supramental (even that of the highest spiritual on the mental plane, which is the highest that has yet manifested) are either partial or relative or otherwise deficient and unable to transform the earthly life, they can only at most modify and influence it. The supermind is the last Truth-consciousness of which the ancient seers spoke; there have been glimpses of it till now, sometimes an indirect influence or pressure, but it has not been brought down into the consciousness of the earth and fixed there. To bring it down is the aim of our Yoga. 25 April 1930" (35: 277)

The Vedic Rishis and the Supramental

"As to *X*'s statement I do not catch what he means by *previously*, unless he means that the Vedic Rishis attained to the supermind for the Earth. But that is precisely what they failed to do or perhaps did not even attempt. They tried to rise individually to the supramental plane, but they did not bring it down and make it a permanent part of the earth consciousness. Even there are verses of the Upanishad in which it is hinted that it is impossible to pass through the gates of the Sun (the symbol of Supermind) and yet retain an earthly body. It was because of this failure that the spiritual effort of India culminated in Mayavada. Our Yoga is a double movement of ascent and descent; one rises to higher and higher levels of consciousness, but at the same time one brings down their power not only into mind and life, but in the end even into the body. And the highest of these levels, the one at which it aims is the supermind. Only when that can be brought down is a divine transformation possible in the earth consciousness. 5 May 1930" (35: 278)

The Supramental Descent and Its Consequences

> "When I hear people talking about the supramental descent it makes me somewhat sceptical. They expect that when the descent happens everything will soon be spiritualised and even in the most outward political life all that is now wrong will immediately be set right. Such expectations create a great curiosity and flutter.

All that is absurd. The descent of the supramental means only that the Power will be there in the earth consciousness as a living force just as the thinking mental and the higher mental are already there. But an animal cannot take advantage of the presence of the thinking mental Power or an undeveloped man of the presence of the higher mental Power – so too everybody will not be able to take advantage of the presence of the supramental Power. I have also often enough said that it will be at first for the few, not for the whole earth, – only there will be a growing influence of it on the earth life.

15 December 1934" (35: 280)

Sri Aurobindo's Spirit in Seeking the Supermind

"It is not for personal greatness that I am seeking to bring down the supermind. I care nothing for greatness or littleness in the human sense. I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth consciousness – I see it above and know what it is – I feel it over gleaming my consciousness from above and I am seeking to make it possible for it to take up the whole being into its own native power, instead of the nature of man continuing to remain in half-light, half-darkness. I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth-evolution. If greater men than myself have not had this vision and this ideal before them, that is no reason why I should not

follow my Truth-sense and Truth-vision. If human reason regards me as a fool for trying to do what Krishna did not try, I do not in the least care. There is no question of *C* or *D* or anybody else in that. It is a question between the Divine and myself – whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that down or open the way for its descent or at least make it more possible or not. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption, – I go on till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the supermind, no hunting for greatness for myself or others. (This is not to be circulated.) 10 February 1935" (35: 281-82)

"I have no intention of achieving the supramental for myself only – I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the supramental to the earth consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile. But it does not follow either that if or when I become supramental, everybody will become supramental. Others can so become who are ready for it, when they are ready for it – though of course the achievement in myself will be to

them a great help towards it. It is therefore quite legitimate to have the aspiration for it – provided (1) one does not make too personal or egoistic an affair of it turning it into a Nietzschean or other ambition to be a superman, (2) one is ready to undergo the conditions and stages needed for the achievement, (3) one is sincere and regards it as part of the seeking for the Divine and a consequent culmination of the divine Will in one and insists on no more than the fulfilment of that Will whatever it may be, psychisation, spiritualisation or supramentalisation. It should be regarded as the fulfilment of God's working in the world, not as a personal chance or achievement.

20 April 1935" (35: 283-84)

The Language of the Mind and a Supramental Language

"…I use the language of the mind because there is no other which human beings can understand, – even though most of them understand it badly. If I were to use a supramental language like Joyce, you would not even have the illusion of understanding it; so, not being an Irishman, I don't make the attempt. But of course anyone who wants to change earth-nature must first accept it in order to change it. To quote from an unpublished poem of my own:

He who would bring the heavens here
Must descend himself into clay
And the burden of earthly nature bear
And tread the dolorous way.*

23 August 1935" (35: 284)

* Lines from "A God's Labour", in *Collected Poems*, volume 2 of *THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO*, p. 534. – Ed.

The Supramental Yoga and Humanity

"I can say little about the method he [*Krishnaprem*] speaks of for getting rid of dead concepts. Each mind has its own way of moving. My own has been a sort of readjustment or rectification of positions and I should rather call it discrimination accompanied by a rearrangement of intuitions. At one time I had given much too big a place to "humanity" in my scheme of things with a number of ideas attached to that exaggeration which needed to be put right. But the change did not come by doubt about what I had conceived before, but by a new light on things in which "humanity" automatically stepped down and got into its right place and all the rest rearranged itself in consequence. But all that is probably because I am constitutionally lazy (in spite of my present feats of correspondence) and prefer the easiest and most automatic method possible. I have a suspicion however that Krishnaprem's method is essentially the same as mine, only he does it in a more diligent and conscientious spirit. For his remark about the concepts as flags and not the means of advance seems to indicate that. 26 October 1934" (35: 289)

"I certainly hope to bring down an effective power of the Truth which will replace eventually the Falsehood that has governed the minds and hearts of men for so long. The liberation of a few individuals is a thing that is always possible and has always been done – but, to my seeing, it cannot be the sole aim of existence. Whatever the struggles and sufferings and blunders of humanity, there is still in it an urge towards the Light, an impulse towards a greater Truth not only of the soul but the life. If it has not been done yet, it is surely because those who reached the Light and the greater Truth, rested there and saw in it more a means of escape for the soul than a means of transformation for the life. The liberation of the spirit is necessary, nothing can be done without it – but the transformation is also possible.

26 January 1935" (35: 289-90)

> "I am disgusted with the world and would have preferred to go away from it to some subtler existence had it not been for your programme of changing the world and bringing some better things into it. But does the world want to change and buy your wares at the heavy cost of giving up all it is and has and does?

It wants and it does not want something that it has not got. All that the supramental could give, the inner mind of the world would like to have, but its outer mind, its vital and physical do not like to pay the price. But after all I am not trying to change the world all at once but only to bring down centrally something into it it has not yet, a new consciousness and power.

31 July 1935" (35: 290)

"It seems that wherever one turns one sees the same humanity – with all its ignorance and incapacity.

Of course. That's what I have been telling you all along. It is not without reason that I am eager to see something better in this well-meaning but woe-begone planet. 3 August 1935" (35: 290)

The Conquest of Death

> "In one of your talks in the early days you seem to have acclaimed yourself as immortal except under three conditions – accident, poison or *icchā mṛtyu*.

It must have been a joke taken as a self-acclamation. Or perhaps what I said was that I have the power to overcome illness, but accident and poison and the I.M. still remain as possible means of death. Of course, the Mother and myself have hundreds of times thrown back the forces of illness and death by a slight concentration of force or even a use of will merely.

> Another conviction which all of us share is that you could never have any illness; but your eye problem, due to whatever cause, has shattered it.

It is long since I have had anything but slight fragments of illness – (e.g. sneezes, occasional twitches of rheumatism or neuralgia: but the last is mostly now outside the body and does not penetrate) – with the exception of the eye and the throat (only one kind of cough though, the others can't come) which are still vulnerable points. Ah yes, there is also prickly-heat; but that has diminished to almost nothing these last years. There is sometimes an attempt at headache, but it remains above the head, tries to get in and then recedes. Giddiness also the same. I don't just now remember anything else. Those are the facts about "having no illness". As for the conclusion, well, you can make a medical one or a Yogic one according to your state of knowledge.

26 March 1935" (35: 295-96)

State of the Yogis in Samadhi

> "I also read that some yogis like "the sage who never speaks" remain in samadhi day and night, coming out of it only occasionally for food. What do they do in such a long samadhi, since their goal is not so high?

Do? why should he want to do anything if he was in the eternal peace or Ananda or union with the Divine? If a man is spiritual and has gone beyond the vital and mind, he does not need to be always "doing" something. The self or spirit has the joy of its own existence. It is free to do nothing and free to do everything – but not because it is bound to action and unable to exist without it. 13 April 1936" (35: 303)

Sri Aurobindo's Experience of Positive Mind, Doubts, Faith and the Certainty of the Supramental Descent

"I must remind you that I have been an intellectual myself and no stranger to doubts – both the Mother and myself have had one side of the mind as positive and as insistent on practical results and more so than any Russell can be. We could never have been contented with the shining ideas and phrases which a Rolland or another takes for gold coin of Truth. We know well what is the difference between a subjective experience and a dynamic outward-going and realising Force. So although we have faith – and who ever did anything great in the world without having faith in his mission or the Truth at work behind him? – we do not found ourselves on faith alone but on a great ground of knowledge which we have been developing and testing all our lives. I think I can say that I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane. That is why I am not alarmed by the aspect of the world around me or disconcerted by the often successful fury of the adverse Forces who increase in their rage as the Light comes nearer and nearer down to the field of earth and Matter.

If I believe in the probability and not only the possibility, if I feel practically certain of the supramental descent – I do not fix a date, – it is because I have my grounds for the belief, not merely a faith in the air. I *know* that the supramental descent is inevitable – l have faith in view of my experience that the time can be and should be now and not in a later age.

But even if I knew it to be for a later time, I would not swerve from my path or be discouraged or flag in my labour. Formerly I might have been, but not now after all the path I have traversed. When one is sure of the Truth, or even when one believes the thing one pursues to be the only possible solution, one does not stipulate for an immediate success, one travels towards the Light taking as well worth facing every risk of the adventure. Still, like you, it is now in this life that I insist on it and not in another or in the hereafter.

30 August 1932" (35: 322)

Sri Aurobindo's Experience of Faith and Doubt and Ups and Downs on the Way to the Heights

"As for faith, you write as if I had never had a doubt or any difficulty. I have had worse than any human mind can think of. It is not because I have ignored difficulties, but because I have seen them more clearly, experienced them on a larger scale than anyone living now or before me that, having faced and measured them, I am sure of the results of my work. Even if I still saw the chance that it might come to nothing (which is impossible), I should go on unperturbed, because I would still have done to the best of my power the work that I had to do and what is so done always counts in the economy of the universe. But why should I feel that all this may come to nothing when I see each step and where it is leading and every week and day – once it was

every year and month and hereafter it will be every day and hour – brings me so much nearer to my goal? In the way that one treads with the greater Light above, even every difficulty gives its help and has its value and the Night itself carries in it the burden of the light that has to be.

As for your own case, it comes to this that experiences come and stop, there are constant ups and downs, in times of recoil and depression no advance at all seems to have been made, there is as yet no certitude. So it was with me also, so it is with everyone, not with you alone. The way to the heights is always like that up to a certain point, but the ups and downs, the difficulties and obstacles are no proof that it is a chimera to aspire to the summits.

5 January 1933" (35: 323-24)

The Difficulties on the Way and their Logic

"I am afraid I cannot endorse your reading of the situation, at least so far as the Mother and myself and the prospects of the work are concerned. I can agree only that we have had a heavy time of it recently and that there has been a strong attack on the plane of the physical and material – but that (heavy attacks) is a thing we have been accustomed to for the last 20 years and it has never prevented us from making any necessary advance. I have never had any illusions about the path being comfortable and easy – I knew all along that the work could only be done if all the essential difficulties rose and were faced – so their rising cannot tire or dishearten me – whatever obstinacy there may be in the difficulties whether our own or in the sadhaks or in Nature. . . .

No, I am not tired or on the point of giving up. I have made inwardly steps in front in the last two or three months which had seemed impossible because of the obstinate resistance for years together and it is not an experience which pushes me to despair and give up. If there is much resistance on one side, there have been large gains on the other – all has not been a picture of sterile darkness. You yourself are kept back only by the demon of doubt which bangs on you each door as you are opening it – you have only to set about resolutely slaying the Rakshasa and the doors will open to you as they have done to many others who were held up by their own mind or vital nature. 12 January 1933" (35: 324-25)

The Overmind Principle and Its Working Giving Room to Adverse Forces

> "You wrote to me yesterday, "Now there is a sufficient descent of Light and Power." Does this show that the psychisation of the sadhaks is advancing?

Yes, there has been some progress in that respect and all progress in the psychic or spiritual consciousness of the sadhaks makes the descent more easy. But the main cause is that the Overmind principle which is the immediate secret support of the present earth-nature with all its limitations is more and more undergoing the pressure of the Supramental and letting through a greater Light and Power. For so long as the Overmind intervenes (the principle of the Overmind being a play of forces, each trying to realise itself as the Truth) the law of struggle remains and with it the opportunity for the adverse Forces.

10 November 1933" (35: 326)

The Possibility of Supramental Descent Makes the Adverse Forces More Eager and Active

"As the moment of the possibility of the supramental Descent grows nearer, these forces have become more eager to keep hold on the Asram atmosphere and break the sadhana of anyone they can touch. Their main aim is to get as many as possible to leave the Asram so that they may not share in the descent and so that the descent itself may be delayed and disturbed by a constant tempest in the atmosphere. That is why I put the notice suggesting that the sadhaks should not admit these forces and need not. To be on guard and admit no violent and irrational movements, to be calm and insistent in faith and self-opening to us is all that is needed.

15 November 1933" (35: 327)

The Possibility of the Descent of the Pure Existence

"It feels as if the Pure Existence is descending into the being. I can feel it manifesting – but then something asks how this can be possible, for the vital and the physical are not yet filled with it.

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

16 October 1934" (35: 329)

The Supramental Descent and the Mother's Working with the Divine Personalities and Powers

"When I wrote in my letter about the supermind and the obstinate resistance, I spoke of course of something I had already spoken of before. I did not mean that the resistance was of an unexpected character or had altered anything essential. But in its nature the descent is not something arbitrary and miraculous, but a rapid evolutionary process compressed into a few years which proceeds by taking up the present nature into its Light and pouring its Truth into the inferior planes. That cannot be done in the whole world at a time, but is done like all such processes first through selected Adharas and then on a wider scale. We have to do it through ourselves first and through the circle of sadhakas gathered around us in the terrestrial consciousness as typified here. If a few open, that is sufficient for the process to be possible. On the other hand if there is a general misunderstanding and resistance (not in all, but in many), that makes it difficult and the process more laborious, but it does not make it impossible. I was not suggesting that it has become impossible, but that if the circumstances are made unfavourable by our being unable to concentrate enough on this thing of capital importance and having too much work to do of an irrelevant kind, the descent was likely to take longer than it would do otherwise. Certainly, when the supramental does touch earth with a sufficient force to dig itself in into the earth consciousness, there will be no more chance of any success or survival for the Asuric Maya.

The rest that I spoke of about the human and the divine had to do with the intermediate period between before it is down. What I meant was that if the Mother were able to bring out the Divine Personalities and Powers into her body and physical being, as she was doing for several months without break some years ago, the brightest period in the history of the Asram, things would be much more easy and all these dangerous attacks that now take place would be dealt with rapidly and would in fact be impossible. In those days when the Mother was either receiving the sadhaks for meditation or otherwise working and concentrating all night and day without sleep and very irregular food, there was no ill-health and no fatigue in her and things were proceeding with a lightning swiftness. The power used was not that of the Supermind, but of the Overmind, but it was sufficient for what was being done. Afterwards because the lower vital and the physical of the sadhaks could not follow, the Mother had to push the Divine Personalities and Powers through which she was doing the action behind a veil and come down into the physical human level and act according to its conditions and that meant difficulty, struggle, illness, ignorance and inertia. All has been for long slow, difficult, almost sterile in appearance. Nevertheless our work was going on behind that appearance and now it is again becoming possible to go forward. But for the advance to be anything like general or swift in its process, the attitude of the

sadhaks, not of a few only, must change. They must cling less to the conditions and feelings of the external physical consciousness and open themselves to the true consciousness of the Yogin and sadhaka. If they did that, the inner eye would open and they would not be bewildered or alarmed if the Mother again manifested externally something of the Divine Personalities and Powers as she did before. They would not be asking her to be always on their level, but would be glad to be drawn swiftly or gradually up towards hers. The difficulties would be ten times less and a larger easier securer movement possible.

This was what I meant and I suppose I manifested some impatience at the slowness of so many to realise what is after all a logical conclusion from the very principle of our Yoga which is that of a transformation, all that is disharmonious in human nature being enlightened out of existence, all that

makes for harmony being changed into its divine equivalent, purer, greater, nobler, more beautiful and much being added which has been lacking to the human evolution. I meant that things could move more swiftly towards this if the sadhaks had a less ignorant attitude, but if they could not yet reach that, we had of course to go on anyhow until the supramental descent came down to the material level.

Finally, you must get rid of this gratuitous tendency to despair. The difficulty for you has been created by the indulgence given to this formation I speak of; that finally dismissed, the difficulty would disappear. Progress might be slow at first, but progress would come; it would quicken afterwards and, with the supramental force here, there would be for you as for others the full speed and certitude. 18 October 1934" (35: 330-32)

Ninety Percent of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's Energies Spent on Smoothing Things Down in the Ashram

"I have felt bound to explain so much [*about the behaviour of certain sadhaks*] though I would have preferred not to write about these things. I do hope you will throw all that behind you. I feel a great longing that the sadhaks should be free of all that. For so long as the present state of things continues with fires of this kind raging all around and the atmosphere in a turmoil, the work I am trying to do, certainly not for my own sake or for any personal reason, will always remain under the stroke of jeopardy and I do not know how the descent I am labouring for is to fulfil itself. In fact, the Mother and I have to give nine-tenths of our energy to smoothing down things, to keeping the sadhaks tolerably contented etc. etc. etc. One-tenth and in the Mother's case not even that can alone go to the real work; it is not enough. It is not surprising either that you should feel it difficult to get on in all this. But then why not push these things away from you and keep a clear field in you for the Divine? That, if everybody, or even a sufficient number could do it, would be the greatest help I could receive. 26 October 1934" (35: 333)

The Idea About the Bad Conditions Calling Down the Divine Intervention and the Certainty of the Advent of the Supermind

"I have already spoken about the bad condition of the world; the usual idea of the occultists about it is that the worse they are, the more is probable the coming of an intervention or a new revelation from above. The ordinary mind cannot know – it has either to believe or disbelieve or wait and see.

As to whether the Divine seriously means something to happen, I believe it is intended. I know with absolute certitude that the supramental is a truth and that its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable. The question is as to the when and the how. That also is decided and predestined from somewhere above; but it is here being fought out amid a rather grim clash of

conflicting forces. For in the terrestrial world the predetermined result is hidden and what we see is a whirl of possibilities and forces attempting to achieve something with the destiny of it all concealed from human eyes. This is however certain that a number of souls have been sent to see that it shall be now. That is the situation. My faith and will are for the now. I am speaking of course on the level of the human intelligence – mystically rationally, as one might put it. To say more would be going beyond that line. You don't want me to start prophesying, I suppose? As a rationalist, you can't.

25 December 1934" (35: 334)

The Necessity and the Meaning of the Sadhana Coming Down in the Physical

"When the sadhana is going on in the physical plane, is it necessary for all the sadhaks to come down into the physical consciousness, or only those who have much inertia and impurity in them, as in my case?

It is a little difficult to say whether all have to come down totally into the physical. The Mother and I had to do it because the work could not be otherwise done. We had tried to do it from above through the mind and higher vital, but it could not be because the sadhaks were not ready to follow – their lower vital and physical refused to share in what was coming down or else misused it and became full of exaggerated and violent reactions. Since

then the sadhana as a whole has come down along with us into the physical consciousness. Many have followed – some unluckily without sufficient preparation in the mind and vital, some holding on to the vital and mind and living still between the three, some totally but with a prepared mind and vital. The total descent into the physical is a very troublesome affair – it means a long and trying period of difficulty, for the physical is normally obscure, inert, impervious to the Light. It is a thing of habits, very largely a slave of the subconscient and its mechanical reactions. It is less open to violent attacks than the vital except in the way of illness and some other movements, but it is dull and dreary to have these – until the Light, the Peace, the Power, the Joy can

come down from above and fix themselves. We would have preferred to do all the hard work ourselves there and called others down only when an easier movement was established, but it did not prove possible.

I don't think it has anything to do with impurity. Only you came down a little too soon. At the moment it happened, the peace and silence of the Atman and the movement upward to realisation of the Self above the head in the higher consciousness were about to establish themselves. If that had been done first, it would have been less difficult. It means a great struggle against the inertia to get these things done – but you have only to persevere and done they will surely be. Then things will be much more easy for you.

31 December 1934" (35: 335-36)

Greater Difficulties in Sadhana on the Physical Plane

"It seems to take a lot more effort to free myself from sexual and other problems now than ever before. Even in the very beginning it was easier for me.

The greater difficulty is because the sadhana is now taking place directly on the physical plane, where the force of a habit or habitual movement once formed is very great. When the sadhana is taking place on the mental or vital plane, it is more easy to control or change, because the mind and vital are more plastic than the physical. But on the other hand if something is definitely gained on the physical plane, there is a more lasting and complete fulfilment than when it is on the mental or vital alone. 19 March 1935" (35: 337)

There is Process in Sadhana and not an Instantaneous Absolute Miracle

"How can it be possible – realisation in parts – in your case?

Why not? Always the idea that there must be an instantaneous absolute miracle or else nothing! What about process in things? You are ignorant of all that is between supreme Spirit and matter, it seems. You know nothing of the occult processes of mind, life and all the rest – so you can think only of miraculous divinity or else law of matter as known to Science. But for supramental Spirit to work itself out in matter it must go through a process of transforming the immediate mental, vital and other connections, must it not – so why should not the process be in parts? Immortality also can come by parts. First the mental being becomes immortal (not shed and dissolved after death), then the vital, while the physical comes only last. That is a possible evolution, recognised by occult science. 27 March 1935" (35: 338)

The Only Safegaurd Against Terrible Hostile Attacks

"I have heard that even *X* had a terrible attack recently. He almost left the Asram! *Y* wanted to commit suicide, and *Z* is in revolt!

There are only 2 or 3 in the Asram to whom this word "even" would apply. I won't mention their names less the devil should be tempted to try with them also. A solid mind, a solid nervous system and a steady psychic flame seem to be the only safeguard against "terrible attacks". 30 April 1935" (35: 340)

The Solution of the Problem of the Subconscient by Sri Aurobindo

> "Some time back you wrote to me: "Never has there been such an uprush of mud and brimstone as during the past few months. However the Caravan goes on and today there was some promise of better things." What about the uprush of mud? Has it settled down, and are people now floating in the flood of the Supramental?

It is still there, but personally I have become superior to it and am travelling forward like a flash of lightning, that is to say, zigzag, but fairly fast. Now I have got the hang of the whole hanged thing – like a very Einstein I have got the mathematical formula of the whole affair (unintelligible as in his case to anybody but myself) and am working it out figure by figure.

As for people, no! they are not floating in the supramental – some are floating in the higher mind, others rushing up into it and flopping down into the subconscient alternately, some swinging from heaven into hell and back into heaven, again back into hell ad infinitum, some are sticking fast contentedly or discontentedly in the mud, some are sitting in the mud and dreaming dreams and seeing visions, some have their legs in the mud and their head in the heavens, etc. etc., an infinity of combinations, while many are simply nowhere. But console yourself – these things, it seems, are inevitable in the process of great transformations. 16 August 1935" (35: 344)

"You say, "I have become superior to it and am travelling forward . . . fast," but you have been always superior and always travelling fast all your life.

[*Underlining "always superior and always travelling fast".*] Rubbish!

How is it going to affect us?

If my being able to solve the problem of the subconscient in the sadhana is of no importance, then of course it won't affect anybody. Otherwise it may.

17 August 1935" (35: 344)

> "Do tell me please if you are getting anything solid from this nebulous supramental. *X** tells me you have scaled and winged like lightning on its pinions. Have you really? Was it something like motion on a sort of marvellous Calm which seems *like* motion through some supramental jugglery of consciousness? Some enlightenment on this bewildering problem would be highly edifying even to the mentals and humans, you may be sure. Also, *Y* has to be gagged somehow. He talks of nothing but the supramental. And what am I to answer?

You have created your own "bewildering problem" by supplying your own data! There is nothing nebulous about the supramental, its action depends on the utmost precision possible. As for solidity, since I have got many solid things from much lower forces, I do not see why the highest ones should only give nebulosities. But that seems the human mind's position, only what is earthy is solid, what is high is misty and unreal – the worm is a reality, but the eagle is a vapour!

However, I have not told *X* that I am scaling and winging – on the contrary I am dealing with very hard practical facts. I only told him I had got the formula of solution for the difficulty that had been holding me up since last November and I am working it out.

To return to the supramental – the supramental is simply the direct self-existent Truth-Consciousness and the direct self-effective Truth-Power. There can therefore be no question of jugglery about it. What is not true is not supramental. As for calm and silence, there is no need of the supramental to get that. One can get it even on the level of Higher Mind which is the next above the human intelligence. I got these things in 1908, twenty-seven years ago and I can assure you they were solid enough and marvellous enough without any need of supramentality to make it more so! Again, a calm that "seems like motion" is a phenomenon of which I know nothing. A calm or silence which can support or produce action – that I know and that is what I have had – the proof is that out of an absolute silence of the mind I edited the *Bande Mataram* for four months and wrote 6½ volumes of the *Arya*, not to speak of all the letters and messages etc. etc. I have written since. If you say that writing is not an action or motion but only something that seems like it, a jugglery of the consciousness, – well, still out of that calm and silence I conducted a pretty strenuous political activity and have also taken my share in keeping up an Asram which has at least an appearance to the physical senses of being solid and material! If you deny that these things are material or solid (which of course metaphysically you can), then you land yourself plump into Shankara's illusionism, and there I will leave you.

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* The recipient of the letters of July and August 1935 on pages 343 – 45. – Ed.

You will say however that it is not the Supramental but at most the Overmind that helped me to these non-nebulous motions. But the Supermind is by definition a greater dynamic activity than mind or Overmind. I have said that what is not true is not supramental; I will add that what is ineffective is not supramental. And finally I will conclude by saying that I have not told *X* that I have taken possession of the supramental – I only admit to be very near to it or at least to its tail. But "very near" is – well, after all a relative phrase like all human phrases. 23 August 1935" (35: 345-47)

The Process of the Transformation of the Body Consciousness

"If the progress of the transformation of the body is so slow that it cannot keep pace with that of the higher parts, it seems that at any given time it would always be behind the higher parts. For example, when the higher parts are overmentalised the body would be just beginning to be intuitivised. In the same way, when the higher parts are supramentalised, the physical consciousness would be just beginning to receive the overmental influence. The body would always be behind unless one stopped at each stage in order to deal with the body at that level, and proceeded only when that work was finished.

That is hardly possible. The body consciousness is there and cannot be ignored, so that one can neither transform the higher parts completely leaving the body for later dealing nor make each stage complete in all its parts before going to the next. I tried that method but it never worked. A predominant overmentalisation of mind and vital is the first step, for instance, when overmentalising, but the body consciousness retains all the lower movements unovermentalised and until these can be pulled up to the overmental standard, there is no overmental perfection, always the body consciousness brings in flaws and limitations. To perfect the overmind one has to call in the supramental force and it is only when the overmind has been partially supramentalised that the body begins to be more and more overmental. I do not see any way of avoiding this process, though it is what makes the thing so long.

18 November 1935" (35: 355)

The Supramental Descent – All Inevitable Necessity in the Logic of Things

"…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 chimaera; so too afterwards he would

have repeated his mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimaera. 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 do not know that the descent depends on the readiness of the sadhaks of this Asram. It is likely that these things are determined from above rather than from below. That the descent is preparing and progressing is a fact; it is that which you feel and are justified in feeling. 1 December 1935" (35: 357-58)

The Supramental Descent into the Earth Consciousness

"*X* wrote to you that he saw the Supermind descending into the earth consciousness. You wrote to him in reply that his vision and feeling were justifiable. But before the Supermind descends into the earth consciousness, do not the planes between mind and Overmind have to descend first?

They descended long ago. It does not mean that they are available to everybody or developed anywhere in their full power – only that they can be counted among the things to which one can reach by tapasya. For Supermind, it may be descending, but it may take long before it is available to the race.

7 April 1936" (35: 359)

Sri Aurobindo Not Busy with the Empyrean

"No, it is not with the Empyrean that I am busy, I wish it were. It is rather with the opposite end of things – in the Abyss that I have to plunge to build a bridge between the two. But that too is necessary for my work and one has to face it. 29 May 1936" (35: 360)

A Great Experience

"Yesterday after dusk, I felt as if some welcome revolution had taken place in the Divine order of things. I attended the meditation and felt the whole place filled with calm and silence. . . . Then descended a *virāṭ mahāpuruṣa*, Himalayan in proportions, in the form of Sri Aurobindo, who, as if finding the earth incapable of bearing his weight, stood behind the Mother and placed his hands on her shoulders. The whole world was surcharged with silence and Ananda. The sight is beyond my powers to describe. An immeasurable force rushed into me, wave upon wave. . . . Was my experience true?

The experience you had was a true one, for something came down at that meditation which had not come down before and your experience was a translation of this descent in your consciousness. That you should have become aware of it in this way shows that your stay here has been very profitable to you and prepared your consciousness for the true realisation. The capacity for it is now there in you. Your future sadhana should be a development from the experience to the realisation. 11 September 1936" (35: 361-62)

Sadhana in the Inconscient

"There is another cause of the general inability to change which at present afflicts the sadhak. It is because the sadhana, as a general fact, has now and for a long time past come down to the Inconscient; the pressure, the call is to change in that part of the nature which depends directly on the Inconscient, the fixed habits, the automatic movements, the mechanical repetitions of the nature, the involuntary reactions to life, all that seems to belong to the fixed character of a man. This has to be done if there is to be any chance of a total spiritual change. The Force (generally and not individually) is working to make that possible, its pressure is for that, – for, on the other levels, the change has already been made possible (not, mind you, assured to everybody). But to

open the Inconscient to light is a herculean task; change on the other levels is much easier. As yet this work has only begun and it is not surprising that there seems to be no change in things or people. It will come in time, but not in a hurry.

As for experiences, they are all right but the trouble is that they do not seem to change the nature, they only enrich the consciousness – even the realisation, on the mind level, of the Brahman seems to leave the nature almost where it was, except for a few. That is why we insist on the psychic transformation as the first necessity – for that does change the nature – and its chief instrument is bhakti, surrender, etc. 27 April 1944" (35: 365-66)

Sri Aurobindo's Help to Dilip Kumar Roy

"I have no intention, I can assure you, of cutting off connection in the future. What restrictions there have been, were due to unavoidable causes. My retirement itself was indispensable; otherwise I would not now be where I am, that is, personally near the goal. When the goal is reached, things will be different. But as far as you are concerned, I have given to you what I have not given to others; what you have quoted about my connection with you is perfectly true; if it were false, why should I have persistently pressed you to remain with me always? Inwardly, I have been constant in my desire and my effort to help you, not only from time to time, but daily and always. If you had an unprecedented peace for so long a time, it was due to my persistent inner pressure; I refuse to give up all the credit to my double, Krishna.

