

Yoga Centres and Movements

Centres

We have the idea of concentrating our activities and joining ourselves more closely to the Pondicherry Ashram by starting a lodge someplace in Gujarat where we can meet at least once a month.

No “Lodge” or formal society; these methods are not suitable for this sadhana. If they like to meet or meditate together of their own accord and without starting any fixed association or propaganda, that is another matter.

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You might write to Rangpur (to X or Y—the one who wrote about the friction with Z, I don’t remember which it was) that it is not at all clear from his letter or A’s why this friction should at all have taken place. Each has the right to go on his own way according to his lights and there should be no sectarian spirit. This does not mean that one should allow several different influences at the same time; for that only brings confusion. Those who take this Yoga must follow only the path which leads to the supramental realisation and accept no other influence than that of myself and the Mother, otherwise they will not go in a straight line to the goal but are likely to be confused or divided, to wander into circuits or bypaths and lose the guidance. But they need not try to oppose the convictions of others, who are not following this way but another. Religions quarrel and collide with each other, but we are not creating a religion, we are following a path of spiritual realisation, into which those only need come who are drawn to it and have the call.

4 January 1932

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Write to X that it was his own mistake. He must not mix up the things of Yoga with activities that have nothing to do with Yoga. What have the coming in front of the psychic being and the supramental to do with the founding of a school Samiti, a magazine and the rest of it? These are ordinary outward activities. The psychic being and the supramental are matters of a profound and difficult Yoga. These terms ought not to be cheapened by being tacked on to these small superficial things.

No doubt all activities can be carried on with a spiritual consciousness, but it is the Yogi alone who can do that. To invite people who have no spirituality in them and are no Yogis to get the psychic being in front and aspire to the supramental has no meaning whatever and is merely a mental propaganda which is unrealisable and hopelessly out of place.

16 May 1933

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Should not the Sadhanbari be regarded as the seed-type of an Asram in the making? The question arises from the fact that there is a tendency in almost all here at the Sadhanbari — and in others in Chittagong at large — to think that it (the Sadhanbari) is merely a resting-place — a temporary foothold — and that the sooner one leaves for the Yogasram at Pondicherry the better. What really is the immediate and ultimate use of mofussil centres?

It is quite a mistake to suppose that everybody has eventually to come and join the Pondicherry Asram. That is not the Mother's intention, nor is it physically possible. The work to be done is not supposed to be confined to Pondicherry.

On the other hand cannot this tangential turn of thought prove to be an index of aspiration to live physically near the Mother, which under certain conditions is productive of great results — results which cannot be achieved anywhere else?

Where that is necessary, it will be done — but it does not follow that everybody has to come and stay here permanently.

How can sadhaks profit psychically when they live spiritually in close contact with each other?

It depends on themselves. If they grow psychically and spiritually and live within and above, instead of in the mind and vital and body, then there can be a psychic and spiritual solidarity created useful for the divine work. At present that does not exist, except in future potentiality. 18 April 1935

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For some time there have been a lot of clashes here in our centre. [*Details given.*] The other day X called me aside and told me that if people had no confidence in him, he would rather not associate with us, but remain alone. Most people here are against X, who is filled with self-praise, and always criticises the Sadhanbari.

There is absolutely no hope of mutual harmony and confidence in Chittagong and it is idle to talk of it when the hearts of the sadhaks are full of all kinds of egoism, mutual dislike, jealousy, rivalry, suspicion, fault-finding and all sorts of uncleanness. It is only through the psychic and in a psychic atmosphere that harmony can come; a sadhana based entirely on the vital ego cannot create it. X is right in drawing back and keeping to himself. When things have gone so far that the sadhaks of the Sadhanbari are forming visions of him as a dangerous devil, it is absurd to want to go on as if there were nothing.

Some people here feel that X has been bringing impurity of thought and action into our centre. I give you some examples. . . .

All these are simply self-created vital formations due to the atmosphere of suspicion and dislike which Y's campaign has created around X. In such an atmosphere it is not truth that manifests but the feelings of the vital that take form in shapes and images.

You may recall that you refused to let Z stay with X, as you thought it might not be good for Z's sadhana.

I can say nothing and am not willing to say anything in these matters. I discouraged X from allowing Z to stay with him because I did not think the results will be good in view of what had happened at Rangpur — that was the reason why X refused to lodge him without an express order from here. But, seeing the results of my intervention, I refuse to intervene in any other matter. The Chittagong sadhaks must themselves settle their own affairs. 30 October 1936

Association Not a Necessity

I am feeling the want of association with co-sadhaks here. I am trying to adapt myself to the new place but I do miss my friends, especially as I can't discuss spiritual matters with anyone here.

You must be able to stand alone with only the force of the Mother supporting you. The association should not be a necessity, but only instrumental for action. 8 September 1934

Group Meditations

(1) It is not advisable to sit with others; for if any force is brought down, it may very easily be a mixed force. The difficulties in his nature may be prematurely raised and he may add to them the difficulties of those with whom he sits.

(2) Indications given by letter may not be rightly grasped or rightly practised; even if mentally understood, they may not be very helpful. The important thing is to open to the Influence. That indeed was the reason why in the old systems personal initiation by the Guru was considered indispensable. The best thing will be for him to come here for a short time, say in November (the 24th) and receive the direct touch and influence.

(3) Meanwhile he can try to prepare himself by personal meditation if he likes. The method is to quiet the mind and,

in order to do so, to concentrate on an aspiration for faith in the Divine Power, peace and calm in the mind, single-minded sincerity in the heart, and a conscious opening to the Light and Truth and Power.

14 September 1928

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An acquaintance has written a letter asking for the Mother's permission to join our group meditation here.

Is he practising Yoga — does he do meditation by himself? It would as a rule be better if people tried by themselves first and joined the collective meditation only when they had begun to have experiences or some kind of opening.

This is not an absolute rule, however. If the other sadhaks find no inconvenience, he may come as a trial and see if it helps him, and if the others find it does not disturb the harmony of the atmosphere or bring in any inertia, he can continue.

3 February 1932

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You [*Sri Aurobindo's secretary*] can write conveying the permission to meditate with X and the others. You can also write briefly to her explaining the principle of this Yoga (its practice) which is to open oneself to the Divine Power which is always secretly there above, aspire and call down its peace, calm, purity, wideness into one's own consciousness and its working which will change the nature and fill it with a higher light and Ananda. One's own part is to so aspire and open oneself and to reject all that belongs to ego, desire and the lower nature.

21 December 1932

Group Movements

The Mother does not think that a group movement of that kind could be effective for the purpose or produce any serious impression on the welter of strong blind forces that are now at work in the world. It can only be a mental ripple on the surface like so many other mental idealistic efforts of the day. All these

suffer from the fundamental defect that they work within the existing plan of things with no superior force that can dominate their disharmonies or oblige them to transform themselves by any irresistible compulsion of Light from above. Even if the meditation of these groups became less mental, that defect would not disappear. Individuals among them might rise to the spiritual heights just above mind, others might be helped to rise nearer towards them; but nothing fundamental would change in the world as a whole.

The Mother does not think any intervention or farther organisation of these groups would be helpful. Publicity of the kind suggested would be disastrous, — it would be sure to lead to vulgarisation and corruption, what purity or virtue there is in the movement would disappear. It is better to let it go on in silence with the momentum you gave to it and observe where that leads it. If there are any elements of utility in it for future work, those will be taken up when the time comes; if not, it must be left to fade away of itself. But it should be in the quiet and silence you first assigned to it — not as a public movement, for then it would soon cease to be at all pure and genuine.

28 November 1936