

Sadhana through Love and Devotion

TO BRING the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our yoga. But it has always seemed to me impossible unless there comes as its support and foundation and guard the Divine Truth — what I call the supramental — and its Divine Power. Otherwise Love itself blinded by the confusions of this present consciousness may stumble in its human receptacles and, even otherwise, may find itself unrecognised, rejected or rapidly degenerating and lost in the frailty of man's inferior nature. But when it comes in the divine truth and power, Divine Love descends first as something transcendent and universal and out of that transcendence and universality it applies itself to persons according to the Divine Truth and Will, creating a vaster, greater, purer personal love than any the human mind or heart can now imagine. It is when one has felt this descent that one can be really an instrument for the birth and action of the Divine Love in the world.

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I do not exactly know what you mean by the Divine Love being established down to the subconscious. What love? the soul's love for the Divine? or the principle of the Divine Love and Ananda which is the highest thing that can be reached? To establish the latter down to the subconscious is a thing which would mean the entire transformation of the whole being and it cannot be done except as the result of the supramental change which is as yet far away. The other may be established even now in principle, but to make it living and complete in the whole being would mean the psychic transformation completed and the spiritual also well under way already.

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The Mother did not tell you that love is not an emotion, but that Divine Love is not an emotion, — a very different thing to say. Human love is made up of emotion, passion and desire, — all of them vital movements, therefore bound to the disabilities of the human vital nature. Emotion is an excellent and indispensable thing in human nature, in spite of all its shortcomings and dangers, — just as mental ideas are excellent and indispensable things in their own field in the human stage. But our aim is to go beyond mental ideas into the light of the supramental Truth, which exists not by ideative thought but by direct vision and identity. In the same way our aim is to go beyond emotion to the height and depth and intensity of the Divine Love and there feel through the inner psychic heart an inexhaustible oneness with the Divine which the spasmodic leapings of the vital emotions cannot reach or experience.

As supramental Truth is not merely a sublimation of our mental ideas, so Divine Love is not merely a sublimation of human emotions; it is a different consciousness, with a different quality, movement and substance.

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It [the Divine Love] exists in itself and does not depend on outer contact or outer expression. Whether it shall express itself outwardly or how it will express itself outwardly depends on the spiritual truth that has to be manifested.

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The Divine Love may not be able yet to manifest on the physical plane, humanity being what it is, as fully and freely as it would otherwise do, but that does not make it less close or intense than the human. It is there waiting to be understood and accepted and meanwhile giving all the help you can receive to raise and widen you into the consciousness in which it will be no longer possible for these difficulties and these misunderstandings to recur — the state in which there is possible the full and perfect union.

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And let me say also that, as regards human love and divine Love, I admitted the first as that from which we have to proceed and to arrive at the other, intensifying and transforming into itself, not eliminating, human love. Divine Love, in my view of it, is again not something ethereal, cold and far, but a love absolutely intense, intimate and full of unity, closeness and rapture using all the nature for its expression. Certainly, it is without the confusions and disorders of the present lower vital nature which it will change into something entirely warm, deep and intense; but that is no reason for supposing that it will lose anything that is true and happy in the elements of love.

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Love cannot be cold — for there is no such thing as cold love, but the love of which the Mother speaks in that passage is something very pure, fixed and constant; it does not leap into fire and sink for want of fuel, but is steady and all-embracing and self-existent like the light of the sun. There is also a divine love that is personal, but it is not like the ordinary personal human love dependent on any return from the person — it is personal but not egoistic: it goes from the real being in the one to the real being in the other. But to find that, liberation from the ordinary human way of approach is necessary.

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And first about human love in the sadhana. The soul's turning through love to the Divine must be through a love that is essentially divine, but as the instrument of expression at first is a human nature, it takes the forms of human love and bhakti. It is only as the consciousness deepens, heightens and changes that that greater eternal love can grow in it and openly transform the human into the divine. But in human love itself there are several kinds of motive-forces. There is a psychic human love which rises from deep within and is the result of the meeting of the inner being with that which calls it towards a divine joy and union; it is, once it becomes aware of itself, something lasting, self-

existent, not dependent upon external satisfactions, not capable of diminution by external causes, not self-regarding, not prone to demand or bargain but giving itself simply and spontaneously, not moved to or broken by misunderstandings, disappointments, strife and anger, but pressing always straight towards the inner union. It is this psychic love that is closest to the divine and it is therefore the right and best way of love and bhakti. But that does not mean that the other parts of the being, the vital and physical included, are not to be used as means of expression or that they are not to share in the full play and the whole meaning of love, even of divine love. On the contrary, they are a means and can be a great part of the complete expression of divine love, — provided they have the right and not the wrong movement. There are in the vital itself two kinds of love, — one full of joy and confidence and abandon, generous, unbargaining, ungrudging and very absolute in its dedication and this is akin to the psychic and well-fitted to be its complement and a means of expression of the divine love. And neither does the psychic love or the divine love despise a physical means of expression wherever that is pure and right and possible; it does not depend upon that, it does not diminish, revolt or go out like a snuffed candle when it is deprived of any such means; but when it can use it, it does so with joy and gratitude. Physical means can be and are used in the approach to divine love and worship; they have not been allowed merely as a concession to human weakness, nor is it the fact that in the psychic way there is no place for such things. On the contrary, they are one means of approaching the Divine and receiving the Light and materialising the psychic contact, and so long as it is done in the right spirit and they are used for the true purpose they have their place. It is only if they are misused or the approach is not right, because tainted by indifference and inertia, or revolt or hostility, or some gross desire, that they are out of place and can have a contrary effect.

But there is another way of vital love which is more usually the way of human nature and that is a way of ego and desire. It is full of vital craving, desire and demand; its continuance depends upon the satisfaction of its demands; if it does not get what it craves or even imagines that it is not being treated as it

deserves — for it is full of imaginations, misunderstandings, jealousies, misinterpretations — it at once turns to sorrow, wounded feeling, anger, all kinds of disorder, finally cessation and departure. A love of this kind is in its very nature ephemeral and unreliable and it cannot be made a foundation for divine love.... It is for this reason that we discourage this lower vital way of human love and would like people to reject and eliminate these elements as soon as may be from their nature. Love should be a flowering of joy and union and confidence and self-giving and Ananda, — but this lower vital way is only a source of suffering, trouble, disappointment, disillusion and disunion. Even a slight element of it shakes the foundations of peace and replaces the movement towards Ananda by a fall towards sorrow, discontent and Nirananda.

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The love which is turned towards the Divine ought not to be the usual vital feeling which men call by that name; for that is not love, but only a vital desire, an instinct of appropriation, the impulse to possess and monopolise. Not only is this not the divine Love, but it ought not to be allowed to mix in the least degree in the yoga. The true love for the Divine is a self-giving, free of demand, full of submission and surrender; it makes no claim, imposes no condition, strikes no bargain, indulges in no violences of jealousy or pride or anger — for these things are not in its composition. In return the Divine Mother also gives herself, but freely — and this represents itself in an inner giving — her presence in your mind, your vital, your physical consciousness, her power re-creating you in the divine nature, taking up all the movements of your being and directing them towards perfection and fulfilment, her love enveloping you and carrying you in its arms Godwards. It is this that you must aspire to feel and possess in all your parts down to the very material, and here there is no limitation either of time or of completeness. If one truly aspires and gets it there ought to be no room for any other claim or for any disappointed desire. And if one truly aspires, one does unfailingly get it, more and more as the purification

proceeds and the nature undergoes its needed change.

Keep your love pure of all selfish claim and desire; you will find that you are getting all the love that you can bear and absorb in answer.

Realise also that the Realisation must come first, the work to be done, not the satisfaction of claim and desire. It is only when the Divine Consciousness in its supramental Light and Power has descended and transformed the physical that other things can be given a prominent place — and then too it will not be the satisfaction of desire, but the fulfilment of the Divine Truth in each and all and in the new life that is to express it. In the divine life all is for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of the ego.

I should perhaps add one or two things to avoid misapprehensions. First, the love for the Divine of which I speak is not a psychic love only; it is the love of all the being, — the vital and vital-physical included, — all are capable of the same self-giving. It is a mistake to believe that if the vital loves, it must be a love that demands and imposes the satisfaction of its desire; it is a mistake to think that it must be either that or else the vital, in order to escape from its “attachment”, must draw away altogether from the object of its love. The vital can be as absolute in its unquestioning self-giving as any other part of the nature; nothing can be more generous than its movement when it forgets self for the Beloved. The vital and physical should both give themselves in the true way — the way of true love, not of ego-desire.

