

Conversations
with
Sri Aurobindo

Pavitra

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Editor's Note

These conversations were held from December 18, 1925 to November 20, 1926. Pavitra, a French engineer of the Polytechnic School, arrived at Pondicherry on the 17th of December, 1925, having come from a Mongolian lamasery where his spiritual search had driven him, after his having spent four years in Japan. He never left Pondicherry again, where he lived for forty-four years in the service of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He left his body on May 16, 1969. These brief conversations were noted from memory, most of the time in French, except towards the end. Hence, they do not represent the exact words of the Master, but are as faithful a record as possible. Pavitra was then 31 years old.

Conversations with Sri Aurobindo

Friday, December 18, 1925

YOUR going back to France at the moment would be a defeat. You would fall off from the state of consciousness of which you have caught a glimpse. It could even be worse. Perhaps after a few years you would get over it, but in any case, you would be missing an opportunity and failing in what you have to do.

You bring a sincerity of heart in your search and the aptitude of your mind for learning (for reserving your judgment). But your mental activity is harmful; you must make your mind silent.

A new consciousness is seeking expression in you. There are in India people, yogis, who can help you in this and give you a new birth. But there will be some difficulties in finding them, for you do not speak their language and they are often hard of access. This, however, is one of the solutions before you.

This spiritual consciousness will give you mukti. Personally, my yoga would be finished if my goal were liberation. Mukti is only the first part. The second is to bring down the light into all the instruments, to make them perfect and to become the embodiment of Truth. The universal truth and power will then act through you and by your instrumentation. It is true that people are more or less unconscious instruments of the Shakti; but it is a question of remaining perfectly conscious.

This perfection of man is difficult — very, very difficult, and it is a lifetime's work. One may fail and make a mess of one's life. It is in fact so hard that I do not advise anyone to take this path. However, there is a powerful aspiration in you and something which is seeking to come down. So I put this ideal before you. If you choose it remain here, with us, and see what I can give you and what you can take from me before going farther.

Sunday, December 20, 1925

There is in us a region which is above space and time, immobile, immutable, at first; it does not participate in the waves of emotions and thoughts. The first step is to centre one's consciousness in this region and keep it there: this is mukti. In us, beyond our personality, the Purusha is seen, with many attributes which are successively unveiled.

First of all, he appears as the witness of actions and sensations, untouched, unalterable.

Then he manifests as the giver of sanctions: he approves or refuses his consent to a movement of Prakriti: desire or thought or even action. When such an order is given, as for instance, the refusal to take part in a certain emotion, though the past is yet strong, the being turns away from that emotion.

Then, Purusha is the Knower and in him is the knowledge. This knowledge has several forms: the lowest is intuition, then comes the knowledge in unity. In any case, the senses are no longer avenues of knowledge: it comes directly.

Finally, Purusha reveals himself as Ishwara, the Lord. Governing and acting through his instruments he at last takes his kingdom in his hands.

This is accomplished in two stages.

At first the contact is mental — zone of the spiritual mind (Buddhi?). Man recognises his mind, his emotions and his body as not-himself. He feels himself existing above them — above the spatial and temporal form. He has peace and certitude.

To reach this, the first thing (and specially for you) is to stop the thoughts at will. One must first separate oneself mentally from the mind (for one is not yet capable of doing it otherwise), must look at it and study it. When that is done it becomes easy to stop the thoughts. This is the first lesson of Yoga. Thus, whilst talking with you at this moment, I have no thoughts. I see what is around me but without thinking (unless I want to do so and call the thought). When I began Yoga I went in search of Lele to ask him to help me. He ordered me to sit beside him and practise this mental separation. At the end of three days I had

succeeded and slain the thoughts.

There are other means of arriving at this, like the one of sitting down and opening oneself to the influx from above, so that this working may be accomplished from above without any personal effort. To you I would recommend the first method. Till this first realisation everything is mental. And intuition is only fragmentary, uncertain and intermittent. One must go beyond. Little by little, strong aspiration brings about (sometimes suddenly) the irruption into the consciousness of something new. Sometimes it is a peace, solid like a rock. Sometimes a light, almost physical, which illumines all things, inner and outer. Sometimes a guidance. In any case, ineffable peace is followed by knowledge.

Besides, all this descends from above below. And not as with the Tantriks starting from the lower cakra. But on the contrary from above.

So — for you — the first aim: to separate yourself from your mind and know it as outside you. To take the attitude of the witness. Let the thoughts come but do not let yourself be carried away by them. Practise during meditation. Then, you will have to infuse into daily life what you establish first in meditation.

Tuesday, December 22, 1925

It seems to me that there are two levels in the mind: the first attends to images and forms; the second to words and ideas. Beyond this is the principle of comprehension (Buddhi). I can easily dissociate myself from the lower mind. When I recall to memory an idea or phrase which I have just expressed, I can also remain detached. But when for instance, I reason, I am one with my mind (more exactly Buddhi is joined to manas).

This is true — but there is yet a third thing, it is the mind in itself, different from the forms and ideas it produces. It is a principle which pervades the whole universe — calm and transparent. Most people — and you also — identify yourself with the mind and its activities: you confuse the mind and its activities. You must succeed in separating yourself from Prakriti and knowing yourself as the Purusha.

The method I was taught was to kill all thoughts when they appeared before me, quite simply by looking at them steadily.

You say that you sleep, for indeed the only form of silence ordinary man knows for the mind is sleep. But this must be overcome — it is a known obstacle which all must overcome. Reject sleep as you reject other ills of the lower nature. You have the strength to do it, being the Purusha.

Then one of the following two things will happen: either you will remain fully conscious but with the mind empty, or you will have this consciousness but not in the waking state, that is, you will be in Samadhi.

So, this work is the first step for you.

Friday, December 25, 1925

Remaining attentive facing my thoughts — I found that they disappeared immediately on my looking steadily at them. The means of killing them, hence, is to watch attentively and, as soon as one becomes conscious of any, destroy it thus. This succeeds quite well in the region of words but less in that of images. I can manage to remain thus, conscious only of my attention. But the mind is not dead. I feel it behind the door. At certain moments I have the impression that I shall soon lose consciousness (?).

Good, but you are still conscious of your effort to kill the thoughts. This is natural, but in time this will disappear also.

As for the loss of consciousness, do not fear. It might happen that, besides the two alternatives put before you last time, you could fall into an unconsciousness of which you would not keep any memory. You must try to avoid that and to attain either the waking state without mind or Samadhi.

Is reading harmful? I do not need it much, and sometimes mental work is painful to me.

You must not make any mental rules. Do according to your inner needs. Reading is not harmful in itself.

Wednesday, December 30, 1925

I succeed for a few minutes in keeping myself attentive, empty of thought — but then the sensations return with a new strength. I do not succeed in turning away from a noise once my attention is caught there, for I have no object of concentration.

The first step is not to withdraw from all thought and sensation, but to consider them as outside oneself. There are two regions in the mind, one active, the other calm and attentive, not dragged away by the movements of nature. It is this distinction that you must make. You want to go too fast by suppressing even the thought: 'I am not that'. At the moment this thought is your instrument.

Remain the spectator of your thoughts and sensations, recognising that they are outside you and do not affect you. Then the higher consciousness (Purusha consciousness) will descend and take possession of your mind.

But never struggle, for, in the mind, what you reject violently returns with a greater force.

To struggle is to enter into all sorts of difficulties.

Monday, January 4, 1926

I succeed in fixing my consciousness so as to remain awake, immobile, in the silence. This state lasts only for a few moments. It happens that my consciousness is then centred in a point next to the eyebrow centre. This exercise involves a great fatigue of the brain and a work in the three centres: solar, eyebrow and occipital.

Later, this cerebral effort will disappear, for you will not work with the brain. This is an intermediate state. Your consciousness will be centred at a particular moment outside your physical body — above your head —, then it will expand and you will become aware of its unity with the other centres.

The throat-centre is not involved for it is not a mental centre, but only vocal. Most people who work with the emotional mind remain at the level of the solar plexus.

If one becomes aware of one's unity with the whole, does one consequently become capable of identifying one's consciousness with that of another centre of consciousness?

Not all at once. There are two stages. First, you will feel your unity with the other centres of consciousness 'in the silence'. It is in the Transcendent that you will feel the identification. Later, you will realise this union even in the manifested activity — in the play of forces — and at that moment the union you speak about is possible.

I do not yet succeed in realising actually the independence of my real being from my physical body — an independence which I can conceive mentally. Will I realise this division?

This will necessarily come and you will realise that your body is an instrument which you can put aside. This is the first aspect of Mukti: the recognition that you are free from your body.

All the same, certain imperfections like the desire for approbation, for consideration, are very strong, though mentally I fight them.

Yes, and your being is much more complex still than you imagine. The time will come when you will observe your inner being as though it were outside. And there is a part of your consciousness which gives its sanction to this movement of nature. For there is in you something which desires this approbation, although your mind struggles. But the mind can only restrain — it cannot change anything.

That this change — this transmutation — may be effective, it is necessary, according to my own ideas, to attain the cosmic consciousness and to get possession thus of the 'universal solvent' as the alchemists say. Then can't one transmute?

No, this does not suffice. When you come down again from your cosmic consciousness, the same tendencies are there which can always be restored to life. But beyond the immanent aspect of the absolute power, the aspect which you realise in the experience of the cosmic consciousness, there is what may be called the transcendent aspect, which is creative and without limitations. This is the solvent which destroys and creates. The vital Purusha who consented to a certain movement of nature, must surrender to the higher life and the transformation is possible.

There are several levels in the incarnated consciousness. The Upanishads speak of five Purushas bound to the five Koshas.¹

In the case in which the soul succeeds in escaping from the world of forms and entering into Nirvana, in sinking into the silence, is this fusion and loss of individuality final?

Naturally, this is what many seek. The Absolute has two aspects as Purusha: the transcendent, immutable Purusha and the mutable Purusha, as the Gita says. The soul can realise its union with the first: Prakriti disappears and the soul escapes from the manifested world

[1] The five envelopes or five subtle bodies which constitute man.

which it considered a falsehood, an illusion or a dangerous trap. But this cannot satisfy. For the Absolute contains also the mutable Purusha and the soul, if it wants integral union, must realise its unity with the Divine in the manifestation, as with the Transcendent.

Besides, to say that the soul has become finally absorbed in the Absolute is only a way of speaking. Is this liberation final? I am far from granting this.

The Absolute has an aspect which knows itself, loves itself, etc. through us as intermediaries. And that is the reason of the manifestation.

Friday, January 8, 1926

What seemed so simple has become very difficult. These last few days I have had the greatest difficulty in separating myself from my lower mind. It needed a great deal of energy to remain awake, attentive, and not to let myself be carried away by the stream of mental images, without head or tail, a sort of waking dream. Perhaps this is a temporary reaction?

What do you do when you try to quiet your mind?

I fix my consciousness on a point and try to remain attentive, to watch the play of the lower mind. If I attain this attitude it becomes quiet. Two postures: one with images, one with language. The one with language is more difficult. It is automatic: does not hook itself to well-defined objects, but to what preoccupies me most, or to the last thing I have thought about — the unhooking is often produced by the senses.

On what point do you try to fix your consciousness?

Normally at the level of the Ajna.²

Ajna is the centre which corresponds to the automatic mind and it is this dynamic position which is working in you. It is this which constitutes the mind of the majority of men, and if you are conscious of it — if you notice its action during your ordinary occupations — others are not conscious of it.

The real mind (thought-mind) is higher. The other is the automatic mind which is no longer of any use to you. It is a waste of nature. Have you ever tried to use the will?

Naturally, but I do not know if it is really the will which I have used.

[2] The centre between the eyebrows.

The will has three grades and it must be distinguished before all from the effort which is purely mental. The first grade is desire — corresponding to the solar plexus. The second, *isita* or *aisvarya* is a kind of command, of order, which either sanctions or not the work of Prakriti. When it is known that a thing must or must not be, it ought to come into action. This is an indispensable power for the Yoga we follow. One can call it by a consecration and one becomes aware of its action. This action is disturbed and imperfect at the beginning, but in time it is perfected. Mental effort may succeed in time, but the action of the true will is infinitely more rapid.

I have experienced this action when, by a call which is at the same time an offering, I reach the highest layers of my being. I have, physically, the sensation of an action descending above my head.

That's it. Try from time to time to invoke it. A continuous action is yet impossible — but get back the contact now and then.

The third action of the will is a control, an absolute possession of Prakriti by the Purusha (*vasita?*).

Monday, January 11, 1926

The fundamental doctrine of the T.S., in my opinion, is the existence of the Masters. On one side this is the new message (the other doctrines: Karma, reincarnation, being purely philosophical and already known). On another, this is a vital point for the leaders of the T.S. who affirm that they are guided by these very Masters. a) From the logical and philosophical point of view, the existence of Siddhas who have perfected their vehicles and remain to guide humanity, is reasonable and even very probable. I admit it on this ground. b) Putting aside the idea that the leaders of the T.S. are consciously deceitful, how to account for their assertions about their relations with the masters — on the higher planes, but also on the physical plane? HPB, HSO, CWL, for example, have met living masters. If one admits these statements, how to explain the little spirituality of the T.S. in general, and the general trend, ethical, moral, but not spiritual? There is something erroneous there of which I cannot find the cause, but which has made me stand aside from the movement (missionary, sectarian, etc., etc.).

These are very important questions for me.

There are as a matter of fact two very different questions. Their true answers are not of a mental order, but can be understood only through spiritual realisation. However, here's what I can say about it.

About the first point, I shall say only that the existence of perfect beings, that is, of those "having nothing more to learn" as you say, is problematical. There is always something to learn in the Infinite. The Buddha who took a vow to remain on earth until the last man should enter Nirvana, is not Gautama but Amida.

The other question is to judge the relations of the leaders of the T.S. with the masters, that is, to determine the nature of the psychical experiences of these people. Everything in their works, and particularly the little true spirituality one meets with, makes me think that they have never gone beyond the vital plane — which corresponds to what they call the astral plane. I set aside the case of deception. First, there is to be

considered wilful self-deceit, the fact that on this plane we see what we mentally want to see. This is a complex and marvellous realm, where the true and the false are inextricably entangled. Everything appears under a logical and seductive form, organised but finally illusory.

HPB was an amazing woman, with strong intuitions but wherein everything was mixed up, incapable of discussing critically psychical facts. She did not want it, besides. What mattered to her was to launch a movement. And this impulse, this desire to organise, to exercise an influence, is the characteristic of the vital plane. There are influences of all sorts there, whose one desire is to take possession of those who are rising high in order to use them for their own ends. Not only the weak are their prey, but the strong can be so equally, for it is specially the strong they aim at. After HPB, there was A.B. In the beginning she simply followed the lines of HPB, then it was CWL who influenced her. She recognised him, however, at a certain moment of her life (the glamour he has put on me...), but as she had nothing of her own, she returned. And what is special about the vital plane is that anyone who has a certain realisation there, can make another person get the same realisation. One must not apply the criteria of ordinary life to this plane; this is the mistake that many spiritists, metapsychists, etc. make. I know it by experience. I have old disciples who have deviated, without my being able to bring them back, so great is the force of deception. Others write to me letters full of visions they have had; they have seen me and I am supposed to have given them instructions. Now, it was not I, and those instructions I would disown. It so happened that several of them had the same vision at the same time, not taking into account small variations of detail.

