The Real Awakener

Lights on the Path

Words of the Mother – 1

Price : Rs. 15/-

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The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates.

– Sri Aurobindo

I. Prayers and Meditations

1. (5 December, 1912)

"IN Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there. . . . Yes, we should not put too much intensity, too much effort into our seeking for Thee; the effort and intensity become a veil in front of Thee; we must not desire to see Thee, for that is still a mental agitation which obscures Thy Eternal Presence; it is in the most complete Peace, Serenity and Equality that all is Thou even as Thou art all, and the least vibration in this perfectly pure and calm atmosphere is an obstacle to Thy manifestation. No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising, and Thou art there without a possible doubt, for all becomes a Holy Peace and a Sacred Silence.

And that is better than all the meditations in the world."[1]

2. (7 December, 1912)

"LIKE a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I trust myself to Thee that Thy Will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. When Thou willest I shall be in Thee, Thyself, and there shall be no more any distinction; I await that blessed hour without impatience of any kind, letting myself flow irresistibly toward it as a peaceful stream flows toward the boundless ocean.

Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity."[2]

3. (7 December, 1912)

"My being goes up to Thee in thanksgiving, not because Thou usest this weak and imperfect body to manifest Thyself, but because *Thou dost manifest Thyself*, and that is the Splendour of splendours, the Joy of joys, the Marvel of marvels. All who seek Thee with ardour should understand that Thou art there whenever there is need of Thee; and if they could have the supreme faith to give up seeking Thee, but rather to await Thee, at each moment putting themselves integrally at Thy service, Thou wouldst be there whenever there was need of Thee; and is there not always need of Thee with us, whatever may be the different, and often unexpected, forms of Thy manifestation?

Let Thy glory be proclaimed,

And sanctify life;

Let it transform men's hearts,

And Thy Peace reign on earth."[3]

4. (18 June, 1913)

"To turn towards Thee, unite with Thee, live in Thee and for Thee, is supreme happiness, unmixed joy, immutable peace; it is to breathe infinity, to soar in eternity, no longer feel one's limits, escape from time and space. Why do men flee from these boons as though they feared them? What a strange thing is ignorance, that source of all suffering! How miserable that obscurity which keeps men away from the very thing which would bring them happiness and subjects them

to this painful school of ordinary existence fashioned entirely from struggle and suffering!"[4]

5. (2 August, 1913)

"THIS morning, as I was glancing over the month that is beginning and wondering how I could serve Thee better, I heard the small voice within like a murmur in the silence, and this is what it said to me: 'See how very little all outer circumstances matter. Why strive and strain so to realise thy own conception of Truth? Be more supple, more trusting. The only duty is not to let oneself be troubled by anything. To torment oneself about doing the right thing causes as much harm as a bad will. Only in a calm as of deep waters can be found the possibility of True Service.' "[5]

6. (15 August, 1913)

"O Divine Master, Thine is all our life, our thought, our love, all our being. Take unto Thyself once more what is Thine; for Thou art ourselves in our Reality."[6]

7. (17 August, 1913)

"O lord, Master of our life, let us soar very high above all care for our material preservation. Nothing is more humiliating and depressing than these thoughts so constantly turned towards the preservation of the body, these preoccupations with health, the means of subsistence, the framework of life. . . . How very insignificant is all this, a thin smoke that a simple breath can disperse or a single thought turned towards Thee dispel like a vain mirage!

Deliver those who are in this bondage, O Lord, even as those who are the slaves of passion. On the path that leads to

Thee these obstacles are at once terrible and puerile – terrible for those who are yet under their sway, puerile for one who has passed beyond.

How shall I describe that utter relief, that delightful lightness which comes when one is free from all anxiety for oneself, for one's life and health and satisfaction, and even one's progress?"[7]

8. (22 November, 1913)

"A FEW minutes passed in silence before Thee are worth centuries of felicity. . . . "[8]

9. (28 November, 1913)

"O Divine Master, grant that today may bring to us a completer consecration to Thy Will, a more integral gift of ourselves to Thy work, a more total forgetfulness of self, a greater illumination, a purer love. Grant that in a communion growing ever deeper, more constant and entire, we may be united always more and more closely to Thee and become Thy servitors worthy of Thee. Remove from us all egoism, root out all petty vanity, greed and obscurity. May we be all ablaze with Thy divine Love; make us Thy torches in the world."[9]

10. (13 December, 1913)

"O Lord, Eternal Master, Thou art my Light and my Peace; guide my steps, open my eyes, illumine my heart, and lead me on the paths that go straight to Thee.

O Lord, Lord, grant that I may have no other will than Thine and that all my acts may be an expression of Thy divine law."[10]

11. (11 January, 1914)

"EVERY moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us, every moment the universe is created anew in its entirety and in every one of its parts. And if we had a truly living faith, if we had the absolute certitude of Thy omnipotence and Thy sole reality, Thy manifestation could at each moment become so evident that the whole universe would be transformed by it. But we are so enslaved to everything that is around us and has gone before us, we are so influenced by the whole totality of manifested things, and our faith is so weak that we are yet unable to serve as intermediaries for the great miracle of transfiguration. . . . But, Lord, I know that it will come one day."[11]

12. (12 January, 1914)

***"A TEACHING can be profitable only if it is perfectly sincere, that is, if it is lived while it is being given, and words often repeated, thoughts expressed frequently can no longer be sincere. . . ."**[12]

13. (19 March, 1914)

"O LORD, eternal Teacher, Thou whom we can neither name nor understand, but whom we want to realise more and more at every moment, enlighten our intelligence, illumine our hearts, transfigure our consciousness; may everyone awaken to the true life, flee from egoism and its train of sorrow and anguish, and take refuge in Thy divine and pure Love, source of all peace and all happiness."[13]

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* *Bold letters in the text, used here for emphasis, are from the Editor and are not there in the original.*

14. The Mother's First Meeting With Sri Aurobindo

(a) 30 March, 1914

"IN the presence of those who are integrally Thy servitors, those who have attained the perfect consciousness of Thy presence, I become aware that I am still far, very far from what I yearn to realise; and I know that the highest I can conceive, the noblest and purest is still dark and ignorant beside what I should conceive. But this perception, far from being depressing, stimulates and strengthens the aspiration, the energy, the will to triumph over all obstacles so as to be at last identified with Thy law and Thy work.

Gradually the horizon becomes distinct, the path grows clear, and we move towards a greater and greater certitude.

It matters little that there are thousands of beings plunged in the densest ignorance, He whom we saw yesterday is on earth; his presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, and Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.

O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope has no bounds. My adoration is beyond all words, my reverence is silent.

(b) 1 April, 1914

I FEEL we have entered the very heart of Thy sanctuary and grown aware of Thy very will. A great joy, a deep peace reign in me, and yet all my inner constructions have vanished like a vain dream and I find myself now, before Thy immensity, without a frame or system, like a being not yet individualised.

All the past in its external form seems ridiculously arbitrary to me, and yet I know it was useful in its own time.

But now all is changed: a new stage has begun."[14]

15. (12 July, 1914)

"In all the states of being, in all the modes of activity, in all things, in all the worlds, one can meet Thee and unite with Thee, for Thou art everywhere and always present. He who has met Thee in one activity of his being or in one world of the universe, says "I have found Him" and seeks nothing more; he thinks he has reached the summit of human possibilities. What a mistake! In all the states, in all the modes, in all things, all worlds, all the elements we must discover Thee and unite with Thee and if one element is left aside, however small it may be, the communion cannot be perfect, the realisation cannot be accomplished.

And that is why to have found Thee is but a first step on an infinite ladder. . . .

O sweet Master, sovereign Transfigurator, put an end to all negligence, all lazy indolence, gather together all our energies, make them into an indomitable, irresistible will."[15]

16. (17 July, 1914)

"Earthly realisations easily take on a great importance in our eyes, for they are proportionate to our external being with this limited form which makes us men. But what is an earthly realisation beside Thee, before Thee? However perfect, complete, divine it may be, it is nothing but an indiscernible moment in Thy eternity; and the results obtained by it, however powerful and marvellous they may

be, are nothing but an imperceptible atom in the infinite march to Thee. This is what Thy workers must never forget, otherwise they will become unfit to serve Thee. . . .

O my sweet Master, what childishness to think oneself responsible for anything at all and want to individualise Thy supreme and divine Will! Is it not enough to unite with Thy heart and live there permanently? Then Thou takest all the responsibilities and Thy will works without even our needing to know it. . . . Only a realisation independent of all outer circumstances, free from all attachment and all understanding, however high, is a true realisation, a valuable realisation. And the only such realisation is to unite with Thee integrally, closely, definitively."[16]

17. (6 September, 1914)

"HIGHER, ever higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is achieved, let us not stop at any realisation, let us march always onwards, ceaselessly, energetically, towards an ever completer manifestation, an ever higher and more total consciousness. . . . Yesterday's victory must be only a stepping-stone to the victory of tomorrow, and the power of the day gone by aweakness beside the effectivity to come.

O Mother Divine, Thy march is triumphal and uninterrupted. He who unites with Thee in integral love journeys unceasingly towards ever vaster horizons, towards an ever completer realisation, leaping from peak to peak in the splendour of Thy light, to the conquest of the marvellous secrets of the Unknown and their integral manifestation.

