

Sadhana through Work

THE ordinary life consists in work for personal aim and satisfaction of desire under some mental or moral control, touched sometimes by a mental ideal. The Gita's yoga consists in the offering of one's work as a sacrifice to the Divine, the conquest of desire, egoless and desireless action, bhakti for the Divine, an entering into the cosmic consciousness, the sense of unity with all creatures, oneness with the Divine. This yoga adds the bringing down of the supramental Light and Force (its ultimate aim) and the transformation of the nature.

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Men usually work and carry on their affairs from the ordinary motives of the vital being, need, desire of wealth or success or position or power or fame or the push to activity and the pleasure of manifesting their capacities, and they succeed or fail according to their capability, power of work and the good or bad fortune which is the result of their nature and their Karma. When one takes up the yoga and wishes to consecrate one's life to the Divine, these ordinary motives of the vital being have no longer their full and free play; they have to be replaced by another, a mainly psychic and spiritual motive, which will enable the sadhak to work with the same force as before, no longer for himself, but for the Divine. If the ordinary vital motives or vital force can no longer act freely and yet are not replaced by something else, then the push or force put into the work may decline or the power to command success may no longer be there. For the sincere sadhak the difficulty can only be temporary; but he has to see the defect in his consciousness or his attitude and to remove it. Then the Divine Power itself will act through him and use his capacity and vital force for its ends. In your case, it is the psychic being and a part of the mind that have drawn you to the yoga and were predisposed to it, but the vital nature or at least a

large part of it has not yet put itself into line with the psychic movement. There is not as yet the full and undivided consecration of the active vital nature.

The signs of the consecration of the vital in action are these among others:

The feeling (not merely the idea or the aspiration) that all the life and the work are the Mother's and a strong joy of the vital nature in this consecration and surrender. A consequent calm content and disappearance of egoistic attachment to the work and its personal results, but at the same time a great joy in the work and in the use of the capacities for the divine purpose.

The feeling that the Divine Force is working behind one's actions and leading at every moment.

A persistent faith which no circumstance or event can break. If difficulties occur, they raise not mental doubts or an inert acquiescence, but the firm belief that, with sincere consecration, the Divine Shakti will remove the difficulties, and with this belief a greater turning to her and dependence on her for that purpose. When there is full faith and consecration, there comes also a receptivity to the Force which makes one do the right thing and take the right means and then circumstances adapt themselves and the result is visible.

To arrive at this condition the important thing is a persistent aspiration, call and self-offering and a will to reject all in oneself or around that stands in the way. Difficulties there will always be at the beginning and for as long a time as is necessary for the change; but they are bound to disappear if they are met by a settled faith, will and patience.

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That is the ordinary Karmayoga in which the sadhak chooses his own work but offers it to the Divine — it is given to him in the sense that he is moved to it through some impulsion of his mind or heart or vital and feels that there is some cosmic power or *the* cosmic Power behind the impulsion and he tries to train himself to see the One Force behind all actions working out in him and others the cosmic Purpose.

Once he has the ideal of the direct surrender, he has to find the direct moving or Guidance — that is why he rejects all that he sees to be merely mental, vital or physical impulsions coming from his own or universal Nature. Of course the full significance of the surrender comes out only when he is ready.

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I do not know that it is possible for me to give any guidance on the path you have chosen — it is at any rate difficult for me to say anything definite without more precise data than those contained in your letter.

There is no need for you to change the line of life and work you have chosen so long as you feel that to be the way of your nature (*svabhāva*) or dictated to you by your inner being or, for some reason, it is seen to be your proper dharma. These are the three tests and apart from that I do not know if there is any fixed line of conduct or way of work or life that can be laid down for the yoga of the Gita. It is the spirit or consciousness in which the work is done that matters most; the outer form can vary greatly for different natures. This, so long as one does not get the settled experience of the Divine Power taking up one's works and doing them; afterwards it is the Power which determines what is to be done or not done.

The overcoming of all attachments must necessarily be difficult and cannot come except as the fruit of a long sadhana — unless there is a rapid general growth in the inner spiritual experience which is the substance of the Gita's teaching. The cessation of desire of the fruit, of the attachment to the work itself, the growth of equality to all beings, to all happenings, to good repute or ill-repute, praise or blame, to good fortune or ill fortune, the dropping of the ego which are necessary for the loss of all attachments can come completely only when all work becomes a spontaneous sacrifice to the Divine, the heart is offered up to Him and one has the settled experience of the Divine in all things and all beings. This consciousness or experience must come in all parts and movements of the being, *sarvabhāvena*, not only in the mind and idea; then the falling away of all attach-

ments becomes easy. I speak of the Gita's way of yoga, for in the ascetic life one obtains the same object differently, by cutting away from the objects of attachment and the consequent atrophy of the attachment itself through rejection and disuse.

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All I can suggest to him is to practise some kind of Karmayoga — remembering the Supreme in all his actions from the smallest to the greatest, doing them with a quiet mind and without ego-sense or attachment and offering them to Him as a sacrifice. He may also try or aspire to feel the presence of the Divine Shakti behind the world and its forces, distinguish between the lower nature of the Ignorance and the higher divine nature whose character is absolute calm, peace, power, Light and Bliss and aspire to be raised and led gradually from the lower to the higher.

If he can do this, he will become fit in time to dedicate himself to the Divine and lead a wholly spiritual life.

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The line that seems to be natural to him is the Karmayoga and he is therefore right in trying to live according to the teaching of the Gita; for the Gita is the great guide on this path. Purification from egoistic movements and from personal desire and the faithful following of the best light one has are a preliminary training for this path, and so far as he has followed these things, he has been on the right way, but to ask for strength and light in one's action must not be regarded as an egoistic movement, for they are necessary in one's inner development.

Obviously, a more systematic and intensive sadhana is desirable or, in any case, a steady aspiration and a more constant preoccupation with the central aim could bring an established detachment even in the midst of outer things and outer activity and a continuous guidance. The completeness, the Siddhi of this way of yoga — I speak of the separate path of Karma or spiritual action — begins when one is luminously aware of the Guide and the guidance and when one feels the Power working with oneself

as the instrument and the participator in the divine work.

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I gather from his letter to you that he has been following a very sound method in his practice and has attained some good results. The first step in Karmayoga of this kind is to diminish and finally get rid of the ego-centric position in works, the lower vital reactions and the principle of desire. He must certainly go on on this road until he reaches something like its end. I would not wish to deflect him from that in any way.

What I had in view when I spoke of a systematic sadhana was the adoption of a method which would generalise the whole attitude of the consciousness so as to embrace all its movements at a time instead of working only upon details — although that working is always necessary. I may cite as an example the practice of the separation of the Prakriti and the Purusha, the conscious Being standing back detached from all the movements of Nature and observing them as witness and knower and finally as the giver (or refuser) of the sanction and at the highest stage of the development, the Ishwara, the pure will, master of the whole Nature.

By intensive sadhana I meant the endeavour to arrive at one of the great positive realisations which would be a firm base for the whole movement. I observe that he speaks of sometimes getting a glimpse of some wide calm.... A descent of this wide calm permanently into the consciousness is one of the realisations of which I was thinking. That he feels it at such times seems to indicate that he may have the capacity of receiving and retaining it. If that happened or if the Prakriti-Purusha realisation came, the whole sadhana would proceed on a strong permanent base with a new and entirely yogic consciousness instead of the purely mental endeavour which is always difficult and slow. I do not however want to press these things upon him; they come in their own time and to press towards them prematurely does not always hasten their coming. Let him continue with his primary task of self-purification and self-preparation.