On the other hand, if the masters directing the T.S. are perfect, they have certainly noticed the nature of these influences and also know the value of true spirituality. How is it they have not warned their disciples and why does one find so little of this spirituality? I have met Theosophists, some of them have had glimpses of the spiritual life, but in none of those I know has it been truly organised. Whilst in other men, who don't claim to be guided by perfect masters, one often finds much more spirituality, as in some Yogis and other people.

Their conception is mental and ethical, not spiritual. And as ethical, it

has nothing remarkable.

In spiritual life, one must always be ready to reject every system and all constructions. For a time a certain form is useful, then it becomes harmful. In my spiritual life, since I was forty I have three or four times completely discarded and broken the system I had arrived at.

If our disciples at X could not be brought back, the fault lies in their ambition, that kind of spiritual ambition, so dangerous for a yogi, which endows us with a special importance in human life. It is a big danger, which seems to me to have made the Theosophists also fall.

There is a core of true spirituality there, very small, surrounded by a mass of erroneous facts and psychical data. And in time even the core becomes affected.

I am replying to your question because, breaking through the veil, you will come to this psychical region. Hardly 1% can go through, as a result of their mental purity — their mind does not get attached to objects to find satisfaction in them. And there is a big danger, a powerful pressure. One must be very strong and hold on to the truth in order to resist. It is for this reason that I am answering and not in order to speak about the T.S. I have nothing against it nor against any of the Theosophists to all of whom I wish the best. I am not against them.

As for the fact that some have seen a master physically, an explanation is possible. These influences of the vital plane, when conditions are favourable, can very easily materialise: they have a sufficient mastery over matter to do this. Of course they must be given these conditions.

But if the Asuras can do this, cannot the Suras do so?

Evidently, but they do it much less frequently; they are not at all in haste to impose their guidance. And then very strict special conditions are necessary — one must be on the absolute march towards the truth.

If these are the conditions of the vital plane, is it nevertheless possible to manage to extricate oneself? These forces obey laws — by knowing them one can free oneself from them.

Undoubtedly this is possible. Even illusions obey laws. Here there is an aspect of true occultism, not that of the Theosophists. This occultism seeks to understand and realise, and not to edify mentally. It extends in a way (the field of) science.

Monday, January 15, 1926

I am progressing, but slowly. I have not been able to apply the will as you described it. In this connection a curious thing happens. In meditation when I look for a higher support in myself, when I try to invoke the deeper parts of my being, I meet only a void and I am incapable of making any inner movement. Naturally, in ordinary life, either under the impulsion of outer excitement or de proprio, such movements followed by results are frequent. And usually, though meditation has very perceptible effects on my general state, it has never had any tangible results.

There are two principal forces which help in the ascent of man. One is aspiration; it is emotive and has its centre in the solar plexus. The other is supramental and its centre is above the head. You act in ordinary life with the help of the first. In meditation your consciousness goes back into the higher mind. The silence aspired for, is not for itself, but only in order to let this higher force descend and rejoin the other. The old allegory of the climbing fire and the descending Sun. But your mind is not used to letting this force pass consciously and consequently it does not know how to act. There is no effort to be made then. In your case it is better to remain immobile. Naturally, this depends on different cases; there are people, very active above the head, who draw easily from this force. Later one succeeds in calling it down at will.

When I prepare myself inwardly to practise silence, I have noticed that I centre my consciousness by taking the help of the physical body. Then my attention sinks deeper little by little. A moment comes when I must leave this point of support. Then I do not know where to fix my consciousness. Either it returns to external things and I then become quite awake and attentive to the outer world, or I fall into a half-dream state, although keeping my consciousness for a time attentive.

It is not necessary to fix the consciousness anywhere. When you begin

to participate in the higher consciousness, you will find it diffuse, englobing everything and without any particular centre. One makes for oneself one's own centre (above the head). In the beginning, what you are doing is natural; but let go. As for attention to the outer world you will see also at one time all the phenomena, noises, etc. as though you were a part of them; you will embrace them in your consciousness, "they will occur in it".

The half-dream state is not to be feared, but keep your consciousness attentive; it will then probably shift inwards. But have you succeeded in quietening your mind?

Yes, in the first state in which I take a support. When I let go the support, I cannot yet stop the passing images.

What kind of images? Objects and beings seen and known, or unknown to you?

I do not know. Some seem to me new, but perhaps I have already seen them?

And what do you do then?

I try to efface them.

You must not do that. Wait and observe. Perhaps these images show a rudiment of clairvoyance. Perhaps you are seeing events which are happening at a distance. You must take the scientific attitude and see what it is. This may be a precious faculty.

I have heard much about this faculty, but I did not think that the incoherent images I see could lead to it.

This may be the beginning.

All that you said about the T.S. is undoubtedly absolutely true. I have understood and raise no objection. I have the feeling of a link which has been cut. But I would like to ask one more question. The force

which is behind me, which I feel and which guides me, which I call my master (without ever having seen him) and which some psychics have connected with a Master — what is this force?

These are problems which cannot be solved solely with the mind. When your psychic being opens, you will see and understand.

This can happen. But there are many things. All those who have a strong urge towards the higher life, have a similar experience. The mind travesties and clothes the force in a form which pleases it or to which it is accustomed: Christ for a Christian, etc. First, there is the universal force, the Purusha, whose action is effective and guiding. Then there are the intermediaries in the great plan, at all levels. Then, those you are destined to meet can also influence you, often without their knowing it. When the psychic being has opened and has set foot on spiritual ground, it can judge. The mental being cannot.

Monday, January 18, 1926

I have succeeded in keeping my mind absolutely empty of thought for a few minutes. All the waves have stopped. But still my consciousness is fixed all the time upon the physical plane; thus, I hear and see, though the perceptions do not awaken any thought. However, several times I had the feeling of being on the point of passing beyond; my breathing became very difficult and everything went whirling round though my consciousness remained and attentive.

If I could have stopped my breath, I would have surely changed consciousness.

IT is a question of leaving the physical body. But this is not to be tried at the moment: it is necessary at first to get more control (to know, for instance, how to direct oneself beyond) and other conditions are also necessary — for example, to be sure of not being disturbed. Naturally, this is what yogis seek and strive to attain. Everybody cannot do it. In my opinion, it is not necessary to seek this state at present — for instance, by breathing normally.

No, you have touched the state of perfect silence.

Widen it — this does not mean deepen it. But make it last steadily for a longer time and let it envelop gradually all that surrounds you.

Friday, January 22, 1926

These last few days have not brought much progress, for my mind was extremely distracted and agitated by different mental occupations. Everything is settled now. But I don't see very well what I ought to do: my mind is divided into two parts. The first which uses language, reasons and formulates — is that which is silent. A certain attention is however necessary in order to prevent inopportune thoughts from arising through the throat and disturbing this peace. The other part is attentive, its particular function being the vision of inner images — its centre is Ajana.³ The former is inactive so far, but it is not always still for all that: it is centred here and there and does not know what to do.

Thoughts, in fact, have their origin in the solar plexus, rise up through the throat and invade the brain where they become conscious. The still mind has no definite localisation; it is a question of habit. For the moment you are localising it in the brain, but its true seat, which corresponds to the supramental truth, is Sahasrara.⁴ Above, this very consciousness will spread out and become the cosmic consciousness.

There are two different points to consider. The first is to empty the active mind of thoughts and leave it motionless. It is a useful faculty. The second is to remain completely detached from the thoughts which may arise in this active mind. Later you will see the thoughts formulating there, not rising from below, but coming from the surroundings or from above. And you will have to learn to recognise the truth.

So you must learn to regard these thoughts as external objects, without ever letting yourself be carried away.

Besides, you may from now onwards, whilst keeping the lower mind still, “look upwards” to centre your consciousness there, gradually.

[3] The centre between the eyebrows.

[4] The thousand-petalled lotus above the top of the head.

When I do that, my consciousness oscillates between the top and bottom for it has yet to watch the lower part.

Besides, a prolonged sound, for instance, does not raise any thought but it captures my attention which gets riveted there.

This is wrong concentration !

Put this aside, simply. In the cosmic consciousness you will have the impression that this sound is occurring somewhere in this consciousness, but it will no longer trouble you.

Monday, January 25, 1926

I can at times keep my attention fixed, “turned upwards” (pointed towards Sahasrara) and my mind calm and empty of thought. But all is closed up there — I am at the door and knock.

Something curious happened this morning. I woke up with waves of powerful vibrations at the top of the head and in the pit of the stomach. They were even physical, my scalp was sensitivised. These vibrations were connected with a sort of anguish — though I was not frightened and reproduced these vibrations in order to study them.

You must be prepared for such things. You have called and the force descends, prepares the instruments, right up to the physical itself. Every thing in man is opposed to the work of the Force, and it must be transformed. The very cells will be transmuted later.

The feeling of fear must be put aside completely. Even when an experience is likely to be dangerous, one must remain calm and master of oneself, for without that danger comes immediately. The help is always given if one remains master. Here it is a simple preparation — reply to the call given — a reply which, besides, does not always come.

The mental states are becoming more marked joy, calm and fervent seeking on one side — but deep sadness when I am separated from my inner light or when my mind, troubled by an outer cause, becomes a great obstacle to sadhana.

It is normal and connected with the psychic being.

(Then we spoke of Z... whose letter, announcing her early departure from France, had just come. A. G.⁵ asked me several questions, wanting to know the state she had reached and whether she had succeeded in separating the true psychic from the various false

[5] Formerly Sri Aurobindo was known as Aurobindo Ghose, or A.G. to his disciples.

creations. I do not know anything much about it — is she coming here to realise her primitive plan of a small colony in North India??)

Monday, February 1, 1926

All these days I had many difficulties with my mind. At one moment, when I succeed in rising above it, all goes well. But at other times I am overwhelmed. Meditation is painful and without much profit. It is at other moments that I feel sometimes how thin the veil is. The best method I have found consists precisely in climbing as high as possible — then the lower being is calmed. The three centres (Sahasrara, Ajna and Solar) are then united. When not in meditation the mechanical mind is very restless and I have difficulty even in reading — in concentrating on anything at all. Whence this difficulty? Should I put yet more energy into my meditation and my efforts?

What is happening to you is common. The dynamic mind (and not the mechanical which only repeats the actions and thoughts of ordinary life) takes as much more force as the other higher parts are calm and as at certain periods it is reduced to silence. When one “relapses” during meditation, one gets out of one’s depth in its turmoil. It is a common experience. Do not be frightened by it but continue to detach yourself more and more. When the detachment is complete, the waves will gradually become less powerful and will die away. This experience must be extended to the entire conscious life, and not only to the period of meditation.

The moment you feel tired, you must not force yourself. Overdoing will cause another delay. It is better to go more slowly but surely.

Here is Z’s letter which you had given me. According to me she is at the stage when one does not know how to distinguish between the creations of one’s own mind and the truth. In her book she is very positive and believes herself bound, in the name of Christ, to spread it in the world. In her letter she expresses doubts about her capacity of discernment. But then why attach so much importance to what is so doubtful? She writes “... the Force connected with it is, and because it is and I know it to be my Force (and your Force if you like), It cannot deceive me.” Here’s exactly what makes so many people stumble. They

imagine, because they have an experience of something higher than the ordinary mentality, that everything is the truth. But when the universal Force enters an individual, there is an entire part of him which rises and tries to profit by this Force for its own benefit, to use it for its personal ends. Her book seems to be altogether a dialogue between her higher illumined mind and her ordinary mind. One gets the impression of a conversation between her conscious self and her higher being or another being or a god.

But how many things creep in from below upwards! I know it, having myself remained for long in this state. But I always kept the critical mind, and my attention was roused by equivocal mixtures. But it is a common experience, and unless one has a special tact it is extremely difficult to distinguish the truth in the beginning. One must have an absolute sincerity — not the sincerity of the ordinary mind but something deeper, an impulsion which never lets one stop till the truth is reached, the whole truth, and one pushes ahead.

You easily gave up your ideas when you came to me; but if they had been mixed with personal psychic experiences, this would have been much more difficult.

If there is a little pride in us — quite unconscious, even hidden under humility — it makes us exaggerate to ourselves our personal importance and we believe ourselves called to something special. So she writes this book, takes disciples, etc. It is a common trap.

Let us hope that the doubt she shows in her letter will help her to shake off the illusion.

Friday, February 5, 1926

These last few days were better — the concentration easier and the detachment of the mind more happy. I can separate myself from the mind and observe its action. But when I try to make it dead-still, I cannot do it except by concentrating near the Sahasrara, trying to separate myself from the body, — and the breathing becomes difficult.

There are two ways of becoming aware of a higher world. One is to send a part of oneself there, whilst remaining at the same time in one's physical consciousness. The other is to leave this physical consciousness and to enter into a sort of trance, which may come very near catalepsy or coma. You are not in a condition to try that. And probably, there is a confusion between the two movements in you: the one of quieting the mind and the other of going out of your physical body.

This is probable. When I meditate I am aware of certain movements which I locate in my vital body. They are not physical though I feel them physically, specially between the chest and the head and within the head.

There are movements in the higher body and they are felt even physically. But mostly they are a consequence (as your breathing trouble proves) of an effort to go out of your physical body. They are not necessary. You can simply become aware of the movement of the consciousness from one point to another.

Now that you can observe the calmness of the mind and separate yourself from the action of the mind linked to the physical, you must give up these efforts and remain in an expectant attitude, open to the action from above — without making an effort to go towards this above, but knowing it is there, offering yourself for its descent. Do not even make an effort to “see” and “feel”. Quiet all below and wait — form a simple aspiration towards what you know is near.

Thursday, February 11, 1926

I must indeed have confused two movements: quieting my dynamic mind and going out of my body. Consequently, I had to work all over again to get mental silence. I can get it, though not always, for the dynamic mind is very active and I am always obliged to supervise it. I attain also a kind of relative peace: I am motionless, attentive, in a sort of transparent surrounding. But this has never a very long duration. It is another peace, deeper, which I want to attain. That which will destroy the feeling of the "self".

One difficulty comes from trying at the same time to keep the mind silent and to look beyond, to make this offering silent and attentive.

These last few days, I forced the meditation a little too much and the tension was too great. I have come back to 3 hours a day. Dental neuralgia. Why is this feeling of personal effort so painful? It is not inertia and rest I want, but peace in action, the cessation of individual effort.

The deeper peace cannot come till the "lotuses" are open and the force descends to take possession. Besides, a distinction must be made between the real individuality and the illusory sense of the ego. The true individuality is a fragment of the universal consciousness and even when it seems to merge in this consciousness, the distinction is nevertheless there. It permits organised action, which without it would be impossible.

As gradually the supreme force takes possession of you, this sense of effort will diminish; but the separate action will disappear only with perfection.

Besides, other difficulties will yet come. Your active centres are the centres higher than the solar plexus: the others are asleep. With their awakening, the mind, even quieted and controlled, will again be invaded and submerged. The real difficulties come then — in the mind there is always an element which helps. But here, everything is directly linked with life and action.

Since you feel the possibility of uniting yourself to nature through the solar plexus, do it when not in regular meditation.

You also say that all that you do outside meditation seems to activate your mind again. This has no importance — you cannot do nothing. Everything must take its time. And you are of those who have built everything on the mind — thence the difficulty. Others open easily. But do not be impatient, this prolongs the sense of personal effort.