O divine Victor, all the earth sings Thy praises, and all forces will obey Thee.

For the Lord has said: "The hour has come."

And all obstacles will be surmounted."[17]

18. (17 October, 1914)

"O MOTHER divine, the obstacles shall be overcome, the enemies appeased; Thou shalt dominate the whole earth with Thy sovereign love, and every consciousness shall be illumined with Thy serenity.

This is the promise."[18]

19. (2 January, 1915)

"EVERY idea, however powerful and profound it may be, repeated too often, expressed too constantly, becomes stale, insipid, worthless. . . . The highest concepts thus lose their freshness after a time and the intelligence which delighted in transcendental speculations suddenly feels an imperious need to abandon all reasonings and all its philosophy and contemplate life with the marvelling gaze of a child, so as no longer to remember anything of its past knowledge, were it even a sovereignly divine one. . . .

It is true to say that the divisions of time are purely arbitrary, that the date assigned to the renewal of the year varies according to the latitude, the climate, the customs, and that it is purely conventional. This is the mental attitude which smiles at the childishness of men and wants to let itself be guided by profounder truths. And then suddenly the mind itself feels its powerlessness to translate these truths precisely, and, renouncing all wisdom of this kind, it lets the song of the aspiring heart arise, the heart for which every circumstance

is an opportunity for a deeper, vaster and more intense aspiration. . . . The year of the West renews itself: why not profit by it to will with renewed ardour that this symbol should become a reality and the deplorable things of the past give place to things which must exist in all glory?

Always we believe that we can define Thee, can shut Thee up in our mental formulas; but however vast, complex, synthetic they may be, Thou wilt remain always the Inexpressible even for him who knows and lives Thee. . . . For one can live Thee though one is unable to express Thee, can be Thy infinity and realise it though unable to define or explain Thee; always Thou wilt remain the eternal mystery, worthy of all our wonder; – not only in Thy unthinkable and even unknowable Transcendence but in Thy universal manifestation, in all that we integrally are. And always forms of thought are succeeded by new forms, ever purer, higher and more comprehensive, but never will one of them be considered sufficient to give so much as an idea of what Thou art. And each new fact will be a new problem, more marvellous and mysterious than all that preceded it. Yet, faced with its own ignorance and incapacity, the mental being remains luminous, smiling and calm, even as though it possessed the supreme knowledge – that of its being Thou, innumerably, invariably, infinitely, very simply Thou."[19]

20. (30 March, 1917)

"**THERE is a sovereign royalty in taking no thought for oneself.** To have needs is to assert a weakness; to claim something proves that we lack what we claim. To desire is to be impotent; it is to recognise our limitations and confess

our incapacity to overcome them. If only from the point of view of a legitimate pride, man should be noble enough to renounce desire. How humiliating to ask something for oneself from life or from the Supreme Consciousness which animates it! How humiliating for us, how ignorant an offence against Her! For all is within our reach, only the egoistic limits of our being prevent us from enjoying the whole universe as completely and concretely as we possess our own body and its immediate surroundings."[20]

21. (31 March, 1917)

"EACH time that a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath, a little more beauty seems to be born upon the Earth, the air is embalmed with a sweet perfume, all becomes more friendly.

How great is Thy power, O Lord of all existences, that an atom of Thy joy is sufficient to efface so much darkness, so many sorrows and a single ray of Thy glory can light up thus the dullest pebble, illumine the blackest consciousness!

Thou hast heaped Thy favours upon me, Thou hast unveiled to me many secrets, Thou hast made me taste many unexpected and unhoped for joys, but no grace of Thine can be equal to this Thou grantest to me when a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath."[21]

22. (12 July, 1918)

"SUDDENLY, before Thee, all my pride fell. I understood how futile it was in Thy Presence to wish to surmount oneself, and I wept, wept abundantly and without constraint the sweetest tears of my life. . . . Ah yes, how refreshing, how

calm and sweet were those tears I shed before Thee without shame or constraint! Was it not like a child in its father's arms? But what a Father! What sublimity, what magnificence, what immensity of comprehension! And what a power and plenitude in the response! Yes, my tears were like holy dew. Was it because it was not for my own sorrow that I wept? Tears sweet and beneficent, tears that opened my heart without constraint before Thee and melted in one miraculous moment all the remaining obstacles that could separate me from Thee!"[22]

23. (6 May, 1927)

"ONE must know how to give one's life and also one's death, give one's happiness and also one's suffering, to depend for everything and in all things upon the Divine Dispenser of all our possibilities of realisation, who alone can and will decide whether we shall be happy or not, whether we shall live or not, whether we shall participate or not in the realisation.

In the integrality and absoluteness of this love, this self-giving, lies the essential condition for perfect peace, the indispensable foundation of constant beatitude."[23]

24. (28 December, 1928)

"**THERE is a Power that no ruler can command; there is a Happiness that no earthly success can bring; there is a Light that no wisdom can possess; there is a Knowledge that no philosophy and no science can master; there is a Bliss of which no satisfaction of desire can give the enjoyment; there is a thirst for Love that no human**

relation can appease; there is a Peace that one finds nowhere, not even in death.

It is the Power, the Happiness, the Light, the Knowledge, the Bliss, the Love, the Peace that flow from the Divine Grace."[24]

25. (24 November, 1931)

"O my Lord, my sweet Master, for the accomplishment of Thy work I have sunk down into the unfathomable depths of Matter, I have touched with my finger the horror of the falsehood and the inconscience, I have reached the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity. But in my heart was the Remembrance, from my heart there leaped the call which could arrive to Thee: 'Lord, Lord, everywhere Thy enemies appear triumphant; falsehood is the monarch of the world; life without Thee is a death, a perpetual hell; doubt has usurped the place of Hope and revolt has pushed out Submission; Faith is spent, Gratitude is not born; blind passions and murderous instincts and a guilty weakness have covered and stifled Thy sweet law of love. Lord, wilt Thou permit Thy enemies to prevail, falsehood and ugliness and suffering to triumph? Lord, give the command to conquer and victory will be there. I know we are unworthy, I know the world is not yet ready. But I cry to Thee with an absolute faith in Thy Grace and I know that Thy Grace will save.'

Thus, my prayer rushed up towards Thee; and, from the depths of the abyss, I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: 'Lose not courage, be firm, be confident, – I COME.' "[25]

26. (23 October, 1937)

"(A prayer for those who wish to serve the Divine)

GLORY to Thee, O Lord, who triumphest over every obstacle.

Grant that nothing in us shall be an obstacle in Thy work.

Grant that nothing may retard Thy manifestation.

Grant that Thy will may be done in all things and at every moment.

We stand here before Thee that Thy will may be fulfilled in us, in every element, in every activity of our being, from our supreme heights to the smallest cells of the body.

Grant that we may be faithful to Thee utterly and for ever.

We would be completely under Thy influence to the exclusion of every other.

Grant that we may never forget to own towards Thee a deep, an intense gratitude.

Grant that we may never squander any of the marvellous things that are Thy gifts to us at every instant.

Grant that everything in us may collaborate in Thy work and all be ready for Thy realisation.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, Supreme Master of all realisation.

Give us a faith active and ardent, absolute and unshakable in Thy Victory."[26]

* * *

II. Words of Long Ago

1. The Virtues*

"ONCE UPON a time there was a splendid palace, in the heart of which lay a secret sanctuary, whose threshold no being had ever crossed. Furthermore, even its outermost galleries were almost inaccessible to mortals, for the palace stood on a very high cloud, and very few, in any age, could find the way to it.

It was the palace of Truth.

One day a festival was held there, not for men but for very different beings, gods and goddesses great and small, who on earth are honoured by the name of Virtues.

The vestibule of the palace was a great hall, where the walls, the floor, the ceiling, luminous in themselves, were resplendent with a myriad glittering fires.

It was the Hall of Intelligence. Near to the ground, the light was very soft and had a beautiful deep sapphire hue, but it became gradually clearer towards the ceiling, from which girandoles of diamonds hung like chandeliers, their myriad facets shooting dazzling rays.

The Virtues came separately, but soon formed congenial groups, full of joy to find themselves for once at least together, for they are usually so widely scattered throughout the world and the worlds, so isolated amid so many alien beings.

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* *The titles marked with an * are from the original. All the unmarked titles in the text are from the editor.*

Sincerity reigned over the festival. She was dressed in a transparent robe, like clear water, and held in her hand a cube of purest crystal, through which things can be seen as they really are, far different from what they usually seem, for there their image is reflected without distortion.

Near to her, like two faithful guardians, stood Humility, at once respectful and proud, and Courage, lofty-browed, clear-eyed, his lips firm and smiling, with a calm and resolute air.

Close beside Courage, her hand in his, stood a woman, completely veiled, of whom nothing could be seen but her searching eyes, shining through her veils. It was Prudence.

Among them all, coming and going from one to another and yet seeming always to remain near to each one, Charity, at once vigilant and calm, active and yet discrete, left behind her as she passed through the groups a trail of soft white light. The light that she spreads and softens comes to her, through a radiance so subtle that it is invisible to most eyes, from her closest friend, her inseparable companion, her twin sister, Justice.

And around Charity thronged a shining escort, Kindness, Patience, Gentleness, Solicitude, and many others.

All of them are there, or so at least they think.

But then suddenly, at the golden threshold, a newcomer appears.