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Generally when people speak of vital intimacy they mean something very external which does not need to be brought down since it is common in human life. If it is the inner vital intimacy with the Divine, then of course that makes the union more complete, provided it is based on the psychic.

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When the vital joins in the love for the Divine, it brings into it

heroism, enthusiasm, intensity, absoluteness, exclusiveness, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the total and passionate self-giving of all the nature. It is the vital passion for the Divine that creates the spiritual heroes, conquerors or martyrs.

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I suppose "love" expresses something more intense than goodwill which can include mere liking or affection. But whether love or goodwill the human feeling is always either based on or strongly mixed with ego, — that is why it cannot be pure. It is said in the Upanishad, "One does not love the wife for the sake of the wife", or the child or friend etc. as the case may be, "but for one's self's sake one loves the wife". There is usually a hope of return, of benefit or advantage of some kind, or of certain pleasures and gratifications, mental, vital or physical that the person loved can give. Remove these things and the love very soon sinks, diminishes or disappears or turns into anger, reproach, indifference or even hatred. But there is also an element of habit, something that makes the presence of the person loved a sort of necessity because it has always been there — and this is sometimes so strong that even in spite of entire incompatibility of temper, fierce antagonism, something like hatred, it lasts and even these gulfs of discord are not enough to make the persons part; in other cases, this feeling is more tepid and after a time one gets accustomed to separation or accepts a substitute. There is again often the element of some kind of spontaneous attraction or affinity — mental vital or physical, which gives a stronger cohesion to the love. Lastly, there is in the highest or deepest kind of love the psychic element which comes from the inmost heart and soul, a kind of inner union or self-giving or at least a seeking for that, a tie or an urge independent of other conditions or elements, existing for its own sake and not for any mental, vital or physical pleasure, satisfaction, interest or habit. But usually the psychic element in human love, even where it is present, is so much mixed, overloaded and hidden under the others that it has little chance of fulfilling itself or achieving its own natural purity and fullness. What is called love is therefore sometimes one thing, sometimes

another, most often a confused mixture, and it is impossible to give a general answer to the questions you put as to what is meant by love in such and such a case. It depends on the persons and the circumstances.

When the love goes towards the Divine, there is still this ordinary human element in it. There is the call for a return and if the return does not seem to come, the love may sink; there is the self-interest, the demand for the Divine as a giver of all that the human being wants and, if the demands are not acceded to, *abhimāna* against the Divine, loss of faith, loss of fervour, etc., etc. But the true love for the Divine is in its fundamental nature not of this kind, but psychic and spiritual. The psychic element is the need of the inmost being for self-giving, love, adoration, union which can only be fully satisfied by the Divine. The spiritual element is the need of the being for contact, merging, union with its own highest and whole self and source of being and consciousness and bliss, the Divine. These two are two sides of the same thing. The mind, vital, physical can be the supports and recipients of this love, but they can be fully that only when they become remoulded in harmony with the psychic and spiritual elements of the being and no longer bring in the lower insistences of the ego.

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Why do you need something remarkable? The love of the soul is the true thing, simple and absolute — the rest is good only if it is a means of manifestation of the soul's love.

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The outer being has to learn to love in the psychic way without ego. If it loves in the egoistic vital way, then it only creates difficulties for itself and for the sadhana and for the Mother.

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The relation of the child to the Mother is that of an entire, sincere

and simple trust, love and dependence.

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When you come to the Divine, lean inwardly on the Divine and do not let other things affect you.

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What he describes is a vital demand of the ego for emotional self-satisfaction; it is Maya. It is not true love, for true love seeks for union and self-giving and that is the love one must bring to the Divine. This vital (so-called) love brings only suffering and disappointment; it does not bring happiness; it never gets satisfied and, even if it is granted something that it asks for, it is never satisfied with it.

It is perfectly possible to get rid of this Maya of the vital demand, if one wishes to do it, but the will to do it must be sincere. If he is sincere in his will, he will certainly get help and protection. He must get his basis changed from the vital to the psychic centre.

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It is the ordinary nature of vital love not to last or, if it tries to last, not to satisfy, because it is a passion which Nature has thrown in in order to serve a temporary purpose; it is good enough therefore for a temporary purpose and its normal tendency is to wane when it has sufficiently served Nature's purpose. In mankind, as man is a more complex being, she calls in the aid of imagination and idealism to help her push, gives a sense of ardour, of beauty and fire and glory, but all that wanes after a time. It cannot last, because it is all a borrowed light and power, borrowed in the sense of being a reflection caught from something beyond and not native to the reflecting vital medium which imagination uses for the purpose. Moreover, nothing lasts in the mind and vital, all is a flux there. The one thing that endures is the soul, the spirit. Therefore love can last or satisfy only if it bases itself on the soul and spirit, if it has its roots there. But that

means living no longer in the vital but in the soul and spirit.

The difficulty of the vital giving up is because the vital is not governed by reason or knowledge, but by instinct and impulse and the desire of pleasure. It draws back because it is disappointed, because it realises that the disappointment will always repeat itself, but it does not realise that the whole thing is itself a glamour or, if it does, it repines that it should be so. Where the vairagya is sattwic, born not of disappointment but of the sense of greater and truer things to be attained, this difficulty does not arise. However, the vital can learn by experience, can learn so much as to turn away from its regret of the beauty of the will-o'-the-wisp. Its vairagya can become sattwic and decisive.

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Whatever may be the glamour of a vital love, once it falls away and one gets to a higher level, it should be seen to have been not the great thing one imagined. To keep this exaggerated estimate of it is to hold the consciousness back from the pull towards the greater thing with which that cannot for a moment compare. If one keeps an exaggerated feeling like that for an inferior past it must make it more difficult to develop the entire person for a higher future. It is indeed not the Mother's wish that anybody should look back in a spirit of enthusiastic appreciation to the old vital love. It was indeed "so little" in any true estimate of things. It is not at all a question of comparison or of extolling the vital passion of one at the expense of that of the other. It is the whole thing that must dwindle in its proportions and recede into the shadowy constructions of the past that have no longer any importance.

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Your difficulty is that the vital has not yet arrived at the secret of the self-existent Ananda of love, the Ananda of love's own pure truth, the inner beauty of it for its own sake, the secret of the inner abiding ecstasy; it cannot yet believe that the thing exists. But it is travelling towards it and this feeling was probably

a stage — a groping after a purer vital emotion on the way to the purest of all which is one with the Divine.

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The Divine Love, unlike the human, is deep and vast and silent; one must become quiet and wide to be aware of it and reply to it. He must make it his whole object to be surrendered so that he may become a vessel and instrument — leaving it to the Divine Wisdom and Love to fill him with what is needed. Let him also fix this in the mind not to insist that in a given time he must progress, develop, get realisation; whatever time it takes, he must be prepared to wait and persevere and make his whole life an aspiration and an opening for the one thing only, the Divine. To give oneself is the secret of sadhana, not to demand and acquire. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow. But for that all impatience and revolt must go; all suggestions of not getting, not being helped, not being loved, going away, of abandoning life or the spiritual endeavour must be rejected.

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If the love is absolute and complete and there has never been any vital demand connected with it, then suggestions of revolt cannot come.

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One can love divinely only by becoming divine in nature; there is no other way.

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Love is sufficient for itself — it does not need the support of the blind. In that it is like faith and every other divine force.

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Human love is mostly vital and physical with a mental support

— it can take an unselfish, noble and pure form and expression only if it is touched by the psychic. It is true, as you say, that it is more usually a mixture of ignorance, attachment, passion and desire. But whatever it may be, one who wishes to reach the Divine must not burden himself with human loves and attachments, for they form so many fetters and hamper his steps, turning him away besides from the concentration of his emotions on the one supreme object of love.

There is such a thing as psychic love, pure, without demand, sincere in self-giving, but it is not usually left pure in the attraction of human beings to one another. One must also be on one's guard against the profession of psychic love when one is doing sadhana, — for that is most often a cloak and justification for yielding to a vital attraction or attachment.

Universal love is the spiritual founded on the sense of the One and the Divine everywhere and the change of the personal into a wide universal consciousness, free from attachment and ignorance.

Divine Love is of two kinds — the divine Love for the creation and the souls that are part of itself, and the love of the seeker and love for the Divine Beloved; it has both a personal and impersonal element, but the personal is free here from all lower elements or bondage to the vital and physical instincts.

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The psychic love is pure and full of self-giving without egoistic demands, but it is human and can err and suffer. The Divine Love is something much vaster and deeper and full of light and Ananda.