Monday, February 15, 1926

The effect of sadhana makes itself felt especially outside meditation. It is becoming more and more easy for me to assume the role of witness of the actions of the mind and even of the body. From this comes quietude, but the mind is not yet silent. This separation has made me conscious of the disorderly chaos of the dynamic mind, and thus, at first, I thought it was becoming more active, whilst really I was simply conscious of its action.

The main thing is precisely to deepen and increase this consciousness — witness or Purusha consciousness. The silence of the mind is certainly a precious faculty; but it will come in its time. The widening of this consciousness will bring the influx of a deeper consciousness. Besides, isn't this witness silent?

Before coming here I used to smoke, then I stopped. Now I often have the desire to smoke. What should I do?

There is no absolute rule and this is of no very great importance. I too smoke. But to abstain from something gives a purer atmosphere. Besides, you have stopped; it is better not to begin again.

The time spent in sleep seems to me lost. Is there no means of using it better?

Is it lost? Everything in sadhana is not conscious effort. Besides, it is a very difficult thing, which comes at the end. The body rests; but you have nothing to replace the torpor of the inner being. Later, gradually, sleep gets organised in its turn.

Monday, February 22, 1926

I am continuing the separation of my self from the mind. I can easily enough place myself as inactive spectator of the movements of the individual being. In these conditions I exist nevertheless as a mental being, endowed with the 'I' and centred in the brain. But behind this mental self I can discern another state, free from all relation with the manifested activity. There lies my true self which uses the mental self as a window to look out from. What is this true self? I have so far only a faint experience of it. I distinguish nothing, I have the impression of an emptiness, of a nought; but I have also the impression of a veil behind which a Presence would be found.

When you are a spectator, are you active or passive?

Passive. It is not a question of witnessing a march past of images, of being the spectator of an action unfolding itself before me. The mental images are vague, fragmentary, very much like waves of a sea growing calm. Besides, the sensorial impressions often give rise to vivid images which are a cause of trouble.

Do you have the feeling of being a mental being?

Whilst I remain on the level of the mind, yes; but when I can raise myself above it, the being (?) that I am is not mental. The mental being is a mask assumed by the true self.

I see the way clearly. And I know that if I could make the total and definitive surrender to the Divine Force, it would itself take charge of the Yoga. This self-giving is made in my soul — my mind has accepted it, but there are certain points in the vital being which hinder the perfection of the gift and pull me down at times. But now, even these defections I see with an equal eye and offer to the Divine Force — the good movements and the bad, all are parts of the process. Formerly I used to be easily upset — now I am more calm.

Good — you have but to continue. Isn't there anything else? As to Z's

letter, what are you going to say to her?

That I am awaiting a telegram announcing her arrival to go to the station to receive her. There is no need to go to Madras or Trichinopoly.

Evidently she is coming here with this plan of work — imaginary work. India is not what she thinks. India is India. After a short time every foreign element is either absorbed or thrown out. And the life is different from that of Europe. These ideas about a work to be done are common. It is the mental being which invents its own inspirations: one part of the mind ascends and when coming down takes on the nature of a revelation. The mind wants to achieve something and seeks a great and important work. But all work, even the humblest, has the same value if it is that which ought to be done. There is something true behind, it is the idea of a work to be accomplished. And this work is the divine work — but one must be perfect to be able to undertake it. There are many men whose work has no need of perfection; they vaguely feel an impulsion, the mind mixes up its own desires and they go on thus. But I am speaking of those who have to realise some spiritual work — then, for these, the work will be found when the instrument is ready.

Naturally, all work is a preparation. Your friends X... seem to me to be in the same position as Z... It is the mind which is pushing them though they are altogether unaware of it. And they must learn to put aside this illusion; then all work is good for Yoga.

But I wouldn't advise you to say all that to Z... I don't know if the mere fact of coming here and listening to what I have to say will suffice to make her see the truth. It is possible that she needs to find out by her own experience. For it is experience of life which is the touch-stone; so long as one remains in abstractions one does not discover the criterion; but when you try to realise, experience teaches you. It is necessary for the whole being to know the truth. If she only puts aside her idea, this tendency will remain there, intact, ready to reappear, and the final results may be bad. Perhaps it would be better to let her try out her own experience; that of another does not suffice.

You may write to her that you are engaged in sadhana and that for

the time being you have given up all other work.

If she wants to see you she may do so here.

It is very dangerous to think oneself inspired for the work. This happens specially to those who are very impatient, who have a strong desire for realisation. They do not perceive that it is their mind which is thus sending messages to their mind. The true work to be done does not present itself under this form, and the method of work also is entirely different.

Monday, March 1, 1926

During the last week there has not been much progress. I can't manage to get out of my prison and my mind doesn't want to yield. There are two inner movements which I practise successively: first, whilst keeping the mind as calm as possible, I try hard to open myself to a higher perception, to become aware of the supramental reality; the other is to detach my inner being from action and from the mental level, to establish myself, as we say, in the supramental region. Are these two movements both right?

THEY seem to me to be two aspects, active and passive, of the same effort. But it is always with the mind that you make this effort. It is unavoidable in the beginning; but the calm which comes is not an effort, it is a substance, "a mental stuff".

I understand it mentally, but I do not yet realise it. I have always to make an effort, quite a strenuous one, for it takes up even my physical brain, in which I feel it. When I lift this pressure, the waves resume their movement. I am also very easily disturbed by outside noises. Even when they don't start any thought in me, they draw my attention sharply which gets riveted to them.

You will feel them occurring somewhere in your widened consciousness, but without their disturbing you. Indeed everything will seem to you as though outside you. That's my experience. When I began yoga, I came to an impasse, unable to go any further. My brother then directed me to a yogi (Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, whom Sri Aurobindo met towards the end of 1907.) who had certain powers. I remained with him ten days. He told me to sit beside him and to drive away with deliberation any thought which would appear. I did it and after three days my mind was calm and peaceful, unchangeable. Thoughts floated before me, I saw them and was aware of them, but was no longer their toy. When I left, as I was the political leader I was asked to make a speech somewhere. I refused, saying I hadn't a single thought in my

head. But the yogi told me to go, for the thoughts would come of themselves. And it was true. So too I had to write in the papers. And I went back home to Bengal; at several places I had to speak. And always the mental work was done of itself without my being its plaything, in detachment and peace.

This calm is at first mental; there are two parts in the mind, one which reflects the activity of Prakriti, the other which shares the calm of Purusha.

I understand quite clearly. The only result reached so far is more calmness and a deeper peace, less easily disturbed by the little things of life, more intuitiveness and a greater facility in uniting myself with what is around me.

This is already something important. Continue, and develop also this feeling of union with nature which you have.

Monday, March 8, 1926

This week there has not been much progress. My mind is sometimes tamasic, sometimes rajasic, at times outside noises are the cause of difficulties; they resound with as much greater a force as my mind is more quiet and empty.

What are your inner movements?

Always the following two movements: either, having quietened the mind, to remain attentive to the influence from above; or, to separate myself from the calmed mental being and try to realise my existence above the mind, as in the swift experience glimpsed by me once.

If you succeed in shutting out all thought, in reaching absolute passiveness, three things in fact can happen. Either a profound calm descends and takes hold of one; or the consciousness separates from the outer world and attains another level; or, lastly, the invasion of outside impressions becomes all-powerful. And if the first two are not realised, the third in that case supervenes. Hence the importance of making all quiet whilst remaining attentive to the higher influence, open towards the heights, so to say.

It is difficult for me to keep this attitude and this aspiration when I silence my thought — for it is thought which helps me to rouse them.

Why? Because you think it is difficult and because you are not used to it. But it is important. Practise this. If your consciousness leaves the physical level, this can in itself shut out all sensation. But at any rate you will have to develop this. Might as well do it now.

I suppose these difficulties are common. Like the one of the mind's trying by every means to keep its hold upon me. And it tosses me violently hither and thither.

Quite common.

It would seem easier to overcome the causes of agitation by retiring from the world. It is this feeling which, undoubtedly, has given rise to the sannyasin's aversion for the world. But I understand that there is another way, that of mental control.

Yes — besides, the shrunken world in which the sannyasin moves becomes very often a theatre of the same difficulties and the same struggles — and it is the smallest things which take on an importance. It is altogether futile to cut oneself off like this. Many have felt it. An old yogi at Benares told me that if he could start all over again, he would change his whole method in this way; but he was too old. And those who have thus left the world for a long time can scarcely come back to it. They have lost the faculty, and there is something in them which would not be able to bear it. If we, here, retire a little from human contact, it is not for the same reason, but mainly in order to avoid the shock and pressure of the thoughts of others directed towards us.

Is this experience which I am preparing in myself that which has been described as the second birth?

Yes — but in this yoga one must pass through many new births !

Wednesday, March 10, 1926

In meditation the entire mind is quiet. The faculty of forming images disappears and also that of reasoning, of putting out ideas. And I remain immobile, incapable of any inner movement. There is no change in the consciousness, only in the instruments of this consciousness. What should I do in meditation? Should this new state be brought into the ordinary life?

In the first analysis, the mind is divided into two parts: one, whose movements are aroused by Nature; the other which shares the nature of the Purusha and remains immobile. It is now necessary to extend the power of this immobile part to remain the witness of the changes of the other. Thought will seem to occur in front of it, and it will become aware that it is universal Nature which raises the play of thoughts. One must go towards this universalisation. Thoughts will come from outside and you will see them taking shape in you. You will also experience that you have power over them: you will be able to make a choice, refuse a movement, etc. This is the beginning of mastery. The part of the immobile mind will also have to be seen as the reflection of a vaster, more universal Purusha above you. From both sides you must free yourself from the self. You must relax the pressure you have put on the mind to succeed in mastering thought and being free from it. Insist on the witness attitude. When a thought comes, examine it, see from where it comes, follow it.

The two parts which you are thus separating will have to be later united once again.

I have the feeling that there is only one part, with two possible states, one active, the other passive and inactive.

At first it is necessary to emphasise the division before making the synthesis. You will experience that it is not you who are thinking, but Prakriti; this is the first liberation. The faculty of thought has not been taken away from you; but thought seems to you to be outside yourself.

There is no change in the consciousness and this state has nothing spiritual about it.

True. But it is a preparation of the instruments, and as such it is very important.

Saturday, March 13, 1926

Master, there is something I don't understand very well. Suppose I am meditating. At first there is quite a large action of the semi-automatic mind, which continues the original movement. Little by little this action becomes calm and stops. I find myself then face to face with the quiet mind: but there is another activity of the mind, a kind of inner language which seems to be aroused by myself. It is with this thought that I tell myself, for instance: "Now I am observing my thoughts ... whence does this one come? ... now all is calm ... I must also stop talking to myself thus, etc. etc." It is possible to stop this activity also, absolutely. Where does it come from? Its laws are those of the mind, but it seems to reflect some purpose of the Purusha, or to serve him as an instrument of knowledge and action. If it were aroused by Prakriti, Prakriti would be struggling against herself. On the other hand, how can Purusha who is calm, immutable, bring about a change? If really there is no change in him, this would be impossible, wouldn't it?

At first it so happens that Prakriti does struggle against herself — certain parts against certain others. But Purusha is not totally inactive. This inactivity, reduced to the single role of passive witness, is that of Sankhya.⁶ Purusha is Sakshi.⁷ But even then he can either give or refuse his consent, he is the giver of sanction: anumanta. And Prakriti does not work only for herself, she works for Purusha also — she executes. But Purusha is more than that. It is not he who executes, his activity is not effective, but he is also the Knower and Lord (Ishwara). And what he decides, Prakriti executes. In most people Purusha is hidden behind all mental action. There is certainly a consent to the Play of Prakriti. But Purusha is not free then: Prakriti casts her action on Purusha. Purusha

[6] System of Philosophy and spiritual practice founded on a detailed analysis of nature and consciousness.

[7] Witness.

must first recover his attitude of witness. Then he experiences that he has a certain power over the activities of Prakriti.

Is this consent of the Purusha conscious? Or is it something much more profound?

It is not in the mental ego, that is why it seems unconscious. But when Purusha is free it becomes conscious.

This part which I call myself, which looks at the calmed mind, not sharing in its activities, is this Manomaya Purusha?⁸

Yes.

Is the consent of the Purusha individual, is it not the universal which determines it?

There is the universal Purusha as there is the individual Purusha, and there is that which transcends them both. This individual Purusha is distinct, though not separate — he does not feel himself separate — from the whole. And when he is fully conscious, he has direct access to the transcendent. Without this individual Purusha, no organised action would be possible. For instance, there are many sadhaks who try to wipe out this action. The stage of Paramhansa — in which one is absolutely unconscious of one's activities, be it as a child or one inert, carried away as a leaf in the wind — is a phase preparatory to the total cessation. When the given impulsion ceases, there is a final rejection, at the time of the dissolution of the body. But we, we want not cessation, but the replacing of limited action circumscribed by a limited consciousness, by the true action, governed by the knowledge of the truth. Thought is a means of knowledge, but it is the lowest. When Purusha is freed from Prakriti, he has all knowledge in him, direct. He knows directly by a sort of vision, a direct contact with the truth (for example, when you are angry you don't need to think "I am angry", you know it without that. Direct knowledge is like that). Even when, later, he

[8] The mental Purusha or mental self

translates this knowledge into mental terms, it remains independent of them. Besides, only a part, fragmentary and deformed, can be translated. That is why I find it so difficult to express myself in words. If you had developed this faculty in yourself, I could have shown you the truth directly without putting it in words.

I am aware that I exist independently of my thoughts, but I am then weak and feeble, without knowledge and action.

It is a new state you must attain. You will see that your knowledge is not limited by thought.

So too, I do not see that thoughts are aroused in me by Prakriti. I know that the mind is not myself, but the thoughts seem to be born in the mind.

Yes, but in the universal mind, which formulates them in you. So long as you are confined to the physical brain, naturally you cannot have this understanding. But later, you will be able to discern this action of the universal mind which projects them into your mental field

How can one attain that?

Continue to stress the separation. You say that you can silence even the inner language, governed by the Purusha. Can you also separate yourself from him?

Yes, I observe him as outside myself.

Stress the separation still more. There are stages like this to pass. People remain more or less long at one stage or another .

Monday, April 19, 1926

This whole week I tried to withdraw again into the silent mind, but without much success. I have not yet come back to the point where I was before the arrival of X.

That great peace is there, behind. I have the feeling of a transparent milieu. I wonder whether this is not the experience the Christian mystics describe as the glassy sea and the Japanese as the Crystal Palace?

THERE are two principal forms under which one becomes aware of it: one is analogous to the sensation of a transparent stirless sea and the other of an ethereal expanse.

Last time you spoke to me about psychic knowledge and its character of truth. Does this knowledge concern facts, beings and events of the manifested world, or simply metaphysical truths?

The word "metaphysical" indicates a mental knowledge and there is in psychic knowledge a nearness, a concrete reality very different from intellectual speculation.

To say that it brings material knowledge would be wrong, that is not its field. It transforms the being into a being of truth, into a flame of aspiration for the truth. Psychic knowledge would be rather a contact, a feeling. When it is said that the heart knows better than the brain, one expresses something that would come near it, although there is a gulf between emotion, feeling and the psyche. The psychic being receives the truth but does not create it, as opposed to the supramental. There is a difference between the two.