With great reluctance the guards, set to watch the gates, have agreed to admit her. Never before had they seen her, and there was nothing in her appearance to impress them.

She was indeed very young and slight, and the white dress which she wore was very simple, almost poor. She takes a few

steps forward with a shy, embarrassed air. Then, apparently ill at ease to find herself in such a large and brilliant company, she pauses, not knowing towards whom she should go.

After a brief exchange with her companions, Prudence steps forward at their request and goes towards the stranger. Then, after clearing her throat, as people do when they are embarrassed, to give herself a moment to reflect, she turns to her and says:

"We who are gathered here and who all know each other by our names and our merits are surprised at your coming, for you appear to be a stranger to us, or at least we do not seem to have ever seen you before. Would you be so kind as to tell us who you are?"

Then the newcomer replied with a sigh:

"Alas! I am not surprised that I appear to be a stranger in this palace, for I am so rarely invited anywhere.

'My name is Gratitude.' "[27] (1904)

2. To Know How to Suffer*

"Suffering is not something inevitable or even desirable, but when it comes to us, how helpful it can be!

Each time we feel that our heart is breaking, a deeper door opens within us, revealing new horizons, ever richer in hidden treasures, whose golden influx brings once more a new and intenser life to the organism on the brink of destruction.

And when, by these successive descents, we reach the veil that reveals thee as it is lifted, O Lord, who can describe the intensity of Life that penetrates the whole being, the radiance of the Light that floods it, the sublimity of the Love that transforms it for ever!"[28] (1910)

3. On Thought*

(a) "It seems to me that we must first of all distinguish two very different kinds, or I might say qualities, of thought: thoughts in us which are the result, the fruit, as it were, of our sensations, and thoughts which, like living beings, come to us – from where?... most often we do not know – thoughts that we perceive mentally before they express themselves in our outer being as sensations.

If you have observed yourselves even a little, you must have noticed that the contact with what is not yourselves is established first of all through the medium of your senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, etc. The impact felt in this way, whether slight or violent, pleasant or unpleasant, arouses a feeling in you – like or dislike, attraction or repulsion – which very quickly turns into an idea, an opinion you form about the object, whatever it may be, that has determined the contact.

An example: you go out and as you step out of your house you see that it is raining and at the same time you feel the damp cold seizing you; the sensation is unpleasant, you feel a dislike for the rain and inwardly, almost mechanically, you say to yourself, "This rain is really a nuisance, especially as I have to go out! Not to mention that I am going to get dreadfully dirty; Paris is very dirty in rainy weather, especially now that all the streets have been dug up" (and so on)....

All these and many other similar thoughts about the simple fact that it is raining come to assail your mind; and if nothing else, outwardly or inwardly, comes to attract your attention, for a long while, almost without your noticing it,

your brain may produce minute, trivial thoughts about this small, insignificant sensation....

This is how most human lives are spent; this is what human beings most often call *thinking* – a mental activity that is almost mechanical, unreflecting, out of our control, a reflex. All thoughts concerning material life and its many needs are of the same quality.

Here we face the first difficulty to be overcome; if we want to be able to truly think, that is, to receive, formulate and form valid and viable thoughts, we must first of all empty our brain of all this vague and unruly mental agitation. And this is certainly not the easiest part of our task. We are dominated by this irrational cerebral activity, we do not dominate it.

Only one method is worth recommending: meditation. But as I was telling you last time, there are many ways of meditating; some are very effective, others less so.

Each one should find his own by successive trial and error. However, one thing can be recommended to everyone: reflection, that is to say, concentration, self-observation in solitude and silence, a close and strict analysis of the multitude of insignificant little thoughts which constantly assail us.

During the few moments you devote each day to this preliminary exercise of meditation, avoid, if possible, the complacent contemplation of your sensations, your feelings, your states of mind.

We all have an inexhaustible fund of self-indulgence, and very often we treat all these little inner movements with the

greatest respect and give them an importance which they certainly do not have, even relative to our own evolution.

When one has enough self-control to be able to analyse coldly, to dissect these states of mind, to strip them of their brilliant or painful appearance, so as to perceive them as they are in all their childish insignificance, then one can profitably devote oneself to studying them. But this result can only be achieved gradually, after much reflection in a spirit of complete impartiality. …"[29] (15-12-1911)

(b) "When you are able by methodical and repeated effort to objectivise and keep at a distance all this flood of incoherent thoughts which assail us, you will notice a new phenomenon.

You will observe within yourself certain thoughts that are stronger and more tenacious than others, thoughts concerning social usages, customs, moral rules and even general laws that govern earth and man.

They are your opinions on these subjects or at least those you profess and by which you try to act.

Look at one of these ideas, the one most familiar to you, look at it very carefully, concentrate, reflect in all sincerity, if possible leaving aside all bias, and ask yourself why you have this opinion on that subject rather than any other.

The answer will almost invariably be the same, or nearly:

Because it is the opinion prevalent in your environment, because it is considered good form to have it and therefore saves you from as many clashes, frictions, criticisms as possible.

Or because this was the opinion of your father or mother, the opinion which moulded your childhood.

Or else because this opinion is the normal outcome of the education, religious or otherwise, you received in your youth. This thought is not your own thought.

For, to be your own thought, it would have to form part of a logical synthesis you had elaborated in the course of your existence, either by observation, experience and deduction, or by deep, abstract meditation and contemplation.

This, then, is our second discovery.

Since we have goodwill and endeavour to be integrally sincere, that is, to make our actions conform to our thoughts, we are now convinced that we act according to mental laws we receive from outside, not after having maturely considered and analysed them, not by deliberately and consciously receiving them, but because unconsciously we are subjected to them through atavism, by our upbringing and education, and above all because we are dominated by a collective suggestion which is so powerful, so overwhelming, that very few succeed in avoiding it altogether.

How far we are from the mental individuality we want to acquire!

We are products determined by all our past history, impelled by the blind and arbitrary will of our contemporaries.

It is a pitiful sight.... But let us not be disheartened; the greater the ailment and the more pressing the remedy, the more energetically we must fight back.

The method will always be the same: to reflect and reflect and reflect.

We must take these ideas one after another and analyse them by appealing to all our common sense, all our reason, our highest sense of equity; we must weigh them in the balance of our acquired knowledge and accumulated experience, and then endeavour to reconcile them with one another, to establish harmony among them. It will often prove very difficult, for we have a regrettable tendency to let the most contradictory ideas dwell side by side in our minds.

We must put all of them in place, bring order into our inner chamber, and we must do this each day just as we tidy the rooms of our house. For I suppose that our mentality deserves at least as much care as our house.

But, once again, for this work to be truly effective, we must strive to maintain in ourselves our highest, quietest, most sincere state of mind so as to make it our own.

Let us be transparent so that the light within us may fully illumine the thoughts we want to observe, analyse, classify. Let us be impartial and courageous so as to rise above our own little preferences and petty personal conveniences. Let us look at the thoughts in themselves, for themselves, without bias.

And little by little, if we persevere in our work of classification, we shall see order and light take up their abode in our minds. But we should never forget that this order is but confusion compared with the order that we must realise in the future, that this light is but darkness compared with the light that we shall be able to receive after some time.

Life is in perpetual evolution; if we want to have a living mentality, we must progress unceasingly.

Moreover, this is only a preliminary work. We are still very far from true thought, which brings us into relation with the infinite source of knowledge. …"[30] (15-12-1911)

(c) "One who strives in sincere quest for truth, who is ready, if necessary, to sacrifice all he had thought until then to be true, in order to draw ever nearer to the integral truth that can be no other than the progressive knowledge of the whole universe in its infinite progression, enters gradually into relation with great masses of deeper, completer and more luminous thoughts.

After much meditation and contemplation, he comes into direct contact with the great universal current of pure intellectual force, and thenceforth no knowledge can be veiled from him.

From that moment serenity – mental peace – is his portion. In all beliefs, in all human knowledge, in all religious teachings, which sometimes appear so contradictory, he perceives the deep truth which nothing can now conceal from his eyes.

Even errors and ignorance no longer disturb him, for, as an unknown master says:

"He who walks in the Truth is not troubled by any error, for he knows that error is the first effort of life towards truth."

But to attain this state of perfect serenity is to attain to the summit of thought. …"[31] (15-12-1911)

(d) And now allow me, before concluding, to express a wish.

I would like us to make the resolution to raise ourselves each day, in all sincerity and goodwill, in an ardent aspiration towards the Sun of Truth, towards the Supreme Light, the source and intellectual life of the universe, so that it may pervade us entirely and illumine with its great brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.

Then we shall acquire the right and the privilege of following the counsel of the great initiate of the past, who tells us:

'With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch.' "[32] (15-12-1911)

4. The Supreme Discovery*

(a) "IF WE want to progress integrally, we must build within our conscious being a strong and pure mental synthesis which can serve us as a protection against temptations from outside, as a landmark to prevent us from going astray, as a beacon to light our way across the moving ocean of life.

Each individual should build up this mental synthesis according to his own tendencies and affinities and aspirations. But if we want it to be truly living and luminous, it must be centred on the idea that is the intellectual representation symbolizing That which is at the centre of our being, That which is our life and our light.

This idea, expressed in sublime words, has been taught

in various forms by all the great Instructors in all lands and all ages.

The Self of each one and the great universal Self are one.