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If I have not written to you, it is because I could not add anything to what I had already written before to you. I cannot promise that within a given time you will have a result which will enable you either to go out into the world with a stronger spirit or succeed in the yoga. For the yoga you yourself say that you have not yet the whole mind for it and without the whole mind success is hardly possible in sadhana. For the other, it is hardly the function of sadhana to prepare a man for ordinary life in the world. There is one thing only that could work in a direction which would help you to something which is not that, but still not the whole yoga for which you intimate that you are not wholly ready. It is if you get the spirit of the yoga of works as it is indicated in the Gita — forget yourself and your miseries in the aspiration to a larger consciousness, feel the greater Force working in the world and make yourself an instrument for a work to be done, however small it may be. But, whatever the way may be, you must accept it wholly and put your whole will into it — with a divided and wavering will you cannot hope for success in anything, neither in life nor in yoga.

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Any work can be done as a field for the practice of the spirit of the Gita.

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You used the Force for the work, and it supported you so long as you preferred to stick to that work. What is of first importance is not the religious or non-religious character of the work done, but the inner attitude in which it is done. If the attitude is vital and not psychic, then one throws oneself out in the work and loses the inner contact. If it is psychic, the inner contact remains, the Force is felt supporting or doing the work and the sadhana progresses.

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There are those who have done the lawyer's work with the Mother's force working in them and grown by it in inward con-

sciousness. On the other hand religious work can be merely external and vital in its nature or influence.

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I may say, however, that I do not regard business as something evil or tainted, any more than it is so regarded in ancient spiritual India. If I did, I would not be able to receive money from X or from those of our disciples who in Bombay trade with East Africa; nor could we then encourage them to go on with their work but would have to tell them to throw it up and attend to their spiritual progress alone. How are we to reconcile X's seeking after spiritual light and his mill? Ought I not to tell him to leave his mill to itself and to the devil and go into some Ashram to meditate? Even if I myself had had the command to do business as I had the command to do politics I would have done it without the least spiritual or moral compunction. All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principles on which it is built and the use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoram karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarvakarmāṇi*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes further and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capacity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine. He validates the function and dharma of the Vaishya as well as of the Brahmin and Kshatriya. It is in his view quite possible for a man to do business and make money and earn profits and yet be a spiritual man, practise yoga, have an inner life. The Gita is constantly justifying works as a means of spiritual salvation and enjoining a Yoga of Works as well as of Bhakti and Knowledge. Krishna, however, superimposes a higher law also that work must be done

without desire, without attachment to any fruit or reward, without any egoistic attitude or motive, as an offering or sacrifice to the Divine. This is the traditional Indian attitude towards these things, that all work can be done if it is done according to the dharma and, if it is rightly done, it does not prevent the approach to the Divine or the access to spiritual knowledge and the spiritual life.

There is, of course, also the ascetic idea which is necessary for many and has its place in the spiritual order. I would myself say that no man can be spiritually complete if he cannot live ascetically or follow a life as bare as the barest anchorite's. Obviously, greed for wealth and money-making has to be absent from his nature as much as greed for food or any other greed and all attachment to these things must be renounced from his consciousness. But I do not regard the ascetic way of living as indispensable to spiritual perfection or as identical with it. There is the way of spiritual self-mastery and the way of spiritual self-giving and surrender to the Divine, abandoning ego and desire even in the midst of action or of any kind of work or all kinds of work demanded from us by the Divine. If it were not so, there would not have been great spiritual men like Janaka or Vidura in India and even there would have been no Krishna or else Krishna would have been not the Lord of Brindavan and Mathura and Dwarka or a prince and warrior or the charioteer of Kurukshetra, but only one more great anchorite. The Indian scriptures and Indian tradition, in the Mahabharata and elsewhere, make room both for the spirituality of the renunciation of life and for the spiritual life of action. One cannot say that one only is the Indian tradition and that the acceptance of life and works of all kinds, *sarvakarmāṇi*, is un-Indian, European or western and unspiritual.

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All acts are included in action; work is action regulated towards a fixed end and methodically and constantly done; service is work done for the Mother's purpose and under her direction.

II

Recommendation to X not to take you away but to let you realise the Divine first has no meaning. Must one realise the Divine before one can serve him or is not service of the Divine a step towards it? In any case, the service and the realisation are both necessary for a complete yoga and one cannot fix an unalterable rule of precedence between the two.

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Your object is not only to practise yoga for your internal progress and protection but also to do a work for the Divine.

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The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the yoga.

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The spiritual effectivity of work of course depends on the inner attitude. What is important is the spirit of offering put into the work. If one can in addition remember the Mother in the work or through a certain concentration feel the Mother's presence or force sustaining or doing the work, that carries the spiritual effectivity still farther. But even if one cannot in moments of clouding, depression or struggle do these things, yet there can be behind a love or bhakti which was the original motive power of the work and that can remain behind the cloud and re-emerge like the sun after dark periods. All sadhana is like that and it is

why one should not be discouraged by the dark moments, but realise that the original urge is there and that therefore the dark moments are only an episode in the journey which will lead to greater progress when they are once over.

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To be free from all egoistic motive, careful of truth in speech and action, void of self-will and self-assertion, watchful in all things, is the condition for being a flawless servant.

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There should be no straining after power, no ambition, no egoism of power. The power or powers that come should be considered not as one's own, but as gifts of the Divine for the Divine's purpose. Care should be taken that there should be no ambitious or selfish misuse, no pride or vanity, no sense of superiority, no claim or egoism of the instrument, only a simple and pure psychic instrumentation of the nature in any way in which it is fit for the service of the Divine.

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It is the spirit and the consciousness from which it is done that makes an action yogic — it is not the action itself.

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Self-dedication does not depend on the particular work you do, but on the spirit in which all work, of whatever kind it may be, is done. Any work done well and carefully as a sacrifice to the Divine, without desire or egoism, with equality of mind and calm tranquillity in good or bad fortune, for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of any personal gain, reward or result, with the consciousness that it is the Divine Power to which all work belongs, is a means of self-dedication through Karma.

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Of course the idea of bigness and smallness is quite foreign to the spiritual truth.... Spiritually there is nothing big or small. Such ideas are like those of the literary people who think writing a poem is a high work and making shoes or cooking the dinner is a small and low one. But all is equal in the eyes of the Spirit — and it is only the spirit within with which it is done that matters. It is the same with a particular kind of work, there is nothing big or small.

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I may add that in the wider consciousness one can deal with the small as well as the high things, but one comes to deal with them with a larger as well as a profounder, subtler and more accurate view coming from a more and more understanding and luminous consciousness, so that the thoughts about small things also cease to be themselves small or trivial, being more and more part of a higher Knowledge.

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Every artist almost (there can be rare exceptions) has got something of the public man in him in his vital-physical parts, which makes him crave for the stimulus of an audience, social applause, satisfied vanity, appreciation, fame. That must go absolutely if you want to be a yogi, — your art must be a service not of your own ego, not of anyone or anything else but solely of the Divine.

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If you wish to be free from people's expectations and the sense of obligation, it is indeed best not to take from anybody; for the sense of claim will otherwise be there. Not that it will be entirely absent even if you take nothing, but you will not be bound any longer.

What you write about the singing is perfectly correct. You sing your best only when you forget yourself and let it come out from within without thinking of the need of excellence or the impression it may make. The outer singer should indeed dis-

appear into the past, — it is only so that the inner singer can take her place.

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As for your singing, I was not speaking of any new creation from the aesthetic point of view, but of the spiritual change — what form it takes must depend on what you find within you when the deeper basis is there.

I do not see any necessity for giving up singing altogether; I only meant, — it is the logical conclusion from what I have written to you, not now only but before, — that the inner change must be the first consideration and the rest must arise out of that. If singing to an audience pulls you out of the inner condition, then you could postpone that and sing for yourself and the Divine until you are able, even in facing an audience, to forget the audience. If you are troubled by failure or excited by success, that also you must overcome.

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It is not that you have to do what you dislike, but that you have to cease to dislike. To do only what you like is to indulge the vital and maintain its domination over the nature — for that is the very principle of the untransformed nature, to be governed by its likes and dislikes. To be able to do anything with equanimity is the principle of Karmayoga and to do with joy because it is done for the Mother is the true psychic and vital condition in this yoga.