The faculty of recognising the truth at first sight comes from intuition, one of the forms of the lower supramental knowledge. The true knowledge which never errs is that by identity.

Steiner distinguishes three degrees of occult knowledge: imaginative, inspired and unitive; the last, which cannot err, is

probably knowledge by identity?

The first form of intuition is clothed in mental forms which distort it. Moreover, the mind is not satisfied with what it receives and it crystallizes everything around its own accretions. There is something true and much that is false.

Besides, the mind learns to pass off its data under the appearance of intuitions. When the being begins to ask for intuitive knowledge, the personality sends its desires and prejudices under the guise of intuitions. And so at the beginning intuitive knowledge is not very sure. Then it develops; but even before it is brought to perfection, other modes of knowing develop.

There are' four grades in intuition, the elementary form of supramental truth:

Intuition —proper, sporadic and irregular, which brings isolated elements. It gives the impression of remembering a latent, past or subconscious knowledge.

Discernment —Here there is a process, a non-intellectual work which accepts certain elements and rejects others.

Inspiration —Something comes from outside and expands within. Analogy of a voice which speaks in you.

Revelation —Analogy of a vision.

I thought you would like to join us in the evenings, once or twice a week⁹ Which day suits you?

With great joy. For me any day is suitable.

I shall let you know, later, on which days you may come.

[9] Till November 1926, the disciples used to gather around Sri Aurobindo in the evenings. (See A. B. Purani: Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo)

Monday, April 26, 1926

This week my meditation was better, deeper and more regular. I feel the force descending into the centres: Anahata and Muladhara and even in the legs. At certain moments my legs become stiff. Also a greater calm which, if I could apply it directly to the mind, would quieten, by its single descent, the whole mind. Once I happened to see flashes of light.

You say your legs become stiff. Do you feel the force descending into the legs?

In any case, I become conscious of my legs; the force is doing some work there.

It is possible, if you do not feel the force descending there but are only conscious of your legs, that the force which is trying to descend meets with an obstacle and that this is the cause of the stiffness you feel. When the force descends and presses, after the meditation one remains for a while unable to move. It is such a pressure. One may, however, remove this inability to move by applying the force itself. But if there is stiffness, perhaps there is struggle.

The calm you speak about, what is it?

The experience is not complete; I know I could make this force act to calm the mind; but this is not realised.

All this work is necessary on all the planes, so as to make possible the opening and the total awareness.

I want to say something about smoking. I used to smoke. When I came here I stopped smoking. But when the Xs came slowly I began again, just sometimes. Then I stopped once more. Lately, for ten days I have not smoked. But the desire comes back very strongly. I would like to get rid of it very much, for I am not its master.

If the desire is simply nervous it can easily be managed; but if it finds a support in the vital and the mind, it is more difficult.

In principle there are two methods. The first is to cut off everything abruptly. To make a firm resolution and by an act of will refuse the consent. When the desire comes, to withdraw from it and to let it have its play below, unless one can throw it out also. The desire becomes weaker and weaker. The other method is to give the desire when it comes a little satisfaction and then to reject it. To give it a little bhoga¹⁰. But one must take care to make this only a means to arrive at the rejection. Not to indulge in it, for without that the resistance is indefinite.

These are the two methods used by yogis.

I have fought more or less for several years; but I don't seem to have come to any result. I want to be free from desire. Then smoking becomes a matter of indifference.

This is my experience in sexual matters. I had to struggle very hard for several years. Then the desire vanished abruptly, and left me quiet. However, I know it is not dead and that if circumstances were different it could wake up and come to life again.

That always happens when one fights it out. As for myself, I smoke a little, but for me it is all the same, and my mind is as calm when I do not smoke.

But in my case, I become the slave of tobacco; that is why I want to free myself from it. Anyway, I am going to do my best.

[10] Enjoyment

Monday, May 3, 1926

Nothing new in my sadhana. The mind does not fall quiet, although I feel the force descending into me. It is no longer, as at the outset, vibrating waves going straight to Muladhara. It is now a calmer force which flows gently and penetrates into me.

Where does this force come from? From above?

If I may localise it in space, I should speak of its origin as above the head. I try, besides, to unite with this force in this place.

Where is your consciousness?

In the head.

At the top of the head?

When I can disengage myself and forget my body and sensations, my consciousness can be centred outside. But this is extremely difficult for me.

It is not necessary to forget one's body. If your consciousness were fixed in this place, you could continue to receive sense-impressions, but you would look at them from this place.

I would see them as outside myself?

At least as different from the calm zone which would be like an outer layer of your consciousness.

At present I am identified rather with this outer layer and I look at the inner calm layer. But I try to open myself as best I can to this force. Where is the difficulty? In the mind or in the physical?

It is in the mind. But often a certain length of time is needed to obtain

the first result. There is nothing for it but to persevere.

In my efforts to bring about this separation, I give rise to movements in the nervous fluid, and thus I often have nervous neuralgia.

It is not useful to make these efforts. It is rather through a calm will that this separation comes about. When one makes efforts, often headaches or other little disorders appear.

The mind will not be always calm but there will be one region perpetually peaceful, inaccessible to movements which reach only the outer part.

Monday, May 10, 1926

Not much change. My mind seems to be more and more outside myself and I can look at its activities unmoved. It seeks to profit by everything to cling to its old way of feeling and acting; but even its sudden starts do not disturb me any longer as they used to do formerly.

To get this calm, which rests on the perception of the immutable Purusha, is the beginning of realisation.

Some days ago I had an experience during the night. I woke up about half an hour after midnight and, whilst coming back into my physical consciousness, the memory was transformed into a dream; here it is. I was driving a car on a great wide road. In the car, several people, among others Mother and X. It was Mother who was directing me past ambushes with which the road was sown. Carriages passing in all directions, men ambushed to fire at us. "Take care of this", "Look out there", she was saying. I had a revolver within my reach.... It seems to me that this symbolises a passage through hostile forces. In this passage, I remember that at one moment X said, looking at me, "He is drowning, he is drowning". Immediately I perceived that I was being dragged away by these forces. At once I called the divine force which descended through the Sahasrara right down to the two lower chakras. With the help of this force, I pushed back the hostile forces and set myself afloat again. A little later I woke up. But for some time I was aware that the hostile forces were trying to force the wall and I pushed them back in the same way. The two lower centres were vibrating rapidly.

Carriages, horses and other symbols of movement indicate progress in occult evolution. This is a symbol of the vital plane.

Does the fact that I woke up mean that I was not able to sustain the effort?

Not at all. If you had not awakened, you would probably not have kept any remembrance of this.

Quite true.

(Then I passed on to another subject)

The evening talks on science and occultism interest me extremely. That was for long one of my ideals: to work for the union between science and occultism. But a moment came when I had to give up my ideals, as all the rest, to the Lord of Yoga. But it is possible a time may come when once again I could work at it.

Indeed, in Yoga, one must give up everything, all ideals even as all desires. A moment comes when what is true in the being, what is not mental but deeper, and which must be used by the Divine, — the moment comes when this is awakened. This happens when the force descends into the physical plane. What was mental or vital is rejected, but the true forms of action continue.

Monday, May 17, 1926

This week was a little better than the former ones; the mind and vital were more submissive and the meditation more easy. But nothing new or particular. At times, when the mind is quite calm, it gives me the feeling of transparency, like a...jelly.

A jelly?

That is the word which best expresses what I mean.

Does the mind remain immobile of itself, without your putting, pressure on it?

No, not yet; but there is, however, an automatic inner movement which puts me as observer before my mind...

This calm is necessary before calling down something higher, so as not to be disturbed by the invasion of thoughts.

Monday, May 24, 1926

The difficulty always comes from the mechanical part of the mind. it clings to everything it can find: small things of daily life, books, purchases, etc., and embroiders and builds upon these data. Nevertheless, there is a certain progress in the way I look at its activity; it seems more external.

You will not be able to free yourself completely from this mechanical activity until you have accomplished the transformation of the physical. Till then you will be able to stop it at will, during meditation, for instance. You will see it as outside yourself and have a certain influence on its line of unfoldment; but you won't be entirely free from it.

I suppose I take too great an interest in these things: that is what enables my mind to get fastened to them. The highest parts of my mind have fallen silent: I no longer have any interest in spiritual books, like the Bhagavad-Gita or others. Only this mechanical part remains active.

Because this is the most difficult to handle. Moreover, the physical consciousness always takes interest in these things. And even if they were not in you, they fill the surrounding atmosphere. Unless one follows the Sannyasins, one must fight like you. But this is rather a negative thing and one must not attach too great an importance to it. A positive experience is more important; that is, 'either the deep calm or the light from above. And these will quite naturally remove the rest of this mechanical activity. You must aim at this.

Is there a centre near the heart?

No. All the centres are in a straight line. That which is called "the heart centre" is at the solar plexus. Manipura is behind the navel. They are joined to the vertebral column.

Steiner speaks, besides the solar plexus, of the heart centre.

That is a mistake.

My body feels the effects of the heat. These days I was tired. Also, I did my meditation lying down. Is there any objection to that?

You can meditate in any position whatever. I meditate often whilst walking.

You spoke about going out "in the vital body" and "in the mental body". What does the latter phrase mean?

When the vital body leaves the physical, the latter remains in trance, but if it is only the mind, this does not happen. The mind leaves, for instance, in meditation, and goes on a visit to certain places or certain planes. It can observe things there and even make itself felt. It is not even the whole mind which goes out thus, but a central portion, so to say. There are no dangers as of trance. If you are awakened, the mind comes back immediately without danger. It is not the same if the vital itself has gone out. A link ties it to the physical. As it is the life, if this thread is cut, death results. An abrupt recall is also dangerous.

As a rule, it is better to acquire a certain experience of the mental going-out and a mental knowledge of the planes before attempting the exit in the vital body.

So in this yoga the going-out in the mental body precedes that in the vital body?

Yes, but both these are yet subordinate to the spiritual experience which is much more important.

I understand that the spiritual experience is fundamental and that the rest is necessary simply because the perfection must be reached on all the planes.

Monday, May 31, 1926

My meditation is becoming deeper and more detached from the external world. At certain times I succeed in watching myself thinking. Thought does not yet seem to me as external; but I can nevertheless consider this activity as objective. I am also quite aware that thought is an altogether superficial activity and that it does not affect the deeper layers of my being but remains on the surface.

When the meditation becomes deep, my feet start aching.

What kind of sensation do you have?

At the same time like a pressure and a pulling out. Is it perhaps the vital being rising up to separate itself?

It may be that, or possibly it is a modification which is generally produced when the divine force transforms gradually even the physical substance. This substance is impure and cannot receive the impulsion without a previous transformation.

Is it the physical matter itself which changes or the life of this matter?

It is a cellular modification found above all within the vital and mental parts of the cells; but even physical matter shares in it.

In my meditations there are several inner attitudes which I can take and each one generates certain vital currents.

What attitudes, for instance?

I can try to take the stand of witness of the mental activity; I can attempt to climb higher and hold fast to the uppermost position of my being. I can call the force down. In my last meditations, for instance, it was not above the head that I was centred but behind the solar plexus, in the depth and not on the height.

It is the region of the psychic being which is behind the "heart" (solar plexus). Here is one of the occult centres and it is this one that governs the ordinary man. You must also become conscious in the one above the head whence the central being governs everything.

But are not all these currents conflicting? I produce them blindly without knowing their effects. Which of these attitudes is good?

All. All this is good. You must only watch what happens. The solar centre and that in the head must cooperate in the perfect mastery of the instruments. Each has its role.

Should this attitude of witness of mental changes be held in all circumstances of ordinary life? At present, in these conditions I can manage only less important, semi-automatic activities. As soon as a certain attention is necessary, I get lost once again in action.

But this is not indispensable. It is a question of habit. You have not yet conquered the illusion which sees you as the doer. Naturally this witness attitude is necessary, it is a first step. All the parts of the mind can thus be made automatic. And from above one watches them; one can stop or modify them.

It is then a perfect mastery of the instruments. But in me this automatic activity is not yet sufficiently developed and I can entrust to it only less important tasks. Though there is already a progress in this.

Monday, June 7, 1926

There are cycles in my meditations: good periods and others when it is more difficult. At present I can quieten the mind quite well, detach myself from it and try to penetrate into a region which I feel above it. My mind now seems to me like a small portion of my real being. But there is above me a sort of veil which will not yield and which prevents me from going through. And when I succeed in thus quietening the mind and trying to penetrate it, I am aware of a pain, or rather of a sensation in the legs and feet, which thenceforth draws the attention of my being. I cannot separate myself from it, for the more efforts I make, the stronger does this sensation become.

There are parts in your physical consciousness which hold you back. You may be conscious of them or not. But when you try to pierce the veil, they hold you back. You are not ready. Also, it is necessary for the force from above to descend and prepare your lower consciousness. This veil may be crossed from below; but that is more difficult and everybody cannot do it. But if the force descends from above, it can remove it. Hence, to open yourself to this force is the first necessity.

It means then that I should take a passive attitude and not try to centre my consciousness above.

The aim naturally is to lift yourself above the mind, but the force must prepare what is not ready. Even if the mind is calm, these imperfections hold you back.

What is the difference between the psychic being behind the heart-centre and the central being above the head? Are they two beings or one single being?

Naturally, from one point of view, they are one. But your being, though one, is composed of many distinct beings. Just as your mental being is different from your physical or vital beings, so the psychic being, the soul, is different from the central being.

The psychic being is the transmitter which receives the light and transmits it to the lower personality. It is that which remains at the back and governs the personality. The psychic being is in direct communication with the truth, which it organises and transmits to the outer being. The central being cannot organise the truth: it is above all evolution. It is the psychic being which develops spiritually through the different personalities.

It is then the central being which is above space and time and behind that which evolves through the successive personalities?

Yes. The psychic being is only the soul which develops, which holds and prepares the personality. The central being has no direct action; it presides and watches.

Yesterday evening I dined at the Xs. I narrated how the house of C. S. had burnt down. Mme. X began to think over this accident. Suddenly she felt a very unpleasant emanation which she described as being reddish-brown, nauseating. Indeed, I too had an unpleasant feeling. Then I returned home and went out again to the seaside. Suddenly I was aware of the same unpleasant sensation. It was as if some entity was trying to bring about something evil. And I felt that I had to remain attentive, on my guard. By keeping the contact with my inner being, I was able to reject that easily.

She has as a matter of fact written about it, this morning. Mme. X is very sensitive to these influences. But there is no reason for you to become so, for you are not yet ready to work on the physical plane. It is infinitely better not to enter into contact with them but reject them.

It is probable that she has no connection with C.S.'s affairs; but all these influences hold together and to think of one calls up others.

Is it not an imagination?

No, there was probably nothing imaginative in it. But you ought not to have anything to do with these forces. Throw them off vehemently, far away from you.

I did not try to enter into contact with them.

Some days ago, I dreamt that someone raised up a snake with his stick. Then he told me: take care, don't move, this make is venomous. So I remained still, and the snake passed by my side without touching me.

It was a warning. But there is no need to stir up snakes with sticks.

Monday, June 14, 1926¹¹

I try to understand the resistance that is in me. The only thing I do is to open myself to the force from above and to surrender utterly. Every time the force comes down I feel it going down to the solar plexus and then at the level of the belly a resistance is felt that translates itself into a stiffness of the legs and a peculiar feeling in the feet and hands also.