14 August 1945" (35: 366-67)

Acuteness of Difficulties and the Inconscient – The Fundamental Basis of All Resistance in the Individual to the Divine

"The extreme acuteness of your difficulties is due to the yoga having come down against the bedrock of Inconscience which is the fundamental basis of all resistance in the individual and in the world to the victory of the Spirit and the Divine Work that is leading toward that victory. The difficulties themselves are general in the Ashram as well as in the outside world. Doubt, discouragement, diminution or loss of faith, waning of the vital enthusiasm for the ideal, perplexity and a baffling of the hope for the future are the common features of the difficulty. In the world outside there are much worse symptoms such as the general increase of cynicism, a refusal to believe in anything at all, a decrease of honesty, an immense corruption, a preoccupation with food,

money, comfort, pleasure to the exclusion of higher things and a general expectation of worse and worse things awaiting the world. All that, however acute, is a temporary phenomenon for which those who know anything about the workings of the world-energy and the workings of the Spirit were prepared. I myself foresaw that this worst would come, the darkness of night before the dawn; therefore I am not discouraged. I know what is preparing behind the darkness and can see and feel the first signs of its coming. Those who seek for the Divine have to stand firm and persist in their seeking; after a time, the darkness will fade and begin to disappear and the Light will come. 9 April 1947" (35: 367)

Sri Aurobindo's Use of the Overmind Force

"If I had been standing on the Supermind level and acting on the world by the instrumentation of Supermind, that world would have changed or would be changing much more rapidly and in a different fashion from what is happening now. My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that, but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself.

I have always said that the spiritual force I have been putting on human affairs such as the War is not the supramental but the overmind force, and that when it acts in the material world it is so inextricably mixed up in the tangle of the lower world forces that its results, however strong or however adequate for the immediate object, must necessarily be partial. That is why I am getting a birthday present of a free India on August 15, but complicated by its being presented in two packets as two free Indias: this is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole. 7 July 1947" (35: 367-68)

The Right Attitude Towards Difficulties, Negations and Denials

"I suppose all spiritual or inner experiences can be denounced as merely subjective and delusive. But to the spiritual seeker even the smallest inner experience is a thing of value. I stand for the Truth I hold in me and I would still stand for it even if it had no chance whatever of outward fulfilment in this life. I should go on with it even if all here abandoned and repudiated me and denounced it to the world as a delusion and a folly. I have never disguised from myself the difficulties of what I have undertaken, it is not difficulties or the threat of failure that can deter me. 7 April 1935" (35: 371)

The Right Attitude towards Stoppage of Sadhana

"The worst thing for sadhana is to get into a morbid condition, always thinking of "lower forces, attacks etc." If the sadhana has stopped for a time, then let it stop, remain quiet, do ordinary things, rest when rest is needed – wait till the physical consciousness is ready. My own sadhana when it was far more advanced than yours used to stop for half a year together. I did not make a fuss about it, but remained quiet till the empty or dull period was over.

8 March 1935" (35: 372-73)

The Censor

"I don't find it a noble voice at all, it is the voice of the usual defeatist suggester using any and every reasoning to instil weakness, flight and self-destruction. There is no strong reasoning, either, it is the usual round of sophistries always the same and repeated to every sadhak in turn. "Give up, give up, give up! run, run, run! die, die, say die, say die." That is always the substance of it, the rest is only skin and shell to give it a good presentation. I don't reason with the creature; you may reason like Socrates and be as convincing as the Buddha, but after a little it will soon come back and sing the same song over again. It pretends to reason, but doesn't care a damn for either truth or reason – I know too well the ways of the fellow – I have paid heavily to know. In my own sadhana I have heard his chant of death a million times and several hundreds of times from this or that sadhak. So I simply refuse to listen to him and I advise you to do the same. February 1935

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There is no reason to think that the movement of strength and purity was a make-believe. No, it was a real thing. But with these strong forward movements the vital enthusiasm often comes in with a triumphant "Now it is finished", which is not quite justified, for "Now it will soon be finished" would be nearer to it. It is at these moments that the thrice-damned Censor comes in with a jog, raises up a still shaky bit of the nature and produces a result that is out of all proportion to the size of the little bit, just to show that it is not finished. I have had any number of times that experience myself. All this comes from the complexity and slowness of our evolutionary nature which Yoga quickens but not as a whole at a stroke. But in fact, as I said, these crises are out of all proportion to their cause in the nature. One must therefore not be discouraged, but see the exaggeration in the adversary's successful negation as well as the exaggeration in our own idea of a complete and definitive victory already there. 24 August 1936" (35: 375-76)

How to Deal with Depression and Despair

"Fits of despair and darkness are a tradition in the path of sadhana – in all Yogas oriental and occidental they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself – but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has only to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun.

9 April 1930" (35: 376)

The Right Attitude towards the Violence of Vital Movements

"The exacerbation of certain vital movements is a perfectly well-known phenomenon in Yoga and does not mean that one has degenerated, but only that one has come to close grips instead of to a pleasant nodding acquaintance with the basic instincts of the earthly vital nature. I have had myself the experience of this rising to a height, during a certain stage of the spiritual development, of things that before hardly existed and seemed quite absent in the pre-Yogic life. These things rise up like that because they are fighting for their existence – they are not really personal to you and the vehemence of their attack is not due to any "badness" in the personal nature. I dare say seven sadhaks out of ten have a similar experience. Afterwards when they cannot effect their object, which is to drive the sadhak out of his sadhana, the whole thing sinks and there is no longer any vehement trouble. I repeat that the only serious thing about it is the depression created in you and the idea of inability

in the yoga that they take care to impress on the brain when they are at their work. If you can get rid of that, the violence of the vital attacks is only the phenomenon of a stage and does not in the end matter. 24 June 1932

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> God knows when I shall be above all this vital desire, sex, etc. I heave a sigh thinking of such retrogression.

There is nothing peculiar about retrogression. I was also noted in my earlier time before Yoga for the rareness of anger. At a certain period of the Yoga it rose in me like a volcano, and I had to take a long time eliminating it. As for sex – well. You are always thinking that the things that are happening to you are unique and nobody else ever had such trials or downfalls or misery before.

13 November 1936" (35: 376-77)

The Obstinacy of the Subconscient and the Persistence of Old Impressions in the Dreams

> "I do not find any change in the character of my dreams as yet – I get the usual kind of dreams about home life, eating, meeting strange people, moving about, etc. Why has there been no change in this respect in spite of my three years of sadhana here?

Dreams of this kind can last for years and years after the waking consciousness has ceased to interest itself in things of that kind. The subconscient is exceedingly obstinate in the keeping of its old impressions. I find myself even recently having a dream of revolutionary activities or another in which the Maharaja of Baroda butted in, people and things I have not even thought of passingly for the last twenty years almost. I suppose it is because the very business of the subconscient in the human psychology is to keep all the past inside it and, being without conscious mentality, it clings to its office until the light has fully come down into it, illumining even its corners and crevices.

17 December 1934" (35: 380-81)

"These stone-throwing or stone-producing incidents and similar 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 are called poltergeist phenomena in Europe. Scientists don't say or think anything of such supernormal happenings except to pooh-pooh them or to prove that they are simply the tricks of children simulating supernatural manifestations. It was only three or four stones that fell inside a room, the others were thrown from outside and in the last period banged day after day against the closed door of Bijoy Nag who was sheltering inside the servant boy who became the centre of the phenomena. As the boy got wounded by two of the last stones, we sent him away to another house with the idea that then the phenomena would cease and it so happened. As a rule these things need certain conditions to happen – e.g. a housewhich becomes the field of the action of these supernormal forces and a person (usually psychologically ill-developed) who is very often their victim as well as their centre. If the person is removed elsewhere, the phenomena often stop but sometimes his aura is so strong for these things that the house aura is not needed – they continue wherever he or she goes. As for the other necessary factor it is supposed to be elemental beings who are the agents. Sometimes they act on their own account, sometimes they are controlled and used by a person with occult powers. It was supposed here that some magic must have been used – such magic is common in the Tamil country and indeed in all South India. The stones were material enough, a huge heap of them were collected and remained at the staircase bottom for two or three days, so they were not thoughts taking a brick form. It was evidently a case of materialisation probably preceded by a previous dematerialisation and "transport" – the bricks became first visible in their flight at a few feet from the place where they fell.

Scientific laws only give a schematic account of material processes 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 (*kāraṇa*) 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 materialisation 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 – but that has nothing to do with the stone-throwing affair which is of a lower and more external order. In your (2) and (3) different operations seem to be confused together, (1) the creation of mere (subtle) images which the one who sees may mistake for real things, (2) the temporary materialisation of subtle substance into forms capable of cognition not only by the sight but by material touch or other sense, (3) the handling of material objects by mind-energy or vital force, e.g. making a pencil move and write on paper. All these things are possible and have been done. 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 its 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 can't 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 October 1938

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About the occult phenomenon of the house and the stones etc.
What was it?

I gave this as one instance of actual occult experience and action in accordance with occult law and practice, showing that these things are not

imaginations or delusions or humbug, but can be true phenomena. The stone-throwing began unobtrusively with a few stones thrown at the Guest House kitchen – apparently from the terrace opposite, but there was no one there. The phenomenon began before the fall of dusk and continued at first for half an hour, but daily it increased in frequency, violence and the size of the stones and the duration of the attack till it lasted for several hours until it towards the end became in the hour or half hour before midnight a regular bombardment. It was no longer at the kitchen only, but thrown too in other places, e.g. the outer verandah. At first we took it for a human-made affair and sent for the police, but the investigation lasted only for a very short time; when one of the constables in the verandah got a stone whizzing unaccountably between his legs, the police abandoned the case in a panic. We made our own investigations, but the places whence the stones seemed to be or might be coming were void of human stone-throwers. Finally, as if to put us kindly out of doubt, the stones began falling in closed rooms; one huge one (I saw it immediately after it fell) reposed flat and comfortable on a cane table as if that was its proper place. To wind up, they became murderous. The stones had hitherto been harmless in result except for a daily battering of Bijoy's door which (in the last days) I had watched for half an hour the night before the end. They appeared in mid-air a few feet above the ground, not coming from a distance but suddenly manifesting, and from the direction from which they flew, should have been thrown close in from the compound of the Guest House or the verandah itself, but the whole place was in a clear light and I saw that there was no human being there and could not have been. At last the semi-idiot boy-servant who seemed to be the centre of the attack and was sheltered in Bijoy's room under Bijoy's protection began to be severely hit and was bleeding from a wound by stones thrown from inside the closed room. I went in at Bijoy's call and saw the last stone fall on the boy; Bijoy and he were sitting side by side and the stone was thrown at them from in front, but there was no one visible to throw it – the two were alone in the room. So unless it was Wells's invisible man – ! We had been only watching or sometimes scouting around till then, but this was a little too much, it was becoming dangerous, and something had to be done. The Mother from her knowledge of the process of these things decided that the process here must depend on a nexus between the boy-servant and the house and if the nexus were broken, the servant and the house separated, the stone-throwing would cease. We sent him away to Hrishikesh's place and immediately the whole phenomenon ceased; not a single stone was thrown after that, peace reigned. That shows that these occult phenomena are real, have a law or process, as definite as that of any scientific operation and a knowledge of these processes can not only bring them about but put an end to or annul or dissolve them.

6 February 1943" (35: 384-88)

> "Surrender to the Divine and surrender to the Guru are said to be two different things. Is it really so?

No. In surrendering to the Guru, it is to the Divine in him that one surrenders – if it were only to a human entity it would be ineffective. But it is the consciousness of the Divine Presence that makes the Guru a real Guru, so that even if the disciple surrenders to him thinking of the human being to whom he surrenders, that Presence would still make it effective.

> Does surrender to the formless Divine leave the being subject to the gunas and ego to a certain extent?

Yes – because only the static part would be free in formlessness, the active Nature would be still in the play of the gunas. Many think they are free from the ego because they get the sense of the formless Existence, they do not see that the egoistic element remains in their action just as before.

> Is not surrender to the Divine in form – as the Guru – higher than the surrender to the formless Divine?

It is more dynamic.

> What makes the surrender to the Guru so grand and glorious as to be called the surrender beyond all surrenders?

Because through it you surrender not only to the impersonal but to the personal, not only to the Divine in yourself but to the Divine outside you; you get a chance for the surpassing of ego not only by retreat into the Self where ego does not exist, but in the personal nature where it is the ruler. It is the sign of the will to complete surrender to the total Divine, *samagramṁ mām*, *mānuṣīṁ tanum āśritam*. Of course it must be a genuine spiritual surrender for all this to be true.

> If absolute surrender to the Guru leaves one helpless like a puppet in the hands of forces – what good is it? I think what is harmful is to surrender only to the Divine in the Guru and not to the Divine in one's Self. It is this one-sided surrender which is harmful.

What is harmful is to surrender to something in yourself which flatters your ego and which you call the Divine. It is that which makes you a puppet in the hands of Forces. 20 November 1933" (35: 396-97)

Need of the Guru's Help

"As for the letter, I suppose you will have to tell the writer that his father committed a mistake when he took up Yoga without a Guru – for the mental idea about a Guru cannot take the place of the actual living influence. This Yoga especially, as I have written in my books, needs the help of the Guru and cannot be done without it. The condition into which his father got was a breakdown, not a state of siddhi. He passed out of the normal mental consciousness into a contact with some intermediate zone of consciousness (not the spiritual) where one can be subjected to all sorts of voices, suggestions, ideas, so-called aspirations which are not genuine. I have warned against the dangers of this intermediate zone in one of my books. The sadhak can avoid entering into this zone – if he enters, he has to look with indifference on all these things and observe them without lending any credence, by so doing he can safely pass into the true spiritual light. If he takes them all as true or real without discrimination, he is likely to land himself in a great mental confusion and, if there is in addition a lesion or weakness of the brain – the latter is quite possible in one who has been subject to apoplexy – it may have serious consequences and even lead to a disturbance of the reason. If there is ambition, or other motive of the kind mixed up in the spiritual seeking, it may lead to a fall in the Yoga and the growth of an exaggerated egoism or megalomania – of this there are several symptoms in the utterances of his father during the crisis. In fact one cannot or ought not to plunge into the experiences of this sadhana without a fairly long period of preparation and purification (unless one has already a great spiritual strength and elevation). Sri Aurobindo himself does not care to accept many into his path and rejects many more than he accepts. It would be well if he can get his father to pursue the sadhana no farther – for what he is doing is not really Sri Aurobindo's Yoga but something he has constructed in his own mind and once there has been an upset of this kind the wisest course is discontinuance. 21 April 1937

A Reluctant Guru

> I have prayed a lot today. Some comfort to dwell on that, though Krishnaprem advocates the Upanishadic attitude – "Awake! Arise!" – and not to trust too much to Divine Grace.

Krishnaprem's objection to Grace would be valid if the religionists mattered, but in spiritual things they don't. Their action naturally is to make a formula and dry shell of everything, not Grace alone. Even "Awake, Arise" leads to the swelled head or the formula – can't be avoided when Mr. Everyman deals with things divine. I had the same kind of violent objection to Gurugiri, but you see I was obliged by the irony of things or rather by the inexorable truth behind them to become a Guru and preach the Guruvada. Such is Fate.

16 January 1936" (35: 397-98)

"About the question of the Avatar, I do not think it is useful to press in the matter. It has become very much the tendency, especially in Bengal, to regard the Guru as the Avatar. To every disciple the Guru is the Divine, but in a special sense – for the Guru is supposed to live in the divine consciousness, to have attained union and when he gives to the disciple, it is the Divine that gives and what he gives is the consciousness of the Divine who is within the Guru. But that and Avatarhood are two different things. It is mostly in East Bengal recently that those have come who were acclaimed as Avatars; those who came had each of them the idea of a work to be done for the world and the sense of a Divine Power working through them, which shows that there was a pressure for manifestation there and something came in each case, for something of the Divine Power always comes when it is called, but it does not look as if there was anywhere the complete descent. It is this that may have created the idea that the Avatar was born there. It has always been said of the Advent that is to come now that there would be many in whom it would seem that it had come, but the real Avatar would work behind a veil until the destined hour came.

I do not gather from what is quoted as said by your Guru that he claimed to be the Avatar. It seems to me that he claimed to be a Power preparing the way for the work of the Divine Mother and even to indicate that all that he meant would be manifested not only by his own followers but by other groups (সম্প্রদায়), consisting evidently of those who had not had him for Guru but had some other Head and Teacher. This is also confirmed by the saying that some other one than his disciples might be the means of his প্রকাশ – that is to say, would be the means of carrying on his work and aiding the manifestation of the Mother. If this meant proclaiming him as the Avatar, I do not see how it can agree with the other saying that after his leaving his body the Avatar would come to the Asram he had created.

I do not quite know what is meant by *ayoni-sambhava*. An incarnation is always through a human mother, though there have been one or two cases in which a virgin birth has been proclaimed (Christ, Buddha). The only other meaning – unless we suppose an unprecedented miracle – might be a descent such as sometimes happens, the Godhead manifesting in somebody who at birth was a Vibhuti, not at once the full incarnation. But in the absence of a clear statement from your Guru himself, these are only speculations.

I have written this much as an answer to your question, but I doubt whether it is necessary or advisable to write anything of it to your friends. They have their own feeling about the matter; it seems to me better not to challenge or disturb it. 25 August 1935

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> Elsewhere people try to find out various qualities in their Guru to prove him an Avatar; here some try to find out reasons to disprove even the possibility.

It is a modern Asram, that's why!

14 November 1935" (35: 399-400)

The Avatar and Human Ideas of Space

> "How can the Divine, who is the All or Omnipresent, containing the Infinite, incarnate in the small space of a human body? I believe it is because this seems impossible to the mind that the Arya Samajists do not accept the possibility of incarnation.

The objection is founded on human three-dimensional ideas of Space and division in spaces, which are again founded upon the limited nature of the human senses. To some beings space is one-dimensional, to others two-dimensional, to others three-dimensional – but there are other dimensions also. It is well recognised in metaphysics that the Infinite can be in a point and not only in extension of space – just as there is an eternity of extension in Time but also an Eternity which is independent of Time so that it can be felt

in the moment – one has not to think of millions and millions of years in order to realise it. So too the rigid distinction of One against Many, a One that cannot be many or of an All that is made up by addition and not self-existent are crude mental notions of the outer finite mind that cannot be applied to the Infinite. If the All were of this material and unspiritual character, tied down to a primary arithmetic and geometry, the realisation of the universe in oneself, of the all in each and each in all, of the universe in the Bindu would be impossible. Your Arya Samajists are evidently innocent of the elements of metaphysical thinking or they would not make such objections.

1 April 1936" (35: 400-01)

The Avatar and A Possession

"Does an Avatar create a new mind, life and body from the cosmos for himself, or take hold of some liberated human being and use his outer personality for his manifestation? That would be a possession, not an Avatar. An Avatar is supposed to be from birth. Each soul at its birth takes from the cosmic mind, life and matter to shape a new external personality for himself. What prevents the Divine from doing the same? What is continued from birth to birth is the inner being. 18 December 1935" (35: 401-02)

The Avatar and His Apparent Failure

"Why the immortal Hell should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations? What if failure suits him better and serves better the ultimate purpose? What if the gentleman in question had to be given his chance as Duryodhan was given his chance when Krishna went to him as ambassador in a last effort to avoid the massacre of Kurukshetra? What rigid primitive notions are these about the Divine! And what about my explanation of how the Divine acts through the Avatar?* It seems all to have gone into water.

* The "explanation" Sri Aurobindo refers to here is probably the one presented in *Essays on the Gita*, First Series, Chapters XV to XVII. – Ed.

By the way about the ass becoming an elephant – what I meant to say was that the only reason why it can't be done is because there is no recognizable process for it. But if a process can be discovered whether by a scientist (let us say transformation or redistribution of the said ass's atoms or molecules – or what not) or by an occultist or by a Yogi, then there is no reason why it should not be done. In other words certain conditions have been established for the game and so long as those conditions remain unchanged certain things are not done – so we say they are impossible, can't be done. If the conditions are changed, then the same things are done or at least become licit – allowable, legal, according to the so-called laws of Nature, – and then we say they can be done. The Divine also acts according to the conditions of the game. He may change them, but he has to change them first, not proceed while maintaining the conditions to act by a series of miracles. 9 February 1935" (35: 404)

The Appearance of New Faculties by the Power of the Yoga

"…The question was whether new faculties not at all manifested in the personality up to now in this life could appear, even suddenly appear, by force of Yoga. I say they can and I gave my own case as proof.3 I could have given others also. The question involved is also this – is a man bound to the character and qualities he has come with into this life – can he not become a new man by Yoga? That also I have proved in my sadhana, it can be done. When you say that I could do this only in my case because I am an Avatar (!) and it is impossible in any other case, you reduce my sadhana to an absurdity and Avatarhood also to an absurdity. For my Yoga is done not for myself who need nothing and do not need salvation or anything else, but precisely

for the earth consciousness, to open a way to the earth consciousness to change. Has the Divine need to come down to prove that he can do this or that or has he any personal need of doing it? Your argument proves that I am not an Avatar but only a big human person. It may well be so as a matter of fact, but you start your argument from the other basis. Besides, even if I am only a big human person, what I achieve shows that that achievement is possible for humanity. Whether any street-beggar can do it or has done it, is a side issue. It is sufficient if others who have not the economic misfortune of being street-beggars can do it. 10 February 1935" (35: 405)

Rama, Krishna and Greatness

> "Past history does not seem to prove it. In Krishna's time no disciple of his was a greater spiritual figure than the preceding Avatar Rama, even though Krishna was an Avatar of a higher plane.

It is not a question of Sri Krishna's disciples, but of the earth consciousness – Rama was a mental man, there is no touch of the overmind consciousness (direct) in anything he said or did, but what he did was done with the greatness of the Avatar. But there have since been men who did live in touch with the planes above mind – higher mind, illumined mind, Intuition. There is no question of asking whether they were "greater" than Rama; they might have been less "great", but they were able to live from a new plane of consciousness. And Krishna's opening the overmind certainly made it possible for the attempt at bringing Supermind to the earth to be made.

10 February 1935" (35: 407-08)

"About greater and less, one point. Is Captain John Higgins of S.S. Mauretania a greater man than Christopher Columbus because he can reach America without trouble in a few days? Is a university graduate in philosophy greater than Plato because he can reason about problems and systems which had never even occurred to Plato? No, only humanity has acquired greater scientific power which any good navigator can use or a wider intellectual knowledge which anyone with a philosophic training can use. You will say greater scientific power and wider knowledge is not a change of consciousness. Very well, but there are Rama and Ramakrishna. Rama spoke always from the thinking intelligence, the common property of developed men; Ramakrishna spoke constantly from a swift and luminous spiritual intuition. Can you tell me which is the greater? the Avatar recognised by all India? or the saint and Yogi recognised as an Avatar only by his disciples and some others who follow them?

10 February 1935" (35: 410)

The Work of an Avatar: The Personal Example of Sri Aurobindo

"I don't know about Avatars. Practically what I know is that I had not all the powers necessary when I started, I had to develop them by yoga, at least many of them which were not in existence in me when I began, and those which were I had to train to a higher degree. My own idea of the matter is that the Avatar's life and action are not miracles and if they were, his existence would be perfectly useless, a mere superfluous freak of Nature. He accepts the terrestrial conditions, he uses means, he shows the way to humanity as well as helps it. Otherwise what is the use of him and why is he here?

I was not always in the overmind, if you please. I had to climb there from the mental and vital level. 13 February 1935" (35: 413)

The Two Sides of the Phenomenon of Avatarhood

"…There are two sides of the phenomenon of Avatarhood, the Divine Consciousness behind and the instrumental personality. The Divine Consciousness is omnipotent but it has put forth the instrumental personality in Nature, under the conditions of Nature, and it uses it according to the rules of the game – though also sometimes to change the rules of the game. If Avatarhood is only a flashing miracle, then I have no use for it. If it is a coherent part of the arrangement of the omnipotent Divine in Nature, then I can understand and accept it. 13 February 1935" (35: 414)

The Difficulties and Struggles of the Avatar are not Shams

"I did say that the difficulties and struggles of the Avatar are all shams, put on, so to say.

If they are shams, they have no value for others or for any true effect. If they have no value for others or for any true effect, they are perfectly irrational and unreal and meaningless. The Divine does not need to suffer or struggle for himself; if he takes on these things it is in order to bear the world-burden and help the world and men; and if these sufferings and struggles are to be of any help, they must be real. A sham or falsehood cannot help. They must be as real as the struggles and sufferings of men themselves – the Divine bears them and at the same time shows the way out of them. Otherwise his assumption of human nature has no meaning and no utility and no value. It is strange that you cannot understand or refuse to admit so simple and crucial a point. What is the use of admitting Avatarhood if you take all the meaning out of it?

7 March 1935" (35: 417)

Sri Aurobindo's Avatarhood

"Let me make it clear that in all I wrote I was not writing to prove that I am an Avatar! You are busy in your reasonings with the personal question, I am busy in mine with the general one. I am seeking to manifest something of the Divine that I am conscious of and feel – I care a damn whether that constitutes me an Avatar or something else. That is not a question which concerns me. By manifestation of course I mean the bringing out and spreading of that Consciousness so that others also may feel and enter into it and live in it.

7 March 1935" (35: 419)

The Work of the Avatar – To Open The Way Men Can Follow

"We have had sufferings and struggles to which yours are mere child's play, – I have not made our cases equal to yours. I have said that the Avatar is one who comes to open the Way for humanity to a higher consciousness – if nobody can follow the Way, then either our conception of the thing, which is that of Christ and Krishna and Buddha also, is all wrong or the whole life and action of the Avatar is quite futile. *X* seems to say that there is no Way and no possibility of following, that the struggles and sufferings of the Avatar are unreal and all humbug, – there is no possibility of struggle for one who represents the Divine. Such an idea makes nonsense of the whole idea of Avatarhood – there is no reason in it, no necessity for it, no meaning in it. The Divine being all-powerful can lift people up without bothering to come down on earth. It is only if it is part of the world arrangement that he should take upon himself the burden of humanity and open the Way that Avatarhood has any meaning. 7 March 1935" (35: 420)

The Work of the Past Avatars

"Throughout the history of human evolution we see that the Avatar brings light into the world. But when he retires, very little of this light remains. There is no substantial change. Does the Divine will it to be so?

You have only to consider what the state of humanity would have been if Krishna and others had not come. They would have been still near to the beast with no openings on the heights of the spirit. 20 October 1933…

Were the Avatars – the ten that have already come – known as Avatars in their own times?

Only to a few, according to the accounts. 14 November 1935" (35: 431)

Sri Krishna and Sri Aurobindo

"I thought I had already told you that your turn towards Krishna was not an obstacle. In any case I affirm that positively in answer to your question. If we consider the large and indeed predominant part he played in my own sadhana, it would be strange if the part he has in your sadhana could be considered objectionable. Sectarianism is a matter of dogma, ritual etc., not of spiritual experience; the concentration on Krishna is a self-offering to the *iṣṭa-deva*. If you reach Krishna you reach the Divine; if you can give yourself to him, you give yourself to me. Your inability to identify may be because you are laying too much stress on the physical aspects, consciously or unconsciously.

18 June 1943

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You can't expect me to argue about my own spiritual greatness in comparison with Krishna's. The question itself would be relevant only if there were two sectarian religions in opposition, Aurobindoism and Vaishnavism, each insisting on its own God's greatness. That is not the case. And then what Krishna must I challenge, – the Krishna of the Gita who is the transcendent Godhead, Paramatma, Parabrahma, Purushottama, the cosmic Deity, master of the universe, Vasudeva who is all, the immanent in the heart of all creatures, or the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwarka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my Yoga and with whom I realised identity? All that is not to me something philosophical or mental but a matter of daily and hourly realisation and intimate to the stuff of my consciousness. Then from what position can I adjudicate this dispute? *X* thinks I am superior in greatness, you think there can be nothing greater than Krishna; each is entitled to have his own view or feeling, whether it is itself right or not. It can be left there; it can be no reason for your leaving the Asram.

25 February 1945" (35: 431-32)

The Human Mind and the Recognition of Divinity

"After reading your answers, one part of me tries to justify itself and attribute to you the ordinary humanity. Of course. Whatever does not say ditto to the human mind cannot be divine. That is the usual maxim of judgment. "The Divine must do what I want and think as I think, judge as I judge and support my ideas, interests or feelings against others, otherwise how can he be Divine? For whatever I think, feel or want must be the TRUTH." At least that seems to be the attitude of most sadhaks in the Asram." (35: 432)

Sri Aurobindo's Divinity

"Shall man know of your divinity only after the supermind has descended?*

There is no necessity of the supermind for that. It is the inner consciousness that has to recognise – it is impossible for the outer mind to know it by its own reasonings.…

I have a strong faith that you are the Divine Incarnate in *bhāgavatī tanu*. Am I right?

Follow your faith – it is not likely to mislead you.

12 August 1935" (35: 432-33)

* It is not clear from the context whether the correspondent's "your" refers to Sri Aurobindo or the Mother or both. The same is true of "you" in the next letter. – Ed.

The Effectivity of Satsanga

> "It is a traditional belief that satsanga has great effect – the nearness or the personal contact of a spiritual person is supposed to produce great benefit to those who are in his company. How is it then that your earliest companions here did not derive any benefit from your company?

I don't know that the theory of satsanga can be taken so rigorously as that. Company always has an effect, but it may be less or more or even for the most part nullified by things in the person's own consciousness or nature or by other atmospheres. *X* and the others were greatly influenced by company with me in the old days but it was more in the direction of mental and vital development than spiritually, for at that time I was doing my own sadhana and not putting out any spiritual influence on others – only if anybody asked me, I told him what to do, the result of his effort was his own affair.

17 August 1936" (35: 437)

Fallibility of Human Judgements

"I do not believe in human judgments because I have always found them fallible – also perhaps because I have myself been so blackened by human judgments that I do not care to be guided by them with regard to others. All this however I write to explain my own point of view; I am not insisting on it as a law for others. I have never been in the habit of insisting that everybody must think as I do – any more than I insist on everybody following me and my yoga. December 1934" (35: 438)

The Nature of the Disciple and the Omnipotence of the Divine

> "But is it really impossible to give *X* some experience of peace, silence or meditation? That would mean that the Divine is not omnipotent.

My dear sir, what has the omnipotence of the Divine to do with it? In this world there are conditions for everything – if a man refuses to fulfil the conditions for Yoga, what is the use of appealing to the Divine's omnipotence? He does not believe that the Divine is here. He regards us as Gurus. Yes, but he begins by disputing all my way of Yoga. He does not understand and does not care to understand my processes. He has ideas of his own, does not want peace or equality or surrender or anything else, wants only Krishna and bhakti. He has read things in Ramakrishna and elsewhere as to how to do it, insists on following

that. Rejects all suggestions I can make as unpracticable. Erects a sadhana of violent meditation, japa, prayer – for these are the traditional things, has no idea that there are conditions without which they cannot be effective. Meditates, japs, prays himself into pits of dullness and disappears. Also tries in spite of my objections a wrestling tapasya which puts his vital into revolt. Then by a stroke of good luck I succeed unexpectedly in making a sort of psychic opening. Decides to try surrender, purification of the heart, rejection of ego, true humility etc. – tries a little of it and is really progressing. After two months finds that Krishna is not appearing – gets disgusted and drops the beastly thing. And after all that he is always telling me "What an impotent Guru you are! You are evidently able to do nothing for me." Evidently! That's *X*.

28 May 1936" (35: 440-41)

"But after all, without putting forth eighteen visible arms (perhaps, since it is a symbol, by putting them forth internally) I hope to become one day so divine even in the body consciousness that I shall be able to satisfy everybody! But you can't hurry a transformation like that. I must ask for time.