Since all that is exists from all eternity in its essence and principle, why make a distinction between the being and its origin, between ourselves and what we place at the beginning?

The ancient traditions rightly said:

"Our origin and ourselves, our God and ourselves are one."

And this oneness should not be understood merely as a more or less close and intimate relationship of union, but as a true identity.

Thus, when a man who seeks the Divine attempts to reascend by degrees towards the inaccessible, he forgets that all his knowledge and all his intuition cannot take him one step forward in this infinite; neither does he know that what he wants to attain, what he believes to be so far from him, is within him.

For how could he know anything of the origin until he becomes conscious of this origin in himself?

It is by understanding himself, by learning to know himself, that he can make the supreme discovery and cry out in wonder like the patriarch in the Bible, "The house of God is here and I knew it not."

That is why we must express that sublime thought, creatrix of the material worlds, and make known to all the word that fills the heavens and the earth, "I am in all things and all beings."

…This indeed is the central thought epitomising all others, the thought which should be ever present to our remembrance as the sun that illumines all life.

That is why I remind you of it today. For if we follow our path bearing this thought in our hearts like the rarest jewel, the most precious treasure, if we allow it to do its work of illumination and transfiguration within us, we shall know that it lives in the centre of all beings and all things, and in it we shall feel the marvellous oneness of the universe.

Then we shall understand the vanity and childishness of our meagre satisfactions, our foolish quarrels, our petty passions, our blind indignations. We shall see the dissolution of our little faults, the crumbling of the last entrenchments of our limited personality and our obtuse egoism. We shall feel ourselves being swept along by this sublime current of true spirituality which will deliver us from our narrow limits and bounds.

The individual Self and the universal Self are one; in every world, in every being, in every thing, in every atom is the Divine Presence, and man's mission is to manifest it.

In order to do that, he must become conscious of this Divine Presence within him. Some individuals must undergo a real apprenticeship in order to achieve this: their egoistic being is too all-absorbing, too rigid, too conservative, and their struggles against it are long and painful. Others, on the contrary, who are more impersonal, more plastic, more spiritualised, come easily into contact with the inexhaustible divine source of their being. But let us not forget that they too should devote themselves daily, constantly, to a methodical effort of adaptation and transformation, so that

nothing within them may ever again obscure the radiance of that pure light.

But how greatly the standpoint changes once we attain this deeper consciousness! How understanding widens, how compassion grows!

On this a sage has said:

"I would like each one of us to come to the point where he perceives the inner God who dwells even in the vilest of human beings; instead of condemning him we would say, 'Arise, O resplendent Being, thou who art ever pure, who knowest neither birth nor death; arise, Almighty One, and manifest thy nature.' "

Let us live by this beautiful utterance and we shall see everything around us transformed as if by miracle. …"[33] (28-4-1912)

(b) "Hear again: no state was ever more precarious than that of man when he was separated on earth from his divine origin. Above him stretched the hostile borders of the usurper, and at his horizon's gates watched jailers armed with flaming swords. Then, since he could climb no more to the source of life, the source arose within him; since he could no more receive the light from above, the light shone forth at the very centre of his being; since he could commune no more with the transcendent love, that love offered itself in a holocaust and chose each terrestrial being, each human self as its dwelling-place and sanctuary.

That is how, in this despised and desolate but fruitful and blessed Matter, each atom contains a divine thought, each being carries within him the Divine Inhabitant. And if no being

in all the universe is as frail as man, neither is any as divine as he!

In truth, in truth, in humiliation lies the cradle of glory!"[34] (28-4-1912)

5. The Most Useful Work

"What is the most useful work to be done at the present moment?

The general aim to be attained is the advent of a progressing universal harmony.

The means for attaining this aim, in regard to the earth, is the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One.

In other words, – to create unity by founding the Kingdom of God which is within us all.

This, therefore, is the most useful work to be done:

(1) For each individually, to be conscious in himself of the Divine Presence and to identify himself with it.

(2) To individualise the states of being that were never till now conscious in man and, by that, to put the earth in connection with one or more of the fountains of universal force that are still sealed to it.

(3) To speak again to the world the eternal word under a new form adapted to its present mentality.

It will be the synthesis of all human knowledge.

(4) Collectively, to establish an ideal society in a propitious spot for the flowering of the new race, the race of the Sons of God."[35] (7-5-1912)

6. Clarity

" 'One who is without darkness, free from blemish, of blameless conduct, perfectly pure, that one, even though he does not know and has never heard and in short has no knowledge, however little, of any of the things that are in the world of the ten regions since time without beginning until today, none the less, he possesses the highest knowledge of the one who knows all. He is the one of whom it is said: Clarity.' You see here a panegyric of the direct relationship with the idea as opposed to the wholly external and superficial method of erudition."[36] (16-2-1912)

7. On Thought

(a) "One who advances in Truth is not troubled by any error, for he knows that error is the first effort of life towards truth. …"[37]

"This attachment to form, which consists entirely of intellectual impotence, is one of the most powerful causes of dissension among men.

But one who penetrates deeply enough to see the thought, the naked truth, soon realises that it is the same behind its varied and more or less opaque veils.

This is the surest way to achieve true tolerance.

Indeed, how can we have an exclusive passion for one particular doctrine or school or religion when we have had the experience that each one of them contains treasures of light and truth, however varied the caskets which enclose them?"[38] (16-12-1912)

(b) "If we do not see thought, it is because its substance is more ethereal than that of light; just as, if we do not hear light, it is because its essence is more subtle than that of sound.

Among the elements of its own order, thought moves just as our bodies do among physical objects. Just as our hands know how to shape these objects, in the same way thought also knows how to mould these elements and cast them into a myriad appropriate forms.

Thus our intellectual gestures are no less fruitful than our physical gestures. And that is why wisdom has always taught that we must watch over our thoughts as we would over generating acts."[39] (19-2-1912)

(c) "Just as a good, kind, just and lofty thought can be eminently beneficial, so also a malevolent, base, wicked and selfish thought can be baneful. …

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, the harm caused by a misdirected thought is even greater still.

'Neither father nor mother nor any other kinsman can do so much good as a well-directed thought.' "[40] (19-2-1912)

(d) "All the thoughts of worldly-minded people whose only aim is enjoyment and physical diversion, express craving.

All the thoughts of intellectual creators or artists thirsting for esteem, fame and honour, express craving.

All the thoughts of the ruling class and the officials hankering after more power and influence, express craving.

All the thoughts of the thousands of employees and

workmen, of all the oppressed, the unfortunate, the downtrodden struggling for some improvement of their cheerless existence, express craving.

All, rich or poor, powerful or weak, privileged or deprived, intellectual or obtuse, learned or ignorant, all want gold, always more gold to satisfy all their cravings."[41] (19-2-1912)

(e) "With regard to defects, let us not forget that those which annoy us most in others are usually those which thrive most in ourselves and that, in any case, if we did not have any seeds of these defects within us, we would not be able to perceive them anywhere. Besides, what exactly is a defect? Most often it is the reverse side of a quality, an excess of virtue which has found no outlet, something which is not in its place.

As for what concerns us personally, we must be more prudent still and follow one strict rule very scrupulously: never judge anything without first having put ourselves in the place of the other, whoever he may be, with the greatest possible impersonality; try to feel what he has felt, see what he has seen, and if we succeed in being perfectly sincere, very often we shall see our estimation becoming less strict and more just.

Besides, as a general rule, in what light shall we look at what we want to judge? What shall our criterion be? Indeed, do we fancy that we possess the supreme wisdom and the perfect justice that we are able to say with certainty, "This is good, this is bad"? Let us never forget that our notions of good and evil are wholly relative and so ignorant that, in what concerns others, we often find fault with an act which is the expression of a

wisdom far greater than our own."[42] (19-2-1912)

(f) "…we can always keep in mind that the malevolent or uncharitable thoughts emanating from men are the chief causes of division among them; they make their union almost impossible even when they wish to realise it."[43] (19-2-1912)

8. The Moral Problem

"Actually, in human life, the whole moral problem is concentrated in the conflict between the vital will with its impulses and the mental power with its decrees. When the vital will is submitted to the mental power, then the life of the individual or of the society becomes moral. But it is only when both, vital will and mental power, are equally submissive to something higher, to the supermind, that human life is exceeded, that true spiritual life begins, the life of the superman; for his law will come from within, it will be the divine law shining in the centre of each being and governing life from therein, the divine law multiple in its manifestation but one in its origin. And because of its unity this law is the law of supreme order and harmony.

Thus the individual, no more guided by egoistical motives, laws or customs, shall abandon all selfish aims. His rule will be perfect disinterestedness. To act in view of a personal profit, either in this world or in another beyond, will become an unthinkable impossibility. For each act will be done in complete, simple, joyful obedience to the divine law which inspires it, without any seeking for reward or results, as the supreme reward will be in the very delight of acting under such inspiration, of being identified in conscience and will with the divine principle within oneself."[44]

9. Myself and My Creed*

"I belong to no nation, no civilisation, no society, no race, but to the Divine.

I obey no master, no ruler, no law, no social convention, but the Divine.

To Him I have surrendered all, will, life and self; for Him I am ready to give all my blood, drop by drop, if such is His Will, with complete joy; and nothing in His service can be sacrifice, for all is perfect delight."[45] (Japan, February 1920)

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III. Questions and Answers 1929

1. (7 April, 1929)

(a) *"Will you say something to us about Yoga?*

What do you want the Yoga for? To get power? To attain to peace and calm? To serve humanity?