Now, I tried to see what part of the mind was connected with the resistance. It seems to me that it is the most material and physical part of the mind, that part which is busy with the form and the collection of forms, acquiring, dealing with objects, etc.

YES, but that ought not to interfere with anything. This part of the mind, the physical mind, is useful and has to do its work. It is not bad unless it tries to impose its desire. But I suppose that is not so. What do you feel exactly? And you said you feel the force outside yourself; don't you feel its workings inside also?

I feel it come down to the solar plexus, but nothing in the navel. Sometime before I felt also the muladhara. Now I don't feel it so distinctly, but there is no strict separation between inside and outside.

Two reasons for these sensations may be possible. First, the vitality of the limbs retires in deep meditation and as I am not yet accustomed I feel a little pain — or there is an obstacle in the path of the force.

There is an obstacle in the form of the physical mind. It is often the case with minds accustomed to be too active. They are not plastic enough, and they must wear out till they become fully passive to the divine force. Gradually this opposition will be overcome if you go on surrendering to the force.

[11] From this date, conversations with Sri Aurobindo were noted directly in English.

Sometimes the force, coming down, does not permeate all the chakras and the light only descends up to what is ready. There is a partial enlightenment, which improves afterwards. That may be the case if some chakras remain untouched.

It seems to me also that I have to reject these lower movements of the mind, unless they are necessary, and to submit to them as little as possible.

Exactly so. This rejection is necessary.

Should I do some work like the study of Astrology now?

I would not advise it. For the present leave the mind quiet until the calm settles. Then afterwards comes the period when the mind changes its workings. And a work can be taken as a field of action, to carry out the process.

The calm that I can, at certain times, produce in my mind is artificial, so to say. It is imposed by will and must be constantly watched so that no thought interferes — and it does not last long. But I know this is not the calm that has to come from above and to settle in the mind. Nevertheless I always feel that the calm is very close and the veil is thin and grows thinner and thinner. But I may be wrong in my expectations?

You said last time that I was not ready. That means that this part of the mind was not ready to admit the force?

Yes.

Will it be overcome?

Certainly.

What happened is this. When you came here you took the work with a very strong aspiration. But as it goes the defects of the mind rise by and by and they have to be overcome.

That is true. From when I came till the coming of X.. was a period of hard work. Then with the coming of X..., for many reasons, I relaxed my effort and my mind asserted itself again in the old ways. I have not yet regained the former eagerness and I am now trying to regain it.

That is exactly so.

I suppose there is no need to feel discouraged. I am not at all discouraged, or even sad, about this process taking so long a time.

No need at all.

When I came here you saw in me certain possibilities and also certain difficulties. Now is there any change in the outlook?

No.

I mean: do you think it will be possible for me to stay here?

Yes, Certainly. I have the conviction you will stay here.

Monday, June 21, 1926

There is a slow improvement but no radical change yet.

The pain in the legs has greatly diminished and I find less obstacles in the way of the force coming down.

But, nothing has changed. Truly I feel that a strong pressure is behind, that would, if unveiled, quickly stabilize the mind.

Do you feel it in the mind?

Yes, but I know it comes from above the mind.

Also, my mind has a lesser tendency to busy itself with all sorts of things. The obstacle is always, as it seems to me, that part of the mind which is active with the most outward aspects of things. For instance, the part of the mind that rejoices in making a collection of stamps. And I have still difficulty in retiring from it.

It is probably a small thing that keeps you up, but it is very obstinate.

I wonder whether the pain in the legs was not due to tobacco smoking, for, since I gave up tobacco ten days ago, the pain has decreased.

No, I don't think so. The craving for tobacco is more a vital desire and creates a vital obstacle. There is probably some resistance in the body itself.

But what is a little unusual is the resistance of the physical mind, at this stage. Generally it comes at a later stage, and when it comes it is very obstinate. But in your case, it seems to rise now; this may be due to the fact that we all are working in the physical mind and the resistance is there. All rises at the same time. You have to wear it out. That is all.

I know that I am doing the right thing and that I am in the proper way, so there is no anxiety in my mind.

I have always a great difficulty in separating from the physical

body and my meditation is not deep. Every sound, which is a little insistent or recurring, calls my attention and breaks my meditation.

You need not be so disturbed. Is it not because you have a fixed idea that such a sound is able to disturb you?

You could hear it without its leaving any impression in the mind. A part of the mind would know it, but the central part would not be in the least disturbed.

No doubt it is so. A feeble sound enters and goes on unnoticed, but once my attention is awakened, it is difficult to reject it into quietness.

Which is easier to separate from my true self: the body or the mind?

When you are out of the body, you are in the true mind!

Sometimes I feel a part of my consciousness somewhere before my face, but as soon as I begin realising it, I return speedily to my bodily consciousness.

(A.G. smiles)

Monday, June 28, 1926

Sometimes the activity of my mind is very painful. I feel tired and harassed by it. No doubt there is in me something that takes pleasure in this activity, for if there were none, it would cease of itself. But my conscious will and the greatest part of my being reject it and¹² ... in freedom. How is it that such a small part opposes victoriously the process?

It may be a small part, but it played an important part in past evolution.

In the beginning of the week, meditation was good. I succeeded in separating from the mind entirely and keeping it quiet for a while. But the last days were not successful. At times I feel harassed. Does the mental resistance not receive a support from the vital?

Yes, and from the physical also. The physical is the receptacle of the past habits and supports them. So too does the vital. Therefore no perfection is possible unless the vital is opened and the physical conquered.

But you should not insist so much upon the perfection of the mind. It cannot be perfect now — that is — quiet and luminous. But it must be sufficiently still to allow the force to come down and work. That is what is especially needed.

Last Tuesday I felt as if a great sweetness (there is no better word) was hovering upon me.

It is rather in that direction that you should go.

It means a more active surrender.

Yes. Not a mere negative effort in the mind. You should insist more upon the positive aspect. Negative blankness is not an end but a means.

[12] The author has left out a word here. We suppose he wanted to put “and want to remain”.

How is it that even the faint experiences I had — light, deep calm of the mind — have receded and do not come back?

It happens so. There is no continuous and regular unfolding, but alternations of light and darkness — ebb and flow. But the experiences have to become more and more frequent and prolonged, until they come at will and mastery is gained.

Monday, July 12, 1926

My mind is becoming quieter and I am able to separate myself better from its workings.

There is also a kind of broadening of consciousness; I feel in touch, all around the head, with a living medium. It is yet very dim, only a beginning.

What I am doing is mostly to remain passive, allowing the force to flow down and to work. It then goes down to a little above the navel and expands.

I am watching the work of the force. It seems to me not very spiritual.

...?...

I mean it is of the nature of a sensation — not of course of a physical sensation — but not very distinct from it.

There is no such distinction between spiritual and material, in the sense that the force is working on a material level — so to say — that is, here, the psycho-physical, and there is nothing astonishing that you may feel that working. But it comes from above and has a set purpose: to render the bodies fit instruments for the spirit.

It happened twice that during meditation, my head was slowly bending backwards. Has this any meaning?

I don't see very well.

I did not come last week because I was then in the midst of a struggle and did not find myself worthy of coming. It has been a difficult time — over powered by the mind. But now it is better. Always the alternate coming of night and daylight.

You spoke of a broadening of consciousness. That is an important part of the process. If that were firmly established, it would go all right. The

essential thing to do is to watch closely the forces, to follow the divine force in its workings and see how it works, to see what happens and how it happens.

The force may come down for organising the vehicles, it may work from above or it may organise experiences. All this has to be watched.

Sometimes, in meditation, images occur in the field of vision. But they are not very vivid and they have the same character as the images of a dream. Moreover, I never noticed any element in them unknown to my consciousness. They are remembrances or due to habitual linking of thoughts. I have always tried to reject these images. Is it all right?

The faculty of observing images should not be opposed either. It may be that the present images are nothing but thought-images, but - it may cover a more delicate working. And this may be the basis for something higher. You should not discourage this faculty, but you should remain watching them, not being taken away by them.

When looking at such images, I begin to think: What is that? Oh, this is so and so, and so on, and my thinking (inner speech) begins to influence the images themselves which shape themselves differently.

Of course, this thinking has to stop, for it spoils everything. What is needed is passivity without losing oneself.

Monday, July 19, 1926

This week has been calm and quiet — the meditation good.

There is a slow improvement in the separation from the acting mind — and also an increasing peace and joy. There is nothing else to be said.

I received a letter from my friend Y, whose wife is at Geneva. He sent me a lecture of his about internationalism and it will perhaps show you better what the man is.

(After reading it) It is more about nationalism than internationalism! He uses still crude language.

...?....

Yes, he talks about love between nations. Love between nations is an absurdity. The love that man can become conscious of for his fellow-beings is the experience of identity, and only a few can know it. If the leaders, the brains of a nation, could know it, that would be all right, but nothing more can be expected. And to speak about love in such a way is only to prepare war.

Why so?

Because it is a false ideal. False because not practical. Of course the Society of Nations is based actually upon greed and vanity. But to break it all of a sudden is an impossible task, at the present state of humanity. Something can be done, but to hope that love can be the next motto of it, is foolish.

About him, I feel as if these ideals were coming more from the vital plane than from elsewhere. He is not a mental man and has always had the ideal of a mission to fulfil, of being guided towards it by higher entities. In what way can I help him?

Of course, the life energy he speaks of is a vital energy and it catches

ideals and ideas to support itself. This is a common fact and it is all right for those who are not destined for the spiritual life. In such a case one has to recognize that such ideals are not final and to understand their proper nature. But to destroy this would mean that you would have something higher to give him.

He seems to be perfectly happy today. In his letter he says that his soul is full of joy.

Then it is better to leave him, not to meddle with his evolution, until he demands something higher.

May I come more often at the evening sittings?

Yes, you may come.

Monday, July 26, 1926

I feel distinctly the overshadowing presence of a force above me. A small part of that force comes down and works in me.

WHAT kind of work does it effect?

I cannot see very distinctly. It is a pressure that tries to expand. More than this I cannot say. Only, I feel that a small part only comes down. It also presses upon the physical mind and tries to calm and quiet it.

There are two movements I make: one is to be passive and to open to that working. The other is to go above trying to unite with that force. I have then a sensation of broadening, of a vast and compact consciousness.

It happened two or three times that I saw before me a long, endless road. But this image had no distinct character that indicated another origin than the ordinary mental images.

It is still a mental image, and all mental images have the same character. Only it may come from the higher mental plane. Once you open to them you receive knowledge of things you do not know in the ordinary mind.

The image of a road is a very common image of the higher mental; its meaning is that of the path that has to be travelled on.

If the images are all around us, how is it that they do not come in our mind?

They come often in man's mind but he believes them to be his own thoughts. Moreover one must have something that corresponds to them, otherwise they make no impression and do not come out of the subconscious. But once you begin to open, images arise more frequently and you need to discriminate among them.

What kind of image has to be rejected and what to be accepted?

What is first to be rejected is the ordinary working of the mind and the images of material life that surround us. Afterwards one has to remain passive. What seems to come from above is not necessarily pure and then one has to discriminate.

Mr. G. has spoken to Mr. V., head of the College here. There is a possibility of my becoming an examiner at the baccalauréat here. This will bring me students. But I will have to owe this position to Mr. G. And it is impossible to obtain it without his support.

I don't see why you should not accept it. It does not bind you?

Not at all. I have only to be thankful for it.

That is all right. What is to be avoided is your being drawn into politics.

Certainly. There is no chance of that.

Monday, August 2, 1926

There is nothing new to report. Quiet meditation becoming deeper. At times flashes of light pass before my eyes. But I know they have no outward reality. They are of the same kind as those flashes that are seen when one presses one's own eyes.

These flashes of light are the first signs of the coming down of the light into the physical consciousness. They need not come and the sense of light may remain mental, but if it comes down, flashes are seen. But you must not jump to the conclusion that they are of the same kind as light created by ocular compression. People generally view their new experiences from the standpoint of their accumulated experience. Some people for instance when they first see that light look around to see if the lamp is alight or if the sunlight is coming in. It is necessary to view them from a higher point of view.

But how does it give such a physical impression of light though not physical? You said also that a tendency to blindness may be created at that time.

Because the centre of vision is affected and we have the habit to refer every new experience to what we already know. It need not affect the physical sight, if we can remain aloof from it.

As for the tendency to blindness, it has two main causes. First, many people, when these visions come, get into the habit of continually keeping their visual attention inward and create a disturbance in the physical sight. Then, the light which is seen is very brilliant and it has the same effect as if somebody was continually fixing a dazzling light.

Madame X. has these experiences and says she nearly became blind.

But a balance has to be cultivated that enables one to remain above, undisturbed and unaffected.

Monday, August 9, 1926

Nothing new. As I have done some mental work, my mind has caused me some trouble. There are two kinds of mental work as regards their effect upon me. When I am preparing my tuitions or reading an easy book, my mind is only superficially interested, but when I am trying to solve a question for myself, for instance, a problem of mathematics and if I take interest in it, my mind gets loose again and carries me away. Then it rushes out with accumulated force — and it sees nothing else, does not allow me to meditate and cuts my connection with the higher life.

You need not be cut. There is nothing wrong in being interested in some work. But the mind that works is not the whole mind and there is a part which remains aside if you do not identify yourself with the working mind.

I cannot make this separation in practice. When I am reading, if I try to look at my mind which is reading I lose the significance of what I read.

That has always been a difficulty with me. As soon as I do any action in life, it may be a manual or an intellectual work, I cut myself from my higher aspiration. It is impossible to practice yoga in life.

Because the vital and physical parts of the mind have remained untouched. They must be opened.

Mother told me that my vital being had been repressed. There is some truth in it. My education has been purely scientific and I had no artistic culture. I did not derive any help from art. I am far from clinging to conventional ideas of morality, but I have repressed certain tendencies of the vital only in order to get a relative freedom and mastery. I have respect, but certainly little of emotional emotion. So the vital is of very little use to me. But what is to be done? I suppose it will open to the higher light and nothing is to be

tried from below.

It will open in the process of yoga. But something more than a passive self-surrender is necessary. In this yoga, a mere waiting upon the force to come down if it wills, won't do. You have done nearly all that could be done by the mind above, and the opening through a pure mental process would no doubt require a long time. Therefore you have to rely on the higher force. But simply waiting is not sufficient. You have to call it down, and see how it works, make demands upon it.

And this must be done in the vital as well as in the mind.

What is the difference between a vital demand and a mental demand?

This you have to find out. You have to see what is there in the vital, see the possibilities and potentialities, what is to be kept. You will rely on the higher light to decide, but you must not remain purely passive. The higher light will show you what has to be done, but you must put the active demand for transformation. This will not be perfect at first and some resistance will be met with.

Especially in your case, such an active demand is necessary. Some people need some moderation, for they are continually pulling down, being vitally and emotionally eager. But this is not your case.

I have always been afraid of mental laziness. But I suppose that was wrong. Even if I don't do any mental work except what is strictly necessary for my tuitions, there is no harm in it.

It is sometimes found good to change the habitual way of working for a certain time.

Monday, August 16, 1926

Last week has been better, taken as a whole; it has been more easy to meditate and the force has come down with more power. It presses down at the level of the navel. My mind also is more quiet and does not require as much incentive.