Why do you always insist on cherishing the idea that I refuse all human love? I have surely written to you to the contrary. I don't reject it, neither human nor vital love. But I want that behind the vital there shall be the constant support of the psychic *human* love (not all at once the divine), because that alone can prevent the movements which make you restless, obscured and miserable. In asking this I am surely not asking anything excessive or beyond your power. circa 1931

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I meant that even before I met you for the first time, I knew of you and felt at once the contact of one with whom I had that relation which declares itself constantly through many lives and followed your career (all that I could hear about it) with a close sympathy and interest. It is a feeling which is never mistaken and gives the impression of one not only close to one but part of one's existence. The Mother had not heard of you before you came here for the first time, but even on that occasion on seeing you – though without any actual meeting – she had a sympathetic contact. The relation that is so indicated always turns out to be that of those who have been together in the past and were predestined to join again (though the past circumstances may not be known) drawn together by old ties. It was the same inward recognition in you (apart even from the deepest spiritual connection) that brought you. If the outer consciousness does not yet fully realise, it is the crust always created by a new physical birth that prevents it. But the soul knows all the while.

Your poem is very beautiful.

I am aware of the terribly trying period that is upon you as upon us just now, but you must try to stand firmly until we may come through into the sunshine hereafter. 27 February 1935

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I have not time to write a long letter. I can write only this. You are not to leave Pondicherry by this morning's train or at all. You have to come and see the Mother at 9.30 and speak to her heart to heart. Both the Mother and myself have lavished much love and care on you and you are certainly not going to make a return like this – it is impossible. Do not believe all you hear or allow yourself to be driven off your balance by falsehoods of the kind that have been retailed to you. You do not belong to yourself and have not the right to do what you propose to do: you belong to the Divine and to myself and the Mother. I have cherished you like a friend and a son and have poured on you my force to develop your powers – until the time should come for you to make an equal development in the Yoga. We claim the right to keep you as our own here with us. Throw away this despair – rise above the provocations of others – turn back to the Mother. 16 May 1937" (35: 441-43)

The Importance of Correspondence

"About the correspondence, I would be indeed a brainless fool if I made it the central aim of my life to con an absurd mountain of letters and leave all higher aims aside! If I have given importance to the correspondence, it is because it was an effective instrument towards my central purpose – there are a large number of sadhaks whom it has helped to awake from lethargy and begin to tread the way of spiritual experience, others whom it has carried from a small round of experience to a flood of realisations, some who have been absolutely hopeless for years who have undergone a conversion and entered from darkness into an opening of light. Others no doubt have not profited or profited only a little. Also there were some who wrote at random and wasted our time. But I think we can say that for the majority of those who wrote, there has been a real progress. No doubt also it was not the correspondence in itself but the Force that was increasing in its pressure on

the physical nature which was able to do all this, but a canalisation was needed, and this served the purpose. There were many for whom it was not necessary, others for whom it was not suitable. If it had been a mere intellectual asking of questions it would have been useless, but the substantial part was about sadhana and experience and it was that that proved to be of great use.

But as time went on the correspondence began to grow too much and reached impossible proportions – yet it was difficult to stop the flood or to make distinctions which would not have been understood – so we have to seek a way out and as yet have only found palliatives. The easy way would be if those who have opened would now rely mainly on the inner communication with only a necessary word now and then – some have begun to do so. I suppose in the end we shall be able to reduce the thing to manageable proportions. 12 January 1933" (35: 452-53)

Writing of Letters and the Attempt of the Hostiles to Disrupt

> "For some time I have been thinking about ceasing to write to you. Today I was overcome by vital problems. Finally at 4.30 I sent the letter I had written earlier. Why should the idea of not writing or not sending the letter cause so much difficulty?

It is because the idea came from a wrong source and was an attempt of the wrong forces to enter and disturb. It was not so much the idea in itself, but the idea as an expression of dissatisfaction and impatience. Immediately the hostiles took hold of it as a line of entry for all the old movements once associated with this kind of dissatisfaction and impatience. Moreover these letters of yours and my answers have been a strong means of canalising our help and making it habitually available to you and effective – not by the words themselves alone but by the forces behind them. 17 April 1933" (35: 453)

The Volume of Correspondence and the Attitude of the Recipients

"You do not realise that I have to spend 12 hours over the ordinary correspondence, numerous reports, etc. I work 3 hours in the afternoon and the whole night up to 6 in the morning over this. So if I get a long letter with many questions I may not be able to answer it all at once. To get into such a disturbance over it and want to throw off the Yoga is quite unreasonable.

17 June 1933" (35: 466)

"I should like to say, in passing, that it is not always safe to apply practically to oneself what has been written for another. Each sadhak is a case by himself and one cannot always or often take a mental rule and apply it rigidly to all who are practising the Yoga. What I wrote to *X* was meant for *X* and fits his case; but supposing a sadhak with a different (coarse) vital nature unlike *X*'s were in question, I might say to him something that might seem the very opposite, "Sit tight on your lower vital propensities, throw out your greed for food, – it is standing as a serious obstacle in your way: it would be better for you to be ascetic in your habits than vulgarly animal in this part as you are now." To one who is not taking enough food or sleep and rest in the eagerness of his spirit, I might say "Eat more, sleep more, rest more; do not overstrain yourself or bring an ascetic spirit into your tapasya." To another with the opposite excess I might speak a contrary language. Each sadhak has a nature or turn of nature of his own and the movement of the Yoga of two sadhaks, even when there are some resemblances between them, is seldom exactly the same.

Again in applying some truth that is laid down it is necessary to give it its precise meaning. It is quite true that "in our path the attitude is not one of forceful suppression, *nigraha*"; it is not coercion according to a mental rule or principle on an unpersuaded vital being. But that does not mean either that the vital has to go its own way and do according to its fancy. It is not coercion that is the way, but an inner change, in which the lower vital is led, enlightened and transformed by a higher consciousness which is detached from the objects of vital desire. But in order to let this grow an attitude has to be taken in which a decreasing importance has to be attached to the satisfaction of the claims of the lower vital, a certain mastery, *saṁyama*, being above any clamour of these things, limiting such things as food to their proper place. The lower vital has its place, it is not to be crushed or killed, but it has to be changed, "caught hold of by both ends", at the upper end a mastery and control, at the lower end a right use. The main thing is to get rid of attachment and desire; it is then that an entirely right use becomes possible. By what actual steps, in what order, through what processus this mastery of the lower vital shall come depends on the nature, the stress of development, the actual movement of the Yoga.

It is not the eating or the not eating of *mohan bhoga* that is the important point – (actually when I gave *X* what you call his permit, I was thinking of *X* and not of anybody else). What is important is how that or any of these food matters affects you, what is your inner condition and how any such indulgence, cooking or eating, stands or does not stand in the way of its progress and change, what is best for you as a Yogic discipline. One rule for you I can lay down, "Do not do, say or think anything which you would want to conceal from the Mother." And that answers the objections that rose within you – from your vital, is it not? – against bringing "these petty things" to the Mother's

notice. Why should you think that the Mother would be bothered by these things or regard them as petty? If *all* the life is to be Yoga, what is there that can be called petty or of no importance? Even if the Mother does not answer, to have brought any matter of your action and self-development before her in the right spirit means to have put it under her protection, in the light of the Truth, under the rays of the Power that is working for the transformation – for immediately those rays begin to play and to act on the thing brought to her notice. Anything within that advises you not to do it when the spirit in you moves you to do it, may very well be a device of the vital to avoid the ray of the Light and the working of the Force. It may also be observed that if you open yourself to the Mother by putting the movements of any part of you under her observation, that of itself creates a relation, a personal closeness with her other than that which her general, silent or not directly invited action maintains with all the sadhaks.

All this, of course, if you feel ready for this openness, if the spirit moves you to lay what is in you bare before her. For it is then that it is fruitful – when it comes from within and is spontaneous and true. 18 May 1932

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It is not a fact that all I write is meant equally for everybody. That assumes that everybody is alike and there is no difference between sadhak and sadhak. If it were so everybody would advance alike and have the same experiences and take the same time to progress by the same steps and stages. It is not so at all. In this case the general rules were laid down for one who had made no progress – but everything depends on how the Yoga comes to each person.

26 July 1934…

> Occasionally I show a letter from you to some sympathetic friend. Perhaps there may be a little egoistic sense of display, so I want your order on this.

It is better not to show. Apart from the possibility of display it dissipates the force of the thing and brings in other currents from outside.

13 February 1933

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It is always a mistake to let another know what we have written privately to you on personal things, for it is likely, as you see, for it to be misinterpreted. It is because we have had so much experience of that that we prefer that personal things should be kept private. Formerly we used to allow people to show if they wanted to, but we found that even the simplest and clearest things were liable to mental constructions and misconceptions, so we have become more prudent. But of course what you quote from what I said was in itself quite harmless. 9 November 1935" (35: 473-76)

"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 sadhak 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 altered in this respect – and that is why my main effort is 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 Yoga-force and not of something else? One of two things it must do. Either it must allow the consciousness to go inside, to become aware of inner things, to believe in and experience 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 sensible 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 out a new experiment would never succeed if he allowed his mind to behave in that way.

When the Mother said it was just a trick of reversing the consciousness, she meant that – that instead of allowing always the external mind to interfere and assert its own ordinary customary point of view, it should turn itself round, admit that things may work from in outwards, and keep itself sufficiently quiet to see that developing and being done. For then an inner mind shows itself which is capable of following and being the instrument of the invisible Forces.

It is not that you are incapable of it, for it was several times on the point of being done. But your external mind has interfered always, questioning, doubting, asking for something more external, not waiting for the movement to continue, for the inward to externalise itself and make itself concrete. That is why I object to this worship of Doubt. It is not that I used not to have doubts myself more formidable than any you have ever thought of – but I did not allow them to interfere with the development of my experience. I let it continue until it had sufficient body for me to know what it was and what it could bring me. 2 August 1932

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> Highly delighted (unyogically though) to learn you had put so much force for the sale of my gramophone records! But highly intrigued too. What is this force? A sweet blessing that all should be smooth in this rough world? Or is it a conscious way of directing a control, as one controls the organisation of a music choir? I mean does this force mean concrete business, as the scheming of a schemer does? I ask this naïve question since your force always puzzles me.

Well, I made the mistake of "thinking aloud with my pen" when I wrote that unfortunate sentence about the force I had put for the success of the gramophone records. As my whole action consists of the use of force or forces – except of course my writing answers to correspondence which is concrete; but even that I am made to do by and with a force, otherwise I can assure you I would not and could not do it – I sometimes am imprudent enough to make this mistake. It is foolish to do so because a spiritual force or

any other is obviously something invisible and its action is invisible, so how can anyone believe in it? Only the results are seen and how is one to know that the results are the result of the Force? It is not concrete.

But I am myself rather puzzled by your instances of the concrete. How are the schemes of a schemer concrete? Something happens and you tell me it was the result of a schemer's scheme. But the schemer's scheme was a product of his consciousness and not at all concrete; it was in his mind and another fellow's mind is not concrete to me unless I am a Yogi or a thought-reader. I can only infer from some things he said or did that he had a scheme, things which I have not myself seen or heard and which are therefore not to me concrete. So how can I accept or believe in the scheme of the schemer? And even if I saw or heard, I am not bound to believe that it was a scheme or that which happened was the result of a scheme. He may have acted on a chain of impulses and what happened may have been the result of something quite different or itself purely accidental. Again how do you control the music choir? By words and signs etc., which are of course concrete? But what made you use those words and signs and why did they produce a control? and why did the other fellows do what you told them? what made them do that? It was something in your and their consciousness, I suppose; but that is not concrete. Again, scientists talk about electricity which is, it seems, an energy, a force in action and it seems that everything has been done by this energy, my own physical being is constituted by it and it is at the base of all my mental and life energies. But that is not concrete to me. I never felt my being constituted by electricity, I cannot feel it working out my thoughts and life-processes – so how can I believe in it or accept it? The force I use is not a sweet blessing – a blessing (silent) certainly is not concrete, like a stone or a kick or other things seizable by the senses; it is not even a mere will saying within me "let it be so" – that also is not concrete. It is a force of consciousness directed towards or on persons and things and happenings – but obviously a force of consciousness is not seizable by the physical senses, so not concrete. I may feel it and the person acted on may feel it or may not feel it, but as the feeling is internal and not external and perceivable by others, it cannot be called concrete and nobody is bound to accept or believe in it. For instance, if I cure someone (without medicines) of a fever and send him fresh and full of strength to his work, all in the course of a single night, still why should any third person believe or accept that it was my force that did it? It may have been Nature or his imagination that made him cure (three cheers for those concrete things, imagination and Nature!) – or the whole thing happened of itself. So, you see the case is hopeless, it can't be proved at all – at all. 6 December 1935

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Is the force you "put on me" concrete?

Concrete? what do you mean by "concrete"? It has its own concreteness; it

can take a form (like a stream for instance) of which one is aware and can send it quite concretely in whatever "direction" or on whatever object one chooses.

> In one of your letters to me you wrote: "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."

That is a general statement about the inherent power of spirituality. What I was speaking of was a willed use of subtle force (it may be spiritual or mental or vital) to secure a particular result at some point in the world. Just as there are waves of unseen physical forces (cosmic waves etc.) or currents of electricity, so there are mind waves, thought currents, waves of emotion, e.g. anger, sorrow etc. which go out and affect others without their knowing whence they come or that they come at all – they only feel the result. One who has the occult or inner senses awake can feel them coming and invading him; influences good or bad can propagate themselves in that way; that can happen without intention, automatically, but also a deliberate use can be made of them. There can also be a purposeful generation of force, spiritual or other. There can be too the use of the effective will or idea, which is not concrete in that sense, but is all the same effective. 6 February 1943" (35: 479-84)

> "I tried to convince *X* that it was your force that cured *Y*. But *X* said, "What about instances in which the Divine Force has failed? Why does it succeed in some cases and not in others?"

The mistake is to think that it must be either a miraculous force or else none. There is no miraculous force and I do not deal in miracles. The word Divine here is out of place, if it is taken as an always omnipotently acting Power. Yogic Force is then better; it simply means a higher Consciousness using its power, a spiritual and supraphysical force acting on the physical world directly. One has to train the instrument to be a channel of this force; it works also according to a certain law and under certain conditions. The Divine does not work arbitrarily or as a thaumaturge; He acts upon the world along the lines that have been fixed by the nature and purpose of the world we live in – by an increasing action of the thing that has to manifest, not by a sudden change or disregard of all the conditions of the work to be done. If it were not so, there would be no need of Yoga or time or human action or instruments or of a Master and disciples or of a Descent or anything else. It could simply be a matter for the तथास्तु [*tathāstu*] and nothing more. But that would be irrational if you like and worse than irrational, – childish. This does not mean that interventions, things apparently miraculous, do not happen – they do. But all cannot be like that.

> I told *X*, "I don't see how you can deny the reality of this Force. Were you able to work with such vigour before you came here?" He said, "Yes, I could work a lot, so much so that people were astounded. Was that Sri Aurobindo's Force?"

What is Sri Aurobindo's force? It is not a personal property of this body or mind. It is a higher Force used by me or acting through me.

> "And Tagore, Lenin and other greats. Is the Divine Force working in them too?"

Of course it is a Divine Force, for there is only one force acting in the world, but it acts according to the nature of the instrument. Yogic Force is different from others because it is a special power of the spiritual consciousness.

> I continued, "It may not be Sri Aurobindo's Force, but how can I exclude the possibility of a Divine Force behind? Because one is an atheist, it doesn't mean the Divine is undivine against him!"

There was an obvious intervention in the case he speaks of – but the agent or process could only be determined if one knew all the circumstances. Such interventions are frequent; e.g. my uncle's daughter was at her last gasp, the doctors had gone away telling him there was no more to be done. He simply sat down to pray – as soon as he had finished, the death symptoms were suspended, the girl recovered without farther treatment (it was a case of typhoid

fever). Several cases of that kind have come within my personal observation.

> *X* concluded, "Oh, if you say everything is being done at the divine impulsion, I have nothing to say. But you can't say that I am working because Sri Aurobindo is constantly at my back!" What can I say against this?

I am not very particular about that. It is a personal question and depends on *X*'s feeling. I certainly put force on him for the development and success of his poetry – about the rest I don't want to say anything.

I have marginalised on the Force* – to write more com- pletely would need more time than I have tonight. Of course, if it depended on a few cases of illness, it would be a thing of no certitude or importance. If the "Force" were a mere freak or miracle, it would be equally trivial and unimportant, even if well attested. It is only of importance if it is part of the consciousness and the life used at all times, not only for illness but for whatever one has to do. It manifests in various ways – as a strength of the consciousness evenly supporting the life and action, as a power put forth for this or that object of the outward life, as a special Force from above drawn down to raise and increase the scope of the Consciousness and its height and transform it not by a miraculous, but by a serious, steady, organised action following certain definite lines. Its effectiveness as well as its action is determined first by its own height and intensity or that of the plane from which it comes (it may be from any plane ranging from the Higher Mind upward to the Overmind), partly by the condition of the objects or the field in which it acts, partly by the movement which it has to effect, general or particular. It is neither a magician's wand nor a child's bauble, but something one has to observe, understand, develop, master before one can use it aright or else – for few can use it except in a limited manner – be its instrument. This is only a preface. 6 February 1935

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Our idea was that the Divine is always omnipotent, independent of all conditions and not limited by the particular plane from which he acts. But you give so many clauses under which the Force can operate successfully! *X* then seems to be right when he says that if one has not got a particular possibility in him the Divine cannot make him develop in that direction. Pushing this a little farther, I would say that one must have a talent or capacity as a nucleus in him for the spiritual development he is going to have later. One must have it, the Divine cannot make anything out of শূন্যম্ [*śūnyam*].

What is শূন্যম্? It is out of the silence that all things originated. All is contained in what you call Shunyam.

But then how is it that you wasted so much Force on *Y* to no avail? Is it

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* Sri Aurobindo wrote the above answers in the margins of the correspondent's notebook. – Ed.

that you did not use the supramental Force, which alone can work irresistibly without the necessity of adapting itself to existing conditions?

Certainly, supramental Force was not the force used in that case, it was mental-spiritual. In such cases the object of the Force has always the right to say No. I put the force on him because he said he wanted to change, but his vital refused – as it had the right to do. If nothing in him had asked for the change, I would not have tried it, but simply put another force on him for another purpose.

> You make a distinction between the Yogic Force and the Divine Force; but is not the former an outcome of the latter?

Of course, but all force is the Divine Force. It is only the egoism of the individual which takes it as his own. He uses it, but it is not his.

> By the way, *Z* did not question the reality of your Force for his poetry or other literary activities, but he said he could not admit that all his activities were permeated by your Force, because he used to work with great vigour and energy even before he came here.

Of course not – all the activities cannot be that. It is only in the Yoga realisation that one feels all one's activities to be from the one source – something from above or the Yogashakti or the Guru Shakti or the Cosmic Force or whatever it may be (all names for the same thing in different formations) driving the whole consciousness and being.

> Success in life outside is dependent on different things, on one's own energy and the environmental stimulus.

What is one's own energy after all? You mean Nature's energy in you? It may, in new conditions, remain extant in some things, develop in others, fail or change in others. One can't make a rule.

> Looking at myself, I wonder how a vitalistic man like me can pass his days in cellular imprisonment without any suffocation!

That kind of change happens.

> One may say that a tamasic, indolent man can't be activated by the Divine to that extent.

Of course he can.

> Am I really wrong?

No, but there are many sides or aspects to a question.

> After the "preface" [*p. 486*] is any chapter likely to follow?

Perhaps in some weeks or some months or some centuries the chapter may follow! But I used the word preface to characterise the nature of what I had written, not in a prophetic sense.

> There are two things – Yoga-Force in its original totality which is that of

the Divine spiritual force, always potentially all-powerful, and Yoga-Force doing its work under the conditions of the evolutionary world here.

It is not a question of "can" or "cannot" at all. All is possible, but all is not licit – except by a recognisable process; the Divine Power itself imposes on its action limits, processes, obstacles, vicissitudes. It is possible that an ass may be changed into an elephant, but it is not done, at least physically, because of the lack of a process. Psychologically such changes do take place. I have myself in my time changed cowards into heroes and that can be done even without Yogashakti, merely by an inner force. How can you say what is latent in man or what is incurably absent? I have developed many things by Yoga, often even without any will or effort to do so, which were not in my original nature, I may even say that I have transformed my whole nature and it is in many respects the opposite of what I began with. There can be no question about the power to change, to develop, to awaken faculties that were not there before; this power exists already, but it can be raised to an acme by being lifted to the spiritual plane.

The force put on the gentleman you speak of at least made it necessary for him to change if he remained here. He had no will in the vital to change and so did not remain here but went to his fate.

The rest is for the indefinable future. One day I shall certainly try to explain methodically and by examples what the spiritual force is; how it has worked on the earth-plane, how it acts and under what conditions – conditions not rigidly fixed, but plastic and mutable. 7 February 1935…

> In one of your letters you have written about being "sufficiently open" to receive the Force. What did you mean by this?

I mean simply a certain receptivity in the consciousness – mind, vital, physical, whichever is needed. The Mother or myself send a force. If there is no openness, the force may be thrown back or return (unless we put a great force which it is not always advisable to do) as from an obstruction or resistance: if there is some openness, the result may be partial or slow; if there is the full openness or receptivity, then the result may be immediate. Of course there are things that cannot be removed all at once, being an old part of the nature, but with receptivity these also can be more effectively and rapidly dealt with. Some people are so open that even by writing they get free before the book or letter reaches us. 8 June 1933" (35: 484-89)

"The strangest thing of all is that if the Divine wills, why can't an effective drug in a case be revealed to him, medico or no medico? Why the devil should He will like that in all cases? . . .

As to Force let me point out a few elementary notions which you ignore.

(1) The Force is a divine Force, so obviously it can apply itself in any direction; it can inspire the poet, set in motion the soldier, doctor, scientist, everybody.

(2) The Force is not a mental Force – it is not bound to go out from the Communicator with every detail mentally arranged, precise in its place, and communicate it mentally to the Recipient. It can go out as a global Force containing in itself the thing to be done, but working out the details in the Recipient and the action as the action progresses. It is not necessary for the Communicant to accompany mentally the Force, plant himself mentally in the mind of the Recipient and work out mentally there the details. He can send the Force or put on the Force, leave it to do its work and attend himself to other matters. In the world most things are worked out by such a global Force containing the results in itself, but involved, concealed and working them out in a subsequent operation. The seed contains the whole potentiality of the tree, the gene contains the potentiality of the living form that it initiates, etc. etc., but if you examine the seed and gene ad infinitum, still you will not find there either the tree or the living being. All the same the Force has put all these potentialities there in a certain evolution which works itself out automatically.

(3) In the case of a man acting as an instrument of the Force the action is more complicated, because consciously or unconsciously the man must receive, also he must be able to work out what the Force puts through him. He is a living complex instrument, not a simple machine. So if he has responsiveness, capacity, etc. he can work out the Force perfectly, if not he does it imperfectly or frustrates it. That is why we speak of and insist on the perfectioning of the instrument. Otherwise there would be no need of sadhana or anything else – any fellow would do for any blessed work and one would simply have to ram things into him and see them coming out in action.

(4) The Communicant need not be an all-round many-sided Encyclopaedia in order to communicate the Force for various purposes. If we want to help a lawyer to succeed in a case, we need not be perfect lawyers ourselves knowing all law, Roman, English or Indian and supply him all his arguments, questions, etc., doing consciously and mentally through him his whole examinations, cross-examinations and pleading. Such a process would be absurdly cumbrous, incompetent and wasteful. The prearrangement of the eventual result and the capacity for making him work his instruments in the right way and for arranging events also so as to aid towards the result are put into the Force when it goes to him, they are therefore inherent in its action

and the rest is a question of his own receptivity, experience etc. Naturally the best instrument even is imperfect (unless he is a perfected Adhar) and mistakes may be committed, other suggestions accepted etc. etc., but if the instrument is sufficiently open, the Force can set the thing to rights and the result still comes. In some or many cases the Force has to be renewed from time to time or supported by fresh Force. In some directions particular details have to be consciously attended to by the Communicant. All that depends on circumstances too multitudinous and variable to be reduced to rule. There are general lines, in these matters, but no rules, the working of a non-mental Force has necessarily to be plastic, not rigid and tied to formulas. If you want to reduce things to patterns and formulas, you will necessarily fail to understand the workings of a spiritual (non-mental) Force.

(5) All that I say here refers to spiritual Force. I am not speaking of the Supramental.

(6) Also please note that this is all about the working of Force on or through people: it has nothing to do with intuition which is quite another matter. Also it does not preclude always and altogether a plenary and detailed inspiration from a Communicant to a recipient – such things happen, but it is not necessary to proceed in that way, nor below the Supermind or supramentalised Overmind can it be the ordinary process. 10 April 1937

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> You said, in regard to the Spanish General, "Let us suppose . . . I put the right force on him" [*p. 447*]. Why did you say "right"? Is there also a wrong Force?

Don't remember what exactly I wrote – so can't say very well. But of course there can be a wrong Force. There are Asuric Forces, rajasic Forces, all sorts of Forces. Apart from that one can use a mental or vital Force which may not be the right thing. Or one may use the Force in such a way that it does not succeed or does not hit the General on the head or is not commensurate with the opposing Forces – (opposing Forces need not be Asuric, they may be quite gentlemanly Forces thinking they are in the right. Or two Divine Forces might knock at each other for the fun of the thing. Infinite possibilities, sir, in the play of the Forces.)

> What I want to know is whether the Force applied or directed is always the right Force. Can there be any mistake in the Force, either in its application or in any other way, resulting in its failure to get the desired result?

What is a mistake? Eventually the Force used is always the Force that was destined to be used. If it succeeds, it does its work in the whole and if it fails, it has also done its work in the whole. 17 April 1937" (35: 490-93)

Power to Help

"I do not ask you to believe that the Divine Grace comes to all or that all can succeed in the sadhana or that I personally have succeeded or will succeed in the case of all who come to me. I have asked you if you cannot develop the faith that the Divine is – you seemed often to doubt it, – that the Divine Grace is and has manifested both elsewhere and here, that the sadhana by which so many profit is not a falsehood or a chimaera and that I have helped many and am not utterly powerless – otherwise how could so many progress under our influence? If this is first established, then the doubt and denial, the refusal of faith boils itself down to a refusal of faith in your own spiritual destiny and that of *X* and some others – does it not? I have never told you that the power that works here is absolute at present; I have on the contrary told you that I am trying to make it absolute and it is for that that I want the Supermind to intervene. But to say that because it is not absolute therefore it does not exist, seems to me a logical inconsequence.

There remains your personal case and you may very well tell me "What does it matter to me if these things are true when they are not true to me, true in my own experience?" But it does make a difference that they are true in themselves. For if your personal want of experience is held as proving that it is all moonshine, then all is finished – there is no hope for you or me or anybody. If on the other hand these things are true but not yet realised by you, then there is hope, a possibility at least. From the point of view of reason you may be right in thinking that because you have not realised yet, you can never realise – though it does not seem to me an inevitable conclusion. From the same point of view I also may be right in concluding from my experience and that of other Yogis that there is no such inevitability and that with the persistent aspiration in you and the vairagya we have the conditions for a realisation that must come – sooner, for there are sudden liberations, or later.

28 August 1934" (35: 494-95)

"Certainly, my force is not limited to the Asram and its conditions. As you know it is being largely used for helping the right development of the war and of change in the human world. It is also used for individual purposes outside the scope of the Asram and the practice of Yoga; but that, of course, is silently done and mainly by a spiritual action. The Asram however remains at the centre of the work and without the practice of Yoga the work would not exist and could not have any meaning or fruition. But in the Yoga itself there are different ways of proceeding for different natures, even though the general path is the same, surrender to the Divine and change of nature. But surrender to the Divine in the completest sense cannot be achieved in a short time, nor can the change of the nature. On the whole, one has to go as quickly as one can and as slowly as is necessary – which seems contradictory but is not.

13 March 1944" (35: 496)

Spiritual Force and the Body

"It is a pity that *X* could not write all this time. Formerly when she wrote often she used to get better after writing. It is also a pity that she has been told by the doctors that she is not going to live; even if it is true, such a thing should not be told unless in case of necessity (which does not exist in her case), for it takes away much of the power of resistance and diminishes what chances of cure and survival there were. *X*'s physical destiny has always been against her but this is a thing that *can* be cancelled if one can have sufficient faith and inner strength and openness and receive the spiritual force.*

27 June 1935" (35: 497)

* The woman referred to here as X lived until 1993. – Ed.

"Perhaps I might say a word about Ramakrishna's attitude with regard to the body. He seems always to have regarded it as a misuse of spiritual force to utilise it for preserving the body or curing its ailments or taking care for it. Other Yogis – I do not speak of those who think it justifiable to develop Yogic siddhis, but of those who think that that should be avoided – have not had this complete disregard of the body: they have taken care to maintain it in good health and condition as an instrument or a physical basis for their development in Yoga. I have always been in agreement with this view: moreover, I have never had any hesitation in the use of a spiritual force for all legitimate purposes including the maintenance of health and physical life in myself and in others – that is indeed why the Mother has given flowers, not only as a blessing but as a help in illness. I put a value on the body first as an instrument, *dharmasādhana*, or, more fully, as a centre of manifested personality in action, a basis of spiritual life and activity as of all life and activity upon the earth, but also because for me the body as well as the mind and life is a part

of the divine whole, a form of the Spirit and therefore not to be disregarded or despised as something incurably gross and incapable of spiritual realisation or of spiritual use. Matter itself is secretly a form of the Spirit and has to reveal itself as that, can be made to wake to consciousness and evolve and realise the Spirit, the Divine within it. In my view the body as well as the mind and life has to be spiritualised or, one may say, divinised so as to be a fit instrument and receptacle for the realisation and manifestation of the Divine. It has its part in the divine Lila, even, according to the Vaishnava sadhana, in the joy and beauty of Divine Love. That does not mean that the body has to be valued for its own separate sake or that the creation of a divine body in a future evolution of the whole being has to be contemplated as an end and not a means – that would be a serious error which would not be admissible. In any case, my speculations about an extreme form of divinisation are something in a far distance and are no part of the preoccupations of the spiritual life in the near future. 7 December 1949" (35: 497-98)

The Working of the Therapeutic Force

"The Divine Grace has certainly done something. I [*the Ashram doctor*] acted according to your advice, and *X* felt better the whole day.

It was not the Divine Grace but the Divine Force. If it had been the Grace, it would simply have said तथास्तु [*tathāstu*] and the thing would be done. As it is, last night I had to work a damned lot for this result – I only hope it will last and complete itself. 30 January 1935

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> But may I ask you why you are wasting such a lot of Force when a word could do the job? Why not cut short our labour and the patients' discomfort by saying तथास्तु? Is it as easily done as it is said? If working "a damned lot" reduces the temperature only by one degree and that too for 12 hours or less, what am I to think?

I did not expect you to take my तथास्तु with such grim seriousness. Speaking semi-seriously, I am not here to do miracles to order, but to try to get in a new consciousness somewhere in the world – which is itself however to attempt a miracle. If physical miracles happen to tumble in in the process, well and good, but you can't present your medical pistol in my face and call on me to stand and deliver. As for the Force, application of my force, short of the supramental, means always a struggle of forces and the success depends on (1) the strength and persistency of the force put out, (2) the receptivity of the subject, (3) the sanction of the Unmentionable – I beg your pardon, I meant the Unnameable, Ineffable, Unknowable. *X*'s physical consciousness is rather obstinate, as you have noticed, and therefore not too receptive. It may feel the Mother inside it, but to obey her will or force is less habitual for it.

31 January 1935

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> I still can't understand why you should bother to follow us doctors. The Divine can very easily act from the supramental consciousness directly; you don't really need a diagnosis given by ordinary men!

If things were like that, why the deuce should we have Doctors or a dispensary at all? And what would have been the use of your 20,000?* We don't propose to do the whole business of the inside and outside off our own bat. You are as necessary for this as *X* for the building or others for their work.