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One must be able to do the same work always with enthusiasm and at the same time be ready to do something else or enlarge one's scope at a moment's notice.

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Yes. It depends on a certain extension and intensifying of the consciousness by which all activity becomes interesting not for

itself but because of the consciousness put into it and, through the intensity of the energy, there is a pleasure in the exercise of the energy, and in the perfect doing of the work, whatever the work may be.

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As a rule, I mean in their unchanged condition, the lower parts get interested and enthusiastic when the ego mixes with the interest. But the pure enthusiasm can come into them as they get more and more converted and purified and they then become very indispensable forces for the realisation.

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It is natural for the vital or even the mind to feel energised by something new — but for the physical plane the work always repeated is the foundation — so one has to be able at least to take a steady calm interest in it always. But in this case I think it was a particular strength the Mother sent you when she saw you there.

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Part of the physical cannot do without work, another part (more material) finds it an infliction. What gives the force and joy of the work is however not physical but vital.

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The reason of the difference of result between the two moods in work is that the first mood is that of a vital joy, while the other is that of a psychic quiet. Vital joy though it is a very helpful thing for the ordinary human life, is something excited, eager, mobile without a settled basis — that is why it soon gets tired and cannot continue. Vital joy has to be replaced by a quiet settled psychic gladness with the mind and vital very clear and very peaceful. When one works on this basis, then everything becomes glad and easy, in touch with the Mother's force and fatigue or depression do not come.

III

Before things become pucca in the consciousness, the doing of work does carry the consciousness outward unless one has made it a sadhana to feel the "Force greater than oneself" working through one. That I suppose is why the Shankarites considered work to be in its own nature an operation of the Ignorance and incompatible with a condition of realisation. But as a matter of fact there are three stages there: (I) in which the work brings you to a lower as well as outer consciousness so that you have afterwards to recover the realisation. (II) in which the work brings you out, but the realisation remains behind (or above), not felt while you work, but as soon as the work ceases you find it there just as it was. (III) in which the work makes no difference, for the realisation or spiritual condition remains through the work itself. You seem this time to have experienced No. (II).

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It refers to a certain stage when the consciousness is sometimes in activity and when not in activity is withdrawn in itself. Afterwards comes a stage when the Sachchidananda condition is there in work also. There is a still further stage when both are, as it were, one, but that is the supramental. The two states are the silent Brahman and the active Brahman and they can alternate (1st stage), coexist (2nd stage), fuse (3rd stage)....

Certainly, it [the highest Sachchidananda realisation] is realisable in work. Good Lord! How could the integral yoga exist, if it were not?

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The passage describes the state of consciousness when one is aloof from all things even when in their midst and all is felt to be unreal, an illusion. There are then no preferences or desires because things are too unreal to desire or to prefer one to another. But, at the same time, one feels no necessity to flee from the world or not to do any action, because being free from the illusion, action or living in the world does not weigh upon one, one is not

bound or involved. Those who flee from the world or shun action (the Sannyasis) do so because they would be involved or bound; they believe the world to be unreal, but in fact it weighs on them as a reality so long as they are in it. When one is perfectly free from the illusion of the reality of things, then they cannot weigh on one or bind at all.

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Do? Why should he want to do anything if he was in the eternal peace or Ananda or union with the Divine? If a man is spiritual and has gone beyond the vital and mind, he does not need to be always “doing” something. The self or spirit has the joy of its own existence. It is free to do nothing and free to do everything — but not because it is bound to action and unable to exist without it.

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But the Jivanmukta feels no bondage. In all works and action he feels perfectly free, because the work is not done by him personally (there is no sense of limited ego) but by the cosmic Force. The limitations of the work are those put by the cosmic Force itself in its own action. He himself lives in communion of oneness with the Transcendent which is above the cosmos and feels no limitation. That is at least how it is felt in the overmind.

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If ego and desire are different things from the gunas, then there can be an action of the gunas without ego and desire and therefore without attachment. That is the nature of the action of these gunas in the unattached liberated yogi. If it were not possible, then it would be nonsense to talk of the yogis being unattached, for there would remain still attachment in part of their being. To say that they are unattached in the Purusha, but attached in the Prakriti, therefore they are unattached, is to talk nonsense. Attachment is attachment in whatever part of the being it may be. In order to be unattached one must be un-

attached everywhere, in the mental, vital, physical action and not only in the silent soul somewhere inside.

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In the liberated state it is not the inner Purusha only that remains detached — the inner Purusha is always detached, only one is not conscious of it in the ordinary state. It is the Prakriti also that is not disturbed by the action of the gunas or attached to it — the mind, the vital, the physical (whatever Prakriti) begin to get the same quietude, unperturbed peace and detachment as the Purusha, but it is a quietude, not a cessation of all action. It is quietude in action itself. If it were not so, my statement in the *Arya* that there can be a desireless or liberated action on which I found the possibility of a free (*mukta*) action would be false. The whole being, Purusha-Prakriti, becomes detached (having no desire or attachment) even in the action of the gunas.

The outer being is also detached — the whole being is without desire or attachment and still action is possible. Action without desire is possible, action without attachment is possible, action without ego is possible.

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You seem to think that action and Prakriti are the same thing and where there is no action there can be no Prakriti! Purusha and Prakriti are separate powers of the being. It is not that Purusha = quiescence and Prakriti = action, so that when all is quiescent there is no Prakriti and when all is active there is no Purusha. When all is active, there is still the Purusha behind the active Nature and when all is quiescent, there is still the Prakriti, but the Prakriti at rest.

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Prakriti is the Force that acts. A Force may be in action or in quiescence, but when it rests it is as much a Force as when it acts. The gunas are an action of the Force, they are in the Force itself. The sea is there and the waves are there, but the waves are not

the sea and when there are no waves and the sea is still, it does not stop being the sea.

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The sattwa predominates, the rajas acts as a kinetic movement under the control of sattwa until the tamas imposes the need of rest. That is the usual thing [in the liberated state]. But even if the tamas predominates and the action is weak or the rajas predominates and the action is excessive, neither the Purusha nor the Prakriti get disturbed, there is a fundamental calm in the whole being and the action is no more than a ripple or an eddy on the surface.

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It is more difficult for the Prakriti [to separate from surface action than for the Purusha] as its ordinary play is that of the surface being. It has to divide itself into two to separate from that. The Purusha, on the contrary, is in its nature silent and separate — so it has only to go back to its original nature.

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When Prakriti is liberated it divides itself into an inner Force that is free from its action (free from rajas, tamas, etc.) and the outer Prakriti which it is using and changing.

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If consciousness and energy are the same thing, there would be no use in having two different words for them. In that case, instead of saying, “I am conscious of my defects”, one can say, “I am energetic of my defects”. If a man is running fast, you can say of him, “He is running with great energy”. Do you think it would mean the same if you said, “He is running with great consciousness”? Consciousness is that which is aware of things — energy is a force put in action which does things. Consciousness may have energy and keep it in or put it out, but that does not mean that that is only another word for energy, and that it has to go

out when the energy goes out and that it can't stand back and observe the energy in action. You have plenty of inertia in you, but that does not mean that you and inertia are the same and when inertia rises and sweeps you, it is you who rise and sweep yourself.

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Certainly, the mind and the inner being are consciousness. For human beings who have not got deeper into themselves, mind and consciousness are synonymous. Only when one becomes more aware of oneself by a growing consciousness, then one can see different degrees, kinds, powers of consciousness, mental, vital, physical, psychic, spiritual. The Divine has been described as Being, Consciousness, Ananda, even as a Consciousness (Chaitanya), as putting out a force or energy, Shakti that creates world. The mind is a modified consciousness that puts forth a mental energy. But the Divine can stand back from his energy and observe it at its work, it can be the Witness Purusha watching the works of Prakriti. Even the mind can do that — a man can stand back in his mind-consciousness and watch the mental energy doing things, thinking, planning, etc.; all introspection is based upon the fact that one can so divide oneself into a consciousness that observes and an energy that acts. These are quite elementary things supposed to be known to everybody. Anybody can do that merely by a little practice; anybody who observes his own thoughts, feelings, actions, has begun doing it already. In yoga we make the division complete, that is all.

