

Chapter Two

The Divine Force

The Nature of Spiritual Force

All the world, according to Science, is nothing but a play of Energy — a material Energy it used to be called, but it is now doubted whether Matter, scientifically speaking, exists except as a phenomenon of Energy. All the world, according to Vedanta, is a play of a power of a spiritual entity, the power of an original consciousness, whether it be Maya or Shakti, and the result an illusion or real. In the world so far as man is concerned we are aware only of mind energy, life energy, energy in matter; but it is supposed that there is a spiritual energy or force also behind them from which they originate. All things, in either case, are the results of a Shakti, energy or force. There is no action without a Force or Energy doing the action and bringing about its consequence. Farther, anything that has no Force in it is either something dead or something unreal or something inert and without consequence. If there is no such thing as spiritual consciousness, there can be no reality of Yoga, and if there is no Yoga force, spiritual force, Yoga Shakti, then also there can be no effectivity in Yoga. A Yoga consciousness or spiritual consciousness which has no power or force in it, may not be dead or unreal but it is evidently something inert and without effect or consequence. Equally a man who sets out to be a Yogi or Guru and has no spiritual consciousness or no power in his spiritual consciousness — a Yoga force or spiritual force — is making a false claim and is either a charlatan or a self-deluded imbecile; still more is he so if having no spiritual force he claims to have made a path others can follow. If Yoga is a reality, if spirituality is anything better than a delusion, there must be such a thing as Yoga force or spiritual force.

It is evident that if spiritual force exists, it must be able to produce spiritual results — therefore there is no irrationality in

the claim of those sadhaks who say that they feel the force of the Guru or the force of the Divine working in them and leading towards spiritual fulfilment and experience. Whether it is so or not in a particular case is a personal question, but the statement cannot be denounced as *per se* incredible and manifestly false because such things cannot be. Farther, if it be true that spiritual force is the original one and the others are derivative from it, then there is no irrationality in supposing that spiritual force can produce mental results, vital results, physical results. It may act through mental, vital or physical energies and through the means which these energies use, or it may act directly on mind, life or matter as the field of its own special and immediate action. Either way is *prima facie* possible. In a case of cure of illness, someone is lying ill for two days, weak, suffering from pains and fever; he takes no medicine but finally asks for cure from his Guru; the next morning he rises well, strong and energetic. He has at least some justification for thinking that a force has been used on him and put into him and that it was a spiritual power that acted. But in another case medicines may be used, while at the same time the invisible force may be called for to aid the material means, for it is a known fact that medicines may or may not succeed — there is no certitude. Here for the reason of an outside observer (one who is neither the user of the force nor the doctor nor the patient) it remains uncertain whether the patient was cured by the medicines only or by the spiritual force with the medicines as an instrument. Either is possible, and it cannot be said that because medicines were used, therefore the working of a spiritual force is *per se* incredible and demonstrably false. On the other hand it is possible for the doctor to have felt a force working in him and guiding him or he may see the patient improving with a rapidity which, according to medical science, is incredible. The patient may feel the force working in himself bringing health, energy, rapid cure. The user of the force may watch the results, see the symptoms he works on diminishing, those he did not work upon increasing till he does work on them and then immediately diminishing, the doctor working according to his unspoken suggestions, etc. etc. until the cure is

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

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

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

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

to direct it, manipulate it, watch its movement, be conscious of its mass and intensity and in the same way of that of other perhaps opposing forces; all these things are possible and usual by the development of Yoga.

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

Still the Yoga-force is always tangible and concrete in the way I have described and has tangible results. But it is invisible — not like a blow given or the rush of a motor car knocking somebody down which the physical senses can at once perceive. How is the mere physical mind to know that it is there and working? By its results? but how can it know that the results were that of the Yoga-force and not of something else? One of two things it must do. Either it must allow the consciousness to go inside, to become aware of inner things, to believe in and experience the invisible and the supraphysical, and then by experience, by the opening of new capacities it becomes conscious of these forces and can see, follow and use their workings just as the scientist uses the unseen forces of Nature. Or one must have faith and watch and open oneself and then it will begin to see how things happen; it will notice that when the Force was called in, there began after a time to be a result, — then repetitions, more repetitions, more clear and tangible results, increasing frequency, increasing consistency of results, a feeling and awareness of the Force at work — until the experience