> Another thing – why should a mental formation obstruct the supramental?

Who told you we are acting from supramental consciousness? We are not and cannot until the confounded quarrel with Matter is settled. 1 February 1935

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* The amount (in rupees) paid by the correspondent for his medical education. – Ed.

> What is this "confounded quarrel with Matter" you mention? Does this refer to the lower vital and physical movements of the sadhaks?

I am not speaking of the sadhaks, but the resistance of the Earth nature itself in its material parts. But these are things you people cannot understand unless you have less childlike notions about things.

> I am still wondering why there should be doctors and a dispensary at all! Isn't it a paradox – the Divine sending his disciples to the human physician?

Rubbish! This is a world of the play of forces, sir, and the Doctor is a force. So why should not the Divine use him? Have you realised that if the Divine did everything, there would be no world, only a show of marionettes?

2 February 1935…

> Can't you send me some force? I am willing to try to believe or *à la X* remain passive – but I am not so foolish and irrational not to avail myself of any kindly force because of my mental reservations.

As for the Force, I shall write some other time. I have told you that it is not always efficacious, but works under conditions like all forces; it is only the supramental Force that works absolutely, because it creates its own conditions. But the Force I am using is a Force that has to work under the present world conditions. It is not the less a Force for that. I have cured myself of all illnesses except three by it and those too when they come I have kept in check; the fact that I have not succeeded yet in eliminating the fact or probability of those three does not cancel the fact of my success with the others. As for the Mother, she used formerly to cure everything at once by the same Power – now she has no time to think about her body or to concentrate on it. Even so when she makes a certain inner concentration she can see, read etc. perfectly well without glasses, but she has no time to work out the possibility which that shows. The prevalence of illness just now is a fact; it is part of the struggle that is going on in the domain of Matter. But even so there are plenty of people in the Asram who get rid of their ills by reliance on the Mother. If all cannot do it, what does that prove or disprove? It only proves that the Power does not work absolutely, miraculously, impossibly, but it works by certain given means and under conditions. I have always said that, so what is there in that that is new or that annihilates the truth of the Yoga? 6 February 1935" (35: 498-501)

"There has been no negligence on our part in putting the force for *X*'s change – the Mother has been doing that daily; nor is the trouble she has contracted one for which we are in any way responsible – it is not imposed as an ordeal or anything else. If there is so obstinate a persistence of her attachment and the demands it makes, it is because there is in her own vital a resistance to the Force that would remove it. If there were the complete consent in the being for giving it up (not only mental wish or prayer, however strong), it could not possibly last – at any rate in this form, – only at most for a time in fragments of the old habit. There is in her vital a certain violence of temperament – I do not mean merely a tendency to violence of speech or act, but an exaggerated intensity in the feelings and vital reactions, and this is the source of the trouble. For it is this that when asked to give up the claim and attachment, has reacted vehemently calling in an outside Force to support its resistance. When this rises, her mind also begins to justify the claim and demand, her vital feels very hurt and angry with the Mother because she does not support it. All that is proof of a very familiar kind of resistance which refuses to yield to the mind's will or the soul's aspiration. It is like that in *X*; it is so in many others here.

The Divine Force does not act now in an omnipotent ease regardless of conditions – it might do that if it were the pure supramental Force in its native action; but that is not yet. Here conditions have been created and it acts under those conditions. You speak of the Force acting in the case of the illnesses you have treated. No doubt, but here too it is under conditions – only, favourable conditions. For you believe and are conscious of the Force, your whole will is to cure, the patient's will is to get well – the more he assents to the treatment, the more quickly the Force acts – the one obstacle is the force of the illness itself and the patient's habitual subjection to it. But with everything else against it, that does not succeed in remaining. It is quite otherwise in these things where the consent of the being is far from being complete, where the mind often consents to and justifies the illness when it comes, even takes strongly sides with it, where the vital is there with its revolt and clamour and tempest. It is only if the sadhak's resolution is firm and one minded, not to assent to the attack when it comes, to refuse all mental justification of it, to detach himself from the vital movement in the very time of its action that the liberation can be done with the clarity and ease which you desire.

Otherwise, the only thing to be done is to keep up the pressure of the force quiet and strong and persistent until it gets into the vital itself and makes it reject its own movement. For that you must help by getting rid of the violence and impatience in your own nature and being yourself patient, firm and persistent. You are here to change your nature and the difficulty is no reason for throwing up the spiritual endeavour. All this talk of going away cannot help – it would be of no advantage to yourself or to *X* in any way – any more than her talk of going has any sense or is in any way reasonable.

Keep firmly to your object, develop that calm and force in the vital as well as the mind which are the basis of the spiritual life. That will help more in getting *X*'s morbid rushes of excitement to subside and the control to come in her also. 9 August 1936

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No need to give up your faith, for it is faith that gets things done and even makes the impossible possible. But it has to be kept when even there is no immediate result. In the physical care of a patient also there are adverse periods when the resistance is great and obstinate and there seems to be more swinging back than going forwards or a persistent recurrence of the trouble. Faith persisting and the call bring down after a time sufficient Force to overcome the obstacle. 11 August 1936

I have not yet written about the Force because it is too complex to be adequately stated in a short space and I had no time these days for anything long. Anyhow, the clue is that the Force does not act in a void and in an absolute way, like a writing on a blank paper or in the air, the "Let there be light and there was light" formula. It comes as a Force intervening and acting on a very complex nexus of forces that were in action and displacing their disposition and interrelated movement and natural result by a new disposition, movement and result. It meets in so doing a certain opposition, very often a strong opposition from many of the forces already in possession and operation. To overcome it three factors are needed, the power of the Force itself, i.e. its own sheer pressure and direct action on the field of action (here the man, his condition, his body), the instrument (yourself) and the instrumentation (treatment, medicine). I have often used the Force alone without any human instrument or outer means, but here all depends on the recipient and his receptivity – unless as in the case of many healers there are unseen beings or powers that assist. If there is an instrument in direct touch with the patient, whether the doctor or one who can canalise the force, then the action is immensely assisted, – how much depends on the instrument, his faith, his energy, his conveying power. Where there is a violent opposition, this is frequently not enough or at least not enough for a rapid or total effect, the instrumentation (treatment or medicine) is needed. It is especially where the resistance of the body or the forces acting on the body-consciousness is strong that the medicine comes in as an aid. But if the doctor is non-psychic or the medicine the wrong one or the treatment unplastic, then they become an added resistance which the Force has to overcome. This is a very summary and inadequate statement, but it gives the main points, I believe.

P.S. I forgot to say that the surroundings, especially the people around the patient, the atmosphere, the suggestions it carries or they give to him, are often of a considerable importance. 24 January 1936" (35: 502-04)

Therapeutic Force and Medical Diagnosis

> "I was under the impression that it is quite possible for the intuition to know the exact condition of a patient without going through any mental processes like deduction from evidence and so arrive at a diagnosis like a shot.

It can if you can train it to act in that field and if you can make it the real Intuition which sees the things without ranging among potentialities.

> But I find that it is not so. In several recent cases you have insisted on knowing this or that about the patient's condition. But what is the need of your knowing these things? Is not Yogic vision more powerful and accurate than our external optical capacities?

As for me, I have no medico in me, not even a latent medico. If I had, I would not need an external one but diagnose, prescribe and cure all by my solitary self. My role in a medical case is to use the force either with or without

medicines. There are three ways of doing that – one by putting the Force without knowing or caring what the illness is or following the symptoms – that however needs either the mental collaboration or quiescence of the victim. The second is symptomatic, to follow the symptoms and act on them even if one is not sure of the disease. There an accurate report is very useful. The third needs a diagnosis – that is usually where the anti-forces are very strong and conscious or where the patient himself answers strongly to the suggestions of the illness and unwittingly resists the action of the Force. This last is usually indicated by the fact that the thing gets cured and comes back again or improves and swings back again to worse. It is especially the great difficulty in cases of insanity and the like. Also in things where the nerves have a say – but in ordinary illnesses too. 1 April 1935" (35: 505)

> "I felt some improvement in the leg but the pain has not gone completely. Generally the medicines of *X* [*a homeopath*] are effective, but not in my case. Why is it so? I have heard that he is a wonderful medium. You have worked through him in the case of outside people, why not in me? Does that mean that they were more open to your force than I was? Kindly explain.

X is a remarkable medium, but he is more successful with people outside than with the sadhaks – (not that he has not succeeded with many of them also). For this there are two reasons. People outside are impressed by his apparently miraculous cure and believe implicitly and follow his treatment – the sadhaks question and dispute it; this mental opposition has a reaction upon the result of the treatment (e.g. *X* told me there had been a great improvement in *Y*'s illness, *Y* denied that there had been any visible or undoubted improvement, yet today Dr. *Z* told the Mother that he was amazed by the improvement, he had not thought such a thing possible, but now he knew because he had seen it.) The other reason is that sadhaks ought not to need an intermediary between themselves and the Mother – their bodies as well as their minds ought by this time to have become sufficiently receptive for that – outside people do need a medium, for they cannot be expected to have the same receptivity.

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> Today's case has again convinced me that *X* doesn't know much about physiology, pathology, dieting, diagnosis, etc. You may say, "Homeopaths are concerned with symptoms." But I shall be the last to believe that he cured this man by relying on symptoms alone.

Because you are tied in your own system and do not understand that Nature is not so rigid as your mental ideas.

> All big homeopaths, I have heard, were originally allopaths who knew anatomy, physiology, pathology etc. *X* is unique and his cures also unique. I am puzzled about the real mystery behind.

Is it not the very principle of homeopathy that it cures the disease by curing the symptoms? I have always heard so. Do you deny that homeopaths acting on their own system, not on yours, have cured illnesses? If they have, is it not more logical to suppose that there is something in their system than to proclaim the sacrosanct infallibility of the sole allopathic system and its principle? For that matter I myself cure more often by attacking the symptoms than by any other way, because medical diagnosis is uncertain and fallible while the symptoms are there for everybody to see. Of course if a correct indisputable diagnosis is there, so much the better – the view can be more complete, the action easier, the result more sure. But even without infallible diagnosis one can act and get a cure. 23 December 1935" (35: 508-09)

> "A symptomatic treatment can't be applied in cases where the same symptom is produced by two or three different diseases.

Why can't it? There is a possibility that you can strike at the cause, whatever it be, through the symptoms and you can kill the root through the stalk and leaves and not start by searching for the roots and digging them out. That at any rate is what I do. 24 December 1935

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> I wonder whether our mode of looking at things is altogether wrong. If there really are such drugs in homeopathy that can give results in cases where we [*allopaths*] have almost none, it would be worthwhile trying to study it and combine both systems.

Certainly there are – the universe is not shut up in the four walls of allopathic medicine. There are plenty of cases of illnesses being cured by other systems (not homeopathy alone) when they had defied the allopaths. My experience is not wide but I have come across a good number of such cases.

24 December 1935

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> *X* gives a high-blood-pressure patient on the verge of heart-failure "moderate" licence in eating, drinking etc. He calls it "leaving to Nature"!

Well, I have followed that system with myself and others and gone on the basis that Nature is very largely what you make of her – or can make of her.

28 December 1935

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> I believe that an allopath would have been as successful as *X* if he had the backing of your Force.

The Force needs an instrument and an instrumentation also sometimes. The instrument was *X*, the instrumentation partly at least his drugs. I don't believe in the story of the inefficiency of homeopathic drugs only because they are homeopathic. Also, I don't believe that *X* knows nothing about them and can't properly apply them. I have noted almost constantly that they have a surprising effect, sometimes instantaneous, sometimes rapid, and this not on *X*'s evidence alone, but in the statement of his patients and the visible results. Not being an allopathic doctor, I can't ignore a fact like that.

> Some symptoms like headache, vomiting etc. may be caused by many diseases, such as brain-tumour, syphilis, high blood-pressure, etc. If you tell me that a homeopathic medicine for headache, vomiting etc. will be a panacea for all these diseases, it will be difficult for me to accept it.

Tumour, syphilis etc. are specialities, but what I have found in my psycho-physical experience is that most disorders of the body are connected, though

they go by families, – but there is also connection between the families. If one can strike at their psycho-physical root, one can cure even without knowing the pathological whole of the matter and working through the symptoms as a possibility. Some medicines invented by demi-mystics have the power. What I am now considering is whether homeopathy has any psycho-physical basis. Was the founder a demi-mystic? I don't understand otherwise certain peculiarities of the way *X*'s medicines act.

> Allopaths after all are not yogis and have no third eyes! Still I should say that mistaken diagnoses of appendicitis, for example, are very rare.

Good heavens! It happened in scores and scores of cases when there was the appendicitis mania among doctors in France – and they have other manias also.

> Why ignore the wonderful things due to thousands of right diagnoses and let sporadic cases of error loom large in your eyes?

Sporadic cases! I have heard of any number of them, they are as plentiful as blackberries in Europe. And as for difference of diagnosis it is almost the rule except when doctors consult together and give concessions to each other. Don't try to throw allopathic dust in my eyes, sir! I have lived a fairly long time and seen something of the world before my retirement and much more after it.

28 December 1935

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> Is there not some occult healing power in homeopathic medicine which effects miraculous cures? Or is it the doctor who has it?

I suppose it is as much the man and the force working through him as the medicine that makes the difference. I doubt if the medicine by itself could do so much.

11 January 1936

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The Mother and I have no preference for allopathy; the Mother thinks doctors very usually make things worse instead of better, spoiling Nature's resistance to illness by excessive and ill directed use of their medicines. We have been able to work through *X*'s homeopathy far better than through anything else – though it is likely that the Force working through homeopaths who were not conscious instruments might not have succeeded better than with the allopaths.

September 1936

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> I am taking *X*'s medicine, but there is no marked result as yet in regard to the nervous weakness. The only effect is in the relief of pain. Pray free me from this nervous trouble.

How then was *X* left for days under the impression that there was nothing the matter in this respect? If you want his treatment to succeed you must inform

him from day to day accurately, without suppression or exaggeration of all the symptoms happening. This treatment is a system which deals with the symptoms as they come from day to day and shapes itself accordingly. In every case in which *X* succeeded "markedly" daily reports of the utmost fullness were given. Apart from that, in a case like yours of long duration immediate miraculous results cannot be expected. I told you that you must stick patiently to the treatment for a long time, if you wanted a radical cure.

13 September 1936

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> I must say that *X*'s theories about disease are absurd, however successful he may be as a homeopath-physician.

You may say what you like about the homeopathic theories, but I have seen *X* work them out detail by detail in cases where he had free and unhampered action and the confidence of the patients and their strict obedience and have seen the results correspond to his statements and his predictions based on them fulfilled not only to the very letter but according to the exact times fixed, not according to *X*'s reports but according to the daily long detailed and precise reports of the allopathic doctor in attendance. After that I refuse to believe, even if all the allopaths in the world shout it in unison, that homeopathic theory or *X*'s interpretation and application of it are mere rubbish and nonsense. As to mistakes all doctors make mistakes and very bad ones and kill as well as cure – my grandfather and one of my cousins were patently killed by one of the biggest doctors in Bengal. One theory is as good as another and as bad according to the application made of it in any particular case. But it is something else behind that decides the issue.

> Just hear what grave errors he has committed. He said to me that he used his drug to bring about the profuse menstruation in *Y*'s case. Then he asked me whether this profuse flow should be stopped. Yes, I said, it must be stopped.

To bring out the latent illness and counteract it is a recognised principle in homeopathy and is a principle in Nature itself. He misapplied it here because he was in ignorance of the full facts about the menstrual trouble.

3 October 1936" (35: 510-14)

Efficacy of the Various Systems of Medicine

"I have put down a few comments to throw cold water on all this blazing hot allopathism. But all these furious disputes seem to me now of little use. I have seen the working of both systems and of others and I cannot believe in the sole truth of any. The ones damnable in the orthodox view, entirely contradicting it, have their own truth and succeed – also both the orthodox and heterodox fail. A theory is only a constructed idea-script which represents an imperfect human observation of a line of processes that Nature follows or can follow; another theory is a different idea-script of other processes that also she follows or can follow. Allopathy, homeopathy, naturopathy, osteopathy, Kaviraji, hakimi have all caught hold of Nature and subjected her to certain processes; each has its successes and failures. Let each do its own work in its own way. I do not see any need for fights and recriminations. For me all are only outward means and what really works are unseen forces behind; as they act, the outer means succeed or fail – if one can make the process a right channel for the right force, then the process gets its full utility – that is all. 3 October 1936" (35: 514)

No Formal Initiation in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

"No one is initiated in this Yoga in any formal way. Those are accepted by the Mother who are found to be called or chosen from within for this path or for Sri Aurobindo's work. That acceptance is sufficient. Those are considered as called or chosen who can open and be receptive to the Power that goes from her here and can feel its working. If by doing what he is doing now, he can in time thus open and receive and feel the Power that will be a sign that he is meant for this way of Yoga. Nothing else is needed; prayer and aspiration are sufficient, if there is sincerity and a true call within.

23 February 1930" (35: 542)

Entering Sri Aurobindo's Path

"You had better send a copy of this letter to *X* and ask him to be careful in future with those whom he takes for the sadhana. Everybody must be made to understand clearly that this is not a sadhana of emotional and egoistic *bhakti*, but of surrender. One who makes demands and threatens to commit suicide if his demands are not complied with, is not meant for this Yoga. Also they must understand that they must not consider that they have a right to be called here at their own demand either for darshan or for permanent residence. Farther, it is not the habit of Sri Aurobindo or the Mother to answer every letter written to them; they do not answer unless there is a special reason for reply. Sadhaks who write about their sadhana will get the help they need if they take the right attitude and can receive it. But no written answer can be demanded for any letter.

You may write also to the boy himself to the following effect.

(1) If he cannot take the right attitude, he had better leave this Yoga and take to the ordinary life or follow some other path like Gandhi's.

(2) *Satyāgraha* and *prāyopaveśana* are no parts of this Yoga – they are parts of Gandhi's teaching and practice, but anyone who tries to bring them in here will be considered unfit to be Sri Aurobindo's disciple. If he writes again in this strain, no farther notice will be taken of him and he will be left to his own ways.

(3) It is not the habit of the Mother to answer letters written to her; all letters are written by you under my instructions or at the Mother's order. But no disciple has the right to demand an answer to his letter. If he writes about his sadhana, he will receive *silent* help, provided he has the capacity to receive it and the right attitude. In future he must expect no direct answer to his letters; if anything has to be said, you will write through *X*.

2 August 1930" (35: 543-44)

Two Stages in the Yoga

"You can also tell him that there are two stages in the Yoga, one of preparation and one of the actual intensive sadhana. It is the first that he can undertake. In this stage aspiration in the heart with prayer, bhakti, meditation, a will to offer the life to the Divine are the important things. Purification of the nature is the first aim to be achieved. There should be no over-eagerness for experiences but such as come should be observed and, if helpful to the right attitude and true development, accepted. All that flatters the ego or feeds it should be rejected. There should be no impatience if the progress is slow or difficulties many – all should be done in a calm patience – and full reliance on the Divine Mother. This period tests the capacity of the sadhak and the sincerity of his aspiration towards the Divine. 12 November 1936" (35: 551)

Three Kinds of Arrangements in the Ashram

"You can write to *X* answering his questions.

There are three kinds of arrangements

(1) Those who live outside, rent their own house and see to their own arrangements.

(2) A room is sometimes given in the Asram to those who come for sadhana, as well as food etc.; but they pay a monthly sum so long as they stay.

(3) Those who are accepted as permanent resident members of the Asram and give all they have as property or income; these have nothing to pay.

If he comes, it is probably the first that would suit him best, at least at the beginning.

You can write this on your account and need not give it as coming from me. I have not yet decided anything about him. circa 1929" (35: 570)

A Way to Avoid Severe Internal Struggles

"Yes, you can leave everything and come to the Asram; but we suggest that, if it is at all possible for you to take a prolonged leave, say for six months, you should do that first. The reason is that there is sure to be a strong pressure on you (spoken or unspoken), especially from your father's side to return, so it is surest to test yourself first and see that there is no response in yourself, otherwise you might be subjected to a severer internal struggle if you come permanently at once. If all is well then the six months can become a permanent stay. But if leave is not possible, then you can give up all and come.

20 October 1933" (35: 579)

The Absurdity of the Idea That the Divine is in Need of the Instruments

> "In some minds there is, I think, the idea that the Divine is "in need" of instruments for the work of manifestation. With this idea are associated some very curious ideas. I suppose the Divine may be in need of us in his own supramental way, but that cannot mean that we have not to make any effort.

What you say is right. This attitude that the Divine has need of the sadhak and not the sadhak of the Divine, is utterly wrong and absurd. When people are accepted here, they are given a chance of a great Divine Grace, of being instruments in a great work. To suppose that the Divine *cannot* do his work without the help of this or that person is surely most arrogant and illogical. They ought to remember the Gita's ऋतेऽपि त्वां, "even without thee" the work can be done, and its निमित्तमात्रं भव. 11 April 1934" (35: 580-81)

A Period of Trial Before Entering the Path

"I have read and considered your letter and have decided to give you the opportunity you ask for – you can reside in the Asram for two or three months to begin with and find out whether this is really the place and the path you were seeking and we also can by a closer observation of your spiritual possibilities discern how best we can help you and whether this Yoga is the best for you.

This trial is necessary for many reasons, but especially because it is a difficult Yoga to follow and not many can really meet the demands it makes on the nature. You have written that you saw in me one who achieved through the perfection of the intellect, its spiritualisation and divinisation; but in fact I arrived through the complete silence of the mind and whatever spiritualisation and divinisation it attained was through the descent of a higher supra-intellectual knowledge into that silence. The book, *Essays on the Gita*, itself was written in that silence of the mind, without intellectual effort and by a free activity of

this knowledge from above. This is important because the principle of this Yoga is not perfection of the human nature as it is but a psychic and spiritual transformation of all the parts of the being through the action of an inner consciousness and then of a higher consciousness which works on them, throws out the old movements or changes them into the image of its own and so transmutes lower into higher nature. It is not so much the perfection of the intellect as a transcendence of it, a transformation of the mind, the substitution of a larger greater principle of knowledge – and so with all the rest of the being.

This is a slow and difficult process; the road is long and it is hard to establish even the necessary basis. The old existing nature resists and obstructs and difficulties rise one after another and repeatedly till they are overcome. It is therefore necessary to be sure that this is the path to which one is called before one finally decides to tread it. 26 March 1937" (35: 585-86)

Unwelcome Visitors

> "*X* has come here. If I happen to see him, what should be my attitude? If I speak to him should I advise him to stay here or go away?

X has come here not only without permission but in spite of repeated prohibitions. He cannot be received in the Asram or encouraged to stay at Pondi. It is not good for him; his mental illness would increase and it would be the cause of endless trouble for himself and others. To live a normal life with work and study and without intensive sadhana or seclusion is his only chance of keeping normal.

You must tell him, if you see him, to go away and if he can be persuaded to return to the Gurukul and live a normal life, that would be the best for him.

23 October 1938" (35: 587-88)

The Purpose of the Ashram

"This is not an Asram like others – the members are not Sannyasis; it is not *mokṣa* that is the sole aim of the Yoga here. What is being done here is a preparation for a work – a work which will be founded on Yogic consciousness and Yoga-Shakti, and can have no other foundation. Meanwhile every member here is expected to do some work in the Asram as part of his spiritual preparation. 16 August 1932" (35: 590)

"It is not absolutely necessary to abandon the ordinary life in order to seek after the Light or to practise Yoga. This is usually done by those who want to make a clean cut, to live a purely religious or exclusively inner and spiritual life, to renounce the world entirely and to depart from the cosmic existence by cessation of the human birth and a passing away into some higher state or into the transcendental Reality. Otherwise it is only necessary when the pressure of the inner urge becomes so great that the pursuit of the ordinary life is no longer compatible with the pursuit of the dominant spiritual objective. Till then what is necessary is a power to practise an inner isolation, to be able to retire within oneself and concentrate at any time on the necessary spiritual purpose. There must also be a power to deal with the ordinary outer life from a new inner attitude and one can then make the happenings of that life itself a means for the inner change of nature and the growth in spiritual experience. This was what was recommended to *X* when she first wanted to

join the Ashram; she had already acquired the habit of inward concentration and it was suggested to her to proceed farther in this way, opening herself towards the spiritual and psychic aid she could get from here, until she had made farther progress; later on we acceded to her request to join the Ashram. The Ashram itself has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit. There is no general rule as to the stage at which one may leave the ordinary life and enter here; in each case it depends on the personal need and impulsion and the possibility or the advisability for one to take the step, the decision resting with the Mother.

24 April 1947" (35: 592-93)

"The Asram here is not precisely a place for "spiritual training" but for growing into a divine consciousness and divine life. Those who come here must have grown already so far that they are ready to give up all past mental ideas, fixed life-habits or life-tendencies and even the very mould of their physical consciousness and open only to the light of a greater Truth which, by their complete surrender to it, will transform the whole nature. This is very difficult, and it has been found by experience that those who come here unprepared break down after a time and can go no farther, because they cannot consent to get free from their past selves. They find the atmosphere too hard for them to breathe and the pressure of the Truth too exacting. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are therefore unwilling to call anyone here, especially from so great a distance, transplanted from such different surroundings unless they have first assured themselves that the one concerned is ready for the change and truly called to this way of Sadhana. 26 February 1930" (35: 594-95)

The Nature of the Work and the Yoga in the Ashram

> "In the Ashram one finds that people with forceful personalities and great capacities like *X* or *Y* are not able to put their energies to good use. Others, like *Z* and *A*, who have no great capacities, are able to apply their energies better. No doubt the Divine could give great capacities to *Z* and *A*, but could they ever become great writers or artists like *X*, *Y* or *B*?

There is no necessity for everybody to become artists or writers or do work of a public character. *Z* and *A* have their own capacities and it is sufficient for the present if they train themselves to make them fit for the Mother's work. Others have great capacities which they are content to use in the small and obscure work of the Asram without figuring before the public in something big. What is important now is to get the true consciousness from above, get rid of the ego (which nobody has yet done) and learn to be an instrument of the Divine Force. After that the manifestation can take place, not before.

24 October 1935

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It is necessary or rather inevitable that in an Asram which is a "laboratory", as Adhar Das puts it,* for a spiritual and supramental Yoga, humanity should be variously represented. For the problem of transformation has to deal with all sorts of elements favourable and unfavourable. The same man indeed carries in him a mixture of these two things. If only sattwic and cultured men came for the Yoga, men without very much of the vital difficulty in them, then because the difficulty of the vital element in terrestrial nature has not been faced and overcome, it might well be that the endeavour would fail. There might conceivably be under certain circumstances an overmental layer superimposed on the mental, vital and physical and influencing them, but hardly anything supramental or a sovereign transmutation of the human being. Those in the Asram come from all quarters and are of all kinds; it cannot be otherwise.

In the course of the Yoga, collectively – though not for each one necessarily – as each plane is dealt with, all its difficulties arise. That will explain much in the Asram that people do not expect there. When the preliminary work is over in the "laboratory", things must change.

Also much stress has not been laid on human fellowship of the ordinary kind between the inmates, (though good feeling, consideration and courtesy should always be there), because that is not the aim; it is a unity in a new consciousness that is the aim and the first thing is for each to do his sadhana, to arrive at that new consciousness and realise oneness there.

Whatever faults are there in the sadhaks must be removed by the Light from above – a sattwic rule can only change natures predisposed to a sattwic rule.

31 October 1935" (35: 600-601)

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* A. C. Das, review of *Lights on Yoga*. *The Calcutta Review* 47 (October 1935), pp. 101 – 2.

The Psychological State of the Ashramites and the Work of the Ashram

"Your description of the psychological state of the Asramites is vivid and convincing and very true. It is that which we are up against. It is the average physical consciousness of humanity concentrated in the Asram and the one consolation is that if the Force can transform *that*, then it can transform anything. If everybody were as accurately conscious of the nature of the thing as you show yourself in this letter, the transformation would be perhaps more quickly possible. 11 February 1936" (35: 601)

"I certainly cannot sanction your departure on so wrong and trivial a ground. You must be aware, as you admitted at first, that you are yourself to blame. When the Mother after a long and exhausting morning's work still gave you time, it was very wrong of you to reward her by speech of an insulting character. And it was wrong of you to resent her kind letter and her reference to the adverse force which you yourself have called the "devil" and from which you have prayed insistently to be delivered. I shall add that if you allow yourself to be ruled in this way by self-will and an abnormal sensitiveness, you will always create trouble for yourself, no matter where you go.

I could only sanction your departure if I came to the conclusion that you are still too young and raw and ill-balanced to bear the pressure for change which is inevitable in the atmosphere of the Asram. But before this attack, you were progressing very well with a rapid growth in consciousness and character. It ought not to be difficult for you to get over this attack and settle down to a self-development of your undoubted possibilities on the right line. It would be a pity if you threw away the chance by obstinate persistence in the result of a moment's pique.

I prefer not to give any decision till after the 15th. You will do well to wait till then and see if your present feelings do not change.

4 August 1929

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When these moods come upon you, why do you run away from the Mother and avoid her? Why do you not come to her, tell her frankly what you feel and what is in your mind and let her take the trouble from you?

The reasons you give for wishing to leave us are no good reasons at all. If you want to see the richness and greatness of God, you will, if you wait, see more of it with us than you ever can outside. And if you want to see the Himalayas, it will be much better for you to see them hereafter with your Mother beside you.

You are quite mistaken when you say that if you will go, there will be no Devil left in the Asram. The Devil is not here because of you; he is here because he wants to give trouble to the Mother and spoil her work. And what he chiefly wants is to drive her children away from her, and especially those who like you are nearest to her. If you go, he will remain; and not only he will remain, but he will feel that he has won a great victory and will set himself with a double vigour to attack her through others.

You talk of not giving trouble to the Mother and to me; but do you not realise that nothing can be worse trouble to us than your going away? The moods of revolt that come upon you are clouds that pass; but to see you leave us in this way and feel our love rejected and your place near us empty

would be indeed a real trouble to us and we would feel it more deeply than anything else you could do.

You know that it is not true that your sole desire is to go away. It is only so when you are in these moods. And you know that these are moods that pass, and if you allow the Mother to take them away, they go at once. The trouble is that when they come, you take them too much to heart and you begin to think that there is nothing else to do but go away. I assure you that that is no solution and that we would much rather have you with us even with these moods than be separated from you; compared with our love for you, the trouble they give us is mere dust in the balance.

Read this letter, talk with the Mother and act according to your true self; never mind the rest. 7 March 1930

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It is certainly the force hostile to the Yoga and the divine realisation upon earth that is acting upon you at the present moment. It is the force (one force and not many) which is here in the Asram and has been going about from one to another. With some as with *X, Y* and *Z* it has succeeded; others have cast it from them and have been able to liberate the light of their soul, open in that light to the nearness and constant presence of the Mother, feel her working in them and move forward in a constant spiritual progress. Some are still struggling, but in spite of the bitterness of the struggle have been able to keep faithfully to the divine call that brought them here.

That it is the same hostile force would be shown, even if its presence were not for us visible and palpable, by the fact that the suggestions it makes to the minds of its victims are always the same. Its one master sign is always this impulse to get away from the Asram, away from myself and the Mother, out of this atmosphere, and *at once*. For the force does not want to give time for reflection, for resistance, for the saving Power to be felt and act. Its other signs are doubt, tamasic depression, an exaggerated sense of impurity and unfitness, the idea that the Mother is remote, does not care for one, is not giving what she ought to give, is not divine, with other similar suggestions accompanied by an inability to feel her presence or her help, a feeling that the Yoga is not possible or is not going to be done in this life, the desire to go away and do something in the ordinary world – the thing itself suggested varying according to the personal mind. If it were not this one invariable hostile force acting, there would not be this exact similarity in all the cases. In each case it is the same obscurities thrown on the intelligence, the same subconscious movements of the vital brought to the surface, the same irrational impulses pushing to the same action, – departure, renunciation of the soul's truth, refusal of the Divine Love and the Divine Call.