None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path.

The question you are to answer is this: Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine? Is the Divine the supreme fact of your life, so much so that it is simply impossible for you to do without it? Do you feel that your very *raison d'être* is the Divine and without it there is no meaning in your existence? If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

This is the first thing necessary – aspiration for the Divine. The next thing you have to do is to tend it, to keep it always alert and awake and living. And for that what is required is Concentration – concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose."[46]

(b) *"What is one to do to prepare oneself for the Yoga?*

To be conscious, first of all. We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being; for the most part we are unconscious. It is this unconsciousness that keeps us down to our unregenerate nature and prevents change and transformation in it. It is through unconsciousness that the undivine forces enter into us and make us their slaves. You

are to be conscious of yourself, you must awake to your nature and movements, you must know why and how you do things or feel or think them; you must understand your motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, that move you; in fact, you must, as it were, take to pieces the entire machinery of your being. Once you are conscious, it means that you can distinguish and sift things, you can see which are the forces that pull you down and which help you on. And when you know the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the divine from the undivine, you are to act strictly up to your knowledge; that is to say, resolutely reject one and accept the other. The duality will present itself at every step and at every step you will have to make your choice. You will have to be patient and persistent and vigilant – "sleepless", as the adepts say; you must always refuse to give any chance whatever to the undivine against the divine.

Is the Yoga for the sake of humanity?

No, it is for the sake of Divinity. It is not the welfare of humanity that we seek but the manifestation of the Divine. We are here to work out the Divine Will, more truly, to be worked upon by the Divine Will so that we may be its instruments for the progressive incorporation of the Supreme and the establishment of His reign upon earth. Only that portion of humanity which will respond to the Divine Call shall receive its Grace."[47]

2. (14 April, 1929)

(a) "The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you,

you may catch the contagion from him. It is sufficient for you to come near a place where there is plague in order to be infected with its poison; you need not know at all that it is there. You can lose in a few minutes what it has taken you months to gain. So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment."[48]

(b) "Once you have turned to the Divine, saying, "I want to be yours", and the Divine has said, "Yes", the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, "I am here and I am yours", then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one."[49]

(c) "It is always wrong to display powers. This does not mean that there is no use for them. But they have to be used in the same way as they came. They come by union with the Divine. They must be used by the will of the Divine and not for display. If you come across someone who is blind and you have the power to make him see – if it is the Divine Will that the man shall see, you have only to say, "Let him see" and he will see. But if you wish to make him see simply because you want to cure him, then you use the power to satisfy your personal ambition. Most often, in such cases, you not only

lose your power but you create a great disturbance in the man. Yet in appearance the two ways are the same; but in one case you act because of the Divine Will and in the other for some personal motive."[50]

(d). "One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition. The Guru who believes that he has a great truth to teach to humanity and who wants many disciples and who feels uncomfortable when the disciples go away or who seizes on anybody that comes and tries to make him a disciple, is evidently following nothing but his ambition. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment – to any object or any mode of life."[51]

(e). "You must have a strong body and strong nerves. You must have a strong basis of equanimity in your external being. If you have this basis, you can contain a world of emotion and yet not have to scream it out. This does not mean that you cannot express your emotion, but you can express it in a beautiful harmonious way. To weep or scream or dance about is always a proof of weakness, either of the vital or the mental or the physical nature; for on all these levels the activity is for self-satisfaction. One who dances and jumps and screams has the feeling that he is somehow very unusual in his excitement; and his vital nature takes great pleasure in that.

If you have to bear the pressure of the Divine Descent, you must be very strong and powerful, otherwise you would be shaken to pieces. Some persons ask, "Why has not the Divine come yet?" Because you are not ready. If a little drop makes you sing and dance and scream, what would happen if the whole thing came down?"[52]

3. (21 April, 1929)

(a) "The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate. Then you have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness. Then you are sure of progress, then you have made real progress when concentration in the Divine is the necessity of your life, when you cannot do without it, when it continues naturally from morning to night whatever you may be engaged in doing. Whether you sit down to meditation or go about and do things and work, what is required of you is consciousness; that is the one need, – to be constantly conscious of the Divine."[53]

(b) "What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline. The final aim

is to be in constant union with the Divine, not only in meditation but in all circumstances and in all the active life."[54]

(c) "There are disciplines such as Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga that one can practise and yet have nothing to do with the spiritual life; the former arrives mostly at body control, the latter at mind control. But to enter the spiritual life means to take a plunge into the Divine, as you would jump into the sea. And that is not the end but the very beginning; for after you have taken the plunge, you must learn to live in the Divine. How are you to do it? You have simply to jump straight in and not to think, "Where shall I fall? What will happen to me?" It is the hesitation of your mind that prevents you. You must simply let yourself go."[55]

4. (28 April, 1929)

(a) "Yoga means union with the Divine, and the union is effected through offering – it is founded on the offering of yourself to the Divine. In the beginning you start by making this offering in a general way, as though once for all; you say, "I am the servant of the Divine; my life is given absolutely to the Divine; all my efforts are for the realisation of the Divine Life." But that is only the first step; for this is not sufficient. When the resolution has been taken, when you have decided that the whole of your life shall be given to the Divine, you have still at every moment to remember it and carry it out in all the details of your existence. You must feel at every step that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine Consciousness that is acting through you. You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel

everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond."[56]

(b) ..we want the divine conquest of this world, the conquest of all its movements and the realisation of the Divine here. But if we want the Divine to reign here we must give all we have and are and do here to the Divine. It will not do to think that anything is unimportant or that the external life and its necessities are no part of the Divine Life. If we do, we shall remain where we have always been and there will be no conquest of the external world; nothing abiding there will have been done."[57]

5. (5 May, 1929)

(a) *"What is the proper function of the intellect? Is it a help or a hindrance to Sadhana?*

Whether the intellect is a help or a hindrance depends upon the person and upon the way in which it is used. There is a true movement of the intellect and there is a wrong movement; one helps, the other hinders. The intellect that believes too much in its own importance and wants satisfaction for its own sake, is an obstacle to the higher realisation.

But this is true not in any special sense or for the intellect alone, but generally and of other faculties as well. For example, people do not regard an all-engrossing satisfaction of the vital desires or the animal appetites as a virtue; the moral sense is accepted as a mentor to tell one the bounds that one may not transgress. It is only in his intellectual activities that man thinks

he can do without any such mentor or censor!

Any part of the being that keeps to its proper place and plays its appointed role is helpful; but directly it steps beyond its sphere, it becomes twisted and perverted and therefore false. A power has the right movement when it is set into activity for the divine's purpose; it has the wrong movement when it is set into activity for its own satisfaction.

The intellect, in its true nature, is an instrument of expression and action. It is something like an intermediary between the true knowledge, whose seat is in the higher regions above the mind, and realisation here below. The intellect or, generally speaking, the mind gives the form; the vital puts in the dynamism and life-power; the material comes in last and embodies."[58]

(b) *"Can mere faith create all, conquer all?*

Yes, but it must be an integral faith and it must be absolute. And it must be of the right kind, not merely a force of mental thought or will, but something more and deeper. The will put forth by the mind sets up opposite reactions and creates a resistance. You must have heard something of the method of Coué in healing diseases. He knew some secret of this power and utilised it with considerable effect; but he called it imagination and his method gave the faith he called up too mental a form. Mental faith is not sufficient; it must be completed and enforced by a vital and even a physical faith, a faith of the body. If you can create in yourself an integral force of this kind in all your being, then nothing can resist it; but you must reach down to the most subconscious, you must fix the faith in the very cells of the body. There is, for instance, now abroad the

beginning of a knowledge among the scientists that death is not a necessity. But the whole of humanity believes firmly in death; it is, one might say, a general human suggestion based on a long unchanging experience. If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind, then from the vital nature and the subconscious physical layers, death would no longer be inevitable."[59]

6. (12 May, 1929)

(a) *"There are some human beings who are like vampires. What are they and why are they like that?*

They are not human; there is only a human form or appearance. They are incarnations of beings from the world that is just next to the physical, beings who live on the plane which we call the vital world. It is a world of all the desires and impulses and passions and of movements of violence and greed and cunning and every kind of ignorance; but all the dynamisms too are there, all the life-energies and all the powers. The beings of this world have by their nature a strange grip over the material world and can exercise upon it a sinister influence. Some of them are formed out of the remains of the human being that persist after death in the vital atmosphere near to the earth-plane. His desires and hungers still float there and remain in form even after the dissolution of the body; often they are moved to go on manifesting and satisfying themselves and the birth of these creatures of the vital world is the consequence. But these are minor beings and, if they can be very troublesome, it is yet not impossible to deal with them. There are others, far more dangerous, who have never been in human form; never were

they born into a human body upon earth, for most often they refuse to accept this way of birth because it is slavery to matter and they prefer to remain in their own world, powerful and mischievous, and to control earthly beings from there. For, if they do not want to be born on earth, they do want to be in contact with the physical nature, but without being bound by it. Their method is to try first to cast their influence upon a man; then they enter slowly into his atmosphere and in the end may get complete possession of him, driving out entirely the real human soul and personality. These creatures, when in possession of an earthly body, may have the human appearance but they have not a human nature. Their habit is to draw upon the life-force of human beings; they attack and capture vital power wherever they can and feed upon it. If they come into your atmosphere, you suddenly feel depressed and exhausted; if you are near them for some time you fall sick; if you live with one of them, it may kill you."[60]

(b) *"But how is one to get such creatures out of one's environment when they are once there?*

The vital power incarnated in these beings is of a very material kind and it is effective only within a short distance. Ordinarily, if you do not live in the same house or if you are not in the same company with them, you do not come within their influence. But if you open some channel of connection or communication, through letters, for example, then you make possible an interchange of forces and are liable to be influenced by them even from a far distance. The wisest way with these beings is to cut off all connection and have nothing to do with them – unless indeed you have great occult knowledge and power and have learned how to cover and

protect yourself – but even then it is always a dangerous thing to move about with them. To hope to transform them, as some people do, is a vain illusion; for they do not want to be transformed. They have no intention of allowing any transformation and all effort in that direction is useless.