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It [consciousness] is not by its nature detached from the mental and other activities. It can be detached, it can be involved. In the human consciousness it is as a rule always involved, but it has developed the power of detaching itself — a thing which the lower creation seems unable to do. As the consciousness develops, this power of detachment also develops.

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No, without sadhana the object of yoga cannot be attained. Work itself must be taken as part of sadhana. But naturally when you are working, you must think of the work, which you will learn to do from the yogic consciousness as an instrument and with the memory of the Divine.

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It is because the energy is put forward in the work. But as the peace and contact grow, a double consciousness can develop — one engaged in the work, another behind, silent and observing or turned towards the Divine — in this consciousness the aspiration can be maintained even while the external consciousness is turned towards the work.

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One can both aspire and attend to the work and do many other things at the same time when the consciousness is developed by yoga.

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No — it is only if it is an inner absorption that it would come in the way. But what I mean is a sort of stepping backward into something silent and observant within which is not involved in the action, yet sees and can shed its light upon it. There are then two parts of the being, one inner looking at and witnessing and knowing, the other executive and instrumental and doing. This gives not only freedom but power — and in this inner being one can get into touch with the Divine not through mental activity but through the substance of the being, by a certain inward touch, perception, reception, receiving also the right inspiration or intuition of the work.

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If one feels a consciousness not limited by the work, a consciousness behind supporting that which works, then it is easier. That

usually comes either by the wideness and silence fixing and extending itself or by the consciousness of a Force not oneself working through the worker.

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Mother does not disapprove of your writing a book — what she does not like is your being so lost in it that you can do nothing else. You must be master of what you do and not possessed by it. She quite agrees to your finishing and offering the book on your birthday, if that can be done. But you must not be carried away — you must keep your full contact with higher things.

*
**

I repeat that we do not object to your writing — whether it be poetry or short stories or novels. What we felt was that this kind of total absorption and possession by it was not good for your spiritual condition and that it put a lesser thing in front, even occupying the *whole* front of the consciousness for most of the time instead of putting it in its proper place in a sound spiritual harmony.

*
**

You can try [writing a novel], if you like. The difficulty is that the subject matter of a novel belongs mostly to the outer consciousness, so that a lowering or externalising can easily come. This apart from the difficulty of keeping the inner poise when putting the mind into outer work. If you could get an established poise within, then it would be possible to do any work without disturbing or lowering the consciousness.

*
**

It depends upon the plasticity of the consciousness. Some are like that, they get so absorbed they don't want to come out or do anything else. One has to keep a certain balance by which the

fundamental consciousness remains able to turn from one concentration to another with ease.

*
**

The absorption in work is not undesirable — but the difficulty in turning inwards can only be temporary. A certain plasticity in the physical consciousness which is sure to come makes it easy to turn from one concentration to another.

*
**

The resistance you speak of and the insufficient receptivity and the inability to continue in communion while doing work must all be due to some part of the physical consciousness that is still not open to the Light — probably something in the vital-physical and the material subconscious which stands in the way of the physical mind being in its mass free and responsive.

There is no harm in raising the aspiration from below to meet the power from above. All that you have to be careful about is not to raise up the difficulty from below before the descending power is ready to remove it.

There is no necessity of losing consciousness when you meditate. It is the widening and change of the consciousness that is essential. If you mean going inside, you can do that without losing consciousness.

*
**

It is a certain inertia in the physical consciousness which shuts it up in the groove of what it is doing so that it is fixed in that and not free to remember.

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**

All the difficulties you describe are quite natural things common to most people. It is easy for one, comparatively, to remember and be conscious when one sits quiet in meditation; it is difficult when one has to be busy with work. The remembrance and con-

sciousness in work have to come by degrees, you must not expect to have it all at once; nobody can get it all at once. It comes in two ways, — first, if one practises remembering the Mother and offering the work to her each time one does something (not all the time one is doing, but at the beginning or whenever one can remember,) then that slowly becomes easy and habitual to the nature. Secondly, by the meditation an inner consciousness begins to develop which, after a time, not at once or suddenly, becomes more and more automatically permanent. One feels this as a separate consciousness from that outer which works. At first this separate consciousness is not felt when one is working, but as soon as the work stops one feels it was there all the time watching from behind; afterwards it begins to be felt during the work itself, as if there were two parts of oneself — one watching and supporting from behind and remembering the Mother and offering to her and the other doing the work. When this happens, then to work with the true consciousness becomes more and more easy.

It is the same with all the rest. It is by the development of the inner consciousness that all the things you speak of will be set right. For instance it is a part of the being that has *utsāha* for the work, another that feels the pressure of quietude and is not so disposed to work. Your mood depends on which comes up at the time — it is so with all people. To combine the two is difficult, but a time comes when they do get reconciled — one remains poised in an inner concentration while the other is supported by it in its push towards work. The transformation of the nature, the harmonising of all these discordant things in the being are the work of sadhana. Therefore you need not be discouraged by observing these things in you. There is hardly anybody who has not found these things in himself. All this can be arranged by the action of the inner Force with the constant consent and call of the sadhak. By himself he might not be able to do it, but with the Divine Force working within all can be done.

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**

It is a little difficult at first to combine the inward condition

with the attention to the outward work and mingling with others, but a time comes when it is possible for the inner being to be in full union with the Mother while the action comes out of that concentrated union and is as easily guided in its details so that some part of the consciousness can attend to everything outside, even be concentrated upon it and yet feel the inward concentration in the Mother.

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**

It is a very good sign that even in spite of full work the inner working was felt behind and succeeded in establishing the silence. A time comes for the sadhak in the end when the consciousness and the deeper experience go on happening even in full work or in sleep, while speaking or in any kind of activity.

*
**

It is not at first easy to remember the presence in work; but if one revives the sense of the presence immediately after the work is over it is all right. In time the sense of the presence will become automatic even in work.

*
**

The unhappiness is not necessary or inevitable in the sadhana, but it comes because your inner nature feels the touch of the Divine Presence indispensable to it and uneasy when it does not feel it: to feel it always a certain constant detachment within allowing you to remain within and do everything from within is necessary. This can more easily be done in quiet occupations and quiet contacts. For it is quietness and inwardness that enable one to feel the Presence.

*
**

You must learn to act always from within — from your inner being which is in contact with the Divine. The outer should be

a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action.

*
**

All should be done quietly from within — working, speaking, reading, writing as part of the real consciousness — not with the dispersed and unquiet movement of the ordinary consciousness.

*
**

One can work and remain quiet within. Quietude does not mean having an empty mind or doing no action at all.

*
**

The stress of the Power is all right, but there is really nothing incompatible between the inner silence and action. It is to this combination that the sadhana must move.

IV

It needs a quiet mind to know the Divine Will. In the quiet mind turned towards the Divine the intuition (higher mind) comes of the Divine's Will and the right way to do it.

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When the mind is pure and psychic prominent, then one feels what is according to the Divine Will and what is against it.

*
**

Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work.

*
**

It is good that you were able to observe yourself all the time and see the movements and that the intervention of the new consciousness was frequent and automatic. At a later stage you will no doubt get a guidance in the mind also as to how to do things you want to get done. Evidently your mind was too active — as well as the minds of the others also — and so you missed your objective, owing to the excessive multitude of witnesses! However —

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**

For the actions to be psychic, the psychic must be in front. The observing Purusha can separate himself, but cannot change the Prakriti. But to be the observing Purusha is a first step. Afterwards there must be the action of the Purusha Will as an instrument of the Mother's force. This Will must be founded on a right consciousness which sees what is wrong, ignorant, selfish, egoistic, moved by desire in the nature and puts it right.