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The Divine's love is that which comes from above poured down from the Divine Oneness and its Ananda on the being — psychic love is a form taken by divine love in the human being according to the need and possibilities of the human consciousness.

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The soul's love and joy come from within from the psychic being. What comes from above is the Ananda of the higher consciousness.

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If love is psychic in its motive, it always brings the sense of oneness or at least of an inner intimate closeness of being. The Divine Love is based upon oneness and the psychic derives from the Divine Love.

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If the psychic unites itself with the Divine, it cannot be separated. Separation is non-union. The psychic realisation is one of diversity in unity (the portion and the whole); it is not one of dissolving like a drop of water in the sea — for then no love or devotion is possible unless it is love of oneself, devotion to oneself.

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Men are necessarily separated by the individualisation of their nature and can only establish contacts there. In the psychic being one gets the sense of oneness by psychic sympathy, but not any unification, for the psychic is the individual soul and must unify itself with the Divine before it can through the Divine unify with others. In spiritual realisation there are two quite opposite forms — one in which one withdraws from all outer things including all material beings in the world to merge in the Divine and one in which one feels the Self or the Divine in all and through that realisation attains to a universal oneness.

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The love that belongs to the spiritual planes is of a different kind — the psychic has its own more personal love, bhakti, surrender. Love in the higher or spiritual mind is more universal and impersonal. The two must go together to make the highest divine love.

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Universal love is always universal — psychic love can individualise itself.

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Cosmic love depends on the realisation of oneness of self with all. Psychic love or feeling for all can exist without this realisation.

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The Intuitive or overmind are more open to the truth of Divine love and more capable of universalising love than the mind ordinarily is — love there is also more calm in its intensity, less ego-bound than in the mental parts. But the mind can also approach their quality of love, if the love in it grows psychic and spiritual.

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I do not quite understand X's question. Does he mean to ask whether one can become conscious of the Divine's Love for all creatures before one is oneself filled with the universal love for others? If that is the meaning, then one can certainly become conscious of the Divine's Love before one has oneself the universal love — one can become conscious of it by contact with the Divine in oneself. Naturally the consciousness of it should lead to the development of a universal love for all. But if he means a love that is divine, not tainted by the lower movements, then it is true that until there comes the peace, purity, freedom from ego, wideness, light of the universal consciousness which is the basis of the universal love, it is difficult to have a love that is free from all the defects, limitations, taints of ordinary human love. The more one has of the universality the more one tends to be freed from these things.

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The oneness with all in its basis is something self-existent and self-content which does not *need* expression. When it does express

itself as love, it is something wide and universal, untroubled and firm even when it is intense. This is in the basic cosmic oneness. There is also the surface cosmic consciousness which is an awareness of the play of cosmic forces — here anything may rise, sex also. It is this part that needs the perfect psychisation, otherwise one cannot hold, contain and deal with it in the proper way.

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The realisation in the mind of the One brings or ought to bring a certain freedom in the mind, but it is possible for the vital and the body under its impulse to go on having the ordinary movements — for they depend only partially on the mind for their action. They can even carry it away, *haranti prasabham manah*, or they can act in spite of the mind's reasoning and disapprobation. "I see the better and approve it, I follow the worse" as the Roman poet puts it — in the language of the Gita, *anicchannapi balādiva niyojitaḥ*. It is necessary therefore that the realisation with its peace and force of purity should come down concretely into the vital and physical itself so that when the vital movements try to rise they are met by it and unable to remain because of its automatic pressure.

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So long as the whole consciousness is not clear of doubtful stuff and the realisation of oneness confirmed in the supreme purity, the expression of the all-love is not advisable. It is by holding it in oneself that it becomes a real part of the nature, established and purified by joining with it the other realisations still to come. At present it is only a first touch and to dissipate it by expression would be very imprudent. The sex and vital might easily become active — I have known cases of very good yogis...in whom the *viśvaprema* became the *viśvakāma*, all-love becoming all-lust. This has happened with many both in Europe and the East. Even apart from that it is always best to solidify or confirm rather than to throw out and disperse. When the sadhana has pro-

gressed and the knowledge from above comes to enlighten and guide the love, then it will be another matter. My insistence on rejection of all untransformed vital movements is based on experience, mine and others' and that of past yogas like the Vaishnava movement of Chaitanya (not to speak of the old Buddhist Sahaja dharma) which ended in much corruption. A wide movement such as that of all-love can only take place when the ground of Nature has been solidly prepared for it. I have no objection to your mixing with others, but only under a continual guard and control by a vigilant mind and will.

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Perception is not enough to transform the nature. *Paśyataḥ* in the spiritual language does not mean only perception. Perception is of the mind and a mental perception is not enough — a substantial and dynamic realisation in all the being is necessary. Otherwise one of three things may happen. (1) The mind perceives oneness but the vital is not affected, it goes on with its impulses, for the vital is governed not by thought or reason but by tendency, impulse, desire-force — it uses reason only as a justification for its tendencies. Or even the vital may say, "All is one so it does not matter what I do. Why should not I seek oneness with others in my own way?" (2) If the mind has a realisation, but the vital does not share in it or distorts it, then also the vital can insist on its own way or even carry the mind along with it. As the Gita says, the senses (vital) carry away the mind even of the sage who sees, as the wind carries away a ship on a stormy sea. (3) The inner being may have the realisation strongly and live in the oneness, calm, peace, but the interior parts of the outer may feel the reactions of desire etc. In this case the reactions are more superficial; but even so rejection is needed till they cease. When all the being lives in the solid realisation of calm, peace, liberation, oneness, then the desires fall away and the necessity of rejection ceases, because there is nothing to reject any longer.

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The mental realisation [of the one self] does not bring this result [immunity from *moha* and *śoka*], the spiritual does. In the Vedantic experience “seeing” means also becoming, one is that one self, identified, — all action of Nature seems to one a movement on that one self which is itself not touched by it. Therefore there is no *moha* or *śoka*. That is when one can keep the experience and when it is complete. Even if one has the experience only as something within while the movements of the vital continue on the surface, yet these movements are felt as external and superficial, not really belonging to oneself — the self within remains untouched, calm, griefless, at peace: If the vital also is transformed into this consciousness, then even on the surface grief becomes impossible.

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The *dynamic* Love cannot go out equally to all — that would create a chaotic disturbance because of the unpreparedness of the majority. It is only the static immutable universal Love that can apply equally to all — that which comes in a still wideness of the heart which corresponds with the still wideness of the mind in which there is the equanimity and infinite peace.

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One can talk to all, unless one has a reason for not doing so. The oneness with all is an internal realisation, but it does not necessarily impose the same dealing with all... It is the old story of *hāthi brahman* and *māhout brahman*. There is the fundamental realisation and there are the disparities of the Lila — both have to be taken into account.

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It is the vital seeking to pour itself out with the implicit idea of getting a return in interchange. The consciousness of oneness is something behind all life and all forms of affection come no doubt from it, but not consciously, and they get changed, mixed,

perverted when the vital takes up the action of the force of Love of whose true or divine nature it is unconscious.

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That was exactly what X tried to do — to express the love in connection with this or that person. But universal love is not personal — it has to be held within as a condition of the consciousness which will have its effects according to the Divine Will or be used by that Will if necessary; but to run about expressing it for one's personal satisfaction or the satisfaction of others is only to spoil and lose it.

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Formerly whenever the opening of the heart came you began to associate it with vital enjoyment and turned it upon others instead of turning the love towards the Divine and keeping its essential purity — so also the higher consciousness when it came down was being dispersed in mental movements. This time they were both coming in a purer form, but the danger of the mental and vital forces catching hold of them is still there and then both are likely to stop or break down. So you must be careful to allow no mental deviation this time.

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I have heard of McTaggart as a philosopher but am totally unacquainted with his thought and his writings, so it is a little difficult for me to answer you with any certitude. Isolated thoughts or sentences may easily be misunderstood if they are not read against the background of the thinker's way of looking at things taken as a whole. There is always, too, the difference of standpoint and approach between the spiritual seeker or mystic who (sometimes) philosophises and the intellectual thinker who (sometimes or partly) mysticises. The one starts from a spiritual or mystic experience or at the least an intuitive realisation and tries to express it and its connection with other spiritual or intuitive truth in the inadequate and too abstract language of

the mind; he looks behind thought and expression for some spiritual or intuitive experience to which it may point and, if he finds none, he is apt to feel the thought, however intellectually fine, or the expression, however intellectually significant, as something unsubstantial, because without spiritual substance. The intellectual thinker starts from ideas and mentalised feelings and other mental or external phenomena and tries to reach the essential truth in or behind them; generally, he stops short at a mental abstraction or only a derivative mental realisation of something that is in its own nature other than mental. But if he has the true mystic somewhere in him, he will sometimes get beyond to at least flashes and glimpses. Is it not the compulsion of this approach (I mean the inadequacy of the method of intellectual philosophy, its fixation to the word and idea, while to the complete mystic, word and idea are useful symbols only or significative flash-lights) that kept McTaggart, as it keeps many, from the unfolding of the mystic within him? If the reviewer is right, that would be why he is abstract and dry, while what is beautiful and moving in his thought might be some light that shines through in spite of the inadequate means of expression to which philosophical thinking condemns us. However, subject to this rather lengthy caveat, I will try to deal with the extracted sentences or summarised thoughts you have placed before me in your letter.