It is the vital crisis, the test, the ordeal for you as for others – a test and ordeal which we would willingly spare to those who are with us but which

they call on themselves by persistence in some wrong line of movement or some falsification of the inner attitude. If you reject entirely the falsehood that this force casts upon the sadhak, if you remain faithful to the Light that called you here, you conquer and, even if serious difficulties still remain, the final victory is sure and the divine triumph of the soul over the Ignorance and the darkness. 30 March 1930

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The Mother has told me what you said to her. In other circumstances I would have asked you to stay on in the confidence that, however sharp the struggle might be, the inner being in you aided by the Divine Force would prevail over the other and foreign influence. But in the condition of mind described by you some relief and rest from the inner struggle seems to be necessary for you. An absence from Pondicherry and change of atmosphere may be the best way to give it.

I do not, however, care to take the responsibility of sending you to Hyderabad, as that might turn out not at all the best, but the worst thing for you. Even if there were nothing else to do, it would not be possible to send you all that way alone; arrangements would have to be made. We would prefer instead to see whether another means cannot be arranged, such as staying in a quiet place in the hills where you could have a healthy change of air for a time and other surroundings and recover your vital strength and nervous balance. We are making enquiries and in a few days hope to be able to let you know what can be done.

I write this much today in answer to your request for an immediate decision; but I have something to say with regard to your spiritual life and its difficulties which I have not had time to finish. I will finish it tomorrow and send it to you. 3 June 1930…

How can the people in this Asram judge whether a man has progressed in Yoga or not? They judge from outward appearances – if a sadhak secludes himself, sits much in meditation, gets voices and experiences, etc. etc. they think he is a great sadhak! *X* was always a very poor Adhar. He had a few experiences of an elementary kind – confused and uncertain, but at every step he was getting into trouble and going off on a side path and we had to pull him up. At last he began to get voices and inspirations which he declared to be ours – I wrote to him many letters of serious warning and explanation but he refused to listen, was too much attached to his false voices and inspirations and, to avoid rebuke and correction, ceased to write or inform us. So he went wholly wrong and finally became hostile. You can tell this by my authority to anybody who is puzzled like yourself about this matter. 11 March 1933…

I don't know why. It is perfectly irrational. People have been going as well as coming since the Asram began. Perhaps it arises from the ignorant idea that the people who go like *X* and *Y* are true bhaktas and sadhaks – while the fact

is that *X* never made much progress even elementary and *Y* has been in a state of vital revolt sometimes against the Mother, sometimes against myself, battling against both, for the last six or seven years. People go away because they are too proud and arrogant to accept the control of the Guru or of the Truth or of the Divine. *Y* had decided that the Truth was in him alone and there was no Truth in myself or in the Mother. 10 October 1933" (35: 604-11)

The Reason for the Inability to Go from the Ashram

"The inability to go can come from the psychic which refuses, when it comes to the point, to allow the other parts to budge, or it can come from the vital which has no longer any pull towards the ordinary life and knows that it will never be satisfied there. It is usually the higher parts of the vital that act like that. What still is capable of turning outwards is probably the physical vital in which the old tendencies have not been extinguished.

19 May 1935" (35: 613)

The Reasons for Giving the Permission to Leave

> "Sometimes people who are in difficulty ask your permission to leave the Ashram, and you and the Mother grant it. But if things turn out badly they say, "Why did I fall even after taking their permission to go?" I think that too much should not be made of such "permissions", which are often just concessions to their weaknesses.

It is well understood that the permission given does not exclude the possibility of the experiment ending badly. But the experiment becomes necessary if the pull of the ego or outer being and that of the soul have become too acute for solution otherwise or if the outer being insists on having its experience.

20 June 1935

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> Do you mean [*in the preceding letter*] that when we feel a strong push to leave, it would be best to make the experiment?

It is especially when the outer being rejects the Truth and insists on living its own life and refuses the rule of the spiritual life that the experiment becomes inevitable. I have never said that it is recommendable.

24 June 1935" (35: 615-16)

The Force Seeking to Push People Away from the Ashram

"I feel a push to leave the Ashram often just before other people actually do leave. A day or two before *X*'s departure on the 19th, I felt the same way. Do all people get such feelings?

There is a Force that is always seeking to push people away; formerly more than half the sadhaks were getting from time to time the suggestion to go. This has diminished now in its general power, but the Force is still there and presses very heavily on some. When it gets anyone to go, then the power of the suggestion revives through that person and spreads to others. Those who are specially sensitive receive it most. 22 September 1935" (35: 616-17)

"If I am not doing anything useful here, why should I not try the world where also there is so much love and joy and the Divine?

Do you think so? Those who have gone do not find the world like that – they feel miserable and harassed on every side. So it has been with all who left here.

28 September 1935

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What takes people away mostly is not the smaller failings like family attachment etc., but either ambition and great vanity or sexual desire or else some extreme form of vital ego which wants its own way and not the Divine's. It is from the first two causes that the departures from the Asram have mostly taken place and *X* and *Y*'s case is no exception to the rule. 1935" (35: 617)

Disapproval of Departure Due to Misunderstanding

"I have surely never said that you should not want the Divine Response. One does Yoga for that. What I have said is that you should not expect or insist on it at once or within an early time. It can come early or it can come late, but come it will if one is faithful in one's call – for one has not only to be sincere but to be faithful through all. If I deprecate insistence, it is because I have always found it creates difficulties and delays – owing to a strain and restlessness which is created – in the nature and despondencies and revolts of the vital when the insistence is not satisfied. The Divine knows best and one has to have trust in His wisdom and attune oneself with His will. Length of time is no proof of an ultimate incapacity to arrive – it is only a sign that there is something in oneself which has to be overcome and, if there is the will to reach the Divine, it can be overcome.

Suicide solves nothing – it only brings one back to life with the same difficulties to be faced in worse conditions. If one wishes to escape from life altogether, it can only be by the way of complete inner renunciation and merging oneself in the Silence of the Absolute or by a bhakti that becomes absolute or by a karmayoga that gives up one's own will and desires to the will of the Divine.

I have said also that the Grace *can* at any moment act suddenly, but over that one has no control, because it comes by an incalculable Will which sees things that the mind cannot see. It is precisely the reason why one should never despair, – that and also because no sincere aspiration to the Divine can fail in the end.

Mother does not remember having said to *X* what you report – it may have been something in another sense which *X* understood in that way. For it cannot be said that you have never received Force from us, you have received it to any extent; it can only be said that you were not conscious of it, but that happens with many. Certainly none of the sadhaks receives and uses all the Force the Mother sends, but that is a general fact and not peculiar to you.

I hope you will not carry out your idea of going suddenly away – if you have to go for a time, it should be with our knowledge and our protection around you. I hope it will not be necessary at all, but certainly it should not be in that way. Whatever else you doubt, you should not doubt that our love and affection will be always with you. But I still hope that you will be able to overcome this despair and this impulse of flight and develop the quiet force of intense will which brings the Light that is sure to come.

May 1936" (35: 619-20)

Wrong Reactions to the Departure of Others from the Ashram

"Each time somebody leaves the Asram, I feel a kick, a shock, a heartquake.

May I ask why? People have been leaving the Asram since it began, not only now. Say 30 or 40 people have gone, 130 or 140 others have come. The big Maharathas, *X*, *Y*, *Z* departed from this too damnable Asram where great men are not allowed to do as they like. The damnable Asram survives and grows. A and B and C fail in their Yoga – but the Yoga proceeds on its way, advances, develops. Why then kick, shock and heartquake?

21 April 1937" (35: 624)

The Divine does not Drive Away Sadhakas from the Ashram

"You said long ago that the Supramental won't tolerate any nonsense of freedom of movement or wrong movement. Is this the kick he is imparting from high up? . . . In these two months he has struck a tall tower like *A* and a fat buoy like *B*; how many of these!

And what then?

I hold the view that the Supramental is descending concentratedly, though I don't feel it,

Not so strongly or concentratedly as it ought, but better than before.

. . . and that those who resist, who are between two fires, have either to quit or to submit.

Even if it were so, that is their own business. The Divine is driving nobody out except in rare cases where their staying would be a calamity to the Asram (for instance it could decide one day to drive *C* out); if they cannot bear the pressure and rush away, listening to the "Go away, go away" push and suggestion of the Hostiles can it be said then that it was the Divine who drove them away and the push and suggestion of the Hostile is that of the Divine? A singular logic! The "Go, go" push and suggestion have been successfully there ever since the Asram started and even before when there was no Asram. How does that square with your theory that it is due to the concentrated descent of the Force? 21 April 1937" (35: 624-25)

Defects in Nature do not Necessarily Justify Departure

"What you say about yourself – the jealousy etc. – is already known; you have yourself written it all before to the Mother. In spite of that we did not consider you unfit for the Yoga. Every sadhak has by nature certain characteristics which are a great obstacle in the way of the sadhana; these remain with obstinacy and can only be overcome after a very long time by an action of the Divine from within. Your mistake is – not to have these defects, others have defects of anger, jealousy, envy etc. very strongly and not only have them within but show them very openly, – but to accept it as a reason for despair and the wish to go away from here. There is absolutely no meaning in going away, for nothing would be gained by it. One does not escape from what is within oneself by changing place; it follows and reproduces itself under other

circumstances and among other surroundings. To go away and die does not solve anything either; for one's being and nature do not end with death, they continue. The only way to get rid of them is to throw them out and the only place where you can get rid of them is here. Here, if you remain, a time is sure to come when these things will go out of you. The suffering it causes cannot cease by going out – it can only cease by the *inner* cause being removed or else by your drawing back from them and realising your true self which even if they rose would not be troubled by them and could refuse to regard them as part of itself – this liberation too can only come here by sadhana.

24 May 1937" (35: 625)

Departure not a Defeat of the Divine

"What you have written is quite correct. To say that the Divine is defeated when a sadhak goes away is an absurdity. If the sadhak allows his lower nature to get the better of him, it is his defeat, not the Divine's. The sadhak comes here not because the Divine has need of him, but because he has need of the Divine. If he carries out the conditions of the spiritual life and gives himself to the Mother's leading, he will attain his goal but if he wants to lay down his own conditions and impose his own ideas and his own desires on the Divine, then all the difficulty comes. This is what happened to *X* and *Y* and several others. Because the Divine does not yield to them they go away; but how is that a defeat for the Divine? 27 May 1937" (35: 625-26)

Going Away and Coming Back

> "It doesn't seem to me that it will be impossible for me to return after I have exhausted my vital attachments. I feel I am destined for the spiritual life and will take the final plunge very soon.

When there is so sharp a difference between the inner and the outer being, it is always the sadhak who has to make his choice. As for coming back, many who have gone out have come back, others have not – for in going out there is always the danger of entering into a current of forces that make return impossible. Whatever decision you make should be clear and deliberate – otherwise, you may go out and as soon as you are there want to come back and after coming here again want to go; that would be inadmissible.

16 May 1938" (35: 627-28)

The True Reason behind the Refusal of Consent for Departure

"I have already answered more than once to what you have written in your last two letters and I can only give the same answer as before.

You write as if our only reason for not consenting to your going away or for not sending you away was that you had nowhere to go. But that is not so. It is because we do not approve of the idea of your going; it is a wrong step altogether without any sense or reason in it.

The difficulties in your nature are not peculiar to you alone among the sadhaks here and their persistence is no sign that you cannot do Yoga. The few years you have been here is too short a time to expect a transformation of the character. Nobody can expect a transformation in so short a time.

It is not a fact that you are incapable of doing Yoga. Anyone who can open his consciousness and have inner experiences is capable of Yoga and that did happen in you. The closing of this openness by a descent into the physical consciousness is something that has happened to most in this Asram and it usually takes a long time to come out of the closing. There is therefore no reason for concluding that this shows incapacity for Yoga and therefore there is no use in staying here.

The only reasonable thing for you to do is to get rid of this wrong idea and remain quietly here where alone the true consciousness and the true life can come to you. 7 July 1938" (35: 628)

The Ashram Precincts

> "Mother said once that all the houses were sanctified by her presence and there were no houses more favoured than others. This appeals to me. For if it was otherwise I would of course try to get into a room within the Asram precincts, as people often say that there the atmosphere is ever so much better.

The atmosphere of the houses as houses is pretty much the same in all the Asram. But people make their own atmosphere as well; a number of people living together may create one that is agreeable to this person and disagreeable to another. A single man also may leave a vital atmosphere in a house which is felt by others who follow him or, even if they do not feel it, they may be

influenced by it for a time – that I have observed often enough. The surroundings also have sometimes an effect. But all that is very secondary – one ought to create one's own atmosphere (of course of the right kind) and keep it, then other vibrations will fall away from it.

What are the Asram precincts? Every house in which the sadhaks of the Asram live is in the Asram precincts. People have a queer way of talking of the houses in this compound as the Asram – it has no meaning. Or do they think the Mother's influence or mine is shut up in a compound?

12 January 1935" (35: 630-31)

The Atmosphere of the Ashram

> "I was surprised to learn that *X* and *Y* are staying in the town. How, after being in the Ashram for two years, can they bear the outside atmosphere? *Z*, who just returned from a visit home, tells me he could not endure the atmosphere over there.

It is certainly strange. Most people after the atmosphere here cannot tolerate the ordinary atmosphere. If they go outside, they are restless until they return. Even *A*'s aunt who was here only for a few months writes in the same way. But probably when people get into the control of a falsehood as *X* and *Y* did, they are projected into the unregenerated vital nature and no longer feel the difference of the atmosphere. 30 May 1933

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It is easier to feel the presence in the atmosphere of the Asram than outside it. But that is only an initial difficulty which one can overcome by a steadiness in the call and a constant opening of oneself to the influence.

16 August 1934" (35: 631)

The Two Atmospheres in the Ashram

"There are two atmospheres in the Asram, ours and that of the sadhaks. When people with a little perceptiveness come from outside, they are struck by the deep calm and peace in the atmosphere and it is only when they mix much with the sadhaks that this perception and influence fade away. The other atmosphere of dullness or unrest is created by the sadhaks themselves – if they were opened to the Mother as they should be, they would live in the calm and peace and not in unrest or dullness. 15 March 1937" (35: 632)

The Reason for Increase in Difficulties After Joining Ashram

"How is it that many sadhaks who had a strong spiritual tendency before coming to the Asram have got stuck in vital difficulties after many years of sadhana?

It is because outside before people come here, they are quite satisfied with their inner spiritual experiences and there is no idea of changing or attempt to change the vital. The moment this idea is imposed on the vital or the attempt begins all the vital difficulties begin. That is one reason, but by itself it would not have mattered so much, the difficulties would have appeared but they could have been conquered without so much trouble. But here owing to the wrong attitude of many sadhaks, their indulgence of the vital opposition and revolt, an atmosphere of extreme vital difficulty has been created and when one comes to stay here all that atmosphere throws itself upon him and it is only by a great and prolonged struggle that he can get back to the spiritual simplicity and straightforward aspiration or the psychic poise.

18 July 1934" (35: 636)

The Ashram and the Hostile Forces

"With Sri Aurobindo and the Mother so close to us here, how is it that we continue to fall into darkness and sorrow – even into struggles with the hostile forces?

You are right. The hostile forces, their attacks, their suggestions ought now to be superannuated, out of date, out of place here in this sadhana. If somebody would realise that and fulfil it in his sadhana, the others might perhaps get strength to follow. At present these things are still here because the sadhaks open themselves to them, out of habit, out of desire, out of attraction for the drama of the vital, out of fear, out of passive response and unresisting inertia. But there is no real necessity for them any longer or true justification for their presence here, – the outer world is a different matter. The sadhana could very well go on and should go on as an unfolding, a natural falling away of defects and difficulties, a coming of greater and greater light and power and peace and transformation. 8 November 1933" (35: 639)

"Many people are experiencing acute difficulties. Is this the result of an inrush of forces or a pressure in the atmosphere?

It is not the pressure from above that creates difficulties. There is a strong resistance to change in the lower planes and certain Forces take advantage of it to throw in vortices of disturbance and try to upset as many people as possible. The only action of the Pressure from above on these is to push them out from the atmosphere of the person touched or from the atmosphere generally. After a time they are pushed out of the atmosphere of the person and can no longer work on him except from a distance with very slight effect. When that can be done generally – so as to push them to a distance from the atmosphere of the Asram, then all this trouble will cease.

9 November 1933" (35: 639)

"You wrote, in the letter that was placed on the notice board,* that there is not "any longer" a justification for the hostile forces here. That suggests that there has been some change in the atmosphere, which makes possible their elimination. But can they really be eliminated?

I wrote because now there is a sufficient descent of Light and Power, for one not to be subject to the ordeals and tests which the Hostile Powers are permitted to put when one has only the mental, or ordinary spiritual forces on the plane of mind, to support one's progress. If you look closely, you will see that when these Forces work now it is in a perfectly irrational, instinctive way, repeating always the same movements without any intellectual or higher vital power behind them. Theirs is now an irrational mechanical method which obscures more in the lowest physical and subconscient than anything else. That means that their true justification for being there is gone.

9 November 1933" (35: 640)

* The letter of 8 November 1933 on page 639. Ed.

"I have something to ask about your letter [*of 8 November 1933*] about the hostile forces. You write that they are "out of place here in this sadhana". But you go on to say that attacks continue because "the sadhaks open themselves to them, out of habit, . . . out of passive response and unresisting inertia". Please explain all this more clearly. Do you mean that the forces that were obstructing the sadhaks have been destroyed?

There is no question of destruction. There is only the question of their exclusion from the Asram. The things enumerated are not causes of the attacks, but they are the occasion, the weakness in the sadhaks that allows them when they could very well be dismissed. The hostile forces are there in the world to maintain the Ignorance – they were there in the sadhana because they had the

right to test the sincerity of the sadhaks and their power and will to cleave to the Divine and overcome all difficulties. But this is only so long as the higher Light has not descended into the physical – now it is descending, it is sufficiently there for anyone to receive it more and more fully, so that the way becomes smooth and open, a progressive development and not a struggle.

10 November 1933

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> Since I wrote to you last, the hostile force has been trying to prove that it still has a place in this world.

Even if it had a place in the world where men do not seek the Divine, it has no right of place in the Asram. 14 November 1933" (35: 640-41)

"Avidya did not interfere with the earth evolution, it existed before the earth life was evolved in the form of Inconscience. The meaning of evolution is the evolving or slow manifestation of life, mind and conscious supermind out of matter with its original Inconscience. Avidya is one thing and the intervention of the hostile forces is another.

> Even if the hostile forces go back to their own region, they will certainly wage war against the transformed divine world. The only way for God to save us from this would be for him to put some pressure on them for self-transformation.

It is supposed that the supramental Light and Force is to descend – if the descent is so complete that these forces are driven back to their own world, it is not likely that any efforts on their part would have any success. It is the darkness or the insufficient Light that gave them their chance to intervene. If there is the victory of the true light, they cannot any longer.

9 December 1933" (35: 642)

"The work of this Yoga and therefore the principle of the Asram life is to take the world as it is and deal with it by a transformation of which the supramental descent is not the first but the final process. The presence of the hostile forces is a part of the world as it is and not to deal with them at all or to act as if they were not there would have been to leave the problem unsolved and the work undone. The sadhaks of the Asram are not spotless Saints or perfect born Yogis but men who carry in them their human nature and typify each in his own way what is in the world and what has to be changed. The influence of the hostile Forces was on them as on all human beings in a less or greater degree, and so long as they open themselves to that influence, it works on them as on the world, – it is only by a perfect sincerity and by a perfect opening to the Light that it can disappear. In that sense the presence of these forces is a test and the world that has to be changed being what it is and their

nature being what it is, it could not be otherwise.

> I believe that each divine being has a hostile being associated with it for some unknown purpose in the Asrama.

It is not only in the Asram but everywhere that it is like that. It is a well-known principle of all occult knowledge that there are these two elements overstanding each seeker of the Truth.

> The Mother once said that she never upheld the hostile forces, nor was she their Mother.

The hostile forces are upheld not by the Mother but by something in the sadhaks themselves which opens the doors to them by concentrated egoism, mental arrogance, vital revolt and many other things, e.g. lying, sex etc."

9 December 1933 (35: 642-43)

> I remember how I was suddenly betrayed into the hands of the hostile forces when I came to the Budhi house. When I asked to be moved to a house near the Asrama, you ordered me to remain here.

The hostile forces were not in the Budhi house any more than in any other and being in a house near the Asram does not save anybody from their attacks – as is shown by the case of several who lived in houses near the Asram. Even to be in the central building does not necessarily save anybody from attacks. It depends on oneself, not on purely external things.

> You have said that the hostile forces are no more necessary here in the Asrama. Will you let me know when they are going to be put out of the Asrama life altogether?

They are no more necessary if the sadhaks open to the Light that is descending – that was what I said – but if they do not open and go on exposing themselves, there will still be a possibility of their presence for some time to come.

9 December 1933" (35: 643)

"Forced opening by a vital or a hostile force means a forced opening and entering of the same force in our mental, vital, physical body.

If you mean an invasion of the consciousness by a hostile force, that happens – but it cannot succeed unless something in the sadhaka either welcomes the invasion or is somehow attracted or won over or somehow responds. As for the ordinary attack not amounting to an opening, that nobody escapes.

16 January 1934" (35: 652)

> "The only way to avoid the "fall" is to preserve oneself by a supreme knowledge and strength that refuses submission even to God if some part of His being should draw one down the path of darkness; and to correct this world-movement at its very source.

I am not aware of any state of supreme knowledge in which the separative ego or the individual becomes greater in knowledge and will than the Divine or can by his own separate power overcome the Divine Will and correct the world movement.

In the supermind there is not this division of one part of the being of God willing something and some other part fighting against it. There all is viewed from an integral vision and founded on a harmony in the being – how this works out cannot be fixed by the mind, which lives and acts in division. If there is no such integral supermind, then I have nothing to do here and will leave it to greater Minds to solve the problem in their own way.

25 January 1934" (35: 654)

> "A converted Asura, i.e. one who has consented to be God's ally and undergo transformation, may easily change colour and become hostile. In fact, the Mother writes in her *Prayers* of some Asuras who promised to be God's servants, but did not keep their promise as they wanted to lord it over others.*

The Mother was not speaking of any Asuras called into the Asram and imposed on some human being there who was to bear the burden of his transformation. She was speaking of certain Lords of the Vital who had taken birth in earthly bodies and tried to prepare the Divine Descent, but each imagining that he alone was the chosen instrument of the Force, spoiled the work they could have done. It was outside the Asram that this originally happened – only the

* The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2003), p. 223.

Mother found the same mentality still persisting and interfering with the manifestation of the Force. But it had no reference to the converted Asura who tried to come here in his subtle Form of whom I spoke – that was many years afterwards – and he did not change colour or become hostile. Any other case of Asuric intervention was due to an affinity in the sadhak himself or a call from him – as in the case of *X* who was always calling Asuras into himself to convert them and although discouraged by us persisted thinking that he had himself a truer knowledge than we of what was wanted for the work. But again I have not known of any Asura who had accepted submission to the Divine becoming hostile. It is men who are under the influence of truly hostile beings who become like that. 25 January 1934" (35: 654-55)

> "The hostile beings generally attack, then make some way in, lay siege and create conditions for invasion and ultimately lead or compel the human being to fall.

I am quite aware of the way in which the unconverted hostile beings, who have a hostile intention, get inside – there have been plenty of cases like that, and their method besides has been known by occultists and Yogins all through the ages. As for attacks, they can attack anybody. Christ and Buddha too had to bear the assaults of the Asura. But invasion in a man is only possible if there is something in him that gives a response and opens the gate.

25 January 1934" (35: 655)

"Summing up, I understand you to say:

(1) That the hostile forces were permitted by God to pervert this creation at the time of the evolution of the human type.

No, I said "when life began to appear", that is before the human evolution.

(2) That when the supermind comes down and manifests itself in the transformed earth consciousness they will go away or be driven out as there would be no need of their presence in this creation or Asrama,

No possibility either, if the supermind is once dominant.

(3) for here they serve some purpose (which I have not quite understood).

The purpose they serve *in the world* is to give a full chance to the possibilities of the Inconscience and Ignorance – for this world was meant to be a working out of these possibilities with the supramental harmonisation as its eventual outcome. The life, the work developing here in the Asram has to deal with the world problem and had therefore to meet, it could not avoid, the conflict with the working of the hostile Powers in the human being.

(4) That you did not allow any hostile being in the Asrama, except one converted Asura, and that no Asura owing allegiance to you had turned hostile.

We did not call any. The converted one too came but did not remain, so he too does not count.

(5) Outside the Asrama some Lords of the vital world took birth on this earth, saying that they would serve God, but in fact lorded it over others. But these were not Asuric forces though they were so called in the book.*

I said nothing about their not being Asuras. I said those to whom the Mother referred were not Asuras who had manifested in the Asram, but outside the Asram and before it was formed – as human beings who wanted to help and prepare the Divine Advent but spoiled their work, not by hostility, but by egoism – just as human beings with an Asuric temperament often do.

(6) The transformation of hostile beings is no part of the Yogin's work – though Mother transformed one. No such thing had been done in the Asrama or will be done.

The Mother's transforming one Asura was an incident, not an object of the Yoga.

I have not said either that it will not be done. If the Divine demands it,

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* The "book" referred to here is apparently the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations*. See footnote 2 on page 654. – Ed.

it will be done; if not, it won't be; but in any case it is not an object of the Yoga.

> (7) That the Supermind can be attained individually though a force may descend by which men can profit according to the self-preparation – though you once said that it could not be done individually.

You have missed altogether the qualifying words which I put with great care and prominent emphasis – if you don't read carefully, you will necessarily misunderstand what I write. I said *"This transformation* cannot be done individually *in a solitary way only*" [*p. 649*]. No individual solitary transformation apart from the work for the earth (which means more than any individual transformation) would be either possible or useful. (Also no individual human being can by his own power alone work out the transformation, nor is it the object of the Yoga to create an individual superman here and there.) The object of the Yoga is to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth, to fix it there, to create a new race with the principle of the supramental consciousness governing the inner and outer individual and collective life. Therefore the existence of the Asram, whatever difficulties it created for ourselves or for the individual, was inevitable. The method was the preparation of the earth consciousness in the human being as represented by the members of the Asram and others (with also a certain working in the general earth consciousness) so as to make the descent of the supramental Force possible. That Force accepted by individual after individual according to their preparation would establish the supramental consciousness in the physical world and so create a nucleus for its own expansion. 31 January 1934" (35: 656-58)

The Difference between the Action of the Hostile Powers and the Ordinary Action of the Lower Nature

"In a letter of November 1933 [*p. 639*], you wrote that the intervention of the hostile forces was no longer necessary. But it seems that they have come full force this year and driven several people away. That suggests that the hostile forces will remain for ever – or at least until the final transformation.

When I said "no more necessary", I did not mean that their action could not go on – I think I expressly said that if the sadhaks persisted in opening themselves to it, it would continue. There is a difference between the action of the hostile powers and the ordinary action of the lower nature. The latter of course goes on until it is changed but there is no necessity for it to take the form of hostile attacks and upsettings; it can be treated as a machinery that has to be set right and with the aid of the higher Light and Power can be set right. There are several who were once taken by hostile attacks who have now

reached the point where they can follow this method, others are approaching it – some of course have always followed and never were attacked, at least in their mind and vital. But there are still many who are very far from it and so the action of the Hostiles continues. 14 October 1935

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There can be no question that it is a most desirable thing that the hostile forces should be destroyed or ejected from the Asram atmosphere and from all hold on the lower vital and physical of the sadhaks – the sooner the better. For the moment they are still able to resist and to keep up the disharmony in this part of Nature. It is only when they do so no more that the capital difficulty in the general sadhana will be over. 9 May 1936" (35: 659)

Reasons for the Lack of Devotion in the Ashram

"How is it that there is so little intensity of devotion here? Is it because there is more insistence on controlling emotions or because of constant Sadhana and the integral movement?

It is true that devotion here is very insufficient – but these cannot be the reasons, for psychic emotion is not discouraged by us and the integral Sadhana is not integral without bhakti. And yet it is a fact that those who come here full of bhakti lose much of it after a time – with a few exceptions. I think it is because of the prevalence of a too positive mind and the habit of criticising everything from a quite external point of view which is rife in the atmosphere.

5 August 1933

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> We have very little devotion and obedience compared to the disciples of Shankara and Buddha or the followers of old yogic disciplines, even though a greater discipline is needed because our aim is higher. This is perhaps due to the fact that you do not impose any discipline. Or perhaps there is a fundamental defect in our aspiration because of the western education many have had. I wonder if Shankara or Buddha or Mahavir would have allowed many of the things we do here.

They would not. All the causes you mention operate – perhaps the westernised atmosphere (even more than the education) of the present times is the strongest, but also the nature of the work to be done. 3 April 1934" (35: 660-61)

Reason for Softness in the Sadhakas After Coming to the Ashram

> "I feel that many have become "soft" after they come here. Is there something in the Yoga itself that makes them soft?

Nothing in the sadhana. It is because their desires had only been limited by poverty and, as soon as the poverty is removed, the desires come surging up. As for the self-imposed renunciation of desire which is of primary importance in this Yoga, only a few ever think of it. 13 June 1934

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> If the Force cannot bring definite and lasting fruit without our individual endeavour, don't you think at least half the sadhaks here will remain in the mud for long if not for ever? Half of them don't seem to want to make any steady personal effort. They depend on the action of your Force alone.

That is why the Asram is what it is. Only those who are taking the Yoga seriously are making any progress. 17 November 1936" (35: 661)

How is it that people here become more soft than in ordinary life and a little hardship or discomfort becomes unbearable? Is it because they live a life of ease here doing no physical work?

What you have noticed is quite correct. It comes from a wrong movement which takes the rejection of asceticism as if it were a sanction for the indulgence of the body in whatever comfort it can get. The right principle is that one should be free from attachment and be able to do without things but also able to have them and use them without being bound or affected. Very few have taken it in that way – the vital has chosen to turn a deaf ear to anything said in that direction and to take as a right the comforts and conveniences given. What you have noted is one of the consequences.

December 1936" (35: 662)

"I have heard that some people here have gigantic egos, like *X* and *Y*, while some have fat egos, like *Z*. What sort of ego do I have?

Your ego is small and not gigantic – not tall and vehement and aggressive like *Y*'s, but squat and inertly obstinate – not fat, completely, nor thin, but short and roundish and grey in colour. 3 November 1935

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I looked up "squat" in the dictionary but could not guess which definition applied to my ego.

Squat = short in stature but broad and substantial, so difficult to get rid of.

You write: "not fat, completely, nor thin, but short and roundish and grey in colour." What do all these symbols stand for?

Not tall and preeminent or flourishingly settled in self-fullness – roundish = plenty of it all the same

Grey = tamasic in tendency, therefore not aggressive, but obstinate in persistence. But these are not symbols, they are the temperamental figure of the ego. 5 November 1935

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Nowadays I find ego in every little act or feeling. Formerly I saw it only when I acted with desire or pride.

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

Half my being is trying hard to reject the sense of ego, while the ego itself colours all my actions. This contradiction creates an inner pain. Will the ego never be dissolved completely?