*

**

If you want the consciousness for true actions very much and aspire for it, it may come in one of several ways:

1. You may get the habit or faculty of watching your movements in such a way that you see the impulse to action coming and can see too its nature.
2. A consciousness may come which feels uneasy whenever a wrong thought or impulse to action or feeling is there.
3. Something within you may warn and stop you when you are going to do the wrong action.

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**

[To be constantly governed by the Divine:] A constant aspiration for that is the first thing — next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual

feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic.

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**

As for the feeling from within, it depends on being able to go inside. Sometimes it comes of itself with the deepening of the consciousness by bhakti or otherwise, sometimes it comes by practice — a sort of referring the matter and listening for the answer — listening is, of course, a metaphor but it is difficult to express it otherwise — it doesn't mean that the answer comes necessarily in the shape of words, spoken or unspoken, though it does sometimes or for some; it can take any shape. The main difficulty for many is to be sure of the right answer. For that it is necessary to be able to contact the consciousness of the Guru inwardly — that comes best by bhakti. Otherwise, the attempt to get the feeling from within by practice may become a delicate and ticklish job. Obstacles: (1) normal habit of relying on outward means for everything; (2) ego, substituting its suggestions for the right answer; (3) mental activity; (4) intruder nuisances. I think you need not be eager for this, but rely on the growth of the inner consciousness. The above is only by way of general explanation.

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**

Openness in work means the same thing as openness in the consciousness. The same Force that works in your consciousness in meditation and clears away the cloud and confusion whenever you open to it, can also take up your action and not only make you aware of the defects in it but keep you conscious of what is to be done and guide your mind and hands to do it. If you open to it in your work, you will begin to feel this guidance more and more until behind all your activities you will be aware of the Force of the Mother.

*
**

To be able to receive the Divine Power and let it act through you in the things of the outward life, there are three necessary conditions:

(i) Quietude, equality — not to be disturbed by anything that happens, to keep the mind still and firm, seeing the play of forces, but itself tranquil.

(ii) Absolute faith — faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one's will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done — *kartavyam karma*.

(iii) Receptivity — the power to receive the Divine Force and to feel its presence and the presence of the Mother in it and allow it to work, guiding one's sight and will and action. If this power and presence can be felt and this plasticity made the habit of the consciousness in action, — but plasticity to the Divine force alone without bringing in any foreign element, — the eventual result is sure.

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**

What happened to you shows what are the conditions of that state in which the Divine Power takes the place of the ego and directs the action, making the mind, life and body an instrument. A receptive silence of the mind, an effacement of the mental ego and the reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness, a close contact with the Divine Power and an openness of the being to that one Influence and no other are the conditions for becoming an instrument of the Divine, moved by that and that only.

The silence of the mind does not of itself bring in the supramental consciousness; there are many states or planes or levels of consciousness between the human mind and the supermind. The silence opens the mind and the rest of the being to greater things, sometimes to the cosmic consciousness, sometimes to the experience of the silent Self, sometimes to the presence or power of the Divine, sometimes to a higher consciousness than that of the human mind; the mind's silence is the most favourable condition for any of these things to happen. In this yoga it is the most favourable condition (not the only one) for the Divine Power to descend first upon and then into the individual consciousness and there do its work to transform that consciousness, giving it the necessary experiences, altering all its outlook and

movements, leading it from stage to stage till it is ready for the last (supramental) change.

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What happened is a thing that often happens and, taking your account of it, it reproduced in your case the usual stages. First, you sat down in prayer, — that means a call to the Above, if I may so express it. Next came the necessary condition for the answer to the prayer to be effective — “little by little a sort of restfulness came”, in other words, the quietude of the consciousness which is necessary before the Power that has to act can act. Then the rush of the Force or Power, “a flood of energy and sense of power and glow”, and the natural concentration of the being in inspiration and expression, the action of the Power.

The vital is the means of effectuation on the physical plane, so its action and energy are necessary for all work; without it, if the mind only drives without the co-operation and instrumentation of the vital, there is hard and disagreeable labour and effort with results which are usually not at all of the best kind. The ideal state for work is when there is a natural concentration of the consciousness in the special energy, supported by an easeful rest and quiescence of the consciousness as a whole. Distraction of the mind by other activities disturbs this balance of ease and concentrated energy, — fatigue also disturbs or destroys it. The first thing therefore that has to be done is to bring back the supporting restfulness and this is ordinarily done by cessation of work and repose. In the experience you had that was replaced by a restfulness that came from above in answer to your station of prayer and an energy that also came from above. It is the same principle as in sadhana, — the reason why we want people to make the consciousness quiet so that the higher peace may come in and on the basis of that peace a new Force from above.

It is not effort that brought the inspiration. Inspiration comes from above in answer to a state of concentration which is itself a call to it. Effort, on the contrary, fatigues the consciousness and therefore is not favourable to the best work; the only thing is that sometimes — by no means always — effort

culminates in a pull for the inspiration which brings some answer, but it is not usually so good and effective an inspiration as that which comes when there is the easy and intense concentration of the energy in its work. Effort and expenditure of energy are not necessarily the same thing, — the best expenditure of energy is that which flows easily without effort at all, — when the inspiration or Force (any Force) works of itself and the mind and vital and even body are glowing instruments and the Force flows out in an intense and happy working — an almost labourless labour.

*
**

It is true that the Force can work effectively without any effort on your part. It is not the effort, it is the assent of the being that it needs for its work.

*
**

Well, that is the idea in yoga — that by a right passivity one opens oneself to something greater than one's limited self, and effort is only useful for getting that condition. Even in the ordinary life the individual is only an instrument in the hands of a universal Energy, though his ego takes the credit of all he does.

*
**

As you have opened yourself to the Force and made yourself a channel for the energy of work, it is quite natural that when you want to do this work the Force should flow and act in the way that is wanted or the way that is needed and for the effect that is needed. When one has made oneself a channel, the Force is not necessarily bound by the limitations or disabilities of the instrument; it can disregard them and act in its own power. In doing so it may use the human instrument simply as a medium and leave him as soon as the work is finished just what he was before, incapable in his ordinary moments of doing such good work; but also it may by its action set the instrument right, accustom it to the necessary intuitive knowledge and movement so that it can at will command the action of the Force. As for the technique,

there are two different things, the intellectual knowledge which one applies and the intuitive cognition which acts in its own right, even if it is not actually possessed by the worker. Many poets, for instance, have little knowledge of metrical or linguistic technique and cannot explain how they write or what are the qualities and elements of their success, but they write, all the same, things that are perfect in rhythm and language. Intellectual knowledge of technique helps of course, provided one does not make of it a mere device or a rigid fetter. There are some arts that cannot be done well without technical knowledge, e.g. painting, sculpture.

What you write is your own in the sense that you have been the instrument of its manifestation — that is so with every artist or worker, though of course for sadhana it is necessary to recognise that the real Power was not yourself and you were simply the instrument on which it played its tune.

The Ananda of creation is not the pleasure of the ego in having personally done well and being somebody, that is something extraneous which attaches itself to the joy of work and creation. The Ananda comes from the inrush of a greater Power, the thrill of being possessed and used by it, the *āveśa*, the exultation of the uplifting of the consciousness, the illumination and its heightened and heightened action and also the joy of beauty, power or perfection that is being created. How far one feels it depends on the condition of the consciousness at the time, the temperament, the activity of the vital; the yogi, of course, (or even certain strong and calm minds) is not carried away by the Ananda, he holds and watches it and there is no mere excitement mixed with the flow of it through the mind, vital or body. Naturally the Ananda of *samarpaṇa* or spiritual realisation or divine love is something far greater, but the Ananda of creation has its place.