“Love the main occupation of the selves in absolute reality”: This seems to me a little excessive. If instead of “the main occupation” it were said “an essential power”, that might pass. I would myself say that bliss and oneness are the essential condition of the absolute reality, and love as the most characteristic dynamic power of bliss and oneness must support fundamentally and colour their activities; but the activities themselves may not be of one main kind but manifold in character.

Benevolence and sympathy: In mental experience benevolence and sympathy have to be distinguished from love; but it seems to me that beyond the dividing mind, where the true sense of oneness begins, these become at a higher intensity of their movement characteristic values of love. Benevolence becomes an intense compulsion imposed by love to seek always the good

of the loved, sympathy becomes the feeling out of love to contain, participate in and take as part of one's own existence all the movements of the loved and all that concerns him.

“Love is authentic and justifies itself completely whether its cause be great or trivial”: That is not often true in human practice; for there the destiny of love and its justification depend very much as a rule (though not always) on the nature of the cause or object. For if the object of love is trivial in the sense of its being an inadequate instrument for the dynamic realisation of the sense of oneness which McTaggart says is the essence of love, then love is likely to be balked of its fulfilment. Unless, of course, it is satisfied with existing, with spending itself in its own fundamental way on the loved without expecting any return for its self-expenditure, any mutual unification. Still, of love in its essence the statement may be true: but then it would point to the fact that Love at its origin is a self-existent force, an absolute, a transcendent (as I have put it), which does not depend upon the objects — it depends only on itself or only on the Divine; for it is a self-existent power of the Divine. If it were not self-existent, it would hardly be independent of the nature or reaction of its objects. It is partly what I mean when I speak of transcendent Love — though this is only one aspect of its transcendence. That self-existent transcendent Love spreading itself over all, turning everywhere to contain, embrace, unite, help, upraise towards love and bliss and oneness, becomes cosmic divine Love; intensely fixing itself on one or other to find itself, to achieve a dynamic unification or to reach here towards the union of the soul with the Divine, it becomes the individual divine Love. But there are unhappily its diminutions in the human mind, human vital, human physical; there the divine essence of Love easily becomes mixed with counterfeits, dimmed, concealed or lost in the twisted movements born of division and ignorance.

Love and self-reverence: It sounds very high, but also rather dry; this “emotion” in the lover does not seem to be very emotional, it is a hill-top syllogising far above the flow of any emotional urges. Self-reverence in this sense or in a deeper sense can come from Love, but it can come equally from a participation in Knowledge, in Power or anything else that one feels to be the

highest good or else of the essence of the Highest. But the passion of love, the adoration of love can bring in a quite different, even an opposite emotion. Especially in love for the Divine or for one whom one feels to be divine, the Bhakta feels an intense reverence for the Loved, a sense of something of immense greatness, beauty or value and for himself a strong impression of his own comparative unworthiness and a passionate desire to *grow* into likeness with that which one adores. What does come very often with the onrush of Love is an exaltation, a feeling of a greatening within, of new powers and high or beautiful possibilities in one's nature or of an intensification of the nature; but that is not exactly self-reverence. There is a deeper self-reverence possible, a true emotion, a sense of the value and even the sacredness of the soul, even the mind, life, body as an offering or itself the temple for the inner presence of the Beloved.

These reactions are intimately connected with the fact that Love, when it is worthy of the name, is always a seeking for union, for oneness, but also in its secret foundation it is a seeking, if sometimes only a dim groping for the Divine. Love in its depths is a contact of the Divine Possibility or Reality in oneself with the Divine Possibility or Reality in the loved. It is the inability to affirm or keep this character that makes human love either transient or baulked of its full significance or condemned to sink into a less exalted movement diminished to the capacity of the human receptacle. But there McTaggart brings in his saving clause, "When I love, I see the other not as he is now (and therefore really is not), but as he really is (that is, as he will be)". The rest of it that "the other with all his faults is somehow infinitely good — at least for his friend" seems to me too mental to convey anything very definite from the standpoint of the spiritual inner values. But the formula quoted also is not over clear. It means, I suppose, something like Vivekananda's distinction between the apparent Man and the real Man; or it coincides up to a point with the saying of one of the early teachers of Vedanta, Yajnavalkya, "Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear (or, friend — for the wife is only the first of a list), but for the sake of the Self (the greater Self, the Spirit within) is she dear". But Yajnavalkya, a seeker of the One (not the plural) Absolute, would not have

accepted the implication in McTaggart's phrase; he would have said that one must go beyond and eventually seek the Self not in the wife or friend — even though sought there for a time, but in its own self-existence. In any case, there seems to be here an avowal that it is not the human being (what he now is), but the Divine or a portion of the Divine within (call it God if you will or call it Absolute) that is the object of the love. But the mystic would not be satisfied like McTaggart with that "will be", — would not consent to remain in love with the finite for the sake of an unrealised Infinite. He would insist on pushing on towards full realisation, towards finding the Divine in Itself or the Divine Manifest; he would not rest satisfied with the Divine unconscious of itself, unmanifested or only distantly *in posse*.

There is where the parallel with the Ishta Devata which you suggest would not hold; for the Ishta Devata on whom the seeker concentrates is a *conscious* Personality of the Divine answering to the needs of his own personality and showing to him as in a representative image what the Divine is or at least pointing him through itself to the Absolute. On the other side, when I spoke of the self-absorption of the Divine Force in its energising, I was trying to explain the possibility in a Divine Cosmic manifestation of this apparently inconscient Matter. I said that in the frontal movement there was something of the Divine that had thrown itself into material form with so much concentration that it became the motion and the form which the motion of Force creates and put all that was not that behind it, — even, but in a greater degree and more permanently, as a man can concentrate and forget his own existence in what he is doing, seeing or making. In man himself, who is not inconscient, this appears in a different way; his frontal being is unaware of what is behind the surface personality and action, like the part of the actor's being which becomes the role and forgets entirely the other more enduring self behind the actor. But in either case there is a larger self behind, "a Conscient in things inconscient", which is aware both of itself and of the self-forgetting frontal form seen as the creature. Does McTaggart recognise this conscious Divine within? He makes too little of this Absolute or Real Self which, as he yet sees, is within the unreal or less real appearance. His

denial of the Divine comes from the insistence of his mind and vital temperament on the friend as he is, even though his higher mind may try to escape from that by the idea of what his friend will be; otherwise it is difficult to understand the stupendous exaggeration of his thesis that the love for friends is the *only* real thing in life and his unwillingness to give God a chance, lest that should take away the friend and leave the Divine in his place.

I do not quite seize what is his conception of the Absolute. How can it be said that a society (?) of distinct selves are collectively the Absolute? If it is meant that where there is a union of conscious liberated selves there is the presence of the Divine and a certain manifestation is possible, — that is intelligible. Or if by society is meant only that the sum or totality of all distinct selves is the Divine and these distinct individual selves are portions of the Divine, that would be an intelligible (pantheistic) solution. Only, it would be a Divine All or some kind of Cosmic Self or Spirit rather than the Absolute. For if there is an Absolute — which intellectually one is not bound to believe except that something in the higher mind seems imperatively to ask for it or feel it is there — it must surely exist in its own absolute right, — not constituted, not dependent for its being on a collectivity of distinct selves, but self-existent. To the intellect such an Absolute may seem an indefinable *x* which it cannot grasp, but mystic or spiritual experience pushed far enough ultimately leads to it, and whatever may be the gate of experience through which one gets the first glimpse of it, it is there even though not fully grasped in that opening experience.