These beings, when in the human body, are not often conscious of what they really are. Sometimes they have a vague feeling that they are not quite human in the ordinary way. But still there are cases where they are conscious and very conscious; not only do they know that they do not belong to humanity but they know what they are, act in that knowledge and deliberately pursue their ends. The beings of the vital world are powerful by their very nature; when to their power they add knowledge, they become doubly dangerous. There is nothing to be done with these creatures; you should avoid having any dealings with them unless you have the power to crush and destroy them. If you are forced into contact with them, beware of the spell they can cast. These vital beings, when they manifest on the physical plane, have always a great hypnotic power; for the centre of their consciousness is in the vital world and not in the material and they are not veiled and dwarfed by the material consciousness as human beings are."[61]

(c) "..The power of money is at present under the influence or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world. It is because of this influence that you never see money going in any considerable amount to the cause of Truth. Always it goes astray, because it is in the clutch of the hostile forces and is one of the principal means by which they keep their grip upon the earth. The hold of the hostile forces upon

money-power is powerfully, completely and thoroughly organised and to extract anything out of this compact organisation is a most difficult task. Each time that you try to draw a little of this money away from its present custodians, you have to undertake a fierce battle.

And yet one signal victory somewhere over the adverse forces that have the hold upon money would make victory possible simultaneously and automatically at all other points also. If in one place they yielded, all who now feel that they cannot give money to the cause of Truth would suddenly experience a great and intense desire to give. It is not that those rich men who are more or less toys and instruments in the hands of the vital forces are averse to spend; their avarice is awake only when the vital desires and impulses are not touched. For when it is to gratify some desire that they call their own, they spend readily; but when they are called to share their ease and the benefits of their wealth with others, then they find it hard to part with their money. The vital power controlling money is like a guardian who keeps his wealth in a big safe always tightly closed. Each time the people who are in its grasp are asked to part with their money, they put all sorts of careful questions before they will consent to open their purses even a very little way; but if a vital impulse arises in them with its demand, the guardian is happy to open wide the coffer and money flows out freely. Commonly, the vital desires he obeys are connected with the sex impulses, but very often too he yields to the desire for fame and consideration, the desire for food or any other desire that is on the same vital level; whatever does not belong to this category is closely questioned and scrutinised, grudgingly admitted and most often refused help

in the end. In those who are slaves of vital beings, the desire for truth and light and spiritual achievement, even if it at all touches them, cannot balance the desire for money. To win money from their hands for the Divine means to fight the devil out of them; you have first to conquer or convert the vital being whom they serve, and it is not an easy task. Men who are under the sway of vital creatures can change from a life of ease, cast away enjoyment and become intensely ascetic and yet remain just as wicked as ever and even by the change turn worse than before."[62]

7. (19 May, 1929)

(a) *"What is the nature of the power that thought possesses? How and to what extent am I the creator of my world?*

According to the Buddhist teachings, every human being lives and moves in a world of his own, quite independent of the world in which another lives; it is only when a certain harmony is created between these different worlds that they interpenetrate and men can meet and understand one another. This is true of the mind; for everybody moves in a mental world of his own, created by his own thoughts. And it is so true that always, when something has been said, each understands it in a different way; for what he catches is not the thing that has been spoken but something he has in his own head. But it is a truth that belongs to the movement of the mental plane and holds good only there.

For the mind is an instrument of action and formation and not an instrument of knowledge; at each moment it is creating forms. Thoughts are forms and have an individual life, independent of their author: sent out from him into the

world, they move in it towards the realisation of their own purpose of existence. When you think of anyone, your thought takes a form and goes out to find him; and, if your thinking is associated with some will that is behind it, the thought-form that has gone out from you makes an attempt to realise itself. Let us say, for instance, that you have a keen desire for a certain person to come and that, along with this vital impulse of desire, a strong imagination accompanies the mental form you have made; you imagine, "If he came, it would be like this or it would be like that." After a time you drop the idea altogether, and you do not know that even after you have forgotten it, your thought continues to exist. For it does still exist and is in action, independent of you, and it would need a great power to bring it back from its work. It is working in the atmosphere of the person touched by it and creates in him the desire to come. And if there is a sufficient power of will in your thought-form, if it is a well-built formation, it will arrive at its own realisation. But between the formation and the realisation there is a certain lapse of time, and if in this interval your mind has been occupied with quite other things, then when there happens this fulfilment of your forgotten thought, you may not even remember that you once harboured it; you do not know that you were the instigator of its action and the cause of what has come about. And it happens very often too that when the result does come, you have ceased to desire or care for it. There are some men who have a very strong formative power of this kind and always they see their formations realised; but because they have not a well-disciplined mental and vital being, they want now one thing and now another and these different or opposite formations and their results collide and clash with one another.

And these people wonder how it is that they are living in so great a confusion and disharmony! They do not realise that it is their own thoughts and desires that have built the circumstances around them which seem to them so incoherent and contradictory and make their life almost unbearable.

This is a knowledge of great importance, if it is given along with the secret of its right use. Self-discipline and self-mastery are the secret; the secret is to find in oneself the source of the Truth and that constant government of the Divine Will which can alone give to each formation its full power and its integral and harmonious realisation."[63]

(b) "**There is one thing certain about the mind and its workings; it is that you can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you.** Men find a book or a teaching very wonderful and often you hear them say, "That is exactly what I myself feel and know, but I could not bring it out or express it as well as it is expressed here." When men come across a book of true knowledge, each finds himself there, and at every new reading he discovers things that he did not see in it at first; it opens to him each time a new field of knowledge that had till then escaped him in it. But that is because it reaches layers of knowledge that were waiting for expression in the subconscious in him; the expression has now been given by somebody else and much better than he could himself have done it. But, once expressed, he immediately recognises it and feels that it is the truth. **The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.**"[64]

(c) "The whole mental world in which you live is limited, even though you may not know or feel its limitations, and something must come and break down this building in which your mind has shut itself and liberate it. For instance, you have some fixed rules, ideas or principles to which you attribute an absolute importance; most often it is an adherence to certain moral principles or precepts, such as the commandment "Honour thy father and mother" or "Thou shalt not kill" and the rest. Each man has some fad or one preferred shibboleth or another, each thinks that he is free from this or that prejudice from which others suffer and is willing to regard such notions as quite false; but he imagines that his is not like theirs, it is for him the truth, the real truth. An attachment to a rule of the mind is an indication of a blindness still hiding somewhere. Take, for example, the very universal superstition, prevalent all over the world, that asceticism and spirituality are one and the same thing. If you describe someone as a spiritual man or a spiritual woman, people at once think of one who does not eat or sits all day without moving, one who lives in a hut in great poverty, one who has given away all he had and keeps nothing for himself. This is the picture that immediately arises in the minds of ninety-nine people out of a hundred, when you speak of a spiritual man; the one proof of spirituality for them is poverty and abstinence from everything that is pleasant or comfortable. This is a mental construction which must be thrown down if you are to be free to see and follow the spiritual truth.

For you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration and you want to meet the Divine and realise the Divine in your consciousness and in your life; and then what happens is

that you arrive in a place which is not at all a hut and meet a Divine One who is living a comfortable life, eating freely, surrounded by beautiful or luxurious things, not distributing what he has to the poor, but accepting and enjoying all that people give him. At once with your fixed mental rule you are bewildered and cry, "Why, what is this? I thought I was to meet a spiritual man!" This false conception has to be broken down and disappear. Once it is gone, you find something that is much higher than your narrow ascetic rule, a complete openness that leaves the being free."[65]

(d) "When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things, – or, as they say, "to escape from their bondage". But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you, – they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile."[66]

(e) "In life it is the action of the subconscious that has the larger share and it acts a hundred times more powerfully

than the conscious parts. The normal human condition is a state filled with apprehensions and fears; if you observe your mind deeply for ten minutes, you will find that for nine out of ten it is full of fears – it carries in it fear about many things, big and small, near and far, seen and unseen, and though you do not usually take conscious notice of it, it is there all the same. To be free from all fear can come only by steady effort and discipline.