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**

To observe whether it is really well done or not and feel the Ananda of work done for the Mother. Get rid of the “I”. If it is well done, it is the Force that did it and your only part was to be a good or a bad instrument.

*
**

There must be the *rasa* [in the work], but it comes when there is the dynamic descent of the Power.

*
**

What you find happening is a common experience in all work. Mother says it is due to the fact that in beginning the work there is an inspiration of what to do and the mind at first acts as a channel for it and all goes well. Afterwards the mind begins to be acting on its own account, without one's noticing it usually unless one is very conscious and accustomed to scrutinise oneself — and do the thing without the original inspiration by its ordinary means. This is felt very clearly in work like poetry and music — for there one feels the inspiration coming and feels it failing and getting mixed up with the ordinary mind. So long as it goes on, everything is done easily and well, but as soon as the mind begins to interfere or to work in its place, then the work is less well done. In work like cooking one does not directly and vividly feel the inspiration, only a brightness and perceptiveness and confidence perhaps — so also one does not notice when the physical mind becomes active. In a thing like poetry one can break off till the inspiration comes again, but in cooking one can't do that, the work has to be finished there and then. I suppose this can be remedied only by one's becoming more conscious within, as one does in *sadhana*, till one can see and counteract the wrong movement of inferior mental activity by bringing down of one's will again the right inspiration and perception.

*
**

The Mother can give indications and open out possibilities, but if the mind interferes and if they are not followed up, what can be done?

*
**

Why should you try the same things as the others? What one feels inspired to do, is the best thing for one.

V

During the course of the sadhana one can learn to draw upon the universal Life-Force and replenish the energies from it. But usually the best way is to learn to open oneself to the Mother's Force and become conscious of it supporting and moving or pouring into the system and giving the energy needed for the work whether it be mental, vital or physical.

There is naturally a higher Energy above the present universal forces and it is that which will transform the nature and take up the mental, vital, physical energies and change them into its own likeness.

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**

It is a Force that comes and pushes to work and is as legitimately a part of the spiritual life as others. It is a special Energy that takes hold of the worker in the being and fulfils itself through him. To work with a full energy like this in one is quite salutary. The only thing is not to overdo it — that is to avoid any exhaustion or recoil to a physical inertia.

As for the dedication make the *sankalpa* always of offering it, remember and pray when you can (I mean in connection with the work). This is to fix a certain attitude. Afterwards, the Force can take advantage of this key to open the deeper dedication within.

*
**

The Force from above is the Force of the Higher Consciousness. That from behind works as a mental, vital or physical force according to need. When the being is open to it and there is a certain passivity to its working, it takes the place of the personal activity and the Person is a witness of its action.

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**

I was not speaking of the Force coming down from above, but of the Force from behind doing action through the mind and body as instruments. Very often when the mind and body are

inert, their actions still go on by this push from behind.

*
**

In the ordinary course of yoga that physical strength is replaced by a yogic strength or yogic life-force which keeps up the body and makes it work, but in the absence of this force the body is denuded of power, inert and tamasic. This can only be remedied by the whole being opening to Yoga-Shakti in each of its planes — yogic mind-force, yogic life-force, yogic body-force.

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Yes. With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue.

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**

When doing this work you had the Force in you and the right consciousness filling the vital and physical — afterwards with relaxation the ordinary physical consciousness came up and brought back the ordinary reactions — fatigue, sciatica etc.

*
**

When you feel tired, don't overstrain yourself but rest — doing only your ordinary work; restlessly doing something or other all the time is not the way to cure it. To be quiet without and within is what is needed when there is this sense of fatigue. There is always a strength near you which you can call in and will remove these things, but you must learn to be quiet in order to receive it.

*
**

Yes, it is a mistake to overstrain as there is a reaction afterwards. If there is energy, all must not be spent, some must be stored up so as to increase the permanent strength of the system.

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**

Overstraining brings inertia up. Everybody has inertia in his nature: the question is of its greater or less operation.

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**

If too much work is done the quality of the work deteriorates in spite of the zest of the worker.

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**

The idleness must of course go — but sometimes I think you have pulled too much the other way. To be able to work with full energy is necessary — but to be able not to work is also necessary.

What you say about ordinary conversation is quite correct and that all that should fall away is very necessary for the true consciousness.

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**

If the physical is in this condition and the work creates such reactions in it, it is no use forcing it violently and putting an overstrain upon it. It is better to educate and train the external natural being slowly by bringing calm and peace and light and strength persistently into the nervous system and cells of the body. A violent compulsion on the body may well defeat its own object. Probably your sadhana has been too exclusively internal and subjective; but if it is so, this cannot be remedied in a moment. It is better therefore for you not to do heavy physical work at present.

*
**

It [the cause of fatigue] is probably some desire or vital preference — likes and dislikes in the vital. All work given you must be felt as the Mother's and done with joy, opening yourself for the Mother's force to work through you.

VI

You have been progressing of course, but what Mother told you and tells everyone is true that to be a real artist needs hard work for years together. But your mistake is to put stress on these things and get discouraged by any check or difficulty in them. The one thing to be done is to open your consciousness to what is coming down, to let the change operate in so that the consciousness becomes a consciousness of peace and light and power and joy full of the Divine Presence. When that is there, then what the Divine wants to get done through you or developed in you will be done or developed with a rapidity and perfection which at present is impossible. The one thing needful first, all the rest is only now a field of exercise for the development of the one thing needful.

*
**

As for the French writing, you should not think so much of expressing things — it does not matter whether others have written the same things and done it better. What you should aim at is simply to learn to write French perfectly, to get full use of the French language as an instrument. If the Force wants to express anything through you hereafter or not, is a thing you should leave to the Divine Will; once you give yourself into its hands in the true consciousness, it will know what to do or not to do through you and will make full use of whatever instrumentation you can put at its disposal.

*
**

As I have said already, in all matters, work and study as well as in the inner progress in the yoga, the same thing is needed if you want perfection — quietude of mind, becoming aware of the Force, opening to it, allowing it to work in you. To aim at perfection is all right, but restlessness of mind is not the way towards it. To dwell upon your imperfections and be always thinking how to do and what to do, is not the way either. Remain quiet, open yourself, allow the consciousness to grow — call the Force

to work. As it grows and as the Force works, you will become aware not only of what is imperfect, but of the movement which will take you, (not at one step, but progressively) out of the imperfection and you will then only have to follow that movement.

If you overstrain yourself by too prolonged work or a restless working, that disturbs or weakens the nervous system, the vital-physical, and lays one open to the action of the wrong forces. To work but quietly so as to have a steady progress is the right way.

*

**

The difficulty you find results very much from your always worrying with your mind about things, thinking "This is wrong, that is wrong in me or my work" and, as a result, "I am incompetent, I am bad, nothing can be done with me". Your embroidery work, your lampshades etc. have always been very good, and yet you are always thinking "this is bad work, that is wrong" and by doing so, confuse yourself and get into a muddle. Naturally, you make a mistake now and then, but more when you worry like that than when you do things simply and confidently.

It is better whether with work or with sadhana to go on quietly, allowing the Force to act and doing your best to let it work rightly, but without this self-tormenting and constant restless questioning at every point. Whatever defects there are would go much sooner, if you did not harp on them too much; for by dwelling on them so much you lose confidence in yourself and in your power of openness to the Force — which is there all the same — and put unnecessary difficulties in the way of its working.

*

**

Do not worry about mistakes in work. Often you imagine that things are badly done by you when really you have done them very well; but even if there are mistakes, it is nothing to be sad about. Let the consciousness grow — only in the divine con-

sciousness is there an entire perfection. The more you surrender to the Divine, the more will there be the possibility of perfection in you.