Your own experience of it was, you say, that of an irruption of the Infinite into the finite — of a greater Power descending upon you or uplifting you to itself. That indeed is what it is always to the spiritual experience — and that is why I speak of it as the Transcendent. It reveals itself as such a descending and uplifting Power or a descending and uplifting Love — or Light, Peace, Bliss, Consciousness, Presence; it is not limited by its manifestation in the finite, — one feels it, the Peace, the Power, Love, Light or Bliss or the Presence in which all these are, to be a self-existent infinity, not something constituted by or limited to our first sight of it here. McTaggart's love of friends remained

the *only* real thing for him; I must suppose that he had not this glimpse. But once this irruption has taken place, this descent and uplifting, that is bound to become in the end the one thing real, for by that alone can the rest find its own lasting greater reality. It is the descent of the Divine Consciousness and the ascent or uplifting into it of which we speak in our yoga. All else can only hold, make good, fulfil itself if it can lift itself to be a part of this divine realisation or of its manifestation, and, to do that, it must accept a great transformation and perfection. But the central realisation must be the one central aim and it is that realisation only which will make other things, all that is intended to be made part of it, divinely possible.

II

The nature of Bhakti is adoration, worship, self-offering to what is greater than oneself; the nature of love is a feeling or a seeking for closeness and union. Self-giving is the character of both; both are necessary in the yoga and each gets its full force when supported by the other.

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Bhakti is not an experience, it is a state of the heart and soul. It is a state which comes when the psychic being is awake and prominent.

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In the way of *ahaitukī bhakti*, everything can be made a means — poetry and music, for instance, become not merely poetry and music and not merely even an expression of Bhakti, but themselves a means of bringing the experience of love and Bhakti. Meditation itself becomes not an effort of mental concentration, but a flow of love and adoration and worship.

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There is no restriction in this yoga to inward worship and meditation only. As it is a yoga for the whole being, not for the inner being only, no such restriction could be intended. Old forms of the different religions may fall away, but absence of all forms is not the rule of the sadhana.

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These are the exaggerations made by the mind taking one side of Truth and ignoring the other sides. The inner bhakti is the main thing and without it the external becomes a form and mere ritual, but the external has its place and use when it is straightforward and sincere.

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What is meant by *bāhyapūjā* [external worship]? If it is purely external, then of course it is the lowest form; but if done with the true consciousness, it can bring the greatest possible completeness to the adoration by allowing the body and the most external consciousness to share in the spirit and act of worship.

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The photograph is a vehicle only — but if you have the right consciousness, then you can bring something of the living being into it or become aware of the being for which it stands and can make it a means of contact. It is like the *prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā* in the image in the temple.

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What you say is no doubt true, but it is better not to take away the support that may still be there for the faith of those who need such supports. These visions and images and ceremonies are meant for that. It is a spiritual principle not to take away any faith or support of faith, unless the persons who have it are able to replace it by something larger and more complete.

If the *prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā* brings down a powerful Presence, that may remain there long after the one who has brought it has left

his body. Usually it is maintained by the bhakti of the officiant and the sincerity of belief and worship of those who come to the temple for adoration. If these fail, there is likely to be a withdrawal of the Presence.

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Seeing is of many kinds. There is the superficial seeing which only erects or receives momentarily or for some time an image of the Being seen; that brings no change unless the inner bhakti makes it a means for change. There is also the reception of the living image in one of its forms into oneself — let us say, in the heart; that can have an immediate effect or initiate a period of spiritual growth. There is also the seeing outside oneself in a more or less objective and subtle-physical or physical way.

As for the *milana*, the abiding union is within and that can be there at all times; the outer *milana* or contact is not usually abiding. There are some who often or almost invariably have the contact whenever they worship, the Deity may become living to them in the picture or other image they worship, may move and act through it; others may feel him always present, outwardly, subtle-physically, abiding with them where they live or in the very room, but sometimes this is only for a period. Or they may feel the Presence with them, see it frequently in a body (but not materially except sometimes), feel its touch or embrace, converse with it constantly — that is also a kind of *milana*. The greatest *milana* is one in which one is constantly aware of the Deity abiding in oneself, in everything in the world, holding all the world in him, identical with existence and yet supremely beyond the world — but in the world too one sees, hears, feels nothing but him, so that the very senses bear witness to him alone — and this does not exclude such special personal manifestations as those vouchsafed to X and his guru. The more ways there are of the union, the better.

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One can receive the manifestation by any of the senses or by a

feeling in the consciousness, — in the complete objective manifestation there can be sight, hearing, touch, everything.

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I meant that one can feel the divine consciousness as an impersonal spiritual state, a state of peace, light, joy, wideness without feeling in it the Divine Presence. The Divine Presence is felt as that of one who is the living source and essence of that light etc., a Being therefore, not merely a spiritual state. The Mother's Presence is still more concrete, definite, personal — it is not that of Someone unknown, of a Power or Being, but of one who is known, intimate, loved, to whom one can offer all the being in a living concrete way. The image is not indispensable, though it helps — the presence can be inwardly felt without it.

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If the Presence of the Divine is established, it means that the being is ready for the transformation which proceeds naturally.

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Adesh and Darshan are elements of a stage of sadhana in which there is still much distance from the closer state of union. The mind and vital seek the contact through Darshan and the guidance through Adesh. What we aim at in our yoga is the constant union and presence and control of the Divine at every moment. But on the mental and vital level this usually remains imperfect and there is much chance of error. It is by the supramentalisation that the perfect truth of this Divine union in action can come.

III

It is a misunderstanding to suppose that I am against Bhakti or against emotional Bhakti — which comes to the same thing, since without emotion there can be no Bhakti. It is rather the

fact that in my writings on yoga I have given Bhakti the highest place. All that I have said at any time which could account for this misunderstanding was against an *unpurified* emotionalism which, according to my experience, leads to want of balance, agitated and disharmonious expression or even contrary reactions and, at its extreme, nervous disorder. But the insistence on purification does not mean that I condemn true feeling and emotion any more than the insistence on a purified mind or will means that I condemn thought and will. On the contrary, the deeper the emotion, the more intense the Bhakti, the greater is the force for realisation and transformation. It is oftenest through intensity of emotion that the psychic being awakes and there is an opening of the inner doors to the Divine.

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It is no part of this yoga to dry up the heart; but the emotions must be turned towards the Divine. There may be short periods in which the heart is quiescent, turned away from the ordinary feelings and waiting for the inflow from above; but such states are not states of dryness but of silence and peace. The heart in this yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.

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Emotion is necessary in the yoga and it is only the excessive emotional sensitiveness which makes one enter into despondency over small things that has to be overcome. The very basis of this yoga is bhakti and if one kills one's emotional being, there can be no bhakti. So there can be no possibility of emotion being excluded from the yoga.

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Emotion is a good element in yoga; but emotional desire becomes easily a cause of perturbation and an obstacle.

Turn your emotions towards the Divine, aspire for their

purification; they will then become a help on the way and no longer a cause of suffering.

Not to kill emotion, but to turn it towards the Divine is the *right way of the yoga*.

But it must become pure, founded upon spiritual peace and joy, capable of being transmuted into Ananda. Equality and calm in the mind and vital parts, an intense psychic emotion in the heart can perfectly go together.

Awake by your aspiration the psychic fire in the heart that burns steadily towards the Divine — that is the one way to liberate and fulfil the emotional nature.

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It is only the ordinary vital emotions which waste the energy and disturb the concentration and peace that have to be discouraged. Emotion itself is not a bad thing; it is a necessary part of the nature, and psychic emotion is one of the most powerful helps to the sadhana. Psychic emotion, bringing tears of love for the Divine or tears of Ananda, ought not to be suppressed: it is only a vital mixture that brings disturbance in the sadhana.

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The emotional [devotion] is more outward than the psychic — it tends towards outward expression. The psychic is inwards and gives the direction to the whole inner and outer life. The emotional can be intense, but is neither so sure in its basis nor powerful enough to change the whole direction of the life.

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It is quite true that by going above one can get out of all problems, for they no longer exist, but the problems are there below and it is difficult to be always above with so much unsolved and calling for solution. But just as one can go high above, so one can go deep within and it is this going deep within that is needed. What happened was at the surface of the emotional being and if

one simply stays there the difficulties of the emotional can come, but what has to be done is not to stay on the surface but go deep within. For the psychic is there behind the emotional surface, deep behind the heart-centre. Once one reaches it, these things can no longer touch; what will be there is the inner peace and happiness, the untroubled aspiration, the presence or nearness of the Mother.

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To indulge in the emotions, love, grief, sorrow, despair, emotional joy, etc. for their own sake with a sort of mental-vital over-emphasis on them is what is called sentimentalism. There should be in deep feeling a calm, a control, a purifying restraint and measure. One should not be at the mercy of one's feelings and sentiments, but master of oneself always.

