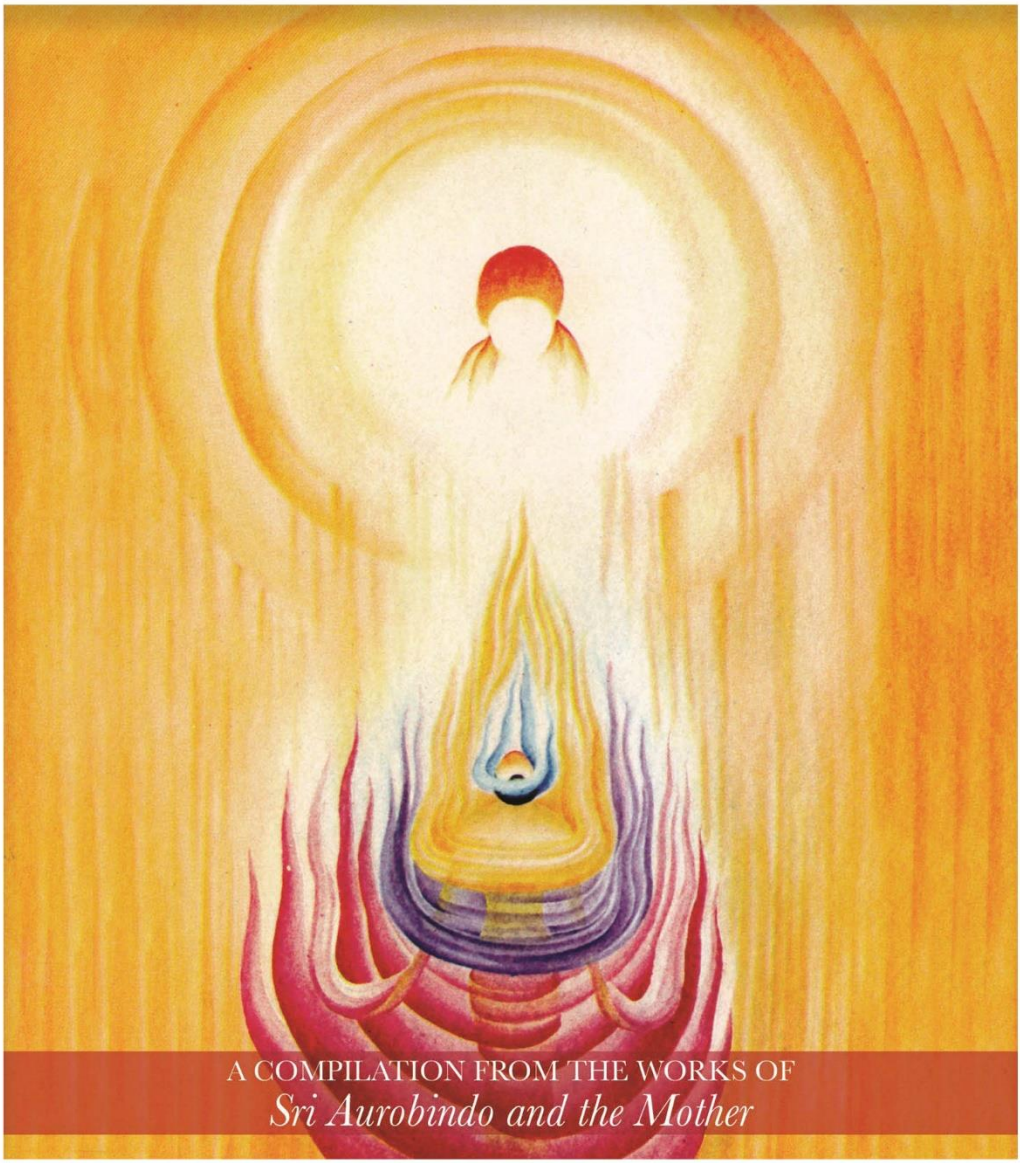
ASPIRATION
in the INTEGRAL YOGA
Third Edition



Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

ASPIRATION

In the Integral Yoga

Third Edition

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A Compilation from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

ASPIRATION

In the Integral Yoga

Third Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

All over the world, there is a growing interest in spirituality and Yoga. There is a search for the true meaning and purpose of life, for deeper solutions to the problems that confront us all, and for ways in which we can contribute to evolutionary change and progress.

In this search, more and more people are turning to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guidance and enlightenment. But in their voluminous writings, they do not know where to find the answers they are looking for.

In this regard, the Mother has said,

> *"It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc."*
>
> (CWM 12: 206)

On another occasion She said:

> *"If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement*

one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis."

(CWM 16: 309–310)

While several compilations are now available, many sincere spiritual seekers have felt the need for Comprehensive Compilations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on specific subjects, in which the contents are further organised into sub-topics, so that one can find everything one is looking for in one place.

This compilation is an effort to fulfil this need and thus help spiritual seekers in their journey and sadhana. We hope that this compilation will help us gain greater mental clarity about a subject so that we can channel our efforts in the right direction. For Sri Aurobindo has written:

"It is always better to make an effort in the right direction; even if one fails the effort bears some result and is never lost."

(CWSA 29: 87)

We will be glad to receive suggestions and feedback from the readers.

Vijay

Preface

Once, the Mother was asked to say something about Yoga. In her reply, she said that the first thing necessary in Yoga is an aspiration for the Divine. She further says that one has to tend this aspiration and keep it always alert, awake, and living. In this compilation, *Aspiration in the Integral Yoga*, an effort has been made to bring together all the quotations on "Aspiration" from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The Mother also emphasizes that, if one wishes always to progress, one must understand more completely what one already knows.

> "For those who want always to progress, there are three major ways of progressing:
>
> (1) To widen the field of one's consciousness.
>
> (2) To understand ever better and more completely what one knows.
>
> (3) To find the Divine and surrender more and more to His Will." (CWM 16: 435–436)

The purpose of this comprehensive compilation is to help the reader understand Aspiration more completely and in greater depth. The headings and subheadings are intended to guide the reader towards a clearer and deeper understanding. However, it is important to read the quotations themselves, for Sri Aurobindo's and the

Mother's words are infused with a consciousness infinitely higher than our own. Therefore, reading these quotations will help the reader not only understand all aspects of Aspiration but also, and most importantly, elevate their consciousness.

The quotations in this compilation are taken from the volumes of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition. Each quotation is followed by the title of the book, the volume number, and the page number from which it has been taken.

While the passages from Sri Aurobindo are in the original English, most of the passages from the Mother (selections from her talks and writings) are translations from the original French. We must also bear in mind that the excerpts have been taken out of their original context and that a compilation, by its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to remain faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Those who would like to read the fuller text are advised to consult *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition.

The section headings and sub-headings have also been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—What Is Aspiration in Yoga?

1.
"Aspiration is a call to the Divine,—will is the pressure of a conscious force on Nature." (CWSA 29: 57)

2.
"A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be everything for you in your integral being, and you feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that you do, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being. That is a spiritual aspiration." (CWM 5: 292–293)

3.
"Aspiration is to call the forces. When the forces have answered, there is a natural state of quiet receptivity concentrated but spontaneous." (CWSA 29: 57)

4.
"It was like an aspiration (not formulated in words, naturally), what is called in English 'a yearning', 'a longing' for this contact with the divine Force, the Force of Harmony, the Force of Truth, the Force of Love." (CWM 11: 4)

5.
"Yoga is not only an aspiration of the mind towards the Divine but also and chiefly a yearning of the heart." (CWM 14: 32)

6.
"There is no deep meaning [*of aspiration*]–the meaning is plain. It is the call of the being for the higher things–for the Divine, for all that belongs to the higher or Divine Consciousness." (CWSA 29: 56)

"It [*aspiration*] is the call in the being for the Divine or for the higher things that belong to the Divine Consciousness. (To 'aspire' always means to call for higher things.)" (CWSA 29: 56)

7.
"There is no need of words in aspiration. It can be expressed or unexpressed in words." (CWSA 29: 58)

The aspiration need not be in the form of thought—it can be a feeling within that remains even when the mind is attending to the work." (CWSA 29: 58)

8.
"To pull is always an egoistic movement. It is a deformation of aspiration. True aspiration consists in a giving, a self–

giving, whereas to pull means to want for oneself." (CWM 11: 23)

9.

"I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; … But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration—an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, 'What's going to happen?' For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That's why I speak of courage—but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage." (CWM 8: 40–41)

10.

"Aspiration is like an arrow, like this (*gesture*). So you aspire, want *very* earnestly to understand, know, enter into the truth. Yes? And then with that aspiration you do this (*gesture*). Your aspiration rises, rises, rises, rises straight up, very strong and then it strikes against a kind of... how

to put it?... lid which is there, hard like iron and extremely thick, and it does not pass through. And then you say, 'See, what's the use of aspiring? It brings nothing at all. I meet with something hard and cannot pass!' But you know about the drop of water which falls on the rock, it ends up by making a chasm: it cuts the rock from top to bottom. Your aspiration is a drop of water which, instead of falling, rises. So, by dint of rising, it beats, beats, beats, and one day it makes a hole, by dint of rising; and when it makes the hole suddenly it springs out from this lid and enters an immensity of light, and you say, 'Ah, now I understand.'

It's like that.

So one must be very persistent, very stubborn and have an aspiration which rises straight upwards, that is, which does not go roaming around here and there, seeking all kinds of things.

Only this: to understand, understand, understand, to learn to know, to be.

When one reaches the very top, there is nothing more to understand, nothing more to learn, one is, and it's when one is that one understands and knows." (CWM 7: 239)

11. "Spiritual aspiration rises like an arrow caring for neither obstacles nor laggards [idler]." (CWM 14: 77)

12.
"True aspiration is not a movement of the mind but of the psychic." (CWM 14: 76)

13.
(*Message for the "Home of Progress", an Ashram hostel*)

"If in man the seed of aspiration is watered with the true spirituality then he will grow into Divinity." (CWM 14: 78)

14.
"Aspiration is a turning upward of the inner being with a call, yearning, prayer for the Divine, for the Truth, for the Consciousness, Peace, Ananda, Knowledge, descent of Divine Force or whatever else is the aim of one's endeavour." (CWSA 29: 56–57)

15.
"Divine Nature is the nature of the divine Consciousness, Truth, Peace, Light, Purity, Knowledge, Power, Ananda on whichever plane it manifests." (CWSA 35: 87)

16.
"Aspiration is a call in the being, it is not opening." (CWSA 29: 57)

17.

"You aspire for a certain state; for instance, you have found something in yourself that is not in keeping with your ideal, a movement of darkness and ignorance, perhaps even of ill–will, something that's not in harmony with what you want to realise; then that is not going to be formulated in words; that will be like a springing flame and like an offering made of a living experience, asking to grow larger, be magnified and ever more and more clear and precise. All that may be put into words *later*, if one tries to remember and note down one's experience. But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word 'desire', but truly it is here that the word 'aspire' should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best, and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future

that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (*pointing to the heart*) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like a springing flame.

That indeed is true aspiration. That may happen a hundred, a thousand times daily if one is in that state in which one constantly wants to progress and be more true and more fully in harmony with what the Divine Will wants of us." (CWM 5: 140–141)

18.

"Aspiration is the dynamic push of your whole nature behind the resolution to reach the Divine. Surrender, on the other hand, may be defined as the giving up of the limits of your ego." (CWM 3: 168)

19.

"The desire for the Divine or bhakti for the Divine is the one desire which can free one from all the others—at the core it is not a desire, but an aspiration, a soul need, the breath of existence of the inmost being, and as such it cannot be counted among desires." (CWSA 31: 255–256)

II—The Essential Thing in Yoga Is Aspiration for the Divine

1.

"I have always had realisation by meditation first and the purification started afterwards as a result. I have seen many get important, even fundamental realisations by meditation who could not be said to have a great inner development. Are all Yogis who have meditated with effect and had great realisations in their inner consciousness perfect in their nature? It does not look like it to me. I am unable to believe in absolute generalisations in this field, because the development of spiritual consciousness is an exceedingly vast and complex affair in which all sorts of things can happen and one might almost say that for each man it is different according to his nature and that the one thing that is essential is the inner call and aspiration and the perseverance to follow always after it no matter how long it takes or what are the difficulties or impediments—because nothing else will satisfy the soul within us.

It is quite true that a certain amount of purification is indispensable for going on, that the more complete the purification the better because then when the realisations begin they can continue without big difficulties or relapses and without any possibility of fall or failure. It is also true that with many purification is the first need,—certain things

have to be got out of the way before one can begin any consecutive inner experience."
(CWSA 30: 40)

2.

"*Will you say something to us about Yoga?*

What do you want the Yoga for? To get power? To attain to peace and calm? To serve humanity?

None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the Path.

The question you are to answer is this: Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine? Is the Divine the supreme fact of your life, so much so that it is simply impossible for you to do without it? Do you feel that your very *raison d'être* is the Divine and without it there is no meaning in your existence? If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

This is the first thing necessary [in Yoga]—aspiration for the Divine.

The next thing you have to do is to tend it, to keep it always alert and awake and living. And for that what is required is concentration—concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose." (CWM 3: 1)

3.

"Q: 'Do you want the Yoga for the sake of the Divine?... If so, then only can it be said that you have a call for the Path.

'This is the first thing necessary—aspiration for the Divine.'

Questions and Answers 1929 (7 April)

A: The first movement of aspiration is this: you have a kind of vague sensation that behind the universe there is something which is worth knowing, which is probably (for you do not yet know it) the only thing worth living for, which can connect you with the Truth; something on which the universe depends but which does not depend upon the universe, something which still escapes your comprehension but which seems to you to be behind all things.... I have said here much more than the majority of people feel about the thing, but this is the beginning of the first aspiration—to know that, not to live in this perpetual falsehood where things are so perverted and artificial, this would be something pleasant; to find something that is worth living for.

'The next thing you have to do is to tend this aspiration, to keep it always alert and awake and living.'
Ibid.

Instead of telling yourself once in a while, 'Oh, yes! I am thinking of finding the Divine', just when there is something unpleasant, when you are a little disgusted because you feel tired—indeed, there are very many flimsy reasons—all of a sudden you remember that there is such a thing as yoga, something like the Divine to know who can get you out of this flatness of life." (CWM 4: 67–68)

4.

"Q: *What is the best method to find the Divine who is in each of us and in all things?*

A: Aspiration.

Silence.

Concentration in the solar plexus region." (CWM 14: 41)

5.

"It is quite true that aspiration, rejection and the remembrance of the Mother and surrender to her and union with her consciousness are the main means of the sadhana." (CWSA 32: 137)

6.

"Aspiration and devotion are the natural and easy means for getting the contact." (CWSA 29: 361)

7.

"Q: I have heard about the aspiration to be simply what You want.

A: That is the best state for advancing swiftly on the path." (CWM 16: 369)

8.

"It is the opening of the consciousness to the Mother from within that is the true initiation and that can only come by aspiration and rejection of restlessness in the mind and vital." (CWSA 29: 326)

9.

"Sadhana is necessary and the Divine Force cannot do things in the void but must lead each one according to his nature to the point at which he can feel the Mother working within and doing all for him. Till then the sadhak's aspiration, self-consecration, assent and support to the Mother's workings, his rejection of all that comes in the way is very necessary—indispensable." (CWSA 32: 137)

10.

"There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls

from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers." (CWSA 32: 3)

11.
"This Yoga demands a total dedication of the life to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever." (CWSA 29: 15)

12.
"The sadhana of this Yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self–concentration inwards or upwards, by self–opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart, and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self–opening can come." (CWSA 29: 20)

13.
"To be in contact with the Mother's Light and Force is the one important thing (fundamental) to which you must aspire. For this the psychic feeling is the indispensable condition; for it is through the psychic that this contact becomes easy and natural. It gives the psychic basis. Once the basis is there firmly established the rest can be done according to need and it will be much better done, because

then there will be the safety from hostile attack and the right guidance." (CWSA 32: 136–137)

14.

"There are three stages of the ascent,—at the bottom the bodily life enslaved to the pressure of necessity and desire, in the middle the mental, higher emotional and psychic rule that feels after greater interests, aspirations, experiences, at the summits first a deeper psychic and spiritual state and then a supramental eternal consciousness in which all our aspirations and seekings discover their own intimate significance. In the bodily life first desire and need and then the practical good of the individual and the society are the governing consideration, the dominant force. In the mental life ideas and ideals rule, ideas that are half-lights wearing the garb of Truth, ideals formed by the mind as a result of a growing but still imperfect intuition and experience." (CWSA 23: 208–209)

15.

"*Please give your Grace to this unfortunate lady, whose letter I enclose. Be kind enough to instruct me what I should write to her. She prays for your upadeśa and blessings.*

But it is not by *upadeśa* that this sadhana is given or carried on. It is only those who are capable by aspiration and

meditation on the Mother to open and receive her action and working within that can succeed in this Yoga." (CWSA 32: 136)

16.
"In this Yoga there is no fixed mantra, no stress is laid on mantras, although sadhaks can use one if they find it helpful or so long as they find it helpful. The stress is rather on an aspiration in the consciousness and a concentration of the mind, heart, will, all the being. If a mantra is found helpful for that, one uses it. OM if rightly used (not mechanically) might very well help the opening upwards and outwards (cosmic consciousness) as well as the descent." (CWSA 35: 826) (CWSA 29: 324)

17.
"Aspiration is necessary in all spiritual aims from whatever part of the consciousness." (CWSA 28: 303)

18.
"It depends on the stage which one has reached. Personal aspiration is necessary until there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development." (CWSA 29: 58)

19.

"Naturally, there is a state in which one may be perfectly pure, perfectly wise, and be in contact with the Divine! But then, that means that one has reached a certain degree of perfection and lost the sense of one's personal importance and personal worth. I believe that's most important. The greatest obstacle to the contact with the Divine is pride and the sense of one's personal worth, one's personal capacities, personal power—the person becomes very big, so big that there is no place for the Divine.

No, the one truly important thing is the intensity of the aspiration. And this intensity of aspiration comes in all kinds of circumstances.

… One must not do this with the idea of gaining merit, or the idea that because you will gain merit God will be very pleased and come and manifest within you! It is not at all that, not at all! Perhaps even, He feels closer to him who has made mistakes, who is conscious of his faults and has the sense of his weakness, and aspires sincerely to come out of it all—He feels perhaps closer to him than to one who has never made a mistake and is satisfied with his external superiority over other human beings. In any case, that does not make a great difference. What does make a lot of difference is the sincerity, the spontaneity, the intensity of the aspiration—the need, that need which seizes you and which is so powerful that nothing else in the world counts.

As I have said elsewhere about surrender and sacrifice, if one regrets something, that means that one is not in a spiritual state of consciousness. If one regrets that one can no longer satisfy one's desires, that means the desires are at least as important as, if not more than, the thing one aspires for. You may say, 'Desires are something of which I am quite conscious, whilst if I give up my desires with the idea of getting the Divine, I am yet not sure that I shall have Him; hence I call this a sacrifice.' But I, I call that bargaining! It is bargaining with the Divine. One tells Him, 'Give and take; I, I give You the joy I have in satisfying my desires, You must give me in exchange the joy of feeling You within myself, else it is not just.'—This is not self-giving, this is bargaining."
(CWM 5: 348–349)

20.
"Activity in aspiration, tapasya, rejection of the wrong forces, passivity to the true working, the working of the Mother's force are the right things in sadhana." (CWSA 29: 59)

21.
"It is altogether unprofitable to enquire who or what class will arrive first or last at the goal. The spiritual path is not a field of competition or a race that this should matter. What matters is one's own aspiration for the Divine, one's

own faith, surrender, selfless self–giving. Others can be left to the Divine who will lead each according to his nature. Meditation, work, bhakti are each means of preparative help towards fulfilment; all are included in this path." (CWSA 29: 213)

III— Initially, Sadhaka Has to Make Personal Effort to Aspire

1.

"But so long as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the Sadhaka* remains necessary. The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender, —

an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature; …" (CWSA 32: 6)

[**sadhaka : one who is engaged in the practice of yoga*]

2.

"The effort demanded of the sadhak is that of aspiration, rejection and surrender. If these three are done the rest is to come of itself by the Grace of the Mother and the working of her force in you." (CWSA 32: 139)

3.

"It is certain that one's own effort is necessary, though one cannot do the sadhana by one's own effort alone. The Mother's Force is needed, but the sadhak must open himself to it, reject what opposes the Force, put his full sincerity, aspiration, will power into the sadhana. It is only when all is open and there is the full surrender that the

Divine Power takes up the sadhana so entirely that personal effort is no longer necessary. But that cannot happen at an early stage—one must go on opening oneself, consecrating oneself, making the surrender till that later stage comes." (CWSA 32: 220)

4.

"*Mother, it is said: 'Reject the false notion that the divine Power will do and is bound to do everything for you at your demand and even though you do not satisfy the conditions laid down by the Supreme.' Then...*

But, you know, there are people who are told, 'You should surrender.' Then they answer you with a smile, 'Well, make me surrender!' Why, this is very simple!

When one wants to make some progress...

Yes!

One tries but finds that something doesn't want to advance, doesn't want to progress.

Yes, to progress.

Then, if one asks the Divine to...

To help?

Yes.

To help, that's understood, He is there to help. But what is said here means to sit idly not doing anything, not making the shadow of an effort, nor even aspiring or willing, nothing, and then say, 'Well, God will do this for me; the Divine will do everything for me. The Divine Grace will give me aspiration. If I need aspiration, It will give it to me. If I need surrender, It will give me that', and so on. 'I have to do nothing except to remain passively seated, without stirring and without willing anything.' Well, there are people like that, many! They are told 'Aspire.' 'Give me aspiration.' (*Laughter*) They are told, 'Be generous.' 'Oh, make me generous; and I shall give everything!' (*Laughter*)." (CWM 6: 208–209)

5.

"To accept the uglinesses of the lower nature under the pretext that they exist—if this is what is meant by realism—does not form part of the sadhana. Our aim is not to accept these things and enjoy them, but to get rid of them and create a life of spiritual beauty and perfection. That cannot be done as long as we accept these uglinesses.

To be aware that they are there and to reject them, not to let them touch us is one thing; to accept them and submit to them is quite another.

Beware of what pulls you downward. Do not yield to any lower instinct. Keep intact your aspiration for the Divine." (CWM 14: 253)

6.

"You have my love and grace and blessings.

But if you are to feel them you must be disciplined, attentive and concentrated; above all you must not listen to any of your desires and fancies.

In life, one must choose between a disordered and useless life of desires and that of an ascent into the light of aspiration and mastery of one's lower nature." (CWM 14: 256)

IV—Not the Capacity or Potential but the Requirement in Yoga Is Aspiration

1.

"Q: "*Divine Mother,*

I wish to get light on the following points.

1. Have I the capacity and are there potentialities in me to follow this path?

A: This is not the question, the question is whether you have the necessary aspiration, determination and perseverance and whether you can by the intensity and persistence of your aspiration make all the parts of your being answer to the call and become one in the consecration." (CWM 14: 38)

2.

"These ideas of incapacity are absurd, they are the negation of the truth of progress—what cannot be done today, will be done another day, if the aspiration is there." (CWM 14: 236)

3.

"What you say is quite true. A simple, straight and sincere call and aspiration from the heart is the one important thing and more essential and effective than capacities. Also to get the consciousness to turn inwards, not remain

outward–going is of great importance—to arrive at the inner call, the inner experience, the inner Presence.

The help you ask will be with you. Let the aspiration grow and open the inner consciousness altogether." (CWSA 29: 55)

4.

"It is useless to raise the question of fitness. No one is fit—for all human beings are full of faults and incapacities—even the greatest sadhaks are not free. It is a question only of aspiration, of believing in the divine Grace and letting the Divine work in you, not making a refusal." (CWSA 29: 33)

5.

"No sadhak even if he had the capacity of the ancient Rishis and Tapaswis or the strength of a Vivekananda can hope to keep during the early years of his sadhana a continuous good condition or union with the Divine or an unbroken call or height of aspiration. It takes a long time to spiritualise the whole nature and until that is done, variations must come. A constant trust and patience must be cultivated — must be acquired—not least when things go against—for when they are favourable, trust and patience are easy." (CWSA 29: 32)

6.

"A present incapacity, however heavy may seem its pressure, is only a trial of faith and a temporary difficulty and to yield to the sense of inability is for the seeker of the integral Yoga a non-sense, for his object is a development of a perfection that is there already, latent in the being, because man carries the seed of the divine life in himself, in his own spirit, the possibility of success is involved and implied in the effort and victory is assured because behind is the call and guidance of an omnipotent power. At the same time this faith in oneself must be purified from all touch of rajasic egoism and spiritual pride. The sadhaka should keep as much as possible in his mind the idea that his strength is not his own in the egoistic sense but that of the divine universal Shakti and whatever is egoistic in his use of it must be a cause of limitation and in the end an obstacle. The power of the divine universal Shakti which is behind our aspiration is illimitable, and when it is rightly called upon it cannot fail to pour itself into us and to remove whatever incapacity and obstacle, now or later; for the times and durations of our struggle while they depend at first, instrumentally and in part, on the strength of our faith and our endeavour, are yet eventually in the hands of the wisely determining secret Spirit, alone the Master of the Yoga, the Ishwara." (CWSA 24: 780)

7.

"If you want to change, you must first resolutely get rid of the defects of your vital being, persevering steadily, however difficult it may be or however long it may take, calling in always the divine help and compelling yourself always to be entirely sincere.

As for fitness and unfitness, nobody is entirely fit for this Yoga; one has to become fit by aspiration, by *abhyāsa*, by sincerity and surrender. If you have always desired the spiritual life, it is the psychic part of you that desired it, but your vital has always come in the way. Establish a sincere will in the vital; do not allow personal desires and demands and selfishness and falsehood to mix in your sadhana; then alone the vital in you will become fit for the sadhana." (CWSA 31: 108–109)

8.

"*O Mother, come down in me. So many times I have promised to offer myself to you, and every time the promise has been broken, leaving me suspended in the air. But if I am reminded of my unfitness, what shall I do? I can't do anything.*

The fitness comes with the aspiration." (CWSA 32: 136)

9.

"I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and excesses of despair are natural—though not inevitable—on the way,—not because they are helps, but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the incidents you allude to as an example for others to follow—they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in the end in spite of these bad moments and they would never have dreamed of giving up the Yoga or the aspiration for the Divine on the ground that they were unfit and not meant for the realisation." (CWSA 29: 470)

10.

"Fitness for Yoga is a very relative term—the real fitness comes by the soul's call and the power to open oneself to the Divine. If you have that, and your past actions cannot stand in the way: the past cannot bind the future. Of course, you have to finish with it, reject it and turn into the new ways—otherwise the past remains the present. But that is the question of the will in you and the soul's call. If you are faithful to your soul's call there is no reason why you should not be able to do Yoga. All that you have to do is to keep your aspiration and not lose the inner connection

that has been made—then The Mother's thought and the help will be with you and you will find your way." (CWSA 29: 33)

11.

"The Mother's help and mine are always there for you. You have only to turn fully towards it and it will act on you.

What has come across is these wrong ideas about your unfitness, about bad things in you that prevent you from receiving the Mother's grace, about the lack of aspiration which prevents you from having realisation and experience. These thoughts are quite wrong and untrue—they are not even your own thoughts, they are suggestions thrown on you just as they are thrown on the other sadhaks and intended to produce depression. There is no unfitness, no bad thing inside that comes across, no lack of aspiration causing the cessation of experience. It is the depression, the self-distrust, the readiness to despair which are the only cause; there is no other. To all sadhaks, as I wrote to you, even to the best and strongest there come interruptions in the flow of the sadhana; that is not a cause for thinking oneself unfit and wanting to go away with the idea that there is no hope. A little quietude would bring back the flow. You were having the necessary experiences, the necessary progress and it was only a coming forward of some difficulties of the physical consciousness that stopped them for a time. That happens

to all and is not particular to you, as I explained to you. These difficulties always come and have to be overcome. Once overcome by the working of the Force, the sadhana goes on as before. But you began to entertain this wrong idea of unfitness and lack of aspiration as the cause and got entirely depressed. You must shake all that off and refuse to believe in the thought-suggestions that come to you. No sadhak ought ever to indulge thoughts of unfitness and hopelessness—they are quite irrelevant because it is not one's personal fitness and worthiness that makes one succeed, but the Mother's grace and power and the consent of the soul to her grace and the workings of her Force." (CWSA 29: 34)

V—What Awakens the Aspiration?

1.

"*Sweet Mother, here it is written: 'There is a Yoga-Shakti lying coiled or asleep...' How can it be awakened?*

I think it awakens quite naturally the moment one takes the resolution to do the yoga. If the resolution is sincere and one has an aspiration, it wakes up by itself.

In fact, it is perhaps its awakening which gives the aspiration to do yoga.

It is possible that it is a result of the Grace... or after some conversation or reading, something that has suddenly given you the idea and aspiration to know what yoga is and to practise it. Sometimes just a simple conversation with someone is enough or a passage one reads from a book; well, it awakens this Yoga-Shakti and it is this which makes you do your yoga.

One is not aware of it at first—except that something has changed in our life, a new decision is taken, a turning." (CWM 7: 101)

2.

"So each one must find those activities which increase his aspiration, his consciousness, his deeper knowledge of things, and those which, on the contrary, mechanise him

and bring him back more thoroughly into a purely material relation with things.

It is difficult to make a general rule." (CWM 8: 159)

3.

"What is ordinarily called a spiritual experience is the intense need for something other than the life one lives, and most often this awakens after difficulties or disappointments or pain or sorrow, all these things which bring unhappiness and at the same time arouse the aspiration for a better state. It is this that is generally at the root of spiritual experiences: it is something negative." (CWM 8: 97)

4.

"When the spiritual force is able to act, when it begins to have an influence, it jolts the mind's self-satisfaction and, by continuous pressure, begins to make it feel that beyond it there is something higher and truer; then a little of its characteristic vanity gives way under this influence and as soon as it realises that it is limited, ignorant, incapable of reaching the true truth, liberation begins with the possibility of opening to something beyond. But it must *feel* the power, the beauty, the force of this beyond to be able to surrender. It must be able to perceive its incapacity and its limitations in the presence of something higher than itself, otherwise how could it ever feel its own weakness!

Sometimes one single contact is enough, something that makes a little rent in that self-satisfaction; then the yearning to go beyond, the need for a purer light awaken, and with this awakening comes the aspiration to win them, and with the aspiration liberation begins, and one day, breaking all limits, one blossoms in the infinite Light.

If there were not this constant Pressure, simultaneously from within and without, from above and from the profoundest depths, nothing would ever change.

Even with that, how much time is required for things to change! What obstinate resistance in this lower nature, what blind and stupid attachment to the animal ways of the being, what a refusal to liberate oneself!" (CWM 9: 419)

VI—Aspiration Needs to Be Developed in Yoga

1.

"*Q: Should not one be born with a great aspiration?*

A: No, aspiration is a thing to be developed, educated, like all activities of the being. One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong." (CWM 4: 343)

2.

"*Sri Aurobindo says here, '... The aspiration and tapasya needed [are] too constant...'*

Yes, one cannot do the yoga if one does not take it seriously. For one must be very serious to have a constant aspiration and do tapasya. If one is not serious, for five minutes one has an aspiration and for ten hours one hasn't; for one day there is a great urge and for a month nothing, and so on. Well, one can't do yoga in these conditions. It must be a continuous, constant thing which does not flag. If one forgets or slackens, one cannot do yoga." (CWM 4: 343)

3.

"One should be satisfied with what one gets and still aspire quietly, without struggle, for more—till all has come. No

desire, no struggle—aspiration, faith, openness—and the grace." (CWSA 29: 60)

4.

"Put stress always on the aspiration within; let that get depth and steadiness in the heart; the outer obstacles of mind and the vital will recede of themselves with the growth of the heart's love and aspiration." (CWSA 35: 839)

5.

"It is by meditation, by concentration, by the constant turning or call [*that aspiration and openness may be cultivated*]—secondly, by the keeping of the mind and vital still for the descent of the Presence, peace, light, Ananda and for the psychic being to emerge. When the psychic being is in front, the descent constant, then the constant feeling of the Divine in you and of yourself in the Divine becomes more easy to have." (CWSA 30: 387)

VII—Develop Sincere Aspiration

1.

"Q: *What is exactly meant by a sincere aspiration?*

A: An aspiration which is not mixed with any interested and egoistic calculation." (CWM 14: 72)

2.

"Sincere is simply an adjective meaning that the will must be a true will. If you simply think 'I aspire' and do things inconsistent with the aspiration, or follow your desires or open yourself to contrary influences, then it is not a sincere will." (CWSA 29: 50)

3.

"To be sincere, all the parts of the being must be united in their aspiration for the Divine—not that one part wants and others refuse or revolt. To be sincere in the aspiration—to want the Divine for the Divine's sake, not for fame or name or prestige or power or any satisfaction of vanity." (CWM 14: 65)

4.

"All sincere aspiration has its effect; if you are sincere, you will grow into the divine life.

To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life.

One cannot become altogether this at once, but if one aspires at all times to it and calls in always the aid of the Divine Shakti with a true heart and straightforward will, one grows more and more into this consciousness." (CWSA 29: 51)

5.

"I think it is that: it is the habit of looking at oneself acting, looking at oneself living. It is necessary to observe oneself but I think it is still more necessary to try to be absolutely sincere and spontaneous, very spontaneous in what one does: not always to go on observing oneself, looking at what one is doing, judging oneself—sometimes severely. In fact it is almost as bad as patting oneself with satisfaction, the two are equally bad. One should be so sincere in his aspiration that he doesn't even know he is aspiring, that he becomes the aspiration itself. When this indeed can be realised, one truly attains to an extraordinary power.

One minute, one minute of this, and you can prepare years of realisation. When one is no longer a self–regarding

being, an ego looking at itself acting, when one becomes the action itself, above all in the aspiration, this truly is good. When there is no longer a person who is aspiring, when it is an aspiration which leaps up with a fully concentrated impulsion, then truly it goes very far. Otherwise there is always mixed up in it a little vanity, a little self–complacency, a little self–pity also, all kinds of little things which come and spoil everything. But it is difficult." (CWM 6: 402)

6.

"*X wants to know whether she can take up this life or has to go for the ordinary life*.

The fact of her being here proves that there is an aspiration somewhere in her being and with help the aspiration can spread in the whole being." (CWM 13: 141)

7.

"There is a positive side and a negative side to this work.

The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them before this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place in relation to this centre; finally, to organise all

one's aspiration towards the Divine and one's progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side." (CWM 8: 22)

8.

Aphorism 43: If God draw me towards Heaven, then, even if His other hand strive to keep me in Hell, yet must I struggle upwards.

"Q: *Does not God know what He wants for us? Why should He want to pull us in two opposite directions?*

A: God knows perfectly well what He wants for us. He wants to bring us all back to Him in a perfect union. The goal is one, the same for all; but the means, the methods and the procedures for reaching it are innumerable. There are just as many as there are beings on earth; and each one of these means is an exact expression of the will of the Supreme Lord, who, in his integral vision and perfect wisdom, does what is needful for each person.

So if someone needs a contradiction, an inner opposition to intensify his aspiration and effort, the Lord, in His infinite Grace, even while drawing this being upward and giving him the power to rise, will at the same time hold him down to create in him the resistance needed to intensify his aspiration and effort.

And if, like Sri Aurobindo, you can see that both movements have the same divine origin, then, instead of

lamenting and being alarmed, you rejoice and keep a firm and luminous faith." (CWM 10: 66)

9.

"When the soul is meant to go forward and there is an external weakness like that, circumstances do come like that to help the external being against itself—which means that there must be a truly sincere aspiration behind; otherwise it does not happen." (CWSA 31: 699)

10.

"*What is the cause of this effect? of the call?*

Perhaps one was destined to call. That is: Did the hen produce the egg or the egg the hen? I don't know whether it is the Grace which makes you call the Grace or whether because the Grace is called the Grace comes. It is difficult to say.

Essentially, it is quite possible that what is most lacking is faith. There is always a tiny corner in the thought which doubts and debates. So that spoils everything. It is only just when one is in an absolutely critical situation, when the mind realises that it can do nothing, absolutely nothing, when it stands there quite stupid and incapable, then, at that moment, if one aspires for a higher help, the aspiration has exactly that kind of intensity which comes from despair, and that takes effect. But if your thought

continues to argue, if it says: 'Yes, yes, I have aspired, I have prayed, but God knows if this is the moment, and whether it will come and whether it is possible', well, then it is finished, it doesn't work. This is one of the commonest of things. People are told: 'If you want to advance in the yoga, you must have no desires'. One goes even a little further and says: 'You must not have any needs.' One goes a little further still and says: 'Never ask anything from the Divine.' Well, I don't know, more than ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people's reaction is: 'Ah! if I don't ask, I won't have what I need.' They don't see that they cut the whole movement at the very root! They don't have faith. 'I need this....' (CWM 5: 366–367)

11.

"Let us have a sincere aspiration united to a constant goodwill and the victory is certain." (CWM 15: 82)

"Keep your aspiration ardent and sincere and never forget that you are the child of the Divine; it will prevent you from doing anything unworthy of the Divine children." (CWM 15: 222)

VIII—The Spiritual Aspiration Is Innate in Man

1.
"The spiritual aspiration is innate in man; for he is, unlike the animal, aware of imperfection and limitation and feels that there is something to be attained beyond what he now is: this urge towards self–exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race. The human mental status will be always there, but it will be there not only as a degree in the scale of rebirth, but as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status." (CWSA 22: 875)

2.
"If it be supposed that her [*evolutionary Nature's*] next step is the spiritual and supramental being, the stress of spirituality in the race may be taken as a sign that that is Nature's intention, the sign too of the capacity of man to operate in himself or aid her to operate the transition. If the appearance in animal being of a type similar in some respects to the ape–kind but already from the beginning endowed with the elements of humanity was the method of the human evolution, the appearance in the human being of a spiritual type resembling mental–animal humanity but already with the stamp of the spiritual aspiration on it would be the obvious method of Nature for the evolutionary production of the spiritual and supramental being." (CWSA 22: 874)

3.

"Who says that a sufficiently sincere aspiration, a sufficiently intense prayer is not capable of changing the path of the unfolding?

This means that all is possible.

Now, one must have a sufficient aspiration and a prayer that's sufficiently intense. But that has been given to human nature. It is one of the marvellous gifts of grace given to human nature; only, one does not know how to make use of it." (CWM 5: 88)

4.

"But you cannot understand and be something unless it is in you in some way or other or you are in it—it's the same thing, isn't it? However, to make you understand more easily, I can say it's because it is in you, because it's a part of your consciousness, somewhere, otherwise you could never become aware of it. If one did not carry the Divine within oneself, in the essence of one's being, one could never become aware of the Divine; it would be an impossible venture. And then if you reverse the problem, the moment you conceive and feel in some way or other, or even, to begin with, admit that the Divine is in you, as well as you are in the Divine, then already this opens the door to realisation, just a little, not much—slightly ajar. Then if later the aspiration comes, the intense need to know and to be, then that intense need widens the opening

until one can creep in. Then when one has crept in, one becomes aware of what he is. And that's exactly what Sri Aurobindo says, that one has forgotten, that due to this separation of Sat, Chit, Ananda, forgetfulness comes, forgetfulness of what one is; one thinks oneself to be somebody, you see, anyone at all, a boy, a girl, a man, a woman, a dog, a horse, anything at all, a stone, the sea, the sun; one believes oneself to be all this, instead of thinking oneself the One Divine—because, in fact, if one had continued thinking oneself the One Divine, there would have been no universe at all." (CWM 7: 236)

5.

"A vital life, 'a little higher than the animals' because of some play of mind, with death as its answer is all that human existence is as it is ordinarily envisaged. And yet there is an aspiration for something more; but the religions take hold of it and canalise it into something pointless for life and things remain as they are. Only a few indeed get beyond this limit." (CWSA 31: 102)

6.

"Man has seen that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the evolutionary oestrus [passion] is there in his parts of mind and life, the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him: he has become conscious of a soul, discovered

the self and spirit. In him, then, the substitution of a conscious for a subconscious evolution has become conceivable and practicable, and it may well be concluded that the aspiration, the urge, the persistent endeavour in him is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way of fulfilment, the emergence of a greater status." (CWSA 22: 876)

7.

"Man's urge towards spirituality is the inner driving of the spirit within him towards emergence, the insistence of the Consciousness–Force of the being towards the next step of its manifestation. It is true that the spiritual urge has been largely other–worldly or turned at its extreme towards a spiritual negation and self–annihilation of the mental individual; but this is only one side of its tendency maintained and made dominant by the necessity of passing out of the kingdom of the fundamental Inconscience, overcoming the obstacle of the body, casting away the obscure vital, getting rid of the ignorant mentality, the necessity to attain first and foremost, by a rejection of all these impediments to spiritual being, to a spiritual status. The other, the dynamic side of the spiritual urge has not been absent,—the aspiration to a spiritual mastery and mutation of Nature, to a spiritual perfection of the being, a divinisation of the mind, the heart and the very body: there has even been the dream or a psychic prevision of a

fulfilment exceeding the individual transformation, a new earth and heaven, a city of God, a divine descent upon earth, a reign of the spiritually perfect, a kingdom of God not only within us but outside, in a collective human life. However obscure may have been some of the forms taken by this aspiration, the indication they contain of the urge of the occult spiritual being within to emergence in earth–nature is unmistakable." (CWSA 22: 878–879)

8.

"In our human consciousness there is the image of an ideal truth of being, a divine nature, an incipient godhead: in relation to that higher truth our present state of imperfection can be relatively described as an undivine life and the conditions of the world from which we start as undivine conditions; the imperfections are the indication given to us that they are there as first disguises, not as the intended expression of the divine being and the divine nature. It is a Power within us, the concealed Divinity, that has lit the flame of aspiration, pictures the image of the ideal, keeps alive our discontent and pushes us to throw off the disguise and to reveal or, in the Vedic phrase, to form and disclose the Godhead in the manifest spirit, mind, life and body of this terrestrial creature. Our present nature can only be transitional, our imperfect status a starting-point and opportunity for the achievement of another higher, wider and greater that shall be divine and perfect

not only by the secret spirit within it but in its manifest and most outward form of existence.

But these conclusions are only first reasonings or primary intuitions founded on our inner self-experience and the apparent facts of universal existence." (CWSA 21: 412)

9.

"The next form is that of which man alone here has the secret, for in him it is progressively revealing itself in a partial and always incomplete accomplishing and unfolding. His thoughts, his ideals, his dreams, his attempts at a high self-exceeding are the clues by which he attempts to discover the Spirit, the moulds in which he tries to seize the form of the Divinity. But they too are only a partial light and not the whole form of the Godhead. Something waits beyond which the human mind approaches in a shapeless aspiration to an ineffable Perfection, an infinite Light, an infinite Power, an infinite Love, a universal Good and Beauty. This is not something that is not yet in perfect being, a God who is becoming or who has to be created by man; it is the Eternal of whom this infinite ideal is a mental reflection. It is beyond the form of the universe and these psychological realisations of the human being and yet it is here too in man and subsists surrounding him in all the powers of the world he lives in. It is both the Spirit who is in the universe and the

invisible king in man who is the master of his works." (CWSA 25: 619)

IX—Aspiration Is a Need for Human Beings and Other Forms of Life Are Incapable of Aspiration

1.

"Humanity is, upon earth, the form of life chosen for this human aspiration & divine accomplishment; all other forms of life either do not need it or are ordinarily incapable of it unless they change into humanity. The divine fullness is therefore the sole real aim of humanity. It has to be effected in the individual in order that it may be effected in the race." (CWSA 12: 101)

2.

"It [mankind] has never attempted to work out thoroughly even that little, except in the limits of a religious order or a peculiar community, and even there with such serious defects and under such drastic limitations as to make the experiment nugatory and without any bearing on human life. If we do not get beyond the mere holding of the ideal and its general influence in human life, this little is all that mankind will attempt in the future. More is needed; a general spiritual awakening and aspiration in mankind is indeed the large necessary motive-power, but the effective power must be something greater. There must be a dynamic re-creating of individual manhood in the spiritual type.

For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration, accepted only as a partial influence. The ideal is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it; it is often used even as a cover and a plea for things that are diametrically opposed to its real spirit. Institutions are created which are supposed, but too lightly supposed to embody that spirit and the fact that the ideal is held, the fact that men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient. The holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal; the existence of its institutions is sufficient to abrogate the need of insisting on the spirit that made the institutions. But spirituality is in its very nature a thing subjective and not mechanical; it is nothing if it is not lived inwardly and if the outward life does not flow out of this inward living. Symbols, types, conventions, ideas are not sufficient." (CWSA 25: 261–262)

3.

"Sri Aurobindo says here that each species is satisfied with the particular characteristics of that species, the principles of its structure, and does not try to transform or change itself into a new species. The dog remains satisfied with being a dog, the horse with being a horse and never tries, for instance, to become an elephant! Starting from this Sri

Aurobindo asks the question: Will man remain satisfied with being man or will he awaken to the necessity of being something other than man, that is, a superman?

That is the summary of the paragraph.

But when one is used to such expositions, if one has a speculative mind, and one reads this, something in the being is not satisfied. That is to say, this concerns only the most external form, that kind of crust of the being, but within oneself one feels 'something' which has, on the contrary, a sort of imperative tendency to go beyond that form. And this is what Sri Aurobindo wants to bring home to us.

I have seen pet animals which truly had a sort of inner *need* to become something other than what they were. I knew dogs which were like that, cats, horses and even birds like that. The outer form was inevitably what it was, but there was something living and perceptible in the animal which was making an obvious effort to achieve another expression, another form. And every man who has gone beyond the stage of the animal man and become the human man truly has what I might call an 'incorrigible' need to be something other than this thoroughly unsatisfactory semi-animal—unsatisfactory in its expression, its means of expression and its means of life. So the problem is this: Will this imperious need be effective enough in its aspiration for the form itself, the species, to

develop and transform itself, or will it be only this thing, this imperishable consciousness in the being, which will leave this form when it perishes to enter into a higher form which, besides, as far as we can see now, does not yet exist?

And the problem before us is: How will this higher form be created? If we consider the problem, it becomes very interesting. Is it by some process which we have to imagine, that this form will gradually transform itself in order to create a new one, or is it by some other means, a means still unknown to us, that this new form will appear in the world?" (CWM 9: 233–234)

X—Which Part of the Being Aspires?

1.

"Q: *Here it is written: 'Our one objective must be the Divine himself to whom, knowingly or unknowingly, something always aspires in our secret nature.'*

What is this something which aspires, Sweet Mother?

A: It is a part of the being which is not always the same in everyone, and which is instinctively open to the influence of the psychic.

There is always one part—sometimes indeed quite veiled, of which we are not conscious—something in the being which is turned to the psychic and receiving its influence. This is the intermediary between the psychic consciousness and the external consciousness.

It is not the same thing in everyone; in each one it is different. It is the point in his nature or character through which he can touch the psychic and where he can receive the psychic influence. It depends upon people; for each one it is different; everyone has a point like this.

You may also feel that there are certain things which suddenly push you, lift you above yourself, open a kind of door upon something greater. It can be many things; and it depends upon each one's nature. It's the part of the being which enthuses over something; it is this capacity for enthusiasm." (CWM 7: 417–418)

2.
"*Which part of the being aspires for love, for peace?*

It is that part on any plane (physical, vital or mental) which is open to the psychic influence." (CWM 17: 76)

3.
"Every gleam of aspiration is always the expression of a psychic influence. Without the presence of the psychic, without the psychic influence, there would never be any sense of progress or any will for progress." (CWM 4: 165)

4.
"The fundamental seat of aspiration from which it [Divine Love] radiates or manifests in one part of the being or another is the psychic centre." (CWM 3: 130)

5.
"But the role of subliminal forces cannot be said to be small, since from there come all the greater aspirations, ideals, strivings towards a better self and better humanity without which man would be only a thinking animal—as also most of the art, poetry, philosophy, thirst for knowledge which relieve if they do not yet dispel the ignorance." (CWSA 28: 223)

XI—The Heart Centre Has the Most Intense and Effective Aspiration

1.
"But it is better because if you concentrate there [in the heart], deeply enough, it is there that you enter into contact with the psychic for the first time; while if you concentrate in the head you have to pass later from the head to the heart to be able to identify yourself with the psychic being. And if you concentrate by gathering the energies, it is better to gather them here, because it is in this centre, [the heart centre] in this region of the being that you find the will to progress, the force of purification, and the most intense and effective aspiration. The aspiration that comes from the heart is much more effective than that from the head." (CWM 6: 389)

2.
"The aspiration must come from the heart." (CWM 14: 6)

3.
"Q: *Sweet Mother, … Because as soon as one aspires, isn't it the mind that aspires?*

A: No; aspiration, as well as widening and intensity, comes from the heart, the emotional centre, the door of the psychic or rather the door leading to the psychic.