*
**

Do not attach too much importance to such mistakes or get upset about them. It is the nature of the mind to make such mistakes. It is only a higher consciousness that can set them right — the mind can be sure only after a very long training in each particular action and even then it has only to be off-guard for something untoward to occur. Do as well as you can, for the rest let the higher consciousness grow till it can enlighten all the movements of the physical mind.

*
**

Skill in works will come when there is the opening in the physical mind and the body. There is no need to be anxious about that now. Do your best and do not be anxious about it.

*
**

Think of your work only when it is being done, not before and not after.

Do not let your mind go back on a work that is finished. It belongs to the past and all re-handling of it is a waste of power.

Do not let your mind labour in anticipation on a work that has to be done. The Power that acts in you will see to it at its own time.

These two habits of the mind belong to a past functioning that the transforming Force is pressing to remove and the physical mind's persistence in them is the cause of your strain and fatigue. If you can remember to let your mind work only when its action is needed, the strain will lessen and disappear. This is indeed the transitional movement before the supramental working takes possession of the physical mind and brings into it the spontaneous action of the Light.

VII

Yes, obviously, that is one great utility of work that it tests the nature and puts the sadhak in front of the defects of his outer being which might otherwise escape him.

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The actions are of importance only as expressing what is in the nature. You have to be conscious of whatever in your actions is not in harmony with the yoga and get rid of it. But for that what is needed is your own consciousness, the psychic, observing from within and throwing off what is seen to be undesirable.

*
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It will be better to do the work as a sadhana for getting rid of the defects rather than accept the defects as a reason for not doing the work. Instead of accepting these reactions as if they were an unchangeable law of your nature, you should make up your mind that they must come no longer — calling down the aid of the Mother's force to purify the vital and eliminate them altogether. If you believe that the trouble in the body must come, naturally it will come; rather fix in your mind the idea and will that it must not come and will not come. If it tries to come reject it and throw it away from you.

*
**

That is a great error of the human vital — to want compliments for their own sake and to be depressed by their absence and imagine that it means there is no capacity. In this world one starts with ignorance and imperfection in whatever one does — one has to find out one's mistakes and to learn, one has to commit errors and find out by correcting them the right way to do things. Nobody in the world has ever escaped from this law. So what one has to expect from others is not compliments all the time, but praise of what is right or well done and criticism of

errors and mistakes. The more one can bear criticism and see one's mistakes, the more likely one is to arrive at the fullness of one's capacity. Especially when one is very young — before the age of maturity — one cannot easily do perfect work. What is called the juvenile work of poets and painters — work done in their early years is always imperfect, it is a promise and has qualities — but the real perfection and full use of their powers comes afterwards. They themselves know that very well, but they go on writing or painting because they know also that by doing so they will develop their powers.

As for comparison with others, one ought not to do that. Each one has his own lesson to learn, his own work to do and he must concern himself with that, not with the superior or inferior progress of others in comparison with himself. If he is behind today, he can be in full capacity hereafter and it is for that future perfection of his powers that he must labour. You are young and have everything yet to learn — your capacities are yet only in bud, you must wait and work for them to be in full bloom — and you must not mind if it takes months and years even to arrive at something satisfying and perfect. It will come in its proper time, and the work you do now is always a step towards it.

But learn to welcome criticism and the pointing out of imperfections — the more you do so, the more rapidly you will advance.

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**

Someone who is learning to paint or play music or write and does not like to have his mistakes pointed out by those who already know — how is he to learn at all or reach any perfection of technique?

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**

We cannot approve of your idea — there are already enough intellectuals in the Ashram and the room-keeping intellectual is not a type whose undue propagation we are disposed to encourage. Outside work is just what is necessary to keep the equilibrium of the nature and you certainly need it for that purpose. Also your presence in the D.R. [Dining Room] is indispensable. For the

rest instead of getting vexed with X or Y you should seek the cause of these things in yourself — that is always the true rule for a sadhak. You are sometimes at your best and then things go on very well; but sometimes you are not at all at your best and then these misunderstandings arise. The remedy therefore is to be at your best always — not to be in your room always, but to be in your best and therefore your true self always.

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The difficulty rises from a certain excess of sensitiveness in the vital nature which feels strongly any want of harmony or opposition in the work or any untoward happening and, when that comes, one is apt to feel it as if a personal opposition and on the other side also a similar feeling arises and so the difficulty becomes prolonged and leads to conflict. As a matter of fact the difficulty often arises from circumstances, e.g. the B.S. [Building Service] with its much reduced staff and a rush of work using up all its men may find it more difficult to accommodate you than before. Or it may arise from people acting according to their view of a matter which does not accord with yours. Or again it may come from the person following his own ideas, view of what is convenient and effective and thus coming up against yours. There need be no personal feeling in all that and it is best not to look for any and not to see it from that point of view. What is needed is always to take a calm view of the thing and a clear vision — not only from one's own standpoint which may be eventually right and yet need modification in detail, but with a vision that sees also the standpoint of others; this broad seeing quiet and impersonal is needed in the full yogic consciousness. Having it one can insist on what has to be insisted on with firmness but at the same time with a consideration and understanding of the other that removes the chance of any clash of personal feeling. Naturally if the other is unreasonable, he may still resent, but then it will be his own fault entirely and it will fall back on him only. It is here that we see the necessity of some change. Loyalty, fidelity, capacity, strength of will and other qualities in the work you have in plenty — a full calm and

equality not only in the inner being where it can exist already, but in the outer nervous parts is a thing you have to get completely.

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There are always defects on both sides which lead to this disharmony. On your side you have...a tendency to too harsh judgment of others, a readiness to see and stress the faults, defects, weak side of others and not to see enough their good sides. This prevents the kindness of outlook which should be there and gives an impression of harshness and critical severity and creates a tendency to contrariety and revolt, which even when it is not there in the minds of the others, acts through their subconscious and creates all these discordant movements. To take advantage of what is good in others, keeping one's eye always on that, and to deal tactfully with their mistakes, faults and defects is the best way; it does not exclude firmness and maintenance of discipline, even severity when severity is due; but the latter should be rare and the others should not feel it as if it were a permanent attitude.

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The experience of the difference between your inner feelings and your surface reactions shows that you are becoming aware of different parts of your nature which each have their own character. In fact each human being is composed of different personalities that feel and behave in a different way and his action is determined by the one that happens to be prominent at the time. The one that has no feelings against anyone is either the psychic being or the emotional being in the heart, the one that feels anger and is severe is a part of the external vital nature on the surface. This anger and severity is a wrong form of something that in itself has a value, a certain strength of will and force of action and control in the vital being, without which work cannot be done. What is necessary is to get rid of the anger and to keep the force and firm will along with a developed judgment as to what is the right thing to do in any circumstances. For instance, people can be allowed to do things in their own way when that

does not spoil the work, when it is only their way of doing what is necessary to be done; when their way is opposed to the discipline of the work, then they have to be controlled, but it should be done quietly and kindly, not with anger. Very often, if one has developed a silent power of putting the Mother's force on the work with one's own will as instrument, that by itself may be sufficient without having to say anything as the person changes his way of himself as if by his own initiative.

This feeling of not being able to eat and of eating being unnecessary is a sort of suggestion that is coming to several people. It should be rejected and cleared out of the system as it may lead to weakening of the body by taking insufficient food. Often one does not feel weak at first, a vital energy comes which supports the body, but later on the body weakens. This feeling may sometimes come when one is going much inside and there is no insistence on the bodily needs; but it should not be accepted. If it is rejected, it is likely to disappear.

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To discourage anybody is wrong, but to give false encouragement or encouragement of anything wrong is not right. Severity has sometimes to be used (though not overused), when without it an obstinate persistence in what is wrong cannot be set right. Very often, if an inner communication has been established, a silent pressure is more effective than anything else. No absolute rule can be laid down; one has to judge and act for the best in each case.

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That is quite necessary for work; efficiency and discipline are indispensable. They can, however, only partly be maintained by outward means — it really depends in ordinary life on the personality of the superior, his influence on the subordinates, his firmness, tact, kindness in dealing with them. But the sadhak depends on a deeper force, that of his inner consciousness and the force working through him.