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When the consciousness indulges in these things and wallows in the excitement of emotional joy or suffering, that is called sentimentalism. There is another kind in which the mind enjoys its perceptions of emotion, love, suffering etc. and plays with them, but that is a less violent and more superficial sentimentalism.

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To know about the sadhana with the mind is not indispensable. If one has bhakti and aspires in the heart's silence, if there is the true love for the Divine, then the nature will open of itself, there will be the true experience and the Mother's power working within you, and the necessary knowledge will come.

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There is always the personal and the impersonal side of the Divine and the Truth and it is a mistake to think the impersonal alone to be true or important, for that leads to a void incomplete-

ness in part of the being, while only one side is given satisfaction. Impersonality belongs to the intellectual mind and the static self, personality to the soul and heart and dynamic being. Those who disregard the personal Divine ignore something which is profound and essential.

In following the heart in its purer impulses one follows something that is at least as precious as the mind's loyalty to its own conceptions of what the Truth may be.

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It is because it is the analysing mind that is active — that always brings a certain dryness; the higher mind or the intuition bring a much more spontaneous and complete knowledge — the beginning of the real Jnana without this effort. The bhakti which you feel is psychic, but with a strong vital tinge; and it is the mind and the vital between them that bring in the opposition between the bhakti and the Jnana. The vital concerned only with emotion finds the mental knowledge dry and without *rasa*, the mind finds the bhakti to be a blind emotion, fully interesting only when its character has been analysed and understood. There is no such opposition when the psychic and the higher-plane knowledge act together predominantly — the psychic welcomes knowledge that supports its emotion, the higher thought consciousness rejoices in the bhakti.

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There can be no such thing as a mechanical and artificial devotion — there is either devotion or there is not. Devotion may be intense or not intense, complete or incomplete, sometimes manifest and sometimes veiled, but mechanical or artificial devotion is a contradiction in terms.

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Your new attitude towards food and outward things is the true attitude, the psychic attitude and shows that the psychic is already

controlling the vital-physical as well as the other parts of the vital nature.

As for the heart, the movement of longing for the Divine, weeping, sorrowing, yearning is not essential in this yoga. A strong aspiration there must be, an intense longing there may very well be, an ardent love and will for union; but there need be no sorrow or disturbance. The quiet and silence you feel in your heart is the result of the pressure of the higher consciousness to come down. That always brings a quietude in mind and heart and as it descends a great peace and silence. In the silent heart and mind, there must be the true attitude, and thus you have the feeling that you are the Mother's child, the faith and the will to be united with her. Along with that there may be an aspiration or silent expectation of what is to come. That also you seem to have. All therefore is well.

As I have written often, there are two transformations in this yoga. The first is when the psychic being comes forward and controls and changes the nature. This is what has happened in you with great rapidity; it must complete itself, but that it will do naturally. The second is the descent of the Mother's consciousness from above the head and its transformation of the whole being and nature. This also is now preparing in you. It is the reason of the pressure, the silence in the heart etc. What you experienced this time when you went above was the wideness of the higher being in that higher consciousness above with the Light coming down through it. That wideness and that light will afterwards come down into you and your consciousness will be changed into the light and wideness and all that is in them.

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Viraha is a transitional experience on the plane of the vital seeking for the Spirit — there is no reason why it should not be possible at a quite early stage. It is the realisations without any uneasiness, realisations in pure Ananda, that belong to the more developed sadhana.

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The pure feeling of *viraha* is psychic — but if rajasic or tamasic movements come in (such as depression, complaint, revolt etc.) then it becomes tamasic or rajasic.

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Pangs of separation belong to the vital, not to the psychic; the psychic having no pangs need not express them. The psychic is always turned towards the Divine in faith, joy and confidence — whatever aspiration it has is full of trust and hope.

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The sooner you get rid of *abhimāna* the better. Anyone who indulges *abhimāna* puts himself under the influence of the hostile forces. *Abhimāna* has nothing to do with true love; it is, like jealousy, a part of the vital egoism.

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The very object of yoga is a change of consciousness — it is by getting a new consciousness or by unveiling the hidden consciousness of the true being within and progressively manifesting and perfecting it that one gets first the contact and then the union with the Divine. Ananda and Bhakti are part of that deeper consciousness, and it is only when one lives in it and grows in it that Ananda and Bhakti can be permanent. Till then, one can only get experiences of Ananda and Bhakti, but not the constant and permanent state. But the state of Bhakti and constantly growing surrender does not come to all at an early stage of the sadhana; many, most indeed, have a long journey of purification and Tapasya to go through before it opens, and experiences of this kind, at first rare and interspersed, afterwards frequent, are the landmarks of their progress. It depends on certain conditions, which have nothing to do with superior or inferior yoga-capacity, but rather with a predisposition in the heart to open, as you say, to the Sun of the Divine Influence.

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Yes, that was what happened, but also the flow of devotion and love is a thing which the more it repeats or awakens is bound to overflow to all the parts of being and have its effect on them.

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What you felt about replacement is quite true. The transformation proceeds to a large extent by a taking away or throwing out of the old superficial self and its movements and replacing them by a new deeper self and its true action.

It does not matter if the higher feelings, devotion etc. seem to you sometimes like an influence or colouring. It looks like that when you feel yourself in the external physical or outer vital or outer mind. These feelings really are those of your inmost self, your soul, the psychic in you and when you are in the psychic consciousness they become normal and natural. But when your consciousness shifts and becomes more external, then these workings of the soul or of the divine consciousness are felt as themselves external, as merely an influence. All the same, you have to open yourself to them constantly and they will then more and more either soak in steadily or come in successive waves or floods and go on till they have filled the mind, the vital, the body. You will then feel them always as not only normal but as part of your very self and the true substance of your nature.

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If one does not encourage the devotion of the emotional being merely because the lower vital is not yet under control and acts differently, then how is the devotion to grow and how is the lower vital to change? Until the final clarification and harmonising of the nature there are always contradictions in the being, but that is not a reason for in any way suppressing the play of the better movements — on the contrary it is these that should be cultivated and made to increase.

IV

Your whole-hearted acceptance of the Vaishnava idea and Bhakti becomes rather bewildering when it is coupled with an insistence that love cannot be given to the Divine until one has experience of the Divine. For what is more common in the Vaishnava attitude than the joy of Bhakti for its own sake? "Give me Bhakti," it cries, "whatever else you may keep from me. Even if it is long before I can meet you, even if you delay to manifest yourself, let my Bhakti, my seeking for you, my cry, my love, my adoration be always there." How constantly the Bhakta has sung, "All my life I have been seeking you and still you are not there, but still I seek and cannot cease to seek and love and adore." If it were really impossible to love God unless you first experience him, how could this be? In fact, your mind seems to be putting the cart before the horse. One seeks after God first with persistence or with passion, one finds him afterwards, some sooner than others, but most after a long seeking. One does not find him first, then seek after him. Even a glimpse often comes only after long or fervent seeking. One has the love of God or at any rate some heart's desire for him and afterwards one becomes aware of God's love, its reply to the heart's desire, its response of the supreme joy and Ananda. One does not say to God, "Show your love from the first, shower on me the experience of yourself, satisfy my demand, then I will see whether I can love you so long as you deserve it." It is surely the seeker who must seek and love first, follow the quest, become impassioned for the Sought — then only does the veil move aside and the Light appear and the Face manifest that alone can satisfy the soul after its long sojourn in the desert.

Then again you may say, "Yes, but whether I love or not, I want, I have always wanted and now I want more and more, but I get nothing." Yes, but wanting is not all. As you now begin to see, there are conditions that have to be met — like the purification of the heart. Your thesis was, "Once I want God, God must manifest to me, come to me, at least give glimpses of himself to me, the real, solid, concrete experience, not mere vague things which I can't understand or value. God's Grace must

answer my call for it, whether I yet deserve it or not — or else there is no Grace.” God’s Grace may indeed do that in certain cases, but where does the “must” come in? If God must do it, it is no longer God’s Grace, but God’s duty or an obligation or a contract or a treaty. The Divine looks into the heart and removes the veil at the moment which he knows to be the right moment to do it. You have laid stress on the Bhakti theory that one has only to call his name and he must reply, he must at once be there. Perhaps, but for whom is this true? For a certain kind of Bhakta surely who feels the power of the Name, who has the passion of the Name and puts it into his cry. If one is like that, then there may be the immediate reply — if not, one has to become like that, then there will be the reply. But some go on using the Name for years, before there is an answer. Ramakrishna himself got it after a few months, but what months! and what a condition he had to pass through before he got it! Still he succeeded quickly because he had a pure heart already — and that divine passion in it.