There is nothing to be troubled about. You ought rather to congratulate yourself that you have become conscious. Very few people in this Asram are. They are all ego-centric and they do not realise their ego-centricity. Even in their sadhana the I is always there, – *my* sadhana, *my* progress, *my* everything. The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, act, do sadhana for the Divine, – not to consider how this or that affects *me* personally, not claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly, but it is the proper way. 31 March 1936

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Many here seem to be proud of their surrender – even though they know that surrender and ego do not go together.

But who has got rid of ego in this Asram? To get rid of ego is as difficult as to make a complete surrender. 10 August 1936" (35: 662-63)

"I sometimes wonder whether anyone here is attaining anything at all? Has anyone realised the Divine? Please don't ask me what I mean by the Divine.

Why shouldn't I ask? If you mean the Vedantic realisation, several have had it. Bhakti realisation also. If I were to publish the letters on sadhana experiences that have come to me, people would marvel and think that the Asram was packed full of great Yogis! Those who know something about Yoga would not mind about the dark periods, eclipses, hostile attacks, despairings, falls, for they know that these things happen to Yogis. Even the failures would have become Gurus, if I had allowed it, with circles of Shishyas! *X* did become one. *Y* of course. But all that does not count here, because what is a full realisation outside, is here only a faint beginning of siddhi. Here the test is transformation of the nature, psychic, spiritual, finally supramental. That and nothing else is what makes it so difficult. 20 May 1936

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Is it only for physical transformation that staying here is necessary? Otherwise sincere sadhana can be done elsewhere as well as here.

I don't suppose the later stages of the transformation including the physical would be possible elsewhere. In fact in those outside none of the three transformations seems to have begun. They are all preparing. Here there are at least a few who have started one or two of them. Only that does not show outside. The physical or external alone shows outside. 11 April 1937

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People here – the Toms, Dicks and Harrys, who would be nowhere beside *X* in the outside world and who would simply have rotted in the gutter if they hadn't found shelter here – even such people criticise him.

The quality of the sadhaks is so low? I should say there is a considerable amount of ability and capacity in the Asram. Only the standard demanded is higher than outside even in spiritual matters. There are half a dozen people here perhaps who live in the Brahman consciousness – outside they would make a big noise and be considered as great Yogis – here their condition is not known and in the Yoga it is regarded not as siddhi but only as a beginning.

12 July 1937

…Is the realisation of the Self a state of perpetual peace, joy and bliss?

If it is thoroughly established, it is one of *internal* peace, freedom, wideness, in the inner being.

Is it a state surpassing all struggles, dualities and depressions?

All these things you mention become incidents in the external being, on the surface – but the inner being remains untouched by them.

Are all troubles of the lower nature conquered finally – especially sex?

No, sir. But the inner being is not touched. 18 July 1937" (35: 666-69)

"Advanced Sadhaks"

"The Mother never speaks of advanced sadhaks – it is the sadhaks themselves who have invented the phrase. Whenever they used it in their letters to me, I have thrown ridicule on the phrase and said I have no knowledge of there being two classes in the Asram, one of advanced sadhaks and the other of non-advanced sadhaks. So the question about *X* does not arise. If a sadhak, whoever he may be, speaks or acts out of anger, rajasic violence or any other unYogic impulse, his speech or action is contrary to the spirit of the sadhana.…

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> Wouldn't it be best if people did not think of themselves as being more advanced than others? It is enough to know that we are on the right path.

Yes, the talk about advanced sadhaks is a thing I have always discouraged – but people go on because that appeals to the vital ego.

13 May 1935" (35: 670-71)

Discipline Defined

"What is discipline?

To act according to a standard of Truth or a rule or law of action (dharma) or in obedience to a superior authority or to the highest principles discovered by the reason and intelligent will and not according to one's own fancy, vital impulses and desires. In Yoga obedience to the Guru or to the Divine and the law of the Truth as declared by the Guru is the foundation of discipline.

12 June 1933" (35: 672)

"What is discipline and how does it apply here, in our Yoga?

It is not the discipline of Yoga, but the discipline of an organisation, the exterior material discipline one has to accept if one is to be part of an organisation. 9 July 1933

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What is discipline?

To live and act under control or according to a standard of what is right – not to allow the vital or the physical to do whatever they like and not to let the mind run about according to its fancy without truth or order. Also to obey those who ought to be obeyed. July 1933" (35: 672)

Need of Self-Discipline

"If there was a perception of the difficulties in the adhar, it ought to have moved you to a more strenuous effort, a deeper call on the help and Grace. To indulge in a bout of gross material self-indulgence was a quite imbecile solution. It is true that the Grace is there for all who aspire and, however one may stumble, if there is a sincere repentance and a will to atone, there need be no cause for despair.

But I must remind you that that is only the individual aspect. There is here an Asram, a group of seekers of the Divine Truth with a collective existence and aim; a work is being done for the Divine against great difficulties and in the midst of a hostile and censorious world which is only too glad of any pretext for assailing it and, if possible, injuring its fair fame and success. A conduct like this deals a wound to the work and the collective effort towards

a higher life. Your proposed escape from your own fall by suicide would not have been a solution and would only do a still greater injury to the divine Work which is, as much as individual realisation, our spiritual endeavour.

I trust that you are sincere in saying that these things are finished for ever. If you had not confessed, the Mother would have been obliged to deal severely with you; but as you have confessed, this lapse may be considered as annulled, provided it is never repeated. A greater frankness and sincerity in laying yourself open to the Mother will help you avoid such aberrations in future.

There is no reason why you should not succeed in your sadhana if, having seen the defects of your lower nature, you take a firm resolve in future and keep it to be more strict with yourself, more trustful in the Divine Grace, more sincerely open to the Mother. 10 September 1933" (35: 673)

> "Some [*personal*] rules I have been following – not reading newspapers, not eating outside, and so forth – now seem like mental dogmas.

Rules like these are intended to help the vital and physical to come under the discipline of sadhana and not get dispersed in fancies, impulses, self-indulgences; but they must be done simply, not with any sense of superiority or ascetic pride, but as a mere matter of course. It is true also that they can be made the occasion of a too great mental rigidity – as if they were things of supreme importance *in themselves* and not only a means. Put in their right place and done in the right spirit, they can be very helpful for their purpose.

8 May 1934" (35: 674)

Importance of Obedience

"In regard to obedience, *X* told *Y*, in a depreciatory way, that it was not that important, that asking for permission to do things was not necessarily surrender, but often was hypocritical.

It seems to me that one obeys rules because if one was to do the opposite, one would go out of your protection.

It is precisely that – one immediately goes out of the protection.

As far as I can see, right action and right movement (after asking you what is right) are rather the first bases of sadhana.

Yes, quite right.

Please cast some light on this, so that I can explain it to *Y*.

It is a deficiency of psychic perception and spiritual discrimination that makes people speak like that and ignore the importance of obedience. It is the mind wanting to follow its own way of thinking and the vital seeking freedom for its desires which argue in this manner. If you do not follow the rules laid

down by the spiritual guide or obey one who is leading you to the Divine, then what or whom are you to follow? Only the ideas of the individual mind and the desires of the vital: but these things never lead to siddhi in Yoga. The rules are laid down in order to guard against certain influences and their dangers and to keep a right atmosphere in the Asram favourable to spiritual development; the obedience is necessary so as to get away from one's own mind and vital and learn to follow the Truth. 8 June 1933…

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What most want is that things should be done according to their desire without check or reference. The talk of perfection is humbug. Perfection does not consist in everybody being a law to himself. Perfection comes by renunciation of desires and surrender to a higher Will. 5 August 1934" (35: 674-75)

Rules in the Life of the Ashram: How Things are Worked Out in It

"What seems to me of more importance is to try to explain how things are worked out here. Indeed very few are the people who understand it and still fewer those who realise it.

There has never been, at any time, a mental plan, a fixed programme or an organisation decided beforehand. The whole thing has taken birth, grown and developed as a living being by a movement of consciousness (Chit-tapas) constantly maintained, increased and fortified. As the Conscious Force descends in matter and radiates, it seeks for fit instruments to express and manifest it. It goes without saying that the more the instrument is open, receptive and plastic, the better are the results. The two obstacles that stand in the way of a smooth and harmonious working in and through the sadhaks are:

(1) the preconceived ideas and mental constructions which block the way to the influence and the working of the conscious force;

(2) the preferences and impulses of the vital which distort and falsify the expression.

Both these things are the natural output of the ego. Without the interference of these two elements my physical intervention would not be necessary.

You are quite right when you do not believe in "Mother likes", "Mother dislikes": it is quite a childish interpretation.

There is a clear precise perception of the Force and the Consciousness at work, and whenever this Force gets distorted or the Consciousness is obscured in its action, I have to interfere and rectify the movement. In most cases things are mixed up and there again I have to intervene to separate the distorted transcription from the pure one.

Otherwise a great freedom of action is left to all, because the Conscious Force can express itself in innumerable ways and for the perfection and integrality of the manifestation no ways are to be *a priori* excluded; a trial is very often given before the selection is made.

22 August 1939" (35: 676-77)

"It is a little difficult from the wider spiritual outlook to answer your question in the way you want and every mental being wants, with a trenchant "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not", especially when the "thou" is meant to cover "all". For while there is an identity of essential aim, while there are general broad lines of endeavour, yet there is not in detail one common set of rules in inner things that can apply to all seekers. You ask "Is such and such a thing harmful?" But what is harmful to one may be helpful to another, – what is helpful at a certain stage may cease to be helpful at another, – what is harmful under certain conditions is helpful under other conditions, – what is done in a certain spirit may be disastrous, the same thing done in a quite different spirit would be innocuous or even beneficial. I asked the Mother indeed what she would say to your question about pleasures and social expansiveness (put as a general question) and she answered, "Impossible to say like that; it depends on the spirit in which it is done." So there are so many things: the spirit, the circumstances, the person, the need and cast of the nature, the stage. That is why it is said so often that the Guru must deal with each disciple according to his separate nature and accordingly guide his sadhana; even if it is the same line of sadhana for all, yet at every point for each it differs. That also is the reason why we say the Divine's way cannot be understood by the mind, – because the mind acts according to hard and fast rules and standards, while the spirit sees the truth of all and the truth of each and acts variously according to its own comprehensive and complex vision. That also is why we say that no one can understand by his personal mental judgment the Mother's actions and reasons for action; it can only be understood by entering into the larger consciousness from which she sees things and acts upon them. That is baffling to the mind because it loses its small measures, but it is the truth of the matter.

To come down to hard facts and it may make the dictum a little more comprehensible. You speak of retirement and you say that if it is good why not impose it – you couple together *X*, *Y*, *Z*, *A*, *B*, *C*! Well, take that last name, *C*, and add to it *D* for he also "retired" and went headlong for an intense and solitary sadhana. *X* and *Y* profited by their seclusion, what happened to *C* and *D*? We forbade *D* to retire, – he was always wanting to give up work, withdraw from all intercourse and spend all his time in meditation; but he did it as much as he could – result, collapse. *C* never asked permission and I cannot say what his retirement was like, but I hear he boasted that by his intense sadhana he had conquered sex not only for himself but all the sadhaks! He had to leave the Asram owing to his unconquerable attachment to his wife and child and he is there living the family life and has produced another child – what a success for retirement. Where the retirement is helpful and fits the mind or the nature, we approve it, but in the face of these results how can you expect us to follow what the mind calls a consistent course and impose it as the right

thing on everybody? You have spoken of your singing. You know well that we approve of it and I have constantly stressed its necessity for you as well as that of your poetry. But the Mother absolutely forbade *E*'s singing? To music for some again she is indifferent or discourages it, for others she approves as for *F*, *G* and others. For some time she encouraged the concerts, afterwards she stopped them. You drew from the prohibition to *E* and the stopping of the concerts that Mother did not like music or did not like Indian music or considered music bad for sadhana and all sorts of strange mental reasons like that. Mother prohibited *E* because while music was good for you, it was spiritually poison to *E* – the moment he began to think of it and of audiences, all the vulgarity and unspirituality in his nature rose to the surface. You can see what he is doing with it now! So again with the concerts – though in a different way – she stopped them because she had seen that wrong forces were coming into their atmosphere which had nothing to do with the music in itself; her motives were not mental. It was for similar reasons that she drew back from big public displays like Udayshankar's. On the other hand she favoured and herself planned the exhibition of paintings at the Town Hall. She was not eager for you to have your big audiences for your singing because she found the atmosphere full of mixed forces and found too you had afterwards usually a depression; but she has always approved of your music in itself done privately or before a small audience. If you consider then, you will see that here there is no mental rule, but in each case the guidance is determined by spiritual reasons which are of a flexible character and look only at what in each case are the spiritual conditions, results, possibilities. There is no other consideration, no rule. Music, painting, poetry and many other activities which are of the mind and vital can be used as part of spiritual development or of the work and for a spiritual purpose – "it depends on the spirit in which they are done."

That being established, that these things depend on the spirit, the nature of the person, its needs, the conditions and circumstances, I will come to your special question about pleasure and especially the pleasure in society of an expansive vital nature.

P.S. Of course there is a category of things that have to be eschewed altogether and of things that have to be followed by all, but I am speaking of the large number that do not fall into the two categories.

24 October 1936

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No, there is no obligation of gloom, harshness, austerity or lonely grandeur in this Yoga. If I am living in my room, it is not out of a passion for solitude, and it would be ridiculous to put forward this purely external circumstance – or *X*'s withdrawnness which is a personal necessity of his sadhana – as if it were the obligatory sign of a high advance in the Yoga or solitude the aim; these are simply incidents which none is called on to imitate. So you need not

be anxious; solitude is not demanded of you, for an ascetic dryness of isolated loneliness cannot be your spiritual destiny since it is not consonant with your swabhava which is made for joy, largeness, expansion, a comprehensive movement of the life-force. And, as for stern gravity and the majesty of a speechless and smileless face, your transformation into that would be terrifying to think of! I may remind you that theMother and myself always recommended to you a sunlit and cheerful progress as the best; if we were inclined to complain of anything in you – which we are not, knowing that one does not choose one's difficulties, – it would not be that you have too much gaiety but that you are not always as gay and cheerful as we would like you to be! The storm, cloud, difficulty, suffering come, but they are no part of the Yogic idea; they belong to the Nature that is now, not to the divine Nature that is to be." (35: 678-81)

"Is it a fact that some sadhaks enjoy the special privilege of having obtained either your or the Mother's sanction for eating meat or fish whenever they like?

No such sanction or privilege has been obtained by anybody from the Mother.

If so, can they cook these things in their residential quarters?

Certainly not, that is strictly forbidden.

Or does the permission apply only to their going out in town to eat these things?

When they do it outside in the town, they are taking a liberty – no liberty has been granted to them.

If no such sanction has ever been given, then how far are the principles of the Asram violated if a local well-wisher or a visitor to the Asram invites us to such feasts? Do they do the right thing by inviting us?

No, they don't do the right thing – if they know of the rule of the Asram.

Those sadhaks who wilfully indulge this vital desire, how do they stand in your estimation? Are they to be classed as especially progressed souls for whom no such bondage to rules and regulations apply?

Not in the least – any such claim is obvious bunkum.

When such sadhaks lead others to believe that they are above the Asram rules, does it not do harm to their own Buddhahood? Then what is the right attitude to take up?

That raises the general question of disregard of the rules of the Asram or of the standards of action in Yoga. As such disregard is widespread and common among the sadhaks, if dealt with radically, it could entail a Pride's purge or Communist purification which would leave in the Asram only a greatly reduced number of inmates. Certain things cannot be tolerated especially if done in the Asram. Apart from that we have been waiting for something to develop inwardly in individual sadhaks which will bring about a change. If it doesn't – well, I suppose a time will come or is coming *when everybody will have to choose.*

I am not aware that there are any Buddhas in the Asram.

The right attitude is to keep strictly oneself to the truth and to affirm it quietly whenever it is necessary to do so.

Would turning down such invitations amount to a breach of etiquette or hurting the feelings of the person inviting?

That too is rubbish. Etiquette cannot take precedence over a rule of life proper to the Asram or the Yoga. 10 November 1938" (35: 681-82)

No Politics in the Ashram

"The rule for permanent residents of the Asram is that they must abstain from political activities altogether. Although this rule is not rigidly imposed on disciples at a distance, yet it is expected that they should not do anything which would compromise the Asram, and, as a matter of fact, no disciple of Sri Aurobindo is at present participating in political agitation.

It is also the rule for permanent members of the Asram that they should put their property at the disposal of the Mother, and they do not spend anything of it for other purposes except with the sanction previously given by her. But as you are not a permanent member, this rule does not apply to you, and the Mother cannot undertake to direct you as to the persons and the purposes to which you should give or refuse financial assistance. As a rule we never interfere in the personal lives or affairs of others than whole-time sadhaks

who have given up everything else for the spiritual life.

I would suggest that the difficulty about giving shelter to Congressmen arises only when there is an arrival of a batch of Salt Law Satyagrahis sent to break the Law. If such a batch arrives at your place and you give them shelter, then, as the law is now being administered, you run the risk of going to jail. It seems to me that, not being yourself a Satyagrahi, you are not bound to give this help or run this risk. Nothing prevents you from receiving a friend who is a Congressman under other circumstances.

The questions you put about financial help to Khaddar and Prohibition and to the National school, must be decided by yourself, I think. I will only ask you to note what I have written in the first paragraph of the letter.

24 May 1930" (35: 682-83)

Guidelines for Writing about the Ashram

"I think I had better make it clear once for all that I do not approve of the publication of articles on controversial political subjects by members of the Asram. It involves the Asram and can prejudice the work of the Mother by raising quite uselessly unnecessary opposition and prejudice of which there is already more than enough. From a deeper point of view it pulls down the work to a lower region of mental and vital forces and the methods current on that lower plane. The work we have to do does *not* belong to that plane and cannot be done by current methods. It can only be done by rising to a higher spiritual plane and working silently from there on the forces in action so as to prepare a favourable field for the growth of the true consciousness and the true life-action. So long as that is not done, to engage in any activity which means opposition and struggle on the lower plane or to resort to its

methods can only put it at a disadvantage and imperil its future. It is from the higher levels that things have to be worked out before the lower can be ready.

Your article is not at all conclusive except to people who are already disposed to be of the same way of thinking. It has besides the appearance of preaching a sort of spiritualised individualism and capitalism, but that is no more the object of our work than the "spiritual communism" which Motilal put into it. To allow that to pass as the economic gospel of this Yoga would not do at all. In the Gita I only explain the spiritual sense of the *cāturvarṇya*; I do not put that forward as my own economic or social teaching. Our aim is to rise to a higher spiritual consciousness and to create from there – to drag in mental forms from the present or past society could only spoil or hamper the purity and freedom of the future spiritual working.

29 September 1938" (35: 688-89)

"It is a rule of the Asram that resident sadhaks shall not engage in any kind of public or propagandist activity political, social or religious; it is only our special permission which could dispense any member of the Asram from conformity to this rule. The Asram exists solely for Yoga and for a purely spiritual purpose; it is not a political or social or religious institution and it abstains from all these activities, this abstention is necessary for its existence. If any member engages in them, it involves the Asram itself and gives it the appearance of entering into activities which are not proper to it, and if any such impression of that kind is created, it may have serious consequences.

It appears that you have been engaging without our permission or authorisation in public activities of various kinds for some time past. This must cease. If you intend to carry them on any farther, you must leave the Asram and go outside; you cannot be allowed to continue them from the Asram and as a member.

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You must not write to all these people encouraging them in the idea of coming here. It is only selected people who can come here. If anybody is encouraged, there would before long be 10,000 instead of 120 – and it would no longer be an Asram. 14 April 1933

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There is no necessity for a society for the translation of the books. I have given my books outside always so that the Asram should not be entangled in these things and there should be no appearance of a propaganda inspired by me. 14 May 1933

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> How far does the arrival of well-known people justify the flutter it causes? Is it a sign that the Truth is spreading?

No, not at all. Well-known or unknown has absolutely no importance from the spiritual point of view. It is simply the propagandist spirit; they think and say "O if Kalelkar comes, the whole of Gujarat will be ours" – as if we were a party or a church or religion seeking adherents or proselytes. One man who earnestly pursues the Yoga is of more value than a thousand well-known men. 16 January 1934

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> I think there is nothing solid about all these magazine articles – a temporary value.

There is no value at all in these things – people read and forget. As for propaganda I have seen that it is perfectly useless for us – if there is any effect, it is a very trifling and paltry effect not worth the trouble. If the Truth has to

spread itself, it will do it of its own motion; these things are unnecessary.

5 September 1934

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It may be said generally that to be overanxious to pull people, especially very young people, into the sadhana is not wise. The sadhak who comes to this Yoga must have a real call, and even with the real call the way is often difficult enough. But when one pulls people in in a spirit of enthusiastic propagandism, the danger is of lighting an imitative and unreal fire, not the true Agni, or else a short-lived fire which cannot last and is submerged by the uprush of the vital waves. This is especially so with young people who are plastic and easily caught hold of by ideas and communicated feelings not their own – afterwards the vital rises with its unsatisfied demands and they are swung between two contrary forces or rapidly yield to the strong pull of the ordinary life and action and satisfaction of desire which is the natural bent of adolescence. Or else the unfit *ādāra* tends to suffer under the stress of a call for which it was not ready, or at least not yet ready. When one has the real thing in oneself, one goes through and finally takes the full way of sadhana, but it is only a minority that does so. It is better to receive only people who come of themselves and of these only those in whom the call is genuinely their own and persistent.

6 May 1935

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It is true that there is in most people here this running after those who come from outside especially if they are well-known or distinguished. It is a common weakness of human nature and, like other weaknesses of human nature, the sadhaks seem not inclined to get rid of it. It is because they do not live sufficiently within, so the vital gets excited or attracted when something important or somebody important (or considered so) comes in from outside.

29 November 1935

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No, *X* should not write to his friends to come here. That would not only be propaganda which we must avoid but done like that it would create a conflict and turmoil – and conflict and turmoil are the wrong atmosphere for the Truth to grow in. It has been the great mistake of schools and religions to fight for the possession of men's minds – that we must not do. We can protect ourselves by spiritual means from attacks from outside, but not enter into mental or outward conflict with others. If his friends are meant to come here, it must happen otherwise.

30 March 1936

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What Tagore or others think or say does not matter very much after all as we do not depend on them for our work but on the Divine Will only. So many have said and thought all sorts of things (people outside) about and against us,

that has never affected either us or our work in the least; it is of a very minor importance. 7 March 1937

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> I am sure you have read the eulogies showered upon Duraiswami on his retirement and enjoyed them immensely, at the same time feeling proud of him and saying, "Ha, ha, here is the fruit of my Force!" It is indeed a great pleasure to see the prestige of the Asram elevated by at least one man, though I suppose you don't give a damn about prestige.

Queer idea all you fellows seem to have of the "prestige" of the Asram. The prestige of an institution claiming to be a centre of spirituality lies in its spirituality, not in newspaper columns or famous people. Is it because of this mundane view of life and of the Asram held by the sadhaks that this Asram is not yet the centre of spirituality it set out to be?

> I want to see how far Duraiswami's character has been changed and moulded by the Force.

Lord, man, it's not for changing or moulding character that this Asram exists. It is for moulding spirituality and transforming the *consciousness*. You may say it doesn't seem to be successful enough on that line, but that is its object.

> I suspect, however, that you are closing in your Supramental net and bringing in all the outside fish!

Good Lord, no! I should be very much embarrassed if all the outside fish insisted on coming inside.

> What about *X*? When do you propose to catch him? . . . It would be a great enrichment of your Fishery. We are all watching with interest and eagerness that big operation of yours. But I don't think you will succeed till your Supramental comes to the field in full-fledged colours, what?

What big operation? There is no operation; I am not trying to hale in *X* as a big fish. I am not trying to catch him or bring him in. If he comes into the true spiritual life it will be a big thing for him, no doubt, but to the work it means only a ripple more or less in the atmosphere. Kindly consider how many people big in their own eyes have come and gone (*Y*, *Z*, *A* to speak of no others) and has the work stopped by their departure or the Asram ceased to grow? Do you really think that the success or failure of the work we have undertaken depends on the presence or absence of *X*? or on my hauling him in or letting him go? It is of importance only for the soul of *X* – nothing else.

Your image of the Fishery is quite out of place; I fish for no one; people are not hauled or called here, they come of themselves by the psychic instinct. Especially, I don't fish for big and famous and successful men. Such fellows may be mentally or vitally big, but they are usually quite contented with that

kind of bigness and do not want spiritual things, or, if they do, their bigness stands in their way rather than helps them. The fishing for them is *X*'s idea – he wanted to catch hold of Subhas Bose, Sarat Chatterji, now Lila Desai etc. etc., but they would have been exceedingly troublesome sadhaks, if they ever really dreamed of anything of the kind. All these are ordinary ignorant ideas; the Spirit cares not a damn for fame, success or bigness in those who come to it. People have a strange idea that Mother and myself are eager to get people as disciples and if anyone goes away, especially a "big" balloon with all its gas in it, it is a great blow, – a terrible defeat, – a dreadful catastrophe and cataclysm for us. Many even think that their being here is a great favour done to us for which we are not sufficiently grateful. All that is rubbish. 30 June 1938

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> Is it not natural for us to feel proud of the praises bestowed on Duraiswami or feel a little "embarrassed" when things are said against *X*?

If the praise and blame of ignorant people is to be our standard, then we may say good-bye to the spiritual consciousness. If the Mother and I had cared for praise or blame, we would have been crushed long ago. It is only recently that the Asram has got "prestige" – before it was the target for an almost universal criticism, not to speak of the filthiest attacks.

2 July 1938" (35: 690-95)

A Way, Not a Religion

"I have no time to read books usually. I seldom had and none at all now. I have had no inspirations from the sadhana of Bejoy Goswami, though a good deal at one time from Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. My remarks simply meant that I regard the spiritual history of mankind and especially of India as a constant development of a divine purpose, not a book that is closed, the lines of which have to be constantly repeated. Even the Upanishads and the Gita were not final though everything may be there in seed. In this development the recent spiritual history of India is a very important stage and the names I mentioned had a special prominence in my thought at the time – they seemed to me to indicate the lines from which the future spiritual development had most directly to proceed, not staying but passing on. I do not know that I would put my meaning exactly in the language you suggest. I may say that it is far from my purpose to propagate any religion new or old for humanity in the future. A way to be opened that is still blocked, not a religion to be founded, is my conception of the matter.

18 August 1935" (35: 696)

> "I want to do something to work for Islamic ideals here. I have a strong desire to do this, but somehow it cuts me off very much from the Ashram atmosphere and sadhana.

As to what you say about Islamic ideals, you should remember that whatever is necessary to keep from the past as materials for the future, will *of itself* and *automatically* be taken into the new creation when things are ready and the full Light and Power at work. It is not necessary for anybody to represent or stand for Islamic ideals or for Hindu or Christian ideals; if anybody here thinks he must stand for one or other of these things, he is making a mistake and is likely to create unnecessary narrowness, clash and opposition. There is no opposition or clash between them in spiritual experience; it is only the external human mind that mistakenly puts them against each other. What we are here to make is a new creation in which there is a larger reconciling Truth than anything that went before in the past; but what will reconcile and create anew is the Power, the Light, the Knowledge that comes from above. The important thing therefore is to prepare yourself for that Power, Light and Knowledge; it is only when that descends that all will be done rightly. Nothing can be done rightly by the individual working without the Light and the Knowledge.

14 January 1932

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> I want to ask if there is any likelihood of a fight between the Hindus and Mahomedans in India, and if the forces are nearly equal on both sides or one side is superior to the other.

It is to be hoped that in time the present mentality will pass away and both communities learn to live as children of the same Mother. If they fight, neither are likely to gain but both to lose, even perhaps giving an opening to a third party as has happened before in their history.

> I also want to ask if Mahomedanism will retain its present form and terms in the future. At present its only strength and faith is in the most orthodox section, which does not and cannot change even a bit; for the least change would mean the end of its formation, and in that it has sufficient force and faith. What happens under such circumstances? Can it have a place in the supramental creation?

There is no place for rigid orthodoxy, whether Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian in the future. Those who cling to it, lose hold on life and go under – as has been shown by the fate of the Hindus in India and of the orthodox Mahomedan countries all over the world. It is only where there has been an opening to new light and inevitable change that strength is returning as in Turkey and Persia. In the supramental creation fundamental truth will always find a place; but orthodoxy means a clinging to narrow limitations, and

limitations of that kind cannot exist in the supramental creation. All that is permanently true will be taken up into the creation of the future.

23 February 1932

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> I wish that Muslims might come here from outside and keep a more constant contact. It would create a nice atmosphere here. After all, it seems improbable that all the twelve crores of Mahomedans should be left quite out of contact with the Yoga.

These things that rise in you are certainly desires of the physical vital or else ideas of the physical mind giving a mental shape to desires. The sadhak has to see them when they rise and note them for what they are, but not allow them to move him to action.

If one is meant to be an intermediary between the Yogic Truth that is descending here and some part of the outside world, e.g. the Mahomedan world, it is necessary first that he should get a calm and complete balance, a full foundation in the higher consciousness and the permanent Light in his being, – otherwise he will not be able to do his work. If he tries before he is ready, he will fail – therefore let there be nothing done that is premature.

16 November 1932

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> You write: "If one is meant to be an intermediary between the Yogic Truth and . . . the Mahomedan world". I wish to ask if the Mahomedan world is such a separate thing here. For this phrase cannot be put thus: "between the Yogic Truth and the Hindu world".

Of course it can – the orthodox Hindu world is quite separate, all the outside world is separate, until the Light that is growing here makes the connection.

> I thought the attitude towards Mahomedans lay in the minds of the people here because of a subconscious influence and I took this to be an ignorance that can be overlooked for the time being. But if Sri Aurobindo also writes like this, I wish to know if the Mahomedan world is a separate block to be dealt with as one deals with strangers, foreigners, almost enemies.
>
> I wish also to ask this: The Mother has often issued notices saying, "When a man comes here, he ceases to be a Hindu or a Mahomedan etc." Though there is sufficient pressure on the Mahomedans to cease to be Mahomedan, does anybody cease to be a Hindu? Is the idea even believed by any Hindu sadhak? So certain is everybody of its not being true that there is hardly any hope of such a thought ever entering the mind. Under these circumstances, God alone knows if it is right or sensible for me to live on and see the ruin without doing anything to bring in the

Mahomedan influence here. When I surrendered, I had not ceased to be a Mahomedan as happened afterwards.

If there is anybody in this Asram who is a Hindu sectarian hating Mahomedans and not opening to the Light in which all can overcome their limitations and in which all can be fulfilled (each religion or way of approaching the Divine contributing its own element of the truth, but all fused together and surpassed), then that Hindu sectarian is not a completely surrendered disciple of Sri Aurobindo. By his narrowness and hatred of others he is bringing an element of falsehood into the work that is being done here.

When I spoke of the outside world, I meant all outside, including the Hindus and Christians and everyone else, all who have not yet accepted the greater Light that is coming. If this Asram were here only to serve Hinduism I would not be in it and the Mother who was never a Hindu would not be in it.

What is being done here is the preparation of a Truth which includes all other Truth but is limited to no single religion or creed, and this preparation has to be done apart and in silence until things are ready. It is in that sense that I speak of the rest of the world and all its component parts as being the outside world – not that there was nothing to be done or no connection to be made; but these things are to be done in their own proper time.

Do you tell me that all the people here show the spirit you speak of against the Mahomedans or are you generalising from particular cases? If it is as you say, I am quite ready to intervene to put a stop to it. For such a spirit would be entirely opposed to the Truth I am here to manifest.