The mind by its nature is curious and interested; it sees, it observes, it tries to understand and explain; and with all this activity, it disturbs the experience and diminishes its intensity and force.

On the other hand, the more quiet and silent the mind is, the more can aspiration rise up from the depths of the heart in the fullness of its ardour." (CWM 16: 223–224)

4.

"It seems to me that you must know by this time about the psychic being—that it is behind the veil and its consciousness also; only a little comes out into the mind and vital and physical. When that consciousness is not concealed, when you are aware of your soul (the psychic being), when its feelings and aspirations are yours, then you have got the consciousness of the psychic being. The feelings and aspirations of the psychic being are all turned towards truth and right consciousness and the Divine; it is the only part that cannot be touched by the hostile forces and their suggestions." (CWSA 30: 338)

XII—It Is the Divine Who Aspires in Us

1.

"Always indeed it is the higher Power that acts. Our sense of personal effort and aspiration comes from the attempt of the egoistic mind to identify itself in a wrong and imperfect way with the workings of the divine Force. It persists in applying to experience on a supernormal plane the ordinary terms of mentality which it applies to its normal experiences in the world. In the world we act with the sense of egoism; we claim the universal forces that work in us as our own; we claim as the effect of our personal will, wisdom, force, virtue the selective, formative, progressive action of the Transcendent in this frame of mind, life and body. Enlightenment brings to us the knowledge that the ego is only an instrument; we begin to perceive and feel that these things are our own in the sense that they belong to our supreme and integral Self, one with the Transcendent, not to the instrumental ego. Our limitations and distortions are our contribution to the working; the true power in it is the Divine's. When the human ego realises that its will is a tool, its wisdom ignorance and childishness, its power an infant's groping, its virtue a pretentious impurity, and learns to trust itself to that which transcends it, that is its salvation." (CWSA 23: 59)

2.

"*Does the inconscient aspire to become conscious?*

No. It is the Divine in the inconscient who aspires for the Divine in the consciousness. That is to say, without the Divine there would be no aspiration; without the consciousness hidden in the inconscient, there would be no possibility of changing the inconscience to consciousness. But because at the very heart of the inconscient there is the divine Consciousness, you aspire, and necessarily—this is what he says—automatically, mechanically, the sacrifice is made. And this is why when one says, 'It is not *you* who aspire, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who make progress, it is the Divine, it is not you who are conscious, it is the Divine'—these are not mere words, it is a fact. And it is simply your ignorance and your consciousness which prevent you from realising it." (CWM 8: 79)

3.

"The individual being, and particularly the mind in it, have an instinctive repulsion to admitting that it's another force than their own small personal one which does things. There is a kind of instinct which makes you feel absolutely convinced that the effort of aspiration, the will to progress are things belonging to you by your own right and, therefore, that you have all the merit.

From the man of art or of literature or of science, who produces something, studies something, and is absolutely convinced that it is he himself who is doing it, to the aspirant yogi who is convinced that it is the ardour of his own aspiration, his personal need for realisation which push him—if someone tells these people (I have had this experience), if someone tells them a little too soon, 'Why, no, it is the Divine who aspires in you, it is the divine Force which produces in you...', they no longer do anything, they fall flat, it doesn't interest them at all any longer; they say, 'Good, I have nothing to do then, let the Divine do it.'

And this is what Sri Aurobindo means—that the mind is something so egoistic and so proud that if you take away from it the satisfaction it seeks, it no longer collaborates; nor the vital either. And as the physical is very obedient to the vital and the mind, it too collaborates no longer. Then one is before an inert mass which says, 'Good, if it isn't I, well, let the Divine do what He likes, I am not going to do anything at all any more'." (CWM 7: 358–359)

4.

"*Mother, at times one spontaneously feels an aspiration: and at other moments when one wants to aspire it is no longer spontaneous. Then what is the difference, does the Divine aspire?...*

Sri Aurobindo answers this. He describes it extremely well.

For all this darkness, all this inconscience, all this ignorance is not at all something personal. It is the condition of the world the state of matter, the state of physical life. And it enters you, makes you act; it's like something pulling the strings of the puppet. All these desires, all these impulses, all these currents of force are things which pass through you, which you obey without even being aware of it, and which you take for yourself. And there is no yourself in this affair. It comes from everywhere and goes everywhere. You are a public square: things enter, go out, make you move." (CWM 7: 359–360)

5.

"Our commonest or most grossly material actions must assume this sublimated character; when we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us; it must be a sacred offering in a temple and the sense of a mere physical need or self-gratification must pass away from us. In any great labour, in any high discipline, in any difficult or noble enterprise, whether undertaken for ourselves, for others or for the race, it will no longer be possible to stop short at the idea of the race, of ourselves or of others. The thing we are doing must be consciously offered as a sacrifice of works, not to these, but either through them or directly to the One Godhead; the Divine Inhabitant who was hidden by these figures

must be no longer hidden but ever present to our soul, our mind, our sense. The workings and results of our acts must be put in the hands of that One in the feeling that that Presence is the Infinite and Most High by whom alone our labour and our aspiration are possible. For in his being all takes place; for him all labour and aspiration are taken from us by Nature and offered on his altar. Even in those things in which Nature is herself very plainly the worker and we only the witnesses of her working and its containers and supporters, there should be the same constant memory and insistent consciousness of a work and of its divine Master. Our very inspiration and respiration, our very heart-beats can and must be made conscious in us as the living rhythm of the universal sacrifice." (CWSA 23: 111)

XIII—In the First Preparatory Stage Aspiration Is Important

1.

"You can write to him in Bengali and tell him that Sri Aurobindo has seen the letters and says that the vision is interesting as showing that his inner being which came up in the dream is capable of receiving the Light which descends from above through the head into the other centres of the being. It is too early to say more. But he can continue with his aspiration and endeavour and report what experiences he has.

You can also tell him that there are two stages in the Yoga, one of preparation and one of the actual intensive sadhana. It is the first that he can undertake. In this stage aspiration in the heart with prayer, bhakti, meditation, a will to offer the life to the Divine are the important things. Purification of the nature is the first aim to be achieved. There should be no over-eagerness for experiences but such as come should be observed and, if helpful to the right attitude and true development, accepted. All that flatters the ego or feeds it should be rejected. There should be no impatience if the progress is slow or difficulties many—all should be done in a calm patience—and full reliance on the Divine Mother. This period tests the capacity of the sadhak and the sincerity of his aspiration towards the Divine." (CWSA 35: 551)

2.

"His aspiration may be satisfied if he makes himself fit. Let him continue to read the *Arya* and practise daily meditation. In the meditation he should concentrate first in an aspiration that the central truths of which he reads should be made real to him in conscious experience and his mind opened to the calm, wideness, strength, peace, light and Ananda of the spiritual consciousness." (CWSA 35: 539)

3.

"If you want to make any progress while you are here, you will first have to realise how much time you have lost and how far you are from this. Afterwards, you will have to see whether you can light a fire of aspiration strong enough to burn up all that is unclean and obscure in you. Then only can you speak of the transformation of your lower vital nature." (CWSA 35: 276)

4.

"Q: I have been reading your Bases of Yoga*—a most staggering book: the Himalayan conditions for success you impose—well, shall the likes of us ever fulfil a hundredth part of such countless conditions?*

A: Conditions for success? But these are not conditions for doing the sadhana, but the basic conditions for the integral

siddhi—they are, as it might be said, basic siddhis, realised foundations on which the total and permanent siddhi can be created—or one may say they are the constituents of the Yogic as opposed to the ordinary consciousness. When one has arrived fully at this Yogic consciousness, one can be called a Yogi, till then one is a sadhak. So much as all that is not demanded immediately from a sadhak. From the sadhak all that is asked is 'a sincerity in the aspiration and a patient will to arrive ... in spite of all obstacles, then the opening in one form or another is sure to come.' 'All sincere aspiration has its effect; if you are sincere you will grow into the divine life'. Again 'One cannot become altogether this at once, but if one aspires at all times and calls in the aid of the Divine Shakti with a true heart and a straightforward will, one grows more and more into the true consciousness'. It is of course said that the success will come sooner or later,—it is for that reason that patience is indispensable. But these are not Himalayan conditions—it is not putting an impossible price on what is asked for." (CWSA 35: 131)

5.

"According to the nature and the circumstances the call will come. But in whatever way it comes, there must be a decision of the mind and the will and, as its result, a complete and effective self–consecration. The acceptance of a new spiritual idea–force and upward orientation in the

being, an illumination, a turning or conversion seized on by the will and the heart's aspiration,—this is the momentous act which contains as in a seed all the results that the Yoga has to give." (CWSA 23: 70)

6.

"All that the Light from above asks of us that it may begin its work is a call from the soul and a sufficient point of support in the mind. This support can be reached through an insistent idea of the Divine in the thought, a corresponding will in the dynamic parts, an aspiration, a faith, a need in the heart. Any one of these may lead or predominate, if all cannot move in unison or in an equal rhythm." (CWSA 23: 81–82).

7.

"Q: *Are there any signs which indicate that one is ready for the path, especially if one has no spiritual teacher?*

A: Yes, the most important indication is a perfect equality of soul in all circumstances. It is an absolutely indispensable basis; something very quiet, calm, peaceful, the feeling of a great force. Not the quietness that comes from inertia but the sensation of a concentrated power which keeps you always steady, whatever happens, even in circumstances which may appear to you the most terrible in your life. That is the first sign.

A second sign: you feel completely imprisoned in your ordinary normal consciousness, as in something extremely hard, something suffocating and intolerable, as though you had to pierce a hole in a brass wall. And the torture becomes almost unbearable, it is stifling; there is an inner effort to break through and you cannot manage to break through. This also is one of the first signs. It means that your inner consciousness has reached a point where its outer mould is much too small for it—the mould of ordinary life, of ordinary activities, ordinary relations, all that becomes so small, so petty; you feel within you a force to break all that.

There is yet another sign: when you concentrate and have an aspiration, you feel something coming down into you, you receive an answer; you feel a light, a peace, a force coming down; and almost immediately—you need not wait or spend a very long time—nothing but an inner aspiration, a call, and the answer comes. This also means that the relation has been well established." (CWM 4: 97–98)

8.

"There is only one safety: to cling to the Divine, like this (*gesture of clenched fists*).

Not clinging to what one thinks to be the Divine, not even to that which one feels to be the Divine.... An

aspiration... as sincere an aspiration as possible. And to cling to that." (CWM 11: 262)

9.

"Whatever you do, never forget the goal which you have set before you. There is nothing great or small once you have set out on this great discovery; all things are equally important and can either hasten or delay its success. Thus before you eat, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the food you are about to eat may bring your body the substance it needs to serve as a solid basis for your effort towards the great discovery, and give it the energy for persistence and perseverance in the effort.

Before you go to sleep, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the sleep may restore your fatigued nerves, bring calm and quietness to your brain so that on waking you may, with renewed vigour, begin again your journey on the path of the great discovery." (CWM 12: 34)

10.

"In any case, the most effective starting-point, the swiftest method is total self-giving. Besides, no joy is more perfect than the joy of a total self-giving to whatever is the summit of your conception: for some it is the notion of God, for others that of Perfection. If this self-giving is made with persistence and ardour, a moment comes when you pass beyond the concept and arrive at an experience that

escapes all description, but which is almost always identical in its effects. And as your self-giving becomes more and more perfect and integral, it will be accompanied by the aspiration for identification, a total fusion with That to which you have given yourself, and little by little this aspiration will overcome all differences and all resistances, especially if with the aspiration there is an intense and spontaneous love, for then nothing can stand in the way of its victorious drive." (CWM 12: 36)

11.

(*To someone returning to the West)*

"Everything can be part of 'sadhana'; it depends on the inner attitude.

Naturally, if one lets himself be invaded by the Western atmosphere, farewell to the sadhana.

But even in the most materialistic milieu, if one retains one's aspiration and one's faith in the Divine Life, the sadhana can and should continue." (CWM 14: 44)

XIV—Aspiration for Union with the Divine

1.

"All that we become and do and bear in the physical life is prepared behind the veil within us. It is therefore of immense importance for a Yoga which aims at the transformation of life to grow conscious of what goes on within these domains, to be master there and be able to feel, know and deal with the secret forces that determine our destiny and our internal and external growth or decline.

It is equally important for those who want that union with the Divine without which the transformation is impossible. The aspiration could not be realised if you remained bound by your external self, tied to the physical mind and its petty movements. It is not the outer being which is the source of the spiritual urge; the outer being only undergoes the inner drive from behind the veil. It is the inner psychic being in you that is the bhakta, the seeker after the union and the Ananda, and what is impossible for the outer nature left to itself becomes perfectly possible when the barrier is down and the inner self in the front. For the moment this comes strongly to the front or draws the consciousness powerfully into itself, peace, ecstasy, freedom, wideness, the opening to light and a higher knowledge begin to become natural, spontaneous, often immediate in their emergence." (CWSA 30: 218)

2.

"... the aspiration to the Divine, vision of the Divine everywhere, the surrender to the Divine have to be made the main objective of the sadhana." (CWSA 31: 288)

3.

"For the opening of the psychic being, concentration on the Mother and self-offering to her are the direct way. The growth of Bhakti which you feel is the first sign of the psychic development. A sense of the Mother's presence or force or the remembrance of her supporting and strengthening you is the next sign. Eventually, the soul within begins to be active in aspiration and psychic perception guiding the mind to the right thoughts, the vital to the right movements and feelings, showing and rejecting all that has to be put away and turning the whole being in all its movements to the Divine alone." (CWSA 30: 321)

4.

"How can the mind find out or decide what is the right thing to do for your sadhana? The more it is active in that way, the more confusion there will be. In sadhana the mind has to be quiet, fixed in aspiration towards the Divine—the true experience and change will come in the quietude of the mind from within and from above." (CWSA 31: 28)

5.

"Yoga is union with the Divine, sadhana is what you do in order to unite with the Divine. You have to get away from the ordinary human consciousness and get into touch with the divine Consciousness.

For that call always on the Mother, open yourself to her, aspire and pray for her Force to work in you so as to make you fit—reject desire, restlessness, disturbances of the mind and vital." (CWSA 32: 135)

6.

"There are many ways of opening to this Divine consciousness or entering into it. My way which I show to others is by a constant practice to go inward into oneself, to open by aspiration to the Divine and once one is conscious of it and its action to give oneself to It entirely. This self-giving means not to ask for anything but the constant contact or union with the Divine Consciousness, to aspire for its peace, power, light and felicity, but to ask nothing else and in life and action to be its instrument only for whatever work it gives one to do in the world. If one can once open and feel the Divine Force, the Power of the Spirit working in the mind and heart and body, the rest is a matter of remaining faithful to It, calling for it always, allowing it to do its work when it comes and rejecting every other and inferior Force that belongs to the lower consciousness and the lower nature." (CWSA 36: 441)

7.

"Fidelity, devotion, self-giving, selfless work and service, constant aspiration are the simplest and most effective means by which the soul can be made ready and fit to be in the abiding presence of the Divine". (CWSA 35: 841)

8.

"It is a mistake to think that a constant absence of *vyākulatā* is a sign that the aspiration or will for the Divine is not true. It is only in certain exclusive forms of Bhakti Yoga that a constant *vyākulatā* or weeping or *hāhākāra* (the latter is more often vital than psychic) is the rule. Here though the psychic yearning may come sometimes or often in intense waves, what comes as the basis is a quietude of the being and in that quietude a more and more steady perception of the truth and seeking for the Divine and need of the Divine so that all is turned towards that more and more." (CWSA 29: 359)

9.

"The pleasure of existence can consent to merge only in the greater pleasure of a widened existence, and religion, the aspiration towards God, is simply the fulfilment of this eternal elemental force, its desire to merge its separate & limited joy in the sheer bliss of infinite existence. The Will to live individually embodies the pleasure of individual existence which is the outer phenomenal self of all creatures; but the will to live infinitely can only proceed

straight from the transcendent, ultimate Spirit in us which is our real Self; and it is this that availeth towards immortality. Brahman, then, being infinity of conscious existence, is also infinite bliss. And the bliss of Brahman is necessarily absolute both in its nature and as to its object." (CWSA 18: 369–370)

10.

"This integral turning of the soul Godwards bases royally the Gita's synthesis of knowledge and works and devotion. To know God thus integrally is to know him as One in the self and in all manifestation and beyond all manifestation,—and all this unitedly and at once. And yet even so to know him is not enough unless it is accompanied by an intense uplifting of the heart and soul Godwards, unless it kindles a one-pointed and at the same time all-embracing love, adoration, aspiration. Indeed the knowledge which is not companioned by an aspiration and vivified by an uplifting is no true knowledge, for it can be only an intellectual seeing and a barren cognitive endeavour. The vision of God brings infallibly the adoration and passionate seeking of the Divine,—a passion for the Divine in his self-existent being, but also for the Divine in ourselves and for the Divine in all that is." (CWSA 19: 324)

11.

"*How is it that one person reads sacred books, yet is very far from the Divine, while another reads the most stupid so-called literary productions and remains in contact with the Divine?*

It is not reading that brings the contact, it is the will and aspiration in the being that bring it." (CWSA 27: 731)

12.

"Everything should be for the sake of the Divine, this [*aspiration for the Divine's Presence*] also. As for leaving the result to the Divine, it depends on what you mean by the phrase. If it implies dependence on the Divine Grace and equanimity and patience in the persistent aspiration, then it is all right. But it must not be extended to cover slackness and indifference in the aspiration and endeavour." (CWSA 29: 171)

13.

"There are three main possibilities for the sadhak—(1) To wait on the Grace and rely on the Divine. (2) To do everything himself like the full Adwaitin and the Buddhist. (3)To take the middle path, go forward by aspiration and rejection etc. helped by the Force." (CWSA 29: 171)

14.

"For the Yoga you yourself say that you have not yet the whole mind for it and without the whole mind success is hardly possible in sadhana. For the other it is hardly the function of sadhana to prepare a man for ordinary life in the world. There is one thing only that could work in a direction which would help you to something which is not that, but still not the whole Yoga for which you intimate that you are not wholly ready. It is if you get the spirit of the Yoga of works as it is indicated in the Gita—forget yourself and your miseries in the aspiration to a larger consciousness, feel the greater Force working in the world and make yourself an instrument for a work to be done, however small it may be. But, whatever the way may be, you must accept it wholly and put your whole will into it—with a divided and wavering will you cannot hope for success in anything, neither in life nor in Yoga." (CWSA 29: 237–238)

15.

"The Divine is there in the human, and the human fulfilling and exceeding its highest aspirations and tendencies becomes the Divine." (CWSA 28: 473)

16.

"… one must keep intact the aspiration to receive the true impulsion—not the aspiration for 'complete liberation', but

the aspiration for *active* identification with the Supreme, that is to say, to will only what He wills, to do only what He wants: to exist by and in Him alone." (CWM 10: 198)

17.

"Q: *I have forgotten the Divine for so long in this life and in former lives. But a drop of Your Grace can enable me to make up for all the lost time.*

A: Whatever the past may have been, it is not time that is needed to establish contact with the Divine, but sincerity of aspiration." (CWM 16: 371)

18.

"The question is of aspiration to the Divine, whether that is your central aim in life, your inner need or not. Sadhana for oneself is another matter—one can take it up or leave it. The real sadhana is for the Divine—it is the soul's need and one cannot give it up even if in moments of despondency one thinks one can." (CWSA 29: 240)

19.

"Q: *My sweet beloved Mother, I read in the Conversations: 'Concentration alone will lead you to this goal." Should one increase the time of meditation?*

A: Concentration does not mean meditation; on the contrary, concentration is a state one must be in continuously, whatever the outer activity. By concentration

I mean that all the energy, all the will, all the aspiration must be turned only towards the Divine and His integral realisation in our consciousness." (CWM 16: 177–178)

20.

"It is enough to have had once one minute of aspiration and a will even if it be very fugitive, to become conscious of the Divine, to realise the Divine, for it to flash like lightning through the whole being—there are even cells of the body which respond. This is not visible all at once, but there is a response everywhere. And it is by slowly, carefully, putting together all these parts which have responded, though it be but once, that one can build up something which will be coherent and organised, and which will permit one's action to continue with will, sincerity and perseverance.

Even a fleeting idea in a child, at a certain moment in its childhood when the psychic being is most in front, if it succeeds in penetrating through the outer consciousness and giving the child just an impression of something beautiful which must be realised, it creates a little nucleus and upon this you build your action. There is a vast mass of humanity to whom one would never say, 'You must realise the Divine' or 'Do yoga to find the Divine.' If you observe well you will see that it is a tiny minority to whom this can be said. It means that this minority of beings is 'prepared' to do yoga, it is that. It is that there has been a

beginning of realisation—a beginning is enough." (CWM 4: 255)

21.

"*Sweet Mother,*

You have written: 'So long as you have to renounce anything, you are not on this path.' But doesn't all renunciation begin when one is on the path?

What I call 'being on the path' is being in a state of consciousness in which only union with the Divine has any value—this union is the only thing worth living, the sole object of aspiration. Everything else has lost all value and is not worth seeking, so there is no longer any question of renouncing it because it is no longer an object of desire.

As long as union with the Divine is not *the* thing for which one lives, one is not yet on the path." (CWM 16: 317)

22.

"To know why we live: discovery of the Divine and conscious union with Him.

The aspiration to concentrate solely on this realisation.

To know how to transform all circumstances into a means of reaching this goal." (CWM 16: 428)

23.

"*How can we find the Divine within ourselves?*

... First of all, you must begin to seek Him, and then that must be the most important thing in life. The will must be constant, the aspiration constant, the preoccupation constant, and it must be the only thing you truly want. Then you will find Him.

But of course, if in one's life one thinks of Him for five minutes and is busy with other things for three-quarters of an hour, there is not much chance of success. Anyway, it will take many lifetimes.

It must not be a pastime. It must be the exclusive preoccupation of one's being, the very reason of one's existence." (CWM 8: 94)

24.

"And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; …" (CWM 9: 95)

25.

"… Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world or to have limited beliefs in order to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in

everything, and if He is hidden... it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him.

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it, to that Reality which *alone* can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life.

…

But since I promised you that in five years you would be able to *live* these things, to have a concrete, real, convincing experience of them, well, that means you ought to be ready and that we are going to begin.

We have tried a little, but now we are going to try seriously!

The starting-point: to want it, truly want it, to need it. The next step: to think, *above all*, of that. A day comes, very quickly, when one is unable to think of anything else.

That is the one thing which counts. And then...

One formulates one's aspiration, lets the true prayer spring up from one's heart, the prayer which expresses the sincerity of the need. And then... well, one will see what happens.

Something will happen. Surely something will happen. For each one it will take a different form." (CWM 9: 374–375)

26.

"You say that you wish to lead the spiritual life, but for that you should understand that the first point is to overcome all the lower movements, all the attractions, all the attachments, for all these are *absolutely contrary* to the spiritual life.

The spiritual life *demands* that one is exclusively turned towards the Divine and the Divine *alone*. All that one does should be done *for the Divine*; all occupations, all aspirations, all, without exception, should be directed towards the Divine with a complete surrender of the whole being.

I know that this cannot be done in a day. But the *decision* that it may be so should be taken in an *unshakable* manner. It is only on this condition that I can accept you for the spiritual life." (CWM 13: 112)

27.

Message 24 November 1972

"Beyond all preferences and limitations, there is a ground of mutual understanding where all can meet and find their harmony: it is the aspiration for a divine consciousness." (CWM 15: 187)

XV—The Divine Is With You According to Your Aspiration

1.

"In reality, the Divine gives to each individual exactly what he expects of Him. If you believe that the Divine is far away and cruel, He will be far away and cruel, because it will be necessary for your ultimate good that you feel the wrath of God; He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali and Beatitude for the Bhakta. And He will be the All-knowledge of the seeker of Knowledge, the transcendent Impersonal of the illusionist; He will be atheist with the atheist and the love of the lover. He will be brotherly and close, a friend always faithful, always ready to succour, for those who feel Him as the inner guide of each movement, at every moment. And if you believe that He can wipe away everything, He will wipe away all your faults, all your errors, tirelessly, and at every moment you can feel His infinite Grace. The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration.

…

The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally that does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature,—I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes he does fashion himself according to your outer aspirations, and if, like the devotees, you live alternately in separation and union,

ecstasy and despair, the Divine also will separate from you and unite with you, according as you believe. The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect at every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer." (CWM 13: 75–76)

2.

"The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration.

What is God?

God is the perfection that we must aspire to realise." (CWM 14: 17)

3.

"Yesterday someone wrote to me asking: 'After all, what is the Divine?' I answered. I told him that I was giving a reply to help him, but there could be a hundred which would all be good, one as good as another. …

I answer: 'The Divine is the absolute of perfection, eternal source of all that exists, of whom we become conscious progressively, all the while being Himself from all eternity.'

Once someone told me also that it was for him something simply unthinkable. So I answered him: 'No! That does not help you. You have only to think that the Divine is all (at the maximum, yes), all that we want to become in our highest, most luminous aspiration. All that we want to become, that is the Divine.' He was so happy, he told me: 'Oh! That way it becomes easy'!" (CWM 11: 64)

XVI—You Must Choose to Aspire

1.

"One may be born with a very slight aspiration and develop it so much that it becomes very great. One may be born with a very small will and develop it and make it strong. It is a ridiculous idea to believe that things come to you like that, through a sort of grace, that if you are not given aspiration, you don't have it—this is not true. It is precisely upon this that Sri Aurobindo has insisted in his letter and in the passage I am going to read to you in a minute. He says you must choose, and the choice is constantly put before you and constantly you must choose, and if you do not choose, well, you will not be able to advance. You must choose; there is no 'force like that' which chooses for you, or chance or luck or fate—this is not true. Your will is free, it is deliberately left free and you have to choose. It is you who decide whether to seek the Light or not, whether to be the servitor of the Truth or not—it is you. Or whether to have an aspiration or not, it is you who choose. And even when you are told, 'Make your surrender total and the work will be done for you', it is quite all right, but to make your surrender total, every day and at every moment you must choose to make your surrender total, otherwise you will not do it, it will not get done by itself. It is you who must want to do it. When it is done, all goes well, when you have the Knowledge also, all goes well, and when you

are identified with the Divine, all goes even better, but till then you must will, choose and decide. Don't go to sleep lazily, saying, 'Oh! The work will be done for me, I have nothing to do but let myself glide along with the stream.' Besides, it is not true, the work is not done by itself, because if the least little thing thwarts your little will, it says, 'No, not that!...'" (CWM 4: 342–343)

2.

"Why do you write 'If I get' [*aspiration*]—one can always aspire. It is your mistake to think that everything must come of itself and nothing is within your own power to do. This kind of belief in the necessity of passivity to all movements should be thrown aside. Will, aspiration, surrender are things that you must do yourself—although even in doing them you must call in the Divine Power to help your will, aspiration and surrender and make them effective." (CWSA 29: 59)

3.

"*Instead of giving peace, why doesn't the Divine abolish all at once the ego?*

Ah! That, that is the work for each one. That is what I told you the other day, I read to you what Sri Aurobindo has written: 'Do not harbour the indolent illusion that you will be given the aspiration and the work will be done for you.'

The aspiration must come from you and the abolition of the ego also. You are helped, you are supported; every time you take a step forward you will feel there is something which gives you all that is necessary to enable you to take the step, but it is you who must walk, no one will take you on his back and carry you.” (CWM 4: 410)

XVII—Aspiration Is an Act of Will

1.

"Why 'getting" aspiration? Aspiration is an act of the will and one can always aspire'." (CWSA 29: 59)

2.

"It is a very serious difficulty in one's Yoga—the absence of a central will always superior to the waves of the Prakriti forces, always in touch with the Mother, imposing its central aim and aspiration on the nature. That is because you have not yet learned to live in your central being; you have been accustomed to run with every wave of Force, no matter of what kind, that rushed upon you and to identify yourself with it for the time being. It is one of the things that has to be unlearned; you must find your central being with the psychic as its basis and live in it." (CWSA 30: 227)

3.

"Hardly anyone is strong enough to overcome by his own unaided aspiration and will the forces of the lower nature; even those who do it get only a certain kind of control, but not a complete mastery. Will and aspiration are needed to bring down the aid of the Divine Force and to keep the being on its side in its dealings with the lower powers. The Divine Force fulfilling the spiritual will and the heart's

psychic aspiration can alone bring about the conquest." (CWSA 31: 721)

4.

"Yes, but it is an absence of the one-pointed aspiration more than of strength of will—they [*certain sadhaks*] left because some desire or other got hold of them which was incompatible with the steadfast single-minded aspiration to the Divine Realisation.

If Buddha had the will only after tapasya, how was it that he left everything without hesitation in the search for Truth and never once looked back, regretted nor had any struggle? The only difficulty was how to find the Truth, his single will to find it never faltered; the intensity of his tapasya itself would have been impossible without that strength of will. People less strong than Buddha may have to develop it by endeavour. Those who cannot do that have to find their strength in their reliance on the Divine Mother." (CWSA 31: 714–715)

5.

"Our aspiration rises always identical, supported by a concentrated will." (CWM 14: 77)

6.

"Q: *Are tapasya and aspiration the same thing?*

A: No, you can't do tapasya without aspiration. Aspiration is first, the will to attain something. Tapasya is the process—there is indeed a process, a method." 21 April 1951 (CWM 4: 344)

7.

"First, to become conscious of anything whatever, you must will it. And when I say 'will it', I don't mean saying one day, 'Oh! I would like it very much', then two days later completely forgetting it.

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. This is the first step. There are many others: a very attentive observation, a very persistent analysis, a very keen discernment of what is pure in the movement and what is not. If you have an imaginative faculty, you may try to imagine and see if your imagination tallies with reality." (CWM 4: 244)

8.

"*How can one transform the vital?*

The first step: will. Secondly, sincerity and aspiration. But will and aspiration are almost the same thing, one follows the other." (CWM 4: 247)

XVIII—Keep Your Aspiration Steady and Be Patient in Yoga

1.

"You must keep your aspiration steady and be patient in your endeavour—and you are sure of success." (CWM 14: 170)

2.

"The most important is a steady, quiet endurance that does not allow any upsetting or depression to interfere with your progress. The sincerity of the aspiration is the assurance of the victory." (CWM 14: 164)

3.

"Obviously, a more systematic and intensive sadhana is desirable or, in any case, a steady aspiration and a more constant preoccupation with the central aim could bring an established detachment even in the midst of outer things and outer activity and a continuous guidance. The completeness, the Siddhi of this way of Yoga—I speak of the separate path of Karma or spiritual action—begins when one is luminously aware of the Guide and the guidance and when one feels the Power working with oneself as the instrument and the participator in the divine work." (CWSA 29: 235)

4.

"*Q: Sweet Mother, You speak (in* Conversations*) of the plunge we must take in order to have the true spiritual experience. Is it possible to achieve it by aspiration alone, or is there a method or discipline to be followed?*

A: Everything is possible. All paths lead to the goal provided they are followed with persistence and sincerity.

It is best for each person to find his own path, but for this the aspiration must be ardent, the will unshakable, the patience unfailing." (CWM 16: 321–322)

5.

"*How long will it take for all the parts of my being to turn to and surrender to the Mother?*

It depends on yourself—if there is a strong aspiration and quiet persistence, it can be done soon." (CWSA 32: 140)

6.

"Impatience does not help—intensity of aspiration does. The use of keeping the consciousness uplifted is that it then remains ready for the inflow from above when that comes. To get as early as possible to the highest range one must keep the consciousness steadily turned towards it and maintain the call. First one has to establish the permanent opening—or get it to establish itself, then the

ascension and frequent, afterwards constant descent. It is only afterwards that one can have the ease." (CWSA 27: 12)

7.

"My dear little smile,

You must not lose patience or courage; everything will turn out all right.

The condition you were in while embroidering the 'Silence' flower cannot return as it was before, for in this world things never repeat themselves in exactly the same way—everything changes and progresses. But the state of mental peace you have known is nothing compared to the one—much deeper and completer—which you will come to know.

You must keep your aspiration intact and your will to conquer all obstacles; you must have an unshakable faith in the divine grace and the sure victory.

Sri Aurobindo is working for your transformation—how can there be doubt that he will triumph!

With all my love." (CWM 16: 59)

8.

"*Any suggestion?*

About what?

About sadhana.

Patient aspiration.” (CWM 14: 76)

XIX—Aspiration Must Be Constant, Ceaseless, Patient and Persistent

1.

"The liberation you are aspiring for is indeed extremely necessary for the sadhak, but it means the liberation of the whole vital part of the nature—not a thing that can be done easily or at once. The *mūla jalada* is not in you or in anyone, it is in the universal vital Nature. The aspiration must be constant, patient and persistent, in the end it will prevail. To call the higher calm and peace down into the system from above is the main thing—if you feel that coming down, it will be the beginning of the liberation." (CWSA 31: 111)

2.

"*I wish to become ceaseless in aspiration. I feel that it is the Mother's Force that is aspiring in me. But if the Mother herself does not increase my aspiration through her Grace, how can I become ceaseless in it?*

It is true that it is the Mother's Force that aspires in you, but if the personal consciousness does not give its assent, then the Force does not work. If the personal consciousness ceaselessly looks for the Divine and assents to the working, then aspiration and the working of the Force becomes also ceaseless." (CWSA 32: 227–228)

3.

"Sri Aurobindo also has written this: Aspire intensely, but without impatience.... The difference between intensity and impatience is very subtle—it is all a difference in vibration. It is subtle, but it makes all the difference.

Intensely, but without impatience. That's it. One must be in that state.

And for a very long time, a very long time, one must be satisfied with inner results, that is, results in one's personal and individual reactions, one's inner contact with the rest of the world—one must not expect or be premature in wanting things to materialise. Because our hastiness usually delays things." (CWM 10: 200)

4.

"It [Yoga] cannot be done in a spirit of levity or laxity; the work is too high and difficult, the adverse powers in the lower Nature too ready to take advantage of the least sanction or the smallest opening, the aspiration and tapasya needed too constant and intense." (CWSA 31: 154–155)

5.

"Aspiration and will to change are not so very far from each other, and if one has either, it is usually enough for going through,—provided of course it maintains itself. The opposition in certain parts of the being exists in every

sadhak and can be very obstinate. Sincerity comes by having first the constant central aspiration or will, next, the honesty to see and avow the refusal in parts of the being, finally, the intention of seeing it through even there, however difficult it may be. You have admitted certain things changed in you, so you can no longer pretend that you have made no progress at all." (CWSA 31: 646)

6.

"Do not allow yourself to be shaken or troubled by these things [*demands made by others*]. The one thing to do always is to remain firm in your aspiration to the Divine and to face with equanimity and detachment all difficulties and all oppositions. For those who wish to lead the spiritual life, the Divine must always come first, everything else must be secondary. Keep yourself detached and look at these things from the calm inner vision of one who is inwardly dedicated to the Divine." (CWSA 31: 707)

7.

"Do not worry, be patient and persistent in your aspiration." (CWM 14: 161)

"Persist in your aspiration and it will be fulfilled." (CWM 14: 161)

"Persist in your aspiration and your effort and you will succeed." (CWM 14: 162)

XX—Intense Aspiration with Calm, Peace, Joy and Confidence

1.
"Intense aspiration is always good, but let there also be calm and peace and joy in the mind and heart, and a confidence that all will be done in its due time." (CWSA 29: 59)

2.
"There can be an intense but quiet aspiration which does not disturb the harmony of the inner being." (CWSA 29: 59)

3.
"A quiet aspiration can be as effective as an intense call. Peace is the basis of the sadhana." (CWSA 29: 124)

4.
"Calm, discrimination, detachment (but not indifference) are all very important, for their opposites impede very much the transforming action. Intensity of aspiration should be there, but it must go along with these. No hurry, no inertia—neither rajasic over-eagerness nor tamasic discouragement—a steady and persistent but quiet call and working. No snatching or clutching at realisation, but allowing realisation to come from within and above and

observing accurately its field, its nature, its limits." (CWSA 30: 333–334)

5.

"Impatience is always a mistake, it does not help but hinders. A quiet happy faith and confidence is the best foundation for sadhana; for the rest a constant opening wide of oneself to receive with an aspiration which may be intense, but must always be calm and steady. Full Yogic realisation does not come all at once, it comes after a long preparation of the Adhara which may take a long time." (CWSA 29: 111–112)

6.

"The change noted by *X* evidently indicates a great progress in the vital and physical being. There is nothing spiritually wrong in being glad and cheerful, on the contrary it is the right thing. As for struggles and aspiration, struggles are really not indispensable to progress and there are many people who get so habituated to the struggling attitude that they have all the time struggles and very little else. That is not desirable. There is a sunlit path as well as a gloomy one and it is the better of the two—a path in which one goes forward in absolute reliance on the Mother, fearing nothing, sorrowing over nothing. Aspiration is needed but there can be a sunlit aspiration full of light and faith and confidence and joy. If

difficulty comes, even that can be faced with a smile." (CWSA 31: 173)

7.

"Happiness in the ordinary sense is a sunlit state of the vital with or without cause. Contentment is less than happiness—joy of peace or being free from difficulty is rather a state of joyful *śānti*. Happiness ought not to be a state of self-satisfaction or inertia, and need not be, for one can combine happiness and aspiration. Of course there can be a state of happy inertia, but most people don't remain satisfied with that long, they begin to want something else. There are Yogins who are satisfied with a happy calm immobility, but that is because the happiness is a form of Ananda and in the immobility they feel the Self and its eternal calm and want nothing more." (CWSA 31: 175–176)

8.

"It will not do to indulge this restless vital movement. It is not by that that you can have the union with the Mother. You should aspire calmly—eat, sleep, do your work. Peace is the one thing you have to ask for now—it is only on the basis of peace and calm that the true progress and realisation can come. There must be no vital excitement in your seeking or your aspiration towards the Mother." (CWSA 32: 473)

9.

"One has to proceed on a basis of firm quietude and equanimity with a steady aspiration. It is only if there is a vital excitement that progress becomes a strain and relaxation is needed; for this demand for relaxation is the vital's counterpart of excitement and its way of relief from it." (CWSA 29: 135–136)

10.

"The impulses that are swift and straight and frank, the movements that are unreserved and absolute, the aspiration that mounts in flame are the motion of Mahakali. Her spirit is tameless, her vision and will are high and far-reaching like the flight of an eagle, her feet are rapid on the upward way and her hands are outstretched to strike and to succour. For she too is the Mother and her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness. When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker." (CWSA 32: 19)

11.

"Let your aspiration leap forward, pure and straight, towards the supreme consciousness which is all joy and all beatitude." (CWM 14: 72)

XXI—Indestructible Aspiration Is One of the Things which Carry Us on or Force Us in Sadhana

1.

"I have described the difficulties of Yoga at their worst, as they may hamper and afflict even those predestined to the realisation but as often there is an alternation or a mixture of the light and the darkness, initial attainment perhaps and heavy subsequent difficulties, progress and attacks and retardations, strong movements forward and a floundering in the bogs of the Ignorance. Even great realisations may come and high splendours of light and spiritual experience and yet the goal is not attained; for in the phrase of the Rig Veda, 'As one climbs from peak to peak there is made clear the much that is still to be done.' But there is always something that either carries us on or forces us on. This may take the shape of something conscious in front, the shape of a mastering spiritual idea, indestructible aspiration or fixed faith which may seem sometimes entirely veiled or even destroyed in periods of darkness or violent upheaval, but always they reappear when the storm has passed or the blackness of night has thinned, and reassert their influence. But also it may be something in the very essence of the being deeper than any idea or will in the mind, deeper and more permanent than the heart's aspiration but hidden from one's own observation." (CWSA 31: 688)

2.

"But in this Yoga there is an order or succession of the workings of the secret Force which may vary greatly in its circumstances in each sadhak, but still maintains its general line. … Mind is our present topmost faculty; it is through the thinking mind and the heart with the soul, the psychic being behind them that we have to grow into the Spirit, for what the Force first tries to bring about is to fix the mind in the right central idea, faith or mental attitude and the right aspiration and poise of the heart and to make these sufficiently strong and firm to last in spite of other things in the mind and heart which are other than or in conflict with them." (CWSA 31: 689)

3.

"As one grows, something crystallises in the head; it gets more and more fixed and unless you try very hard you finish by becoming fossilised. This is what usually happens to people, particularly those who have tried for some realisation and succeeded in it or those who have come to believe they have reached the goal. In any case, it was their personal goal. They have reached it, they have attained. It is done, they remain there; they settle there, they say 'that's it.' And they do no more any more. So, after that they may live ten years more, or twenty or thirty, they will not budge. They are there, they will stay there. Such people lack all the suppleness of stuff that's necessary for

going further and progressing. They are stuck. They are very good objects to be put in a museum, but not for doing work. They are like samples to show what can be done but they are not the stuff to do more. For me personally, I admit I prefer for my work someone who knows very little, has not laboured too much, but who has a great aspiration, much goodwill and who feels in himself this flame, this need for progressing. He may know very little, may have realised still less, but if he has that within him, it is good stuff with which one can go very far, much further." (CWM 5: 285)

XXII—Sincere and Sustained Aspiration Is Always Fulfilled

1.

"Since you want the Divine Life so much, you need not be afraid of failure, for a sincere and sustained aspiration is always fulfilled.

Make a firm resolution to overcome your weaknesses and you will see that it is not so difficult as it seems. My force is with you to overcome the obstacles, and also my blessings." (CWM 17: 63)

2.

"*How to be steady and sincere in our aspiration for the Divine Life.*

Consider the Divine Life as the most important thing to obtain." (CWM 12: 301)

3.

" 'I am with you' Mother is with all those who are sincere in their aspiration towards a divine life." (CWM 13: 66)

"Mother is with all those who are sincere in their aspiration towards a divine life above party and politics." (CWM 13: 130)

4.

"Thank You, Lord, You respond miraculously to every sincere aspiration." (CWM 17: 373)

5.

"*Fear nothing*: the Divine always answers every sincere aspiration and never refuses what is offered to Him whole–heartedly; thus you may live in the peace of the certitude that you are accepted by the Divine." (CWM 16: 171)

6.

"The most important [thing] is a steady, quiet endurance that does not allow any upsetting or depression to interfere with your progress. The sincerity of the aspiration is the assurance of the victory.

With my love and blessings." (CWM 16: 145)

7.

"If at any time a deep sorrow, a searing doubt or an intense pain overwhelms you and drives you to despair, there is an infallible way to regain calm and peace.

In the depths of our being there shines a light whose brilliance is equalled only by its purity; a light, a living and conscious portion of a universal godhead who animates and nourishes and illumines Matter, a powerful and unfailing guide for those who are willing to heed his law, a helper full of solace and loving forbearance towards all who

aspire to see and hear and obey him. No sincere and lasting aspiration towards him can be in vain; no strong and respectful trust can be disappointed, no expectation ever deceived.

My heart has suffered and lamented, almost breaking beneath a sorrow too heavy, almost sinking beneath a pain too strong.... But I have called to thee, O divine comforter, I have prayed ardently to thee, and the splendour of thy dazzling light has appeared to me and revived me." (CWM 2: 20)

8.

"*Since the time I have been doing yoga I find that all my affairs are going better than before. So I conclude…*

Perhaps your aspiration was truly sincere and disinterested. In such a case, things must happen like that." (CWM 4:102)

9.

"Naturally, it is always the same thing: one must... must sincerely want to be healed, for otherwise it does not work. If one wants to have the experience solely for the experience's sake and then the next minute one returns to what one was before, this does not work. But if sincerely one wants to be healed, if one has a real aspiration to overcome the obstacle, to rise—rise above oneself, to give

up all that pulls one back, to break the limits, become clear, purify oneself of all that blocks the way, if truly one has the *intense* will not to fall back into past errors, to surge up from the darkness and ignorance, to rise into the light, stripped of all that is too human, too small, too ignorant—then that works. It works, works powerfully. At times it works definitively and totally. But there must be nothing that clings to the old movements, keeps quiet at the moment, hides itself, and then later shows its face and says, 'Yes, yes, it is very fine, your experience, but now it is my turn!' Then, when that happens, I do not answer for anything, because sometimes, as a reaction it becomes worse. That is why I always come back to the same thing, say always the same thing: one must be truly sincere, truly." (CWM 6: 146)

10.

"If you aspire with all your ardour, if you want to receive only the divine influence, if all the time you pull back towards yourself what is taken, caught by other influences and with your will put it under the divine influence, you succeed in doing it. It's a work that can't be done in a day, in a minute; you must be vigilant for a very long time, for years; but one can succeed." (CWM 7: 241)

11.

"The best thing we can do to express our gratitude is to overcome all egoism in ourselves and make a constant effort towards this transformation. Human egoism refuses to abdicate on the grounds that others are not transformed. But that is the stronghold of bad will, for each one's duty is to transform himself regardless of what others may do.

If men knew that this transformation, the abolition of egoism, is the only way to gain constant peace and delight, they would consent to make the necessary effort. This, then, is the conviction that must awaken in them.

Everyone should repeatedly be told: abolish your ego and peace will reign in you.

The Divine help always responds to a sincere aspiration." (CWM 16: 428)

12.

(After seeing the Mother on Lakshmi Puja Day)

"*I await the day when this joy and this felicity will be established in me for ever. Now, it is only a dream and a passing experience like today's. But I hope to realise it for ever with Your Help.*

Persist in your aspiration and the dream will be realised." (CWM 16: 266)

13.

"When the aspiration is awake, each day brings us nearer to the goal." (CWM 14: 73)

14.

"I think that all possibilities are predictable and that all sincere aspiration and complete consecration will have a response, and that the processes, means, transitions, transformations will be innumerable in nature—not at all that things will happen only in a particular way and not otherwise.

In fact, anything, everything that is ready to receive even a particle or a particular aspect of the supramental consciousness and light must *automatically* receive it. And the effects of this consciousness and light will be innumerable, for they will certainly be adapted to the possibilities, the capacity of each one according to the sincerity of his aspiration.

The more total the consecration and the intenser the aspiration, the more integral and intense can be the result. But the effect of the supramental action will be countless in its manifestations—multiple, innumerable, infinitely varied, not necessarily following a precise line which is the same for all. That is impossible. For it is contrary to the very nature of the supramental consciousness.

The very quality of the atmosphere has changed.

The consequences are bound to be infinitely varied, but perceptible. That is to say, it will be possible to distinguish the consequences of ordinary movements from the consequences of the supramental action, for these will have a particular nature, a special character." (CWM 8: 177–178)

XXIII—If Spiritual Aspiration Dominates Your Consciousness, It Can Be Realised Very Swiftly

1.

"*Sweet Mother, it is said that if one sees a shooting star and at that moment one aspires for something, that aspiration is fulfilled within the year. Is this true?*

Do you know what that means?—The aspiration must be formulated *during the time* the star is visible; and that doesn't last long, does it? Well, if an aspiration can be formulated while the star is visible, this means that it is all the time *there*, present, in the forefront of the consciousness—this does not apply to ordinary things, it has nothing to do with that, it concerns a spiritual aspiration. But the point is that if you are able to articulate your spiritual aspiration just at that moment, it means that it is right in front of your consciousness, that it dominates your consciousness. And, necessarily, what dominates your consciousness can be realised very swiftly.

I had the opportunity to make this experiment. Exactly this. The moment the star was passing, at that very moment there sprang up from the consciousness: "To realise the divine union, for my body." That very moment.

And before the end of the year, it was done.

But it was not because of the star! It was because that dominated my whole consciousness and I was thinking

of nothing but that, I wanted only that, thought only of that, acted only for that. So, this thing which generally takes a whole lifetime— it is said the minimum time is thirty-five years!—before twelve months had passed, it was done.

But that was because I thought only of that.

And it was because I was thinking only of that, that just when the star flashed by I could formulate it—not merely a vague impression—formulate it in precise words like this: "To realise union with the Divine", the inner Divine, the thing we speak of, the very thing we speak of. Therefore, what is important is not the star but the aspiration.

The star is only like an outer demonstration, nothing else. But it is not necessary to have a shooting star in order to realise swiftly! What is necessary is that the whole will of the being should be concentrated on one point." (CWM 8: 210–211)

XXIV—Habitual Aspiration Keeps Us in Touch with the Forces which Will Answer Our Aspiration

1.

"*What does 'the degree of its stress' mean?*

Aspiration and will produce a stress in the being. But I say 'degree', for there is also the point upon which the stress works.

I say 'to make yourself blank' is to release the stress of your consciousness towards realisation, towards the goal you want to realise. The 'stress' is the pressure upon a point, what is concentrated upon a point and insists that it be done. Consciousness— the consciousness of the being, individual consciousness—puts a pressure upon a point, you see. We may take the example we were just speaking of: you have a chronic illness, a malformation of the body, a physical defect. Then your consciousness, in its aspiration and will puts a more or less constant stress on the thing it wants to realise, what you want to cure.