It is not surely the Bhakta but the man of knowledge who demands experience first. He can say, “How can I know without experience?” but he too goes on seeking like Tota Puri even though for thirty years, striving for the decisive realisation. It is really the man of intellect, the rationalist who says, “Let God, if he exists, prove himself to me first, then I will believe, then I will make some serious and prolonged effort to explore him and see what he is like.”

All this does not mean that experience is irrelevant to sadhana — I certainly cannot have said such a stupid thing. What I have said is that the love and seeking of the Divine can be and ordinarily is there before the experience comes — it is an instinct, an inherent longing in the soul and it comes up as soon as certain coverings of the soul disappear or begin to disappear. The next thing I have said is that it is better to get the nature ready first (the purified heart and all that) before the “experiences” begin rather than the other way round and I base that on the many cases there have been of the danger of experiences before the heart and vital are ready for the true experience. Of course, in many cases there is a true experience first, a touch of the

Grace, but it is not something that lasts and is always there but rather something that touches and withdraws and waits for the nature to get ready. But this is not in every case, not even in the majority of cases, I believe. One has to begin with the soul's inherent longing, then the struggle with the nature to get the temple ready, then the unveiling of the Image, the permanent Presence in the sanctuary.

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Peace was the very first thing that the yogis and seekers of old asked for and it was a quiet and silent mind — and that always brings peace — that they declared to be the best condition for realising the Divine. A cheerful and sunlit heart is the fit vessel for the Ananda and who shall say that Ananda, or what prepares it, is an obstacle to the Divine union? As for despondency, it is surely a terrible burden to carry on the way. One has to pass through it sometimes, like Christian of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the Slough of Despond but its constant reiteration cannot be anything but an obstacle. The Gita specially says, "Practise the yoga with an undespondent heart — *anirvinna-cetasā*." I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and accesses of despair are natural — though not inevitable on the way — not because they are helps but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the incidents you allude to as an example for others to follow — they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in the end in spite of these bad moments.... At any rate Ramakrishna told the story of Narada and the ascetic yogi and Vaishnava Bhakta with approval of its moral. I put it in my own language but keep the substance: Narada on his way to Vaikuntha met a yogi practising hard tapasya on the hills. "O Narada," cried the yogi, "you are going to Vaikuntha and will see Vishnu. I have been practising terrific austerities all my life and yet I have not even now attained to him. Ask him at least for me when I shall reach him." Then Narada met a Vaishnava, a bhakta who was singing songs

to Hari and dancing to his own singing, and he cried also: "O Narada, you will see my Lord Hari. Ask him when I shall reach him and see his face." On his way back Narada came first to the yogi. "I have asked Vishnu," said the sage, "you will realise him after six more lives." The yogi raised a cry of loud lamentation: "What! So many austerities! Such gigantic endeavours! And how hard to me is the Lord Vishnu!" Next Narada met again the bhakta and said to him: "I have no good news for you. You will see the Lord but only after a lakh of lives." But the bhakta leapt up with a great cry of rapture: "Oh, I shall see my Lord Hari! After a lakh of lives I shall see my Lord Hari! How great is the grace of the Lord!" And he began dancing and singing in a renewed ecstasy. Then Narada said, "Thou hast attained. Today thou shalt see the Lord." Well, you may say: "What an extravagant story and how contrary to human nature!" Not so contrary as all that and in any case hardly more extravagant than the stories of Harishchandra and Shivi. Still, I do not hold up the bhakta as an example, for I myself insist on the realisation in this life and not after six or a lakh of births more. But the point of these stories is in the moral and surely when Ramakrishna told it, he was not ignorant that there was a sunlit path of yoga. He even seems to say that it is the quicker way as well as the better. So the possibility of the sunlit path is not a discovery or original invention of mine. The very first books on yoga I read more than thirty years ago spoke of the dark and sunlit way and emphasised the superiority of the latter over the former.

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The true movement is a pure aspiration and surrender. After all, one has not a right to call on the Divine to manifest himself; it can come only as a response to a spiritual or psychic state of consciousness or to a long course of sadhana rightly done; or, if it comes before that or without any apparent reason, it is a Grace; but one cannot demand or compel Grace. Grace is something spontaneous which wells out from the Divine Consciousness as a free flow of its being. The bhakta looks for it, but he is ready to wait in perfect reliance — even if need be, all his life — know-

ing that it will come, never varying in his love and surrender because it does not come now or soon. That is the spirit of so many songs of devotees which you have sung yourself; I heard one such song from you in a record sometime ago and very beautiful it was and beautifully sung — “Even if I have not won Thee, O Lord, still I adore.”

What prevents you from having that is the restless element of vital impatience and ever-recurring and persisting disappointment at not having what you want from the Divine. It is the idea, “I wish so much for it, surely I ought to have it, why is it withheld from me?” But wanting, however strongly, is not a passport to getting; there is something more to it than that. Our experience is that too much vital eagerness, too much insistence often blocks the way, it makes a sort of obstructing mass or a whirl of restlessness and disturbance which leaves no quiet space for the Divine to get in or for the thing asked for to come. Often it does come, but when the impatience has been definitely renounced and one waits, quietly open, for whatever may be (or, for the time, not be) given. But so often when you are preparing the way for a greater progress in the true devotion, the habit of this vital element starts up and takes hold and interrupts the progress made.

The joylessness also comes from the vital. It is partly due to the disappointment but not solely; for it is a very common phenomenon that when there is a pressure from the mind and soul on the vital, it often gets a rajasic or tamasic vairagya instead of the sattwic kind, refuses to take joy in anything, becomes dry, listless or unhappy, or it says, “Well, why don’t I get the realisation you promised me? I can’t wait.” To get rid of that, it is best, even while observing it, not to identify oneself with it; if the mind or some part of the mind sanctions or justifies, it will persist or recur. If sorrow there must be, the other kind you described in the previous letter is preferable: the sadness that has a sweetness in it — no despair, only the psychic longing for the true thing to come. That must come by the increase of the pure and true Bhakti.

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As for the way out of the impasse you speak of, I know only of the quieting of the mind which makes meditation effective, purification of the heart which brings the divine touch and in time the divine Presence, humility before the Divine which liberates from egoism and pride of the mind and of the vital, — the pride that imposes its own reasonings on the ways of the Spirit and the pride that refuses or is unable to surrender, — sustained persistence in the call within and reliance on the Grace above. Meditation, japa, prayer or aspiration from the heart can all succeed, if they are attended by these or at least some of these things. I fully believe that one who has the call in him cannot fail to arrive if he follows patiently the way towards the Divine.

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

If one wishes to escape from life altogether, it can only be by the way of a complete inner renunciation or merging oneself in the Silence of the Absolute or by a bhakti that becomes absolute or by a Karmayoga that gives up one's own will and desires to the will of the Divine. I have said also that Grace can at any moment act suddenly, but over that one has no control, because it comes by an incalculable will which sees things that the mind cannot see. It is precisely the reason why one should never despair, that and also because no sincere aspiration to the Divine can fail in the end.

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There is only one logic in spiritual things: that when a demand is there for the Divine, a sincere call, it is bound one day to have its fulfilment. It is only if there is a strong insincerity somewhere, a hankering after something else — power, ambition, etc. — which counterbalances the inner call that the logic is no longer applicable. In your case it is likely to come through the heart, through increase of bhakti or psychic purification of the heart: that is why I was pressing the psychic way upon you.

Do not allow these wrong ideas and feelings to govern you or your state of depression to dictate your decisions: try to keep a firm central will for the realisation; you can do so if you make up your mind to it, these things are not impossible. You will find that the spiritual difficulty disappears in the end like a mirage. It belongs to the physical self and, where the inner call is sincere, cannot hold even the outer consciousness always: its apparent solidity will dissolve.

You are no doubt right about asking for the bhakti, for I suppose it is the master claim of your nature: for that matter, it is the strongest motive force that sadhana can have and the best means for all else that has to come. It is why I said that it is through the heart that spiritual experience must come to you.

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As for Krishna, why not approach simply and straight? The simple approach means trust. If you pray, trust that he hears. If the reply takes long in coming, trust that he knows and loves and that he is wisest in the choice of the time. Meanwhile quietly clear the ground, so that he may not have to trip over stone and jungle when he comes. That is my suggestion and I know what I am saying — for whatever you may say, I know very well all human difficulties and struggles and I know of the cure. That is why I press always on the things that would minimise and shorten the struggles and difficulties, — the psychic turn, faith, perfect and simple confidence and reliance. These, let me remind you, are tenets of the Vaishnava yoga. Of course, there is the other Vaishnava way which swings between yearning and despair — ardent seeking and the pangs of *viraha*. It is that you seem to

be following and I do not deny that one can arrive by that as one can by almost any way, if followed sincerely. But then those who follow it find a *rasa* even in *viraha*, in the absence and the caprice of the Divine Lover. Some of them have sung that they have followed after him all their lives but always he has slipped away from their vision and even in that they find a *rasa* and never cease following. But you find no *rasa* in it. So you cannot expect me to approve of that for you. Follow after Krishna by all means, but follow with the determination to arrive: don't do it with the expectation of failure or admit any possibility of breaking off half-way.