When I came here in the beginning, *X* told me that Sri Aurobindo said: "Mahomedanism was all right for the people of Arabia and those countries. I don't see why it should have come to India." Had Mahomedanism no message for India? Is this a teaching of the Ashram?

No, certainly not; it is a sheer misinterpretation of my views. I have written clearly that the coming of so many religions to India was part of her spiritual destiny and a great advantage for the work to be done.

17 November 1932

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If the sadhaks here remain Hindus, which in the end turns out to be their very aim and zest, what an utter fool I would be to allow myself to be changed and trust myself to be worked upon thus.

Again, when Sri Aurobindo writes about what he is going to manifest here, I wonder why such a great thing is partial. Why should that creation be formed in such a way as to exclude Mahomedans from it and put on them an all-round pressure which

> is experienced by nobody else. To give up one's past and forget it or to try not to think about it is one thing; to go through the humiliation of taking up the way of others is most difficult, almost shameful, and I have lost faith in it.

It is news to me that I have excluded Mahomedans from the Yoga. I have not done it any more than I have excluded Europeans or Christians. As for giving up one's past, if that means giving up the outer forms of the old religions, it is done as much by the Hindus here as by the Mahomedans. Every Hindu here – even those who were once orthodox Brahmins and have grown old in it, – give up all observance of caste, take food from Pariahs and are served by them, associate and eat with Mahomedans, Christians, Europeans, cease to practise temple worship or Sandhya (daily prayer and mantras), accept a non-Hindu from Europe as their spiritual director. These are things people who have Hinduism as their aim and object would not do – they do it because they are obliged here to look to a higher ideal in which these things have no value. What is kept of Hinduism is Vedanta and Yoga, in which Hinduism is one with Sufism of Islam and with the Christian mystics. But even here it is not Vedanta and Yoga in their traditional limits (their past), but widened and rid of many ideas that are peculiar to the Hindus. If I have used Sanskrit terms and figures, it is because I know them and do not know Persian and Arabic. I have not the slightest objection to anyone here drawing inspiration from Islamic sources if they agree with the Truth as Sufism agrees with it. On the other hand I have not the slightest objection to Hinduism being broken to pieces and disappearing from the face of the earth, if that is the Divine Will. I have no attachment to past forms; what is Truth will always remain; the Truth alone matters. 17 November 1932

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> Does the supramental victory mean the victory of the Hindu religion and culture over others? Will the supramental consciousness come into the body of a man whether or not he subordinates himself to Hinduism?

The Asram has nothing to do with Hindu religion or culture or any religion or nationality. The Truth of the Divine which is the spiritual reality behind all religions and the descent of the supramental which is not known to any religion are the sole things which will be the foundation of the work of the future."

(35: 696-701)

Sri Aurobindo's View of the Hindu Religion

"I do not take the same view of the Hindu religion as Jawaharlal. Religion is always imperfect because it is a mixture of man's spirituality with the errors that come in trying to sublimate ignorantly his lower nature. Hindu religion appears to me as a cathedral temple half in ruins, noble in the mass, often fantastic in detail, but always fantastic with a significance – crumbled and overgrown in many places, but a cathedral temple in which service is still done to the Unseen and its real presence can be felt by those who enter with the right spirit. The outer social structure which it built for its approach is another matter. 19 September 1936" (35: 702-03)

Helping Others

"The best way to help *X* is to assist her by your own example and atmosphere to get the right attitude. Instead of the sense that she is very ill, she should be encouraged to have a bright and confident feeling, open to receive strength and health from us, contributing by her own faith to a speedy recovery. These ideas that they do not see the Mother, are outside the atmosphere, at a distance, are just the wrong notions and most likely to come in the way and block your sisters' receptivity; it is surprising that you should accept or echo them and not react against them at once. They are here in the Asram (a little nearer or farther makes no difference), in the Mother's presence and atmosphere, meeting her every day at the Pranam where everyone who is open can receive as much of her touch and her help as they can hold, – that is what they should feel and make the most of their opportunity and not waste it by a negative attitude.

For yourself, what you must have with other sadhaks (including your sisters) is a harmonious relation free from any mere vital attachment (indifference is not asked from you) and free from any indulgence in wrong vital movements of the opposite kind (such as dislike, jealousy or ill-will). It is through the psychic consciousness that you have found it possible to be in a true constant relation with the Mother and your aim is to make that the basis of all your life, action and feelings; all in you, all you feel, say and do should be consistent with that basis. If all proceeds from that psychic union of your consciousness with the Mother's, dedicating everything to her, then you will develop the right relations with others. 10 February 1932" (35: 706-07)

"It is not really surprising that people should be able to draw help from you and feel themselves helped and this can happen even though you yourself may not consciously have the idea or the feeling of extending any help to them. You have a very strong vitalwith a great communicative and creative power which is not shut up in itself but expansive and naturally flows out on those around it. Even ordinarily in the world people easily turn to such a strong and expansive vital and draw upon it for strength and assistance. In your case this is enhanced by your psychic being having the habit of using your vital force for communication to the outside world as it has been habitually doing in your creative activities, poetry and other forms of writing or speech,

song and music: apart from artistic qualities and appeal these have an appeal and influence which comes from that inner power which has breathed itself into them and formed their substance. It has again been greatly increased by the practice of Yoga and the feeling of bhakti which comes out of you when you write your songs and sing them. In your work for us you have the knowledge that our force stands behind you; it is always there and can increase your power to help others, not only when you are doing the work but at other times or whenever they turn towards you with the idea or faith that the help they need can come from you. 11 July 1949" (35: 708-09)

"The whole difficulty comes from the fact that you and *X* had a special relation to each other which was of the character of a mutual vital demand and dependence on each other and what is called in Yoga an attachment. (There is no question here of a sexual physical relation but of a vital attachment.) This was coming in the way of your making any progress in Yoga and it was coming in the way of *X* also. When *X* realised this and wanted to reduce the connection between you to a minimum, you were unwilling, you wanted to do all sorts of things that would keep you near him and keep him busy with you. *X* himself was not free from attachment and therefore in reacting against your pressure and his own remains of weakness, he became rude and violent – that was what he meant by cutting the connection altogether. But he is not yet free and that is why he still reacts violently whenever there is any talk of your going to him as he has done in his last letter. On your side you also are not free – if you were, it would not happen that every time there is any question of *X* you immediately lose the good condition you were getting and all the old thoughts occupy your mind and you fall back into the weeping and not eating etc. etc. It is the reason why the Mother does not care for you and *X* to meet so long as these old reactions are there either in him or in you. That is the plain fact of the matter. What other people think or say about it, is of no importance. What matters is the sadhana and besides it nothing else matters. Show that you are free, that what *X* does or does not do does not disturb or occupy your mind in the least and get into the true way of the sadhana as you were preparing to do – then it will be easier for us to deal with *X* and his defects and difficulties. This Asram is not intended to be a society like that of the outside world, and when *Y* or *Z* or anyone else talk and advise you from that standpoint, they are speaking things which have nothing to do with the work we are trying to do here – and if you listen to such advice, you will only get out of the right way of looking at it. You will get into the right way only when you cease to think of these things and look at things from the point of view of sadhana only.

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> Every sadhika has one or another special sadhika-friend but I find none like-minded enough. Why am I such an independent minded loner?

It is not necessary to have special friendships, – to be in good relations is enough. For the rest, to be turned entirely to us is the best condition for spiritual progress." (35: 711-12)

"In view of your last letter and of the disturbances in you which you hint there, we consider and you must yourself realise that it is better for you to return to your family life and not to stay here too long. The conquest of sexual desire can only be done if one is truly ready and has the spiritual call and is prepared, however difficult it may be, to give up for it everything else. There is no place for the sexual impulse and its desires in spiritual life and any sadhaka indulging it, either physically or vitally, is going against the law of the Asram life and injuring gravely his or her sadhana. The sexual desire must be either satisfied in the ordinary family life or it must be thrown aside. But you are not now able to conquer it. To remain here with the unsatisfied desire will only confuse your mind, bring wrong ideas, create a struggle in you and injure the basis of such sadhana as you can do. Make up your mind therefore to return to your family and do what you can there. It is always better to do what you can than to attempt prematurely something for which you are not ready.

16 April 1932

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Your daughter *X** has now been here for a fairly long time and we think it due to you to let you know what we consider best for her. It appears from our observation of her that she is not at all ready for Asram life or for intensive sadhana; she has too much of the ordinary movements and the instinct of sexual desire is too strong in her and unsatisfied and this indicates the need of the social and family life, not a life of Yoga. The family life accompanied with whatever religious worship or practice of bhakti she can manage is her proper field at present. For one with these unsatisfied instincts to live in the Asram would on one side be bad for her, – it would raise up a vital struggle and a confusion of ideas adverse to spiritual progress – for she has not yet the necessary inner force or intensity of the spiritual call that would help her to overcome. On the other side it would be likely to create movements that would be disturbing to the Asram atmosphere. It is better for her therefore to return home and do what she can there. I trust our decision will not in any way disturb or disappoint you; for it was not, I think, your intention in bringing her here that she should remain for a long time. It is in her own interest that she should not be pushed towards an effort that is premature.

16 April 1932

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> The whole of yesterday I felt a dark power hanging over me. When I asked the Mother if it was the same universal dark power that, through woman, binds the soul to the earth, she replied, "Why woman? Through *man* as well!" Yes, man as well – but is there not something which makes woman a more convenient, capacious and dangerous tool in its hand?

That is what man thinks; it is his experience. Woman's experience is that man is the dangerous animal and instrument of all her sufferings and downfalls.

It is not man or woman; it is the Sex-Force which is the dangerous tool in the hands of the Ignorance. 17 September 1932" (35: 713-14)

* The recipient of the preceding letter. – Ed.

"I am afraid *X* is not so forward in sadhana as you think. I suppose I had better tell you plainly that she is full of the sex difficulty – it is *her special difficulty* and it is so much in her nature that with all her struggles she is unable to escape from it. I am afraid she is throwing it upon you. Of course it is her imagination that yields to it; she would never consent to the act.

As for *Y* it is different. She has no sex desires, but before she opened to the Yoga, there was a certain kind of vital passivity in her to men and this kind of passivity is very attractive to the masculine sex instinct. As the movements in you are not mental but in sensation, it is possible that your subconscient vital has somehow felt this in her subconscient temperament and got the attraction. These movements are not vitally willed or mental – they belong to that shadowy region of submerged vital physical instinct which the psychoanalysts try to deal with in their jargon of complexes etc. 30 September 1934" (35: 715)

"What did Sri Ramakrishna mean by banning *kāminī* and *kāñcan* for a spiritual man?

He stressed the danger of sex and greed of money for the spiritual life and insisted on a total abstinence, at any rate in the whole period of sadhana and I suppose he considered that impossible without keeping aloof from the things that most aroused these passions. Some of his disciples say however that he said কাম কাঞ্চন [*kām kāñcan*], not কামিনী কাঞ্চন [*kāminī kāñcan*]. Anyhow he probably imposed it for the raw period of the sadhana – once siddha, when the contact with women could no longer rouse the sex-impulse, he would not have considered it so imperative for all. But he himself could not touch money.

What are the correct ideas with regard to *gārhasthya* life?

Gārhasthya life, meaning marriage and rearing of a family, is a social institution based on ego. It can only be a stage in the evolution of a spiritual man.

13 November 1934" (35: 717-18)

"Is there a region of Apsaras in the intermediate zone? Perhaps you discourage me from retiring because you feel I might go there and try to get in touch with them. But probably such a contact is not as dangerous as ambition, pride, egoism etc. There may very well be, – though I don't know that anyone here came into contact with Apsaras; it is generally less attractive females from the vital world who are after them, usually in the shape of sadhikas, relatives etc. The sadhaks here don't seem to be so aesthetic as the ancient Rishis. It would be pretty dangerous, however, if they did contact it. Sex (occult) stands on a fair level of equality with ambition etc. from the point of view of danger, only its action is usually less ostensible i.e. the Hostiles don't put it forward so openly as a thing to be followed after in the spiritual life. They did that more in the beginning, e.g. *X* and others. 28 February 1935" (35: 718)

"Is it true that there is the spiritual relation of husband and wife between sadhaka and sadhika?

Are you all becoming cracked in the head? How is it that after all this time such a question can be put? Have you not read my letters and messages on the subject of sex? You have not gone through the *Bases of Yoga* where the subject of sex is treated through many pages and it is clearly insisted on that all sex impulse and sex relation must go. If any sadhak and sadhika want to establish this relation, they should immediately pack up their things and go – for it is forbidden here.

If there exists between a man and a woman the high spiritual relation of husband and wife, purusha and shakti, and the woman demands consummation, is the man bound to satisfy her?

You have not read the rule that conjugal relations are forbidden here? You do not know that *X* and *Y* and *Z* and *A* had to leave because they followed this way? Under no pretence or cloak whatever is sex to be indulged by anyone practising this sadhana. circa 1936 – 1938

There is with regard to sex no change whatever. Babies may be allowed in the Asram but the manufacture of babies there is an industry which has no sanction. Married people (that is not new) or families may be living here, but on the old condition of the complete cessation of marital activities. The ban on sex here stands, unchanged by an iota. 2 January 1945" (35: 721-22)

> "I have not your letter with me as I write but there were two questions which you put to us, as far as I can remember.

The first was about a complementary soul and marriage. The answer is easy to give; the way of the spiritual life lies for you in one direction and marriage lies in quite another and opposite. All talk about a complementary soul is a camouflage with which the mind tries to cover the sentimental, sensational and physical wants of the lower vital nature. It is that vital nature in you which puts the question and would like an answer reconciling its desires and demands with the call of the true soul in you. But it must not expect a sanction for any such incongruous reconciliation from here. The way of the supramental Yoga is clear; it lies not through any concession to these things, – not, in your case, through the satisfaction, under a spiritual cover if possible, of its craving for the comforts and gratifications of a domestic and conjugal life and the enjoyment of the ordinary emotional desires and physical passions, but through the purification and transformation of the forces which these movements pervert and misuse. Not these human and animal demands, but the divine Ananda which is above and beyond them and which the indulgence of these degraded forms would prevent from descending, is the great thing that the aspiration of the vital being must demand in the sadhaka.

The other question was about your difficulty in getting rid of the aboriginal in your nature. That difficulty will remain so long as you try to change your vital nature by the sole power of your mind and mental will, calling in at most an indefinite and impersonal divine Power to aid you. It is an old difficulty which has never been truly solved because it has never been met in the true way. In the former ways of Yoga it did not supremely matter because the aim was withdrawal from life. Either the vital was kept down by a mental and moral compulsion, or it was stilled and kept lying in a kind of sleep and quiescence, or it was allowed to run and exhaust itself if it could while its possessor professed to be untouched and unconcerned by it. When none of these solutions could be attained, the sadhaka simply led a double inner life, divided between his spiritual experiences and his vital weaknesses to the end. If you want a true mastery and transformation of the vital movements, it can be done only on condition you allow your psychic being, the soul in you, to awake fully, to establish its rule and open to the permanent touch of the divine Shakti and impose its way of devout aspiration and complete surrender on the mind and heart and vital nature. There is no other way and it is no use hankering after a more comfortable path. *Nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya.*

4 October 1927

If she has the true call to the Yoga and not only an impulse due to the influence of others, the necessary conditions will be created. Even if the circumstances seem adverse, it will be only a test or ordeal and she will come through in the

end. On the other hand, if she is not yet truly called or if her nature is not yet ripe, the marriage may take place and she may have to go through the ordinary life before she can return to the spiritual. There was never any suggestion from here that the girl should come to Pondicherry; how is it that it has been raised over there? 25 April 1930

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No member of the Asram can while he is a member contract a marriage whether it is spiritual or sexual or bring in a woman to be his life-companion or establish such a relation with anyone outside. This is no part of the Asram life. He can do it outside by leaving the Asram, for then he is no longer a member and can order his life as he pleases; he is then responsible to himself alone for his action and its spiritual or other consequences concern only himself and that other person.

In the cases you cite there is no tie of spiritual marriage between the persons concerned: the sexual connection has been renounced, but no new inner tie has been formed – there is therefore no similarity with the action you propose. As special cases they are allowed to live in the same house for certain outward conveniences, but it is clearly understood that the old dependence of husband and wife on each other has to cease; they have to accustom themselves to be only sadhaks having no inner dependence on each other, but separately depending on the Mother alone, receiving spiritual help from her alone, offering to her alone the obedience of the disciple to the Master.

For your case to assimilate to theirs you would have to marry legally and socially with the consent of the father, live for twenty years or more together outside and then come for admission to the Asram with the resolution to develop an inner life independent from each other and turned to the Divine alone. What you propose as described in your letter is something quite different – it might stand in a Vaishnava sadhana or in some form of Karma Yoga, but it has no place here. An old relation is one thing, – its root being cut, time may be given in special cases at the Mother's discretion to get free from some of its outer results and habits which are not of the first importance; to bring in a new marriage relation with the full intention of giving it free play and making it a part of the sadhana is a very different thing.

I do not know what youmean by "true sadhana". Each path of sadhana has its own way and procedure which may be quite different from that of other paths. For this path the Mother and I can alone determine what is necessary or not necessary, what is admissible or not admissible. If one has some other way of life which he finds necessary and considers part of the true sadhana, he is free to practise it elsewhere, but he has no claim to do it here and make it a part of this sadhana or of the life of the Asram if it is not sanctioned and approved by the Mother and myself. 13 May 1937" (35: 724-27)

"There is only one answer to *X*'s question – marriage and Yoga are two different movements going opposite ways; if he follows one, he will be moving away from the other. So if he marries, either of two things will happen – he will sink into the ordinary life and go far away from us in spirit or he will find married life unsatisfactory, renounce his wife and return to the path that leads towards the Divine. Marriage with the first result would be only a stupidity; marriage for the second result would be an irrational inconsequence. So in either way – " (35: 727)

Work and Sadhana

"I have often felt that *dhyāna* was a better way than *karma*, poetry etc. to reach the Divine – a shorter cut I mean. Am I right?

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

Karma is a much simpler road – provided one's mind is not fixed on the karma to the exclusion of the Divine. The aim must be the Divine and the work can only be a means. The use of poetry etc. is to keep one in contact with one's inner being and that helps to prepare for the direct contact with the

inmost, but one must not stop with that, one must go on to the real thing. If one thinks of being a "literary man", a poet, a painter as things worth while for their own sake, then it is no longer the Yogic spirit. That is why I have sometimes to say that our business is to be Yogis, not merely poets, painters etc.

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

10 December 1934" (35: 743)

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

Another thing – it is a mistake to argue from one's own very limited experience, ignoring that of others, and build on it large generalisations about Yoga. This is what many do, but the method has obvious demerits. You have no experience of major realisations through work, and you conclude that such realisations are impossible. But what of the many who have had them – elsewhere and here too in the Asram? That has no value? You kindly hint to me that I have failed to get anything by works? How do you know? I have not written the history of my sadhana – if I had, you would have seen that if I had not made action and work one of my chief means of realisation – well, there would have been no sadhana and no realisation except that, perhaps, of Nirvana.

I shall perhaps add something hereafter as to what works can do, but no time tonight.

Do not conclude however that I am exalting works as the sole means of realisation. I am only giving it its due place. You will excuse the vein of irony or satire in all this – but really when I am told that my own case disproves my whole spiritual philosophy and accumulated knowledge and experience, a little liveliness in answer is permissible. 16 December 1934…

For the sadhana, it is not true that some are here only because they give money and others because they are workers only. What is true is that there are many who can prepare themselves only by work, their consciousness not being yet ready for meditation of the more intense kind. But even for those who can do intense meditation from the beginning, sadhana by work is also necessary in this Yoga. One cannot arrive at its goal by meditation alone. As for your own capacity, it was evident when for a fairly long period an active sadhana was proceeding within you. Everybody's capacity however is limited – little can be done by one's own strength alone. It is reliance on the Divine Force, the Mother's Force and Light and openness to it that is the real capacity. This you had for a time, but as with many others it got clouded over by the coming up of the physical nature in its full force. This clouding happens to almost everybody at that stage, but it need not be lasting. If the physical consciousness resolves to open itself, then nothing more is needed for progress in the sadhana.

10 July 1937" (35: 743)

> "When I was working in the Satyagraha movement, I worked with a zeal and energy I don't seem to have here. Is it because there is no fighting programme except against one's own self? How can I recover my interest and vigour in work?

The Satyagraha was one of those movements in which the vital part of the nature gets easily enthusiastic and interested – it meant a fight on the vital level (its only difference from other revolutionary activities being its "non-violent" character), with universal support and applause and approval, a nationwide excitement behind you, the sense of heroism and possible martyrdom, a "moral" ideal giving a farther support of strong self-approbation and the sense of righteousness. Here there is nothing that ministers to the human vital nature; the work is small, silent, shut off from the outside world and its circumstances, of value only as a field for spiritual self-culture. If one is governed by the sole spiritual motive and has the spiritual consciousness, one can take joy and interest in this work. Or if, in spite of his human shortcomings, the worker is mainly bent on spiritual progress and self-perfection, then also he can take interest in the work and both feel its utility for the discovery and purification of his egoistic mental and vital and physical nature and take joy in it as a service of the Divine. 11 August 1932…

There is no reason why one should not offer to work if there is work to do. Often there is work to be done and no one offers, so it is not done. Most of the Asram work is done by a few people, while others do a little only or only what they please. 31 May 1933

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Each man has his defects – you and all others. So you should not allow that to destroy the harmony that should reign among workers. Remember that patience and equanimity and good feeling for all are the first needs of the sadhak. 12 November 1933

*

The Mother's withdrawal of you from the work had nothing to do with any relation between you and *X* or any other sadhika. What you have to do is to utilise it for becoming quiet within, silencing the vital movement and getting into the true attitude.

What you write shows that you had a wrong idea of the work. The work in the Asram was not meant as a service to humanity or to a section of it called the sadhaks of the Asram. It was not meant either as an opportunity for a joyful social life and a flow of sentiments and attachments between the sadhaks and an expression of the vital movements, a free vital interchange whether with some or with all. The work was meant as a service to the Divine and as a field for the inner opening to the Divine, surrender to the Divine alone, rejection of ego and all the ordinary vital movements and the training in a psychic elevation, selflessness, obedience, renunciation of all mental, vital or

other self-assertion of the limited personality. Self-affirmation is not the aim, development of the personal self is not the aim, the formation of a collective vital ego is also not the aim. The merging of the little ego in union with the Divine, purification, surrender, the substitution of the Divine guidance for one's own ignorant self-guidance based on one's personal ideas and personal feelings is the aim of Karma Yoga, the surrender of one's own will to the Divine Will.

If one feels human beings to be near and the Divine to be far and seeks the Divine through service of and love of human beings and not the direct service and love of the Divine, then one is following a wrong principle – for that is the principle of the mental, vital and moral, not the spiritual life.

November 1933

All work is equal – those who write or embroider are in no way superior to those who cook or prepare the grains. To speak otherwise is ignorance.

7 December 1933

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Active participation in an outside work is sometimes useful to a sadhak in the early stages of his sadhana so that he may learn equanimity; but the utility of it for a sadhak of the Asrama is not very clear. Personal or family work is not part of the divine Work unless as in *X*'s case it is dedicated to the Divine – for he gives all its profits here. But in your case it is family property and that is not possible. We are therefore rather doubtful as to how this would fit in at the present stage of your sadhana. 25 April 1935

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Work here and work done in the world are of course not the same thing. The work there is not in any way a divine work in special – it is ordinary work in the world. But still one must take it as a training and do it in the spirit of karmayoga – what matters there is not the nature of the work in itself but the spirit in which it is done. It must be in the spirit of the Gita, without desire, with detachment, without repulsion, but doing it as perfectly as possible, not for the sake of the family or promotion or to please the superiors, but simply because it is the thing that has been given in the hand to do. It is a field of inner training, nothing more. One has to learn in it three things, equality, desirelessness, dedication. It is not the work as a thing for its own sake, but one's doing of it and one's way of doing it that one has to dedicate to the Divine. Done in that spirit it does not matter what the work is. If one trains oneself spiritually like that, then one will be ready to do in the true way whatever special work directly for the Divine (such as the Asram work) one may any day be given to do. 21 September 1935" (35: 751-54)

Organisation and Discipline in Work

"The Mother has her own reasons for her decisions; she has to look at the work as a whole without regard to one department or branch alone and with a view to the necessities of the work and the management. The objection to buying much of this size was hers and not *X*'s. Whatever work is done here, one has always to learn to subordinate or put aside one's own ideas and preferences about things concerning it and do for the best under the conditions and decisions laid down by her. This is one of the main difficulties throughout the Asram, as each worker wants to do according to his own ideas, on his own lines according to what he thinks to be the right or convenient thing and expects that to be sanctioned. It is one of the principal reasons of difficulty,

clash or disorder in the work, creating conflict between the workers themselves, conflict between the workers and the heads of departments, conflict between the ideas of the sadhaks and the will of the Mother. Harmony can only exist if all accept the will of the Mother without grudge or personal reaction.

Independent work does not exist in the Asram. All is organised and interrelated; neither the heads of departments nor the workers are independent. To learn subordination and cooperation is necessary for all collective work; without it there will be chaos.

As for the Yoga aspect of these personal clashes, dislikes etc. and of the work itself, I have written about that before. 10 March 1936" (35: 756)

"Wanton waste, careless spoiling of physical things in an incredibly short time, loose disorder, misuse of service and materials due either to vital grasping or to tamasic inertia are baneful to prosperity and tend to drive away or discourage the Wealth- Power. These things have long been rampant in the society and, if that continues, an increase in our means might well mean a proportionate increase in the wastage and disorder and neutralise the material advantage. This must be remedied if there is to be any sound progress.

Asceticism for its own sake is not the ideal of this Yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are a very important part of it – and even an ascetic discipline is better for our purpose than a loose absence of true control. Mastery of the material does not mean having plenty and profusely throwing it out or spoiling it as fast as it comes or faster. Mastery implies in it the right and careful utilisation of things and also a self-control in their use.

5 January 1932

*

I may say, generally, that in the present condition of things it is becoming increasingly necessary to do the best we can with what we have and make things last as long as possible. There are many kinds of things hitherto provided, for instance, which it will be impossible to renew once the present stock is over. The difficulty is that most people in the Asram have no training in handling physical things (except the simplest, hardest and roughest), no propensity to take care of them, to give them their full use and time of survival. This is partly due to ignorance and inexperience, but partly also to carelessness, rough, violent and unseeing handling, indifference; there is also in many a feeling that it does not matter if things are quickly spoilt, they will be replaced; one worker was even heard to say to another, "why do you care? it is not your money." To take one instance only. Taps in Europe will last for many years – here in a few months, sometimes in a few weeks they are spoilt and call for repairs or replacement. People ask for new provisions before the old are exhausted or even near exhaustion, not because they need them, but because they have a right (?) to a new supply; some have even been known to throw away what remains with them in order to have a new stock. And so on, ad infinitum. All this is tamas and the end of tamas is disintegration, dispersal of forces, failure of material. And in the end, as this is a collective affair, the consequences come upon everybody, the careful and the careless together. Our ideal was a large, not a restricted life, but well-organised, free from waste and tamas and disorder. Now there has to be a tightness, a period of retrenchment till people learn and things get better. 17 January 1932" (35: 763-65)

Money Power and Ashram Expenses

"The vital forces who hold the money power do not want to give or yield anything except for vital purposes, it is only under compulsion that they give for divine work. 15 May 1933

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I am rather anxious to know the average monthly expenses of the Asram.

Over Rs. 6000 a month – including the building expenses and all other current expenditure. Of course buying of houses and such other non-current expenditure is not included. Each member of the Asram costs Rs. 50 a month, visitors about Rs. 40 (rent, electricity, food, servants etc. all included).

31 July 1933

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May I possibly know more about the financial condition of the Asram?

I think there is nothing more of importance, except that we need money for expansion and do not get it. 1 August 1933" (35: 768)

"As usual you seem to have received some very fantastic and sensational reports about what you call the mill business. There was no "mill" in question, only *X*'s small foundry and *Y*'s equally small oil factory. *X* was in difficulties about her affair and came to the Mother for advice and offered to sell; the Mother was prepared to buy on reasonable or even on generous terms on certain conditions and use it, not on capitalistic lines or for any profit, but for certain work necessary to the Ashram, just as she uses the Atelier or the Bakery or the Building Department. The Ashram badly needs a foundry and the idea was to use *Y*'s machinery for making the soap necessary for the Ashram. The Mother told *X* that she was sending for *Z* and if he consented to run these two affairs, she might buy but not otherwise as the Mother herself had no time to look after these things. *Z* came but found the whole thing too small and not sufficient for the purpose or for some larger work he wanted to do; so *X* had to be told that nothing could be done. That is the whole affair. Where do you find anything here of capitalism and huge profits and slums and all the rest?

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

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

There is of course also the ascetic ideal which is necessary for many and has its place in the spiritual order. I would myself say that no man can be spiritually complete if he cannot live ascetically or follow a life as bare as the barest anchorite's. Obviously, greed for wealth and money-making has to be absent from his nature as much as greed for food or any other greed and all attachment to these things must be renounced from his consciousness. But I do not regard the ascetic way of living as indispensable to spiritual perfection or as identical with it. There is the way of spiritual self-mastery and the way of spiritual self-giving and surrender to the Divine, abandoning ego and desire even in the midst of action or of any kind of work or all kinds of work demanded from us by the Divine. If it were not so, there would not have been great spiritual men like Janaka or Vidura in India and even there would have been no Krishna or else Krishna would have been not the Lord of Brindavan and Mathura and Dwarka or a prince and warrior or the charioteer of Kurukshetra, but only one more great anchorite. The Indian scriptures and Indian tradition, in the Mahabharata and elsewhere, make room both for the spirituality of the renunciation of life and for the spiritual life of action. One cannot say that one only is the Indian tradition and that the acceptance of life and works of all kinds, *sarvakarmāṇi*, is un-Indian, European or Western and unspiritual." (35: 769-71)

"The food given from the Dining Room has the Mother's force behind it. It contains everything that is necessary to keep you in good health to do the sadhana. Keep that attitude and eat. Everything will go well.*

circa 1927

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It is certainly not very Yogic to be so much harassed by the importunity of the palate. I notice that these petty desires, which plenty of people who are not Yogis at all nor aspirants for Yoga know how to put in their proper place, seem to take an inordinate importance in the consciousness of the sadhaks here – not all, certainly, but many. In this as in many other matters they do not seem to realise that, if you want to do Yoga, you must take more and more in all matters, small or great, the Yogic attitude. In our path that attitude is not one of forceful suppression, but of detachment and equality with regard to the objects of desire. Forceful suppression** stands on the same level as free indulgence; in both cases, the desire remains; in the one it is fed by indulgence, in the other it lies latent and exasperated by suppression. It is only when one stands back, separates oneself from the lower vital, refusing to regard its desires and clamours as one's own, and cultivates an entire equality and equanimity in the consciousness with respect to them that the lower vital itself becomes gradually purified and itself also calm and equal. Each wave of desire as it comes must be observed, as quietly and with as much unmoved detachment as you would observe something going on outside you, and must be allowed to pass, rejected from the consciousness, and the true movement, the true consciousness steadily put in its place.

But for that these things of eating and drinking must be put in their right place, which is a very small one. You say that many have left the Asram because they did not like the food. I do not know who are the many; certainly, those who came here for serious sadhana and left, went for much more grave reasons than that. But if any did go because of an offended palate, then certainly they were quite unfit for Yoga and this was not the place for them. For it means that a mutton chop or a tasty plate of fish was more important for them than the seeking of the Divine! It is not possible to do Yoga if values are so topsy-turvy in the consciousness. Apart from such extravagance, these things which ought to be only among the most minor values even in the human life, are promoted by many here to a rank they ought not to have.