You speak of the opening of mind and of vital. What do you mean exactly by these terms?

It is first the opening to a higher light and power and also the opening to the influences of that plane, becoming conscious of the forces of that level.

Does the mind always open before the vital?

It is more generally so. But the vital can be prepared before the mind opens. The mind may get partially opened and the vital is then able to receive the higher light. But the total opening of mind may come only later. In your case the fact that the force works now on the vital level shows that it can pass through the mind without being hampered.

You have to open to the higher light and power.

Has my recent illness any connection with sadhana? At any rate, there is a distinct physical cause for it: I got a chill.

No. I don't think there is any connection with sadhana.

Now another question. Mr. G. spoke to the Governor about me and my positions as a teacher and as an examiner. I wonder whether it would not be good that I should pay a visit to the Governor. He is said to be a kind man, with interest in theosophy. And I would like to say to him, diplomatically, that though he will not meet me in social gatherings my abstention only comes from the kind of studies I am pursuing.

Let me consider that point. I will answer you later on.

(Later Barinda told me that I could go and visit the Governor, but that it would probably be better not to emphasize my private life as regards yoga).

Wednesday, August 18, 1926

I report my conversation with the Governor, who besides had asked for me. He received me quite sympathetically and asked me if I could possibly devote some time for giving lessons at the College. Not only does he excuse my abstention from social life but he approves of it.

In short, interview successful.

Saturday, August 28, 1926

I have been very busy outside with the examination; but, for the first time the contact with the outside world has not disturbed me as it used to do. Coming home I was able to take up meditation rather easily.

Meditation has been, as a whole, satisfactory. The mind was relatively quiet and transparent to the force that came down. The chief place where the force works is above and around the navel. Sometimes I felt a distinct sense of strong power rising in me.

The vital centre is beginning to open in you.

The principal difficulty in meditation comes from the most external part of the mind. Sometimes it is quiet and passive but sometimes intruding thoughts are very obstinate — they are connected with the physical arrangement of things. For instance, I am thinking whether I should place a shelf here or not, what I have to buy, the things that may come by the next mail and so on. That was what I meant when speaking of the part of the mind which is interested in collecting stamps. On the other hand, the preparation of my tuition and the tuition itself does not disturb me. But if I take interest in a work for myself, then I am easily carried away.

But these thoughts do not disturb you in meditation, do they?

When I am in a favourable state they don't, but sometimes I cannot get rid of them. Especially in the morning meditation which is generally very defective. The best one is in the evening, between 6 and 7. The noon one is between these two.

The reason may be because the things you throw away in the waking state are able to come back through the subconscious and they come in mostly at night.

That may be.

Now, something happened a few days ago. I received a letter from my friend Y., speaking about his wife. After that, in meditation I found myself thinking of that lady, but in a peculiar way. I was directing to her a kind of force that came from the mental vital. It was not purposely done by me nor was it a vital rush, but a quiet and mild pressure and it was put forth from the top of the head.

I had twice similar experiences, of finding myself working on the higher planes without purposely intending to do it. The first one was when C. S. was ill. At the evening gathering, you asked the news about him and then remained silent for a while. Then I felt myself carried to his room and working there. Another time, when the gale was raging during our evening meeting, I found also that I was putting forth a kind of force in that direction.

K. also felt that.

It is because the consciousness begins to be awake on the higher planes and to work consciously there. There is nothing of pure imagination in it. It is a fact.

I brought today photos of my friend's wife in order that you may know what she is like.

Can you leave them with me? I shall show them to Mother.

Saturday, September 4, 1926

This week has not been as favourable as the last one. And it is a curious fact, for last week I was very busy outside; but when I came home, I entered easily into meditation, body, vital and mind submitted to it. It may be that I am now going through the consequences of the disturbance, consequences which did not appear at first. My body is slothful, my mind is restless. So there is not much to say.

What is the reason of the fact that progress is always made by fits and starts, never straightforwardly?

It is always so. Different movements enter into play at different times — the important thing would be to discern whence they come. And the most obstinate movements always recur until they are completely transformed.

You spoke of two ways. One direct to the the supermind through the mind, the other by the opening of the psychic being. Are they really two different paths? And what are their characteristics?

Yes, there are two movements. Sometimes the mind opens first to the light and the supermind works then through the mind and uses the machinery of mind. Sometimes the psychic being, which is always behind — without a psychic aspiration nothing in this Yoga is possible — comes forward. There is then no mental illumination, but a burning fire which turns the whole being upwards. It makes then the progress easy. Afterwards of course the whole machinery of nature is also directed from above, but the mental movement is not the chief one.

What is the nature of Carpenter's illumination¹³ ?

It is difficult to say, I don't know him.

[13] Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), English writer and social reformer whose later works express in particular a certain perception of the unity of all existence.

But judging from his writing ...

It does not indicate much — for it may be only an awakening of the intuitive mind.

Sometimes my aspiration is very intense, but when the mind resumes again its working, it covers it to some extent.

Mind must remain, but mind must be transformed. And so also with the vital and the physical. They must completely yield themselves and not only accept the pressure which is put by the mind.

This I understand now. From my experience with the theosophists I can say that they try only to overrule the lower bodies by the mind, but never try to go into these levels and transform them. I understand that the consciousness of these planes must yield to the higher light and accept by itself the transformation.

I suppose that in my case I am following the way through the mind?

Yes, the mental movement is predominant. That is why it is slow.

(Smiling) ... But it does not mean unfitness!

Not at all. There are always difficulties — in each case — for instance when the vital and physical are opening; for everything that is there concealed comes out.

In my case the central acceptance is done and I think that even the vital and physical accept the change.

But the question is whether they accept it for themselves or on account of the pressure put upon them by the mind.

! ... that I don't know.

Now, will you tell me something about the photos?

Not very favourable.

?

She is a vital woman. She moves only on the vital plane.

I knew that. But is there nothing psychic about her?

I don't see anything. Mental aspiration there may be, but it is not sufficient. I may say that she is not safe in the spiritual life.

But will not a time come when she will open to something higher?

What do you mean by a time?

I mean in this life ...

Everything is possible. It would be rather a miracle.

There is something curious. They could have come here. They had the opportunity of doing so. She went to Europe, landed at Colombo but did not come here. He is now going back from the Far-East, but crosses Siberia ...

I don't know much about him, but she is not intended for this place.

Then it is better not to try to bring them to this Yoga?

Yes, you should leave them to follow their path.

Saturday, September 14, 1926

In meditation I feel myself distinct from the mind. I can see my mind working. But the curious thing is that my mind seems to remain connected with the body and I watch it from outside. I see from outside the form-building mind, the speaking mind, and when sounds come from outside, they appear to happen inside that mind. But all this is in the body, so to say, and I am in front of my body, looking at it. Not from above.

When the force comes down, it has a dissolving power over the mental formations. I can now use this power for placing before the force the mental formations I want to get rid of. This power liberates me and I feel a sensation akin to floating. I never go above, but forward — but I never succeed in cutting all connection with the active mind and moving freely on my own plane.

It is not a usual movement. Generally one goes above the body or finds some broadness where there is no location of consciousness.

I don't feel this wideness — of course I cannot be very positive about the location of my consciousness. As soon as I try to think of this location in space I find myself again within the body. Is this movement to be encouraged?

I suppose it is a movement on the mental plane, but we have to see.

As I said I am conscious of the dissolving power of the force coming from above. It goes down to the navel centre and works from there. I cannot say yet how it works. But, at times, a sense of vital power rises.

I am fully conscious from above of vital movements rising. For instance a movement of pride arises. It comes out from the navel. And I realise it as distinct from myself. But what shall I do with it? Up

to the present time I merely tried to force it down and bar its coming into the conscious field. But I think it is not right.

No. That is what people ordinarily do. But it simply suppresses the vital movements. You have to call down the same power that dissolves the mental formations and apply it to open the vital. You have to watch and understand the movements, see how they rise, what supports them in nature. The full understanding of this is necessary.

I did so instinctively. And I offer these movements, impure as they may be, to the Divine, that he may transform them.

Mother told me yesterday that the awakening of the psychic in me depended much upon an attitude of mine. Can you tell me something more about this attitude?

She did not say anything else?

No.

... It is difficult to say. (Silence) This attitude can only become permanent when the mental is no longer the prominent factor in life. It all comes to the same thing You have to rely upon the power that comes from above and realise that it is something more than a power

The divine as personality?

We are always using mental words that mislead. Yes, it is true that it is the support of all personality. The Vedantic standpoint of the impersonal absolute, which has spread so much in the later years¹⁴ is only one aspect of the truth. It applies very much to the mind, especially to the modern mind, but when the consciousness rises above mind, it is clearly seen as a partial aspect of the truth. It is the power that has personality as a guna. It uses the impersonal to rise above the limited egoism of our personalities. The impersonal view of the divine is

[14] *vekananda*.

somewhat larger than our personal conception, limited by our mind. But it is mind that limits personality. It has an existence above mind. You have to recognize that the power is not a mere power.

It is true that, for the present, I only see it as a working power.

Because you are always in the mind. But when the psychic opens you cannot retain this standpoint. It becomes too vivid and too real.

Have I to rise in the supermind for that?

The psychic opening will raise you to that.

Up to my coming here I stuck to the Vedantic idea of impersonality and even now I cannot realize with the mind what is truly meant by divine personality. How can the mind take the right attitude?

It can call for it. When it will get a glimpse of it, it will more easily put itself in the right movement.

Last night I had a dream:

I was with others, probably sadhaks, and Mother was there. I was given a book. This book was written in French, but in purely a phonetic way, not taking any account of the orthographic rules. Even some new phonetic signs were used. It was new to me and somehow I had the idea it was written by you, Mother and P.R. I could not understand anything of it. Looking through the book I noticed some misprints. I showed them to Mother who said, "It is strange. I took so much care to have it corrected before having it printed". I also asked for some information from you who were in the adjoining room. You answered me in Sanskrit, which I could not understand. I went to you. You were in bed, and as far as I remember taking breakfast. I bowed to you with very deep feelings of devotion and aspiration and remained sometime prostrated with a blank mind. Then you touched me with your hand and I underwent a change of consciousness of which I don't remember anything. After sometime I came down again. You kissed me twice and I departed

with very high feelings. The vividness of the dream and the strength of the feelings struck me. I awoke; it was half past two.

As for the book, I don't see very well. It may have been something of the past. Something took place probably on the vital plane, and it is not always easy to interpret.

But did I come into your presence?

Not to the physical. Some vital happening occurred and that is why you saw me in such a way.

Why was it so vivid?

Once you enter the mental and vital planes, they are as real as the physical.

*Perhaps some mixture came from my mind with regard to the book.
But the last part was of a different character.*

(I related the dream to Mother. She said: This is not surprising. We spoke of you several times during the day yesterday, in connection with the difficulties of the western mind. Even yesterday evening, concerning something which happened in you during the evening gathering and of which you are perhaps not conscious. Also it is not surprising that there was some thought on his side about you. And as I too spoke with you yesterday, on your side also there was aspiration... So much the better, this shows that the time is drawing near when you will be able to receive the light. Keep what you have received).

Tuesday, September 14, 1926

Mother spoke with A.G. about my difficulties in meditation. Today she took me aside and we meditated together for half an hour, at 4.30. The force prepared above my head, then descended, particularly to the level of the mind and tried to open the mind. Outer thoughts were kept at a distance, though they tried to penetrate.

The day was not particularly well chosen, for I have been meditating with difficulty since some days.

Later, after having heard what I had felt, Mother told me:

Yes, the force descended. It descended right to your feet; but in the lower regions it was rather outside than within.

At the beginning you had a very strong aspiration. Then something must have disturbed you; all the time there remained a peaceful and calm aspiration. You have a power of aspiration but it has been almost completely strangled by the mind.

The force which descended at first is a force of wisdom, of pure knowledge which descended to the level of the solar plexus. There, there was a sort of order to open the mind. There was an opening but it had a geometrical form: a triangle. And within, a sort of representation of the idea you have formed of the divine.

A force of calm, a silence, descended afterwards. You say you did not feel it. Yet it was there and you will perhaps feel it soon. Much more descended than what you are aware of at present. But it is not lost for the subconscious and it will be realised little by little. There is in you a great capacity of calmness, which may serve as a useful base for a descent and subsequent manifestation.

Yet in that, in this calm, there was Ananda.

There was some response in the lower centre, but the response was feeble and mostly recorded by the subconscient.

In short, I do not think this will take very long now. There is a certain rigidity in the mind, but that is common to all westerners.

Did the force descend as far as the vital plane also?

Yes, naturally, and even on the physical, but outside you rather than within.

There is certainly a great difference from my ordinary meditations. Now I feel, perhaps better than during the meditation, that there is something there quite close, which descended.

Saturday, September 18, 1926

Mother must have told you about our meditation of last Tuesday. After the meditation I felt very deeply the presence of a great calm force which was behind me. It did not enter my consciousness but I felt it nevertheless backing me.

When in meditation, the divine force comes readily down. It works through the navel centre on the vital and also it seems on the physical. There is not any powerful vibration of the lowest centre, but I feel as if a force was expanding in the physical itself. It seems to me quite distinct from the vital.

You say it expands?

... I would rather say it permeates the subtle physical part of the body. But I am not perfectly sure of it. Let us wait and see.

Behind the chest centre, which is always very active, I feel the presence of something and from there my aspiration goes above and unites with the force coming down. I see a kind of connecting line between this centre and the top of the head. It is a straight line. Is there anything like that?

It means that your psychic aspiration is rising and calls the force down. A connection is formed. At the end all the centres will be connected in that way.

My mind is still active on the old lines. How is it that it does not stop !

The old habit recurs ! But it does not matter much as long as the aspiration is able to bring down the force. The mind by itself could not do much; but the force that comes from the Divine is more powerful.

Now, I will be more busy outside with this new work in the archives. I hope it will not disturb me ...

It is not an absorbing work!

Of course not. As soon as it is over I forget all about it. But it seems that the work that best suits me is teaching. As regards teaching in the college, the Governor has met an opposition in Mr. V... the director.

He is completely in the hands of the priests.

I hope in time to get something there. It would suit me better than the present work.

Saturday, September 25, 1926

Meditation has become easier. It is more substantial, more vivid. Up to now it had always been hard and difficult, a pressure erected by the mind. Now a certain interest is found in meditation itself.

That it has become more vivid is due to the fact that the vital is opening.

The principal fact is that the force comes down to the physical. It is felt by the physical consciousness and the pressure acts especially over the centres of the knees and legs. The pressure is so strong that I am now lying down during meditation. At certain times I feel a pressure above and behind me. It is not a punctual pressure (it is not a single point of consciousness) but I feel it, touch it so to say, not only in relation with the head centre but also with the heart centre. What this pressure is I don't know. It is formless, but gives me a strong feeling of peace, calm and bliss. My feelings are also roused. What is it?

(Smiling) You have to wait and see what is beginning to manifest itself. Do you feel it especially at meditation time?

Yes. But also when I turn my inner touch towards it I can feel it at other times. There is nothing else to say.

Monday, October 2, 1926

There is nothing new to say about this last week. The same working goes on. At the evening sitting I feel above the presence of a great peace; it is there but it does not come down, though my mind is quieter also. I suppose it has to come down !

Yes, it will.