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I have no objection at all to the worship of Krishna or the Vaishnava form of devotion, nor is there any incompatibility between Vaishnava Bhakti and my supramental yoga. There is in fact no special and exclusive form of supramental yoga: all ways can lead to the supermind, just as all ways can lead to the Divine.

If you persevere, you cannot fail to get the permanent bhakti you want and the realisation you want, but you should learn to put an entire reliance on Krishna to give it when he finds all ready and the time come. If he wants you to clear out imperfections and impurities first, that is, after all, understandable. I don't see why you should not succeed in doing it, now that your attention is being so constantly turned on it. To see them clearly and acknowledge them is the first step, to have the firm will to reject them is the next, to separate yourself from them entirely so that if they enter at all it will be as foreign elements, no longer parts of your normal nature but suggestions from outside, brings their last state; even, once seen and rejected, they may automatically fall away and disappear; but for most the process takes time. These things are not peculiar to you; they are parts of universal human nature; but they can, do and will disappear.

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As to the point that puzzles you, it only arises from a confusion between the feeling of a devotee and the observation of the

observer. Of course, the devotee loves Krishna because Krishna is lovable and not for any other reason: that is his feeling and his true feeling. He has no time to bother his head about what in himself made him able to love; the fact that he does love is sufficient for him and he does not need to analyse his emotions. The Grace of Krishna consists for him in Krishna's lovable-ness, in his showing himself to the devotee, in his call, the cry of the flute. That is enough for the heart, or if there is anything more, it is the yearning that others or all may hear the flute, see the face, feel all the beauty and rapture of this love.

It is not the heart of the devotee but the mind of the observer that questions how it is that the Gopis were called and responded at once and others — the Brahmin women, for instance — were not called and did not respond at once. Once the mind puts the question, there are two possible answers: the mere will of Krishna without any reason, what the mind would call his absolute divine choice or his arbitrary divine caprice or else the readiness of the heart that is called: and that amounts to *adhikāri-bheda*. A third reply would be: circumstances, as for instance, "the parking off the spiritual ground into close preserves" as X puts it. But then how can circumstances prevent the Grace from acting? In spite of parking off it works: Christians, Mahomedans do answer to the Grace of Krishna. Tigers, ghouls must love if they see him, hear his flute? Yes, but why do some hear it and see him, others not? We are thrown back on two alternatives: Krishna's Grace calls whom it wills to call without any determining reason for the choice or the rejection, it is all his mercy or his withholding or at least delaying of his mercy, or else he calls the hearts that are ready to vibrate and leap up at his call — and even there he waits till the moment has come. To say that it does not depend on outward merit or appearance of fitness is no doubt true: the something that was ready to wake in spite, it may be, of many hard layers in which it was enclosed, may be something visible to Krishna and not to us. It was there perhaps long before the flute began to play, but Krishna was busy melting the hard layers so that the heart in its leap might not be pressed back by them when the awakening notes came. The Gopis heard and rushed out into the forest, the others

did not, — or did they think it was only some rustic music or some rude cowherd-lover fluting to his sweetheart: not a call that learned and cultured or virtuous ears could recognise as the call of the Divine? There is something to be said after all for the *adhikāri-bheda*. But, of course, it must be understood in the large sense: some may have the *adhikāra* for recognising Krishna's flute, some for the call of Christ, some for the dance of Shiva — to each his own way and his nature's answer to the Divine Call. *Adhikāra* cannot be stated in rigid mental terms: it is something spiritual and subtle, something mystic and secret between the called and the Caller.

As for the swelled head, the theory of Grace may no doubt contribute to it, though I should imagine that the said head never felt the Grace but only the magnanimity of its own ego. The swelling may come equally in the road of personal effort as by the craving for Grace. It is fundamentally not due to either, but to a natural predisposition to this kind of oedema.

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Radha is the personification of the absolute love for the Divine, total and integral in all parts of the being from the highest spiritual to the physical, bringing the absolute self-giving and total consecration of all the being and calling down into the body and the most material nature the supreme Ananda.

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The coming of sex on seeing the image of Krishna and Radha is due to the past association of sex with the cult of Radha-Krishna. But in fact the image has nothing to do with sex. The true symbol for it would not be the human sex-attraction, but the soul, the psychic, hearing the call of the Divine and flowering into the complete love and surrender that brings the supreme Ananda. That is what Radha and Krishna by their divine union bring about in the human consciousness and it is so that you must regard it, throwing aside the old sex-associations.

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The Gopis are not ordinary people in the proper sense of the word: they are embodiments of a spiritual passion, extraordinary by their extremeness of love, personal devotion, unreserved self-giving. Whoever has that, however humble his or her position in other respects (learning, power of presentation, scholarship, external sanctity, etc.) can easily follow after Krishna and reach him: that seems to me the sense of the symbol of the Gopis. There are many other significances, of course — that is only one among the many.

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Certainly, Krishna is credited with much caprice, difficult dealings and a playfulness (Lila!) which the played-with do not always immediately appreciate. But there is a reasoning as well as a hidden method in his caprices, and when he does come out of it and takes a fancy to be nice to you, he has a supreme attractiveness, charm and allurements which compensates and more than compensates for all you have suffered.

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Why should not Krishna ride a horse if he so wants? His actions or habits cannot be fixed by the human mind or by an immutable tradition. Especially Krishna is a law to himself. Perhaps he was in a hurry to get to the place where he wanted to flute.

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If Krishna was always and by nature cold and distant (Lord, what a discovery — Krishna of all people!), how could human devotion and aspiration come near him — he and it would soon be like the North and South Pole, growing icier and icier, always facing each other but never seeing because of the earth's bulge. Also, if Krishna did not want the human Bhakta as well as the Bhakta wanting him, who could get at him? — he would be always sitting on the snows of the Himalayas like Shiva. History

describes him otherwise and he is usually charged with being too warm and sportive.

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I do not know that I can answer your question about what X means by Krishna's light. It is certainly not what is ordinarily meant by knowledge. He may mean the Light of the Divine Consciousness or the light that comes from it or he may mean the luminous being of Krishna in which all things are in their supreme truth, — the truth of knowledge, the truth of Bhakti, the truth of ecstasy and Ananda, everything is there.

There is also a manifestation of Light — the Upanishads speak of *Jyotirbrahma*, the Light that is Brahman. Very often the sadhak feels a flow of light upon him and around him or a flow of light invading his centres or even his whole being and body, penetrating and illumining every cell and in that light there grows the spiritual consciousness and one becomes open to all or many of its workings and realisations. Appositely, I have a review of the book of Ramdas entitled "Vision" before me in which is described such an experience, got by the repetition of the Rama mantra, but, if I understand rightly, after a long and rigorous self-discipline. "The mantra having stopped automatically, he beheld a small circular light before his mental vision. This yielded him thrills of delight. This experience having continued for some days, he felt a dazzling light like lightning flashing his eyes, which ultimately permeated and absorbed him. Now an inexpressible transport of bliss filled every pore of his physical frame." It does not always come like that — very often it comes by stages or at long intervals, at first, working on the consciousness till it is ready.

We speak here also of Krishna's light — Krishna's light in the mind, Krishna's light in the vital, etc. But it is a special light — in the mind it brings clarity, freedom from obscurity, mental error and perversion; in the vital it clears out all perilous stuff and where it is, there is a pure and divine happiness and gladness.

But why limit oneself, insist on one thing alone and shut out every other? Whether it be by Bhakti or by Light or by Ananda

or by Peace or by any other means whatsoever that one gets the initial realisation of the Divine, to get it is the thing and all means are good that bring it.

If it is bhakti that one insists on, it is by the bhakti that it comes and bhakti in its fullness is nothing but an entire self-giving. But then all meditation, all tapasya, all means of prayer or mantra must have that as its end and it is when one has progressed sufficiently in that that the Divine Grace descends and the realisation comes and develops till it is complete. But the moment of its advent is chosen by the wisdom of the Divine alone and one must have the strength to go on till it arrives, for when all is truly ready it cannot fail to come.