At the same time it is better, if it is possible, to have well-cooked rather than badly-cooked food. The idea that the Mother wants tasteless food to be

* This message has hung in the dining room of the Ashram for many years. – Ed.

** *Fasting comes under the head; it is of no use for this purpose. Abandon that idea altogether.*

served because tasty food is bad for Yoga, is one of the many absurdities that seem so profusely current among the sadhaks in this Asram about her ways and motives. The Mother is obliged to arrange for neutral (plain and simple), not *tasteless* food, for the reason that any other course has been proved to be impracticable. There are ninety people here, from different countries and provinces whose tastes are as the poles asunder. What is tasty food to the Gujarati is abomination to the Bengali and *vice versa*. The European cannot stand an avalanche of tamarind or chillies; the Andhra accustomed to a fiery diet would find French dishes tasteless. Experiments have been tried before you came, but they were disastrous in their results; a few enjoyed, the majority starved, and bad stomachs began to be the rule. On the other hand, neutral food can be eaten by all and does not injure the health, – that at least is what we have found, – even if it does not give any ecstasy to the palate.

Only, the food, if neutral, should not be tasteless. A certain amount of fluctuation is inevitable; no one can cook daily for 80 or 90 people and yet do always well. But if it is too much, a remedy is to be desired and the Mother is willing to consider any practicable and effective suggestion. If any practicable suggestion is made, it will be considered, – keeping always in view the difficulty I have pointed out of the ninety people and the three continents and half a dozen provinces that are represented here, apart from individual idiosyncracies and fancies, which, of course, it is absolutely impossible even to try to satisfy unless we want to land ourselves in chaos.

But what if people were to remember that they were here for Yoga, make that the salt and savour of their existence and acquire *samatā* of the palate! My experience is that if they did that, all the trouble would disappear and even the kitchen difficulties and the defects of the cooking would vanish.

28 August 1930

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The Mother and I do not take meat or fish and it is not allowed to the members of the Asram. We cannot give the sanction you ask for. You should rise superior to passing ideas and desires; to allow them to take hold of the mind and push towards action is not good for your sadhana.

15 November 1932…

Vegetarian food is a rule for the Asram, it is not incumbent on anyone outside.

30 October 1933…

If animal food (e.g. eggs or soup) is absolutely for health in convalescence, it can be taken. But it is *saṁskāra* to suppose that vegetarian food makes people weak – if the food is nourishing and of the right kind, one can be as strong on vegetable food as on meat. 30 January 1935…

It is not you but I who look on the Asram as a failure [*in regard to food*]. I was speaking not of you in person, but of the general spirit of the sadhaks with

regard to food which is as unYogic as possible. In regard not only to food, but to personal comforts it differs in no way from that of ordinary men; it is an attitude of demand, claim and desire and of anger, vexation, grudging, complaint if they do not get their desire. They justify their position by saying that this is not an ascetic Yoga. But neither is it a Yoga of the satisfaction of desire. In this Yoga quite as much as any other, one must be free from servitude to the mind, the vital and the body. It is to be done by the growth of an inner consciousness free from demand and desire, not by the principle of an outer suppression of the objects of desire. It is to be done by having a perfect equality with regard to food as to other things. But this very few seem to recognise. 17 March 1936" (35: 771-75)

Death

"You have said, I hear, that you have conquered Death, not only personally but for others as well.

I am unaware of having made any such statement. To whom did I make it? I have not said even that personally I have conquered it. All these are the usual Asram legends.

The conquest of Death would mean the conquest of illness and of the psychological and functional necessity of Death of the body – that is one of the ideals of the Yoga, but it can be accomplished only if and when the supramental has driven its roots into Matter. All that has been acting here up to now is an Overmind force which is getting gradually supramentalised in parts – the utmost that it can do in this respect is to keep death at a distance and that is what has been done. The absence of death in the Asram for so

many years has been due to that. But it is not impossible – especially when death is accepted. In S's case there was a 5 percent chance of his survival on certain conditions, but he himself knew the difficulty in his case and had prepared himself for his departure from the body. 25 March 1935…

> Today I had a peculiar feeling – that nothing dies and that there is nothing like death; that death is an illusion. "She is" – that's the only fact.

Of course, that is the real fact – death is only a shedding of the body, not a cessation of the personal existence. A man is not dead because he goes into another country and changes his clothes to suit that climate.

4 October 1936" (35: 788-90)

Avoiding Gossip

"Is it not true that to look always at others' faults and criticise them is harmful and an obstacle to one's progress?

Yes, all that is true. The lower vital takes a mean and petty pleasure in picking out the faults of others and thereby one hampers both one's own progress and that of the subject of the criticism. 6 July 1933

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Is gossiping and making fun of others a hindrance to one's progress in sadhana?

It can be and very often is. A gossiping spirit is always an obstacle.

10 May 1933

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Your attitude to the gossip is quite the right one. A great part of what is talked in the Asram about others is untrue, a great part is distorted or exaggerated and what remains are things that can be left to the Mother and need not be

made the subject of small talk among the sadhaks. 16 September 1936

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The difficulty you experience exists because speech is a function which in the past has worked much more as an expression of the vital in man than of the mental will. Speech breaks out as the expression of the vital and its habits without caring to wait for the control of the mind; the tongue has been spoken of as the unruly member. In your case the difficulty has been increased by the habit of talk about others, – gossip, to which your vital was very partial, so much that it cannot even yet give up the pleasure in it. It is therefore this tendency that must cease in the vital itself. Not to be under the control of the impulse to speech, to be able to do without it as a necessity and to speak only when one sees that it is right to do so and only what one sees to be right to say, is a very necessary part of Yogic self-control.

It is only by perseverance and vigilance and a strong resolution that this can be done, but if the resolution is there, it can be done in a short time by the aid of the Force behind. 6 December 1936" (35: 803-04)

Pressure of the Environment

"Is it possible that thoughts and suggestions come to sadhaks from people in the town who think about us in a critical or hostile way?

It is not only likely but certain that it happens. The pressure of the environment is always there and it becomes more effective for suggestion if there are any in the Asram itself who are accustomed to mix and receive freely the impacts of the people there. 20 May 1933

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Some boys in the neighbourhood have become a systematic nuisance – jeering and throwing things – and something decisive

needs to be done. I know you do not like violence, but how else can one deal with this sort of thing?

It is in the nature of things that the ignorance and smallness of these low minds should push them to these petty manifestations of malevolence and ill-will. The best thing is to remain unmoved. As for violence that is out of the question. No doubt you do not mind about yourself – but you represent the Asram and we must not give a handle to those in power – many of whom are not now favourable to us – to get a handle to do anything against the Asram. That is the primary consideration at the present moment and under the present conditions – which will not always remain as they are now.

21 December 1933" (35: 811)

Contact with the Outer World

"It is not good that *X* [*a visitor*] should spend so much time with you. The Yogic atmosphere is not easy to keep when one is in constant contact with people who are living in another consciousness – it is only when one has got a complete foundation in the outer as well as the inner consciousness that one can do it completely in all surroundings. That is why the Mother has always insisted on keeping the Asram and the sadhaks as much as possible out of contact with the outer world. 9 August 1933" (35: 812)

> "In *The Synthesis of Yoga* you write of the love of the Divine in all beings and the constant perception and acceptance of its workings in all things. If this is one of the ways of realising the Divine, why do we have to restrict our contact with people?

That is all right in the ordinary karmayoga which aims at union with the cosmic Spirit and stops short at the Overmind – but here a special work has to be done and a new realisation achieved for the earth and not for ourselves alone. It is necessary to stand apart from the rest of the world so as to separate ourselves from the ordinary consciousness in order to bring down a new one.

It is not that love for all is not part of the sadhana, but it has not to translate itself at once into a mixing with all – it can only express itself in a general and when need be dynamic universal goodwill, but for the rest it must find vent in this labour of bringing down the higher consciousness with all its effect for the earth. As for accepting the working of the Divine in all things that is necessary here too in the sense of seeing it even behind our struggles and difficulties, but not accepting the nature of man and the world as it is – our aim is to move towards a more divine working which will replace what now is by a greater and happier manifestation. That too is a labour of divine Love. 22 October 1933

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> It seems as if we avoid the world much more than the Mayavadin sannyasis. Some of them start hospitals and schools and do famine relief; some even joined the Satyagraha Movement. Similarly it may be that one would find more true ahimsaks among fighters and warriors than among those who shout "non-violence".

Very probably. You are right about the Mayavadins (I mean the present-day ones) and ourselves. The former Mayavadins were often more consistent, except that they wrote books and preached and disputed and founded institutions which seems a waste of energy if all is Maya. All the energy ought to have gone to getting out of Maya. As for our own position it is that ordinary life is Maya in this sense, not that it is an illusion, for it exists and is very real, but that it is an Ignorance, a thing founded on what is from the spiritual point of view a falsehood. So it is logical to avoid it or rather we are obliged to have some touch with it but we minimise that as much as possible except in so far as it is useful for our purpose. We have to turn life from falsehood into spiritual truth, from a life of ignorance into a life of spiritual knowledge. But until we have succeeded in doing that for ourselves, it is better to keep apart from the life of Ignorance of the world – otherwise our little slowly growing light is likely to be submerged in the seas of darkness all around it. Even as it is, the endeavour is difficult enough – it would be tenfold more difficult if there were no isolation. 20 June 1935" (35: 812-13)

Mantras in the Integral Yoga

"The idea of your friend that it is necessary to receive a mantra from here and for that he must come is altogether wrong. There is no mantra given in this Yoga. It is the opening of the consciousness to the Mother from within that is the true initiation and that can only come by aspiration and rejection of restlessness in the mind and vital. To come here is not the way to get it. Many come and get nothing or get their difficulties raised or even fall away from the Yoga. It is no use coming before one is ready, and he does not seem to be ready. Strong desire is not a proof of readiness. When he is inwardly ready, then there will be no difficulty about his coming." (35: 825)

"As a rule the only mantra used in this sadhana is that of the Mother or of my name and the Mother. The concentration in the heart and the concentration in the head can both be used – each has its own result. The first opens up the psychic being and brings bhakti, love and union with the Mother, her presence within the heart and the action of her Force in the nature. The other opens the mind to self-realisation, to the consciousness of what is above mind, to the ascent of the consciousness out of the body and the descent of the higher consciousness into the body. 13 October 1934" (35: 825)

"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 sadhaks can use one if they find it helpful or so long as they find it helpful. The stress is rather on an aspiration in the consciousness and a concentration of the mind, heart, will, all the being. If a mantra is found helpful for that, one uses it. OM if rightly used (not mechanically) might very well help the opening upwards and outwards (cosmic consciousness) as well as the descent.

16 October 1935" (35: 825-26)

> "I humbly request Sri Aurobindo and you to send me some *mūla-mantra* which I can repeat in meditation and concentration and as *nāma-smaraṇa*. Coming from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, it will have a potency to lead me quickly on the path.

We do not usually give any mantra. Those who repeat something in meditation call on the Mother. 27 June 1936

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> Is there any difference between the Force that helps when I call the Mother in sleep and the Force that comes when I repeat "Sri Aurobindo–Mira"?

There is not necessarily any difference of Force. Usually the Mother's name has the full power in it; but in certain states of consciousness the double Name may have a special effect. 29 August 1936" (35: 826)

Repeating the Name of Sri Krishna in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

"I find no harm if I repeat the name of Sri Krishna, whose very being has taken the form of our Lord Sri Aurobindo and his Parashakti, the Mother.

There is no harm in that; it is not incompatible or inconsistent with this Yoga."

(35: 826-27)

Traditional Mantra Japa

"In the Upanishads (Mandukya chiefly) the upasana of ॐ (OM) is recommended. It is said in the Pranava Upasana that the *praṇava deha* – or the *mantra deha* of *Praṇava deva* – comes successively into the *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa deha* of the sadhaka. It projects itself into the sadhaka first, then it engulfs him. It creates a divine rhythm and harmony and at last becomes one with every particle of his triple body (*sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, *kāraṇa*). Does this process include the transformation of the physical consciousness which Sri Aurobindo's yoga aspires to achieve? Or if it is different, in what way does it differ?

I do not believe a mantra can change the physical consciousness. What it does, if it is effective, is to open the consciousness and to bring into it the power of that which the Mantra represents." (35: 827)

> "It is said that Mantra Japa leads to a certain mechanisation of the sadhana, as the sadhaka becomes dependent on Nature to the extent that he has to awaken the Mantra in order to touch and identify himself with the Divinity. Is this charge against Japa true?

It depends on the way in which the japa is done.

If rightly done, the mantra is a means of opening to the light and knowledge etc. from above and it ceases as soon as that is done." (35: 827)

"It is very good news that you got rid of the attack and it was the japa that helped you to do it. This and past experience also shows that if you can overcome the old association of the japa with sterility and sorrow, it can do its natural function of creating the right consciousness – for that is what the japa is intended to do. It first changes the vibrations of the consciousness, brings into it the right state and the right responses and then brings in the power or the presence of the Deity. Several times before you wrote to me that by doing japa you got rid of the old impulse and recovered calm and the right turn of the consciousness and now it has helped you to get rid of the invasion of sorrow and despondency. Let us hope that this last will also soon lose its strength like the impulse and calm and serenity begin to establish itself in the whole nature. 8 October 1936" (35: 827-28)

Use of a Mantra in Special Circumstances

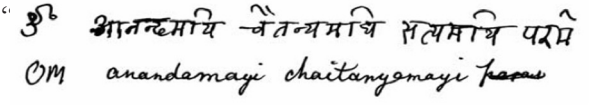
"This is not a case of ordinary madness, but, as your brother himself feels, an attack of evil forces. When the light descended into him, there was something in his brain that was not prepared or able to bear the descent and this gave the opportunity for the attack and the overthrow of the equilibrium.

It may be possible to set matters right without any personal contact. He should repeat as a *mantram* the words contained in the enclosed paper (which he should not reveal to others) after concentrating on the sign above it. He should repeat three times a day (the three Sandhyas), twelve times in all, and also whenever attacked.

Information should be sent from time to time about his condition."

(35: 828)

Mantras Written by Sri Aurobindo

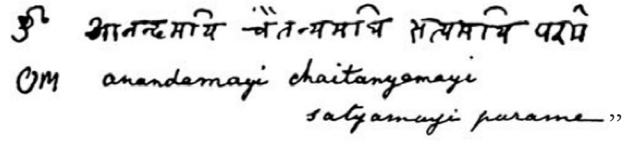


ॐ आनन्दमयि चैतन्यमयि सत्यमयि परमे

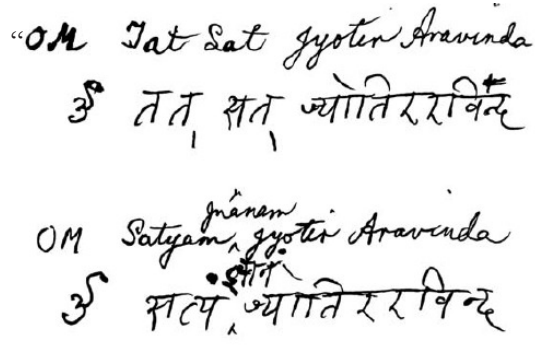
OM anandamayi Chaitanyamayi [satyamayi parame]*

circa 1927

** Sri Aurobindo wrote this mantra around 1927 as one of several miscellaneous natations connected with Record of Yoga. See Record of Yoga, volume 11 of* THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO, *page 1352. Note that he did not complete the transliteration in Latin script. The text was first published as a message in November 1955. Still later the Mother completed the transliteration in her own had; see the facsimile below. – Ed.*



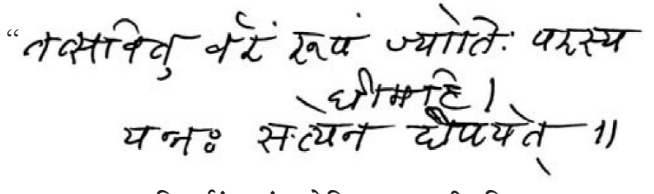
(35: 829)



OM Tat Sat Jyotir Aravinda
ॐ तत् सत् ज्योतिरविन्द

OM Satyam Jnânam Jyotir Aravinda
ॐ सत्यं ज्ञानं ज्योतिरविन्द

circa 1927" (35: 830)

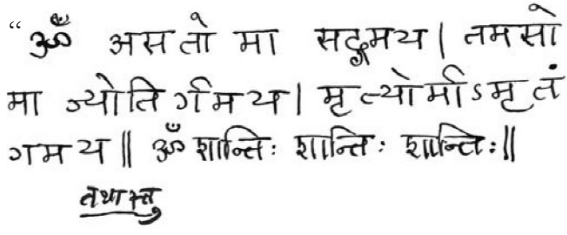


तत्सवितुर्वरं रूपं ज्योतिः परस्य धीमहि।

यन्नः सत्येन दीपयेत्॥

Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the Truth.

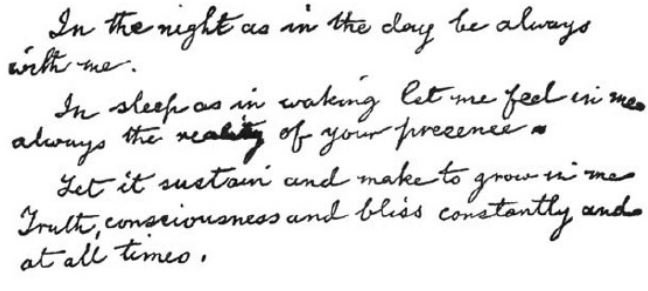
19 March 1933" (35: 831)



ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥*
तथास्तु

19 March 1933" (35: 831)

** One of Sri Aurobindo's disciples wrote this quotation from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I.3.28) in his notebook. Below it Sri Aurobindo wrote तथास्तु (tathāstu): "so be it!" – Ed.*


In the night as in the day be always with me.
In sleep as in waking let me feel in me always the reality of your presence.
Let it sustain and make to grow in me Truth, consciousness and bliss constantly and at all times.

"In the night as in the day be always with me.

In sleep as in waking let me feel in me always the reality of your presence.

Let it sustain and make to grow in me Truth, consciousness and bliss constantly and at all times." (35: 833)

Birthday Messages for Disciples

For Kantilal

"Live always as if you were under the very eye of the Supreme and of the Divine Mother. Do nothing, try to think and feel nothing that would be unworthy of the Divine Presence. 16 April 1930

For K. Krishna Rao

Go below the surface of the consciousness deep within, for there you will find the soul's profound quietude, luminous silence, freedom and spiritual wideness, there the direct touch and presence of the Divine.

13 October 1938" (35: 838)

For Kamala

"In faith and confidence and joy on the quiet and sunlit path towards the home of Light and Ananda.

11 February 1936…

Fidelity, devotion, self-giving, selfless work and service, constant aspiration are the simplest and most effective means by which the soul can be made ready and fit to be in the abiding presence of the Divine.

11 February 1946…

Devotion to the Divine, fidelity to his work and obedience to his will are the first supports of the Yoga. On these pillars all the rest can be supported.

11 February 1948" (35: 840-41)

"It is the 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 April 1933

*

You must make grow in you the peace that is born of the certitude of victory.

14 June 1933

*

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

21 December 1933

*

Our blessings are with you always. Persevere and have full confidence.

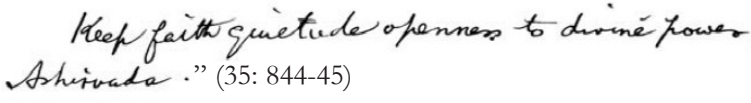
16 October 1934…

*

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

*

Keep faith quietude openness to divine power. Ashirvada.



." (35: 844-45)

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Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

READY-REFERENCE CALENDAR

For ascertaining any day of the week for any given time from 1800 to 2050 inclusive

COMMON YEARS, 1800 TO 2050										Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1801	1829	1857	1885	1914	1942	1970	1998	2026													
1807	1835	1863	1891	1925	1953	1981	2009	2037		4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1818	1846	1874	1903	1931	1959	1987	2015	2043													
1802	1830	1858	1886	1915	1943	1971	1999	2027													
1813	1841	1869	1897	1926	1954	1982	2010	2038		5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3
1819	1847	1875	1909	1937	1965	1993	2021	2049													
1803	1831	1859	1887	1921	1949	1977	2005	2033													
1814	1842	1870	1898	1927	1955	1983	2011	2039		6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1825	1853	1881	1910	1938	1966	1994	2022	2050													
1805	1833	1861	1889	1907	1935	1963	1991	2019	2047												
1811	1839	1867	1895	1918	1946	1974	2002	2030		2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1822	1850	1878	1901	1929	1957	1985	2013	2041													
1800	1823	1851	1879	1913	1941	1969	1997	2025													
1806	1834	1862	1890	1919	1947	1975	2003	2031		3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1
1817	1845	1873	1902	1930	1958	1986	2014	2042													
1809	1837	1865	1893	1911	1939	1967	1995	2023													
1815	1843	1871	1899	1922	1950	1978	2006	2034		7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1826	1854	1882	1905	1933	1961	1969	2017	2045													
1810	1838	1866	1894	1917	1945	1973	2001	2029													
1821	1849	1877	1900	1923	1951	1979	2007	2035		1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1827	1855	1883	1906	1934	1962	1990	2018	2046													
LEAP YEARS, 1804 TO 2048											29										
1804	1832	1860	1888		1928	1956	1984	2012	2040	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1808	1836	1864	1892	1904	1932	1960	1988	2016	2044	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1812	1840	1868	1896	1908	1936	1964	1992	2020	2048	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1816	1844	1872		1912	1940	1968	1996	2024		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1820	1848	1876		1916	1944	1972	2000	2028		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1824	1852	1880		1920	1948	1976	2004	2032		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	6	1	3
1828	1856	1884		1924	1952	1980	2008	2036		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
Monday	1	Tuesday	1	Wednesday	1	Thursday	1	Friday	1	Saturday	1	SUNDAY	1
Tuesday	2	Wednesday	2	Thursday	2	Friday	2	Saturday	2	SUNDAY	2	Monday	2
Wednesday	3	Thursday	3	Friday	3	Saturday	3	SUNDAY	3	Monday	3	Tuesday	3
Thursday	4	Friday	4	Saturday	4	SUNDAY	4	Monday	4	Tuesday	4	Wednesday	4
Friday	5	Saturday	5	SUNDAY	5	Monday	5	Tuesday	5	Wednesday	5	Thursday	5
Saturday	6	SUNDAY	6	Monday	6	Tuesday	6	Wednesday	6	Thursday	6	Friday	6
SUNDAY	7	Monday	7	Tuesday	7	Wednesday	7	Thursday	7	Friday	7	Saturday	7
Monday	8	Tuesday	8	Wednesday	8	Thursday	8	Friday	8	Saturday	8	SUNDAY	8
Tuesday	9	Wednesday	9	Thursday	9	Friday	9	Saturday	9	SUNDAY	9	Monday	9
Wednesday	10	Thursday	10	Friday	10	Saturday	10	SUNDAY	10	Monday	10	Tuesday	10
Thursday	11	Friday	11	Saturday	11	SUNDAY	11	Monday	11	Tuesday	11	Wednesday	11
Friday	12	Saturday	12	SUNDAY	12	Monday	12	Tuesday	12	Wednesday	12	Thursday	12
Saturday	13	SUNDAY	13	Monday	13	Tuesday	13	Wednesday	13	Thursday	13	Friday	13
SUNDAY	14	Monday	14	Tuesday	14	Wednesday	14	Thursday	14	Friday	14	Saturday	14
Monday	15	Tuesday	15	Wednesday	15	Thursday	15	Friday	15	Saturday	15	SUNDAY	15
Tuesday	16	Wednesday	16	Thursday	16	Friday	16	Saturday	16	SUNDAY	16	Monday	16
Wednesday	17	Thursday	17	Friday	17	Saturday	17	SUNDAY	17	Monday	17	Tuesday	17
Thursday	18	Friday	18	Saturday	18	SUNDAY	18	Monday	18	Tuesday	18	Wednesday	18
Friday	19	Saturday	19	SUNDAY	19	Monday	19	Tuesday	19	Wednesday	19	Thursday	19
Saturday	20	SUNDAY	20	Monday	20	Tuesday	20	Wednesday	20	Thursday	20	Friday	20
SUNDAY	21	Monday	21	Tuesday	21	Wednesday	21	Thursday	21	Friday	21	Saturday	21
Monday	22	Tuesday	22	Wednesday	22	Thursday	22	Friday	22	Saturday	22	SUNDAY	22
Tuesday	23	Wednesday	23	Thursday	23	Friday	23	Saturday	23	SUNDAY	23	Monday	23
Wednesday	24	Thursday	24	Friday	24	Saturday	24	SUNDAY	24	Monday	24	Tuesday	24
Thursday	25	Friday	25	Saturday	25	SUNDAY	25	Monday	25	Tuesday	25	Wednesday	25
Friday	26	Saturday	26	SUNDAY	26	Monday	26	Tuesday	26	Wednesday	26	Thursday	26
Saturday	27	SUNDAY	27	Monday	27	Tuesday	27	Wednesday	27	Thursday	27	Friday	27
SUNDAY	28	Monday	28	Tuesday	28	Wednesday	28	Thursday	28	Friday	28	Saturday	28
Monday	29	Tuesday	29	Wednesday	29	Thursday	29	Friday	29	Saturday	29	SUNDAY	29
Tuesday	30	Wednesday	30	Thursday	30	Friday	30	Saturday	30	SUNDAY	30	Monday	30
Wednesday	31	Thursday	31	Friday	31	Saturday	31	SUNDAY	31	Monday	31	Tuesday	31

NOTE: To ascertain any day of the week, first look in the table for the year required and under the months are figures which refer to the corresponding figures at the head of the columns of the days below. For Example:- To know on what day of the week 15th Aug., 1872 fell, look in the table of years for 1872, and in a parallel line under August is figure 4, which directs to column 4 in which it will be seen that August 15 fell on Thursday.

CONVERSION FACTORS

CONVERSION FACTORS

Abbreviation	Prefixes		for instance
		Mile (m) $\frac{1}{1000}$ of unit	
Metre-m	kilo (K)-1000 times unit		100 centimetres = 1 metre
Gramme-gm	hecto (h) - 100 times unit	centi (c) $\frac{1}{100}$ of unit	100 milligramme = 1 gramme
Litres-1	deca (dal) - 10 times unit	deci (d) $\frac{1}{10}$ of unit	100 litres = 1 hectolitre

Length

1 inch = 25.4 millimetres (mm)
1 foot = 30.48 centimetres (cm)
1 yard = 0.9144 metre (m)
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometres (km)
1 millimetre = 0.0328 inch.
1 centimetre = 0.0328 foot
1 metre = 1.094 yards
1 kilometre = 0.62137 mile

Centimetres		Inch
2.540	1	0.394
5.080	2	0.787
7.620	3	1.181
10.160	4	1.575
12.700	5	1.969
15.240	6	2.362
17.780	7	2.756
20.320	8	3.150
22.860	9	3.543

Metres		Yards
0.914	1	1.094
1.829	2	2.187
2.743	3	3.281
3.658	4	4.374
4.572	5	5.468
5.486	6	6.562
6.401	7	7.655
7.315	8	8.749
8.230	9	9.843

Kilometres		Miles
1.609	1	0.621
3.219	2	1.243
4.828	3	1.864
6.437	4	2.485
8.047	5	3.107
9.656	6	3.728
11.265	7	4.350
12.875	8	4.971
14.484	9	5.592

Volume

1 inch^3 = 16.387 centimetres^3
1 foot^3 = 28.316 decimetres^3
1 pint^3 = 0.568 litre
1 imperial gallon = 4.546 litres
1 centimetre^3 = 0.0610 inch^3
1 decimetre^3 = 0.035 feet^3
1 litre = 1.76 pints
1 litre = 0.220 Imperial gallon

Litre		Gallons
4.546	1	0.220
9.092	2	0.440
13.638	3	0.660
18.184	4	0.880
22.730	5	1.110
27.276	6	1.320
31.822	7	1.540
36.368	8	1.760
40.914	9	1.980

Weight

1 ounce = 28.349 gm.
1 pound = 0.4536 kg.
1 stone = 6.350 kilogrammes
1 cwt = 50/80 kilogrammes
1 ton = 1.016 metric tonnes
1 gramme = 0.03527 ounce
1 kilogramme = 2.205 pounds
1 kilogramme = 0.158 stone
1 kilogramme = 0.01968 cwt
1 metric tonne = 0.09842

Kilograms		Pounds
0.454	1	2.205
0.907	2	4.405
1.361	3	6.614
1.814	4	8.819
2.268	5	11.023
2.722	6	13.228
3.175	7	15.432
3.629	8	17.637
4.082	9	19.872

Area

1 sq. inch = 6.4516 sq. cm.
1 sq. yard = 0.8361 sq. metre
1 sq. mile = 2.589 sq. kilometres
1 acra = 4047 sq. metres
1 sq. centimetre = 0.155 sq. inch
1 sq. metre = 1.1960 sq. yards
1 sq. kilometre = 0.386 sq. mile
1 hectare = 10.000 sq. metres
1 hectare = 2.471 acres

Sq. Metres		Sq. Yards
0.836	1	1.196
1.672	2	2.392
2.508	3	3.588
3.345	4	4.784
4.181	5	5.980
5.017	6	7.176
5.853	7	8.372
6.689	8	9.568
7.525	9	10.764

Easy Conversion

Metres into yards
add one-tenth
Yards into metres
deduct one-tenth
Kilometres into miles
multiply by 5 and divide by 8
Miles into kilometres
multiply by 8 and divide by 5
Litres into pints
multiply by 7 and divide by 4
Pints into litres
multiply by 4 and divide by 7
Litres into gallons
multiply by 2 and divide by 9
Gallons into litres
multiply by 9 and divide by 2
Kilograms into pounds
divide by 9 and multiply by 20
Pounds into by kilograms
divide by 20 and multiply by 9

Double conversion Tables : The central figures represent either of the two columns besides them, as the case may be Exemple : 1 kilometre = 0.621 mile and one mile = 1.609 kilometres.

The Resurgent India Trust

The fundamental object of this Trust is to work for an integral resurgence of India so that it may assume its rightful place among the community of nations and, by its powerful example and spiritual influence open for humanity the way leading to the establishment of a divine life on earth which will be the supreme fulfilment of the ages long promises and pronouncements of the forthcoming kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

To assume its true position and fulfil its true role in the community of nations India must find back and manifest her soul which, at present, is completely covered up by an overwhelming commercialism which has spread everywhere and which has arisen out of the onslaught on it of the Western spirit of shortsighted utilitarianism. Individually one can fight it by becoming conscious of one's inner being or – better still – psychic being and letting it become conscious of India's soul and interested in knowing and serving it. The individuals who become conscious of India's Soul and its Mission will become the backbone of a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world.

The Resurgent India Trust has been established by just such a group of people who having become conscious of India's Soul have acquired a living faith in its divine destiny and cannot help intensely loving it in spite of all the contrary surface appearances. This Trust hopes to become a powerful instrument of the expression of theirs and their countless other brothers' and sisters' faith and love for India.

It is believed that the most important thing for India – the one which when set right will automatically lead to the dissolution of most of its present problems and difficulties – is to recover the true sense of pride in its great culture, its glorious past and its supreme achievements. Therefore this Trust ardently seeks to awaken Indian people to the truth of their present condition and their great past and thus contribute to the forces leading to the recovery of their lost faith and pride – lost due to over one thousand years of subjugation to the rule of foreign invaders and the still continuing hold of their alien ideas on Indian minds – in the majesty, greatness and invincibility of their spiritual culture.