And even if by discipline and effort you have liberated your mind and your vital of apprehension and fear, it is more difficult to convince the body. But that too must be done. Once you enter the path of Yoga you must get rid of all fears – the fears of your mind, the fears of your vital, the fears of your body which are lodged in its very cells. One of the uses of the blows and knocks you receive on the path of Yoga is to rid you of all fear. The causes of your fears leap on you again and again, until you can stand before them free and indifferent, untouched and pure."[67]

8. (26 May, 1929)

(a) "What are the conditions in the psychic world? How is it situated with regard to the hostile forces?

The psychic world or plane of consciousness is that part of the world, the psychic being is that part of the being which is directly under the influence of the Divine Consciousness; the hostile forces cannot have even the remotest action upon it. It is a world of harmony, and everything moves in it from light to light and from progress to progress. It is the seat of the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Self in the individual being. It is a centre of light and truth and knowledge and

beauty and harmony which the Divine Self in each of you creates by his presence, little by little; it is influenced, formed and moved by the Divine Consciousness of which it is a part and parcel. It is in each of you the deep inner being which you have to find in order that you may come in contact with the Divine in you. It is the intermediary between the Divine Consciousness and your external consciousness; it is the builder of the inner life, it is that which manifests in the outer nature the order and rule of the Divine Will. If you become aware in your outer consciousness of the psychic being within you and unite with it, you can find the pure Eternal Consciousness and live in it; instead of being moved by the Ignorance as the human being constantly is, you grow aware of the presence of an eternal light and knowledge within you, and to it you surrender and are integrally consecrated to it and moved by it in all things. …

The psychic being is that which persists after death, because it is your eternal self; it is this that carries the consciousness forward from life to life."[68]

(b) "Men have a feeling that if they are not all the time running about and bursting into fits of feverish activity, they are doing nothing. It is an illusion to think that all these so-called movements change things. It is merely taking a cup and beating the water in it; the water is moved about, but it is not changed for all your beating. This illusion of action is one of the greatest illusions of human nature. It hurts progress because it brings on you the necessity of rushing always into some excited movement. If you could only perceive the illusion and see how useless it all is, how it changes nothing! Nowhere can you achieve anything by it. Those who are thus

rushing about are the tools of forces that make them dance for their own amusement. And they are not forces of the best quality either.

Whatever has been done in the world has been done by the very few who can stand outside the action in silence; for it is they who are the instruments of the Divine Power. They are dynamic agents, conscious instruments; they bring down the forces that change the world. Things can be done in that way, not by a restless activity. In peace, in silence and in quietness the world was built; and each time that something is to be truly built, it is in peace and silence and quietness that it must be done. It is ignorance to believe that you must run from morning to night and labour at all sorts of futile things in order to do something for the world.

Once you step back from these whirling forces into quiet regions, you see how great is the illusion! **Humanity appears to you like a mass of blind creatures rushing about without knowing what they do or why they do it and only knocking and stumbling against each other. And it is this that they call action and life! It is empty agitation, not action, not true life.**"[69]

9. (2 June, 1929)

Love

(a) "Love is one of the great universal forces; it exists by itself and its movement is free and independent of the objects in which and through which it manifests. It manifests wherever it finds a possibility for manifestation, wherever there

is receptivity, wherever there is some opening for it. What you call love and think of as a personal or individual thing is only your capacity to receive and manifest this universal force. But because it is universal, it is not therefore an unconscious force; it is a supremely conscious Power. Consciously it seeks for its manifestation and realisation upon earth; consciously it chooses its instruments, awakens to its vibrations those who are capable of an answer, endeavours to realise in them that which is its eternal aim, and when the instrument is not fit, drops it and turns to look for others.

Men think that they have suddenly fallen in love; they see their love come and grow and then it fades – or, it may be, endures a little longer in some who are more specially fitted for its more lasting movement. But their sense in this of a personal experience all their own was an illusion. It was a wave from the everlasting sea of universal love.

Love is universal and eternal; it is always manifesting itself and always identical in its essence. And it is a Divine Force; for the distortions we see in its apparent workings belong to its instruments. Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence. All the deformations of this great and divine Power come from the obscurity and ignorance and selfishness of the limited instrument.

Love, the eternal force, has no clinging, no desire, no hunger for possession, no self-regarding attachment; it is, in its pure movement, the seeking for union of the self with the Divine, a seeking absolute and regardless of all other things. Love divine gives itself and asks for nothing. What human

beings have made of it, we do not need to say; they have turned it into an ugly and repulsive thing. And yet even in human beings the first contact of love does bring down something of its purer substance; they become capable for a moment of forgetting themselves, for a moment its divine touch awakens and magnifies all that is fine and beautiful. But afterwards there comes to the surface the human nature, full of its impure demands, asking for something in exchange, bartering what it gives, clamouring for its own inferior satisfactions, distorting and soiling what was divine."[70]

(b) "Among those who have come into this world seeking to reveal the Divine here and transform earthly life, there are some who have manifested the Divine love in a greater fullness. In some the purity of the manifestation is so great that they are misunderstood by the whole of humanity and are even accused of being hard and unloving, although the Divine love is there. But it is in them divine and not human in its form as in its substance. For when man speaks of love, he associates it with an emotional and sentimental weakness. But the divine intensity of self-forgetfulness, the capacity of throwing oneself out entirely, making no restriction and no reservation, as a gift, asking nothing in exchange, this is little known to human beings. And when it is there unmixed with weak and sentimental emotions, they find it hard and cold; they cannot recognise in it the very highest and intensest power of love.

The manifestation of the love of the Divine in the world was the great holocaust, the supreme self-giving. The Perfect Consciousness accepted to be merged and absorbed into the unconsciousness of matter, so that consciousness might be

awakened in the depths of its obscurity and little by little a Divine Power might rise in it and make the whole of this manifested universe a highest expression of the Divine Consciousness and the Divine love. This was the supreme love, to accept the loss of the perfect condition of supreme divinity, its absolute consciousness, its infinite knowledge, to unite with unconsciousness, to dwell in the world with ignorance and darkness. And yet none perhaps would call it love; for it does not clothe itself in a superficial sentiment, it makes no demand in exchange for what it has done, no show of its sacrifice. The force of love in the world is trying to find consciousnesses that are capable of receiving this divine movement in its purity and expressing it. This race of all beings towards love, this irresistible push and seeking out in the world's heart and in all hearts, is the impulse given by a Divine love behind the human longing and seeking. It touches millions of instruments, trying always, always failing; but this constant touch prepares these instruments and suddenly one day there will awake in them the capacity of self-giving, the capacity of loving.

The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in other worlds than in the human. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put yourself into communion with Nature: you will feel rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration of an intense love and longing, – a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness, for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you

can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here. Once you have come in contact with this large, pure and true Divine love, if you have felt it even for a short time and in its smallest form, you will realise what an abject thing human desire has made of it. It has become in human nature something low, brutal, selfish, violent, ugly, or else it is something weak and sentimental, made up of the pettiest feeling, brittle, superficial, exacting. And this baseness and brutality or this self-regarding weakness they call love!"[71]

(c) "Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed, "There is something that is worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!" And with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans downward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace. Love cannot exist in its pure beauty, love cannot put on its native power and intense joy of fullness until there is this interchange, this fusion between the earth and the Supreme, this movement of Love from the Divine to the creation and from the creation to the Divine. This world was a world of dead matter, till Divine love descended into it and awakened it to life. Ever since it has gone in search of this divine source of life, but it has taken in its search every kind

of wrong turn and mistaken way, it has wandered hither and thither in the dark. The mass of this creation has moved on its road like the blind seeking for the unknown, seeking but ignorant of what it sought. The maximum it has reached is what seems to human beings love in its highest form, its purest and most disinterested kind, like the love of the mother for the child. This human movement of love is secretly seeking for something else than what it has yet found; but it does not know where to find it, it does not even know what it is. The moment man's consciousness awakens to the Divine love, pure, independent of all manifestation in human forms, he knows for what his heart has all the time been truly longing. That is the beginning of the Soul's aspiration, that brings the awakening of the consciousness and its yearning for union with the Divine. All the forms that are of the ignorance, all the deformations it has imposed must from that moment fade and disappear and give place to one single movement of the creation answering to the Divine love by its love for the Divine. Once the creation is conscious, awakened, opened to love for the Divine, the Divine love pours itself without limit back into the creation. The circle of the movement turns back upon itself and the ends meet; there is the joining of the extremes, supreme Spirit and manifesting Matter, and their divine union becomes constant and complete."[72]

10. (9 June, 1929)

"**When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you**

except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clingings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE."[73]

11. (30 June, 1929)

"*What is the ground of the repulsion that one instinctively feels towards certain animals, such as snakes and scorpions?*

It is not an inevitable necessity that one should feel this or any other repulsion. To have no repulsion at all is one of the fundamental achievements of Yoga.

The repulsion you speak of comes from fear; if there were no fear, it would not exist. This fear is not based on reason, it is instinctive; it is not individual, but racial; it is a general suggestion and belongs to the consciousness of humanity as a whole. When one takes up the human body, one accepts along with it a mass of these general suggestions, race ideas, race feelings of mankind, associations, attractions, repulsions, fears.

But from another viewpoint there is something very personal in the nature of an attraction or repulsion; for these movements are not the same for everybody and depend mostly on the quality of vibration of the vital being in different people. There are men who not only do not feel any repulsion for creatures like snakes, but have even a liking for them, a vital attraction and preference.