My thoughts are then seen as happening below. There is not much difference felt between a thought of mine and the voice of somebody else. They all play before me so to say.

Since my coming here my mind has gone through a whole process. Now, I don't feel much inclined towards space and time and towards reading books. The only thing that remains as a part of mental activity is the business of ordinary life. This is sometimes troublesome; however, I generally succeed in keeping it away during meditation.

In the vital I feel the same working. Are there two centres, one below and one above the navel?

The vital centre is at the navel itself. There is a play of forces between this centre and the chest centre. There is a connection between that part and the more physical part of the mind, the material stuff of mind. Below the centre of the navel there is another centre, a vital centre also, which is in connection with life, outward life. The activities of the navel centre may be felt all around the waist. From that centre to Muladhara, all is vital. At Muladhara the vital connects with the physical.

It seems that all these centres become active, though I don't distinguish very well their various activities.

As for the physical consciousness, it appears to me as being somewhere at the level of the mouth?

It may be anywhere. The centres are fixed, but the physical

consciousness may be centred anywhere. The fact that it is in connection with the throat centre is a common one. It is the centre of speech and of formulation and most of the vital and physical activities are connected there.

I see the difference. From mulddhara the force proceeds downwards towards the legs and feet or permeates the whole physical consciousness. But the centre of consciousness, which appears as separate in meditation from the higher consciousness, is felt where I said.

Now there is something I don't understand. When I meditated with Mother last Tuesday the divine force came down. But what is the part of either you or Mother in such a coming down?

I don't understand !

Well ! The divine force comes from inside. How can it be brought down by somebody else? It is not a mere tuning of the vehicles, a quieting of the mind which could be done from outside, but a real call ...

The explanation!?! It is a fact, is it not?

Yes.

Then that is sufficient.

But I meant to say this. Suppose I had not come here, but remained doing yoga elsewhere, I and God would have been the same, but this coming would not have happened. Is there any kind of intermediary centre of divine force, for instance in the spiritual force which is here above?

Even in the case of those who look only for liberation and try to merge into God, such a help from someone who has realised before is generally necessary because the forces of ignorance are too strong. What is trying to come down here is a power for knowledge. In the past,

knowledge has been reached also but a different kind of knowledge, a knowledge more abstract. Now it is a knowledge for effectuation, for practical purposes of the human life. That is what is in the spiritual force above. And as you are in touch here with it, it tries to manifest in you.

Mother has spoken of the blue light of Shri Krishna?

Yes. Krishna is generally depicted as blue. It is his colour. It means that it is one aspect of the Divine. All these colours are aspects of the divine force.

Is it a force of Knowledge?

Not exactly. Knowledge manifests more by a force whose colour is golden. Though it includes many other things.

Then it is a force of divine love.

It is a force of true devotion that raises the psychic being to a pure aspiration. It includes also many things. But names are always limiting. You must not hanker after naming things but see what is behind, realise and know.

Has it any connection with the historical Krishna?

It does not matter, after all, does it?

Sunday, October 3, 1926

Interview with Mother

Mother: Do not seek the truth with your mind ! ... All that you have done so far, all that you have learnt ought to be put aside. What holds you back is your education and your mental habits.

A Hindu who had the deep experience you had last time would have drawn knowledge from it. That experience truly would have brought knowledge, it was beautiful enough, wasn't it? and you felt all its power. But your European mentality came in the way. Your inner being opened, put itself in a receptive attitude which allowed the descent. Instead of trying to reason, plunge into the experience itself.

If I asked a question it was not that my mind was anxious or wanted so much to convert everything into mental terms. My mind has suffered hard blows and it is no longer so exacting. I feel a truth quite close: there is a part in me which knows it. But from time to time a question comes up in my mind, without its attaching much importance to it.

When you put the question to it, it was on the point of speaking. But it cannot speak before the psychic being is open.

If that experience could have brought along the desired change of attitude, all would have been transformed. But that must come, it is bound to come. You are on the eve of that. It depends on your opening to the Divine.

Next week you may come to the small meditation-room¹⁵. You may feel something. That is why I am asking you to come.

[15] The verandah in front of the "Prosperity" hall.

Saturday, October 9, 1926

The pressure bears more upon the mind now. It works at a complete quieting of the mind and for a separation of my consciousness from the workings.

But is it always the mind that is working?

Yes. I feel in me a consciousness distinct from the mind, behind me; but when working I come again to the mind.

What will happen is that the mind no longer works, but all knowledge comes from above. The mind receives it, of course, but it has no longer to ascertain the truth by reasoning. And the workings, even the most outward like tuition, etc. are directed from above.

Does it mean that the mind is perfectly still?

The mind is nothing else then but a channel.

Why is it so difficult to bring into my active consciousness the inner experiences?

Because this consciousness has taken a habitual position, from which it is very difficult to dislodge it. It can be done in two ways. The first is by the mind itself. But it is very slow, especially in cases where the mind has been rigidly trained and has worked much, as in Europeans. In most Hindus where the mind is trained differently it is more easy. But this way is also not absolutely secure. When the mind, enlightened, begins to awaken, the vital powers arise. In the practical use of these powers, the mind is capable of making mistakes, and even if it receives the light from above, it may mistranslate the truth. On the other hand, the second way is shorter and surer, it is the opening of the psychic being. It is surer because it knows the truth and if a mistake is made, it feels uneasy until it is set right.

I feel in me some partial awakening of the inner being.

(Smiling) That is true, but it has to come completely forward.

Tuesday, October 12, 1926

Meditation with Mother at 11-45 a.m.

It is difficult for me to distinguish everything that happens during meditation. I only know that a sweet and powerful and luminous force descends into the vital right up to the physical.

A certain surface activity of the mind always remains. Is it that which prevents me from perceiving clearly?

What is its nature?

Creative thoughts come and seek to enter in. Sometimes they remain without penetrating very deep. At other times I am obliged to throw them out lest they get hold of me.

Yes, that has something to do with it but it is not so important.

The receptivity is good. As soon as you are seated, the force descends and you receive it. What is missing is something in the consciousness. You do not get sufficiently absorbed in the inner experience. If that were so you would return with the full knowledge of what happened.

Between your head and chest a line of light is set up, a column, but not round, a square column so to say, of gleaming light. It is like a cage, the preparation of, an abode for what is going to descend.

Yesterday evening, he spoke to you about the four aspects of the supermind, did you follow? Well, this white light comes from Maheshwari, it is a light of knowledge and purity. It is she who is the great preparer of the yoga. When that is ready generally an aspect of power (Mahakali) descends, which takes a personal form, whilst the force of Maheshwari is impersonal (at least here). I was expecting to see this descent. But the work of preparation was long — of assimilation and cutting off from the exterior, that took almost the whole time. At the same time a third ring separated you as though to cut you off from the world where you lived externally and also from your past. This force

comes from Mahalakshmi.

The force of purification is always there now, preparing, regulating. I am always following you though I do not see you physically. As the preparation was very good I thought something would manifest in your consciousness today. But one must not be in too great hurry, it will come another time.

Before coming here all my meditations were in a wrong direction. Purely mental. I had no idea of what the inner experience was. That is why perhaps I have these difficulties. But perhaps this too was useful after all?

Yes, as a preparation of the instrument.

But what we are doing here is so different from what people are in the habit of thinking, even here in India, and so much more in Europe or in ...

...October 1926

Mother: ... in the inner experience.

That I know quite well. Even in meditation my mind remains active, my consciousness often follows in its train. I go to and fro so to say between the inner and outer movements. I cannot remain for long united with the inner movement. But I hope that when this inner experience becomes more enduring, I shall become more easily absorbed in it.

At present I have often the feeling of transparency. My mind becomes transparent and thoughts are like little centres of activity in this translucent milieu.

Yes, this is an experience which will develop.

Saturday, October 16, 1926

I feel the working of two forces. One goes straight to the psychic centre and remains there.... The other comes from above and permeates the outer consciousness, the mind first then the vital. The first is more inner, but calls the second one into action.

THESE are two workings of the force.

I have difficulties in keeping my mind concentrated upon the inner experience. When I am watching these movements, I don't watch the thoughts and they often carry me off.

But that is the correct movement that has to be made. The thoughts come in and go out without being noticed, without attention paid to them. But you must watch the inner movement and not the outer one. At first you had to act upon the mind to quiet it to some extent, in order to allow the force to begin its work. But now you must detach yourself from the mind itself.

Are there not two methods? One consists in looking at the thoughts as they cross the field of the mind. The other in losing consciousness of them by concentrating upon the inner movement?

I think you can now enter the second movement. And you must keep in mind that the more you can overcome the idea of working by yourself, the quicker you will go. Allow things to be done for you.

I think that means keeping always the inner connection with the force within.

Yes. Till you become one with the force. All things will be directed from within. The inner consciousness will remain calm and peaceful though for some work you may enter again the outer movement and come back again.

I suppose this idea of self will also disappear, for it has no "raison d'être" and is troublesome.

Yes, it will.

I have at times the sense of transparency, the thoughts happening as local activities which I am looking at.

There are two ways: one by oneself — it is slow — one by allowing everything to be done by the Divine — it is quick. Mother has told you about your taking part in their meditation?

I think I misunderstood. I thought she meant my meditation with the group here with you.

No. With them.

What I got in my meditations with Mother is invaluable. And I know that much more has been received than I am conscious of. In fact I am but little conscious of what happened.

But Mother told me that you received well enough.

Yes, certainly. But I only feel a deep and strong and luminous force coming down. My knowledge is informal.

Anyhow you are able to follow the movement. Very few are conscious of all that happens.

I am thankfully willing to participate in the meditation. But I will do what you decide, as you know better.

Now, Mme. W. told me of the possibility of my being invited to dinner by the British Consul. There is an architect from Madras for some time here. I don't think there is any reason to accept.

I neither. But I will speak with Mother and answer later.

Sunday, October 17, 1926

With Mother:

I think I have understood what you meant. Since yesterday I have changed everything in my meditation. Instead of doing things myself as though I was directing the force, I quite simply open myself and remain passive. Almost the whole day through I could keep the contact with the force and opened myself to its action.

Mother: I felt you very close all the day.

But this puts me to sleep.

There is nothing against that. During sleep, in you as in many others, there is no resistance left. Everything opens and the working is perfect. If you feel inclined to sleep don't resist it.

About the meditation, what have you decided?

It is decided if you are yourself ready within.

I consider this meditation as infinitely valuable, and accept it gratefully.

I must ask you not to feel surprised in your outer consciousness if you see certain things which could set you wondering. They consider this room (for meditation) a temple and behave as they would in a temple only replacing the idol by a human figure. That gives them the plenitude they need. You are brought up differently...

Do not fear. First of all, this won't surprise me, I understand very well their feeling. I do not act altogether like them, probably because, as you say, I am brought up in other conditions and have less need of outer manifestations. I obey, however, what I feel within. As for being surprised, why?

Tuesday, October 19, 1926

Meditation with Mother at 12-15 a.m.

Something deep must have happened. I followed the movement on the whole. It seems to me there were two different forces. The first calm and luminous. The second, stronger, was fixed there (solar plexus).

Mother: A force of strength?

Yes — a force of strength. My mind was more calm today.

When you came, you were well prepared. Your psychic being had prepared and adorned — under a symbolic form — a sort of bed of roses and gold leaves to receive what was going to come down. It was very pretty.

The force which descended is a force of transformation. It will act from the centre now — fully conscious of the movements.

.....

(Here, several pages from Pavitra's notebook were torn)

Mother: ... for want of a better word, I would say: several exams — or "tests" if you like. You have passed them all successively and regularly, which shows that you were quite sincere. Now all will go well till the end — all will be easy. I am sure of it.

Tomorrow he will see you after your meditation.

In this way, I won't miss the meditation !

Saturday, October 23, 1926

At first, I will speak of my meditation alone. Then I feel, as I said, two workings of force, one is behind the heart. The impression it gives me is of living fire, but obscure. On the contrary the force coming from above in the mind has a light behind: though I don't see it, I know it is there. Taking for instance my meditation with Mother today, I will say what happens when meditating with her. I feel at first a preparatory period, when the force comes down to the head and remains there a certain time. Then it goes down and takes possession of the central being. There it remains. My consciousness is then drawn backwards, but as it is a new movement for my body, there is some difficulty arising from it, in the chest and throat, as for instance a choking sensation.

With Mother my mind is quiet, its activity is greatly diminished and does not disturb me. But when alone, as I don't act upon it now, it is sometimes very chaotic and disturbs me very much.

What kind of movements?

Always the same old movement. A noise awakens some association and the mind spins around it and goes on. Then I find myself carried away and have to come back again and again.

Do you see what kind of movements they are? Are they true mental movements or do they arise from below?

They arise from below and I don't think there is anything new in them. But there is also another kind of mental movement. Very often now I find myself thinking of you or of Mother, thinking that I will see you tomorrow, for instance, what I will say to you, or seeing myself offering flowers to Mother...

Seeing?

Not seeing, imagining rather. The process is the ordinary mental one, it seems. But as I am awaking to the reality of what I had only an intuition formerly, and as I come in touch with the light here above, my mind is directed towards you. It may be there is something genuine, but then the mind immediately works according to its old fashion. What have I to do here?

You have nothing to do. The two movements you are conscious of are movements of the same force. When it comes to the centre in the chest, it awakens the being to the truth and turns it upwards. It is the human way of establishing the communication with what is above, a straight line with the supramental truth. When the force will be established there and the central being come out, seize upon the outer being, it will effect the transformation. It will direct the force downwards, everywhere, and effect the change.

I am so tired of my mind.

But these movements are not so important. They are the remnants of the old way of working and they will fade away.

I am awaiting a more radical change. Up to the present, though something very luminous is dawning in me, there is no radical change of consciousness. I am still the old self.

What are you expecting?

Well ! Many things. For instance I will see my lower self as I see others' selves. I will be no more bound by the body ...

Of course the time will come when you will see the movements of nature in you as in others. But what you are waiting for, is it not a mental demand? It is better not to make such demands, for they always misrepresent the Truth. What you are asking is the Truth and you must not state in advance that the Truth must be so and so. The mental representations, even the best ones, are imperfect and they become obstacles. What is needed is to realise the experiences as a part of

yourself.

Then it is too much to wait for such a change? I am awaiting a change. Perhaps it is wrong to await something?

No, but it is wrong to state in advance what the change will be.

Now, in meditation I only open myself to the force and allow it to work. I am not acting upon my mind any longer; that is why it is so restless at times. This change in my meditation occurred last Saturday. I was then very conscious of the presence in me and I kept the touch with it the whole day. But since that day, though it is still working, I am not so much conscious of it. Sometimes the force acts in the mind, sometimes in the central being. What shall I do? I have left the idea of directing the force.

(Sri Aurobindo smiles).

But shall I follow all its movements?

Remain open and passive and follow. That is what you have to do. The force will transform by itself and by its own means and ways. The way of doing it with the mind is slow and imperfect, though the mind sometimes thinks it to be the best, because it feels itself acting. That is wrong. The mind does not know the conditions and the means. That force acts with a directness of which the mind is incapable. And you are receptive enough to allow it to work. Obstacles may arise, obstacles in the physical, vital or mental, as they arise always. But that does not matter. They will be worked out and rejected. Do not try to do something by yourself.