Well, when you make yourself empty within in meditation (this is one form of meditation if you like), this means that you stop this concentration of will: your consciousness becomes neutral for the moment. Its stress is upon this point (it may be on other points, on things more or less concrete or abstract, but the stress is on one point) and when you make yourself empty you withdraw

this pressure, this stress, and you remain like a blank page upon which nothing is written. This is what I call 'making yourself empty', not to have any active will concentrated upon one point or another. And so I say the moment you make yourself empty, the stress indeed stops, and yet in your silent aspiration you put yourself in contact with the forces attracted by this stress you usually have, the special point of stress you have normally. That is why I have emphasised the fact that all depends upon the person, because everything depends upon his habitual aspiration, the thing he usually wants to realise, for he is naturally in touch with the forces which will answer his aspiration. So, if for a certain time one stops the activity of this aspiration and remains silently receptive, passive, well, the effect of the habitual aspiration remains and will draw just those forces which ought to answer it." (CWM 4: 282–283)

XXV—To Others, Constant Aspiration Looks like Obsession

1.

"*If one is too serious in yoga, doesn't one become obsessed by the difficulty of the task?*

There is a limit to be kept!... But if one chooses one's obsession well, it may be very useful because it is no longer quite an obsession. For example, one has decided to find the Divine within oneself, and constantly, in every circumstance, whatever happens or whatever one may do, one concentrates in order to enter into contact with the inner Divine. Naturally, first one must have that little thing Sri Aurobindo speaks about, that 'lesser truth' which consists in knowing that there is a Divine within one (this is a very good example of the 'lesser truth') and once one is sure of it and has the aspiration to find it, if that aspiration becomes constant and the effort to realise it becomes constant, in the eyes of others it looks like an obsession, but this kind of obsession is not bad. It becomes bad only if one loses one's balance. But it must be made quite clear that those who lose their balance with that obsession are only those who were quite ready to lose their balance; any circumstance whatever would have produced the same result and made them lose their balance—it is a defect in the mental structure, it is not the fault of the

obsession. And naturally, he who changes a desire into an obsession would be sure to go straight towards imbalance. That is why I say it is important to know the object of the obsession.” (CWM 4: 344–345)

XXVI—The Contact with the Mother's Consciousness Will Lead to the Fulfilment of All True Aspirations

1.

"*On waking up this morning, I felt myself in contact with the Mother's consciousness; it gave me a good feeling and even Ananda. While meditating this morning, my mind opened up above and the contact deepened and I felt aspiration and peace. I have been able to progress and get experiences by keeping contact with the Mother's consciousness; but I have the idea that this contact is not enough to give me all the experiences I aspire for.*

That is your mistake to think the contact is not enough. The contact with the Mother's consciousness will lead to *all* necessary realisations and the fulfilment of all true aspirations." (CWSA 32: 457)

2.

"*I remember that formerly at night I became conscious of the mind rising upward and then I saw many points all around rising up with aspiration, as if each point was aspiring in a different light that was guided by the Mother. Nowadays I think that if there is one aspiration, there will be constant contact.*

Yes—one aspiration to live in the Mother's light and force which bring the true knowledge and the true power. If that aspiration is fulfilled, then all else needed can be fulfilled—all the other lights can be contained in the Divine Light." (CWSA 32: 285)

3.

"*The day before yesterday, just before the Mother came down for her evening walk, I saw: The fire of aspiration is rising from my heart and its flame is slowly going upward as I constantly remember the Mother. Then I saw: The Mother, as we see her every day, is descending in the fire and filling my mind, vital and physical with peace and strength. In the second vision why did I see the Mother's image exactly as we see her every day?*

It indicates an aspiration and an action for realisation in the external nature and not only in the inner being. When it is an inner action or action of another plane one can see the Mother in any of her forms, but for realisation in the physical her appropriate form is that which she wears here." (CWSA 32: 273)

4.

"*I cannot understand whether I am doing Yoga. Can it be said that I am doing your Purna Yoga?*

Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can 'do' the Purna Yoga—i.e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one's own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother's hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you." (CWSA 32: 151–152)

5.

"To be open is simply to be so turned to the Mother that her Force can work in you without anything refusing or obstructing her action. If the mind is shut up in its own ideas and refuses to allow her to bring in the Light and the Truth, if the vital clings to its desires and does not admit the true initiative and impulsions that the Mother's power brings, if the physical is shut up in its desire, habits and inertia and does not allow the Light and Force to enter in it and work, then one is not open. It is not possible to be entirely open all at once in all the movements, but there must be a central opening in each part and a dominant aspiration or will in each part (not in the mind alone) to

admit only the Mother's workings, the rest will then be progressively done." (CWSA 32: 151)

6.

"As for sadhana, I presume you mean by that some kind of exercise of concentration etc. For work also is sadhana, if done in the right attitude and spirit. The sadhana of inner concentration consists in:

(1) Fixing the consciousness in the heart and concentrating there on the idea, image or name of the Divine Mother, whichever comes easiest to you.

(2) A gradual and progressive quieting of the mind by this concentration in the heart.

(3) An aspiration for the Mother's presence in the heart and the control by her of mind, life and action." (CWSA 29: 225–226)

7.

"*Sweet Mother, After a long time I had a beautiful dream in which I saw the Mother and received Her Blessings.*

It is not a dream, but the result of the preceding meditation and of your aspiration." (CWM 16: 279)

XXVII—The Divine Mother Is Present in Every Aspiration which Is Turned Towards Her

1.

"*Remove from me all obscurity which blinds me, and be always with me.*

I am in every thought, every aspiration which you turn towards me; for if you were not always present in my consciousness you would not be able to think of me. So you may be sure of my presence. I add my blessings." (CWM 16: 160)

2.

"All souls who aspire are always under my direct care." (CWM 13: 66)

XXVIII—If You Want Something Precise, It Is Better to Formulate Your Aspiration Clearly

1.

"*But, Mother, when one prays sincerely for the intervention of the Grace, doesn't one expect a particular result?*

Excuse me, that depends on the tenor of the prayer. If one simply invokes the Grace or the Divine, and puts oneself in His hands, one does not expect a particular result. To expect a particular result one must formulate one's prayer, must ask for something. If you have only a great aspiration for the divine Grace and evoke it, implore it, without asking it for anything precise, it is the Grace which will choose what it will do for you, not you.

That is better, isn't it?

Ah! that's quite another question.

Why, it is higher in its quality, perhaps. But still, if one wants something precise, it is better to formulate it. If one has a special reason for invoking the Grace, it is better to formulate it precisely and clearly.

Of course, if one is in a state of complete surrender and gives oneself entirely, if one simply offers oneself to the Grace and lets it do what it likes, that is very good. But after that one must not question what it does! One must

not say to it, 'Oh! I did that with the idea of having this', for if one really has the idea of obtaining something, it is better to formulate it in all sincerity, simply, just as one sees it. Afterwards, it is for the Grace to choose if it will do it or not; but in any case, one will have formulated clearly what one wanted. And there is no harm in that.

Where it becomes bad is when the request is not granted and one revolts. Then naturally it becomes bad. It is at that moment one must understand that the desire one has, or the aspiration, may not have been very enlightened and that perhaps one has asked for something which was not exactly what was good for one. Then at that moment one must be wise and say simply, 'Well, let Thy Will be done.' But so long as one has an inner perception and an inner preference, there is no harm in formulating it. It is a very natural movement.

For example, if one has been foolish or has made a mistake and one truly, sincerely wishes never to do it again, well, I don't see any harm in asking for it. And in fact, if one asks for it with sincerity, a true inner sincerity, there is a great chance that it will be granted.

You must not think that the Divine likes to contradict you. He is not at all keen on doing it! He can see better than you what is really good for you; but it is only when it is absolutely indispensable that He opposes your aspiration. Otherwise He is always ready to give what you ask." (CWM 8: 254–255)

2.

"You are placed in certain circumstances; one thing or another may happen, and you yourself have an aspiration, you ask to be guided, but within you there is something which prefers the answer to be of a certain kind, the indication to be a particular one, or the event to come about in one way rather than another; but all this is not a question of choice, it is a preference. And when the answer to your aspiration or prayer is not in accord with your desire, this preference makes you feel unhappy, you find it difficult to accept the answer, you must fight to accept it; whereas if you had no preferences, whatever the answer to your aspiration, when it comes, you cling to it joyfully, spontaneously with a sincere *élan*. Otherwise you are compelled to make an effort to accept what comes, the decision which comes in answer to your aspiration; you wish, desire, prefer things to be like this and not like that. But that, indeed, is not a choice. The choice is there at every minute; every minute you are faced with a choice: the choice to climb up or go down, the choice to progress or go backwards. But this choice does not imply that you prefer things to be like this or like that; it is a fact of every moment, an *attitude* you take." (CWM 8: 406–407)

XXIX—Have a Strong Will for Purification

1.

"The presence whose fading he regrets can only be felt if the inner being continues to be consecrated and the outer nature is put into harmony or at least kept under the touch of the inner spirit. But if he does things which his inner being does not approve, this condition will be inevitably tarnished and, each time, the possibility of his feeling the presence will diminish. He must have a strong will to purification and an aspiration that does not flag and cease, if the Mother's grace is to be there and effective." (CWSA 32: 165–166)

2.

"The aspiration must be for entire purification, especially (1) purification from sex, so that no sex imaginations may enter and the sex impulse may cease, (2) purification from desires and demands, (3) purification from depression which is the result of disappointed desires. It is the most important for you. Particularly what you must aspire for is peace in all the being, complete equanimity, samata. The feeling that peace is not enough must go. Peace and purity and equanimity once established, all the rest must be the Mother's free gift, not a result of the demand from the being.

You can mix normally with people keeping as much as possible an inner quietude. In future when the purification is done and a continuous experience possible we can reconsider the matter." (CWSA 29: 46)

3.

"True strength and protection come from the Divine Presence in the heart.

If you want to keep this Presence constantly in you, avoid carefully all vulgarity in speech, behaviour and acts. Do not mistake liberty for licence and freedom for bad manners. The thoughts must be pure and the aspiration ardent." (CWM 14: 222)

4.

"People who know that they are doing foolish things, who are conscious, but who are not able to refrain from them, because their mind does not have enough strength to check them?

…

It is only the psychic being that has the strength to intervene. If your mind is in contact with your psychic being, if it receives the influence of the psychic being, then it is strong enough to organise the resistance. It knows what the true thing is and what the false; and knowing what the true thing is, if it has the goodwill, it will organise the resistance, give battle and gain the victory. But that is

the only condition: it must be in contact with the psychic being.

… At one time you are quite determined, you have decided that it would be thus—for example, that you would not do such a thing: it is settled, you will not do it—but how is it that suddenly (you do not know how or why nor what has happened), you have not decided anything at all! And then you immediately find in yourself an excellent reason for doing the thing....

…

It happens only when you have decided: 'Well, this time, I am going to try not to do it, and I shall not do it, I shall apply all my strength and I shall not do it.' Even if you have just a little success, it is much. Not a big success, but just a small success, a very partial success: you do not carry out what you yearn to do; but the yearning, the desire, the passion is still there and that produces whirls within, but outside you resist, 'I shall not do it, I shall not move; even if I have to bind myself hand and foot, I shall not do it.' It is a partial success—but it is a great victory because, due to this, next time you will be able to do a little more. That is to say, instead of holding all the violent passions within yourself, you can begin calming them a little; and you will calm them slowly at first, with difficulty. They will remain long, they will come back, they will trouble you, vex you, produce in you a great disgust, all that, but if you resist well and say: 'No, I shall carry out nothing;

whatever the cost, I shall not carry out anything; I will stay like a rock', then little by little, little by little, that thins out, thins out and you begin to learn the second attitude: 'Now I want my consciousness to be above those things. There will still be many battles but if my consciousness stands above that, little by little there will come a time when this will return no longer.' And then there is a time when you feel that you are absolutely free: you do not even perceive it, and then that is all. It may take a long time, it may come soon: that depends on the strength of character, on the sincerity of the aspiration. But even for people who have just a little sincerity, if they subject themselves to this process, they succeed. It takes time. They succeed in the first item: in not expressing. All forces upon earth tend towards self-expression. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse to express them, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet.

So you must never say: 'I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action.' That is the normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: 'The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it no longer and next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for me, I

am now outside all that.' This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer have desire for anything and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely." (CWM 5: 210–213)

5.

"If one looks at oneself very sincerely, very straightforwardly and very severely, one very quickly perceives that very few things, very few movements of consciousness are free from being mixed with desires. Even in what you take for a higher movement, there is always... no, happily not always, but most often there is a desire mixed. The desire of the sense of one's importance, if only this, that kind of self-satisfaction, the satisfaction of being someone superior.

This is of course much better than those who want to become yogis in order to astound their neighbours and exercise authority over others, and so that others may be full of admiration and of respect for them. How many things are truly *pure*? Pure aspiration? You must have already attained a very high level, that level I spoke of, on which one can look at oneself with a smile, a slightly ironic smile, and have the feeling that one was so small, so small, so small, so petty, so *insignificant* and so *foolish.* After that things go better." (CWM 6: 338)

6.

"One is truly perfectly pure only when the whole being, in all its elements and all its movements, adheres fully, exclusively, to the divine Will. This indeed is total purity. It does not depend on any moral or social law, any mental convention of any kind. It depends exclusively on this: when all the elements and all the movements of the being adhere exclusively and totally to the divine Will. …

For example, if you take your stand on a moral viewpoint—which is itself altogether wrong from the spiritual point of view—there are people who apparently lead an altogether perfectly moral life, who conform to all the social laws, all the customs, the moral conventions, and who are amass of impurity—from the spiritual point of view these beings are profoundly impure. On the other hand there are some poor people who do things... who are born, for instance, with a sense of freedom, and do things which are not considered very respectable from the social or moral point of view, and who can be in a state of inner aspiration and inner sincerity which makes them infinitely purer than the others. This is one of the big difficulties. As soon as one speaks of these things, there arises the deformation produced in the consciousness by all the social and moral conventions. As soon as you speak of purity, a moral monument comes in front of you which completely falsifies your notion. And note that it is infinitely easier to be moral from the social point of view than to be moral

from the spiritual point of view. To be moral from the social viewpoint one has only to take good care to do nothing which is not approved of by others; this may be somewhat difficult, but still it is not impossible; and one may be, as I said, a monument of insincerity and impurity while doing this; whereas to be pure from the spiritual point of view means a vigilance, a consciousness, a sincerity that stand all tests." (CWM 6: 438–439)

7.

"*Sweet Mother, I really feel that there is a great lack of harmony and cooperation here among us and among the various departments. This results in a great waste of money and energy. Where does this disharmony come from and when will it be set right?*

Or is this feeling I have only a reflection of my own Nature!

Here is the best answer to your questions, written by Sri Aurobindo:

Each one carries in himself the seeds of this disharmony, and his most urgent work is to purify himself of it by a constant aspiration." (CWM 16: 324–325)

8.

"Periods of obscuration are frequent and common; generally, it is enough to keep quiet without worrying, knowing that these are spiritual nights which alternate with

the full light of the days. But to be able to remain in peace you must keep in your heart gratitude towards the Divine for all the help He gives. If gratitude also is veiled, the obscure periods last much longer. There is, however, a swift and effective remedy: it is to keep always burning in your heart the flame of purification, the aspiration for progress, the intensity, the ardour of consecration. This flame is kindled in the heart of all who are sincere; you must not let ingratitude cover it up with its ashes." (CWM 14: 246–247)

9.

"Our thoughts are still ignorant, they must be enlightened.

Our aspiration is still imperfect, it must be purified.

Our action is still powerless, it must become effective." (CWM 15: 228)

XXX—Past Does Not Matter If there Is a Sincere Aspiration

1.

"You are mistaken in thinking that the Mother keeps you at a distance; you have only to open yourself to her sincerely and entirely. What has been done in the past does not matter if there is a sincere aspiration and resolution to change. Neither to lament nor to complain or be angry will help; a confident and happy opening of oneself to the Mother without insistence on personal demands and desires is the only thing to do." (CWSA 32: 502)

2.

"Never mind about the purity of the body. The love of the Mother purifies both heart and body—if the soul's aspiration is there, the body also is pure. What happened in the past does not in the least matter." (CWSA 32: 482)

XXXI—With Aspiration One Can Do a Lifetime's Work in a Few Months

1.

"In fact, you must become conscious instruments... conscious... conscious of the Divine.

Usually this takes a whole lifetime, or sometimes, for some people it is several lifetimes. Here, in the present conditions, you can do it in a few months. For those who are... who have an ardent aspiration, in a few *months* they can do it." (CWM 12: 428)

2.

"You see, for those who are sincere, sincere and very—how to put it?—very straight in their aspiration, there is a marvelous help, there is an absolutely living, active consciousness which is ready to... to respond to any attentive silence. You could do six years' work in six months, but there should... there should not be any pretension, there should not be anything which tries to imitate, there should be no wanting to put on airs." (CWM 12: 424)

XXXII—Aspiration and Consecration Call Down a Greater Force to Do the Work

1.

"There is also another way which was mine for a long time—a condition in which the work takes place automatically and without intervention of personal thought or mental action, while the consciousness remains silent in the Divine. The thing, however, does not come so much by trying as by a very simple constant aspiration and will of consecration—or else by a movement of the consciousness separating the inner from the instrumental being. Aspiration and will of consecration calling down a greater Force to do the work is a method which brings great results, even if in some it takes a long time about it. That is a great secret of sadhana, to know how to get things done by the Power behind or above instead of doing all by the mind's effort. I don't mean to say that the mind's effort is unnecessary or has no result—only if it tries to do everything by itself, that becomes a laborious effort for all except the spiritual athletes." (CWSA 29: 214–215)

2.

"Q: Sweet Mother, what is meant by 'the Divine gives Himself'?

A: It means exactly this: that the more you give yourself the more you have the experience—it is not just a feeling or impression or sensation, it is a total experience—that the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there's no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness." (CWM 7: 243)

3.

"Increase steadily your own aspiration. Try to perfect your consecration to the Divine and your life will be arranged for you." (CWM 14: 76)

4.

"Let this day of your birth be for you an occasion to give yourself a little more, a little better to the Divine. Let your consecration be more total, your devotion more ardent, your aspiration more intense.

Open yourself to the New Light and walk with a joyful step on the path.

Resolve on this day that it may be thus and the day will not have passed in vain." (CWM 15: 199)

XXXIII—Sincere and Constant Aspiration Increases Receptivity

1.

"Q: *Your hands are open to give everything, but I can only receive a small part of it because I am not receptive enough.*

A: This is the exact image of the state of the world which suffers because it is not receptive, when it could live in beatitude if it would open to the Divine Love.

But there is a remedy:

Sincere and constant aspiration." (CWM 16: 365)

2.

"An integral and exclusive aspiration is sure to bring the Divine's response." (CWM 14: 75)

3.

"It is with the widening of the consciousness and the one-pointedness of the aspiration that the receptivity increases." (CWM 14: 147)

4.

"One must rely on the Divine and yet do some enabling sadhana —the Divine gives the fruits, not by the measure of the sadhana but by the measure of the soul and its

aspiration. Also worrying does no good—'I shall be this, I shall be that, what shall I be?' Say 'I am ready to be not what I want, but what the Divine wants me to be'—all the rest should go on that base." (CWSA 29: 55)

5.

"I have said also that the Grace *can* at any moment act suddenly, but over that one has no control, because it comes by an incalculable Will which sees things that the mind cannot see. It is precisely the reason why one should never despair,—that and also because no sincere aspiration to the Divine can fail in the end." (CWSA 29: 174)

6.

"*Q: I did not understand very well the answer to this question: "Does the power of aspiration vary in different sadhaks according to their natures?"*

[Sri Aurobindo's answer: "No. Aspiration is the same power in all; it differs only in purity, intensity and object."]

Ah! Yes.

You see, I think the question has been put badly. I believe the one who asked the question wanted to say 'the effect of aspiration' and he put 'power'. That is, aspiration in everyone, no matter who it is, has the same power. But the effect of this aspiration is different. For aspiration is

aspiration: if you have aspiration, in itself it has a power. Only, this aspiration calls down an answer, and this answer, the effect, which is the result of the aspiration, depends upon each one, for it depends upon his receptivity. I know many people of this kind: they say, 'Oh! But I aspire all the time and still I receive nothing.' It is impossible that they should receive nothing, in the sense that the answer is sure to come. But it is they who do not receive. The answer comes but they are not receptive, so they receive nothing.

There are people, you know, who have a lot of aspiration. They call the force. The force comes to them—even enters deeply into them—and they are so unconscious that they don't know it! That indeed happens quite frequently. It is their state of unconsciousness which prevents them from even feeling the force which enters into them. It enters into them, and does its work. I knew people who were gradually transformed and yet were so unconscious that they were not even aware of it. The consciousness comes later—very much later. On the other hand, there are people who are more passive, so to speak, more open, more attentive, and even if a very slight amount of force comes, they become aware of it immediately and use it fully.

When you have an aspiration, a very active aspiration, your aspiration is going to do its work. It is going to call down the answer to what you aspire for. But if, later, you

begin to think of something else or are not attentive or receptive, you do not even notice that your aspiration has received an answer. This happens very frequently. So people tell you: 'I aspire and I don't receive anything, I get no answer!' Yes, you do have an answer but you are not aware of it, because you continue to be active in this way, like a mill turning all the time." (CWM 6: 115–116)

7.

"The central sincerity is the first thing and sufficient for an aspiration to be entertained—a total sincerity is needed for the aspiration to be fulfilled." (CWSA 29: 414)

XXXIV—The Role of Aspiration in Concentration of the Heart and Concentration above the Head

1.

"That is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. The first opening [*of the heart centre which opens to the psychic being*] is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana—accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for." (CWSA 30: 327–328) (CWSA 32: 205)

2.

"Any method sincerely and persistently followed can end by bringing the opening. You yourself chose the method of prayer and japa because you believed in that, and I acquiesced because it does prepare something in the consciousness and, if done with persistent faith and bhakti, it can open all the doors. Another method is concentration

and aspiration in the heart which opens the inner emotional being. Another is the concentration in the head of which I spoke which opens the inner mind or opens the passage through the Brahmarandhra to the higher consciousness. These things are no fantastic invention of mine which one can dismiss as a new-fangled and untested absurdity; they are recognised methods which have succeeded in thousands of cases and here also there are plenty who have found their effect." (CWSA 31: 729)

3.

"In the heart-centre one concentrates in an aspiration, for an opening, for the presence or living image of the Divine there or whatever else is the object. There may be japa of a name but, if so, there must also be a concentration on it and the name must repeat itself there in the heart-centre.

It may be asked what becomes of the rest of the consciousness when there is this local concentration? Well, it either falls silent as in any concentration or, if it does not, then thoughts or other things may move about, as if outside, but the concentrated part does not attend to them or notice. That is when the concentration is reasonably successful." (CWSA 29: 308–309)

4.

"The second opening [*of the mind centres to all that is behind and above which opens to the higher*

consciousness] is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being—the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature." (CWSA 30: 328)

5.

"Nothing needs to be done to bring the ascension—aspiration is sufficient. The object of the ascension is for the lower nature to join the higher consciousness so that (1) the limit or lid between the higher and the lower may be broken and disappear, (2) the consciousness may have free access to higher and higher planes, (3) a free way may be made for the descent of the higher Consciousness into the lower planes." (CWSA 30: 430)

6.

"He asks me to tell you that there are two kinds of movements in the Sadhana, the ascent and the descent. The ascent or the upward movement takes place when there is a sufficient aspiration from the being, i.e. from the

various mental, vital and physical planes. Each in turn ascends above the mind to the place where it meets the supramental and can then receive the origination of all its movements from above.

The Higher descends when you have a receptive quietude in the various planes of your being prepared to receive it. In either case whether in aspiring upward to rise to the Higher or in remaining passive and open to receive the Higher, an entire calmness in the different parts of the being is the true condition. If you do not have the necessary force in the quiet aspiration or will and if you find that a certain amount of effort will help you in rising upward, you may go on using it as a temporary means until there is the natural openness in which a silent call or simple effortless will is sufficient to induce the action of the Higher Shakti." (CWSA 36: 301)

7.

"The result of the concentration is not usually immediate—though to some there comes a swift and sudden out–flowering; but with most there is a time longer or shorter of adaptation or preparation, especially if the nature has not been prepared already to some extent by aspiration and tapasya. The coming of the result can sometimes be aided by associating with the concentration one of the processes of the old Yogas." (CWSA 30: 328)

8.

"There are two main nerve channels for the currents, one on each side of the central channel in the spine. The descending current is the Energy from above coming down to touch the sleeping Power in the lowest nerve centre at the bottom of the spine; the ascending current is the release of energy going up from the awakened Kundalini. This movement as it proceeds opens up the six centres of the subtle nervous system and by the opening one escapes from the limitations of the surface consciousness bound to the gross body, and great ranges of experience proper to the larger subliminal self, mental, vital, subtle-physical, are shown to the sadhaka. When the Kundalini meets the higher consciousness, as it ascends through the summit of the head, there is an opening to the higher superconscient reaches above the normal mind. It is by ascending through these in our consciousness and receiving a descent of their energies that it is possible ultimately to reach the supermind. This is the psycho-physical method which is elaborately systematised in the Tantra. In our Yoga it is not necessary to go through the systematised method,—for this psycho-physical process is only a part of the movement of the Yoga and it takes place spontaneously according to need by the force of the aspiration and the call for the workings of the Divine Power. As soon as there is an opening, the Divine Power descends and conducts the necessary working, does what is needed, each thing in its

time, and the Yogic consciousness begins to be born in the sadhaka." (CWSA 30: 420–421)

9.

"I may say that the opening upwards, the ascent into the Light and the subsequent descent into the ordinary consciousness and normal human life is very common as the first decisive experience in the practice of Yoga and may very well happen even without the practice of Yoga in those who are destined for the spiritual change, especially if there is a dissatisfaction somewhere with the ordinary life and a seeking for something more, greater or better. It comes often exactly in the way that she describes and the cessation of the experience and the descent also come in the same way. This first experience may be followed by a very long time during which there is no repetition of it or any subsequent experience. If there is a constant practice of Yoga, the interval need not be so long; but even so it is often long enough. The descent is inevitable because it is not the whole being that has risen up but only something within and all the rest of the nature is unprepared, absorbed in or attached to ordinary life and governed by movements that are not in consonance with the Light. Still the something within is something central in the being and therefore the experience is in a way definitive and decisive. For it comes as a decisive intimation of the spiritual destiny and an indication of what must be reached some time in

the life. Once it has been there, something is bound to happen which will open the way, determine the right knowledge and the right attitude enabling one to proceed on the way and bring a helping influence. After that the work of clearing away the obstacles that prevent the return to the Light and the ascension of the whole being and, what is equally important, the descent of the Light into the whole being can be begun and progress towards completion. It may take long or be rapid, that depends on the inner push and also on outer circumstances but the inner aspiration and endeavour count more than the circumstances which can accommodate themselves to the inner need if that is very strong. The moment has come for her and the necessary aspiration and knowledge and the influence that can help her." (CWSA 30: 432)

10.

"The vital can rise to the head in two ways—one to cloud the mind with the vital impulses, the other to aspire and join with the higher Consciousness. If you noticed the aspiration, it was evidently the latter movement." (CWSA 31: 113)

11.

"There is no harm in raising the aspiration from below to meet the power from above. All that you have to be careful

about is not to raise up the difficulty from below before the descending Power is ready to remove it.

There is no necessity of losing consciousness when you meditate. It is the widening and change of the consciousness that is essential. If you mean going inside, you can do that without losing consciousness." (CWSA 29: 260)

12.

"The Mother's Peace is above you—by aspiration and quiet self-opening it descends. When it takes hold of the vital and the body, then equanimity becomes easy and in the end automatic." (CWSA 32: 135–136)

13.

"Dhyana means to make the mind and vital quiet and concentrate in aspiration for the Mother's Peace, the Mother's Presence, her Light, Force and Ananda." (CWSA 32: 135)

14.

"It is the right fundamental consciousness that you have now got. The tamas and other movements of the lower universal Nature are bound to try to come in, but if one has the calm of the inner being which makes them felt as something external to the being, and the light of the psychic which instantly exposes and rejects them, then

that is to have the true consciousness which keeps one safe while the more positive transformation is preparing or taking place.

That transformation comes by the descent of the Force, Light, Knowledge, Ananda etc. from above. So you are right in your feeling that you should open with a quiet *śānta samāhita* aspiration or invocation for the descent of the Light from above. Only it must be an aspiration in this calm and wideness, not disturbing it in the least—and you must be prepared for the result being not immediate—it may be rapid, but also it may take some time." (CWSA 30: 450–451)

15.

"It [*peace*] has to be brought down to the heart and navel first. That gives it a certain kind of inner stability—though not absolute. There is no method other than aspiration, a strong quiet will and a rejection of all that is not turned towards the Divine in those parts into which you call the peace—here the emotional and higher vital." (CWSA 30:452)

16.

"The sadhana is a difficult one and time should not be grudged; it is only in the last stages that a very great and constant rapidity of progress can be confidently expected. As for Shakti, the descent of Shakti before the vital is pure

and surrendered, has its dangers. It is better for him to pray for purification, knowledge, intensity of the heart's aspiration and as much working of the Power as he can bear and assimilate." (CWSA 30: 459)

17.

"It is not a theory but a constant experience and very tangible when it comes that there is above us, above the consciousness in the physical body, a great supporting extension as it were of peace, light, power, joy—that we can become aware of it, and bring it down into the physical consciousness and that that, at first for a time, afterwards more frequently and for a longer time, in the end for good, can remain and change the whole basis of our daily consciousness. Even before we are aware of it above, we can suddenly feel it coming down and entering into us. The need is to have an aspiration towards it, make the mind quiet so that what we call the opening is rendered possible. A quieted mind (not necessarily motionless or silent, though it is good if one can have that at will) and a persistent aspiration in the heart are the two main keys of the Yoga. Activity of the mind is a much slower process and does not by itself lead to these decisive results. It is the difference between a straight road and an approach through constant circles, spirals or meanders." (CWSA 31: 740–741)

18.

"I mean [*by writing 'let the Force come in'*] that you need not pull it down, but you should aid its entry by your full aspiration and assent." (CWSA 30: 480)

19.

"What you are doing is entirely the right thing and nothing more is needed. The peace you feel is the basis, the foundation for the transformation, all the rest will be built on it. To open to the Divine Forces with a quiet and strong aspiration, to become conscious of their working, to allow quietly that working and calmly to contain it, seconding it with one's aspiration, getting more and more knowledge and understanding of what is being done as one goes on—this is the sound and natural way of the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 123–124)

20.

"It is only the psychic that knows how to surrender and the psychic is usually very much veiled in the beginning. When the psychic awakes, it can bring a sudden and true surrender of the whole being, for the difficulty of the rest is rapidly dealt with and disappears. But till then effort is indispensable. Or else it is necessary till the Force comes flooding down into the being from above and takes up the sadhana, does it for one more and more and leaves less and less to individual effort—but even then, if not effort, at

least aspiration and vigilance are needed till the possession of mind, will, life and body by the Divine Power is complete.” (CWSA 29: 84)

XXXV—Aspiration to Bring Down the Higher Consciousness

1.

"Even if there is no rising up, the aspiration connects you with the higher consciousness and helps or prepares to bring down something from it." (CWSA 29: 58)

2.

"It [*the higher consciousness*] may not come exactly according to the aspiration, but the aspiration is not ineffective. It keeps the consciousness open, prevents an inert state of acquiescence in all that comes and exercises a sort of pull on the sources of the higher consciousness." (CWSA 29: 58)

3.

"In this Yoga all depends on whether one can open to the Influence or not. If there is a sincerity in the aspiration and a patient will to arrive at the higher consciousness in spite of all obstacles, then the opening in one form or another is sure to arrive. But it may take a long or a short time according to the prepared or unprepared condition of the mind, heart and body; so if one has not the necessary patience, the effort may be abandoned owing to the difficulty of the beginning." (CWSA 29: 107)

4.

"But our thought is something which hardly exists. It can be 'our' thought only if, instead of being like a public place as we generally are in our normal state—we are like a public place and all the forces pass there, come and go, enter, depart, jostle each other and even quarrel—if instead of being like that, we are a concentrated consciousness, turned upwards in an aspiration, and open beyond the limits of the human mind to something higher; then, being open like this brings down that higher something across all the layers of reality, and this something may enter into contact with our conscious brain and take a form there which is no longer the creation of a universal force or a personal mind stronger than ours, but the *direct* expression and creation of a light which is above us, and which may be a light of the highest kind if our aspiration and opening allow it. That is the only case in which one can say that the thought is our own. Otherwise, all the rest is simply a passing notation: we note down, we invest a force with words, a force that's altogether universal and collective, which enters, goes out, moves and passes freely from one person to another." (CWM 8: 345)

XXXVI—Why One Does Not Feel the Aspiration in Action

1.

"*When I am alone for some time, I feel aspiration in the heart, peace and Samata. I feel as if nothing can disturb me. But when I come out to work or move here and there and mix with others, I lose this feeling. Why does it happen like this?*

It is the difficulty of being calm and surrendered in action and movement; when there is no action and one is simply sitting still, it is easy to be quiet." (CWSA 32: 250)

XXXVII—In Work Aspire to Feel the Mother's Force Working in Oneself

1.

"As for the work, it is a means of preparation, it can also be a means of growing into the inner consciousness. But then it must be done not as work only but as an offering to the Mother, without insisting on the ego, with an aspiration to feel her Force working in one, her Presence presiding over the work, seeking to give all to her, not claiming anything for oneself. That is the spirit of work offered as a sacrifice; done like that, work becomes a sadhana and a Yoga." (CWSA 29: 242)

2.

"Sadhana must be the main thing and sadhana means the purification of the nature, the consecration of the being, the opening of the psychic and the inner mind and vital, the contact and presence of the Divine, the realisation of the Divine in all things, surrender, devotion, the widening of the consciousness into the cosmic Consciousness, the Self one in all, the psychic and the spiritual transformation of the nature. … Even works or meditation cannot succeed unless they are done in the right spirit of consecration and spiritual aspiration gathering up the whole being and dominating all else. It is the lack of this gathering up of the whole life and nature and turning it towards the one aim,

which is the defect in so many here, that lowers the atmosphere and stands in the way of what is being done by myself and the Mother." (CWSA 31: 78–79)

3.

"A constant aspiration for that [*to be constantly governed by the Divine*] is the first thing—next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic." (CWSA 29: 261)

4.

"It [*peace and contact in work, but no aspiration*] is because the energy is put outward in the work. But as the peace and contact grow a double consciousness can develop—one engaged in the work, another behind silent and observing or turned towards the Divine—in this consciousness the aspiration can be maintained even while the external consciousness is turned towards the work." (CWSA 29: 256)

5.

"I don't think any attempt should be made [*to turn inwards or revert to thoughts of sadhana during work*]. If the thoughts of sadhana come of themselves or the turning

inwards or a silent aspiration to sadhana, that is all right." (CWSA 29: 253)

6.

"You have your work at hand, it is always within your reach, so to say, it is always there for you to attend to it—a field of action proportionate to your strength, but varied enough, complex, vast, deep enough to be interesting. And you explore this unknown world.

Many people tell you, 'But then this is egoism!' It is egoism if you do it in an egoistic way, for your personal profit, if you try to acquire powers, to become powerful enough to influence others, or if you seek means to make a comfortable life for yourself. Naturally, if you do it in this spirit, it will be egoistic. But the beauty of it is that you will not get anywhere! You will begin by deceiving yourself, you will live in increasing illusions and you will fall back into a greater and greater obscurity. Consequently, things are organised much better than one thinks; if you do your work egoistically (we have said that our field of work is always within our reach), it will come to nothing. And hence the required condition is to do it with an absolute sincerity in your aspiration for the realisation of the divine work. So if you start like that I can assure you that you will have such an interesting journey that even if it takes very long, you will never get tired. But you must do it like that with an intensity of will, with perseverance and that indispensable

cheerfulness which smiles at difficulties and laughs at mistakes. Then everything will go well." (CWM 4: 253–254)

7.

"Listen: if every evening before going to sleep you take off only a tiny minute, like that, and in this little minute, with all the concentration you are capable of you ask to become conscious of the divine Force, simply like that, nothing more; in the morning when waking up, before beginning your day, if you do the same thing, take a minute off, concentrate as much as you can and ask to become conscious of the divine Force, you will see, after some time, it will happen. Nothing but these small things which are nothing at all and take no time.

One day it will happen. Only, you must do it with concentration, intensity and sincerity; that is, it must not happen that while you are asking for this, another part of your being is telling itself, 'After all, this has no importance.' Or maybe you think of something else, what you are going to put on or the person you will meet, anything at all, a thousand desires. You must be there, fully, for *one minute*. Of course if you multiply the minute, it goes so much the quicker. But as I also said, if one is able not to contradict the next minute the aspiration one had the minute before, it is easier; if not, it pushes sincerity away." (CWM 6: 399–400)

8.

"When one is outwardly active, how to keep the concentration?... Oh, this should not be very difficult. Truly it should not be very difficult. For me what seems difficult is not to keep a kind of intensity of inner consciousness, to be separated from it; this seems something impossible. Once one catches that within oneself, how can one separate oneself from it, if you have had it once, if it has become a reality for you, this consciousness and this inner union with the psychic, and this consciousness and intensity of aspiration, and this flame which is always lit? Why, whatever one may be doing, this cannot be extinguished, it is always there.

It seems to me that to separate oneself from it, once it is there, you must close a door, you must deliberately close the door, like this, upon it, and say, 'I am no longer interested in it." But if one truly has the will to keep the contact, it doesn't seem very difficult to me. It seems to me that one must really have the will to turn one's back upon it for it to go away; otherwise it is there, behind everything, all things, constantly. And if on the contrary one has made it a habit, when saying something, when making a movement, simply a movement or doing anything at all, to refer always to that, in there, not to feel capable of doing something without having that at the back, there, to tell you, 'Yes, this way, not that way. That, no, not that, this', then it is difficult to live without it." (CWM 7: 68)

9.

"Once the consciousness is settled in the aspiration, it cannot depend on work or absence of work." (CWM 14: 324)

XXXVIII—Grace Depends on Sincere Aspiration

1.

"The Grace is equally for all. But each one receives it according to his sincerity. It does not depend on outward circumstances but on a sincere aspiration and openness." (CWM 14: 85)

2.

"The Grace is always there, eternally present and active, but Sri Aurobindo says that it is extremely difficult for us to be in a condition to receive it, keep it and make use of what it gives us.

Sri Aurobindo even says that it is more difficult than to drink from the cup of the gods who are immortal.

To receive the divine grace, not only must one have a great aspiration, but also a sincere humility and an absolute trust." (CWM 16: 252)

3.

"All sincere effort to progress and get rid of dangerous habits is answered and supported by an active help from the Grace — but the effort must be *steady* and the aspiration must be *sincere*." (CWM 14: 161)

4.

"Persevere in your aspiration and effort, do not allow yourself to be discouraged by setbacks. This always happens in the beginning. But if you continue to fight without paying any attention to them, a day will come when the resistances give way and the difficulties vanish. My help is always with you, but you must learn to use it and to rely on it rather than on your own resources." (CWM 14: 162)

5.

"It depends a great deal on the intensity of the inner aspiration. If you are in a state of conscious aspiration and very sincere, well, everything around you will be arranged in order to help in your aspiration, whether directly or indirectly, that is, either to make you progress, put you in touch with something new or to eliminate from your nature something that has to disappear. This is something quite remarkable. If you are truly in a state of intensity of aspiration, there is not a circumstance which does not come to help you to realise this aspiration. Everything comes, everything, as though there were a perfect and absolute consciousness organising around you all things, and you yourself in your outer ignorance may not recognise it and may protest at first against the circumstances as they show themselves, may complain, may try to change them; but after a while, when you have become wiser, and

there is a certain distance between you and the event, well, you will realise that it was just what you needed to do to make the necessary progress. And, you know, it is a will, a supreme goodwill which arranges all things around you, and even when you complain and protest instead of accepting, it is exactly at such moments that it acts most effectively." (CWM 6: 176)

6.

"I have written a short sentence which will appear in the *Bulletin*, the next *Bulletin*. It goes something like this (I don't remember the words exactly now): If you say to the Divine with conviction, 'I want only You', the Divine will arrange all the circumstances in such a way as to compel you to be sincere. Something in the being... 'I want only You.'... the aspiration... and then one wants a hundred odd things all the time, isn't that so? At times something comes, just... usually to disturb everything—it stands in the way and prevents you from realizing your aspiration. Well, the Divine will come without showing Himself, without your seeing Him, without your having any inkling of it, and He will arrange all the circumstances in such a way that everything that prevents you from belonging solely to the Divine will be removed from your path, inevitably. Then when all is removed, you begin to howl and complain; but later, if you are sincere and look at yourself straight in the eye... you have said to the Lord, you have said, 'I want

only You.' He will remain close to you, all the rest will go away. This is indeed a higher Grace. Only, you must say this with conviction. I don't even mean that you must say it integrally, because if one says it integrally, the work is done. What is necessary is that one part of the being, indeed the central will, says it with conviction: 'I want only You.' Even once, and it suffices: all that takes more or less long, sometimes it stretches over years, but one reaches the goal." (CWM 6: 176–177)

7.

"There is always, as soon as there's an aspiration... it may be very sincere and spontaneous but immediately the mind and vital are there, watching like robbers behind the door; and if a force answers they rush upon it for their own satisfaction. So there one must take very, very, very great care, because though the aspiration might be sincere, the call absolutely spontaneous and sincere and very pure, as soon as the answer comes the two brigands are there, trying to take possession of what comes for their own satisfaction. And what comes is very good but they immediately pervert it, they use it for personal ends, for the satisfaction of their desires or ambitions, and they spoil everything. And naturally, not only do they spoil everything but they stop the experience. So unless one takes good care, one is stuck there, and cannot move forward. If some Grace is above you, when the Grace sees

this it automatically gives you a terrible blow to recall you to the reality, to your senses; it gives you a good knock on the head or in the stomach or the heart or anywhere else so that all of a sudden you say, 'Oh, that won't do any more'." (CWM 7: 64–65)

8.

"People believe that the Grace means making everything smooth for all your life. It is not true.

The Grace works for the realisation of your aspiration and everything is arranged to gain the most prompt, the quickest realisation." (CWM 14: 96)

9.

" 'The ordinary action of the Divine is a constant intervention within the actual law of things'—that may or may not be but is not usually called the Divine Grace. The Divine Grace is something not calculable, not bound by anything the intellect can fix as a condition—though ordinarily some call, aspiration, intensity of the psychic being can awaken it, yet it acts sometimes without any apparent cause even of that kind." (CWSA 29: 170)

10.

"Strength is all right for the strong—but aspiration and the Grace answering to it are not altogether myths; they are great realities of the spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 215)

11.

"Yes, the solution is certainly the Divine Grace—it comes of itself, intervening suddenly or with an increasing force when all is ready. Meanwhile it is there behind all the struggles, and 'the unconquerable aspiration for the light' of which you speak is the outward sign that it will intervene. As for the two natures, it is only one form of the perpetual duality in human nature from which nobody escapes, so universal that many systems recognise it as a standing feature to be taken account of in their discipline, the two Personae, one bright, one dark, in every human being. If that were not there, Yoga would be an easy walk-over and there would be no struggle." (CWSA 31: 649)

12.

"*Does the intervention of the Grace come through a call?*

When one calls? I think so. Anyway, not exclusively and solely. But certainly, yes, if one has faith in the Grace and an aspiration and if one does what a little child would when it runs to its mother and says: "Mamma, give me this", if one calls with that simplicity, if one turns to the Grace and says "Give me this", I believe it listens. Unless one asks for something that is not good for one, then it does not listen. If one asks from it something that does harm or is not favourable, it does not listen." (CWM 5: 366)

13.

"One aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call, aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later—you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips)*—the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, 'After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well.'

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because

it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic." (CWM 6: 322–323)

14.

"*When X was ill on December 31st you asked Dr. Babu, 'Can't X get better by tonight?' If instead of saying, 'It is impossible', he had answered, 'If it is your will, it can be done', then perhaps X could have attended the midnight meditation for the New Year.*

An *answer* is not enough to change the course of events. Only aspiration or faith can do that—for it is aspiration and faith that allow the Divine Grace to act." (CWM 17: 21)

15.

"The Divine Grace alone has the power to intervene and change the course of Universal Justice. The great work of the Avatar is to manifest the Divine Grace upon earth. To be a disciple of the Avatar is to become an instrument of the Divine Grace. The Mother is the great dispensatrix—through identity—of the Divine Grace, with a perfect knowledge— through identity—of the absolute mechanism of Universal Justice.

And through her mediation each movement of sincere and confident aspiration towards the Divine calls down in response the intervention of the Grace.

Who can stand before Thee, Lord, and say in all sincerity, 'I have never made a mistake'? How many times in a day we commit faults against Thy work, and always Thy Grace comes to efface them!

Without the intervention of Thy Grace, who would not often times have come under the merciless blade of the Law of Universal Justice?" (CWM 14: 83)

16.

"*And the conditions needed for its [spiritual and supramental Truth] creation.*

They are innumerable and vary with the person and the circumstances. But, ultimately, they can be reduced to what he said in the beginning or a little further on, I forget... Here: 'faith, sincerity and surrender'. These are the required conditions. And afterwards, he describes what kind of faith, what kind of sincerity and what kind of surrender. These are the required conditions so that her victory may be won over the hostile forces—the conditions on your side. Her [the Grace of the Divine Mother] conditions—I suppose she fulfils them spontaneously—are to respond to the aspiration, to have power, clear sightedness, knowledge and will. That is obvious. So, one has to give her a field for her work and conditions under which she may work. And these conditions are: faith, sincerity and surrender—a pure, unmixed faith, a perfect,

integral sincerity and an unconditional surrender. This is what he has described for you.” (CWM 15: 318–319)

XXXIX—An Attitude of Aspiration

1.

"What I have said there (*Mother shows 'The Four Austerities'*) is that one must keep the right attitude and be mentally silent: an attitude not expressed through words or through formulated thoughts, but through a living state of consciousness. An attitude of aspiration, you understand. …

An aspiration for all that is essentially true, real, perfect. And this aspiration must be free from words, simply a silent attitude, but extremely intense and unvacillating. Not a word must be allowed the right to enter there and disturb it. It must be like a column of vibrations of aspiration which nothing can touch—and in total silence—and therein, if something comes down, what descends (and will be clothed in words in your mind and in sounds in your mouth) will be the Word." (CWM 6: 99)

2.

"The art of living would then consist in maintaining oneself in one's highest state of consciousness and thus allowing one's highest destiny to dominate the others in life and action. So one can say without any fear of making a mistake: be always at the summit of your consciousness and the best will always happen to you. But that is a maximum which is not easy to reach. If this ideal condition

turns out to be unrealisable, the individual can at least, when he is confronted by a danger or a critical situation, call upon his highest destiny by aspiration, prayer and trustful surrender to the divine will. Then, in proportion to the sincerity of his call, this higher destiny intervenes favourably in the normal destiny of the being and changes the course of events insofar as they concern him personally." (CWM 12: 78–79)

3.

"*If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive... an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do*."

A: When I told you just a while ago that you must aspire with a great ardour to do the best possible, at every moment the best thing possible, you could have asked me, "That is all very well. But how to know?" Well, it is not necessary to know! If you take this attitude with sincerity, you will know at each moment what you have to do, and it is this which is so wonderful! According to your sincerity, the inspiration is more and more precise, more and more exact." (CWM 4: 119–120)

4.

"The urge of aspiration: nothing is too high, nothing too far for its insatiable ardour." (CWM 14: 72)

5.

"Continue doing your work with a simple and peaceful heart and a quiet mind. The aspiration will come gradually according to the need." (CWM 14: 317)

6.

"*It is suffering which makes us conscious of a higher force.*

That is true, in many cases it is like that and that is the apparent justification of suffering. If human beings did not suffer, perhaps they would never make any progress. Aspiration is quite lukewarm when one is perfectly satisfied." (CWM 4: 295)

7.

"One must not torment oneself over errors that one may commit, but one must keep *a perfect sincerity in one's aspiration* and in the end everything will be all right." (CWM 14: 235)

8.

"A harmonious collective aspiration can change the course of circumstances." (CWM 14: 184)

9.

"I knew a young woman who was a theosophist and was trying to practise; she told me, 'We are taught that the divine Will must prevail in all that we do, but in the morning

when I have my breakfast, how can I know whether God wants me to put two lumps of sugar in my coffee or only one?'... And it was quite touching, you know, and I had some trouble explaining to her that the spirit in which she drank her coffee, the attitude she had towards her food, was much more important than the number of lumps of sugar she put into it.