The world is full of things that are not pleasing or beautiful, but that is no reason why one should live in a constant feeling of repulsion for these things. All feelings of shrinking and disgust and fear that disturb and weaken the human mind can be overcome. A Yogi has to overcome these reactions; for almost the very first step in Yoga demands that you must keep a perfect equanimity in the presence of all beings and things and happenings. Always you must remain calm, untouched and unmoved; the strength of the Yogi lies there. An entire calmness and quietness will disarm even dangerous and ferocious animals when they confront you.

Repulsion is a movement of ignorance. It is an instinctive gesture of self-defence. But what best protects you against any danger is not an unreasoning recoil but knowledge, knowledge of the nature of the danger and a conscious application of the means that will remove or nullify it. The ignorance from which these movements rise is a general human condition, but it can be conquered; for we are not bound to the crude human nature from which the external being starts and which is all around us."[74]

12. (28 July, 1929)

Art, Music and Dance

Art is nothing less in its fundamental truth than the aspect of beauty of the Divine manifestation. Perhaps, looking from this standpoint, there will be found very few true artists; but still there are some and these can very well be considered as Yogis. For like a Yogi an artist goes into deep contemplation to await and receive his inspiration. …

Music too is an essentially spiritual art and has always been associated with religious feeling and an inner life. But, here too, we have turned it into something independent and self-sufficient, a mushroom art, such as is operatic music. Most of the artistic productions we come across are of this kind and at best interesting from the point of view of technique. …

…The dance was once one of the highest expressions of the inner life; it was associated with religion and it was an important limb in sacred ceremony, in the celebration of festivals, in the adoration of the Divine. In some countries it reached a very high degree of beauty and an extraordinary perfection. In Japan they kept up the tradition of the dance as a part of the religious life and, because the strict sense of beauty and art is a natural possession of the Japanese, they did not allow it to degenerate into something of lesser significance and smaller purpose. It was the same in India. It is true that in our days there have been attempts to resuscitate the ancient Greek and other dances; but the religious sense is missing in all such resurrections and they look more like rhythmic gymnastics than dance.

Today Russian dances are famous, but they are expressions of the vital world and there is even something terribly vital in them. Like all that comes to us from that world, they may be very attractive or very repulsive, but always they stand for themselves and not for the expression of the higher life. The very mysticism of the Russians is of a vital order. As technicians of the dance they are marvellous; but technique is only an instrument. If your instrument is good, so much the better, but so long as it is not surrendered to the Divine,

however fine it may be, it is empty of the highest and cannot serve a divine purpose. …"[75]

13. (4 August, 1929)

(a) Sacrifice and Surrender

"In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But everything depends on the meaning you put on the word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is a deprivation, a self-immolation. It is your possibilities that you sacrifice, the possibilities and realisations of your personality from the most material to the highest spiritual range. Sacrifice diminishes your being. If physically you sacrifice your life, your body, you give up all your possibilities on the material plane; you have done with the achievements of your earthly existence. In the same way you can morally sacrifice your life; you give up the amplitude and free fulfilment of your inner existence. There is always in this idea of self-immolation a sense of forcing, a constriction, an imposed self-denial. This is an ideal that does not give room for the soul's deeper and larger spontaneities. By surrender we mean not this but a spontaneous self-giving, a giving of all your self to the Divine, to a greater Consciousness of which you are a part. Surrender will not diminish, but increase; it will not lessen or weaken or destroy your personality, it will fortify and aggrandise it. Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a

sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving. When you do anything with the sense of a compression of your being, be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way. True surrender enlarges you; it increases your capacity; it gives you a greater measure in quality and in quantity which you could not have had by yourself. This new greater measure of quality and quantity is different from anything you could attain before: you enter into another world, into a wideness which you could not have entered if you did not surrender. It is as when a drop of water falls into the sea; if it still kept there its separate identity, it would remain a little drop of water and nothing more, a little drop crushed by all the immensity around, because it has not surrendered. But, surrendering, it unites with the sea and participates in the nature and power and vastness of the whole sea."[76]

(b) Desire and Morality

"…desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring movement of the lower nature. Desires are motions of weakness and ignorance and they keep you chained to your weakness and to your ignorance. Men have the impression that their desires are born within; they feel as if they come out of themselves or arise within themselves; but it is a false impression. Desires are waves of the vast sea of the obscure lower nature and they pass from one person to another. Men do not generate a desire in themselves, but are invaded by these waves; whoever is open and without defence is caught in them and tossed about. Desire by engrossing and

possessing him makes him incapable of any discrimination and gives him the impression that it is part of his nature to manifest it. In reality, it has nothing to do with his true nature. It is the same with all the lower impulses, jealousy or envy, hatred or violence. These too are movements that seize you, waves that overwhelm and invade; they deform, they do not belong to the true character or the true nature; they are no intrinsic or inseparable part of yourself, but come out of the sea of surrounding obscurity in which move the forces of the lower nature. These desires, these passions have no personality, there is nothing in them or their action that is peculiar to you; they manifest in the same way in everyone. The obscure movements of the mind too, the doubts and errors and difficulties that cloud the personality and diminish its expansion and fulfilment, come from the same source. They are passing waves and they catch anyone who is ready to be caught and utilised as their blind instrument. And yet each goes on believing that these movements are part of himself and a precious product of his own free personality. Even we find people clinging to them and their disabilities as the very sign or essence of what they call their freedom.

If you have understood this, you will be ready to understand the difference, the great difference between spirituality and morality, two things that are constantly confused with each other. The spiritual life, the life of Yoga, has for its object to grow into the divine consciousness and for its result to purify, intensify, glorify and perfect what is in you. It makes you a power for manifesting of the Divine; it raises the character of each personality to its full value and brings it to its maximum expression; for this is part of the Divine plan. Morality proceeds by a mental construction and,

with a few ideas of what is good and what is not, sets up an ideal type into which all must force themselves. This moral ideal differs in its constituents and its ensemble at different times and different places. And yet it proclaims itself as a unique type, a categoric absolute; it admits of none other outside itself; it does not even admit a variation within itself. All are to be moulded according to its single ideal pattern, everybody is to be made uniformly and faultlessly the same. It is because morality is of this rigid unreal nature that it is in its principle and its working the contrary of the spiritual life. The spiritual life reveals the one essence in all, but reveals too its infinite diversity; it works for diversity in oneness and for perfection in that diversity. Morality lifts up one artificial standard contrary to the variety of life and the freedom of the spirit. Creating something mental, fixed and limited, it asks all to conform to it. All must labour to acquire the same qualities and the same ideal nature. Morality is not divine or of the Divine; it is of man and human. Morality takes for its basic element a fixed division into the good and the bad; but this is an arbitrary notion. It takes things that are relative and tries to impose them as absolutes; for this good and this bad differ in differing climates and times, epochs and countries. The moral notion goes so far as to say that there are good desires and bad desires and calls on you to accept the one and reject the other. But the spiritual life demands that you should reject desire altogether. Its law is that you must cast aside all movements that draw you away from the Divine. You must reject them, not because they are bad in themselves, – for they may be good for another man or in another sphere, – but because they belong to the impulses or forces that, being unillumined and ignorant, stand in the way of your approach

to the Divine. All desires, whether good or bad, come within this description; for desire itself arises from an unillumined vital being and its ignorance. On the other hand you must accept all movements that bring you into contact with the Divine. But you accept them, not because they are good in themselves, but because they bring you to the Divine. Accept then all that takes you to the Divine. Reject all that takes you away from it, but do not say that this is good and that is bad or try to impose your outlook on others; for, what you term bad may be the very thing that is good for your neighbour who is not trying to realise the Divine Life."[77]

(c) Generousity and Avariciousness

"The ordinary social notions distinguish between two classes of men, – the generous, the avaricious. The avaricious man is despised and blamed, while the generous man is considered unselfish and useful to society and praised for his virtue. But to the spiritual vision, they both stand on the same level; the generosity of the one, the avarice of the other are deformations of a higher truth, a greater divine power. There is a power, a divine movement that spreads, diffuses, throws out freely forces and things and whatever else it possesses on all the levels of nature from the most material to the most spiritual plane. Behind the generous man and his generosity is a soul-type that expresses this movement; he is a power for diffusion, for wide distribution. There is another power, another divine movement that collects and amasses; it gathers and accumulates forces and things and all possible possessions, whether of the lower or of the higher planes. The man you tax with avarice was meant to be an instrument of this movement. Both are important, both needed in the entire plan;

the movement that stores up and concentrates is no less needed than the movement that spreads and diffuses. Both, if truly surrendered to the Divine, will be utilised as instruments for its divine work to the same degree and with an equal value. But when they are not surrendered both are alike moved by impulses of ignorance. One is pushed to throw away, the other is pulled towards keeping back; but both are driven by forces obscure to their own consciousness, and between the two there is little to choose. One could say to the much-praised generous man, from the higher point of vision of Yoga, "All your impulses of generosity are nothing in the values of the spirit, for they come from ego and ignorant desire." And, on the other hand, among those who are accused of avarice, you can see sometimes a man amassing and hoarding, full of a quiet and concentrated determination in the work assigned to him by his nature, who, once awakened, would make a very good instrument of the Divine. But ordinarily the avaricious man acts from ego and desire like his opposite; it is the other end of the same ignorance. Both will have to purify themselves and change before they can make contact with the something higher that is behind them and express it in the way to which they are called by their nature."[78]

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