becomes daily, regular, normal, complete. These are the two main methods, one internal, working from in outward, the other external, working from outside and calling the inner force out till it penetrates and is sensible in the exterior consciousness. But neither can be done if one insists always on the extrovert attitude, the external concrete only and refuses to join to it the internal concrete — or if the physical Mind at every step raises a dance of doubts which refuses to allow the nascent experience to develop. Even the scientist carrying out a new experiment would never succeed if he allowed his mind to behave in that way.

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Concrete? what do you mean by “concrete”?¹ It [*spiritual force*] has its own concreteness; it can take a form (like a stream for instance) of which one is aware and can send it quite concretely in whatever “direction” or on whatever object one chooses.

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

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¹ The correspondent asked whether the spiritual force Sri Aurobindo put on him was “concrete”. — Ed.

Leave aside the question of Divine or undivine, no spiritual man who acts dynamically is limited to physical contact — the idea that physical contact through writing, speech, meeting is indispensable to the action of the spiritual force is self-contradictory, for then it would not be a spiritual force. The spirit is not limited by physical things or by the body. If you have the spiritual force, it can act on people thousands of miles away who do not know and never will know that you are acting on them or that they are being acted upon — they only feel that there is a force enabling them to do things and may very well suppose it is their own great energy and genius.

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The fact that you don't feel a force does not prove that it is not there. The steam-engine does not feel a force moving it, but the force is there. A man is not a steam-engine? He is very little better, for he is conscious only of some bubbling on the surface which he calls himself and is absolutely unconscious of all the sub-conscious, subliminal, superconscious forces moving him. (This is a fact which is being more and more established by modern psychology though it has got hold only of the lower forces and not the higher, so you need not turn up your rational nose at it.) He twitters intellectually (= foolishly) about the surface results and attributes them all to his "noble self", ignoring the fact that his noble self is hidden far away from his own vision behind the veil of his dimly sparkling intellect and the reeking fog of his vital feelings, emotions, impulses, sensations and impressions. So your argument is utterly absurd and futile. Our aim is to bring the secret forces out and unwallled into the open so that instead of getting some shadows or lightnings of themselves out through the veil or being wholly obstructed, they may "pour down" and "flow in a river". But to expect that all at once is a presumptuous demand which shows an impatient ignorance and inexperience. If they begin to trickle at first, that is sufficient to justify the faith in a future downpour. You admit that you once or twice felt "a force coming down and delivering a poem out of me" (your opinion about its worth or worthlessness is not

worth a cent, that is for others to pronounce). That is sufficient to blow the rest of your Jeremiad into smithereens; it proves that the force was and is there and at work and it is only your sweating Herculean labour that prevents you feeling it. Also it is the trickle that gives assurance of the possibility of the downpour. One has only to go on and by one's patience deserve the downpour or else, without deserving, stick on till one gets it. In Yoga itself the experience that is a promise and foretaste but gets shut off till the nature is ready for the fulfilment is a phenomenon familiar to every Yogin when he looks back on his past experience. Such were the brief visitations of Ananda you had some time before. It does not matter if you have not a leechlike tenacity — leeches are not the only type of Yogins. If you can stick anyhow or get stuck that is sufficient. The fact that you are not Sri Aurobindo (who said you were?) is an inept irrelevance. One needs only to be oneself in a reasonable way and shake off the hump when it is there or allow it to be shaken off without clinging to it with a "leechlike tenacity" worthy of a better cause.