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It [disciplining the subordinates] has to be done in the right spirit and the subordinates must be able to feel that it is so — that they are being dealt with in all uprightness and by a man who has sympathy and insight and not only severity and energy. It is a question of vital tact and a strong and large vital finding always the right way to deal with the others.

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We have been very glad to get your letters with the details which prove how great and rapid a progress you have made in sadhana. All that you write shows a clear consciousness and a new orientation in the lower vital. To have seen clearly the instinct of domination and the pride of the instrument there means that that part of the being is in the right way to change; these defects must now be replaced by their true counterparts — the power to act selflessly on others for the Truth and the Right and the power to be a strong and confident but egoless instrument of the Divine. It is clear also that the physical is effectively opening, but the instinctive physical and the vital-physical motions in it, fear in the body, weakness, disposition to ill-health must go also. As to diet, a light quality of food sufficient for the strength and sustenance is the best for you — meat is not advisable.

Let the wide opening that has come in you develop and your whole being down to the material fill with the true consciousness and the true power.

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You know what is the right thing to do — to take and keep the necessary inner attitude — when there is the openness to the Force and the strength, courage and power in action coming from it, outward circumstances can be met and turned in the right direction.

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Whenever anything untoward happens, it is essential not to allow...any vibrations of disturbance or unrest in either the physical mind or the nerves. One must remain calm and open to

the Light and Force, then one will be able to act in the right way.

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From the point of view of sadhana — you must not allow yourself to be in the least disturbed by these things. What you have to do, what is right to be done, should be done in perfect calmness with the support of the Divine Force. All that is necessary for a successful result, can be done — including the securing of the support of those who are able to help you. But if this outer support is not forthcoming, you have not to be disturbed but to proceed calmly on your way. If there is any difficulty or unsuccess anywhere not due to your own fault, you have not to be troubled. Strength, unmoved calm, quiet straight and right dealing with all things you have to deal with must be the rule of your action.

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To keep this equanimity and absence of reactions and from that calm ground to direct the yoga-force on things and persons (not for egoistic aims but for the work to be done) is the position of the yogi.

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Keep unmoved, unoffended, do your work without being discouraged, call on the Force to act for you. It is a field of trial for you — the inward result is more important than the outward.

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A double action is needed, to destroy the ill-will of the inferiors and to change the mind of the superiors — an invisible action, for in the visible they seem to be too much under the control of the Forces of the Ignorance.

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You have to make yourself an instrument of the invisible Force

— to be able in a way to direct it to the required point and for the required purpose. But for that Samata must be entire — for a calm and luminous use of the Force is necessary. Otherwise the use of the Force, if accompanied by ego-reactions, may raise a corresponding ego-resistance and a struggle.

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The increase of Samata is only a first condition. It is when on the basis of Samata an understanding Force can be used to make their attacks nugatory that the attacks will become impossible.

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[External attacks by the adverse powers on persons who cooperate:] That is always a part of their tactics in the physical sphere. They can be averted only by a superior Force being used against them.

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This is the right inner attitude of equality — to remain unmoved whatever may outwardly happen. But what is needed for success in the outward field (if you do not use human means, diplomacy or tactics,) is the power to transmit calmly a Force that can change men's attitude and the circumstances and make any outward action at once the right thing to do and effective.

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For the sadhak outward struggles, troubles, calamities are only a means of surmounting ego and rajasic desire and attaining to complete surrender. So long as one insists on success, one is doing the work partly at least for the ego; difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and to bring complete equality. This does not mean that the power of victory is not to be acquired, but it is not success in the immediate work that is all-important; it is the power to receive and transmit a greater and greater correct vision and inner Force that has to be

developed and this must be done quite coolly and patiently without being elated or disturbed by immediate victory or failure.

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What you have to realise is that your success or failure depends, first and always, on your keeping in the right attitude and in the true psychic and spiritual atmosphere and allowing the Mother's force to act through you...

If I can judge from your letters, you take its support too much for granted and lay the first stress on your own ideas and plans and words about the work; but these whether good or bad, right or mistaken, are bound to fail if they are not instruments of the true Force... You have to be always concentrated, always referring all difficulties for solution to the force that is being sent from here, always letting it act and not substituting your own mind and separate vital will or impulse...

Proceed with your work, never forgetting the condition of success. Do not lose yourself in the work or in your ideas or plans or forget to keep yourself in constant touch with the true source. Do not allow anybody's mind or vital influence or the influence of the surrounding atmosphere or the ordinary human mentality to come between you and the power and presence of the Mother.

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It is very satisfying to have closed so well the work you undertook for the Mother...overcoming all difficulties and ending in such a satisfactory result... But your work for the Mother is always sure to be the same, thorough, conscientious and skilful and inspired by a firm faith and openness to her force; where these things are, success is always sure.

VIII

Orderly harmony and organisation in physical things is a neces-

sary part of efficiency and perfection and makes the instrument fit for whatever work is given to it.

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There can be no physical life without an order and rhythm. When this order is changed, it must be in obedience to an inner growth and not for the sake of external novelty. It is only a certain part of the surface lower vital nature which seeks always external change and novelty for its own sake.

It is by a constant inner growth that one can find a constant newness and unfailing interest in life. There is no other satisfying way.

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The impatience of things going wrong is the defect of a quality — an insistence on accuracy and order. The thing is to keep the quality and get rid of the defect.

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In the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with them, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the right way without rules. But in matters of the inner development and the sadhana it is impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say, "Every time you shall stop here, there, in this way, on that line and no other." Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done; there could be no true and effective movement.

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In work there must be a rule and discipline and as much punctuality as possible in regard to time.

What is good work and what is bad or less good work?

All is the Mother's work and equal in the Mother's eyes.

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To be able to be regular is a great force, one becomes master of one's time and one's movements.

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A resolution means the will to try to get a thing done by the given time. It is not a binding "promise" that the thing will be done by that time. Even if it is not, the endeavour will have to continue, just as if no date had been fixed.

IX

Wanton waste, careless spoiling of physical things in an incredibly short time, loose disorder, misuse of service and materials due either to vital grasping or to tamasic inertia are baneful to prosperity and tend to drive away or discourage the Wealth-Power. These things have long been rampant in the society and, if that continues, an increase in our means might well mean a proportionate increase in the wastage and disorder and neutralise the material advantage. This must be remedied if there is to be any sound progress.

Asceticism for its own sake is not the ideal of this yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are a very important part of it — and even an ascetic discipline is better for our purpose than a loose absence of true control. Mastery of the material does not mean having plenty and profusely throwing it out or spoiling it as fast as it comes or faster. Mastery implies in it the right and careful utilisation of things and also a self-control in their use.

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Material things are not to be despised — without them there

can be no manifestation in the material world.

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There is a consciousness in each physical thing with which one can communicate. Everything has an individuality of a certain kind, houses, cars, furniture etc. The ancient peoples knew that and so they saw a spirit or “genius” in every physical thing.

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What you feel about physical things is true — there is a consciousness in them, a life which is not the life and consciousness of man and animal which we know, but still secret and real. That is why we must have a respect for physical things and use them rightly, not misuse and waste, ill-treat or handle with a careless roughness. This feeling of all being consciousness or alive comes when our own physical consciousness — and not the mind only — awakes out of its obscurity and becomes aware of the One in all things, the Divine everywhere.

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It is very true that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress of consciousness.

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The rough handling and careless breaking or waste and misuse of physical things is a denial of the yogic consciousness and a great hindrance to the bringing down of the Divine Truth to the material plane.

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It was I suppose an idea that came through the physical mind,

suggesting the following of a physical utility only and ignoring all other perceptions and motives. You must be on your guard against the ideas and suggestions of this physical mind and accept none without discrimination and subjection to a higher light.