It is the same with all the little things one does at every moment. The divine Consciousness does not work in the human way, It does not decide how many lumps of sugar you will put in your coffee. It gradually puts you in the right attitude towards actions, things—an attitude of consecration, suppleness, assent, aspiration, goodwill, plasticity, effort for progress—and this is what counts, much more than the small decision you take at every second. One may try to find out what is the truest thing to do, but it is not by a mental discussion or a mental problem that these things can be resolved. It is in fact by an inner attitude which *creates* an atmosphere of harmony—progressive harmony—in which all one does will necessarily be the best thing that could be done in those particular circumstances. And the ideal would be an attitude complete enough for the action to be spontaneous, dictated by something other than an outer reason. But that is an ideal—for which one must aspire and which one can realise after some time. Till then, to take care always to keep the true attitude, the true aspiration,

is much more important than to decide whether one will do gymnastic marching or not and whether one will go to a certain class or not. Because these things have no real importance in themselves, they have only an altogether relative importance, the only important thing is just to keep the true orientation in one's aspiration and a living will for progress." (CWM 9: 30–31)

10.

"Everyone has periods when the consciousness is covered up. One has to go on in spite of that, and if you persist in aspiration and keep turned to the Mother, then these periods will diminish and the consciousness more and more open to her.

At such periods instead of allowing these things to hold you, you should separate yourself from them and regard them as something foreign which you have to reject." (CWSA 30: 63)

11.

"*Sweet Mother,*

What do you mean by 'a certain attitude of consciousness'?

The attitude of consciousness which is required is an inner certitude that, in comparison with all that is to be known, one knows nothing; and that at every moment one must

be ready to learn in order to be able to teach. This is the first indispensable point.

There is a second one. It is that outer life, as we know it, is a more or less illusory appearance and that we must constantly keep a living aspiration for the Truth.

Blessings." (CWM 12: 365)

12.

"Aspiration for the right attitude: energetic, willing, determined." (CWM 15: 227)

XL—When Man Awakens to the Divine Love, the Soul's Aspiration Begins

1.

"This world was a world of dead matter, till Divine love descended into it and awakened it to life. Ever since it has gone in search of this divine source of life, but it has taken in its search every kind of wrong turn and mistaken way, it has wandered hither and thither in the dark. The mass of this creation has moved on its road like the blind seeking for the unknown, seeking but ignorant of what it sought. The maximum it has reached is what seems to human beings love in its highest form, its purest and most disinterested kind, like the love of the mother for the child. This human movement of love is secretly seeking for something else than what it has yet found; but it does not know where to find it, it does not even know what it is. The moment man's consciousness awakens to the Divine love, pure, independent of all manifestation in human forms, he knows for what his heart has all the time been truly longing. That is the beginning of the Soul's aspiration, that brings the awakening of the consciousness and its yearning for union with the Divine. All the forms that are of the ignorance, all the deformations it has imposed must from that moment fade and disappear and give place to one single movement of the creation answering to the Divine love by its love for the Divine. Once the creation is

conscious, awakened, opened to love for the Divine, the Divine love pours itself without limit back into the creation. The circle of the movement turns back upon itself and the ends meet; there is the joining of the extremes, supreme Spirit and manifesting Matter, and their divine union becomes constant and complete.

Great beings have taken birth in this world who came to bring down here something of the sovereign purity and power of Divine love. The Divine love has thrown itself into a personal form in them that its realisation upon earth may be at once more easy and more perfect. Divine love, when manifested in a personal being, is easier to realise; it is more difficult when it is unmanifested or impersonal in its movement. (CWM 3: 74–75)

2.

(Regarding love) How can one direct this human love towards the ideal love, the true love?

There is only one true love—it is the Divine Love; all other loves are diminutions, limitations and deformations of that Love. Even the love of the bhakta for his God is a diminution and often is tainted by egoism. But as one tends quite naturally to become like what one loves, the bhakta, if he is sincere, begins to become like the Divine whom he adores, and thus his love becomes purer and purer. To adore the Divine in the one whom one loves has often been

suggested as a solution, but unless one's heart and thought are *very pure*, it can lead to deplorable abasements.

It would seem that in your situation, the best solution would be to use your mutual attachment to unite your efforts in a common and combined aspiration to attain the Divine, and in perfect sincerity to let each bring to the other, as far as possible, what the other needs to attain that goal." (CWM 16: 297)

3.

"*May my whole being be only that love which wants to give itself, and which leads me to You*.

Keep this aspiration and you are sure of victory; you will love me one day with a love which fills you with strength and with joy." (CWM 16: 158)

XLI—The Psychic Fire Is the Fire of Aspiration

1.
"The psychic fire is the fire of aspiration, purification and tapasya which comes from the psychic being. It is not the psychic being, but a power of the psychic being." (CWSA 30: 368)

2.
"It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of Tapasya, a fire of transformation." (CWSA 30: 371)

3.
"The fire [*one feels within*] is always the fire of sacrifice and self–offering, the fire of aspiration or the fire of tapasya." (CWSA 30: 368)

4.
"Agni in the form of an aspiration full of concentrated calm and surrender is certainly the first thing to be lighted in the heart." (CWSA 30: 372)

5.
"It is the Mother's Force that works in the Agni." (CWSA 30: 373))

6.

"*Q: Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: 'A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it.'*

The Synthesis of Yoga, (SABCL 20: 155)

Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

A: It is not always lit.

Q: Then how to light it?

A: By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self–purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make—if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this

fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense." (CWM 8: 251)

7.

"Q: *Sometimes I think that the Agni You have kindled in me is going to burn up everything that separates me from You. What should I do to contribute to its fulfilment?*

A: Each time that you discover in yourself something that denies or resists, throw it into the flame of Agni, which is the fire of aspiration." (CWM 16: 363)

8.

"*Q: Mother, what must I do so that the fire of aspiration never goes out?*

A: One keeps this fire lit by throwing into it all one's difficulties, all one's desires, all one's imperfections. In the morning and evening when you come to me, you should ask me in your heart to keep the fire lit and offer me all these things as fuel." (CWSA 17: 125–126)

9.

"*Q: I feel that it is necessary for me to go into retirement so that the fire may burn more intensely. Let me go into solitude.*

A: It is in the midst of activity that the fire must burn, so that it may set right all your movements.

Q: Keep the fire lit; I offer You all my movements.

A: As long as you aspire to keep the flame lit, I will take care that it does not go out." (CWSA 17: 126)

"Q: I have concentrated very much on the flame, but alas, my aspiration has not been strong enough to light it.

A: It is not your work to light the fire. As I told you, I am always lighting it—you have only to open yourself to receive it and tend it with your goodwill." (CWM 17: 126)

10.

"Q: *Into the fire all desires, all attachment, all impurity, all imperfection, as fuel.*

A: Yes, that is good. This movement should be constantly renewed." (CWSA 17: 126)

11.

"I see clearly what you are trying to say, but truly you do not say it: this inner flame of aspiration is what you call the Divine; this inner flame of aspiration which never dies out, which always burns, burns more and more; what in India

is called Agni, you know, the will to progress, the power of aspiration; this is what you call the Divine. It is an aspect of the Divine, that's true, but it is not the Divine. It is only one aspect, that is, a divine way of being." (CWM 7: 368)

12.

"*Q: I must find out how I can consecrate this being to You.*

A: Keep always burning in you the fire of aspiration and purification which I have kindled there." (CWM 16: 184)

13.

"All is mute in the being, but in the bosom of the silence burns the lamp that can never be extinguished, the fire of an ardent aspiration to know and to live integrally the Divine." (CWM 14: 74)

14.

"The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it." (CWM 14: 74)

15.

"Beyond words, above thoughts the flame of an intense aspiration must always burn, steady and bright.

My love and blessings are with you." (CWM 14: 75)

16.

"In the silence of the heart burns the steady fire of aspiration." (CWM 14: 75)

17.

"Keep the fire burning steadily and wait quietly for the sure result." (CWM 14: 75)

18.

"Flame of aspiration: a flame which illumines but never burns." (CWM 14: 75)

19.

"The fear of the fire you saw is misplaced, for it is the fire of purifying Agni that you see burning and that does no harm; it only clears away what should not be there. That is why it is followed by a lightness or an emptiness. You have only to be quiet and let the fire do its work. The heat one feels at that time is not the heat of fever or any other morbid heat. Afterwards, as you felt, all becomes cool and light." (CWSA 30: 372)

20.

"All these things are signs, now often repeated, of the process that is going on. The heat is the result of the psychic fire burning away obstacles—the coolness and complete quietude come as a result. The tendency to sleep

is really a tendency to go inside into the depths of the inner consciousness due to the pressure for the change." (CWSA 30: 370)

21.

"It is some association in the mind probably coupling Agni with the psychic. Of course the individual Agni fire has its starting–point in the psychic, but the mere burning of the fire does not show that the psychic is coming forward.

When it burns in the heart it is the fire *in* the psychic. The psychic fire is individual and takes usually the form of a fire of aspiration or personal tapasya. This Fire is universal and it came from above." (CWSA 30: 373)

22.

"That [*fiery aspiration*] is all right, that is the psychic aspiration, the psychic fire. Where the vital comes in is in the impatience for result and dissatisfaction if the result is not immediate. That must cease." (CWSA 29: 60)

23.

"What you describe is the psychic fire, *agni pāvaka*, which burns in the deeper heart and from there is lighted in the mind, the vital and the physical body. In the mind Agni creates a light of intuitive perception and discrimination which sees at once what is the true vision or idea and the wrong vision or idea, the true feeling and the wrong

feeling, the true movement and the wrong movement. In the vital he is kindled as a fire of right emotion and a kind of intuitive feeling, a sort of tact which makes for the right impulse, the right action, the right sense of things and reaction to things. In the body he initiates a similar but still more automatic correct response to the things of physical life, sensati on, bodily experience. Usually it is the psychic light in the mind that is first lit of the three, but not always—for sometimes it is the psycho–vital flame that takes precedence." (CWSA 27: 85–86)

24.

"A Fire in the heart is usually the psychic fire and that should rather grow and be fed by the tendency or aspiration to the personal sadhana." (CWSA 29: 107)

25.

"Awake by your aspiration the psychic fire in the heart that burns steadily towards the Divine—that is the one way to liberate and fulfil the emotional nature." (CWSA 29: 350)

26.

"The fire which you feel in the chest must surely be the psychic fire, for it is there that is the seat of the psychic and the fact that it burns strongly when you sit alone points to the same thing." (CWSA 30: 368)

27.

"That kind of pull [*towards the Divine*] is not the same thing as the lighting of Agni. Agni meets men who are not leading the religious life at all but who have Agni burning in them and are intent to keep the fire ablaze—scientists, artists etc. who have the intense will of perfecting what they do and all their central energies are thrown into this flame. The same intense fire should burn in the Yoga." (CWSA 30: 372–373)

28.

"That the constant fire of aspiration has to be lit is true; but this fire is the psychic fire and it is lit or burns up and increases as the psychic grows within and for the psychic to grow quietude is needful. That is why we have been working for the psychic to grow in you and for the quietude also to grow and that is why we want you to wait on the Mother's working in full patience and confidence. To be always remembering the Mother and always with the equal unwavering fire within means itself a considerable progress in sadhana and it must be prepared by various means such as the experiences you have been having. Keep steadfast in confidence therefore and all that has to be done will be done." (CWSA 30: 368)

29.

"The psychic fire may burn in the vital. It all depends on whether it is the fire of the general Force that comes from above or the fire of your soul's aspiration and tapasya." (CWSA 30: 373)

30.

"My dear little X,

Do not worry; I only meant that you are not yet completely free from social ties—but that will surely come as the flame of aspiration towards the Divine burns more and more ardently in you.

With my blessings and all my love." (CWM 17: 196)

31.

"The fire is the divine fire of aspiration and inner tapasya. When the fire descends again and again with increasing force and magnitude into the darkness of human ignorance, it at first seems swallowed up and absorbed in the darkness, but more and more of the descent changes the darkness into light, the ignorance and unconsciousness of the human mind into spiritual consciousness." (CWSA 30: 459)

32.

"The fire you saw was the fire of the psychic being, the fire of aspiration and tapasya, burning under the earth, that is

to say, in the subconscient. It opens the earth, the physical consciousness to the Divine Light. Moonlight may symbolise the spiritual consciousness and the room your own personal being or individual physical consciousness. With these clues it will be easy for you to understand the significance of your experience." (CWSA 30: 369)

33.

"To light always and keep alight the psychic fire within, the fire of aspiration, devotion and self-giving—not to stifle it with the damp smouldering logs of vital desire and egoistic reactions. If that becomes permanent and continuous, then it will be easy to bring down the spiritual transformation." (CWSA 35: 841)

34.

"It is as I told you—only by losing ego and having the sense of the Infinite can one experience the true vital. So you got the experience of the loss of ego and the sense of a true vital existence. But there are all those parts of the human vital nature that are not the true vital and these are full of impurities which have to be thrown in the fire of aspiration burning in the true vital being." (CWSA 28: 187)

35.

"Men do not know themselves and have not learned to distinguish these different parts of the being which are usually lumped together as mind; they do not understand

their own states and actions, or, if at all, then only on the surface. It is part of the foundation of Yoga to become conscious of the complexity of the nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge.

The remedy can only come from the parts of the being that are already turned towards the Light. To call in the light of the divine consciousness, bring the psychic being to the front and kindle a flame of aspiration which will awaken spiritually the outer mind and set on fire the vital being, is the way out. It is usually a psychic awakening or a series of strong experiences by which the sadhak comes out of this intermediary no man's land of the quiescent vital (few can avoid altogether this passage through a neutral vital indifference) into the full dynamic course of the spiritual movement." (CWSA 29: 17)

36.

"It must be your desire to hold nothing in esteem except the word of the Truth; and in order thus to raise your standard you must keep Agni, the soul's flame of transformation, burning in you. It is noteworthy how, when Agni flares up, you immediately develop a loathing for the cheap praise which formerly used to gratify you so much, and understand clearly that your love of praise was a low movement of the untransformed nature. Agni makes you see what a vast vista of possible improvement stretches in

front of you, by filling you with a keen sense of your present insufficiency. The encomium lavished on you by others so disgusts you that you feel almost bitter towards those whom you would have once considered your friends; whereas all criticism comes as a welcome fuel to your humble aspiration towards the Truth. No longer do you feel depressed or slighted by the hostility of others. For, at least, you are able to ignore it with the greatest ease; at the most, you appreciate it as one more testimony to your present unregenerate state, inciting you to surpass yourself by surrendering to the Divine." (CWM 3: 138)

37.

"*O my Mother, I have no peace, no love. I know that this has happened through my own fault. Will I find You again, O my dear Mother?*

Yes, if you allow the fire of aspiration to burn in you." (CWM 17:125)

38.

"*Your presence has become rather cold, and for some time I haven't been feeling the happiness and peace. This shows that something has happened in me.*

The outer consciousness finds it difficult to keep the fire of aspiration burning always with the same intensity. But with

your will you must watch over the purifying fire and revive it when it fails." (CWM 17: 141)

39.

"Go on the path of Yoga without doubt of the ultimate success—surely you cannot fail! Doubts—they are nothing; keep the fire of aspiration burning, it is that that conquers." (CWSA 28: 347)

40.

"The other experiences show that the faculty of inner vision is opening; this is also a part of the yoga. The fire seen by you must have been the fire of aspiration lit in the vital being. The other things you saw are not definite enough to be interpreted.

Continue your progress.

Our blessings and protection are always with you." (CWM 14: 55)

41.

"The important point is to be *more and more* sincere, always more sincere so that you never deceive yourself in the integrality of your aspiration.

This sincerity brings the sure help of the divine Grace.

Blessings." (CWM 14: 71)

XLII—Psychic Aspiration

1.

"Psychic aspiration: constant, regular, organised, gentle and patient at the same time, resists all opposition, overcomes all difficulties." (CWM 14: 77)

2.

"The psychic–vital seeks after the Divine, but it has a demand in its self–giving, desire, vital eagerness the psychic has not, for the psychic has instead pure self–giving, aspiration, intensity of psychic fire." (CWSA 28: 108)

3.

"The aspiration of the psychic being would then translate this demand entirely for the opening of the whole lower nature, mind, vital, body to the Divine, for the love and union with the Divine, for its presence and power within the heart, for the transformation of the mind, life and body by the descent of the higher consciousness into this instrumental being and nature.

Both aspirations are necessary for the fullness of this Yoga, the demand of the self on the nature from above, the psychic aspiration of the nature from below. When the psychic imposes its aspiration on the mind, vital and body, then they too aspire and this is what was felt by you as the

aspiration from the level of the lower being. The aspiration felt above is that of the Jivatman for the higher consciousness with its realisation of the One to manifest in all the being. Both aspirations help and are necessary to each other. But the seeking of the lower being is at first intermittent and oppressed by the obscurity and limitations of the ordinary consciousness. It has by sadhana to become clear, constant, strong and enduring; it then compels realisation, makes it inevitable." (CWSA 28: 65–66)

4.

"If the psychic were liberated, free to act in its own way, there would not be all this stumbling in the Ignorance. But the psychic is covered up by the ignorant mind, vital and physical and compelled to act through them according to the law of the Ignorance. If it is liberated from this covering, then it can act according to its own nature with a free aspiration, a direct contact with the higher consciousness and a power to change the ignorant nature." (CWSA 28: 85)

5.

"That is why we insist so much on sincerity in the yoga—and that means to have all the being consciously turned towards the one Truth, the one Divine. But that for human nature is one of the most difficult of tasks, much more

difficult than a rigid asceticism or a fervent piety. Religion itself does not give this complete harmonised sincerity—it is only the psychic being and the one–souled spiritual aspiration that can give it." (CWSA 29: 54)

6.

"These fluctuations in the force of the aspiration and the power of the sadhana are unavoidable and common to all sadhaks until the whole being has been made ready for the transformation. When the psychic is in front or active and the mind and vital consent, then there is the intensity. When the psychic is less prominent and the lower vital has its ordinary movements or the mind its ignorant action, then the opposing forces can come in unless the sadhak is very vigilant. Inertia comes usually from the ordinary physical consciousness, especially when the vital is not actively supporting the sadhana. These things can only be cured by a persistent bringing down of the higher spiritual consciousness into all the parts of the being." (CWSA 30: 61)

7.

"Get the psychic being in front and keep it there, putting its power on the mind, vital and physical—so that it shall communicate to them its force of single-minded aspiration, trust, faith, surrender, direct and immediate detection of

whatever is wrong in the nature and turned towards ego and error, away from Light and Truth." (CWSA 30: 333)

8.

"Bhakti and love are part of the psychic movement, a large part of it; in aspiring for the psychic change, you are aspiring for bhakti and love. But it is not useful to restrict your aspiration by a single movement like that of the Vaishnava sadhana; for this Yoga is more ample and contains, but is not confined to, what is essential in the Vaishnava sadhana. Whether you visit the physical Brindavan or not does not matter; what is necessary is to find the inner union through love and bhakti." (CWSA 30: 362)

9.

"It is the action of the psychic being, not the being itself, that gets mixed with the mental, vital and physical distortions because it has to use them to express what little of the true psychic feeling gets through the veil. It is by the heart's aspiration to the Divine that the psychic being gets free from these disabilities." (CWSA 30: 363)

10.

"The infinite calm you felt coming down was the calm of the Divine Consciousness—the higher or spiritual consciousness above the head, which descends as the

higher parts of the being open to it. The experience of faith, love or aspiration come from the psychic being. It is when the psychic being is in front and governs all the nature and the Higher Consciousness descends through an open mind, vital and physical that the transformation of the nature begins to take place." (CWSA 30: 464)

11.

"To fix the consciousness within, to keep it concentrated on the Divine alone is a great difficulty for all, it is what makes sadhana a thing for which long time and a slow development of the consciousness is usually necessary, at first at any rate. So that need not discourage you. In your inner vital there is plenty of strong will and deep down in your psychic there is the true aspiration and love which come up when the psychic is active and will eventually possess the whole nature. (CWSA 31: 33)

12.

"When you rise with the vital from its lower reaches and join it to the psychic, then your vital being fills with the pure aspiration and devotion natural to the psychic; at the same time it gives to the feelings its own abundant energy, it makes them dynamic for the change of the whole nature down to the most physical and for the bringing down of the divine consciousness into earth matter." (CWSA 31: 118)

13.

"The true key has been given to you in the right kind or condition of meditation—a state of inner rest, not of straining, of quiet opening, not of eager or desperate pulling, a harmonious giving of oneself to the Divine Force for its working, and in that quietude a sense of the Force working and a restful confidence allowing it to act without any unquiet interference. Now that condition is the beginning of the psychic opening; there is of course much more that afterwards comes to complete it but this is the fundamental condition into which all the rest can most easily come. In this condition there may and will be call, prayer, aspiration. Intensity, concentration will come of themselves, not by a hard effort or tense strain on the nature." (CWSA 31: 191)

14.

"Demand and desire are only two different aspects of the same thing—nor is it necessary that a feeling should be agitated or restless to be a desire; it can be, on the contrary, quietly fixed and persistent or persistently recurrent. Demand or desire comes from the mental or the vital and a psychic or spiritual need is a different thing. The psychic does not demand or desire; it aspires; it does not make conditions for its surrender or withdraw if its aspiration is not immediately satisfied—for the psychic has complete trust in the Divine or in the guru and can wait for

the right time or the hour of the divine grace. The psychic has an insistence of its own, but it puts its pressure not on the Divine, but on the nature, placing a finger of light on all the defects there that stand in the way of the realisation, sifting out all that is mixed, ignorant or imperfect in the experience or in the movements of the Yoga and never satisfied with itself or with the nature till it has got it perfectly open to the Divine, free from all forms of ego, surrendered, simple and right in the attitude and all the movements." (CWSA 31: 259–260)

15.

"*Though I know the Mother is giving me divine things from deep within, my lower nature wants her love and affection to be expressed outwardly. Help me to get rid of this vital demand for some outer expression by the Mother.*

That is what you must get rid of—the demand of the vital in the relation with the Mother. It has been the cause of much disturbance and several frictions, for behind it is a claim of the ego. The psychic relation is the true relation, the psychic gives itself without any demand asking only for love and surrender and union with the Divine, and even in that the asking is not a vital demand but an aspiration." (CWSA 32: 473)

16.

"Pangs of separation belong to the vital, not to the psychic; the psychic having no pangs need not express them. The psychic is always turned towards the Divine in faith, joy and confidence—whatever aspiration it has is full of trust and hope." (CWSA 29: 359–360)

17.

"But just as one can go high above, so one can go deep within and it is this going deep within that is needed. What happened was at the surface of the emotional being and if one simply stays there the difficulties of the emotional can come, but what has to be done is not to stay on the surface but go deep within. For the psychic is there behind the emotional surface, deep behind the heart centre. Once one reaches it, these things can no longer touch; what will be there is the inner peace and happiness, the untroubled aspiration, the presence or nearness of the Mother." (CWSA 29: 351)

18.

"If the human consciousness were bound to the sense of imperfection and the acceptance of it as the law of our life and the very character of our existence,—a reasoned acceptance that could answer in our human nature to the blind animal acceptance of the animal nature,—then we might say that what we are marks the limit of the divine

self-expression in us; we might believe too that our imperfections and sufferings worked for the general harmony and perfection of things and console ourselves with this philosophic balm offered for our wounds, satisfied to move among the pitfalls of life with as much rational prudence or as much philosophic sagacity and resignation as our incomplete mental wisdom and our impatient vital parts permitted. Or else, taking refuge in the more consoling fervours of religion, we might submit to all as the will of God in the hope or the faith of recompense in a Paradise beyond where we shall enter into a happier existence and put on a more pure and perfect nature. But there is an essential factor in our human consciousness and its workings which, no less than the reason, distinguishes it entirely from the animal; there is not only a mental part in us which recognises the imperfection, there is a psychic part which rejects it. Our soul's dissatisfaction with imperfection as a law of life upon earth, its aspiration towards the elimination of all imperfections from our nature, not only in a heaven beyond where it would be automatically impossible to be imperfect, but here and now in a life where perfection has to be conquered by evolution and struggle, are as much a law of our being as that against which they revolt; they too are divine,—a divine dissatisfaction, a divine aspiration. In them is the inherent light of a power within which maintains them in us so that the Divine may not only be there as a hidden Reality in our

spiritual secrecies but unfold itself in the evolution of Nature." (CWSA 21: 410–411)

19.

"The only question is what is to be the chief power in your seeking, a vital demand or a psychic aspiration manifesting through the heart and communicating itself to the mental and vital and physical consciousness. The latter is the greatest power and makes the shortest way—and besides one has to come to that way sooner or later." (CWSA 29: 10)

20.

"*What is the way to establish unity and homogeneity in our being?*

Keep the will firm. Treat the recalcitrant parts as disobedient children. Act upon them constantly and patiently. Convince them of their error.

In the depths of your consciousness is the psychic being, the temple of the Divine within you. This is the centre round which should come about the unification of all these divergent parts, all these contradictory movements of your being. Once you have got the consciousness of the psychic being and its aspiration, these doubts and difficulties can be destroyed. It takes more or less time, but you will surely succeed in the end. Once you

have turned to the Divine, saying, 'I want to be yours', and the Divine has said, 'Yes', the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, 'I am here and I am yours', then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one." (CWM 3: 7)

21.

"I have been asked another question which is a little more subtle, but it seems to me it has quite a special interest.... Somebody asks what is the true intensity for wanting the Divine, in the will to unite with the Divine. And then this person says that he has found within himself two different modes of aspiration, especially in the intensity of aspiration for the Divine: in one of these movements there is a sort of anguish, like a poignant pain, in the other, there is an anxiety, but at the same time a great joy.

This observation is quite correct.

And the question is this:

"When do we feel this intensity mixed with anguish, and when the intensity containing joy?"

I don't know if several or many of you have a similar experience, but it is very real, this experience, very spontaneous. And the answer is very simple.

As soon as the presence of the psychic consciousness is united with the aspiration, the intensity takes on quite a different character, as if it were filled with the very essence of an inexpressible joy. This joy is something that seems contained in everything else. Whatever may be the outer form of the aspiration, whatever difficulties and obstacles it may meet, this joy is there as though it filled up everything, and it carries you in spite of everything.

That is the sure sign of the psychic presence. That is to say, you have established a contact with your psychic consciousness, a more or less complete, more or less constant contact, but at that moment it is the psychic being, the psychic consciousness which fills your aspiration, gives it its true contents. And that's what is translated into joy." (CWM 8: 248–249)

XLIII—By Aspiration the Psychic Being Can Come to the Front

1.

"Awakening [*of the psychic being*] is a different thing [*from its coming to the front*], it means the conscious action of the psychic from behind. When it comes to the front it invades the mind and vital and body and psychicises their movements. It comes best by aspiration and an unquestioning and entire turning and surrender to the Mother. But also it sometimes comes of itself when the Adhar is ready." (CWSA 30: 354–355) (CWSA 32: 162)

2.

"Aspiration constant and sincere and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means of bringing forward the psychic being." (CWSA 30: 360)

3.

"... I chose this quotation from Sri Aurobindo to send to you:

'Aspiration, constant and sincere, and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means to bring forward the psychic.'

Fix a time every day when you can be free and undisturbed; sit comfortably and think of your psychic being with an aspiration to enter into contact with it. If you

don't succeed immediately, don't be discouraged; you are sure to succeed one day. I only ask that you let me know what time you have chosen so that I can help you more consciously." (CWM 17: 363)

4.

"There is no approved method of bringing forward the psychic being. It depends on the aspiration, the growth of faith and devotion, the diminution of the hold of the mental and vital ego and their movements—at a certain point in this development the screen between the psychic and the rest of the nature thins and begins to break, the psychic becomes more and more visible and active and finally takes over charge. Sometimes it may come suddenly, but there is no rule for that." (CWSA 30: 360–361)

5.

"It [*the psychic*] comes forward of itself either through constant love and aspiration or when the mind and vital have been made ready by the descent from above and the working of the Force." (CWSA 30: 361)

6.

"There is absolutely no reason why you should return when you have come with the intention of staying here for a sufficient time and it is better to keep to your intention.

It is not necessary to make an effort to bring your psychic being to the front; all that is necessary is a steady and quiet aspiration; if that is there always, all that is necessary to prepare for the result will be done by degrees and the psychic being will come fully to the front when all is ready and it is time. It happens usually that much in the mental, vital and physical has to be prepared before it can happen. This preparation cannot fail to be hastened by your stay here." (CWSA 30: 361–362)

7.

"Q: But how can I get this psychic consciousness?

A: By aspiration, prayer and concentration." (CWM 17: 103)

8.

"*How does the psychic being open? How to understand the psychic and vital beings in the Adhara?*

By the force of aspiration and the grace of the Mother." (CWM 14: 38–39)

9.

"It's not through the feelings that one goes to the psychic, it is through a very intense aspiration and a self–detachment." (CWM 7: 253)

10.

"*What is the best method to find the Divine who is in each of us and in all things?*

Aspiration.

Silence.

Concentration in the solar plexus region. (CWM 14: 41)

11.

"To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way." (CWSA 29: 6)

12.

"As for sadhana what is necessary is to arrive at a certain quiet of the inner mind which makes meditation fruitful or a quietude of the heart which creates the psychic opening. It is only by regular concentration, constant aspiration and a will to purify the mind and heart of the things that disquiet and agitate them that this can be done." (CWSA 30: 44)

13.

"*When I called down the Purity from above, the whole being was filled with Peace and Purity and I felt the Mother's Presence in the heart. An intense aspiration rose from the heart, from below, in fact, from all parts of the being. The heart was filled with adoration for the Mother; there was devotion and genuine surrender.*

That is one of the most important things for the psychic opening and the inner relation to the Mother." (CWSA 32:470–471)

14.

"If you become aware of the Divine above you or in your heart, call for help, for light and power from there to change the vital itself, and at the same time insist upon this vital till it itself learns to pray for the change.

Finally, the difficulty will be reduced to its smallest proportions the moment you can by the sincerity of your aspiration to the Divine and your surrender awaken the psychic being in you (the Purusha in the secret heart) so that it will come forward and remain in front and pour its influence on all the movements of the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness. The work of transformation will still have to be done, but from that moment it will no longer be so hard and painful." (CWSA 31: 114)

15.

"Your former sadhana was mostly on the vital plane. The experiences of the vital plane are very interesting to the sadhak but they are mixed, i.e. not all linked with the higher Truth. A greater, purer and firmer basis for the sadhana has to be established —the psychic basis. For that reason all the old experiences are stopped. The heart has to be made the centre and through bhakti and aspiration you have to bring forward the psychic being and enter into close touch with the Divine Shakti. If you can do this, your sadhana will begin again with a better result." (CWSA 31: 120)

16.

"*You suggested another way—to keep the psychic in front. But I don't know how to bring the psychic forward.*

It comes forward of itself either through constant love and aspiration or when the mind and vital have been made ready by the descent from above and the working of the Force." (CWSA 35: 748)

17.

"There is only one way for the outer being. Let us take the physical being—the physical being, the poor little physical being, the outer being, which knows nothing, can do nothing by itself. Well, for it there is only one way of

allowing the psychic being to manifest: with the candid warmth of a child *(Mother speaks very softly)* to aspire, pray, ask, want with all its strength, without reasoning or trying to understand. One can't imagine how great an obstruction reasoning and this effort to understand put in the experience. At the moment when you are on the point of reaching a state in which something will happen, some vibration will be changed in the consciousness of the being... you are all tense in an aspiration and have succeeded in fastening your aspiration, and you are standing there awaiting the answer, if this wretched mind begins to stir and to wonder, 'What is happening, and what's going to happen, when is it going to happen, how is it going to happen, and why is it like that, and in what order will things manifest?' it is all over, you may get up and sweep out your room, you are not fit for anything else." (CWM 7: 41–42)

18.

"*Sweet Mother,*

How can one make one's psychic personality grow?

It is through all the experiences of life that the psychic personality forms, grows, develops and finally becomes a complete, conscious and free being.

This process of development goes on tirelessly through innumerable lives, and if one is not conscious of

it, it is because one is not conscious of one's psychic being—for that is the indispensable starting-point. Through interiorisation and concentration one has to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being. This psychic being always has an influence on the outer being, but that influence is almost always occult, neither seen nor perceived nor felt, save on truly exceptional occasions.

In order to strengthen the contact and aid, if possible, the development of the conscious psychic personality, one should, while concentrating, turn towards it, aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care, each time that one receives an indication from it, to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely. To live in a great aspiration, to take care to become inwardly calm and remain so always as far as possible, to cultivate a perfect sincerity in all the activities of one's being—these are the essential conditions for the growth of the psychic being." (CWM 16: 221–222)

19.

"To sit in meditation before a closed door, as though it were a heavy door of bronze—and one sits in front of it with the will that it may open—and to pass to the other side; and so the whole concentration, the whole aspiration is gathered into a beam and pushes, pushes, pushes against this door, and pushes more and more with an increasing energy until all of a sudden it bursts open and

one enters. It makes a very powerful impression. And so one is as though plunged into the light and then one has the full enjoyment of a sudden and radical change of consciousness, with an illumination that captures one entirely, and the feeling that one is becoming another person. And this is a very concrete and very powerful way of entering into contact with one's psychic being." (CWM 7: 268)

20.

"It is therefore of capital importance to become conscious of its [the psychic being's] presence in us, to concentrate on this presence until it becomes a living fact for us and we can identify ourselves with it.

In various times and places many methods have been prescribed for attaining this perception and ultimately achieving this identification. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical. In reality, everyone has to find the one which suits him best, and if one has an ardent and steadfast aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet, in one way or another—outwardly through reading and study, inwardly through concentration, meditation, revelation and experience— the help one needs to reach the goal. Only one thing is absolutely indispensable: the will to discover and to realise. This discovery and realisation should be the primary preoccupation of our being, the pearl of great price

which we must acquire at any cost. Whatever you do, whatever your occupations and activities, the will to find the truth of your being and to unite with it must be always living and present behind all that you do, all that you feel, all that you think." (CWM 12: 4–5)

XLIV—Tears of Psychic Yearning and Aspiration

1.

"The weeping that comes to you comes from the psychic being—it is the tears of psychic yearning and aspiration. At a particular stage it so comes to many and is a very good sign. The other feelings and tendencies are also from the same source. They show that the psychic is exercising a strong influence and preparing, as we say, to come in front. Accept the movement and let it fulfil itself." (CWSA 30: 376)

2.

"As for weeping, there is nothing against the tears that come from the inner aspiration; it is only when it is vital, outward, too much on the surface that it becomes a movement of disturbance and emotional disorder. Intensity of prayer is not at all to be rejected; it is one of the most powerful means of the sadhana." (CWSA 30: 362)

3.

"The tears probably come from the inner psychic being (behind the heart) which is touched in this state of quietness and peace. It is the sign of an aspiration and devotion in the soul which is trying to come to the surface. If the psychic being can come to the surface and a

harmony be established in the nature, all of it being turned towards the Divine, this kind of expression will cease." (CWSA 30: 375)

4.

"A weeping that comes with the feeling you speak of is the sign of a psychic sorrow—for it translates as an aspiration of the psychic being. But depression and hopelessness ought not to come. You should rather cling to the faith that since there is a true aspiration in you—and of that there can be no doubt—it is sure to be fulfilled, whatever the difficulties of the external nature. You must recover in that faith the inner peace and quietude while at the same time keeping the clear insight into what has to be done and the steady aspiration for the inner and outer change." (CWSA 30: 376)

5.

"As for the heart, the movement of longing for the Divine, weeping, sorrowing, yearning is not essential in this Yoga. A strong aspiration there must be, an intense longing there may very well be, an ardent love and will for union; but there need be no sorrow or disturbance. The quiet and silence you feel in your heart is the result of the pressure of the higher consciousness to come down. That always brings a quietude in mind and heart and as it descends a great peace and silence. In the silent heart and mind, there

must be the true attitude and thus you have the feeling that you are the Mother's child, the faith and the will to be united with her. Along with that there may be an aspiration or silent expectation of what is to come. That also you seem to have. All therefore is well." (CWSA 30: 377)

6.

"Q: *Can one's aspiration for the Divine have the required intensity and sincerity without the tears and anguish that are mentioned in nearly all the old legends of the saints?*

A: Tears and anguish indicate the presence of a weak and paltry nature which is still unable to receive the Divine in all his power and glory. Not only are they unnecessary, they are useless and an obstacle to realisation." (CWM 16: 371)

XLV—The Flame of Aspiration Makes the Sadhaka Shun Negligence

1.

"*The Bhikkhu who delights in vigilance and who shuns negligence advances like a fire consuming all bonds, both small and great.*

The Bhikkhu who takes pleasure in vigilance and who shuns negligence can no longer fall. He draws near to Nirvana. [From Dhammapada]

…

The last two verses particularly are very evocative. The Bhikkhu [Monk] moves forward like a burning flame of aspiration and he shuns negligence.

Negligence truly means the relaxation of the will which makes one forget his goal and pass his time in doing all kinds of things which, far from contributing towards the goal to be attained, stop you on the path and often turn you away from it. Therefore the flame of aspiration makes the Bhikkhu shun negligence. Every moment he remembers that time is relatively short, that one must not waste it on the way, one must go quickly, as quickly as possible, without losing a moment. And one who is vigilant, who does not waste his time, sees his bonds falling, every one, great and small; all his difficulties vanish, because of

his vigilance; and if he persists in his attitude, finding in it entire satisfaction, it happens after a time that the happiness he feels in being vigilant becomes so strong that he would soon feel very unhappy if he were to lose this vigilance.

It is a fact that when one has made an effort not to lose time on the way, any time lost becomes a suffering and one can find no pleasure of any kind in it. And once you are in that state, once this effort for progress and transformation becomes the most important thing in your life, the thing to which you give constant thought, then indeed you are on the way towards the eternal existence, the truth of your being." (CWM 3: 208–209)

XLVI—Without Faith in the Divine, there Can Be No Power in the Aspiration

1.

"The integral Yoga of Devotion proceeds through seven stages each of which opens out from the one that precedes it:

Aspiration and self-consecration; devotion; adoration and worship; love; possession of the whole being and life by the Divine; joy of the Divine Love and the beauty and sweetness of the Divine; the absolute Bliss of the Absolute.

Faith is our first need; for without faith in the Divine, in the existence and the all-importance of the Divine Being there can be no reason to aspire or to consecrate, there can be no power in the aspiration or force behind the consecration." (CWSA 12: 347)

2.

"All that we do and attempt proceeds from faith, and if we are deficient in faith nothing can be accomplished. When we are deficient in faith our work begins to flag and failure is frequent; but if we have faith things are done for us. No great work has ever been done without this essential courage. Misled by egoism, we believe that we are working, that the results of what we do are our creation, and when anything has to be done we ask ourselves whether we have the strength, the means, the requisite

qualities, but in reality all work is done by the will of God and when faith in Him is the mainspring of our actions, success is inevitable." (CWSA 7: 937)

3.

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

To arrive at this condition the important thing is a persistent aspiration, call and self-offering, and a will to reject all in oneself or around that stands in the way. Difficulties there will always be at the beginning and for as long a time as is necessary for the change; but they are bound to disappear if they are met by a settled faith, will and patience." (CWSA 29: 234)

4.

"To divinise the perfected nature we have to call in the divine Power or Shakti to replace our limited human energy so that this may be shaped into the image of and filled with

the force of a greater infinite energy, *daivī prakṛti, bhāgavatī śakti.* This perfection will grow in the measure in which we can surrender ourselves, first, to the guidance and then to the direct action of that Power and of the Master of our being and our works to whom it belongs, and for this purpose faith is the essential, faith is the great motor-power of our being in our aspirations to perfection,—here, a faith in God and the Shakti which shall begin in the heart and understanding, but shall take possession of all our nature, all its consciousness, all its dynamic motive-force. These four things are the essentials of this second element of perfection, the full powers of the members of the instrumental nature, the perfected dynamis of the soul nature, the assumption of them into the action of the divine Power, and a perfect faith in all our members to call and support that assumption, *śakti*, vīrya, *daivī prakṛti, śraddhā.* (CWSA 24: 693–694)

5.

"The nature of the doubts and misbeliefs were such as are always suggested to everybody when this kind of Influence envelops— the part of the mind which responds to them is the physical mind—for the other parts are covered over at such times and the physical mind left to itself naturally doubts everything supraphysical and believes only in its own domain.

Mental faith is very helpful, but it is a thing that can always be temporarily shaken or quite clouded—until the higher consciousness and experience get fixed for good. What endures even if concealed is the inner being's aspiration or need for something higher which is the soul's faith. That too may be concealed for a time but it reasserts itself—it undergoes eclipse but not extinction." (CWSA 29: 98)

6.

"Victory in this effort depends upon the sincerity within you, the purity of your aspiration, the burning core of your faith, the absoluteness of your will and surrender[.]" (CWSA 12: 373)

XLVII—One Cannot Aspire if One Does Not Have the Flame of Will and the Flame of Humility

1.

"And then there are those who have no aspiration, they try and they cannot aspire; it is because they do not have the flame of the will, it is because they do not have the flame of humility.

Both are needed. There must be a very great humility and a very great will to change one's Karma." (CWM 5: 92)

XLVIII—The Sadhaka Has to Change His Whole Consciousness and Nature by Aspiration

1.

"First, let me say, that the absorption of ideas and the remoulding of the mental aims and attitude is one thing and the remoulding of the inner life and consciousness and eventually also of the outer life, which is the aim of Yoga, is quite another. The first can be done to some extent by the method of dissemination you indicate. But as you rightly see, instructions in Yoga cannot be fruitfully given on the same lines. That can only be given successfully to a few, to each separately as an intimately personal thing which he must assimilate and make living and true in himself according to his own capacity and nature. That is why I am led to believe that the work of Swami Yogananda is not only elementary but can hardly be the true thing—Yoga cannot be taught in schools and classes. It has to be received personally, it has to be lived, the seeker, *sadhaka*, has to change by a difficult aspiration and endeavour his whole consciousness and nature, his mind, heart, life, every principle of his being and all their movements into a greater Truth than anything the normal life of man can imagine." (CWSA 36: 388–389)

2.

"My dear child, I have just read your good letter. Fear nothing: those who are sincere in their aspiration will remain here and receive all the help needed to be able to change in themselves what needs to be changed. You can be sure that my force will always be with you so that you can make all the progress you want to make.

Have confidence, my child; everything will be all right." (CWM 16: 243)

3.

"The Indian sadhak has his own difficulties in his approach to the Yoga—at least to this Yoga—which a Westerner has in less measure. Those of the occidental nature are born of the dominant trend of the European mind in the immediate past. A greater readiness of essential doubt and sceptical reserve; a habit of mental activity as a necessity of the nature which makes it more difficult to achieve a complete mental silence; a stronger turn towards outside things born of the plenitude of active life (while the Indian commonly suffers from defects born rather of a depressed or suppressed vital force); a habit of mental and vital self-assertion and sometimes an aggressively vigilant independence which renders difficult any completeness of internal surrender even to a greater Light and Knowledge, even to the divine Influence—these are frequent obstacles. But these things are not universal in Westerners, and they

are on the other hand present in many Indian sadhaks, and they are, like the difficulties of the typical Indian nature, superstructural formations, not the very grain of the being. They cannot permanently stand in the way of the soul, if the soul's aspiration is strong and firm, if the spiritual aim is the chief thing in the life. They are impediments which the fire within can easily burn away if the will to get rid of them is strong, and which it will surely burn away in the end,—though less easily—even if the outer nature clings long to them and justifies them—provided that central will, that deeper impulse is behind all, real and sincere." (CWSA 29: 39–40)

XLIX—If One Is Born for Yoga, Then Ardour of Aspiration Will Dominate

1.

"If you are born for this, for the yoga, and this [the ardour of aspiration] is the thing which dominates all your existence, that you feel, yes, before knowing anything, that you need to find something which is in you, then sometimes a word is enough, a conversation which simply orients you—it is enough. But for those who are seeking, who grope, who are not absolutely sure, who are pulled this way and that, have many interests in life, are not steady, stabilised in their will for realisation, it is very good to read, because it puts them in touch with the subject, it gives them some interest in the thing." (CWM 7: 211)

2.

"*Can there be some parts which serve the Divine without our being aware of it?*

Yes, yes. In fact there are some which not only always seek the Divine but have an intense aspiration, and one is not aware of them. The psychic being is like that, and it is always there. But one becomes aware of it only very rarely. It is so veiled, you see. I spoke a while ago of the outer crust. It is really like a crust. It is something hard, thick, without any transparency, which lets no vibrations pass,

and one lives so constantly inside this that one is not even aware that there is something else. But there is, there is indeed right in the depths of the being—specially of those who are predestined, that's understood, but still—a being which not only presides over one's destiny, not only aspires for identification with the Divine, but has the power to govern the circumstances of life and, in fact, to organise them in spite of the outer will which very often revolts and does not want the circumstances as this inner consciousness—which is fully clear-sighted—has organised them. And it is only much later, when one becomes aware of it and looks back at his life, that one realises that all this was wonderfully organised with a complete clear-sightedness of what was necessary, in order to lead him there, just where he had to go." (CWM 6: 386)

L—Aspiration for Greater Knowledge and Wisdom

1.

"For if we want their progress to be sincere and in depth, it must depend on our own.

If we could all bring with us here [*bringing improvement in the meeting*] an ardent aspiration for greater knowledge and wisdom, we would create a contemplative atmosphere, which I would like to be able to call religious, and this atmosphere would be most favourable to our self-perfection.

An atmosphere of spirituality is sometimes a far greater help than an exchange of words; the most beautiful thoughts cannot make us progress unless we have a persistent will to translate them within ourselves into higher feelings, more exact sensations and nobler actions.

Thus, to improve our meetings, the essential condition is our own self-improvement.

If we unify ourselves and identify our consciousness with the consciousness of our Divine Self, our group will become unified. If we enlighten and illumine our intellectual faculties, our group will manifest the light. If we allow impersonal love to permeate our whole being, our group will radiate love. And finally, if we bring order into ourselves, our group will become organised of itself, without our needing to intervene arbitrarily in its formation." (CWM 2: 63)

LI—Aspire to a Higher Nature and a Higher Law

1.

" 'The evil-doers attain not to me,' says the Purushottama, 'souls bewildered, low in the human scale; for their knowledge is reft away from them by Maya and they resort to the nature of being of the Asura.' This bewilderment is a befooling of the soul in Nature by the deceptive ego. The evil-doer cannot attain to the Supreme because he is for ever trying to satisfy the idol ego on the lowest scale of human nature; his real God is this ego. His mind and will, hurried away in the activities of the Maya of the three gunas, are not instruments of the spirit, but willing slaves or self-deceived tools of his desires. He sees this lower nature only and not his supreme self and highest being or the Godhead within himself and in the world: he explains all existence to his will in the terms of ego and desire and serves only ego and desire. To serve ego and desire without aspiration to a higher nature and a higher law is to have the mind and the temperament of the Asura. A first necessary step upward is to aspire to a higher nature and a higher law, to obey a better rule than the rule of desire, to perceive and worship a nobler godhead than the ego or than any magnified image of the ego, to become a right thinker and a right doer. This too is not in itself enough; for even the sattwic man is subject to the bewilderment of the gunas, because he is still governed by wish and

disliking, *icchā-dveṣa*. He moves within the circle of the forms of Nature and has not the highest, not the transcendental and integral knowledge. Still by the constant upward aspiration in his ethical aim he in the end gets rid of the obscuration of sin which is the obscuration of rajasic desire and passion and acquires a purified nature capable of deliverance from the rule of the triple Maya. By virtue alone man cannot attain to the highest, but by virtue he can develop a first capacity for attaining to it, *adhikāra*. For the crude rajasic or the dull tamasic ego is difficult to shake off and put below us; the sattwic ego is less difficult and at last, when it sufficiently subtilises and enlightens itself, becomes even easy to transcend, transmute or annihilate." (CWSA 19: 280–281)

LII—The Higher We Project Our Aspiration, the Greater Is the Truth that Descends Upon Us

1.

"Therefore the material universe was bound in the nature of things to evolve from its hidden life apparent life, from its hidden mind apparent mind, and it must in the same nature of things evolve from its hidden Supermind apparent Supermind and from the concealed Spirit within it the triune glory of Sachchidananda. The only question is whether the earth is to be a scene of that emergence or the human creation on this or any other material scene, in this or any other cycle of the large wheelings of Time, its instrument and vehicle. The ancient seers believed in this possibility for man and held it to be his divine destiny; the modern thinker does not even conceive of it or, if he conceived, would deny or doubt. If he sees a vision of the Superman, it is in the figure of increased degrees of mentality or vitality; he admits no other emergence, sees nothing beyond these principles, for these have traced for us up till now our limit and circle. In this progressive world, with this human creature in whom the divine spark has been kindled, real wisdom is likely to dwell with the higher aspiration rather than with the denial of aspiration or with the hope that limits and circumscribes itself within those narrow walls of apparent possibility which are only our intermediate house of training. In the spiritual order of

things, the higher we project our view and our aspiration, the greater the Truth that seeks to descend upon us, because it is already there within us and calls for its release from the covering that conceals it in manifested Nature." (CWSA 21: 283–284)

2.