I feel also an increasing need for peace, tranquillity. And even the little work I do outside disturbs me for the present. I would like to minimise it, or even to give it up. But I suppose I have to keep it.

Yes. It is better to keep it. And you will arrive at a state where you will do

that work only with the outer part of yourself. It will then no longer disturb you.

Yes. But for the present, it is a little difficult and painful. It seems a period of transition.

Yes. It is a period of transition.

(Here, several pages of conversations with Mother were torn)

Saturday, October 30, 1926

Nothing remarkable is to be said. Meditation is becoming deeper and more luminous. I feel my consciousness as if bathing in light. Also it happened that I felt to some extent separated from my outer consciousness. Yesterday evening, in meditation, my consciousness was very much withdrawn inside and I nearly lost consciousness of the body. Thinking it to be a help, I called Mother, but instead of helping me to go beyond, it seemed that she brought me back to the physical consciousness. It is only an impression, I have not spoken to her since.

It is not always equally easy. Some days are better than others. But apart from these slight variations and from the recurring thoughts of the mind there are no special difficulties now. The force is working mainly in front of the face, where it purifies and pacifies, and on the vital. I feel the force as luminous, white. It pervades the mind but not yet the whole being.

My physical body feels a little the strain resulting from the different movements. Today I woke up with a pain in the back. I don't know if it has any relation to yoga or is simply due to cold? It may perhaps have a connection with the psychic centre?

But why is the vital not opening?

It is opening. Much more work is being done than is felt by your ordinary consciousness. Mother tells me sometimes what is happening during the meditation. It is all very good. The task of connecting the two consciousnesses is going on. When this will be done, it will go quickly.

In meditation I don't remain completely passive but I follow what the force does. I talked with Mother about the matter and she said that passivity was required in the beginning of the meditation but that when the force has begun to work cooperation is to be practised.

Of course following the movement was understood. To follow the movement, and see what it is doing there. Complete passivity would be inconscience.

Completely passive I would go to sleep.

I became conscious of a centre in the middle of the head, a centre connected with both ears. I don't know yet more about it, only its existence.

Sunday, October 31, 1926

Interview with Mother

My meditation was calm and deep. A great force descended. But the last two days were not very luminous. Yesterday particularly was a little cloudy.

The evening the day before, during meditation, I almost lost consciousness of my body. I called you to help me; but instead of helping me to free myself you put me back into my physical consciousness.

Mother: Yes. To leave one's consciousness in order to enter another state is not what one must seek. That may be interesting as an experience; but the present movement is different. It is a question of linking up the two consciousnesses, but that means to bring down the higher consciousness into the physical body. Everything must be present there in the natural consciousness. You will be brought back thus every time you try to escape.

Something is being prepared for you. That was said yesterday. It is as though the divine will had traced the goal, and the road; it is as though it had told you: "You will be like that". It was very clear. The Goal is known to us, but it is reserved for us two. To you it is rather the road that this indicated. And this road is very different from what you expected in your outer consciousness. I wouldn't know how to express it. You would not understand me in your outer consciousness. Your inner being knows: it almost told me sometime ago something very similar. That must become conscious. You are on the eve of something. Don't be surprised if it is very different from what you expect or if it is very intense. It is so willed.

...?...

Today I saw that a shadow had tried to cloud things. But there is nothing left of it now. When something like this descends, the first

effect is to raise up all the oppositions. All that is unsubdued in the being bristles up. Then there is a waiting in the darkness, for one sees nothing yet. That must be the cause of your difficulties yesterday.

Remain calm and concentrated.

(Several conversations which followed were torn)

Saturday, November 6, 1926

During the first part of the week I was disturbed by some movements of the vital which were possibly due to a hostile influence. And even when the possibility of the influence was removed some anxiety was still felt, due perhaps only to the novelty of the movement. But later this anxiety was thrown away and calm came again.

The chief difficulty is always the activity of the mind. It is neither possible to quiet it completely nor to stand aside from it. Even when for some very short time it does not interfere with the concentration, it is not truly quiet and resumes its activity at the very first opportunity. It seems to me that if it were possible to quiet it, progress would be rapid, for concentration would be easy. Now I am always disturbed and concentration is very imperfect.

THIS activity of the physical mind will only be completely transformed when the physical itself will be changed, but what should be arrived at is that during meditation, it be simply dropped off.

But what of the activity of the mind that observes what is going on and expresses it? Shall I try to suppress it?

Not suppress, but simply discard it. But there are movements of the mind more true in character, that are reflections from above and bear some stamp of truth. Are these not of this kind?

I don't think so. There is nothing of a special true character in them. They are ordinary mental movements, as far as I can see.

Nowadays at the beginning of every meditation I call in the force to effect this silencing of the mind and, open to it, let it work it out. I suppose this is correct.

Yes, it is.

(silence)

What did you say to Mme. X.?

I told her what you said, but as coming from me. I told her that you would not allow any of us to make any political move and that from the very beginning you have kept the same attitude. I suggested that a third party should go and meet these gentlemen from Ch. and hint at what was behind the present situation, explaining also the attitude of the Governor and of X's family towards us. And I said that if their suspicion had been aroused, they would have come here for information and that they would have been told the truth, etc., etc.

Nolini told me that she said she was surprised that we would not move for them after what they did for us.

No. I did not mean that. I said simply that I took care to explain in the right way in order to avoid such feeling.

They must understand that I cannot and will not take any step in any political affair.¹⁶ And what they might expect from me is purely spiritual. The only thing they can expect for the help they gave you and

Mine. Z. is a spiritual return. And if they can receive it, it is all right. My only action is on a spiritual plane and when I decide to act in a case like this, it is from above. When C. R. came to me asking for help I did not act otherwise. For sometime he remained open and was able to receive something. He succeeded in all he did and even recovered from ill health. After sometime he severed the connection. He had asked me for some public recognition, some public blessing, etc. This I refused to give. And if the Xs use the power for public good ... But you know how the political atmosphere is corrupt here!

May I tell her this?

Well! by and by, and if the opportunity offers itself. You may tell her that

[16] Let us recall that Sri Aurobindo was a political refugee in French India and that the British would have been only too happy to seize the least opportunity to obtain his extradition.

I have retired completely from physical action for the present and am engaged only in spiritual work.

Saturday, November 6, 1926

Interview with Mother 7 p.m.

The day was calm and peaceful. During my meditation this evening, all the work was in the outer consciousness. A peaceful and calm light descended which filled all the upper part of the body, without it being possible to tell exactly whence it emanated. And a work of calming went on in the outer mind. The lowest centre was also active — in short, the entire outer consciousness. In this case I make no effort to concentrate within myself.

Mother: Yes, naturally it is necessary to follow the movement of the force. It is a work of stopping this outer consciousness so that there would be only one consciousness henceforth.

There is an entire part of the mind which always remains active, it is that which observes. Rather the one which formulates what I observe in words. It follows the experience and expresses it. I can't stop it.

For the moment that does not matter. You are not conscious of a thing except when it is expressed in words. For the moment this is still necessary.

But later even that must disappear?

You will be conscious directly, without this intermediary. Naturally for expression words will always be necessary. But even then the mind is no longer required.

When he wrote the Arya, his mind was absolutely silent, passive. The consciousness was high above in the supermind, and only that kind of consciousness which is in the hand formed the words. He was conscious of them as they were being expressed. From the intellectual point of view the Arya is perfect: clarity, order, logic. And yet the mind has no

part in it. That does not mean that the mind is useless. It has certain useful activities, but it is a ...

(here, eight pages are torn out)

...?

The beginning of this conversation with Mother is torn out.

Mother: ... manifestation.

It is not possible that some mental elements come from one source and others from another?

Yes, but this is not generally important. In some cases, as in Egypt for instance, there was an advanced occult knowledge. Certain men accumulated a mental occult knowledge which remained there, quite ready. And when you enter into contact with it, it is at your disposal. But such cases are rare. Generally, these are tendencies or perhaps it is a faculty or some more or less important remembrance.

This divine aspect is, in short, the individual Higher Self?

You are speaking of the jiva, the individual element which persists and presides over the reincarnations? It is more than that. These jivas, mostly, except for certain very rare cases, are like emanations of divine beings who have put forth outside themselves numerous jivas. And it is these jivas that incarnate.

In your case the divine aspect in question has put itself forth in jivas. But there is one of these which represents more directly this aspect — as the direct projection or emanation by which it will find its fulfilment. And this jiva, from what I can see, has already incarnated thrice upon earth, you would be the fourth. When an emanation like this prepares and chooses its vehicle, that preparation is made all the same under the distant guidance of this force. And often there are certain tendencies in childhood which cannot be understood till the day one becomes conscious of the aim of one's life. Then these tendencies, sometimes quite opposed to the milieu, to heredity, take on their raison d'être.

Besides, it is only when one penetrates the depths of consciousness that one really becomes aware of the reason of things.

And what is there behind you is your real Self, clothed with all the experiences of a terrestrial life.¹⁷

[17] The following note is part of a preceding page torn from Pavitra's notebook:

Mother: At the beginning it (the Jiva in question or the real "Self") remained behind. But gradually as your consciousness grew clear, it came close. I spoke to you about it only when your consciousness was sufficiently transparent for you to begin to perceive.

Saturday, November 13, 1926

My vital being begins to take part fully in the meditation. And I have the sensation that my consciousness extends from the head to the feet, like a transparent and calm medium. It would be quite limp if the physiological sensations of sight would stop, which they do sometimes but not always.

Then I have the consciousness of a presence behind me, the sensation of which is a duplicate of my consciousness. Even I feel it as if it were of the same size as my physical body and it presses to unite with my outer consciousness.

Today the unification was nearly done, though I did not experience any change of consciousness. I have the impression it came into me and only a slight touch would have been required to awake my full consciousness of it.

This luminous consciousness, is it not the physical consciousness? I mean the whole physical, physical mind, vital and body?

It is, I suppose, the normal consciousness, including the physical, and the consciousness behind is the inner one, which tries to unite with the outer one.

I became also conscious of the movements of the vital which we may call egoistic movements. They rise from the vital and become conscious at the emotional centre. The thoughts by themselves have no character of vanity or selfishness, but when dwelling on certain thoughts, vital movements of this character appear and I cannot stop them. I suppose they will disappear?

Yes. The first thing is to become conscious that they do not come from the mind. Then when the mind is free from them and the emotional being sufficiently free, they rise but don't cloud the mind. They are then located in their proper place and by refusing them the consent and calmly putting them aside they will disappear. Most men cannot get rid of them because they cannot make this separation and are not

conscious of this rising.

I feel as before something very deep and grand.

Yes.

...?

Here, several pages of conversations with Mother are torn out.

... philosopher's stone. And they said that this stone could even transform the physical body. Does this not prove a realisation in the physical?

Mother: Yes. This is something that has always been known, this possibility of transformation. But their vision was very partial. They were rather the scientists of the age.

What did you see yesterday?

My physical eyes did not see anything special. But I felt very powerfully the force and majesty.

One must not expect to see a complete change. Yet, some see very different aspects.

I saw a luminosity, a halo.

Yes, it scarcely goes further. Still, some see changing aspects.

I saw in fact modifications of the shadows of faces which could give this idea of successive changes; but as this was unsteady, I did not pay much attention to it.

There are different aspects which manifest successively. The modifications are still imperfect, for the flesh and what is most physical is not transformed; it penetrates into the blood. Yesterday it was above all the wisdom aspect which manifested in all its power — the

knowledge in the Word.

There is quite a work going on in your eyes. You feel it?

Yes. I have spoken about it several times.

All depends on how much your outer consciousness is united with the inner. When you have overcome the difficulties of your outer being, you will pass through a progressive initiation. I shall show you, through the eyes, all that is there in the universe You will then see the exact place of all these things.

You must get rid of all these difficulties.

Is there something special I should do?

The best thing, as you know, is to open yourself and ask that it be done.

Saturday, November 20, 1926

I suppose she must have told you the way I am going on.

Yes.

There is nothing much that's important to add. I am conscious of the process of identification with that greater consciousness which is behind me; but it is not yet done. The difficulty resides always in the outer consciousness and the mechanical part of the mind which carries me away.

That is again the old story. You are paying too much attention to these workings.

I am not trying to suppress them by force. But is it really that they have no importance?

It is only an outer working which will be left and cast away in the process. This outer being is only the aggregate of what belongs to this life-time with a personality that is not your true personality.

How will it disappear?

When the inner consciousness will be fully awake, it will absorb the outer one. Or what cannot be absorbed will be rejected. There is no doubt that the change will occur.

You spoke of your experience with Lele.¹⁸

At that time did this mechanical working stop?

Yes. Everything had stopped. But everybody cannot do it. I could do it

[18] Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, a "temporary guru" whom Sri Aurobindo met in December 1907 and with whom he spent three days in meditation. At the end of the third day Sri Aurobindo had the experience of Nirvana.

because there had always been a tendency to calm in my being and because I became aware of the thoughts coming from outside. When I rejected them the calm descended upon me. Everything appears in the mind but does not evoke any response in it. I see, I hear, but no responses are awakened. At that time a complete silence came down. Everything that happened was like a cinema. After that I had to take things back again into me, but in their right place.

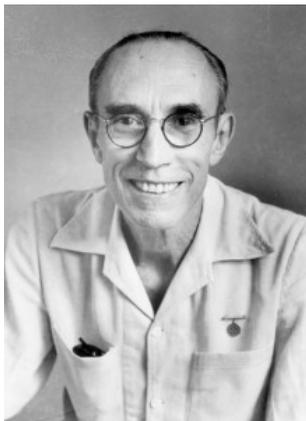
So, this should not be expected for me?

It will come, as a thing pressed from above. But it may not come in the beginning. Of course the faculty of silence at will is needed and has to come.

Up to now no fundamental change in consciousness has occurred. I feel that my mind is deeper, has some deep background behind. I am more and more conscious of the working of the forces in me. But no radical change yet.

(The last ten pages of Pavitra's notebook are torn out.)

THE END



Pavitra (Philippe Barbier Saint-Hilaire)

Pavitra (Philippe Barbier Saint-Hilaire) (from the Sanskrit word for 'pure') was one of the very early disciples of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. He was born in Paris, January 16, 1894. In 1914 he graduated from the École Polytechnique with a degree in Engineering. He served in the army in World War I as an artillery officer, and after the war worked as a junior engineer in Paris, at the Ministry of transport and communication.

He was interested in occultism, and in 1920 departed for Japan to study Zen Buddhism. In 1924 he left Japan and spend time with tantric lamas in monasteries in North China and Mongolia.

In 1925 he came to India and met Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in Pondicherry, where he was accepted as a sadhak, and Sri Aurobindo gave him the name Pavitra ("Clearness"). In 1951 the Mother appointed him director of the just founded Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. He served in this position for eighteen years, as well as the general secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, until his death in 1969. The Mother reports in Agenda (May 1969) that Pavitra left his body in a totally yogic way and merged with her.

According to Satprem (see note to "On Pavitra and Pavitra's Death"), Pavitra left some very interesting memoirs of his conversations with Sri Aurobindo and Mother in 1925 and 1926, large parts of which were

destroyed (almost a third of Pavitra's notebooks) by his closest collaborator, with the pretext that it would be "better left unsaid". What was left was published as *Conversations avec Pavitra*.

Pavitra's Page on Auro e-Books:

www.auro-ebooks.com/authors/pavitra/