The Divine Force Works under Conditions

The Divine Force, not using the supramental Power, can certainly throw back the forces of Death and that has been done many times. But the Divine Force works here under conditions imposed by the Divine Will and Law; it has to take up an immense mass of conflicting forces, conditions, habits and movements of Nature and out of it arrive at the result of a higher consciousness on earth and a higher state. If it were to act otherwise, then all would be done by a miracle or magic, no sadhana would be needed, no way beaten out for the process of spiritual evolution to follow; there would be no real transformation of consciousness, but only a temporary feat of force which having no basis in the substance of creation here would vanish as it came. Therefore conditions have to be satisfied, the work to be done has to be wrought out step by step. The powers that held the field up to now have to be given their chance to oppose, so that the problem

may be solved and not evaded or turned into a sham fight or unreal game without significance. Therefore there is a sadhana to be done, there is a resistance to be overcome, a choice made between the higher and the lower state. The Divine Power does the work, gives a protection and a guidance; but it is not here to use an absolute force — except when that is sanctioned by the Divine Wisdom and in the light of that Wisdom justifiable. Then the decisive Power acts of itself and does what it has to do.

Writing about Spiritual Force

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

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If I was annoyed, it was with myself for speaking of things which ought to be kept under a cover. I put the whole thing in a light form, no doubt, but the substance was perfectly serious, the intention being to point out that even in ordinary non-spiritual things the action of invisible or of subjective forces was open to doubt and discussion in which there could be no material

certitude — while the spiritual force is invisible in itself and also invisible in its action. So it is idle to try to prove that such and such a result was the effect of spiritual force. Each must form his own idea about that — for if it is accepted it cannot be as a result of proof and argument, but only as a result of experience, of faith or of that insight in the heart or the deeper intelligence which looks behind appearances and sees what is behind them. Moreover it would not be seemly for me to appear to be making a claim for myself and pleading for recognition or acceptance — for the spiritual consciousness does not claim in that way, it can state the truth about itself but not fight for a personal acceptance. A general and impersonal statement about spiritual force is another matter, but I doubt whether the time has come for it or whether it could be understood by the mere reasoning intelligence.

Use and Misuse of the Divine Force

All power comes from the Divine but it is more usually misused than used spiritually or rightly.

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The Divine Forces are meant to be used — the mistake of man individualised in the Ignorance is to use it for the ego and not for the Divine. It is that that has to be set right by the union with the Divine Consciousness and also by the widening of the individual being so that it can live consciously in the universal. Difficult it is owing to the fixed ego-habit, but it is not impossible.

The Action of the Divine Force

The action of the Force does not exclude tapasya, concentration and the need of sadhana. Its action rather comes as an answer or a help to these things. It is true that it sometimes acts without them; it very often wakes a response in those who have not prepared themselves and do not seem to be ready. But it does not always or usually act like that, nor is it a sort of magic that

acts in the void or without any process. Nor is it a machine which acts in the same way on everybody or in all conditions and circumstances; it is not a physical but a spiritual Force and its action cannot be reduced to rules.

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It [*the higher Force*] acts by awakening the inner consciousness gradually or swiftly, by replacing the principle of ego-service by the principle of service of the Divine, by making him watch his actions and see his own defects and pushing him to rectify them, by establishing a connection between his consciousness and the Mother's consciousness, by preparing his nature to be taken up more and more by the Mother's consciousness and force, by giving him experiences which make him ready for the major experiences of Yoga, by stimulating the growth of his psychic being, by opening him to the Mother as the Universal Being, etc. etc. Naturally it acts differently in different persons.

Allow the Divine Force to Act

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

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Passivity can be only to the Divine Force when it is felt at work, — there can be no passivity to other forces, for that would be dangerous in the extreme. Passivity does *not* mean a blank mind — it means allowing the Divine Force to work without interference of the mental preferences, vital desires or physical disinclinations. As for freedom from ego or desire, that is the

general law of all Yoga, but it cannot be acquired by merely giving up work. The majority of Sannyasins are not at all free from desire or ego.

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

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One feels the Force only when one is in conscious contact with it.

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It is a great progress, a decisive advance if, at the time the Force is acting behind the screen, you feel that it is there, that the help and support, the more enlightened consciousness is there still. This is the second stage in the sadhana. There is a third when there is no screen and the Force and all else are always felt whether actively working or pausing during a transition.

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Remind yourself always that the Divine Force is there, that you have felt it and that, even if you seem to lose consciousness of it for a time or it seems something distant, still it is there and is sure to prevail. For those whom the Force has touched and taken up, belong thenceforth to the Divine.