"To adopt a religion because one is born in that religion or because the people one loves and trusts practise that religion or because when one goes to a particular place where others pray and worship, one feels helped in one's own prayer and worship, is not the sign of a very strong nature; I should say it is rather the sign of a weakness or at any rate of a lack of originality.

…

Someone who tries to make his material life the expression of his highest aspiration is certainly more noble, more upright and sincere in character than a man who splits himself into two saying that the outer life is of no importance and will never change and must be accepted as it is, and that, in reality only the inner attitude counts." (CWM 8: 246–247)

LIII—Stimulating Aspiration in a Disciple

1.

"The Teacher of the integral Yoga will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the disciple. …

The example is more powerful than the instruction; but it is not the example of the outward acts nor that of the personal character which is of most importance. These have their place and their utility; but what will most stimulate aspiration in others is the central fact of the divine realisation within him governing his whole life and inner state and all his activities. This is the universal and essential element; the rest belongs to individual person and circumstance. It is this dynamic realisation that the sadhaka must feel and reproduce in himself according to his own nature; he need not strive after an imitation from outside which may well be sterilising rather than productive of right and natural fruits. Influence is more important than example." (CWSA 23: 66–67)

2.

"To keep yourself occupied with music and writing is always good; for your nature finds there its inborn occupation and that helps to maintain the vital energy and keep the balance.

About sadhana I should like to ask you: why not do sadhana through your music? Surely meditation is not the only way of doing sadhana. Through your music bhakti and aspiration can grow and prepare the nature for realisation.

If moments of meditation and concentration come of themselves then it is all right; but there is no need to force it." (CWM 12: 237)

LIV—Let Imagination Conform with Our Highest Aspiration

1.

"And now, to come down to a more ordinary level, everyone has in him, in a greater or lesser measure, the power to give form to his mental activity [of imagination] and use this form either in his ordinary activity or to create and realise something. We are all the time, *always*, creating images, creating forms. We send them into the atmosphere without even knowing that we are doing so–they go roaming about, pass from one person to another, meet companions, sometimes join together and get on happily, sometimes create conflicts, and there are battles; for often, very often, in these mental imaginations there is a small element of will which tries to realise itself, and then everyone tries to send out his formation so that it can act, so that things can happen as he wants and, as everyone does this, it creates a general confusion. … All these formations have a common tendency to want to materialise and realise themselves physically, and as they are countless–they are far too many for there to be room enough on earth to manifest them—they jostle and elbow one another, they try to push back those which do not agree with them or even form armies marching in good order, always to take up the available room both in time

and space–it is only a very small space compared with the countless number of creations.

…

… But the beginning of wisdom is to look at ourselves thinking and to see this phenomenon, become aware of this constant projection into the atmosphere of small *living* entities which are trying to manifest. All this comes out of the mental atmosphere which we carry within ourselves. Once we see and observe, we can begin to sort them out, that is, to push back what is not in conformity with our highest will or aspiration and allow to move towards manifestation only the formations which can help us to progress and develop normally.

This is the control of active thought, and that was what I meant the other day.

How many times you sit and become aware that the thought is beginning to form images for itself, to tell itself a story; and so, when you have become a little expert at it, not only do you see unfolding before you the history of what you would like to happen in life, in your own life, but you can take something away, add a detail, perfect your work, make a really *fine* story in which everything conforms with your highest aspiration. And once you have made a complete harmonious construction, as perfect as you can make it, then you open your hands and let the bird fly away.

If it is well made, it always realises itself in the end. And that is what one doesn't know." (CWM 9: 386–387)

2.

"I have known people with such opposite sides in their nature, so contradictory, that one day they could make a magnificent, luminous, powerful formation for realisation, and then the next day a defeatist, dark, black formation—a formation of despair—and so both would go out. And I was able to follow in the course of circumstances the beautiful one being realised, and while it was being realised, the dark one demolishing what the first one had done. And that is how it is in the larger lines of life as in its smaller details. And all that because one does not watch oneself thinking, because one believes one is the slave of these contradictory movements, because one says, 'Oh! Today I am not feeling well. Oh! Today things seem sad to me', and one says this as if it were an ineluctable fate against which one could do nothing. But if one stands back or ascends a step, one can look at all these things, put them in their place, keep some, destroy or get rid of those one does not want and put all one's imaginative power—what is called imaginative—only in those one wants and which conform with one's highest aspiration. That is what I call controlling one's imagination.

It is very interesting. When one learns to do it and does it regularly one no longer has time to feel bored.

And instead of being a cork afloat on the waves of the sea and tossed here and there by each wave, defencelessly, one becomes a bird which opens its wings, flies above the waves and goes wherever it wants.” (CWM 9: 388)

LV—By Aspiration One Can Acquire a State of Consciousness in which Joy Is Unmixed and Light Is Shadowless

1.

"I think it would be better to say that there is a certain state of consciousness—which one can acquire by aspiration and a persistent inner effort—in which joy is unmixed and light shadowless, where all possibility of fear disappears. It is the state in which one does not live for oneself but where whatever one does, whatever one feels, all movements are an offering made to the Supreme, in an absolute trust, freeing oneself of all responsibility for oneself, handing over to Him all this burden which is no longer a burden.

It is an inexpressible joy not to have any responsibility for oneself, no longer to think of oneself. It is so dull and monotonous and insipid to be thinking of oneself, to be worrying about what to do and what not to do, what will be good for you and what will be bad for you, what to shun and what to pursue—oh, how wearisome it is! But when one lives like this, quite open, like a flower blossoming in the sun before the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Wisdom, the Supreme Light, the Supreme Love, which knows all, which can do all, which takes charge of you and you have no more worries—that is the ideal condition." (CWM 3: 256–257)

2.

"*Sweet Mother,*

How can one most effectively call this wonderful world of delight?

An absolute sincerity in the aspiration." (CWM 16: 254)

LVI—Man's Highest Aspiration Has Always Been a Seeking for God, Perfection, Freedom, Truth, Bliss and Immortality

1.

"Man's highest aspiration has been always a seeking for God, perfection, freedom, an absolute truth and bliss, immortality.

A direct contradiction exists between this aspiration and his present state of mortality, imperfection, bondage to mechanical necessity, ego and animality.

This contradiction between what he is now and what he seeks to be is not a final argument against his aspiration. Contradictions are part of Nature's method; the aspiration may be achievable by individual effort or by an evolutionary progress.

The problems of existence are problems of harmony.

The accordance of an active life-principle with the inanimate Matter containing it is Nature's first evolutionary problem; its complete solution would be immortality in the body.

The accordance of conscious mind with an unconscious matter and half-conscious life is her second evolutionary problem; a direct and perfect instrumentation of knowledge in a living body would be its complete solution." (CWSA 13: 502–503)

2.

"A search for God, (for a spiritual or divine Reality within oneself and behind, above or within the phenomenon of existence,) for perfection, for freedom, for an absolute Truth and Bliss, for immortality has been the persistent preoccupation of the highest human thought since the earliest times. This preoccupation seems to be a perpetual element in man's nature; for it survives the longest periods of scepticism.

This aspiration is in contradiction with his present existence and normal experience of himself which is that of a mortal being full of imperfections, ego-ridden, largely animal, subject to transitory joys and much pain and suffering, bound by mechanical necessity. But the direct contradiction between what he is and what he seeks to be need not be a final argument against the validity of his aspiration. For such contradictions are part of Nature's general method; the aspiration may be realisable either by a revolutionary individual effort or by an evolutionary general progress." (CWSA 13: 501)

3.

"The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation,—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment,—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself

in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last,—God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution." (CWSA 21: 3–4)

LVII—One Cannot Transcend Human Nature without a Strong Aspiration

1.

"We are to exceed our human stature and become divine; but if we are to do this, we must first get God; … The finite cannot become infinite unless it perceives its own secret infinity and is drawn by it or towards it … God is That which is the All and which exceeds the All. It is therefore only the knowledge, love and possession of God that can make us free. He who is transcendent, can alone enable us to transcend ourselves; He who is universal can alone enlarge us from our limited particular existence.

... Without a fervent worship of the Supreme in the heart, a strong aspiration upwards to It in the will or a vehement thirst for it in the temperament, we cannot have the impulse to be other than ourselves or the force to do anything so difficult as the transcending of our own ingrained and possessing human nature. The prophets have spoken & the Avatars have descended always for the one purpose, to call us to God, to inspire us to this great call on our upward straining energies or else to prepare something in the world which will help to bring humanity nearer to the goal of its difficult ascending journey." (CWSA 12: 115–116)

2.

"The ego was necessary to form the individual being. Its destruction is therefore difficult. There is a much better, though more difficult solution: to transform it and make it an instrument of the Divine.

Egos that are converted and wholly consecrated to the Divine become especially powerful and effective instruments.

The endeavour is difficult and demands an absolute and steadfast sincerity, but for those who have a strong will, an ardent aspiration and an unshakable sincerity, it is well worth undertaking.

The method for each individual is worked out as the activity proceeds, for each ego has its own character and needs a particular method. The only qualities indispensable for all are absolute perseverance and sincerity. The least tendency to deceive oneself makes success impossible." (CWM 16: 425)

LVIII—The Mystic's Aspiration Was Transcendence by Rising towards a Higher Consciousness

1.

"His true staff of walking is made more of a fire of faith than any ascertained and indubitable light of knowledge. It is only by rising toward a higher consciousness beyond the line and therefore superconscient now to him that he can emerge from his inability and his ignorance. His full liberation and enlightenment will come when he crosses the line into the light of a new superconscient existence. That is the transcendence which was the object of aspiration of the mystics and the spiritual seekers." (CWSA 28: 260)

LIX—Why We Are Not Always Able to Live on a Height of Consciousness

1.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Why isn't it possible to live always on the same height of consciousness? Sometimes I fall despite every effort and aspiration.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a 'period of assimilation'. What is it, Mother?

It is because an individual is not made up all of one piece, but of many different entities which are sometimes even contrary to one another: some want the spiritual life, others are attached to the things of this world. To make all these parts agree and to unify them is a long and difficult task.

The force and the light received by the more developed parts spread gradually into the rest of the being by a process of assimilation, and during this period of assimilation the progress of the more developed parts seems to be interrupted. This is what Sri Aurobindo has spoken of." (CWM 16: 250–251)

2.

"*When I am able to offer You money or some object, it brings me great joy, and when some part of my being*

offers itself to You the joy I feel is greater still. But in spite of this experience my whole being is not offered to You. What stupidity! How can I change this?

We are made up of many different parts which have to be unified around the psychic being, if we are conscious of it or at least around the central aspiration. If this unification is not done, we carry this division within us.

To do this, each thought, each feeling, each sensation, each impulse, each reaction, as it manifests, must be presented in the consciousness to the central being or its aspiration. What is in accord is accepted; what is not in accord is refused, rejected or transformed.

It is a long endeavour which may take many years—but once it is done, the unification is achieved and the path becomes easy and swift." (CWM 16: 362–363)

LX—Do Something Useful When Aspiration Becomes Mechanical Due to Relaxation

1.

"*I begin to meditate and pray ardently and fervently, my aspiration is intense and my prayer full of devotion; and then, after a certain length of time—sometimes short, sometimes long—the aspiration becomes mechanical and the prayer purely verbal. What should I do?*"

This is not an individual case, it is extremely common. I have already said this a number of times, but still it was in passing—that people who claim to meditate for hours every day and spend their whole day praying, to me it seems that three-fourths of the time it must be absolutely mechanical; that is to say, it loses all its sincerity. For human nature is not made for that and the human mind is not built that way.

In order to concentrate and meditate one must do an exercise which I could call the 'mental muscle-building' of concentration. One must really make an effort—as one makes a muscular effort, for instance, to lift a weight—if you want the concentration to be sincere and not artificial.

The same thing for the urge of prayer: suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic *élan*, a great fervour, and express it in words which, to be true, must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with

ardour, without passing through the head. That is a prayer. If there are just words jostling in your head, it is no longer a prayer. Well, if you don't throw more fuel into the flame, after a time it dies out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don't slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, for the intensity of the movement to cease after a certain time. Naturally, someone who is accustomed to lifting weights can do it much longer than one who has never done it before. It is the same thing; someone who is accustomed to concentration can concentrate much longer than one who is not in the habit. But for everybody there comes a time when one must let go, relax, in order to begin again. Therefore, whether immediately or after a few minutes or a few hours, if the movement becomes mechanical, it means that you have relaxed and that you need no longer pretend that you are meditating. It is better to do something useful." (CWM 8: 227–228)

2.

"As soon as you think that you have succeeded in a certain thing, the adverse forces make it a point to attack and spoil it. Moreover, when you think of success, you relax your aspiration and the slightest relaxation is sufficient to spoil the game. The best thing is not to think of it but to go on doing your duty. But sometimes when you go on thinking

of your shortcomings and failures and you get depressed, then you have to put the success before your nose and say, 'Look at this.' (CWM 15: 81)

LXI—What Stands in the Way Surfaces in Order to Be Transformed

1.

"Surely you could not believe that sadhana could be done without facing some difficulties. As your aspiration is sincere, whatever was in the subconscient standing in the way of the Divine Realisation, has come to the surface in order to be transformed. There is nothing there to make you sad or depressed—on the contrary you ought to rejoice at these occasions to make progress and never forget to lean for support and help on my love, force and blessings." (CWM 14: 227)

2.

"Sadhana is always difficult and everybody has conflicting elements in his nature and it is difficult to make the vital give up its ingrained habits.

That is no reason for giving up sadhana. One has to keep up the central aspiration which is always sincere and go on steadily in spite of temporary failures; and it is then inevitable that the change will come.

With my love and blessings." (CWM 14: 228)

3.

"Things always come in the way when one wants to progress in the sadhana, but in the end if one is sincere in

one's aspiration these troubles help to prepare the victory of the soul over all that opposes." (CWSA 31: 269–270)

4.

"When you have something to realise, you will have in you just the characteristic which is the contradiction of that something. Face to face with the defect, the difficulty, you say, 'Oh, I am like that! How awful it is!' But you ought to see the truth of the situation. Say to yourself, 'My difficulty shows me clearly what I have ultimately to represent. To reach the absolute negation of it, the quality at the other pole—this is my mission.'

Even in ordinary life, we have sometimes the experience of contraries. He who is very timid and has no courage in front of circumstances proves capable of bearing the most!

To one who has the aspiration for the Divine, the difficulty which is always before him is the door by which he will attain God in his own individual manner: it is his particular path towards the Divine Realisation.

There is also the fact that if somebody has a hundred difficulties it means he will have a tremendous realisation—provided, of course, there are in him patience and endurance and he keeps the aspiring flame of Agni burning against those defects.

And remember: the Grace of the Divine is generally proportioned to your difficulties." (CWM 3: 143)

5.

"*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says, '... the difficulty faced in the right spirit and conquered, one finds that an obstacle has disappeared.' What is the right spirit?*

Ah, I was expecting this question. The right spirit means what he has explained in the following sentence: to keep one's trust, to remain quiet—I think it is there a little farther off—wait patiently for the attack to pass, keep one's trust. It is not there? Then it is in another passage. In any case the right spirit means not to lose courage, not to lose one's faith, not to be impatient, not to be depressed; to remain very quiet and peaceful with as much aspiration as one can have, and not worry about what is happening. To have the certitude that this will pass and all will be well. This indeed is the best thing." (CWM 7: 9–10)

LXII—Aspire for the Elimination of All Obscurity and Unconsciousness

1.

"Let the power of the Mother work in you, but be careful to avoid mixture or the substitution in its place of either a magnified ego-working or a force of Ignorance presenting itself as Truth. Aspire especially for the elimination of all obscurity and unconsciousness in the nature." (CWSA 30: 334)

2.

"To keep steady one's aspiration and to look at oneself with an absolute sincerity are the sure means to overcome all obstacles." (CWM 14: 229)

3.

"As for the obstacle to meditation or experience, it would usually be when some part of the being is dealt with which has still to be prepared and to open. Such periods always occur in sadhana and one has to meet these with a patient and persistent aspiration and a quiet vigilance of self-introspection that will bring about the necessary opening. It should not awaken depression or lead to any relaxation of will and the effort of sadhana. Open yourself more and more, that is all that is needed." (CWSA 30: 362)

4.

"An always intense aspiration, an unswerving and unwavering will turned to the one thing only, help to get through the difficulties without discouragement or falling into depression—they give an impetus for a rapid development. But the difficulties come all the same because they are inherent in human nature. Even the best sadhaks have these periods of suspension of the sadhana, of nothing happening, of the absence of the urge of the inner being. It is when some difficulty arises in the physical nature that has to be dealt with or when a pause has to be made for a veiled preparation, or for some similar reason. Even when the working of the sadhana is in the mind or vital which are more plastic such periods are frequent—when the physical is concerned they must necessarily come and are usually marked not so much by any apparent struggle but by an immobility and an inertia of the energies that were at work before. This is very troublesome to the mind because it suggests entire cessation, incapacity to progress or unfitness. But it is not really so. One must be quiet and go on opening oneself to the working or keeping the will to do so—afterwards there will be a greater progress. Many sadhaks indulge in such a period a spirit of despondency and loss of faith in the future which delays the renewal, but this should be avoided." (CWSA 30: 67)

5.

"One can either use effort [*to remove difficulties*], and then one must be patient and persevering, or one can rely on the Divine with a constant will and aspiration. But then the reliance has to be a true one, not insisting on immediate fruit." (CWSA 31: 722)

6.

"That is a known fact that everything comes from outside, from universal Nature. But the individual is not bound to accept everything that comes; he can accept and he can reject. The rejection may not succeed at once, if there is a strong habit of past acceptance; but if it is steadily persisted in, the rejection will succeed in the end.

What you should do, is always to reject the lower experiences and concentrate on a fixed and quiet aspiration towards the one thing needed, the Light, the Calm, the Peace, the Devotion that you felt for two or three days. It is because you get interested in the lower vital experiences and in observing and thinking about them that they take hold, and then comes the absence of the Contact and the confusion. You have surely had enough of this kind of experience already and should make up your mind to steadily reject it when it comes." (CWSA 29: 65)

7.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I am very lazy and I lack the fervour and perseverance to continue on the chosen path. I am like a flame that is roused by the wind and rises upwards, but falls back dead or dying as soon as the wind drops. Vigilant, that is what I should be. But how?

All the psychological qualities can be cultivated as the muscles are—by regular, daily exercise. Above all, turn towards the Divine Force in a sincere aspiration and implore It to deliver you from your limitations. If you are *sincere* in your will to progress, you are sure to advance." (CWM 16: 268–269)

8.

"Let the sun of aspiration dissolve the clouds of egoism." (CWM 14: 77)

9.

"Effort well-directed breaks down all obstacles.

Be steady in your aspiration and it is sure to be granted.

Love." (CWM 14: 161)

LXIII—All Defects Can Be Effaced by Sincere Aspiration

1.

"For the Supreme Lord, sin does not exist—all defect can be effaced by sincere aspiration and by transformation.

What you feel is the aspiration of your soul that wants to discover the Divine and live Him.

Persevere, be more and more sincere and you will succeed." (CWM 14: 234)

2.

"For our human will is a misled and wandering ray that has parted from the supreme Puissance. The period of slow emergence out of this lower working into a higher light and purer force is the valley of the shadow of death for the striver after perfection; it is a dreadful passage full of trials, sufferings, sorrows, obscurations, stumblings, errors, pitfalls. To abridge and alleviate this ordeal or to penetrate it with the divine delight faith is necessary, an increasing surrender of the mind to the knowledge that imposes itself from within and, above all, a true aspiration and a right and unfaltering and sincere practice. 'Practise unfalteringly,' says the Gita, 'with a heart free from despondency,' the Yoga; for even though in the earlier stage of the path we drink deep of the bitter poison of

internal discord and suffering, the last taste of this cup is the sweetness of the nectar of immortality and the honey-wine of an eternal Ananda." (CWSA 23: 219–220)

3.

"This seems to be in part what has temporarily happened to you, but the way out is not to excite the physical by any vital revolt and outcry or to blame for your condition either circumstances or the Mother,—for that will only make things worse and increase the tamas, dryness, dullness, inertia,—but to recognise that there is here an element of the universal Nature reflected in yours which you must eliminate. And this can only be done by more and more surrender and aspiration and by so bringing in from beyond the vital and the mind the divine peace, light, power and presence. This is the only way towards the transformation and fulfilment of the physical nature." (CWSA 31: 163)

4.

"These feelings of despair and exaggerated sense of self-depreciation and helplessness are suggestions of a hostile Force and should never be admitted. The defects of which you speak are common to all human nature and the external being of every sadhak is full of them; to become aware of them is necessary for the transformation, but it must be done with a quiet mind and with the faith and surrender to the Divine and assured aspiration to the

higher consciousness which are proper to the psychic being. The transformation of the external being is the most difficult part of the Yoga and it demands faith, patience, quietude and firm determination. It is in that spirit that you have to throw these depressions aside and go steadily on with the Yoga." (CWSA 31:207)

5.

"It is a subtle law of the action of consciousness that if you stress difficulties—you have to observe them, of course, but not stress them, they will quite sufficiently do that for themselves—the difficulties tend to stick or even increase; on the contrary, if you put your whole stress on faith and aspiration and concentrate steadily on what you aspire to, that will sooner or later tend towards realisation. It is this change of stress, a change in the poise and attitude of the mind, that will be the more helpful process." (CWSA 31: 739–740)

6.

"Let your faith, your sincerity, your purity of aspiration be absolute and pervasive of all the planes and layers of the being; then every disturbing element and distorting influence will progressively fall away from your nature." (CWSA 32:13)

7.

"The reaching is already assured, as it cannot but be when a sincere and abiding aspiration is supported by a sincere and abiding endeavour. With that and the Grace supporting, all difficulties can be and surely will be overcome." (CWSA 31: 695)

8.

"Q: *I think there has been something unusual about the general atmosphere in the Ashram these last two days. My depression continues in spite of effort, aspiration and calm.*

A: I do not think that things are as you say, and in any case, as far as you are concerned, the best thing is not to worry and to aspire calmly until your difficulties are dispelled." (CWM 17: 110)

9.

"A constant aspiration conquers all defects." (CWM 14: 73)

10.

"Our help and our protection are with you as always, but it would be more correct to say that both your inability to feel our help and your inability to keep your promise are the simultaneous effects of the same cause.

Remember what I wrote to you when you went to Calcutta to fetch your family: do not let any influence come

in between you and the Divine. You did not pay sufficient attention to this warning: you have allowed an influence to interfere strongly between you and your spiritual life; your devotion and your faith have been seriously shaken by this. As a consequence, you became afraid and you did not find the same joy in your offering to the Divine Cause; and also, quite naturally, you fell back into your ordinary consciousness and your old life.

You are quite right, nevertheless, not to let yourself be discouraged. Whatever the fall, it is always possible not only to get up again but also to rise higher and to reach the goal. Only a strong aspiration and a constant will are needed.

You have to take a firm resolution to let nothing interfere with your ascent towards the Divine Realisation. And then the success is certain.

Be assured of our unfailing help and protection." (CWM 13: 129)

11.

"*Mother Divine,*

Something is going wrong with my brain. I often think of suicide. Please pardon me and give me Thy protection and blessings.

If you are sincere in your aspiration to see me, you must throw far away from you these morbid ideas of suicide

which are quite contrary to any divine life. Be patient, firm and steady, face quietly the difficulties of life and still more quietly the difficulties of "sadhana"—then you will be sure of the final success.

With blessings. (CWM 15: 127)

LXIV—Not Admitting into Ourselves Any Thought Which Destroys Aspiration

1.

"And as an illustration Sri Aurobindo says that all that one thinks one is, one can, by the very fact of that thinking, become. This knowledge of the fact that *all* that one thinks one can be, is a very important key for the development of the being, and not only from the point of view of the possibilities of the being, but also from that of the control and choice of what one will be, of what one wants to be.

This makes us understand the necessity of not admitting into ourselves any thought which destroys aspiration or the creation of the truth of our being. It reveals the considerable importance of not allowing what one doesn't want to be or doesn't want to do to formulate itself into thought within the being. Because to think these things is already a beginning of their realisation. From every point of view it is bad to concentrate on what one doesn't want, on what one has to reject, what one refuses to be, for the very fact that the thought is there gives to things one wants to reject a sort of right of existence within oneself. This explains the considerable importance of not letting destructive suggestions, thoughts of ill-will, hatred, destruction enter; for merely to think of them is already to give them a power of realisation. Sri Aurobindo says that thought is not the cause of existence but an intermediary,

the instrument which gives form to life, to creation, and the control of this instrument is of foremost importance if one wants disorder and all that is anti-divine to disappear from creation.

One must not admit bad thoughts into oneself under the pretext that they are merely thoughts. They are tools of execution. And one should not allow them to exist in oneself if one doesn't want them to do their work of destruction." (CWM 8: 396–397)

LXV—Very Sincere People with Great Aspiration May Have Unpleasant Experiences So that They Can Be Freed from Attachments

1.

"If you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration, sometimes an avalanche of unpleasant things falls upon you: you quarrel with your best friends, your family kicks you out of the house, you lose what you thought you had gained.... I knew someone who had come to India with a great aspiration and after a very long effort towards knowledge and even towards Yoga. That was long long ago. At that time, people used to put on watch-chains and trinkets. This gentleman had a golden pencil which his grandmother had given him to which he was attached as the most precious thing in the world. It was fixed to his chain. When he landed at one of these ports—at Pondicherry or perhaps elsewhere in India or at Colombo, I believe it was at Colombo—they used to get into small boats and the boats took you ashore. And so this gentleman had to jump from the gangway of the ship into the boat. He missed his step, somehow got back his balance, but he made a sudden movement and the little gold pencil dropped into the sea and went straight down into the depths. He was at first very much aggrieved, but he told himself: 'Why, that is the effect of India: I am freed from my attachments....' It is for very sincere people that

the thing takes such a form. Fundamentally, the avalanche of troubles is always for sincere people. Those who are not sincere receive things with the most beautiful bright colours just to deceive them, and then in the end to enable them to find out that they are mistaken! But when someone has big troubles, it proves that he has reached a certain degree of sincerity." (CWM 5: 157–158)

2.

"Q: *Can a very proud person have a great aspiration?*

A: Why not? The very proud person may receive blows and become sensible; besides, when he receives a blow, that may awaken him a little! Then he has an aspiration. And if it is someone who has intensity in his nature and some strength, well, then his aspiration is powerful." (CWM 5: 350)

LXVI—Aspiration Not to Make More Mistakes by Eliminating Occasions for Making Them Is Not a Cure

1.

"For fear of being mistaken in our actions, we stop doing anything at all; for fear of being mistaken in our speech, we stop speaking; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating, we do not eat at all—this is not freedom, it is simply reducing the manifestation to a minimum; and the natural conclusion is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, nothing but Nirvana would exist! It is obvious that He conceives of the coexistence of all opposites, and that for Him this must be the beginning of a totality. So obviously, if one feels meant for that, one can choose only one of His manifestations, that is to say, the absence of manifestation. But it is still a limitation. And this is not the only way to find Him, far from it!

It is a very common tendency which probably originates from an ancient suggestion or perhaps from some lack, some incapacity—reduce, reduce, reduce one's needs, reduce one's activities, reduce one's words, reduce one's food, reduce one's active life—and all that becomes so narrow. In one's aspiration not to make any more mistakes, one eliminates any occasion for making them. It is not a cure.

But the other way is much, much more difficult. (*Silence*)

No, the solution is to act only under the divine impulsion, to speak only under the divine impulsion, to eat only under the divine impulsion. That is the difficult thing, because naturally, you immediately confuse the divine impulsion with your personal impulses." (CWM 10: 195)

LXVII—Periods of Lack of Aspiration and Dryness

1.

"Of course, there is a kind of work which is done only for purely pecuniary and personal reasons, like the one—whatever it may be—which is done to earn a living. That attitude is exactly the one Sri Aurobindo compares with the damp logs of wood which are heaped so thick the flame cannot leap up. It has something dark and heavily dull about it.

…

At the beginning of my present earthly existence I came into contact with many people who said that they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but that they were tied down, subjected, slaves to that brutal necessity of earning their living, and that this weighed them down so much, took up so much of their time and energy that they could not engage in any other activity, inner or outer. I heard this very often, I saw many poor people—I don't mean poor from the monetary point of view, but poor because they felt imprisoned in a material necessity, narrow and deadening.

I was very young at that time, and I always used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world—oh! quite a small one, but still... a small world where people would be able to live without having to be preoccupied with food and lodging and clothing and the

imperative necessities of life, so as to see whether all the energies freed by this certainty of a secure material living would turn spontaneously towards the divine life and the inner realisation.

Well, towards the middle of my life—at least, what is usually the middle of a human life—the means were given to me and I could realise this, that is, create such conditions of life. And I have come to this conclusion, that it is *not* this necessity which hinders people from consecrating themselves to an inner realisation, but that it is a dullness, a tamas, a lack of aspiration, a miserable laxity, an I-don't-care attitude, and that those who face even the hardest conditions of life are sometimes the ones who react most and have the intensest aspiration.

That's all. I am waiting for the contrary to be proved to me.

I would very much like to see the contrary but I haven't yet seen it. As there are many energies which are not utilised, since this terrible compulsion of having something to eat or a roof to sleep under or clothes on one's back does not exist—as one is sure of all that—there is a whole mass of energies which are not utilised for that; well, they are spent in idle stupidities. And of these, the foolishness which seems to me the most disastrous is to keep one's tongue going: chatter, chatter, chatter. I haven't known a place where they chatter more than here, and say everything they should not say, busy themselves

with things they should not be concerned with. And I know it is merely an overflow of unused energy." (CWM 8: 160–161)

2.

"Naturally the more one–pointed the aspiration the swifter the progress. The difficulty comes when either the vital with its desires or the physical with its past habitual movements comes in—as they do with almost everyone. It is then that the dryness and difficulty of spontaneous aspiration come. This dryness is a well–known obstacle in all sadhana. But one has to persist and not be discouraged. If one keeps the will fixed even in these barren periods, they pass and after their passage a greater force of aspiration and experience becomes possible." (CWSA 29: 61)

3.

"You are finding it still difficult to bear the interval periods when all is quiet and nothing being done on the surface. But such interval periods come to all and cannot be avoided. You must not cherish the suggestion that it is because of your want of aspiration or any other unfitness that it is so and, if you had the constant ardent aspiration, then there would be no such periods and there would be an uninterrupted stream of experiences. It is not so. Even if the aspiration were there, the interval periods would

come. If even in them one can aspire, so much the better —but the main thing is to meet them with quietude and not become restless, depressed or despondent. A constant fire can be there only when a certain stage has been reached, that is when one is always inside consciously living in the psychic being, but for that all this preparation of the mind, vital, physical is necessary. For this fire belongs to the psychic and one cannot command it always merely by the mind's effort. The psychic has to be fully liberated and that is what the Force is working to make fully possible." (CWSA 29: 62)

4.

"No doubt the true and strong aspiration is needed, but it is not a fact that the true thing is not there in you. If it had not been, the Force could not have worked in you. But this true thing was seated in the psychic and in the heart and whenever these were active in the meditation it showed itself. But for the sake of completeness the working had to come down into the physical consciousness and establish the quietude and the openness there. The physical consciousness is always in everybody in its own nature a little inert and in it a constant strong aspiration is not natural, it has to be created. But first there must be the opening, a purification, a fixed quietude, otherwise the physical vital will turn the strong aspiration into over–eagerness and impatience or rather it will try to give it that

turn. Do not therefore be troubled if the state of the nature seems to you to be too neutral and quiet, not enough aspiration and movement in it. This is a passage necessary for the progress and the rest will come." (CWSA 29: 62)

5.

"But do not listen to these suggestions of the voice that says, 'You shall not succeed and it is no use trying.' That is a thing that need never be said in the Way of the Spirit, however difficult it may seem at the moment to be. Keep through all the aspiration which you express so beautifully in your poem; for it is certainly there and comes out from the depths, and if it is the cause of suffering —as great aspirations usually are in a world and nature where there is so much to oppose them—it is also the promise and surety of emergence and victory in the future." (CWSA 29: 388)

6.

"On the contrary when even aspiration is not there because of the pressure of inertia, trust and confidence and patience can remain. If trust and patience fail when aspiration is quiescent, that would mean that the sadhak is relying solely on his own effort—it would mean, 'Oh my aspiration has failed, so there is no hope for me. My aspiration fails so what can Mother do?' On the contrary, the sadhak should feel, 'Never mind, my aspiration will

come back again. Meanwhile I know that the Mother is with me even when I do not feel her; she will carry me through even the darkest period.' That is the fully right attitude you must have. To those who have it depression could do nothing; even if it comes, it has to return baffled. That is not tamasic surrender. Tamasic surrender is when one says, 'I won't do anything; let Mother do everything. Aspiration, rejection, surrender even are not necessary. Let her do all that in me.' There is a great difference between the two attitudes. One is that of the shirker who won't do anything, the other is that of the sadhak who does his best but even when he is reduced to quiescence for a time and things seem adverse, keeps always his trust in the Mother's force and presence behind all and by that trust baffles the opposition force and calls back the activity of the sadhana." (CWSA 31: 676–677)

7.

"*For about a month I have the feeling that devotion, love and aspiration for the Divine have disappeared from me. I feel this way even during the morning pranam. Mother, I pray to Thee to shower Thy Grace and inspire me to have devotion, love and aspiration for Thee once again. What may be the reason for this?*

You may have allowed your consciousness to go too much outward and get taken up by ordinary things. It is usually

when the outer physical consciousness covers up the inner being that this happens. The aspiration is not gone, but it no longer rises to the surface. If you remain very quiet inwardly and call to the Mother, it should come back." (CWSA 32: 310)

8.

"That is what must be done. Trust in the Mother and will only to be open to her always and as quietly confident as may be. The work to be done is too great for the outer mind to understand how it is to be done; it is only by growing light and experience that one day it begins to understand—it is also too great and difficult for it to do by itself,—it can only help the Power that is working by its readiness, aspiration, faith, quietude. But in no sadhak are these things constant—the aspiration gets suspended, the faith wavers, the quietude is disturbed or shaken—but still the Mother is there at work and one has only to persevere,—finally the perseverance will be justified by the result. To give up is the one thing one must never do." (CWSA 32: 157)

9.

"*Sweet Mother, I would like to know why my consciousness is going outwards and also why my aspiration has Diminished.*

Probably a part of your nature which is not yet converted has risen to the surface and is active at present." (CWM 17: 42)

10.

"We ought to be in a constant state of aspiration, but when we cannot aspire let us pray with the simplicity of a child." (CWM 15: 208)

LXVIII—Reasons for Lack of Intensity in the Aspiration

1.

"… one can relax without being dissolute, take rest without being vulgar, enjoy oneself without allowing the grosser elements in the nature to rise to the surface. But from the point of view of austerity, these needs themselves change their nature; relaxation is transformed into inner silence, rest into contemplation and enjoyment into bliss.

This generally recognised need for entertainment, slackening of effort and more or less long and total forgetfulness of the aim of life and the purpose of existence should not be considered as something altogether natural and indispensable, but as a weakness to which one yields because of lack of intensity in the aspiration, because of instability in the will, because of ignorance, unconsciousness and sloth. Do not justify these movements and you will soon realise that they are unnecessary; there will even come a time when they become repugnant and unacceptable to you. Then the greater part of human creation, which is ostensibly entertaining but in reality debasing, will lose its support and cease to be encouraged." (CWM 12: 62)

LXIX—A Higher Light Cannot Do Anything If There Is No Intellectual Growth

1.

"There are those who are at the bottom and others who are at another level. There are people who may have very remarkable capacities and yet have no taste for intellectual growth. One may warn them that if they don't work, don't study, when they are grown up, they will perhaps feel embarrassed in front of others. But if that does not matter to them and they want to live a non-intellectual life, I believe one has no right to compel them. That is my constant quarrel with the teachers of the school! They come and tell me: 'If they don't work, when they are grown up they will be stupid and ignorant.' I say: 'But if it pleases them to be stupid and ignorant, what right have you to interfere?'

One can't make knowledge and intelligence compulsory. That's all.

Now, if you believe that by abstaining from all effort and all study, you will become geniuses, and supramental geniuses at that, don't have any illusions, it won't happen to you. For even if you touch a higher light, through an inner aspiration or by a divine grace, you will have nothing in there, in your brain, to be able to express it. So it will remain quite nebulous and won't in any way change your outer life. But if it pleases you to be like this, nobody has

the right to compel you to be otherwise. You must wait till you are sufficiently conscious to be able to choose. Of course, there are people who at fourteen are yet like children of five. But these—there's little hope for them. Especially those who have lived here." (CWM 8: 180–181)

LXX—Viewing from Human Consciousness Does Not Lead to the Soul's Aspiration

1.

"Because we see only parts and fragments, we judge of each by itself as if it were the whole, judge also the external phenomena without knowing their secret sense; but by doing so we vitiate our valuation of things, put on it the stamp of an initial and fundamental error. Perfection cannot reside in the thing in its separateness, for that separateness is an illusion; perfection is the perfection of the total divine harmony.

All this may be true up to a certain point and so far as it goes; but this also is a solution incomplete by itself and it cannot give us an entire satisfaction. It takes insufficient account of the human consciousness and the human view from which we have to start; it does not give us the vision of the harmony it alleges, and so it cannot meet our demand or convince, but only contradicts by a cold intellectual conception our acute human sense of the reality of evil and imperfection; it gives too no lead to the psychic element in our nature, the soul's aspiration towards light and truth and towards a spiritual conquest, a victory over imperfection and evil. By itself, this view of things amounts to little more than the facile dogma which tells us that all that is is right, because all is perfectly decreed by the divine Wisdom. It supplies us with nothing better than

a complacent intellectual and philosophic optimism: no light is turned on the disconcerting facts of pain, suffering and discord to which our human consciousness bears constant and troubling witness; at most there is a suggestion that in the divine reason of things there is a key to these things to which we have no access. This is not a sufficient answer to our discontent and our aspiration which, however ignorant in their reactions, however mixed their mental motives, must correspond to a divine reality deeper down in our being." (CWSA 21: 409–410)

2.

"*Is there nothing to be done but to wait?*

Eh? Nothing to be done but wait? For me!... It is *I* who mark time waiting for you to be ready! (*Mother laughs*.)

It is a very delicate problem, because for a very long time if someone does not feel, does not have this personal aspiration to perfect himself, the personal aspiration to enter into contact with the Divine, the personal aspiration to realise the supramental consciousness, well, he says as you were just saying, 'Then what's the use of doing anything? The only thing is to remain quiet.' Well, as long as it is like that, and as long as you have not developed in yourself enough consciousness for it to be otherwise, there is nothing to say and nothing to do. I have only to wait." (CWM 6: 331–332)

LXXI—Aspiration in Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic Natures

1.

"The sattwic nature has always been held to be the most apt and ready for the spiritual life, while the rajasic nature is encumbered by its desires and passions. At the same time, spirituality is something above the dualities, and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration. This may come to the rajasic man as well as to the sattwic. If it does, he can rise by it above his failings and desires and passions, just as the other can rise beyond his virtues, to the Divine Purity and Light and Love. Necessarily, this can only happen if he conquers his lower nature and throws it from him; for if he relapses into it, he is likely to fall from the path or at least to be, so long as the relapse lasts, held back by it from inner progress." (CWSA 29: 42)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, what is the effect of an aspiration which comes from rajasic eagerness?*

The effect of an aspiration? Well, it takes away your quietude, that is the first effect. It makes you agitated, nervous, impatient and dissatisfied when you don't immediately obtain what you have asked for, and usually

as vehement in your despair and dissatisfaction as in the aspiration, with a strong sense of your helplessness. ...

We must not confuse what he calls "rajasic eagerness" with intensity, because intensity can be very vast, very calm and very pure and give a considerable strength to the aspiration. But this has nothing to do either with a rajasic movement or with desire." (CWM 6: 336–337)

3.

"Q: Sweet Mother,
Although one part of the being aspires and wants the Divine, the other part is so tamasic and heavy! How can it be awakened? ... It is not that this part is against the Divine–it does not even seem to be interested in Him (which is perhaps worse).

A: That is indeed an indication of complete inertia. Sri Aurobindo has written: 'If you cannot love God, at least find a way to fight with Him so that He may be your enemy' (implying that you are sure to be conquered by Him). It is a humorous remark, but it means that of all conditions, inertia is the worst.

Aspiration is the only remedy—an aspiration that rises constantly like a clear flame burning up all the impurities of the being." (CWM 16: 306–307)

4.

"It is the inertia—not to mention the bad will—which *causes* the catastrophe. It is not that the catastrophe was intended, nor even foreseen, it is *caused* by the resistance.

And then, there is added the vision of the action of Grace, which comes to moderate the results wherever possible, that is to say, wherever it is accepted. And this explains why aspiration, faith, complete trust on the part of the earthly human element, have a harmonising power, because they allow the Grace to come and set right the consequences of this blind resistance.

This is a clear vision—clear, clear, even in the details." (CWM 10: 231–232)

5.

"*Sweet Mother,*

The ardour of making an effort is waning. I feel contented. But time passes so quickly that one feels one has not made the most out of what is given to us.

That proves that life is too easy here and that for the most part you are all too tamasic to make an effort unless goaded by the difficulties of ordinary life. Only a very ardent aspiration can remedy this deadly condition. But the aspiration is absent and your soul is asleep!" (CWM 16: 292)

LXXII—Experience Due to Ardent Aspiration

1.

"Always the most interesting cases for me have been those of people who had read nothing but had a very ardent aspiration and came to me saying, 'Something funny has happened to me, I had this extraordinary experience, what can it mean truly?' And then they describe a movement, a vibration, a force, a light, whatever it might be, it depends on each one, and they describe this, that it happened like that and came like that, and then this happened and then that, and what does it all mean, all this? Then here one is on the right side. One knows that it is not an imagined experience, that it is a sincere, spontaneous one, and this always has a power of transformation much greater than the experience that was brought about by a mental knowledge.

…

What I mean is that every definite mental formation always gives a particular colouring to the experience. As for example, with all people brought up in a certain religion their experiences will always be coloured by this religion; and in fact, to reach the very source of the thing one must free oneself from the external formation.

But there is a kind of reading which awakens in you an interest in the thing and can help you in the first seekings. Usually, even if one has had experiences one

needs a contact of thought or idea with the thing so that the effort may be crystallized more consciously. But the more one knows, the more one must be absolutely sincere in his experience, that is, he must not use the formative power of his mind to imagine and so create the experience in himself. From the point of view of orientation it can be useful; but from the point of view of the experience, it takes away from it its dynamic value, it has not the intensity of an experience which comes because the moral and spiritual conditions necessary for it to occur have been fulfilled. There is the whole mental conditioning which is added and which takes away something of the spontaneity. All this is a matter of proportion. Each one must find the exact amount he needs, how much of reading, how much meditation, how much concentration, how much... It is different for each one." (CWM 7: 210–212)

2.

"When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence." (CWSA 29: 107)

3.

"Aspiration during the period of experience is not so necessary. It is in the intervals that it should be there." (CWSA 29: 58–59)

4.

"You see, one may have to wait for days, months, years, centuries, lives, before this moment comes. But if one intensifies his aspiration, there is a moment when the pressure is so great and the intensity of the question so strong that something turns over in the consciousness, and then this is absolutely what one feels: instead of being here one is there, instead of seeing from outside and seeking to see within, one is inside; and the minute one is within, absolutely everything changes, completely, and all that seemed to him true, natural, normal, real, tangible, all that, immediately,—yes, it seems to him very grotesque, very queer, very unreal, quite absurd; but one has touched something which is supremely true and eternally beautiful, and this one never loses again.

Once the reversal has taken place, you can glide into an external consciousness, not lose the ordinary contact with the things of life, but that remains and it never moves. You may, in your dealings with others, fall back a little into their ignorance and blindness, but there is always something there, living, standing up within, which does not move any more, until it manages to penetrate everything,

to the point where it is over, where the blindness disappears for ever. And this is an absolutely tangible experience, something more concrete than the most concrete object, more concrete than a blow on your head, something more real than anything whatever." (CWM 7: 193–194)

5.

"Yes—that is the way. The intensity of the aspiration brings the intensity of the experience and by repeated intensity of the experience the change." (CWSA 29: 58–59)

6.

"If, however, instead of being desires they are aspirations for spiritual things and one continues his line with a regular progress, then one is absolutely sure to obtain one day what he has imagined. The day may be slightly far–off if there are many obstacles on the path, for example if the formation that you have made is still very alien to the state of the earth atmosphere; well, it takes some time to prepare the conditions for its advent. But if it is something which has already been realised several times on earth and does not imply too categorical a transformation, you may have it quite quickly, provided that you follow the same line persistently. And if you add to this the ardour of a faith and trust in the divine Grace and that kind of self–giving to the Grace which makes you expect everything from It, then

it can become tremendous; you can see things being realised more and more, and the most surprising ones can be realised one after another. But for this there are conditions to be fulfilled.

One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self–giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has happened, and they tell themselves, 'Yes, naturally it had to be like that.' So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be.

There.

And so Sat–Chit–Ananda begins to come together, to form its unity once more. (CWM 7: 238–239)

7.

"*What is the exact way of feeling that we belong to the Divine and that the Divine is acting in us?*

You must not feel with your head (because you may think so, but that's something vague); you must feel with your sense–feeling. Naturally one begins by wanting it with the mind, because that is the first thing that understands. And then one has an aspiration here (*pointing to the heart*), with a flame which pushes you to realise it. But if you want it to be truly *the* thing, well, you must feel it.

You are doing something, suppose, for example, you are doing exercises, weight–lifting. Now suddenly without your knowing how it happened, suddenly you have the feeling that there is a force infinitely greater than you, greater, more powerful, a force that does the lifting for you. Your body becomes something almost non–existent and there is this Something that lifts. And then you will see; when that happens to you, you will no longer ask how it should be done, you will know. That does happen.

It depends upon people, depends upon what dominates in their being. Those who think have suddenly the feeling that it is no longer they who think, that there is something which knows much better, sees much more clearly, which is infinitely more luminous, more conscious in them, which organises the thoughts and words; and then they write. But if the experience is complete, it is even no longer they who write, it is that same Thing that takes hold of their hand and makes it write. Well, one knows at that moment that the little physical person is just a tiny

insignificant tool trying to remain as quiet as possible in order not to disturb the experience. …

How can we reach that state?

Aspire for it, want it. Try to be less and less selfish, but not in the sense of becoming nice to other people or forgetting yourself, not that: have less and less the feeling that you are a person, a separate entity, something existing in itself, isolated from the rest.

And then, above all, above all, it is that inner flame, that aspiration, that need for the light. It is a kind of—how to put it?—luminous enthusiasm that seizes you. It is an irresistible need to melt away, to give oneself, to exist only in the Divine.

At that moment you have the experience of your aspiration. But that moment should be absolutely sincere and as integral as possible; and all this must occur not only in the head, not only here, but must take place everywhere, in all the cells of the body. The consciousness integrally must have this irresistible need.... The thing lasts for some time, then diminishes, gets extinguished. You cannot keep these things for very long. But then it so happens that a moment later or the next day or some time later, suddenly you have the opposite experience. Instead of feeling this ascent, and all that, this is no longer there and you have the feeling of the Descent, the Answer. And

nothing but the Answer exists. Nothing but the divine thought, the divine will, the divine energy, the divine action exists any longer. And you too, you are no longer there.

That is to say, it is the answer to our aspiration. It may happen immediately afterwards—that is very rare but may happen. If you have both simultaneously, then the state is perfect; usually they alternate; they alternate more and more closely until the moment there is a total fusion. Then there is no more distinction. I heard a Sufi mystic, who was besides a great musician, an Indian, saying that for the Sufis there was a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to the Divine, than that of devotion, that this was not the last stage; the last stage of the progress is when there is no longer any distinction; you have no longer this kind of adoration or surrender or consecration; it is a very simple state in which one makes no distinction between the Divine and oneself. They know this. It is even written in their books. It is a commonly known condition in which everything becomes quite simple. There is no longer any difference. There is no longer that kind of ecstatic surrender to 'Something' which is beyond you in every way, which you do not understand, which is merely the result of your aspiration, your devotion. There is no difference any longer. When the union is perfect, there is no longer any difference. (CWM 5: 55–57)

8.

"The consciousness from which these experiences come [*such as the division of the mind into an active surface mind and a silent inner mind*] is always there pressing to bring them in. The reason why they don't come in freely or stay is the activity of the mind and vital always rushing about, thinking this, wanting that, trying to perform mountaineering feats on all the hillocks of the lower nature instead of nourishing a strong and simple aspiration and opening to the higher consciousness that it may come in and do its own work. ...

These things do not 'drop'—what you have felt was there in you all the time, but you did not feel it because you were living on the surface altogether and the surface is all crowd and clamour. But in all men there is this silent Purusha, base of the true mental being, the true vital being, the true physical being. It was by your prayer and aspiration that the thing came, to show you in what direction you must travel in order to have the true rasa of things, for it is only when one is liberated that one can get the real rasa. For after this liberation come others and among them the liberation and Ananda in action as well as in the static inner silence." (CWSA 30: 234)

9.

"There is no reason why one should not have a burning aspiration in sleep, provided one is conscious in sleep. In

fact, the condition you describe was not sleep—it was simply that the consciousness was trying to go inside in a sort of indrawn condition (a kind of half-samadhi) while the external mind was constantly coming out of it. What you have, if you go into this indrawn condition, is not dreams but spiritual experiences or visions or experiences in other supraphysical planes of consciousness. Your burning aspiration was just such a spiritual experience." (CWSA 30: 254)

10.

"On the quality of the aspiration depends the force that answers and the work that it comes to do." (CWM 3: 98)

11.

"I forgot to say in that book (perhaps I did not forget but just felt that it was useless to say it) that all these theories are only theories, that is, mental conceptions which are merely more or less imaged representations of the reality; but it is not the reality at all. When you say 'determinism' and when you say 'freedom', you say only words and all that is only a very incomplete, very approximate and very weak description of what is in reality within you, around you and everywhere; and to be able to begin to understand what the universe is, you must come out of your mental formulas, otherwise you will never understand anything.

To tell the truth, if you live only a moment, just a tiny moment, of this absolutely sincere aspiration or this sufficiently intense prayer, you will know more things than by meditating for hours." (CWM 5: 88–89)

12.

"*Mother, you said that the Vedic age was like a promise. A promise to whom?*

To the Earth and men.

They left a kind of oral document of their experience. It was transmitted—and this was the promise.

They used an imaged language. Some people say that it was because they wanted it to be an initiation which would be understood only by the initiates. But it could also be an absolutely spontaneous expression without a precise aim to veil things, but which could not be understood except by those who had the experience. For it is quite obviously something that is not mental, which came spontaneously—as though it sprang from the heart and the aspiration—which was the completely spontaneous expression of an experience or knowledge, and naturally, an expression which was poetic, which had its own rhythm, its own beauty and could be accessible only to those who had an identical experience. So it was veiled of itself, there was no need to add a veil upon it. It is more than likely that it happened like that.

When one has a true experience which is not the result of a preliminary thought constructing and obtaining the experience by a special effort, when it is a direct and spontaneous experience, an experience that comes from the very intensity of the aspiration, it is spontaneously formulated into words. When it is total and complete enough, it is formulated into words... which are not thought out, which are spontaneous, which come out spontaneously from the consciousness. Well, it is more than likely that the Vedas were like that. But only those who have had the experience, had the same state of consciousness, can understand what it means. (CWM 7: 354–355)

LXXIII—The Development of the Experience Depends on Aspiration

1.

"The development of the experience in its rapidity, its amplitude, the intensity and power of its results, depends primarily, in the beginning of the path and long after, on the aspiration and personal effort of the sadhaka. The process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it. The first determining element of the siddhi is, therefore, the intensity of the turning, the force which directs the soul inward. The power of aspiration of the heart, the force of the will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy are the measure of that intensity. The ideal sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase, 'My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.' It is this zeal for the Lord,—*utsāha*, the zeal of the whole nature for its divine results, *vyākulatā*, the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine,—that devours the ego and breaks up the limitations of its petty and narrow mould for the full and wide reception of that which it seeks, that which, being universal, exceeds and, being

transcendent, surpasses even the largest and highest individual self and nature." (CWSA 23: 58)

2.

"*The ideal Sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase: 'My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.' Does this mean an intense, constant and integral aspiration?*

Yes, it means that the entire being is absorbed in its consecration." (CWM 16: 385)

3.

"The vision of the higher planes or the idea of what they are can be had long before the transformation. If that were not possible, how could the transformation take place—the lower nature cannot change of itself, it changes by the growing vision, perception, descent of the higher consciousness belonging to the higher planes? It is through aspiration, through an increasing opening that these visions and perceptions begin to come—the realisation comes afterwards." (CWSA 30: 88–89)

4.

"Active experience of the joy, peace, love, etc. when the direct contact is there; but even when it is not there, a quiet mind, heart and vital waiting and aspiring for the

contact and the Presence—this should always be the condition.

No disturbance or confusion due to mere vital-physical impressions and experiences. To throw these away always, not to want them or get interested when they come—this is what is very much needed in you.

Always either the contact and the true experience *or* the quiet peace and aspiration." (CWSA 29: 155–156)

5.

"There is experience. For a simple heart, a sincere and honest nature, a nature which knows that its experience is sincere, that it is not a falsification of desire or of mental ambition, but a spontaneous movement which comes from the soul—the experience is absolutely convincing. It loses its power of conviction when the desire to have an experience, or the ambition to think oneself very superior, becomes mixed with it. If you have that in you, then beware, because desires and ambitions falsify experience. The mind is a formative power, and if you have a very strong desire for something very important and very interesting to happen to you, you can make it happen, at least in the eyes of those who see things superficially. But apart from these cases, if you are honest, sincere, spontaneous, and especially when experiences come to you without any effort on your part to have them, and as a spontaneous expression of your deeper aspiration, then

these experiences carry with them the seal of an absolute authenticity; and even if the whole world tells you that they are nonsense and illusion, it does not change your personal convictions. But naturally, for this, you must not deceive yourself. You must be sincere and honest with a complete inner rectitude.

Someone has asked me, 'How is it possible for God to reveal Himself to an unbeliever?' That's very funny; because if it pleases God to reveal Himself to an unbeliever, I don't see what would prevent Him from doing so!" (CWM 10: 32–33)

LXXIV—Aspire When the Consciousness Feels Imprisoned Within a Narrow External Mould

1.

"*When the consciousness feels imprisoned within its too narrow external mould, what should be done?*

You must particularly not be violent, for if you are violent, you will come out of it tired, exhausted, without any result. You must concentrate all the forces of aspiration. If you are conscious of the inner flame, you should put into this flame all that you find strongest in you by way of aspiration, of a call, and hold yourself as quiet as you can, calling, with a deep reliance that the answer will come; and when you are in this state, with your aspiration and concentrated force, with your inner flame, press gently upon this kind of outer crust, without violence, but with insistence, as long as you can, without getting agitated, irritated or excited. You must be perfectly quiet, must call and push.

It will not succeed the first time. You must begin again as many times as is necessary, but suddenly, one day... you are on the other side! Then you emerge in an ocean of light.

If you fight, if you are restless, if you struggle, you will get nothing at all; and if you become irritable you will only get a headache, that is all.

Yes, it is that. To gather together all your power of aspiration, make of it something intensely concentrated, in an absolute tranquillity, to be conscious of your inner flame and throw into it all you can that it may burn ever higher and higher, and then call with your consciousness and, slowly, push. You are sure to succeed one day." (CWM 4: 100)

LXXV—An Aspiration Wide Enough for a Realisation Without Narrow Limits

1.

"If we are to attempt an integral Yoga, it will be as well to start with an idea of the Divine that is itself integral. There should be an aspiration in the heart wide enough for a realisation without any narrow limits. Not only should we avoid a sectarian religious outlook, but also all one–sided philosophical conceptions which try to shut up the Ineffable in a restricting mental formula." (CWSA 23: 82)

LXXVI—The Higher the Aspiration, the Higher Will Be the Realisation

1.

"Of one thing you can be sure—*your future is in your hands.* You will become the man you *want to be* and the higher your ideal and your aspiration, the higher will be your realisation, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life." (CWM 12: 122)

2.

Four Bases of Realisation

"You know the four things on which the realisation has to be based—(1) on a rising to a station above the mind, (2) on the opening out of the cosmic consciousness, (3) on the psychic opening, (4) on the descent of the higher consciousness with its peace, light, force, knowledge, Ananda etc. into all the planes of the being down to the most physical. All this has to be done by the working of the Mother's force aided by your aspiration, devotion and surrender. That is the Path. The rest is a matter of the working out of these things for which you have to have faith in the Mother's working." (CWSA 30: 319)

3.

"But when this reversal of consciousness takes place, whether in the mind or a part of the mind, whether in the

vital or a part of the vital, or even in the physical consciousness itself and in the body-consciousness, once this is established, it is over; you no longer go back, you do not ever return to what you were before. And this is the true indication that you have taken a step forward definitively. And before this, there are only preparations.

… For the sadhana, *tapasya* is one thing and the *siddhi* another, quite a different thing. You may do *tapasya* for centuries, and you will always go as at a tangent—closer and closer to the realisation, nearer and nearer, but it is only when the *siddhi* is given to you... then, everything is changed, everything is reversed. And this is inexpressible, for as soon as it is put in words it escapes. But there is a difference—a real difference, essential, total—between aspiration, the mental tension, even the tension of the highest, most luminous mind and realisation: something which has been decided above from all time, and is absolutely independent of all personal effort, of all gradation. Don't you see, it is not bit by bit that one reaches it, it is not by a small, constant, regular effort, it is not that: it is something that comes suddenly; it is established without one's knowing how or why, but all is changed." (CWM 8: 172–173)

LXXVII—Experience Due to Aspiration Goes if Inner Cleanliness Is Not There

1.

"That is well understood. It is not enough to have a positive movement, there must also be the negative movement of rejection. For you cannot attain a stable transformation as long as you harbour in your being elements which oppose it. If you keep obscurities within you, they may for a time remain silent and immobile, so well that you attach no importance to them, and one day they will wake up again and your transformation won't be able to resist them. Not only is the positive movement of self-giving necessary but also the negative movement of rejection of everything in you that opposes this giving. …

Does this happen even if one has a great aspiration?

The aspiration must be very vigilant.

I have known people (many, not only a few, I mean among those who do yoga), I have known many who, every time they had a fine aspiration, and their aspiration was very strong and they received an answer to this aspiration, every time, the very same day or at the latest the next day, they had a complete setback of consciousness and were facing the exact opposite of their aspiration. Such things happen almost constantly. Well,

these people have developed only the positive side. They make a kind of discipline of aspiration, they ask for help, they try to come into contact with higher forces, they succeed in this, they have experiences; but they have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

One must never neglect to clean one's room, it is very important; inner cleanliness is at least as important as outer cleanliness.

Vivekananda has written (I don't know the original, I have only read the French translation): 'One must every morning clean one's soul and one's body, but if you don't have time for both, it is better to clean the soul than clean the body.' (CWM 4: 358–359)

2.

"The experiences you describe are coherent with each other and very clearly explicable. The first shows that some part of your mind was open and this aided by an opening in the psychic enabled you to ascend into the regions above, the ranges of the liberated spiritual mind with the infinite path of the spirit leading to the highest realisation. But the rest of the nature was not ready. The straining to recover the experience was not the right thing to do then; what should have been done was the aspiration for the

purification and preparation of the nature, the permanent psychic opening and the increase of the higher spiritual opening above till there could be a total release of the being. The vehemence of the action of the forces was due to the resistance and the breaking of the knots in the head and different parts of the nature was their working for the release." (CWSA 30: 383–384)

3.

"For there is one part of the being which has an aspiration, there is one part of the being which gives itself, and there are other parts—sometimes a small part, some times a big one which hides nicely, right at the bottom, and keeps absolutely quiet so that it may not be found out, but which *resists* with *all* its might, so as not to change.

And so one wonders... with, 'Oh, I had such a beautiful aspiration, I had so much goodwill, I had such a great desire to change, and then, see, I cannot! Why?' Then, of course, your mental arrogance comes in and says, 'I didn't get the response I deserved, the divine Grace doesn't help me, and I am left all alone to shift for myself', etc., etc.

It is not that. It is that hidden somewhere there is a tiny something which is well coiled up, in there, *doubled up, turned* in upon itself and well hidden, right at the bottom, as at the bottom of a box, which refuses to stir. (*Mother speaks very softly*.) So when the effort, the

aspiration wane, die down, this springs up like that, gently, and then it wants to impose its will and it makes you do exactly what you did not want to do, what you had decided you would not do, and which you do without knowing how or why! Because that thing was there, it had its turn—for small things, big things, for the details, even for the direction of life.

There are people who see clearly, who know so well what they ought to do, and who feel that they can't.... They don't know why. It is nothing else but that. There is a little spot which doesn't want to change and this little spot awaits its hour. And the day it is allowed, through laxity, fatigue, somnolence, through a little inertia, allowed to show itself, it will show itself with all concentrated, accumulated energy, and will make you do, will make you say, make you feel, make you act *ex–act–ly* contrary to what you had decided to do! And you will stand there: 'Ah, how discouraging this is!...' Then some people say, 'Fate!' They think it is their fate. It is not fate, it is themselves!... It is that they don't have, haven't used, the light, the searchlight. They have not turned the searchlight into the small hidden corners of their being, they haven't discovered what was well hidden. They have left it there, and then have done this (*Mother turns away her head*) so as not to see it. How many times one suddenly feels one is on the point of catching something, 'Hup!' It hurts a little.... It is troublesome.... So one thinks of something else, and

that's all! The opportunity has gone. One must wait for another occasion, again commit a few stupidities, before being able to find an opportunity to catch the thing by the tail, like this, or by the ear or the nose, and hold it firmly and say, 'No! You won't hide any longer now, I see you as you are, and you must either get out or change!'

One must have a strong grip and an unshakable resolution. As in our Japanese story of the other day, that soldier who had a knife in his knee in order to make sure of not falling asleep... and when he felt very sleepy, he turned the knife in such a way that it hurt him still more. One must have something like that. This, this is determination: to know what one wants and to do it. (CWM 6: 242–244)

4.

"There are two actions which in practice merge into one.

(1) *Never forget* the goal that one wants to attain.

(2) Never allow any part of the being or any of its movements to contradict one's aspiration.

This also makes it necessary to become conscious of one's nights, because the activities of the night often contradict the aspiration of the day and undo its work.

Vigilance, sincerity, continuity of effort, and the Grace will do the rest." 20 May 1968 (CWM 16: 378)

5.

"You will see, the more you strive to realise, you will discover in the nature—the lower nature, that is, the lower mind, the lower vital, the physical—how much pretension, sham and ambition there is.... One can use any... The desire to put on airs: all that must be eliminated, absolutely, radically, and replaced by a sincere flame of aspiration, of aspiration for the purity which makes us live only for what the Supreme Consciousness demands of us, which makes us able to do only what it wants, which makes us do only what it wants, when it wants. Then we can be entirely different.... It is a little far along the path, but we try to do that, always, this purification of the whole being which...

Then there is no more school, teachers, students, boredom; there is... life trying to transform itself. There: that is the ideal, this is where we have to go." (CWM 12: 425)

6.

"Q: *Sweet Mother, how can we empty the consciousness of its mixed contents?*

A: By aspiration, the rejection of the lower movements, a call to a higher force. If you do not accept certain movements, then naturally, when they find that they can't manifest, gradually they diminish in force and stop

occurring. If you refuse to express everything that is of a lower kind, little by little the very thing disappears, and the consciousness is emptied of lower things. It is by refusing to give expression—I mean not only in action but also in thought, in feeling. When impulses, thoughts, emotions come, if you refuse to express them, if you push them aside and remain in a state of inner aspiration and calm, then gradually they lose their force and stop coming. So the consciousness is emptied of its lower movements.

But for instance, when undesirable thoughts come, if you look at them, observe them, if you take pleasure in following them in their movements, they will never stop coming. It is the same thing when you have undesirable feelings or sensations: if you pay attention to them, concentrate on them or even look at them with a certain indulgence, they will never stop. But if you absolutely refuse to receive and express them, after some time they stop. You must be patient and very persistent.

In a great aspiration, if you can put yourself into contact with something higher, some influence of your psychic being or some light from above, and if you can manage to put this in touch with these lower movements, naturally they stop more quickly. But before even being able to draw these things by aspiration, you can already stop those movements from finding expression in you by a very persistent and patient refusal. When thoughts which you do not like come, if you just brush them away and do

not pay them any attention at all, after some time they won't come any longer. But you must do this very persistently and regularly. (CWM 6: 329–330)

7.

"It is possible to have a guiding Voice, but it is also easy to make a mistake in this matter. For the mind imitates the guiding voice and, if there are demands and desires in the vital, these also put themselves in the same form and are mistaken for a guiding voice. Make yourself pure of demand and desire, full only of psychic aspiration, surrendered, and in time a real guidance from within will come." (CWSA 30: 309)

8.

"I do not know why you doubt your experiences—you should accept them as genuine unless we expressly say anything to the contrary. In all the experiences you have sent me up to now, I have never found any that were not perfectly genuine; moreover, your observation of them is quite sound and accurate.

Your first experience was that of the opening of the psychic; you became aware of the psychic being and its aspirations and experiences and of the external being in front, as two separate parts of your consciousness. You were not able to keep this experience because the vital was not purified and pulled you out into the ordinary external

consciousness. Afterwards, you got back into the psychic and were at the same time able to see your ordinary vital nature, to become aware of its defects and to work by the power of the psychic for its purification." (CWSA 30: 321–322)

9.

"*How can we make the mind and vital a 'clear field'?*

Make what?... Yes, it is difficult. (*Laughter)* It is a great task. Well, it is always the same thing; first of all you must understand what is meant by being clear. And then you must aspire, and with persistence; and each time something comes to obstruct you, you must brush it aside, push it back, not accept it.

The mind and vital have a very bad habit: when one has succeeded through aspiration in having an experience, being in contact with the divine force, immediately they rush forward to make it their own property, you see, like that (*gesture*), as a cat jumps on a mouse. And then they catch it and say, 'It is for me.' And then the mind turns it into all kinds of speculations and affirmations and constructions and takes great pride in it, and the vital uses the power to fulfil its own desires.

So, in order to avoid this it is said that they must be clear, quiet, peaceful, and must not rush at the force which is trying to manifest and make of it a tool for their personal

use. For the mind to be clear it must be silent—at least to a certain extent, and for the vital to be clear it must give up its desires, have no desires and impulses and passions. This indeed is the essential condition. Later, if one goes into details, neither of them should have any preferences, attachments, any particular way of being or particular set of ideas." (CWM 6: 396–397)

LXXVIII—How Aspiration Can Change the Consequence of Karma

1.

"Q: *You have said here that we are 'tied to the chain of Karma', but then sometimes when the Divine Grace acts, that contradicts …*

A: Completely, the Divine Grace completely contradicts Karma; you know, It makes it melt away like butter that's put in the sun. …

There you are, if you have an aspiration that's sincere enough or a prayer that's intense enough, you can bring down in you Something that will change everything, everything —truly it changes everything. An example may be given that is extremely limited, very small, but which makes you understand things very well: a stone falls quite mechanically; say, a tile falls; if it gets loose, it will fall, won't it? But if there comes, for example, a vital or mental determinism from someone who passes by and does not want it to fall and puts his hand out, it will fall on his hand, but it will not fall on the ground. So he has changed the destiny of this stone or tile. It is another determinism that has come in, and instead of the stone falling on the head of someone, it falls upon the hand and it will not kill anybody. This is an intervention from another plane, from

a conscious will that enters into the more or less unconscious mechanism.

Q: *So the consequences of Karma are not rigorous (accurate, exact)?*

No, not at all. … And they want it to be neither this nor that, what should they do?—They have only to climb to a higher storey. They must be given the key to open the door. There is a door to the staircase, a key is needed. The key, as I told you just now, is the sufficiently sincere aspiration or the sufficiently intense prayer. I said "or", but I do not think it is "or". There are people who like one better and others, the other. But in both there is a magical power, you must know how to make use of it." (CWM 5: 90–92)

2.

"Q: *If everything is foreseen, what is the role of human aspiration and effort?*

A: In each domain (physical, vital and mental) everything is foreseen; but the intrusion of a higher domain (overmental and beyond) introduces another determinism into events and can change the course of things. This is what aspiration can achieve.

As for human effort, it is one of the things that are determined and its role is foreseen in the overall play of forces." (CWM 10: 242–243)

3.

"To tell the truth, for each event the situation is different. There are some that can be changed completely, reversed altogether; there are some that are capable of undergoing quite a considerable change; there are others that can suffer only a slight modification—a slight modification but one that has a considerable consequence; and there are some that are inevitable; they are so because they are so; if you tried to oppose, you would break your head against a wall and that would serve no purpose. The whole thing is to have this perspicacity, know to which domain the event belongs and not will any other thing than what *must be*.

I could give hundreds of instances of different cases.

A thing seems to have been completely determined: it is *going* to be so. But you have within you a will that surges up, a flame that is kindled, a great aspiration that is in harmony with a higher Will and you force it upon the event. And then a kind of combination takes place: what had to happen will happen, but along with something else which comes at the same time and changes the nature of the former. For events of importance to the earth, this happens very often. For example, when an entire set of

movements, circumstances, combinations of forces bring about an absolute necessity of war, one can, by calling in another force, change the extent and the consequences, and sometimes even the nature of the war, but one is not able to avert it. I could give you examples of this kind, of a very general nature. (CWM 5: 191)

4.

"There are many fields of consciousness, zones of consciousness superimposed upon one another; and in each one of these fields of consciousness or action there is a determinism which seems absolute. But the intervention in one field of even the next higher field, like the intervention of the vital in the physical, introduces the determinism of the vital in that of the physical, and necessarily transforms the determinism of the physical. And if through aspiration, the inner will, self-giving and true surrender one can enter into contact with the higher regions or even the supreme region, from up there the supreme determinism will come down and transform all the intermediate determinisms and it will be able to bring about in a so-to-say almost in existent span of time what would have otherwise taken either years or lives to be accomplished. But this is the only way.

If at the time of some event or circumstance—take for instance, to simplify things, of a danger—if at that time instead of trying to struggle in the domain where one is,

one can traverse in a great soaring all the domains which are rungs in the consciousness, and go to the supreme region, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Transcendent, if one can enter into contact with this Transcendent, in a state of perfect surrender, it is He who will act and change everything, in all circumstances—to the extent that this will be what people call miracles, because they do not understand how it can happen." (CWM 7: 361–362)

5.

"*Self-development and spiritual aspiration enable one to master one's karma.*" (CWM 10: 275)

6.

"*If something is ineluctably determined, how can it be changed?*

I shall give you a simple example—but it may occur in any state of consciousness.

A stone falls. If it fulfils its destiny, it will fall to the ground, won't it? But you are there and you have a vital or a mental will—one or the other—and you catch the stone in your hand. You have changed the destiny of the stone. A leaf falls—on to the ground if it follows its normal destiny. You have a vital will, you take the leaf in your hand. You have changed the destiny of the leaf. This happens millions

of times in the universe and nobody notices it because it is so common.

But imagine that you have a very high range of consciousness. If into the determinism down here you can bring, by aspiration, an urge, a prayer, a higher consciousness, if you can get hold of your higher consciousness, so to say, and bring it into the material destiny, everything would immediately be changed. But because you do not see or do not understand what is happening, you say that it is chance or a miracle.

Not every destiny is active in a material destiny, and if you want to change this material destiny, you must be able to bring down another one from above. In this way, something new will enter into it—these 'descents' of the higher consciousness take place all the time, but because we do not understand them, this 'something new' that comes is turned by ordinary people into a 'miracle'.

This is precisely what we want to do by bringing down into the physical and material world the supramental force and consciousness. At first it works by diffusion, not directly. Its working is more or less veiled, more veiled and distorted as it descends into the physical world, until it becomes almost imperceptible. If it could work here directly, without this distortion and this veiling, it would change everything in an absolutely unexpected way.

I hope you will get this concrete example one day!" (CWM 15: 290–291)

LXXIX—Aspiration Can Be for the Following Things

1.

"A spiritual aspiration means having an intense need to unite with the Divine, to give oneself totally to the Divine, not to live outside the divine Consciousness so that the Divine may be everything for you in your integral being, and you feel the need of a constant communion with Him, of the sense of his presence, of his guidance in all that you do, and of his harmonising all the movements of the being. That is a spiritual aspiration." (CWM 5: 292–293)

2.

"Aspire for the constant contact and the light. It is in the Light that the being will get organised in the Truth." (CWSA 29: 57)

3.

"The idea of your friend that it is necessary to receive a mantra from here and for that he must come is altogether wrong. There is no mantra given in this Yoga. It is the opening of the consciousness to the Mother from within that is the true initiation and that can only come by aspiration and rejection of restlessness in the mind and vital. To come here is not the way to get it. Many come and get nothing or get their difficulties raised or even fall away from the Yoga. It is no use coming before one is

ready, and he does not seem to be ready. Strong desire is not a proof of readiness. When he is inwardly ready, then there will be no difficulty about his coming." (CWSA 32: 333) (CWSA 35: 825)

4.

"*What is the right and perfect rule of opening?*

Aspiration, quietude, widening of oneself to receive, rejection of all that tries to shut you to the Divine." (CWSA 32: 150)

5.

"*What is the way to open all the knots of the being?*

By aspiration, by consent of the being to the workings of the Divine Force, by the descent and working of that Force." (CWSA 32: 150)

6.

"The first conditions of this Yoga are: (1) A complete sincerity and surrender in the being. The divine life and the transformation of the lower human into the higher divine nature must be made the sole aim of all the life. No attachments, desires or habits of the mind, heart, vital being or body should be clung to which come in the way of this one aspiration and one object of the life. One must

be ready to renounce all these completely as soon as the demand comes from above and from the divine Shakti.

(2) A fundamental calm, peace and purity in the mind, vital being and all the nature.

The hours of meditation should be devoted to the formation of these two conditions in you, by aspiration and by self-observation and rejection of all that disturbs the nature or keeps it troubled, confused and impure. Aspiration if rightly done, quietly, earnestly and sincerely, brings the divine help from above to effect this object." (CWSA 29: 43–44)

7.

"What 'reason' do you need to aspire for peace, purity, freedom from the lower nature, light, strength, Ananda, divine love, divine service? These are things good in themselves and the highest possible aim of human endeavour." (CWSAB 31: 714)

8.

"The aspiration should be for the full descent of the Truth and the victory over falsehood in the world." (CWSA 29: 57)

9.

"Aspire for your will to be one with the Divine will, concentrate in the heart and be plastic to whatever

experience comes, neither forcing nor resisting any spiritual experience." (CWSA 29: 57)

"Change, that is transform one's will into the divine Will? Is that what you want to say?
Yes.

Well, first you must want it. Afterwards you must have a great aspiration. And then you must continue to want it, and continue to aspire and not give way when difficulties come, and continue until you succeed. That's all. And then, a certain number of things are necessary, as for example not to be selfish, not to have a small narrow-mindedness, not to live with preferences, not to have desires, not to have mental opinions—many things. It is a fairly long process because you must change your ordinary nature. This is the first condition.

To break all the limits of one's mind, break all the desires of one's vital, break all the preferences of one's physical nature. After that one may hope to be in contact with the divine Will; and then, later, one must not only be in contact with it, but live integrally this Will, that is, be unified in all one's being: not have a single bit which goes on this side and another bit which goes on that. You must be entirely in one single will." (CWM 6: 460–461)

10.

"We must aspire with all our being for the manifestation to come soon and complete." (CWM 14: 72)

11.

"The aspiration for the supramental would be premature. What you have to aspire for is for the psychic change and the spiritual change of the whole being—which is the necessary condition before one can even think of the supramental." (CWSA 29: 57)

"To want to be a superman is a mistake, it only swells the ego. One can aspire for the Divine to bring about the supramental transformation, but that also should not be done till the being has become psychic and spiritualised by the descent of the Mother's peace, force, light and purity." (CWSA 29: 57–58)

12.

"*How can I develop psychic bhakti?*

By sincere aspiration. (CWSA 32: 477)

"The Divine Love, unlike the human, is deep and vast and silent; one must become quiet and wide to be aware of it and reply to it. He must make it his whole object to be surrendered so that he may become a vessel and

instrument—leaving it to the Divine Wisdom and Love to fill him with what is needed. Let him also fix this in the mind not to insist that in a given time he must progress, develop, get realisations and experiences—whatever time it takes, he must be prepared to wait and persevere and make his whole life an aspiration and an opening for the one thing only, the Divine. To give oneself is the secret of sadhana, not to demand and acquire a thing. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow. But for that all impatience and revolt must go; all suggestions of not getting, not being helped, not being loved, of going away, of abandoning life or the spiritual endeavour must be rejected. (CWSA 32: 481–482)

13.

"*How can one become conscious of Divine Love and an instrument of its expression?*

… There are people who believe that it is enough to wake up one day in a particular mood and say, 'Ah! How I wish to be conscious of divine Love, how I wish to manifest Divine Love....' Note, I don't know how many millions of times one feels within a little stirring up of human instinct and imagines that if one had at one's disposal Divine Love, great things could be accomplished, and one says, 'I am going to try and find Divine Love and we shall see the result.' This is the worst possible way. Because, before

having even touched the very beginning of realisation you have spoilt the result. You must take up your search with a purity of aspiration and surrender which in themselves are already difficult to acquire. You must have worked much on yourself only to be *ready* to aspire to this Love. If you look at yourself very sincerely, very straight, you will see that as soon as you begin to think of Love it is always your little inner tumult which starts whirling. All that aspires in you wants certain vibrations. It is almost impossible, without being far advanced on the yogic path, to separate the vital essence, the vital vibration from your conception of Love." (CWM 4: 244)

14.

"Daily we must aspire to conquer all mistakes, all obscurities, all ignorances." (CWM 14: 73)

15.

To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind, for the realisation of the Self and Divine above

"To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration." (CWSA 29: 7)

16.

"It is not really on the capacity of the outer nature that success depends, (for the outer nature all self–exceeding seems impossibly difficult), but on the inner being and to the inner being all is possible. One has only to get into contact with the inner being and change the outer view and consciousness from the inner—that is the work of the sadhana and it is sure to come with sincerity, aspiration and patience." (CWSA 29: 31–32)

17.

"Aspiration for peace and calm and a perfect equality.

Purification and a basis of calm are the first necessary steps in the spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 46)

18.

"By meditation alone and trying to concentrate you will never succeed. There must be an aspiration from the heart and a giving up of all yourself to Krishna.

In your nature there are many obstacles, chiefly a great activity of the outward–going mind and a thick crust of the impure lower Prakriti that covers the heart and the vital being. Quieting of the mind and purification of the nature are what you must have before you can fulfil your aim. Aspire for these two things first; ask for them constantly from above. You will not be able to achieve them by your own unaided effort." (CWSA 29: 47)

19.

"If you have not got quietude, you can always aspire first and a sincere aspiration will bring it back." (CWSA 29: 53)

20.

"Quiet means to keep the inner quietude and keep turned to the Mother with the aspiration towards or call for the return of the right condition." (CWSA 29:138)

21.

"First aspire and pray to the Mother for quiet in the mind, purity, calm and peace, an awakened consciousness, intensity of devotion, strength and spiritual capacity to face all inner and outer difficulties and go through to the end of the Yoga. If the consciousness awakens and there is devotion and intensity of aspiration, it will be possible for the mind, provided it learns quietude and peace, to grow in knowledge." (CWSA 29: 142–143)

22.

"In works, aspiration towards Perfection is true spirituality." October 1961 (CWM 14: 306)

"The first thing needed is to become conscious of the Divine Will, and in order to do that one must no longer have any desires or personal will.

The best way to achieve this (become conscious of the Divine Will) is to direct one's whole aspiration towards

the Divine Perfection, to give oneself to it without reserve and to rely on That alone for all satisfaction.

All the rest will follow as a result." (CWM 10: 288)

23.

"The division is very usual, almost universal in human nature, and the following of the lower impulse in spite of the contrary will in the higher parts happens to almost everybody. It is the phenomenon noted by Arjuna in his question to Krishna, 'Why does one do evil, even though one wishes not to do it, as if compelled to it by force?', and expressed sententiously by Ovid, '*video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor*' [*I see the better and approve of it, I follow the worse.*]. By constant effort and aspiration one can arrive at a turning point when the psychic asserts itself and what seems a very slight psychological change or reversal alters the whole balance of the nature." (CWSA 28: 121)

24.

"Those who come here have an aspiration and a possibility—something in their psychic being pushes and if they follow it they will arrive; but that is not conversion. Conversion is a turning of the being away from lower things towards the Divine.

Aspiration can lead hereafter to conversion, but aspiration is not conversion." (CWSA 29: 63)

"Mother spoke of three different things: conversion, the turning of the soul decisively towards the Divine,—inner realisation of the Divine,—transformation of the nature. The first two can happen swiftly and suddenly and once for all, the third *always* takes time and cannot be done at one stroke, in a moment. One may become aware of a rapid change in this or that detail of the transformation, but even this is the rapid result of a long working." (SABCL 23: 564)

25.

"It is now one month since you wrote your letter announcing the new favourable turn in your sadhana. You will have had time to see whether the turn was decisive and how far it has moved towards completeness. The test will be whether it gets rid fundamentally of the Asuric turn in your external being. All ambition, pride and vanity must disappear from the thoughts and the feelings. There must be no seeking now or in the future for place, position or prestige, no stipulation for a high seat among the elect, no demand for a special closeness to the Mother, no claim or assertion of right, no attempt to thrust yourself between her and others, no endeavour to intercept what she is giving to them or to share in it, no imposing of yourself on her or on other sadhaks. All falsehood must be rejected from the speech, thought and action and all ostentation, arrogance and insolence. A simple, quiet and unpretending aspiration to the Truth and reception of it for its own sake

and not for any profit it may bring you, a straightforward acceptance of the Mother's will whatever it may be, a complete casting away of all pretensions and pretences, a readiness to obey completely and without reserve and to accept any position and any discipline given are the only conditions on which a divine change can be effected in you. It is for this that you must strive.

On our side we await a certain conquest on the material plane which is not yet accomplished, before we can tell you to return. As you yourself saw once, till this is done your stay here would not be helpful to you. When you are ready in your inner condition and things are ready here, then the Mother will call you." (CWSA 32: 382–383)

26.

"But, finally, there must open in us, as our mental life deepens and subtler knowledge develops, the perception that the terrestrial and the supraterrestrial are not the only terms of being; there is something which is supracosmic and the highest remote origin of our existence. This perception is easily associated by spiritual enthusiasm, by the height and ardour of the soul's aspiration, by the philosophic aloofness or the strict logical intolerance of our intellect, by the eagerness of our will or by a sick disgust in our vital being discouraged by the difficulties or disappointed by the results of life,—by any or all of these motive-forces,—with a sense of the entire vanity and

unreality of all else than this remote Supreme, the vanity of human life, the unreality of cosmic existence, the bitter ugliness and cruelty of earth, the insufficiency of heaven, the aimlessness of the repetition of births in the body." (CWSA 22: 702)

27.

"*In order to know how to love truly, should the nature be transformed?*

The quality of the love is in proportion to the transformation of your consciousness.

I don't understand.

It is childishly simple. If you have the consciousness of an animal, you will love like an animal. If you have the consciousness of an ordinary man, you will love like an ordinary man. If you have the consciousness of an élite being, you will love like an élite being, and if you have a god's consciousness, you will love like a god. It is simple! That's what I have said. And so, if by an effort for progress and inner transformation, by aspiration and growth, you pass from one consciousness to the other and your consciousness becomes vaster and vaster, well, the love you experience will be vaster and vaster. That is quite clear!

You take the purest water, water from the crystalline rocks, you collect it in a fairly large vase, and then, in this vase there is a little mud, or much, or a huge quantity of mud. And you could not say it is the same water which came down, yet it is the same, only you have mixed it with so many things in your vase that it no longer resembles it at all! Well, love in its essence is an absolutely pure, crystalline, perfect thing. In the human consciousness it gets mixed with a fairly considerable amount of mud. So it becomes more and more muddy in proportion to the amount of mud." (CWM 6: 102–103)

28.

"Q: *My dear mother,*

Give energy and force to your child. Oh, take me into your heart. Let me live in you.

A: My dear child,

I carry you always in my heart and you are bathed in energy; it is through a quiet and confident aspiration that you will receive it. All my love is with you." (CWM 16: 124)

29.

"I would like us to make the resolution to raise ourselves each day, in all sincerity and goodwill, in an ardent aspiration towards the Sun of Truth, towards the Supreme Light, the source and intellectual life of the universe, so that it may pervade us entirely and illumine with its great

brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.

Then we shall acquire the right and the privilege of following the counsel of the great initiate of the past, who tells us:

'With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch'." (CWM 2: 29)

30.

"As for the images (statues or pictures) which have to be installed in a temple, a religious ceremony is performed, and if the priest or the assistant is a man with occult powers, even limited ones, he can, with his aspiration and through the ritual, bring a supraterrestrial consciousness into these forms. That is the principle; you are told, 'This is not a piece of wood, this is not a stone, this is not a picture; there is within it a force which the religious ritual has brought down and to this you may speak.' This is right, but the nature of the priest must be known, his occult knowledge and also the forces with which he has an affinity. So, there may be many things in there.... There is "something" (unless it is a stupid ignoramus who has performed the ceremony, one who has no power at all, has brought down nothing, made only a show—but this is rather rare; I can't say it happens frequently, it is quite

rare), generally there is something, but then the nature, the quality of this something, you know... this varies infinitely and it is sometimes a little disturbing." (CWM 4: 396)

31.

" '*To work for your perfection the first step is to become conscious of yourself.*'
"The Science of Living", On Education

'To know oneself and control oneself', what does this mean?

This means to be conscious of one's inner truth, conscious of the different parts of one's being and their respective functions. You must know why you do this, why you do that; you must know your thoughts, know your feelings, all your activities, all your movements, of what you are capable, etc. And to know oneself is not enough: this knowledge must bring a conscious control. To know oneself perfectly is to control oneself perfectly.

But there must be an aspiration at every moment. It is never too early to begin, never too late to continue. That is, even when you are quite young, you can begin to study yourself and know yourself and gradually to control yourself. And even when you are what is called 'old', when you are quite aged, it is not too late to make the effort to

know yourself better and better and control yourself better and better. That is the Science of Living." (CWM 4: 33–34)

32.

If I lay stress here upon defects and difficulties, it is not to discourage you from making an effort but to tell you that you must do things with the necessary courage and precisely not be disheartened because you are not successful at once; but if the aspiration is there in you, if the will is there in you, it is absolutely certain that sooner or later you will succeed. And I am saying this for people who live in very ordinary circumstances, less favourable perhaps than yours, but who can, even so, learn to know themselves and conquer themselves, master themselves, control themselves. Therefore, if the conditions are favourable you have a much greater chance of succeeding. One thing is always necessary, not to give up the game—for it is a great game and the result is worth the trouble of playing it through." (CWM 4: 52–53)

33.

"*Sri Aurobindo speaks of 'the rejection of ... stupidity, doubt, disbelief'. If one rejects stupidity does one become Intelligent?*

Do you mean whether one can get rid of stupidity? Yes, there is a way. It is not easy, but there is a way. I have

known people who were extremely stupid, truly stupid; well, these people succeeded through aspiration—an aspiration which was not formulated, had not even the power to express itself in words—succeeded in coming into contact with their psychic being. It was not a constant contact, it was momentary, at times very fugitive. But while they were in contact with their psychic being, they became remarkably intelligent, they said wonderful things. I knew a girl who had no education, nothing, truly stupid; people said, 'There is nothing to be done about it, it is not possible.' Well, when she was in contact with her psychic being, she understood the profoundest things and made astounding remarks. But when the contact stopped she became stupid once again. It was not something permanent, it was only the contact that took away her stupidity. So, it is a difficult cure, that is, one must establish the contact with one's psychic being and keep it always." (CWM 4: 368–369)

34.

"*But if the power of ill-will is greater than the other person's goodwill?*

Yes, that's true, that may happen. Fundamentally, this is why we always come back to the same thing: one must do all one can, as well as possible, and do it as an offering to the Divine, and then, once all this is settled and organised,

well, if there is really an aspiration in the being, and a being that is a being of light, it can counteract all bad influences. But once one puts one's foot into this world, one can't hope very much to be quite pure and free from bad influences. Every time one eats, one absorbs them; every time one breathes, one absorbs them. Then, essentially, what is necessary is to do the work of cleansing, progressively, as much as possible." (CWM 5: 413)

35.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Is it possible to have control over oneself during sleep? For example, if I want to see you in my dreams, can I do it at will?

Control during sleep is entirely possible and it is progressive if you persist in the effort. You begin by remembering your dreams, then gradually you remain more and more conscious during your sleep, and not only can you control your dreams but you can guide and organise your activities during sleep.

If you persist in your will and your effort, you are sure to learn how to come and find me at night during your sleep and afterwards to remember what has happened.

For this, two things are necessary, which you must develop by aspiration and by calm and persistent effort.

(1) Concentrate your thought on the will to come and find me; then pursue this thought, first by an effort of imagination, afterwards in a tangible and increasingly real way, until you are in my presence.

(2) Establish a sort of bridge between the waking and the sleeping consciousness, so that when you wake up you remember what has happened.

It may be that you succeed immediately, but more often it takes a certain time and you must persist in the effort." (CWM 16: 226–227)

36.

"My dear little child,

I was so pleased to receive your nice letter. You must learn that it is your good and *your good alone* that I want. I want to make you a strong and conscious man who is master of himself—that is, in control of his lower nature and capable of becoming a true Yogi if that be his aspiration. And the more this man realises his true being, the more he will become my very dear child.

That is why, now, when the will that is expressing itself is the will of the lower nature, I cannot satisfy all its whims, for that would be the worst thing I could do for you.

True love is the love that wants, to the exclusion of all else, the highest good for the loved one. This is the love that I have and want to have for you.

Your mother." (CWM 16: 117)

37.

"The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.

To learn to be quiet and silent... When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there inside your head—I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! but inside, in your head—*remain quiet*. And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened. (CWM 9: 422–423)

38.

"The conclusion is always the same: the only true attitude is one of humility, of silent respect before what one does not know, and of inner aspiration to come out of one's ignorance. One of the things which would make humanity progress most would be for it to respect what it does not know, to acknowledge willingly that it does not know and is therefore unable to judge. We constantly do just the opposite. We pass final judgments on things of which we have no knowledge whatsoever, and say in a peremptory manner, 'This is possible. That is impossible', when we do not even know what it is we are speaking of. And we put on superior airs because we doubt things of which we have never had any knowledge.

Men believe that doubt is a sign of superiority, whereas it is really a sign of inferiority.

Scepticism and doubt are two of the greatest obstacles to progress; they add presumptuousness to ignorance." (CWM 10: 26–27)

39.

"*What is the nature of Mahakali's blow?*

It makes you feel very happy. It gives you a sweet warmth in the heart, like that. You feel quite satisfied.

Does one have to aspire for it or does it come naturally?

Yes, one must have a sincerity in the aspiration, really want to progress. One must truly say, 'Yes, I want to progress' with sincerity... 'Whatever happens, I want to progress.' Then it comes.

But as I said, it comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy. When one has taken a decision, has decided to stop something in oneself, just not to repeat a stupidity one has committed, or to do something which one finds impossible or difficult to do and which, one knows, should be done, and when one has taken the decision and has put in the full sincerity of one's will, well, then if a terrible blow comes to compel you to do what you have decided to do, it is a blow, but you feel glorified, you are quite happy, it is magnificent, you see, you feel something magnificent here (Mother points to the heart)." (CWM 6: 325)

40.

"… now science is discovering them, and one can see very clearly that if the functioning is to be divine, that is, if it is to escape this disorder and confusion, it must be simplified, simplified, simplified.

(*Long silence*)

That is to say, Nature, or rather Nature in her attempt at self-expression, was obliged to resort to an unbelievable

and almost infinite complication in order to reproduce the primal Simplicity.

And we come back to the same thing. From this excess of complication arises the possibility of a simplicity which would not be empty but full—a full simplicity, a simplicity that contains everything; whereas without these complications, simplicity is empty.

Now they are making discoveries like that. In anatomy, for example, they are discovering surgical treatments which are unbelievably complicated! It is like their classification of the elements of Matter—what frightful complexity! And all this is for the purpose of... in an effort to express Unity, the one Simplicity—the divine state.

(*Silence*)

Perhaps it will go quickly…. But the question comes to this—an aspiration that is *sufficient,* intense and effective enough, to attract That which can transform complication into Simplicity, cruelty into Love, and so on." (CWM 10: 167–168)

41.

"… if you want your speech to express the truth and thus acquire the power of the Word, never think out beforehand what you want to say, do not decide what is a good or bad thing to say, do not calculate the effect of what you are

going to say. Be silent in mind and remain unwavering in the true attitude of constant aspiration towards the All-Wisdom, the All-Knowledge, the All-Consciousness. Then, if your aspiration is sincere, if it is not a veil for your ambition to do well and to succeed, if it is pure, spontaneous and integral, you will then be able to speak very simply, to say the words that ought to be said, neither more nor less, and they will have a creative power. (CWM 12: 64)

LXXX—Inner-Being's Aspiration

1.
"If not a will, you have a wish in you or an aspiration; the word does not matter, the thing is there. If it gets clouded over, it is not the less there. There are the two things—the inner being with its aspiration, the physical and material with its obscurity and depressions. If you lay stress on the former instead of constantly denying its presence, that would make the progress easy; by laying stress on the outer obscurity and affirming that always and always thinking of it, you help it to last and delay the progress. Even so, if the inner aspiration is there, it must in the end conquer." (CWSA 31: 714)

2.
"It is good. When the external consciousness covers the inner being, then it is by a calm and patient aspiration—without restlessness or disturbance—that the inner state must be called back until the external consciousness itself gets so habituated to the true condition that it is no longer willing to respond to anything else." (CWSA 31: 713–714)

3.
"To live within, in constant aspiration towards the Divine—that renders us capable of regarding life with a smile and

remaining in peace whatever the external circumstances." (CWM 14: 232)

4.

"*Some people seem to think that to prepare themselves for the inner touch of the Mother, they have to go through the preliminary stage of having her physical touch at Pranam. So the question is: Is it possible for all, at the very beginning, to develop the inner touch without the physical touch?*

If they are so dependent on the physical touch that they cannot feel anything when it is not there, this means that they have not used it at all for developing the inner connection; if they had, the inner connection after so many years would already be there. The inner connection can only be developed by an inner concentration and aspiration, not by a mere outward pranam every day. What most people do is simply to pull vital force from the Mother and live on it—but that is not the object of the Pranam." (CWSA 32: 565)

5.

"It is not our experience that by meditation alone it is possible to change the nature, nor has retirement from outward activity and work much profited those who have tried it; in many cases it has been harmful. A certain

amount of concentration, an inner aspiration in the heart and an opening of the consciousness to the Mother's presence there and to the descent from above are needed. But without action, without work the nature does not really change; it is there and by contact with men that there is the test of the change in the nature." (CWSA 32: 252)

6.

"*Sweet Mother, how can we create 'the attunement of the nature with the working of the Divine Light and Power'?*

How can you do it? By trying.

First you must be conscious of the kind of attunement you want to realise. You must become aware of the points where this harmony does not exist; you must feel them and understand the contradiction between the inner consciousness and certain outer movements. You must become conscious of this first, and once you are conscious of it, you try to adapt the outer action, outer movements to the inner ideal. But first of all you must become aware of the disharmony. For there are many people who think that everything is going well; and if they are told, 'No, your outer nature is in contradiction with your inner aspiration', they protest. They are not aware. Therefore, the first step is to become aware, to become conscious of what is not in tune.

To begin with, most people will say, 'What is this inner consciousness you are telling me about? I don't know it!' So, obviously, they cannot establish any harmony if they are not even conscious of something within which is higher than their ordinary consciousness. This means that many preparatory stages are needed, preparatory states of awareness, before being ready for this harmonisation.

You must first of all know what the inner aim of the being is, the aspiration, the descending force, what receives it— everything must become conscious. And then, afterwards, you must look at the outer movements in the light of this inner consciousness and see what is in tune and what is not. And then, when you have seen what does not harmonise, you must gather the will and aspiration to change **it** and begin with the easiest part. You should not begin with the most difficult thing, you should begin with the easiest, the one you understand best, most easily, the disharmony which seems most evident to you. Then from there, gradually, you will go to the more difficult and more central things... (CWM 7: 1–2)

7.

"*How the darkness rises up! It has veiled my consciousness and I don't know what to do. There must be an inner change, and until then, calm, aspiration.*

Yes, that is right. You must constantly aspire for the inner change, you must have the will for the light to come into the obscure physical mind, and you must calmly wait for the result of this aspiration and will." (CWM 17: 123)

8.

"Without discipline you won't be able to get anywhere, without discipline you can't even live the normal life of a normal man. But instead of having the conventional discipline of ordinary societies or ordinary institutions, I would have liked and I still want you to have the discipline you set yourselves, for the love of perfection, your own perfection, the perfection of your being.

But without that... Note that if one didn't discipline the body, one would not even be able to stand on two legs, one would continue like a child on all fours. You could do nothing. You are obliged to discipline yourself; you could not live in society, you could not live at all, except all alone in the forest; and even then, I don't quite know. It is absolutely indispensable, I have told you this I don't know how often. And because I have a very marked aversion for conventional disciplines, social and others, it does not mean that you must abstain from all discipline. I would like everyone to find his own, in the sincerity of his inner aspiration and the will to realise himself." (CWM 8: 184–185)

LXXXI—The Aspiration of Complete Surrender

1.

"Our Yoga is not identical with the Yoga of the Gita although it contains all that is essential in the Gita's Yoga. In our Yoga we begin with the idea, the will, the aspiration of the complete surrender; but at the same time we have to reject the lower nature, deliver our consciousness from it, deliver the self involved in the lower nature by the self rising to freedom in the higher nature. If we do not do this double movement, we are in danger of making a tamasic and therefore unreal surrender, making no effort, no tapas and therefore no progress; or else we may make a rajasic surrender not to the Divine but to some self-made false idea or image of the Divine which masks our rajasic ego or something still worse." (CWSA 29: 442)

2.

"However hard the fight, the only thing is to fight it out now and here to the end.

The trouble is that you have never fully faced and conquered the real obstacle. There is in a very fundamental part of your nature a strong formation of ego-individuality which has mixed in your spiritual aspiration a clinging element of pride and spiritual ambition. This formation has never consented to be broken up in order to give place to something more true and divine. Therefore, when the

Mother has put her force upon you or when you yourself have pulled the force upon you, this in you has always prevented it from doing its work in its own way. It has begun itself building according to the ideas of the mind or some demand of the ego, trying to make its own creation in its 'own way', by its own strength, its own sadhana, its own tapasya. There has never been here any real surrender, any giving up of yourself freely and simply into the hands of the Divine Mother. And yet that is the only way to succeed in the supramental Yoga." (CWSA 32: 142–143)

3.

"To create the union of his soul with the Divine Presence and Power through a perfect surrender of the will in all his activities, is the high aspiration of the seeker on the Way of Works." (CWSA 12: 349)

4.

" 'This then is the supreme movement, this complete surrender of your whole self and nature, this abandonment of all dharmas to the Divine who is your highest Self, this absolute aspiration of all your members to the supreme spiritual nature. If you can once achieve it, whether at the outset or much later on the way, then whatever you are or were in your outward nature, your way is sure and your perfection inevitable. A supreme Presence within you will

take up your Yoga and carry it swiftly along the lines of your swabhava to its consummate completion. And afterwards whatever your way of life and mode of action, you will be consciously living, acting and moving in him and the Divine Power will act through you in your every inner and outer motion. This is the supreme way because it is the highest secret and mystery and yet an inner movement progressively realisable by all. This is the deepest and most intimate truth of your real, your spiritual existence'." (CWSA 19: 594)

5.

"There is a state in which the sadhak is conscious of the Divine Force working in him or of its results at least and does not obstruct its descent or its action by his own mental activities, vital restlessness or physical obscurity and inertia. That is openness to the Divine. Surrender is the best way of opening; but aspiration and quietness can do it up to a certain point so long as there is not the surrender." (CWSA 29: 105–106)

6.

"The ego in us makes claims on the Divine other than the spiritual claim, and these claims are in a sense legitimate, but so long as and in proportion as they take the egoistic form, they are open to much grossness and great perversions, burdened with an element of falsehood,

undesirable reaction and consequent evil, and the relation can only be wholly right, happy and perfect when these claims become part of the spiritual claim and lose their egoistic character. And in fact the claim of our being upon the Divine is fulfilled absolutely only then when it ceases at all to be a claim and is instead a fulfilment of the Divine through the individual, when we are satisfied with that alone, when we are content with the delight of oneness in being, content to leave the supreme Self and Master of existence to do whatever is the will of his absolute wisdom and knowledge through our more and more perfected Nature. This is the sense of the self-surrender of the individual self to the Divine, *ātma-samarpaṇa*. It does not exclude a will for the delight of oneness, for participation in the divine consciousness, wisdom, knowledge, light, power, perfection, for the satisfaction of the divine fulfilment in us, but the will, the aspiration is ours because it is his will in us. At first, while there is still insistence on our own personality, it only reflects that, but becomes more and more indistinguishable from it, less personal and eventually it loses all shade of separateness, because the will in us has grown identical with the divine Tapas, the action of the divine Shakti." (CWSA 24: 766)

7.

"This communion is not to be confined to an exceptional nearness and adoration when we retire quite into ourselves

away from our normal preoccupations, nor is it to be sought by a putting away of our human activities. All our thoughts, impulses, feelings, actions have to be referred to him for his sanction or disallowance, or if we cannot yet reach this point, to be offered to him in our sacrifice of aspiration, so that he may more and more descend into us and be present in them all and pervade them with all his will and power, his light and knowledge, his love and delight. In the end all our thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions will begin to proceed from him and change into some divine seed and form of themselves; in our whole inner living we shall have grown conscious of ourselves as a part of his being till between the existence of the Divine whom we adore and our own lives there is no longer any division." (CWSA 24: 602)

8.

"The core of this inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude, 'I want the Divine and nothing else.' I do not know why you should think that you can be asked to give up that—if there is not that, then the Yoga cannot be done. 'I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet him and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way, I shall believe in

him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and turn to him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done.' That is the attitude into which one must grow; for, certainly, it cannot be made perfect at once; mental and vital movements come across; but if one keeps the will to it, it will grow in the being. The rest is a matter of obedience to the guidance when it makes itself manifest—not allowing one's mental or vital movements to interfere.

It was not my intention to say that this way is the only way and sadhana cannot be done otherwise—there are so many others by which one can approach the Divine. But this is the only one I know by which the taking up of the sadhana by the Divine becomes a sensible fact before the preparation of the nature is done. In other methods the Divine action and help may be felt from time to time, but it remains mostly behind the veil till all is ready. In some sadhanas the Divine action is not recognised; all must be done by tapasya. In most there is a mixing of the two, the tapasya finally calling the direct help and intervention. The idea and experience of the Divine doing all belongs to the Yogas based on surrender.

But whatever way is followed, the one thing to be done is to be faithful and go to the end. You have so often taken that decision—stand by it, do not let the storms of the vital quench the aspiration of your soul." (CWSA 29:70–71)

9.
"I have said that if one has the principle of surrender and union in the mind and heart there is no difficulty in extending it to the obscurer parts of the physical and the subconscient. As you have this central surrender and union, you can easily complete it everywhere. A quiet aspiration for complete consciousness is all that is needed. Then the material and subconscient will become penetrated by the light like the rest and there will come in a quietude, wideness, harmony free from all reactions that will be the basis of the final change." (CWSA 29: 72)

10.
"Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence, weakness and surrender to the impulses of the lower nature; it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender

to one's own desires and lower movements or to one's ego or to some Force of the ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 87)

11.
"Be ever one–pointed in your surrender and sincere in your aspiration and you will constantly feel the presence of the Divine's help and guidance." (CWM 14: 86)

12.
"Aspiration for trust in the Divine: an intense need for that immutable peace given by the certitude of the Divine Grace." (CWM 14: 93)

LXXXII—What One Aspires to Is the Sign of What One May Become

1.

"For what is supermanhood but a certain divine and harmonious absolute of all that is essential in man? He is made in God's image, but there is this difference between the divine Reality and its human representative that everything which in the one is unlimited, spontaneous, absolute, harmonious, self-possessed becomes in the other limited, relative, laboured, discordant, deformed, possessed by struggle, kept by subservience to one's possessions, lost by the transience and insecurity which come from wrong holding. But in this constant imperfection there is always a craving and an aspiration towards perfection. Man, limited, yearns to the Infinite; relative, is attracted in all things towards their absolute; artificial in Nature, drives towards a higher ease, mastery and naturalness that must for ever be denied to her inconscient forces and half-conscient animals; full of discords, he insists upon harmony; possessed by Nature and to her enslaved, is yet convinced of his mission to possess and master her. What he aspires to, is the sign of what he may be. He has to pass by a sort of transmutation of the earthly metal he now is out of flawed manhood into some higher symbol. For Man is Nature's great term of transition in which she grows conscious of her aim; in him she looks up

from the animal with open eyes towards her divine ideal." (CWSA 13: 155)

2.

"Whatever the formulation of its nature, soul can seem to become that and view itself as that only in the frontal active part of its consciousness; but it is never only what it seems to be; it is too the so much else that it can be; secretly, it is the all of itself that is yet hidden. It is not irrevocably limited by any particular self-formulation in Time, but can break through and beyond it, break it up or develop it, select, reject, new-create, reveal out of itself a greater self-formulation. What it believes itself to be by the whole active will of its consciousness in its instruments, that it is or tends to become, *yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ:* what it believes it can be and has full faith in becoming, that it changes to in nature, evolves or discovers.

This power of the soul over its nature is of the utmost importance in the Yoga of self-perfection; if it did not exist, we could never get by conscious endeavour and aspiration out of the fixed groove of our present imperfect human being; if any greater perfection were intended, we should have to wait for Nature to effect it in her own slow or swift process of evolution. In the lower forms of being the soul accepts this complete subjection to Nature, but as it rises higher in the scale, it awakes to a sense of something in itself which can command Nature; but it is only when it

arrives at self-knowledge that this free will and control becomes a complete reality. The change effects itself through process of nature, not therefore by any capricious magic, but an ordered development and intelligible process." (CWSA 24: 628)

3.

"To put into practice the little you know is the best way to learn more; it is the most powerful means of advancing on the way—a little bit of really sincere practice. For example, not to do something that you know must not be done. When you have seen a weakness, a disability in your being, you must not allow it to happen again. When, if only for a moment, you have had the vision of what you must be, in an ardent aspiration, you must not—you must never forget to become that.

Some people are always complaining about their disabilities. But that doesn't lead you very far. If, once, you have truly seen your weaknesses and truly, sincerely understood, seen that you must not be like that—that's the end of complaining. Then there is the daily effort, the building up of the will, the vigilance of every moment—you must never allow a recognised mistake to renew itself. To err through ignorance, to err through unconsciousness, is obviously very unfortunate, but it can be put right. Whereas to go on making the same mistake, knowing that

it must not be made, is an act of cowardice which we must not permit ourselves.

To say, 'Oh, human nature is like this. Oh, we are in the inconscience. Oh, we are in the ignorance'—all this is laziness and weakness. And behind this laziness and weakness there is a huge bad will." (CWM 10: 34)

LXXXIII—Necessary Condition for Satisfying the Soul's Aspiration

1.

"No doubt, there were the joys of the intellect and of artistic creation, but a man cannot be an artist alone; there is the outer quite human lower vital part and, in all but a few, it is the most clamorous and insistent part. But what was dissatisfied in you? It was the soul within, first of all, and through it the higher mind and the higher vital. Why then find fault with the Divine for misleading you when it turned you to the Yoga or brought you here? It was simply answering to the demand of your own inner being and the higher parts of your nature. If you have so much difficulty and become restless, it is because you are still divided and something in your lower vital still regrets what it has lost or, as a price for its adhesion or a compensation—a price to be *immediately* paid down to it,—asks for something similar and equivalent in the spiritual life. It refuses to believe that there is a greater compensation, a larger vital life waiting for it in which there shall not be the old inadequacy and unrest and final dissatisfaction. The foolishness is not in the Divine guidance, but in the irrational and obstinate resistance of this confused and obscure part of you to the demand, made not only by this Yoga, but by all Yoga—to the necessary conditions for the

satisfaction of the aspiration of your own soul and higher nature.

The 'human' vital consciousness has moved always between these two poles, the ordinary vital life which cannot satisfy and the recoil from it to the ascetic solution. India has gone fully through that see-saw; now Europe is beginning once more after a full trial to feel the failure of the mere vital egoistic life. The traditional Yogas—to which you appeal—are founded upon the movement between these two poles." (CWSA 29: 476–477)

2.

"*Prāyopaveśana* [*resolving to die through fasting*] would be quite the wrong movement, it would be a sort of Satyagraha against the Divine. In essence it is an attempt to force the Divine to do what one wants instead of trusting to him to do what is best according to his own divine will and wisdom; it is a culminating act of vital impatience and disappointed desire, while the true movement is a pure aspiration and an ardent surrender.

After all, one has not a *right* to call on the Divine to manifest himself; it can come only as a response to a spiritual or psychic state of consciousness or to a long course of sadhana rightly done; or, if it comes before that or without any apparent reason, it is a grace; but one cannot demand or compel grace; grace is something spontaneous which wells out from the Divine

Consciousness as a free flower of its being. The bhakta looks for it, but he is ready to wait in perfect reliance, even if need be all his life, knowing that it will come, never varying in his love and surrender because it does not come now or soon." (CWSA 29: 473)

3.

"It is not by *prāyopaveśana* or anything of the kind that it must come, but by the increase of the pure and true bhakti. You have been constantly told so by us and lately be Krishnaprem and his guru; remember that she told you that the presence of Krishna during your singing was a sure sign that it would come,—not necessarily today or tomorrow or the day after, but that it would surely come. We can't be all of us wrong and your vital impatience only in the right. For heaven's sake, get rid of it and settle down to quiet aspiration and an ever growing devotion and surrender leaving it to Krishna to do what he is sure to do in his own way and time." (CWSA 29: 474–475)

4.

"In any case one thing can never help and that is to despond always and say, 'I am unfit; I am not meant for the Yoga.' And worse still are these perilous mental formations such as you are always accepting that you must fare like *X* (one whose difficulty of exaggerated ambition was quite different from yours) and that you have only six

years etc. These are clear formations of the Dark Forces seeking not only to sterilise your aspiration but to lead you away and so prevent your sharing in the fruit of the victory hereafter. I do not know what Krishnaprem has said but his injunction, if you have rightly understood it, is one that cannot stand as valid, since so many have done Yoga relying on tapasya or anything else but not confident of any divine Grace. It is not that, but the soul's demand for a higher Truth or a higher life that is indispensable. Where that is, the Divine Grace whether believed in or not, will intervene. If you believe, that hastens and facilitates things; if you cannot yet believe, still the soul's aspiration will justify itself with whatever difficulty and struggle." (CWSA 29: 472–473)

5.

"No use doing asanas and pranayam. It is not necessary to burn with passion. What is needed is a patient increasing of the power of concentration and steady aspiration so that the silence you speak of may fix in the heart and spread to the other members. Then the physical mind and subconscient can be cleared and quieted." (CWSA 29: 439)

6.

"Let him also fix this in the mind not to insist that in a given time he must progress, develop, get realisation; whatever time it takes, he must be prepared to wait and persevere

and make his whole life an aspiration and an opening for the one thing only, the Divine. To give oneself is the secret of sadhana, not to demand and acquire. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow. But for that all impatience and revolt must go; all suggestions of not getting, not being helped, not being loved, going away, of abandoning life or the spiritual endeavour must be rejected." (CWSA 29: 345)

7.

"Let your highest aspiration organise your life." (CWM 15: 222)

LXXXIV—Spirituality Means the Aspiration to a Pure Consciousness, the Divine

1.

"Spirituality has meant hitherto a recognition of something greater than mind and life, the aspiration to a consciousness pure, great, divine beyond our normal mental and vital nature, a surge and rising of the soul in man out of the littleness and bondage of our lower parts towards a greater thing secret within him. That at least is the idea, the experience, which is the very core of Indian thinking." (CWSA 20: 121)

2.

"Even the formations which are the first effects of the perception or urge or the first indices of a spiritual evolution, must inevitably be of this incomplete and tentative nature. But the error so created comes very much in the way of a true understanding, and it must therefore be emphasised that spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to

mind and life; they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution,—the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature.

In fact, the creative Consciousness-Force in our earth existence has to lead forward, in an almost simultaneous process but with a considerable priority and greater stress of the inferior element, a double evolution. There is an evolution of our outward nature, the nature of the mental being in the life and body, and there is within it, pressing forward for self-revelation because with the emergence of mind that revelation is becoming possible, a preparation at least, even the beginning of an evolution of our inner being, our occult subliminal and spiritual nature." (CWSA 22: 889–890)

3.

"But the spiritual aspiration and experience of the mystics was usually casketed in secret formulas and given only to a few initiates; it was conveyed to the rest or rather preserved for them in a mass of religious or traditional symbols. It is these symbols that were the heart's core of religion in the mind of an early humanity.

Out of this second stage there emerged a third which tried to liberate the secret spiritual experience and knowledge and put it at the disposal of all as a truth that could have a common appeal and must be made universally available. … Here, in these two forms of the spiritual evolution, the esoteric and the exoteric, the way of the mystic and the way of the religious man, we see a double principle of evolutionary Nature, the principle of intensive and concentrated evolution in a small space and the principle of expansion and extension so that the new creation may be generalised in as large a field as possible. The first is the concentrated dynamic and effective movement; the second tends towards diffusion and status. As a result of this new development, the spiritual aspiration at first carefully treasured by a few became more generalised in mankind, but it lost in purity, height and intensity. The mystics founded their endeavour on a power of suprarational knowledge, intuitive, inspired, revelatory and on the force of the inner being to enter into occult truth and experience: but these powers are not possessed

by men in the mass or possessed only in a crude, undeveloped and fragmentary initial form on which nothing could be safely founded; so for them in this new development the spiritual truth had to be clothed in intellectual forms of creed and doctrine, in emotional forms of worship and in a simple but significant ritual. At the same time the strong spiritual nucleus became mixed, diluted, alloyed; it tended to be invaded and aped by the lower elements of mind and life and physical nature." (CWSA 22: 902–903)

LXXXV—In Occultism Human Aspiration Takes its Stand that Our Soul Can Know the Mysteries of Every World and Can Master Nature

1.

"Occultism is in its essence man's effort to arrive at a knowledge of secret truths and potentialities of Nature which will lift him out of slavery to his physical limits of being, an attempt in particular to possess and organise the mysterious, occult, outwardly still undeveloped direct power of Mind upon Life and of both Mind and Life over Matter. There is at the same time an endeavour to establish communication with worlds and entities belonging to the supraphysical heights, depths and intermediate levels of cosmic Being and to utilise this communion for the mastery of a higher Truth and for a help to man in his will to make himself sovereign over Nature's powers and forces. This human aspiration takes its stand on the belief, intuition or intimation that we are not mere creatures of the mud, but souls, minds, wills that can know all the mysteries of this and every world and become not only Nature's pupils but her adepts and masters. The occultist sought to know the secret of physical things also and in this effort he furthered astronomy, created chemistry, gave an impulse to other sciences, for he utilised geometry also and the science of numbers; but still more he sought to know the secrets of

supernature. In this sense occultism might be described as the science of the supernatural; but it is in fact only the discovery of the supraphysical, the surpassing of the material limit,—the heart of occultism is not the impossible chimera which hopes to go beyond or outside all force of Nature and make pure phantasy and arbitrary miracle omnipotently effective." (CWSA 22: 906–907)

2.

"That is why, during the great periods when this science [occult science] was flourishing, when there were recognised schools where it could be practised, before anyone was allowed to undertake this study, he had to undergo for a very long time, sometimes for many years, a very strict twofold discipline of self-development and self-mastery. On one hand, the sincerity and disinterestedness of the aspirant's intentions, the purity of his motives, of his capacity for self-forgetfulness and self-abnegation, his sense of sacrifice and unselfishness were ascertained, as far as possible. In this way the loftiness and nobility of the candidate's aspiration were proved, while on the other hand he was subjected to a series of ordeals intended to show that his capacities were adequate and that he could without danger practise the science to which he wished to devote himself. These ordeals laid a special emphasis on the mastery of passions and desires, on the establishment

of an unshakable calm, and above all on the absence of all fear, for in this endeavour an unflinching fearlessness is an essential condition of safety." (CWM 12: 90)

3.
"You give the name of miracle only to things which cannot be clearly explained or for which you have no mental explanation. From this point of view you can say that countless things that happen are miracles, because you cannot explain the how or the why of them.

What would be a true miracle?

I can't see what a true miracle can be because, after all, what is a miracle? A true miracle... Only the mind has the notion of miracles; because the mind decides, by its own logic, that given this and that, another thing can or cannot be. But this represents all the limitations of the mind. Because, from the point of view of the Lord, how can there be a miracle? Everything is Himself which He objectifies." (CWM 10: 160)

4.
"The need for miracles is a gesture of ignorance: 'Oh, I would like things to be like this!' It is a gesture of ignorance and impotence. And those who say, 'You live in a miracle',

know only the lower end—and even then they know it only imperfectly—and they have no contact with anything else.

This need for miracles must be changed into a conscious aspiration for something—which is already there, which exists—which will be manifested *by the help* of all these aspirations; all these aspirations are necessary or, if one looks at it in a truer way, they are an accompaniment—an agreeable accompaniment—in the eternal unfolding.

Of course, people with a very strict logic tell you, 'Why pray? Why aspire? Why ask? The Lord does what He wants and He will do what He wants.' It is quite obvious, there is no need to say it, but this impulse: 'O Lord, manifest!' gives a more intense vibration to His manifestation.

Otherwise, He would never have made the world as it is. There is a special power, a special delight, a special vibration in the intensity of the world's aspiration to become once more what it is." (CWM 10: 163–164)

LXXXVI—Ages of Ardent Aspiration Have Brought Us to the Ashram

1.

"It is ages of ardent aspiration that have brought us here [*in the Ashram*] to do the Divine's Work." (CWM 13: 109)

2.
"You are here [in the Ashram] to contact your soul, and that is why you live. Aspire persistently and try to silence your mind." (CWM 14: 6)

3.
"*By what puṇya of ours has the Grace granted to us, mere humans, this rare privilege of coming here at the Divine's Feet?*

It is the call of your soul that brought you here and also some aspiration or connection with the Mother and myself in past lives." (CWSA 32: 87)

4.
"*What sort of bhakti in my past lives has brought me to the Mother's feet?*

The aspiration for union with the Divine and perhaps also for the descent of the Divine on the earth." (CWSA 32: 88)

5.

"*Mother, what's interesting is this: What is there in us that has made us come here?*

Ah, that is interesting! What is the reason of your being here? Well, it's for each one to find it. Have you found it, you? No, not yet? Why, that's another very interesting question!

If you... (*Silence*) If you asked yourselves this, you would be obliged to seek the answer somewhere, within—because it is *within* you, the answer. 'What is there in us that has made us come here?' The answer is within. There is nothing outside. And if you go deep enough, you will find a very clear answer... (*silence*) and an interesting answer. If you go deep enough, into a sufficiently complete silence from all outer things, you will find within you that flame about which I often speak, and in this flame you will see *your destiny*. You will see the aspiration of centuries which has been concentrated gradually, to lead you through countless births *to the great day of realisation*—that preparation which has been made through thousands of years, and is reaching its culmination.

And as you will have gone very deep to find this, all your incapacities, all your weaknesses, everything in you that denies and does not understand, all that—you will feel that it is not yourself, it is just like a garment which serves in some way and which you have put on for the time being.

But you will understand that in order to be truly capable of profiting fully by the opportunity to do what you wanted to do, what you have aspired to do for such a long time, you must gradually bring the light, the consciousness, the truth into all these obscure elements of the external garment, so that you may be able to understand integrally *why you are here*! And not only that you may understand it, but that you may be able to do it. For centuries this has been prepared in you, not in this... (*Mother pinches the skin of her forearm*) this is quite recent, isn't it?... but in your true self. And *for centuries* it has been awaiting *this opportunity*.

And then you enter *immediately* into the marvellous. You see to what an extent it is extraordinary... that things which one has so long hoped for, things for which one has prayed so much, made so many efforts, suddenly a moment comes when *they are realised.*

It is the moment when great things are done. One must not miss the opportunity." (CWM 6: 271–272)

LXXXVII—To Remain in the Ashram, One Must Be Very Sincere in Aspiration

1.
"Moreover it is not easy to remain here. There is in the Ashram no exterior discipline and no visible test. But the inner test is severe and constant, one must be very sincere in the aspiration to surmount all egoism and to conquer all vanity in order to be able to stay.

A complete surrender is not outwardly exacted but it is indispensable for those who wish to stick on, and many things come to test the sincerity of the surrender. However the Grace and the help are always there for those who aspire for them and their power is limitless when received with faith and confi–dence." 20 November 1948 (CWM 13: 111)

2.
"*But how can one find a way to be what one should be, in normal conditions?*

How can one avoid falling into one kind of excess or the other?

Yes, to live normally and to be free.

My child, that is why the Ashram was created! That was the idea. Because, in France, I was always asking myself: How can one find the time to find oneself? How can one even find the time to understand how to become free? So then I thought: a place where material needs will be sufficiently provided for, so that if one truly wants to become free, one can do so. And the Ashram was founded on this idea, not on any other—a place where people would have enough to live on so as to have time to think of the True Thing.

(*Mother smiles*) Human nature is such that laziness has taken the place of aspiration—not for everyone, but anyway in quite a general way—and licence or libertinism has taken the place of freedom—which would tend to prove that the human race has to pass through a period of rough handling before it is ready to pull itself away more sincerely from its slavery to activity.

Indeed, the first movement is this: 'Oh! To find the place where one can concentrate, find oneself, truly live without being preoccupied with material things.' That is the first aspiration. It was even on this basis, at any rate in the beginning, that disciples were chosen—but it does not last! Things become easy and so one lets oneself go. There are no moral restraints and so one acts foolishly.

But one cannot even say that there was a mistake in the selection—one would be tempted to believe it, but it is not true; because the selection was made according to a

very precise and clear inner indication.... It is probably the difficulty of keeping the inner attitude unmixed. This is exactly what Sri Aurobindo wanted, what he was trying for. He said: 'If I could find one hundred people, that would be enough.' But it did not stay one hundred for long, and I must say that even when it was a hundred, it was already mixed.

Many came, attracted by the True Thing, but... one lets oneself go." (CWM 10: 197–198)

3.

"*Yes, I have noticed that in the extreme difficulty of the outer conditions of the world, the aspiration was much more intense.*

Yes, of course!

It is much more intense, it is almost a question of life and death.

Yes, that's it! That is to say, man is still so crude that he needs extremes. That is what Sri Aurobindo said: For love to be true, hatred was necessary; true love could be born only under the pressure of hatred. That's it. Well, one must accept things as they are and try to go further. That is all.

That is probably why there are so many difficulties—difficulties accumulate here: difficulties of character, health

and circumstances. It is because the consciousness awakens under the stress of difficulties. If everything is easy and peaceful, one falls asleep.

That is also how Sri Aurobindo explained the necessity of war. In peacetime, one becomes slack.

It is a pity.

I cannot say that I find it very pretty, but it seems to be like that.

This is just what Sri Aurobindo said in *The Hour of God*: If you have the Force and the Knowledge and misuse the moment, woe to you.

It is not revenge, it is not punishment, not at all, but you draw upon yourself a necessity, the necessity for a violent impulsion—to react to something violent." (CWM 10: 198–199)

4.

"I intended to let you go for your studies to England without telling you anything about it, because each one must be free to follow the path he has chosen. But after what you have written I feel compelled to write to you.

No doubt from the exterior point of view, you will find in England all that you want for learning what human beings generally call knowledge, but from the point of view of Truth and Consciousness, you can find nowhere the atmosphere in which you are living here. Elsewhere you can meet with a religious or a philosophic spirit, but true

spirituality, direct contact with the Divine, constant aspiration to realise Him in life, mind and action are in the world realised only by very rare and scattered individuals and not as a living fact behind any university teaching however advanced it may be.

Practically, as far as you are concerned, there will be a great risk of drifting away from the experience you have realised and then you cannot know what will happen to you.

That is all I wanted to say—now it is left to you to choose and decide." (CWM 12: 162)

5.

"*In what ways can those connected with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother best celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo?*

Aspire and be sincere and obstinate in your endeavour." (CWM 13: 14)

LXXXVIII—Those Who Have No Aspiration Can Go Out into the World

1.

"I believe really that it is among the children that will be found those who can begin the new race. Men are... crusted over.

Well, I am constantly struggling against people who have come here so that they may be comfortable and 'free to do whatever they like', so... I tell them, 'The world is big enough, you can go out'—there is no soul, no aspiration, nothing.

You know my feeling? They are all, all old and I am the only one to be young! It is that, yes, this flame, this will... what they call 'push'. To be satisfied with petty personal satisfactions... which take you nowhere, busy with what they are going to eat, oh!...

I have the feeling that now there is a sort of 'display' (you know, 'display'?), a show of all that should not be.

Yes.

But the flame, the flame of aspiration (*Mother shakes her head*), there are not many who bring it.

Provided they are what they call 'comfortable', it is all they need—and free to do some nonsense which they would not do in the world!... On the other side, one feels

that to hasten the coming—one *could* hasten it if one were... if one were a conqueror!" (CWM 11: 252)

2.
"The path is not an easy one.

To remain here is possible only for those who feel deep in themselves that here is the *only place* in the world where they must live.

This may—(must)—come to you—but meanwhile it is better to go back to the world and see what it has to give you.

I will be with you always in your aspiration towards a more true future.

Blessings." (CWM 13: 140)

LXXXIX—Those Who Live in Auroville Must Have a Constant Aspiration

1.
"All those who wish to live and work at Auroville must have an integral goodwill, a constant aspiration to know the Truth and to submit to it, enough plasticity to confront the exigencies of work and an endless will to progress so as to move forward towards the ultimate Truth.

And, finally, a word of advice: be more concerned with your own faults than with those of others. If each one worked seriously at his own self-perfection, the perfection of the whole would follow automatically." (CWM 13: 200)

2.
"*What will be the relations between the inhabitants of Auroville and the outside world?*

Each person is allowed full freedom. The external relations of residents in Auroville will be established for each one according to his personal aspiration and his activities within Auroville." (CWM 13: 190)

3.
"The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.

Union with the Divine manifesting in a progressive human unity." (CWM 13: 223)

4.

(*Message for the laying of the Matrimandir foundation stone*)

"Let the Matrimandir be the living symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine." (CWM 13: 223)

The fraternity of collaboration, the aspiration towards Unity in joy and Light

(Message for the beginning of work upon the Matrimandir)

"The fraternity of collaboration.
The aspiration towards Unity in joy and Light.
Blessings. (CWM 13: 224)

5.

(Message for the beginning of construction of the four foundation pillars which support the Matrimandir sphere)

"Let Auroville be the symbol of a progressive Unity.
And the best way to realise this is a unity of aspiration towards the Divine Perfection in work and in feeling, in a consecration of the entire life." (CWM 13: 225–226)

6.

(Significance of the twelve underground rooms which will radiate from the Matrimandir foundation)

Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality, Peace." (CWM 13: 226)

"I have been asked to formulate the aspiration of Auroville. Because there is a lot of goodwill, but it is... it does not seem to be organised. So, I said: the best thing to do is to formulate what Auroville wants to be. That will provide some coordination. But it is a great task.

Each time, we could formulate one of the aspirations, or else you could bring me a question each time. And there will be many of them, so, one question and then either I will answer right away or I will give you the answer the next time. Or else, we can try to express together the aspiration of Auroville.

A: Do you already have some vision of what this aspiration Is?

Of course! Of course! I know what I want, I know what I want Auroville to be. But there is a considerable gap... It is Auroville in a few years' time, many years from now.

A: But you think that we shall achieve this future Auroville?

This is how we will proceed: each time you come, I will give you one of Auroville's aspirations and then we'll put them one after the other, and the next time you can ask me a question on what I have said the time before. There is one drawback; it is not always the same people who come. There are three of you who always come. You must keep up the continuity." (CWM 13: 334–335)

XC—Aspiration to Remember the Divine in All Pursuits

1.

"In all pursuits, intellectual or active, your one motto should be, 'Remember and Offer.' Let whatever you do be done as an offering to the Divine. And this too will be an excellent discipline for you; it will prevent you from doing many foolish and useless things.

Often in the beginning of the action this can be done; but as one gets engrossed in the work, one forgets. How is one to remember?

The condition to be aimed at, the real achievement of Yoga, the final perfection and attainment, for which all else is only a preparation, is a consciousness in which it is impossible to do anything without the Divine; for then, if you are without the Divine, the very source of your action disappears; knowledge, power, all are gone. But so long as you feel that the powers you use are your own, you will not miss the Divine support.

In the beginning of the Yoga you are apt to forget the Divine very often. But by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and

joy. Then very soon a stage will come when, if you do not feel the presence of the Divine at every moment and whatever you are doing, you feel at once lonely and sad and miserable.

Whenever you find that you can do something without feeling the presence of the Divine and yet be perfectly comfortable, you must understand that you are not consecrated in that part of your being. That is the way of the ordinary humanity which does not feel any need of the Divine. But for a seeker of the Divine Life it is very different. And when you have entirely realised unity with the Divine, then, if the Divine were only for a second to withdraw from you, you would simply drop dead; for the Divine is now the Life of your life, your whole existence, your single and complete support. If the Divine is not there, nothing is left." (CWM 3: 26–27)

XCI—Aspiration to Let One's Will Be in Agreement with the Divine's Will

1.

"Q: *But how can one do this* [*putting your will at the disposal of the Divine will*] *before the union has been effected?*

A: You have a will and you can offer that will. Take the example of becoming conscious of your nights. If you take the attitude of passive surrender, you would say, 'When it is the Divine Will that I should become conscious, then I shall become conscious.' On the other hand, if you offer your will to the Divine, you begin to will, you say, 'I will become conscious of my nights.' You have the will that it should be done; you do not sit down idle and wait. The surrender comes in when you take the attitude that says, 'I give my will to the Divine. I intensely want to become conscious of my nights, I have not the knowledge, let the Divine Will work it out for me.' Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do. Only, you must remember that to

surrender is to accept whatever is the result of your action, though the result may be quite different from what you expect. On the other hand, if your surrender is passive, you will do nothing and try nothing; you will simply go to sleep and wait for a miracle.

Now to know whether your will or desire is in agreement with the Divine Will or not, you must look and see whether you have an answer or have no answer, whether you feel supported or contradicted, not by the mind or the vital or the body, but by that something which is always there deep in the inner being, in your heart." (CWM 3: 19)

2.

"Q: *You say, 'I give my will to the Divine.... Let the divine Will work it out for me.' Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved*.'

A: And it is there we have the solution of the problem. You can at every minute make the gift of your will in an aspiration—and an aspiration which formulates itself very simply, not just 'Lord, Thy will be done', but 'Grant that I may do as well as I can the best thing to do.'

You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do or how to do it, but you can place your will at

the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible. You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn't it? One must do things with all the ardour of one's soul, with all the strength of one's will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible." (CWM 4: 117)

3.

"One has to aspire to the Divine and surrender and leave it to the Divine to do what is true and right with the Adhar once it is perfected." (CWSA 29: 59)

4.

"*But why do we do this divine Work? It is to make ourselves…*

No, not at all! It is because that's the divine Will. It is not at all for a personal reason, it must not be that. It is because it's the divine Will and it's the divine Work.

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the divine Will. The only thing which must count is the Divine, His Will, His manifestation, His expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else. And so long as there is a feeling of self, of

the ego, the person, which enters, well, this proves that one is not yet what one ought to be, that's all. I don't say that this can be done overnight but still this indeed is the truth." (CWM 7: 189–190)

5.

"*My dear mother,*

I don't know what to do. I want to open to you, but something prevents me from opening.

My dear child,

You find it difficult to open because you have not yet made the resolution to allow my will, and not your own, to govern your life. As soon as you have understood the need for this, everything will become easier—and you will at last be able to acquire the peace you need so much.

I am always with you in this effort and aspiration." (CWM 16: 146)

6.

"Basically, disgust, revolt, anger, all these movements of violence are necessarily movements of ignorance and limitation, with all the weakness that limitation represents. Revolt is a weakness—it is the feeling of an impotent will. You will—or you think you will—you feel, you see that things are not as they should be and you revolt against whatever does not agree with what you see. But if you

were all-powerful, if your will and your vision were all-powerful, there would be no occasion for you to revolt, you would always see that all things are as they should be. If we go to the highest level and unite with the consciousness of the supreme Will, we see, at every second, at every moment of the universe, that all is exactly as it should be, exactly as the Supreme wills it. That is omnipotence. And all movements of violence become not only unnecessary but utterly ridiculous.

Therefore there is only one solution: to unite ourselves by aspiration, concentration, interiorisation and identification with the supreme Will. And that is both omnipotence and perfect freedom at the same time. And that is the only omnipotence and the only freedom; everything else is an approximation. You may be on the way, but it is not the entire thing. So if you experience this, you realise that with this supreme freedom and supreme power there is also a total peace and a serenity that never fails. Therefore, if you feel something which is not that, a revolt, a disgust, something which you cannot accept, it means that *in you* there is a part which has not been touched by the transformation, something which has kept the old consciousness, something which is still on the path—that is all." (CWM 10: 77–78)

XCII—Aspiration to Understand What Is Incomprehensible Today

1.

"But for the moment it is impossible to understand, for want of a few small cells in the brain, nothing else, it is very simple. And as these cells develop through attention, concentration and effort, when you have listened attentively and made an effort to understand, well, after a few hours or a few days or a few months, new convolutions will be formed in your brain, and all this will become quite natural. You will wonder how there could have been a time when you did not understand: 'It is so simple!' But so long as these convolutions are not there, you may make an effort, you may even give yourself a headache, but you will not understand.

It is very encouraging because, fundamentally, the only thing necessary is to want it and to have the necessary patience. What is incomprehensible for you today will be quite clear in a short time. And note that it is not necessary that you should give yourself a headache every day and at every minute by trying to understand! One very simple thing is enough: to listen as well as you can, to have a sort of will or aspiration or, you might even say, desire to understand, and then that's all. You make a little opening in your consciousness to let the thing enter; and your aspiration makes this opening, like a tiny notch inside, a

little hole somewhere in what is shut up, and then you let the thing enter. It will work. And it will build up in your brain the elements necessary to express itself. You no longer need to think about it. You try to understand something else, you work, study, reflect, think about all sorts of things; and then after a few months—or perhaps a year, perhaps less, perhaps more—you open the book once again and read the same sentence, and it seems as clear as crystal to you! Simply because what was necessary for understanding has been built up in your brain.

So, never come to me saying, 'I am no good at this subject, I shall never understand philosophy' or 'I shall never be able to do mathematics' or... It is ignorance, it is sheer ignorance. There is nothing you cannot understand if you give your brain the time to widen and perfect itself. And you can pass from one mental construction to another: this corresponds to studies; from one subject to another: and each subject of study means a language; from one language to another, and build up one thing after another within you, and contain all that and many more things yet, very harmoniously, if you do this with care and take your time over it. For each one of these branches of knowledge corresponds to an inner formation, and you can multiply these formations *indefinitely* if you give the necessary time and care." (CWM 8: 385–386)

XCIII—Aspiration to Conceive of Incarnations of Evolved Souls

1.

"I may say that I have been present at innumerable incarnations of evolved souls in beings either preparing to be born or already born. As I said, the cases are quite different; it depends more on psychological conditions than on material ones, but it also depends on material conditions. It depends on the state of development of the soul which wants to reincarnate—we take the word 'soul' here in the sense of the psychic being, what we call the psychic being—it depends on its state of development, on the milieu in which it is going to incarnate, on the mission it has to fulfil—that makes many different conditions.... It depends very largely on the state of consciousness of the parents. For it goes without saying that there is a stupendous difference between conceiving a child deliberately, with a conscious aspiration, a call to the invisible world and a spiritual ardour, and conceiving a child by accident and without intending to have it, and sometimes even without wanting it at all. I don't say that in the latter case there cannot also be an incarnation, but it usually takes place later, not at the conception.

For the formation of the child it makes a great difference.

If the incarnation takes place at the conception, the whole formation of the child to be born is directed and governed by the consciousness which is going to incarnate: the choice of the elements, the attraction of the substance—a choice of the forces and even the substance of the matter which is assimilated. There is already a selection. And this naturally creates altogether special conditions for the formation of the body, which may already be fairly developed, evolved, harmonised before its birth. I must say that this is quite, quite exceptional; but still it does happen.

More frequently there are cases in which, just at the moment of its birth, that is to say, of its first gesture of independence, when the child begins to develop its lungs by crying as much as it can, at that moment, very often, this sort of call from life makes the descent easier and more effective.

Sometimes days and at times months pass, and the preparation is slow and the entry takes place very gradually, in quite a subtle and almost imperceptible way.

Sometimes it comes much later, when the child itself becomes a little conscious and feels a very subtle but very real relation with something from above, far above, which is like an influence pressing upon it; and then it can begin to feel the need of being in contact with this something which it does not know, does not understand, but which it

can only feel; and this aspiration draws the psychic and makes it descend into the child.

I am giving you here a few fairly common instances; there are many others; this may happen in innumerable different ways. What I have described to you are the most frequent cases I have seen.

So, the soul which wants to incarnate stays at times in a domain of the higher mind, quite close to the earth, having chosen its future home; or else it can descend further, into the vital, and from there have a more direct action; or again it can enter the subtle physical and very closely govern the development of its future body." (CWM 8: 334–335)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, is it possible for the mother and father to give birth to... to ask for the soul they want?*

To ask? For that they must have an occult knowledge which they don't usually have. But anyway, what is possible is that instead of doing the thing like an animal driven by instinct or desire and most of the time, without even wanting it, they do it at will, with an aspiration, putting themselves in a state of aspiration and almost of prayer, so that the being they are going to form may be one fit to embody a soul which they *can* call down to incarnate in that form. I knew people—not many, this does not often

happen, but still I knew some who chose special circumstances, prepared themselves through special concentration and meditation and aspiration and sought to bring down, into the body they were going to form, an exceptional being.

In many countries of old—and even now in certain countries—the woman who was going to have a child was placed in special conditions of beauty, harmony, peace and well-being, in very harmonious physical conditions, so that the child could be formed in the best possible conditions. This is obviously what ought to be done, for it is within the reach of human possibilities. Human beings are developed enough for this not to be something quite exceptional. And yet it is quite exceptional, for very few people think of it, while there are *innumerable* people who have children without even wanting to.

That was what I wanted to say.

It is possible to call a soul, but one must be at least a little conscious oneself, and must want to do what one does in the best conditions. This is very rare, but it is possible." (CWM 8: 200)

3.

"The Education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life.

Indeed, if we want this education to have its maximum result, it should begin even before birth; in this

case it is the mother herself who proceeds with this education by means of a twofold action: first, upon herself for her own improvement, and secondly, upon the child whom she is forming physically. For it is certain that the nature of the child to be born depends very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as well as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. To see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity—this is the part of education which should apply to the mother herself. And if she has in addition a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the very best conditions will be realised so that the child can come into the world with his utmost potentialities. How many difficult efforts and useless complications would be avoided in this way!" (CWM 12: 9)

XCIV—Aspiration to Get Inspiration Whenever One Wants It

1.

"*Does it [inspiration] not come, Mother, whenever one wants it?*

Whenever one wants it? Generally not, for one does not know the mechanism of one's being and cannot open the doors at will.

It is a thing that can be done. It is one of the earliest things that you are taught to do in Yoga: to open the door whenever one wants. It is the result of meditation or concentration or aspiration: all these processes are followed to open the door somewhere.

And generally you try to open it precisely towards the highest thing, not towards anything whatever. For the other kind of receptivity people unfortunately always have.... It is impossible to be altogether shut up in an ivory tower—besides, I believe it would not be very favourable, it would be impossible to progress if one were completely shut up in oneself." (CWM 5: 207)

2.

"*How to get rid of mental inertia?*

The cure is not in trying to wake up the mind but in turning it, immobile and silent, upward towards the region of intuitive light, in a steady and quiet aspiration, and to wait in silence, for the light to come down and flood your brain which will, little by little, wake up to this influence and become capable of receiving and expressing the intuition." (CWM 12: 136–137)

XCV—Aspiration to Help Someone at a Distance

1.

"Therefore, if you want to help someone at a distance, you have only to formulate very clearly, very precisely and strongly the kind of help you want to give and the result you wish to obtain. That will have its effect. I cannot say that it will be all-powerful, for the mental world is full of innumerable formations of this kind and naturally they clash and contradict one another; hence the strongest and the most persistent will have the best of it.

Now, what is it that gives strength and persistence to mental formations?—It is emotion and will. If you know how to add to your mental formation an emotion, affection, tenderness, love, and an intensity of will, a dynamism, it will have a much greater chance of success. That is the first method. It is within the scope of all those who know how to think, and even more of those who know how to love. But as I said, the power is limited and there is great competition in that world.

Therefore, even if one has no knowledge at all but has trust in the divine Grace, if one has the faith that there is something in the world like the divine Grace, and that this something can answer a prayer, an aspiration, an invocation, then, after making one's mental formation, if one offers it to the Grace and puts one's trust in it, asks it

to intervene and has the faith that it will intervene, then indeed one has a chance of success.

Try, and you will surely see the result." (CWM 8: 253–254)

XCVI—Aspiring Before Sleeping Will Make One Sleep in Light

1.

"If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the inconscient. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there—that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life, the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have. I guarantee that if you do this carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning

you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day." (CWM 4: 351–352)

2.

"In any case one thing you can do in all security is, before going to sleep, to concentrate, relax all tension in the physical being, try... that is, in the body try so that the body lies like a soft rag on the bed, that it is no longer something with twitchings and cramps; to relax it completely as though it were a kind of thing like a rag. And then, the vital: to calm it, calm it as much as you can, make it as quiet, as peaceful as possible. And then the mind also—the mind, try to keep it like that, without any activity. You must put upon the brain the force of great peace, great quietude, of silence if possible, and not follow ideas actively, not make any effort, nothing, nothing; you must relax all movement there too, but relax it in a kind of silence and quietude as great as possible.

Once you have done all this, you may add either a prayer or an aspiration in accordance with your nature, to ask for the consciousness and peace and to be protected against all the adverse forces throughout the sleep, to be in a concentration of quiet aspiration and in the protection; ask the Grace to watch over your sleep; and then go to sleep. This is to sleep in the best possible conditions. What happens afterwards depends on your inner impulses, but

if you do this persistently, night after night, night after night, after some time it will have its effect." (CWM 7: 66)

3.

"I think there is an entire category of dreams which are absolutely commonplace, useless and simply tiring, which one can avoid if, before going to sleep, one makes a little effort of concentration, tries to put himself in contact with what is best in him, by either an aspiration or a prayer, and to sleep only after this is done... even, if one likes, try to meditate and pass quite naturally from meditation into sleep without even realising it... Usually there is a whole category of dreams which are useless, tiring, which prevent you from resting well—all this might be avoided. And then, if one has truly succeeded well in his concentration, it is quite possible that one may have, at night, not exactly dreams but experiences of which one becomes conscious and which are very useful, indications, as I just told you, indications about questions you asked yourself and of which you did not have the answers; or else a set of circumstances where you ought to take a decision and don't know what decision to take; or else some way of being of your own character which does not show itself to you clearly in the waking consciousness—because you are so accustomed to it that you are not aware of it—but something that harms your development and obscures your consciousness, and which appears to you in a

symbolic revelatory dream, and you become clearly aware of the thing, then you can act upon it.

It depends not on what one was during the day, because this doesn't always have much effect upon the night, but on the way one has gone to sleep. It is enough just to have at the moment of sleeping a sincere aspiration that the night, instead of being a darkening of the consciousness, may be a help to understand something, to have an experience; and then, though it doesn't come always, it has a chance of coming." (CWM 7: 119)

4.

"It is tamas which causes bad sleep. There are two kinds of bad sleep: the sleep that makes you heavy, dull, as if you lost all the effect of the effort you put in during the preceding day; and the sleep that exhausts you as if you had passed your time in fighting. I have noticed that if you cut your sleep into slices (it is a habit one can form), the nights become better. That is to say, you must be able to come back to your normal consciousness and normal aspiration at fixed intervals—come back at the call of the consciousness. But for that you must not use an alarm-clock! When you are in trance, it is not good to be shaken out of it.

When you are about to go to sleep, you can make a formation; say: 'I shall wake up at such an hour' (you do that very well when you are a child). For the first stretch

of sleep you must count at least three hours; for the last, one hour is sufficient. But the first one must be three hours at the minimum. On the whole, you have to remain in bed at least seven hours; in six hours you do not have time enough to do much (naturally I am looking at it from the point of view of sadhana) to make the nights useful.

To make use of the nights is an excellent thing. It has a double effect: a negative effect, it prevents you from falling backward, losing what you have gained—that is indeed painful —and a positive effect, you make some progress, you continue your progress. You make use of the night, so there is no trace of fatigue any more.

Two things you must eliminate: falling into the stupor of the inconscience, with all the things of the subconscient and inconscient that rise up, invade you, enter you; and a vital and mental superactivity where you pass your time in fighting, literally, terrible battles. People come out of that state bruised, as if they had received blows. And they did receive them—it is not 'as if'! And I see only one way out: to change the nature of sleep." (CWM 15: 380–381)

5.

"You must lie flat on your back and relax all the muscles and all the nerves—it is an easy thing to learn—to be like what I call a rag on a bed: nothing else remains. And if you can do that with the mind also, you get rid of all those stupid dreams that make you more tired when you get up

than when you went to bed. It is the cellular activity of the brain that continues without control, and that tires one much. So, a total relaxation, a sort of complete calm, without tension, in which everything is stopped. But this is only the beginning.

Afterwards, you make a self-giving as total as possible, of everything, from top to bottom, from outside to inside, and an eradication, as total as possible, of all the resistance of the ego. And you begin repeating your mantra—your mantra, if you have one, or any word which has a power for you, a word leaping forth from the heart spontaneously, like a prayer, a word which sums up your aspiration. After repeating it a certain number of times, if you are accustomed to do so, you enter into trance. And from that trance you pass into sleep. The trance lasts as long as it should and quite naturally, spontaneously, you pass into sleep. But when you come back from this sleep, you remember everything; the sleep was like a continuation of the trance.

Fundamentally, the sole purpose of sleep is to enable the body to assimilate the effect of the trance so that the effect may be received everywhere, and to enable the body to do its natural nocturnal function of eliminating toxins. And when you wake up, there is not that trace of heaviness which comes from sleep: the effect of the trance continues.

Even for those who have never been in trance, it is good to repeat a mantra, a word, a prayer before going

into sleep. But there must be a life in the words; I do not mean an intellectual significance, nothing of that kind, but a vibration. And its effect on the body is extraordinary: it begins to vibrate, vibrate, vibrate... and quietly you let yourself go, as though you wanted to go to sleep. The body vibrates more and more, more and more, more and more, and away you go. That is the cure for tamas." (CWM 15: 379–380)

6.

"Those who practise meditation will do well to concentrate for a few minutes on a lofty and restful idea, in an aspiration towards a higher and vaster consciousness [*before going to sleep*]. Their sleep will benefit greatly from this and they will largely be spared the risk of falling into unconsciousness while they sleep." (CWM 12: 52)

7.

"Auroville is not a work of charity. A night spent in Aspiration is equivalent to a day's work." (CWM 13: 211)

XCVII—Aspire to Find a Solution and to Know the Condition One Is In

1.

"*Once or twice, as a game, you took one of your books or Sri Aurobindo's and opened a page at random, and read out a sentence. Can these sentences give one a sign or an indication? What should we do to get a true answer?*

Everybody can do it. It is done in this way: you concentrate. Now, it depends on what you want. If you have an inner problem and want the solution, you concentrate on this problem; if you want to know the condition you are in, which you are not aware of—if you want to get some light on the state you are in, you just come forward with simplicity and ask for the light. Or else, quite simply, if you are curious to know what the invisible knowledge has to tell you, you remain silent and still for a moment and then open the book. I always used to recommend taking a paper-knife, because it is thinner; while you are concentrated you insert it in the book and with the tip indicate something. Then, if you know how to concentrate, that is to say, if you really do it with an aspiration to have an answer, it always comes.

For, in books of this kind (*Mother shows* 'The Synthesis of Yoga'), books of revelation, there is always an accumulation of forces—at least of higher mental forces,

and most often of spiritual forces of the highest knowledge. Every book, on account of the words it contains, is like a small accumulator of these forces. People don't know this, for they don't know how to make use of it, but it is so. In the same way, in every picture, photograph, there is an accumulation, a small accumulation representative of the force of the person whose picture it is, of his nature and, if he has powers, of his powers. Now, you, when you are sincere and have an aspiration, you emanate a certain vibration, the vibration of your aspiration which goes and meets the corresponding force in the book, and it is a higher consciousness which gives you the answer.

Everything is contained potentially. Each element of a whole potentially contains what is in the whole. It is a little difficult to explain, but you will understand with an example: when people want to practise magic, if they have a bit of nail or hair, it is enough for them, because within this, potentially, there is all that is in the being itself. And in a book there is potentially—not expressed, not manifest—the knowledge which is in the person who wrote the book. Thus, Sri Aurobindo represented a totality of comprehension and knowledge and power; and every one of his books is at once a symbol and a representation. Every one of his books contains symbolically, potentially, what is in him. Therefore, if you concentrate on the book, you can, through the book, go back to the source. And

even, by passing through the book, you will be able to receive much more than what is just in the book.

There is always a way of reading and understanding what one reads, which gives an answer to what you want. It is not just a chance or an amusement, nor is it a kind of diversion. You may do it just 'like that', and then nothing at all happens to you, you have no reply and it is not interesting. But if you do it seriously, if seriously your aspiration tries to concentrate on this instrument—it is like a battery, isn't it, which contains energies—if it tries to come into contact with the energy which is there and insists on having the answer to what it wants to know, well, naturally, the energy which is there—the union of the two forces, the force given out by you and that accumulated in the book—will guide your hand and your paper-knife or whatever you have; it will guide you exactly to the thing that expresses what you ought to know.... Obviously, if one does it without sincerity or conviction, nothing at all happens. If it is done sincerely, one gets an answer.

Certain books are like this, more powerfully charged than others; there are others where the result is less clear. But generally, books containing aphorisms and short sentences—not very long philosophical explanations, but rather things in a condensed and precise form—it is with these that one succeeds best.

Naturally, the value of the answer depends on the value of the spiritual force contained in the book. If you

take a novel, it will tell you nothing at all but stupidities. But if you take a book containing a condensation of forces—of knowledge or spiritual force or teaching power—you will receive your answer.” (CWM 8: 162–164)

XCVIII—The True Family Is the Family of Aspiration, the Family of Spiritual Inclinations

1.

"You have come into the world in a certain milieu, among certain people. When you are quite young, but for a few rare exceptions, what surrounds you seems altogether natural to you, because you are born in its midst and are quite used to it. But when, a little later, a spiritual aspiration wakes up in you, you may quite possibly feel yourself completely ill at ease in the environment where you have lived, if, for instance, the people who have brought you up don't have the same aspiration or if their ideas are the very opposite of what is developing in you. Instead of saying, 'You see, I belong to this family, what shall I do? I have a mother, a father, brothers, sisters...', you can set out in search (I don't mean necessarily travel), set out in search of spirits who have an affinity with yours, people who have a similar aspiration and, if you have the sincere aspiration to find those who like you are in quest of something, you will always have the occasion to meet them in one way or another, through quite unexpected circumstances; and when you have found one or more people who are in exactly the same state of mind and have the same aspiration, quite naturally there will be created bonds of closeness, intimacy, friendship and, among you, you will form a kind of brotherhood, that is to say, a true

family. You are together because you are close to one another, you are together because you have the same aspiration, you are together because you want to create the same goal in life; you understand one another when you speak, you have no need to discuss anything which is said and you live in a kind of inner harmony. This is the true family, this is the family of aspiration, the family of spiritual inclinations.

Now, about the country, this may depend upon all sorts of things, this may depend upon a sort of inner affinity. For instance, if you come to a country and there you find a kind of response, an inner response to your aspiration, you find the surroundings more in conformity with your tastes, your tendencies, you may very well choose to live in this country, which is not necessarily that of your birth; and since you choose that country to live there, you may say, 'This is my country.' There are people, many people who go and settle elsewhere for very materialistic and uninteresting reasons most of the time, but there are also others who are in search of an environment which suits their inner taste, their aspiration, or who seek lands, ways of living more in keeping with their deeper nature; then they settle down somewhere and don't move again, and when they stay there for a number of years, they can really feel that this country is theirs, much more than the house or village or city where they were born." (CWM 4: 258–260)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, why does one feel attracted at first sight to some people and feel a repulsion for others?*

Usually this is based on vital affinities, nothing else. There are vital vibrations which harmonise and vital vibrations which don't. It is usually this, nothing else. It is vital chemistry.

One would have to be in a much deeper and more clear-sighted consciousness for it to be otherwise. There is an inner perception based on a psychic consciousness, which makes you feel which people have the same aspiration, the same aim, and can be your companions on the way; and this perception also makes you clear-sighted about those who follow a very different way or carry in them forces which are hostile to you and may harm you in your development. But to attain such a perception one must oneself be exclusively occupied with one's own spiritual progress and integral realisation. Now, that is not often the case. And usually too, when one has attained this inner clear sightedness, it is not expressed by attraction and repulsion, but by a very 'objective' knowledge, it might be said, and a kind of inner certainty which makes you act calmly and reasonably, and without attractions and repulsions." (CWM 9: 180)

3.

"A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration.

If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and others; you will then be able to communicate among yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all. This outer silence is most favourable to inner peace, and with goodwill and a steadfast aspiration, you will be able to create a harmonious atmosphere which is very conducive to progress." (CWM 12: 58)

4.

A Dream

"There should be somewhere on earth a place which no nation could claim as its own, where all human beings of goodwill who have a sincere aspiration could live freely as citizens of the world and obey one single authority, that of the supreme truth; a place of peace, concord and harmony where all the fighting instincts of man would be used

exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weaknesses and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the concern for progress would take precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the search for pleasure and material enjoyment. …

And yet this dream is in the course of becoming a reality; that is what we are striving for in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, on a very small scale, in proportion to our limited means. The realisation is certainly far from perfect, but it is progressive; little by little we are advancing towards our goal which we hope we may one day be able to present to the world as a practical and effective way to emerge from the present chaos, to be born into a new life that is more harmonious and true." (CWM 12: 93)

5.

The Mother's statement about marriage

"…

Beyond all that, in the depths, at the centre, at the summit of the being, there is a Supreme Truth of being, an Eternal Light, independent of all the circumstances of birth, country, environment, education; That is the origin, cause and master of our spiritual development; it is That which gives a permanent direction to our lives; it is That which

determines our destinies; it is in the consciousness of That that you must unite. To be one in aspiration and ascension, to move forward at the same pace on the same spiritual path, that is the secret of a lasting union." (CWM 13: 236–237)

6.

"Every day things seem to become worse. In truth we feel more and more disgusted with the old rotting world, and are more and more convinced of the necessity of founding, somewhere out of the well-trodden tracks, a new centre of life in which a new and truer light can be manifested, a new world no more based on selfish competitions and egoistic strife but on general and eager endeavours to promote the welfare, knowledge and progress of all—a society based on spiritual aspiration instead of lust for money and material power." (CWM 15: 68)

XCIX—Aspiration and Prayer

1.

"There are several kinds of prayers.

There is the purely mechanical, material prayer, with words which have been learnt and are mechanically repeated. That does not signify anything much. And that has usually only one single result, that of quietening the person who prays, for if a prayer is repeated several times, the words end up by making you calm.

There is a prayer which is a spontaneous formula for expressing something precise which one wants to ask for: one prays for this thing or that, one prays for one thing or another; one can pray for somebody, for a circumstance, for oneself." (CWM 5: 139–140)

2.

"There is a kind of prayer at once spontaneous and unselfish which is like a great call, usually not for one's own self personally, but like something that may be called an intercession with the Divine. It is extremely powerful. I have had countless instances of things which have been realised almost instantaneously due to prayers of this kind. It implies a great faith, a great ardour, a great sincerity, and a great simplicity of heart also, something that does not calculate, does not plan, does not bargain, does not give with the idea of receiving in exchange. For, the

majority of men give with one hand and hold out the other to get something in exchange; the largest number of prayers are of that sort. But there are others of the kind I have described, acts of thanksgiving, a kind of canticle [*songs of praise to the Divine*], and these are very good." (CWM 5: 141–142)

3.

"The efficacy of prayer is often doubted and prayer itself supposed to be a thing irrational and necessarily superfluous and ineffective. It is true that the universal will executes always its aim and cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty, it is true of the Transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order that being omniscient his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done and it does not need direction or stimulation by human thought and that the individual's desires are not and cannot be in any world–order the true determining factor. But neither is that order or the execution of the universal will altogether effected by mechanical Law, but by powers and forces of which for human life at least human will, aspiration and faith are not among the least important. Prayer is only a particular form given to that will, aspiration and faith. Its forms are very often crude and not only childlike, which is in itself no defect, but childish; but still it has a real power and significance. Its (prayer) power and sense is to put the will, aspiration and faith of

man into touch with the divine Will as that of a conscious Being with whom we can enter into conscious and living relations. For our will and aspiration can act either by our own strength and endeavour, which can no doubt be made a thing great and effective whether for lower or higher purposes,—and there are plenty of disciplines which put it forward as the one force to be used,—or it can act in dependence upon and with subordination to the divine or the universal Will. And this latter way again may either look upon that Will as responsive indeed to our aspiration, but almost mechanically, by a sort of law of energy, or at any rate quite impersonally, or else it may look upon it as responding consciously to the divine aspiration and faith of the human soul and consciously bringing to it the help, the guidance, the protection and fruition demanded, *yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham*." (CWSA 23: 566–567)

4.

"Q: *Do prayers and aspirations also take a form like thoughts?*

A: Yes. At times they take even the form of the person who has the aspiration or makes the prayer—often. That depends. Aspirations sometimes take the form of that to which one aspires, but most often, and specially prayers, clearly take the form of the one who prays." (CWM 5: 139)

5.

"Q: *What is the difference between prayer and aspiration?*

A: … There is a point where aspiration and prayer meet, for there are prayers which are the spontaneous formulation of a lived experience: these spring up all ready from within the being, like something that's the expression of a profound experience, and which offers thanksgiving for that experience or asks its continuation or asks for its explanation also; and that indeed is quite close to aspiration. But aspiration is not necessarily formulated in words; or if it is formulated in words, it is almost a movement of invocation." (CWM 5: 140)

6.

"Prayer is a much more external thing, generally about a precise fact, and always formulated for it is the formula that makes the prayer. One may have an aspiration and transcribe it as a prayer, but aspiration goes beyond prayer in every way. It is much closer and much more as it were self–forgetful, living only in the thing one wants to be or do, and the offering of all that one wants to do to the Divine. You may pray in order to ask for something, you may also pray to thank the Divine for what He has given you, and that prayer is much greater: it may be called an act of thanksgiving. You may pray in gratitude for the aspect of kindness the Divine has shown to you, for what

He has done for you, for what you see in Him, and the praise you want to offer Him. And all this may take the form of a prayer. It is decidedly the highest prayer, for it is not exclusively preoccupied with oneself, it is not an egoistic prayer.

Certainly, one may have an aspiration in all the domains, but the very centre of aspiration is in the psychic being, whilst one may pray in all the domains, and the prayer belongs to the domain in which one prays. One may make purely material, physical prayers, vital prayers, mental prayers, psychic prayers, spiritual prayers, and each one has its special character, its special value." (CWM 5: 141)

7.

"To be clearer, we may say that prayer is always formulated in words; but the words may have different values according to the state in which they are formulated. Prayer is a formulated thing and one may aspire. But it is difficult to pray without praying to someone. For instance, those who have a conception of the universe from which they have more or less driven out the idea of the Divine (there are many people of this kind; this idea troubles them—the idea that there is someone who knows all, can do everything and who is so formidably greater than they that there can be no comparison; that's a bit troublesome for their *amour propre*; so they try to make a world without

the Divine), these people evidently cannot pray, for to whom would they pray? Unless they pray to themselves, which is not the custom! But one can aspire for something without having any faith in the Divine. There are people who do not believe in the existence of a God, but who believe in progress. They have the idea that the world is in constant progress and that this progress will go on indefinitely without stopping, towards an ever greater good. Well, these people can have a very great aspiration for progress, and they don't even need any idea of a divine existence for that. Aspiration necessarily implies a faith but not necessarily faith in a divine being; whilst prayer cannot exist if it is not addressed to a divine being. And pray to what? One does not pray to something that has no personality! One prays to someone who can hear us. If there is nobody to hear us, how could one pray? Hence, if one prays, this means that, even when one doesn't acknowledge it, one has faith in somebody infinitely higher than us, infinitely more powerful, who can change our destiny and change us also, if one prays so as to be heard. That is the essential difference." (CWM 5: 142–143)

8.

"So the more intellectual people admit aspiration and say that prayer is something inferior. The mystics tell you that aspiration is all very well but if you want to be really heard and want the Divine to listen to you, you must pray, and

pray with the simplicity of a child, a perfect candour, that is, a perfect trust: 'I need this or that (whether it be a moral need or a physical or material need), well, I ask You for it, give it to me.' Or else: 'You have given me what I asked of You, You have made me realise concretely those experiences which were unknown to me and are now marvels I can attain at will; yes, I am infinitely grateful to You and I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to sing Your praise and thank You for Your intervention.' It is like that. To aspire it is not necessary to direct the aspiration to someone, towards someone. One has an aspiration for a certain state of being, for knowledge, for a realisation, a state of consciousness; one aspires for something, but it is not necessarily a prayer; prayer is something additional.

Prayer is a personal thing, addressed to a personal being, that is, to something—a force or a being—who can hear you and answer you. Otherwise you can't ask for anything." (CWM 5: 143)

9.

"Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing and are all effective; you can take the form that comes to you or is easiest to you." (CWSA 29: 106)

10.

"Let us go to sleep with a prayer and wake with an aspiration for the New and Perfect Creation." (CWM 14: 75)

11.

"Prayer and aspiration are a part of the spiritual life and do not conflict with surrender, provided one is not disturbed in either way by the fulfilment or unfulfilment of the prayer and keeps one's faith and quietude all the same." (CWSA 29: 365)

12.

"Sometimes we wish a thing very intensely and our wish is accomplished. The wish was in fact a prayer, and all sincere prayer receives its answer. It need not be consciously addressed to God, because prayer is not a form of words but an aspiration. If we aspire, we pray. But the aspiration must be absolutely unselfish, not alloyed by the thought of petty advantages or lower aims if it is to succeed. When we mingle self with our aspirations, we weaken to that extent the strength of the prayer and the success is proportionately less." (CWSA 7: 937)

13.

"Of course all prayer is not heard—the world would be a still more disastrous affair than it is, if everybody's prayers were heard, however sincere. Even the Godward prayer is not always heard—at once, even as faith is not always justified at once. Both prayer and faith are powers towards realisation which have been given to man to aid him in his struggle—without them, without aspiration and will and

faith (for aspiration is a prayer) it would be difficult for him to get anywhere. But all these things are merely means for setting the Divine Force in action—and it sometimes takes long, very long even, before the forces come into action or at least before they are seen to be in action or bear their result. The ecstasist is not altogether wrong even when he overstates his case. Even the overstatements sometimes help to convince the Cosmic Power, so that it says 'Oh well, if it is like that all right—'." (CWSA 29: 366)

14.

"What she said was that the prayer must well up from the heart on a crest of emotion or aspiration, the Japa or meditation come in a live push carrying the joy or the light of the thing in it. If done mechanically and merely as a thing that ought to be done (stern grim duty!), it must tend towards want of interest and dryness and so be ineffective. It was what I meant when I said I thought you were doing Japa too much as a means for bringing about a result—I meant too much as a device, a process laid down for getting the thing done. That again was why I wanted the psychological conditions in you to develop, the psychic, the mental—for when the psychic is forward, there is no lack of life and joy in the prayer, the aspiration, the seeking, no difficulty in having the constant stream of bhakti and when the mind is quiet and inturned and upturned there is no

difficulty or want of interest in meditation." (CWSA 29: 226)

15.

"Only, it is a little difficult to understand and one must make a little more progress. Instead of being like a little child that kneels down, joins its hands and says: 'My God, I pray to Thee, make me a good child so that I may never hurt my mother....' That of course is very easy and indeed I cannot say that it is bad. It is very good. Only there are children with whom these things do not work, because they say: 'Why should I ask You to make me good? You should make me good without there being any need of my asking You for it. Otherwise You are not nice!' It is very good when one has a simple heart and does not think much, but when one begins to think, it becomes more difficult. But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards 'something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more.' And then, if you throw yourself out a little, if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties,

then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised *all together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one's heart; and indeed that can take the form of a prayer and one can ask—ask of what?—ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be!" (CWM 5: 162–163)

16.

Prayer

"Aspiration addressed to the Supreme:

Let all in me be always at Your service." (CWM 15: 210)

17.

Prayer

"O Marvellous Grace, let our aspiration be always more intense, our faith always more vibrant, our trust always more absolute.

Thou art the All-Victorious!" (CWM 15: 217)

18.

Prayer

"Lord, God of Beauty and Harmony,

Grant that we may become instruments worthy of manifesting Thy supreme beauty in the world.

This is our prayer and our aspiration." (CWM 15: 218)

C—Aspiration and Meditation

1.

"*What should be the objects or ideas for meditation*?

Whatever is most consonant with your nature and highest aspirations. But if you ask me for an absolute answer, then I must say that Brahman is always the best object for meditation or contemplation, and the idea on which the mind should fix is that of God in all, all in God and all as God. It does not matter essentially whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God or, subjectively, the One Self." (CWSA 36: 294)

2.

"When you sit in meditation you must be as candid and simple as a child, not interfering by your external mind, expecting nothing, insisting on nothing. Once this condition is there, all the rest depends upon the aspiration deep within you. If you ask from within for peace, it will come; if for strength, for power, for knowledge, they too will come, but all in the measure of your capacity to receive it. And if you call upon the Divine, then too —always admitting that the Divine is open to your call, and that means your call is pure enough and strong enough to reach him,—you will have the answer." (CWM 3: 99)

3.

"There is another kind of meditation which consists in being as quiet as one can be but without trying to stop all thoughts, for there are thoughts which are purely mechanical and if you try to stop these you will need years, and moreover you will not be sure of the result; instead of that you gather together all your consciousness and remain as quiet and peaceful as possible, you detach yourself from external things as though they do not interest you at all, and all of a sudden, you brighten the flame of aspiration and throw into it everything that comes to you so that the flame may rise higher and higher, higher and higher; you identify yourself with it and you go up to the extreme point of your consciousness and aspiration, thinking of nothing else—simply, an aspiration which mounts, mounts, mounts, without thinking a minute of the result, of what may happen and especially of what may not, and above all without desiring that something may come—simply, the joy of an aspiration which mounts and mounts and mounts, intensifying itself more and more in a constant concentration. And there I may assure you that what happens is the best that can happen. That is, it is the maximum of your possibilities which is realised when you do this. These possibilities may be very different according to individuals. But then all these worries about trying to be silent, going behind appearances, calling a force which answers, waiting for an answer to your questions, all that

vanishes like an unreal vapour. And if you succeed in living consciously in this flame, in this column of mounting aspiration, you will see that even if you do not have an immediate result, after a time something will happen." (CWM 4: 104–105)

4.

Playground Meditation

"Q: *Sweet Mother, Are You with us during the collective meditation at the Playground?*

A: Certainly, I am always there.

Q: *To benefit from it, what should we meditate on? And how?*

A: The method is always the same. Gather together the energies in you that are usually dispersed outside; concentrate your consciousness within, beneath the surface agitation, and establish, as far as possible, a perfect quietness in your heart and head; then formulate your aspiration, if you have one, and open yourself to receive the divine force from above." (CWM 17: 355)

5.

"Here, at the Playground, the work is to unify all who are here, make them open and *bring down* the divine force into

them. It is the opposite movement and that is why this concentration cannot replace the other, even as the other cannot replace this one. What happens here is exceptional—in the other meditation [*at the Ashram*] I gathered together the consciousness of all who were present and, with the power of aspiration, lifted it towards the Divine, that is, made each one of you progress a little. Here, on the other hand, I take you as you are; each one of you comes saying, 'Here we are with our whole day's activities, we were busy with our body, here it is, we offer to you all our movements, just as they were, just as we are.' And my work is to unify all that, make of it a homogeneous mass and, in answer to this offering (which each one can make in his own way), to open every consciousness, widen the receptivity, make a unity of this receptivity and bring down the Force. So at that moment each one of you, if you are very quiet and attentive, will surely receive something. You will not always be aware of it, but you will receive something.

In March 1964, the following question was put to the Mother:

Q: *And now that you are no longer physically present at the Playground concentrations, what happens?*

I hope people have made some progress and do not need the physical presence to feel the Help and the Force." (CWM 4: 106)

6.

"Q: *How should I meditate?*

A: Fix your mind on the aspiration and dismiss everything else." (CWM 17: 14)

7.

"It may be because I asked you to stop meditating and to wait. The vital does not like waiting. But I had to tell you that because of the burning of the centres, the disturbance of sleep and the rest—these must go before you can meditate in the right way and with success. If you meditate at all now, it should be only in calm and peace with a very quiet aspiration for the divine calm and peace to descend into you." (CWSA 31:139)

8.

"Whose work is it if it is not the Mother's work? All that you do, you have to do as the Mother's work. All the work done in the Asram is the Mother's.

All those works, meditation, reading *Conversations*, studying English etc. are good. You can do any of them dedicating them to the Mother.

Meditation means opening yourself to the Mother, concentrating on aspiration and calling in her force to work and transform you." (CWSA 32: 409)

9.

"*The concentration we have here and the meditation we used to have in the past, are they the same?*

No, I told you this the other day, the concentration we have now [at the Playground] is the opposite of meditation. In the common meditation [in the Ashram] we used to have, I tried to unify the consciousness of all who were present and to lift it in an aspiration towards higher regions; it was a movement of ascent, of aspiration—whereas what we do here, in concentration, is a movement of descent. Instead of an aspiration which rises up, what is required is a receptivity which opens so that the Force may enter into you. There are many ways of doing this; each one according to his particular nature should find out the best method. What is asked here is a receptive offering, not of the body or the mind or the vital, of a piece of your being, but of your entire being. No other thing is asked of you, only to *open* yourself; the rest of the work I undertake.

In the meditation there I wanted each one to kindle in himself a flame of aspiration and to rise up as high as possible. Naturally, both are necessary; but the morning meditation, all who had a goodwill could join it at any stage

of their development, while here the rule is that only those who really want the perfection of their physical body can come, not those who want to escape from life, escape from themselves, escape from their body to enter into the heights. That is why in the beginning the selection was very strict—it is widening little by little, with profit, I hope. We wanted only those who had truly taken it into their head that they wished to perfect their physical body, who understood that their body had its own value and who sought to perfect it, who wanted to try to make it a receptacle of a higher truth, not an old rag one throws aside saying, 'Do not bother me!' On the contrary, to take it up and make of it the best possible instrument, to make it grow, to perfect it as much as it will lend itself to the process." (CWM 4: 122–123)

10.

"I think everyone has his own mode of meditation. But if one wants the meditation to be dynamic, one must have an aspiration for progress and the meditation must be done to help and fulfil this aspiration for progress. Then it becomes dynamic. (CWM 8: 89)

CI—Aspiration and Worship

1.

"All love, indeed, that is adoration has a spiritual force behind it, and even when it is offered ignorantly and to a limited object, something of that splendour appears through the poverty of the rite and the smallness of its issues. For love that is worship is at once an aspiration and a preparation: it can bring even within its small limits in the Ignorance a glimpse of a still more or less blind and partial but surprising realisation; for there are moments when it is not we but the One who loves and is loved in us, and even a human passion can be uplifted and glorified by a slight glimpse of this infinite Love and Lover. It is for this reason that the worship of the god, the worship of the idol, the human magnet or ideal are not to be despised; for these are steps through which the human race moves towards that blissful passion and ecstasy of the Infinite which, even in limiting it, they yet represent for our imperfect vision when we have still to use the inferior steps Nature has hewn for our feet and admit the stages of our progress." (CWSA 23: 159)

2.

"For if without a spiritual aspiration worship is meaningless and vain, yet the aspiration also without the act and the form is a disembodied and, for life, an incompletely effective power." (CWSA 23: 163)

3.

"It never does any harm to express an aspiration—that gives force to it." (CWM 14: 73)

4.

"To turn all actions automatically into worship cannot be done by thought control only; there must be a strong aspiration in the heart which will bring about some realisation or feeling of the presence of the One to whom worship is offered. The bhakta does not rely on his own effort alone, but on the grace and power of the Divine whom he adores." (CWSA 31: 45–46)

5.

"The intense love and bhakti does not come at once. It comes as the power of the psychic grows more and more in the being. But to aspire for it is right and the sincere aspiration is sure to fulfil itself. Always seek to progress in quietude, happiness and confidence, that is the most helpful attitude. Do not listen to contrary suggestions from outside." (CWSA 31: 702–703)

6.

"The mental calm must be changed first into the deeper spiritual peace, Shanti, and then into the supramental calm and silence full of the higher light and strength and Ananda. Moreover, the quieting of the mind only is not enough. The vital and physical consciousness have to be

opened up and the same foundation established there. Also the spirit of devotion of which he speaks must be not merely a mental feeling but an aspiration of the deeper heart and will to the truth above, that the being may rise up into it and that it may descend and govern all the activities." (CWSA 36: 364–365)

7.

"Nature is the worker and not ego, but Nature is only a power of the Being who is the sole master of all her works and energisms and of all the aeons of the cosmic sacrifice. Therefore since his works are that Being's, he has to give up all his actions to the Godhead in him and the world by whom they are done in the divine mystery of Nature. This is the double condition of the divine birth of the soul, of its release from the mortality of the ego and the body into the spiritual and eternal,—knowledge first of one's timeless immutable self and union through it with the timeless Godhead, but knowledge too of that which lives behind the riddle of cosmos, the Godhead in all existences and their workings. Thus only can we aspire through the offering of all our nature and being to a living union with the One who has become in Time and Space all that is. Here is the place of bhakti in the scheme of the Yoga of an integral self-liberation. It is an adoration and aspiration towards that which is greater than imperishable self or changing Nature. All knowledge then becomes an adoration and aspiration,

but all works too become an adoration and aspiration. Works of nature and freedom of soul are unified in this adoration and become one self-uplifting to the one Godhead. The final release, a passing away from the lower nature to the source of the higher spiritual becoming, is not an extinction of the soul,—only its form of ego becomes extinct,—but a departure of our whole self of knowledge, will and love to dwell no longer in his universal, but in his supracosmic reality, a fulfilment, not an annullation." (CWSA 19: 306–307)

8.

"The great-souled who open themselves to the light and largeness of the diviner nature of which man is capable, are alone on the path narrow in the beginning, inexpressibly wide in the end that leads to liberation and perfection. The growth of the god in man is man's proper business; the steadfast turning of this lower Asuric and Rakshasic into the divine nature is the carefully hidden meaning of human life. As this growth increases, the veil falls and the soul comes to see the greater significance of action and the real truth of existence. The eye opens to the Godhead in man, to the Godhead in the world; it sees inwardly and comes to know outwardly the infinite Spirit, the Imperishable from whom all existences originate and who exists in all and by him and in him all exist always. Therefore when this vision, this knowledge seizes on the

soul, its whole life-aspiration becomes a surpassing love and fathomless adoration of the Divine and Infinite. The mind attaches itself singly to the eternal, the spiritual, the living, the universal, the Real; it values nothing but for its sake, it delights only in the all-blissful Purusha. All the word and all the thought become one hymning of the universal greatness, Light, Beauty, Power and Truth that has revealed itself in its glory to the human spirit and a worship of the one supreme Soul and infinite Person. All the long stress of the inner self to break outward becomes a form now of spiritual endeavour and aspiration to possess the Divine in the soul and realise the Divine in the nature. All life becomes a constant Yoga and unification of that Divine and this human spirit. This is the manner of the integral devotion; it creates a single uplifting of our whole being and nature through sacrifice by the dedicated heart to the eternal Purushottama." (CWSA 19: 327)

9.

"To make the mind one with the divine consciousness, to make the whole of our emotional nature one love of God everywhere, to make all our works one sacrifice to the Lord of the worlds and all our worship and aspiration one adoration of him and self-surrender, to direct the whole self Godwards in an entire union is the way to rise out of a mundane into a divine existence. This is the Gita's teaching of divine love and devotion, in which knowledge, works and

the heart's longing become one in a supreme unification, a merging of all their divergences, an intertwining of all their threads, a high fusion, a wide identifying movement." (CWSA 19: 336)

10.

"An awareness comes perhaps of an inner light, of a guidance or a communion, of a greater Control than the mind and will to which something in us obeys; but all is not yet recast in the mould of that experience. But when these intuitions and illuminations grow in insistence and canalise themselves, make a strong inner formation and claim to govern the whole life and take over the nature, then there begins the spiritual formation of the being; there emerges the saint, the devotee, the spiritual sage, the seer, the prophet, the servant of God, the soldier of the spirit. All these take their stand on one part of the natural being lifted up by a spiritual light, power or ecstasy. The sage and seer live in the spiritual mind, their thought or their vision is governed and moulded by an inner or a greater divine light of knowledge; the devotee lives in the spiritual aspiration of the heart, its self-offering and its seeking; the saint is moved by the awakened psychic being in the inner heart grown powerful to govern the emotional and vital being; the others stand in the vital kinetic nature driven by a higher spiritual energy and turned by it towards an inspired action, a God-given work or mission, the service

of some divine Power, idea or ideal. The last or highest emergence is the liberated man who has realised the Self and Spirit within him, entered into the cosmic consciousness, passed into union with the Eternal and, so far as he still accepts life and action, acts by the light and energy of the Power within him working through his human instruments of Nature." (CWSA 22: 914–915)

11.

"It is evident that even real religion,—and Yoga is something more than religion,—only begins when this quite outward worship corresponds to something really felt within the mind, some genuine submission, awe or spiritual aspiration, to which it becomes an aid, an outward expression and also a sort of periodical or constant reminder helping to draw back the mind to it from the preoccupations of ordinary life. But so long as it is only an idea of the Godhead to which one renders reverence or homage, we have not yet got to the beginning of Yoga. The aim of Yoga being union, its beginning must always be a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. When this comes on us, the adoration becomes always primarily an inner worship; we begin to make ourselves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, our whole life an external service and worship. It is as this change, this new soul-tendency grows, that the

religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union. It does not follow that the outward worship will necessarily be dispensed with, but it will increasingly become only a physical expression or outflowing of the inner devotion and adoration, the wave of the soul throwing itself out in speech and symbolic act." (CWSA 24: 572)

12.

"The kind of worship (*pūjā*) spoken of in the letter belongs to the religious life. It can, if rightly done in the deepest religious spirit, prepare the mind and heart to some extent but no more. But if worship is done as part of meditation or with a true aspiration to the spiritual reality and the spiritual consciousness and with the yearning for contact and union with the Divine, then it can be spiritually effective.

If you have a sincere aspiration to the spiritual change in your heart and soul, then you will find the way and the Guide. A mere mental seeking and questioning are not enough to open the doors of the Spirit." (CWSA 28: 420)

13.

"It may be said that a complete act of divine love and worship has in it three parts that are the expressions of a single whole,—a practical worship of the Divine in the act,

a symbol of worship in the form of the act expressing some vision and seeking or some relation with the Divine, an inner adoration and longing for oneness or feeling of oneness in the heart and soul and spirit." Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga

I have not understood the first two parts very well.

There is a purely physical form of the act, like those forms in cults in which a particular gesture, a particular movement is meant to express the consecration. That is purely material, as for example, lighting incense, arranging offerings, or even looking after a temple, decorating an idol, indeed all such purely physical acts.

The second part is a sort of mental consecration which makes the act that is performed a symbol. One is not satisfied with merely lighting the incense, but while lighting the incense one makes this gesture symbolic—for example, of the aspiration burning in the body or of self-giving in a dissolution, in the purification of the fire. That is to say, first the act, then the symbol in this act and the symbolic understanding of what is done.

And finally, behind these two, an aspiration for union; that all this, these acts and the symbol you make of them, may be only a means of drawing closer and closer to the Divine and making yourself fit to unite with Him.

These three things must be there for the act to be complete: that is, something purely material, something mental, and something psychic, the psychic aspiration. If one of the three is there without the other two, it is incomplete. As a rule, very rarely are the three consciously combined. That produces beings of exceptional sincerity and consecration: the entire being, in all its parts, participates in the action." (CWM 8: 234–235)

14.

"*Sweet Mother, does the worship offered to the goddess Durga and to Kali have any spiritual value?*

That depends on who offers the worship.

It is not that which is of importance for the spiritual value. For the integrality and the complete truth of the Yoga it is important not to limit one's aspiration to one form or another. But from the spiritual point of view, whatever the object of worship, if the movement is perfectly sincere, if the self-giving is integral and absolute, the spiritual result can be the same; for, whatever object you take, through it—sometimes in spite of it, despite it—you always reach the supreme Reality, in the measure and proportion of the sincerity of your consecration.

That is why it is always said that, no matter what aspect of the Divine you adore or even what guide you

choose, if you are perfect in your self-giving and absolutely sincere, you are *sure* to attain the spiritual goal.

But the result is no longer the same when you want to realise the integral yoga. Then you must not limit yourself in any way, even in the path of your consecration.... Only, these are two very different things.

Spiritual realisation—as it was formerly understood, as it is still commonly understood—is union with the Supreme in some way or other, either within you or through some form or other; it is the fusion of your being with the Supreme, with the Absolute, almost the disappearance of your individuality in this fusion.1 And that depends absolutely on the sincerity and the integrality of your self-giving, rather than on the choice you make of that to which you want to give yourself. For... the very sincerity of your aspiration will make you cross all limitations and find the Supreme, for you carry Him within yourself.

Whether you seek Him outside, whether you seek Him within, whether you seek Him in a form or without form, if your aspiration is sincere enough and your resolution sincere enough, you are sure to reach the goal.

But if you want to make the complementary movement of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, that is to say, to return to the outer consciousness and world after having realised this union in yourself, and transform this outer consciousness and world, then in this case you cannot limit

yourself in any way, for otherwise you will not be able to accomplish your work.

Essentially, you must be able to find this oneness with the Divine in all forms, all aspects, in every way that has been used to reach Him. And you must go beyond that and find a new way.

So, the first point to clear up in your thought—and it is a point of capital importance: you must not confuse the integral yoga with other spiritual realisations, which may be very high but cover a very limited field, for theirs is a movement only in depth.

You may pierce a hole, you see, with your aspiration and make a movement in depth through anything at all. All depends on the intensity and sincerity of your aspiration—on the sincerity, that is to say, on how far your self-giving is complete, integral, absolute. But it does not depend on the form you have chosen: necessarily, you will have to pass through in order to find what is behind.

But if you want to transform your nature and your being, and if you want to participate in the creation of a new world, then this aspiration, this sharp and linear point is no longer enough. One must include everything and contain everything in one's consciousness." (CWM 8: 243–245)

CII—Aspiration and Faith

1.

"Instead, if one has a quiet faith, if whilst aspiring one knows that there is no aspiration (naturally, sincere aspiration) which remains unanswered, then one is quiet. One aspires with as much fervour as possible, but does not stand in nervous agitation asking oneself why one does not get immediately what one has asked for. One knows how to wait. I have said somewhere: 'To know how to wait is to put time on one's side.' That is quite true. For if one gets excited, one loses all one's time—one loses one's time, loses one's energy, loses one's movements. To be very quiet, calm, peaceful, with the faith that what is true will take place, and that if one lets it happen, it will happen so much the quicker. Then, in that peace everything goes much better." (CWM 5: 396)

2.

"We must always aspire to be free from all ignorance and to have a true faith." 29 April 1954 (CWM 14: 73)

3.

"Day after day our aspiration will grow and our faith will intensify." (CWM 14: 73)

4.

"Q: *How can I have more and more faith and calm, Mother?*

A: Aspiration and will." (CWM 14: 79)

5.

"Q: *How can faith be increased?*

A: Through aspiration, I suppose. Some have it spontaneously... You see, it is difficult to pray if one doesn't have faith, but if one can make prayer a means of increasing one's faith, or aspiring, having an aspiration, having an aspiration to have faith... Most of these qualities require an effort. If one does not have a thing and wants to have it, well, it needs great, great, great sustained efforts, a constant aspiration, an unflagging will, a sincerity at each moment; then one is sure, it will come one day—it can come in a second. There are people who have it, and then they have contrary movements which come and attack. These people, if their will is sincere, can shield their faith, repel the attacks. There are others who cultivate doubt because it is a kind of dilettantism [amateurishness]—that, there's nothing more dangerous than that. It is as though one were letting the worm into the fruit: it eventually eats it up completely. This means that when a movement of this sort comes—it usually comes

first into the mind—the first thing to do is to be very determined and refuse it. Surely one must not enjoy looking on just to see what is going to happen; that kind of curiosity is terribly dangerous.

It is perhaps more difficult for intellectuals to have faith than for those who are simple, sincere, who are straightforward, without intellectual complications. But I think that if an intellectual person has faith, then that becomes very powerful, a very powerful thing which can truly work miracles." (CWM 6: 121)

6.

"Q: *Can one have faith through aspiration?*

A: What? Faith through aspiration? I think so, because it is rare to have it spontaneously, to be born with it. Very few people have this good luck to have a spontaneous faith. But if one is very sincere in one's aspiration, one gets it. Aspiration can bring everything, provided it is sincere and constant. One always has a tiny element of faith within oneself, whether it be faith in what one's parents have said or in the books one has studied. After all, all your education is based upon a faith of this kind. Those who have educated you have told you certain things. You had no means of checking, because you were too young and had no experience. But you have faith in what they told you and you go forward on that faith. So everyone has a tiny

bit of faith, and to increase it one can use one's aspiration." (CWM 6: 394)

7.

"Q: *What are the conditions in which there is a descent of faith?*

A: The most important condition is an almost childlike trust, the candid trust of a child who is sure that it will come, who doesn't even ask himself about it; when he needs something he is sure that it is going to come. Well, it is this, this kind of trust—this indeed is the most important condition.

To aspire is indispensable. But some people aspire with such a conflict inside them between faith and absence of faith, trust and distrust, between the optimism which is sure of victory and a pessimism which asks itself when the catastrophe will come. Now if this is in the being, you may aspire but you don't get anything. And you say, 'I aspired but didn't get anything.' It is because you demolish your aspiration all the time by your lack of confidence. But if you truly have trust... Children when left to themselves and not deformed by older people have such a great trust that all will be well! For example, when they have a small accident, they never think that this is going to be something serious: they are spontaneously convinced that it will soon be over, and this helps so powerfully in putting an end to it.

Well, when one aspires for the Force, when one asks the Divine for help, if one asks with the unshakable certitude that it will come, that it is impossible that it won't, then it is sure to come. It is this kind... yes, this is truly an inner opening, this trustfulness. And some people are constantly in this state. When there is something to be received, they are always there to receive it. There are others, when there is something to have, a force descends, they are always absent, they are always closed at that moment; while those who have this childlike trust are always there at the right time.

And it is strange, isn't it, outwardly there is no difference. They may have exactly the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same wish to do good, but those who have this smiling confidence within them, do not question, do not ask themselves whether they will have it or not have it, whether the Divine will answer or not—the question does not arise, it is something understood... 'What I need will be given to me; if I pray I shall have an answer; if I am in a difficulty and ask for help, the help will come—and not only will it come but it will manage everything.' If the trust is there, spontaneous, candid, unquestioning, it works better than anything else, and the results are marvellous. It is with the contradictions and doubts of the mind that one spoils everything, with this kind of notion which comes when one is in difficulties: 'Oh, it is impossible! I shall never manage it. And if it is going to be aggravated, if this

condition I am in, which I don't want, is going to grow still worse, if I continue to slide down farther and farther, if, if, if, if...' like that, and one builds a wall between oneself and the force one wants to receive. The psychic being has this trust, has it wonderfully, without a shadow, without an argument, without a contradiction. And when it is like that, there is not a prayer which does not get an answer, no aspiration which is not realised." (CWM 6: 403–404)

8.

"Do not allow any discouragement to come upon you and have no distrust of the Divine Grace. Whatever difficulties are outside you, whatever weaknesses are inside you, if you keep firm hold on your faith and your aspiration, the secret Power will carry you through and bring you back here. Even if you are oppressed with opposition and difficulties, even if you stumble, even if the way seems closed to you, keep hold on your aspiration; if faith is clouded for a time, turn always in mind and heart to us and it will be removed. As for outer help in the way of letters we are perfectly ready to give it to you. But keep firm on the way— then in the end things open out of themselves and circumstances yield to the inner spirit." (CWSA 29: 101)

9.

"Introspection is good only when it is used as a means for changing the nature so as to bring it into accordance with a higher ideal steadily held before you. The present nature of man is egoistic in motive, full of falsehoods created by the Ignorance into which he is born and which the mind and life accept in order to follow their ego's aims and desires. By introspection one comes to see that, but by itself that can only create distrust of oneself, loss of motive to action, cynicism and weakness. One must have the faith and aspiration towards a higher consciousness which one has to build up in place of this lower nature, then the introspection and the knowledge of the defects of the nature it gives become useful, as it helps one to see what has to be changed while the higher ideal gives what has to take the place of the old movements and the old nature." (CWSA 31: 626)

10.

"Your mind and psychic being are concentrated on the spiritual aim and open to the Divine—that is why the Influence comes down into the head and as far as the heart. But the vital being and nature and the physical consciousness are under the influence of the lower nature. As long as the vital and physical being are not surrendered or do not on their own account call for the higher life, this struggle is likely to continue.

Surrender everything, reject all other desires or interests, call on the divine Shakti to open the vital nature and bring down calm, peace, light, Ananda into all the centres. Aspire, await with faith and patience the result. All depends on a complete sincerity and an integral consecration and aspiration.

The world will trouble you so long as any part of you belongs to the world. It is only if you belong entirely to the Divine that you can become free." (CWSA 29: 76)

11.

"*Sweet Mother, can faith be increased by personal effort?*

Faith is certainly a gift given to us by the Divine Grace. It is like a door suddenly opening upon an eternal truth, through which we can see it, almost touch it.

As in everything else in the ascent of humanity, there is the necessity—especially at the beginning—of personal effort. It is possible that in some exceptional circumstances, for reasons which completely elude our intelligence, faith may come almost accidentally, quite unexpectedly, almost without ever having been solicited, but most frequently it is an answer to a yearning, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that is seeking and longing, even though not in a very conscious and systematic way. But in any case, when faith has been granted, when one has had this sudden inner illumination,

in order to preserve it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is altogether indispensable. One must *hold* on to one's faith, *will* one's faith; one must seek it, cultivate it, protect it." (CWM 9: 350–351)

CIII—Aspiration and Progress

1.

"Go on aspiring and the necessary progress is bound to come." (CWM 14: 76)

2.

(*Message for a seminar organised by the Maharastra Sri Aurobindo Centenary Celebration Committee*)

"Be sincere in your aspiration for progress.
Love and blessings." (CWM 14: 80)

3.

"*What is needed of me that I may not fail to progress as I should?*

A constant and integral aspiration." (CWM 14: 76)

4.

"As your aspiration is sincere, whatever was in the subconscient standing in the way of the Divine Realisation has come to the surface in order to be transformed; and you must rejoice at these occasions to make a progress." (CWM 14: 227)

5.

"Q: 'O Thou that lovest, strike! If Thou strike me not now, I shall know that Thou lovest me not.'

I have not understood this aphorism very well.

A: All who aspire for the divine perfection know that the blows which the Lord deals us in His infinite love and grace are the surest and quickest way to make us progress. And the harder the blows the more they feel the greatness of the divine Love." (CWM 10: 58)

6.

"But there *must be* enough aspiration and adhesion in the being to make the expansion of the being, the expansion of consciousness possible. For, to tell the truth, everybody is small, small, small, so small that there is not enough room to put any supramental in! It is so small that it is already quite filled up with all the ordinary little human movements. There must be a great widening to make room for the movements of the Supermind.

And then there must also be an aspiration for progress: not to be satisfied with what one is, how one is, what one does, what one knows or thinks one knows; but to have a constant aspiration for something more, something better, for a greater light, a vaster consciousness, a truer truth and a more universal

goodness. And over and above all this, a goodwill which never fails." (CWM 8: 205)

7.

"The minute one stops going forward, one falls back. The moment one is satisfied and no longer aspires, one begins to die. Life is movement, it is effort, it is a march forward, the scaling of a mountain, the climb towards new revelations, towards future realisations. Nothing is more dangerous than wanting to rest. It is in action, in effort, in the march forward that repose must be found, the true repose of complete trust in the divine Grace, of the absence of desires, of victory over egoism." (CWM 9: 66)

8.

"Q: *Sweet Mother,*

How can one know whether we are progressing or not, individually and collectively?

A: It is always preferable not to try to assess the progress one is making because it does not help one to make it—on the contrary. Aspiration for progress, if it is SINCERE, is sure to have an effect. But whatever the progress made, individually or collectively, the progress still remaining to be made is so considerable that there is no reason to stop on the way to assess the ground one has covered.

The perception that some progress has been made should come spontaneously, by the sudden and

unexpected awareness of what one is in comparison with what one was some time before. That is all—but that in itself requires a fairly high degree of development of the consciousness." (CWM 16: 303)

9.

"Q: *Should we aspire to have a spiritual experience?*

A: I think it is wiser to aspire to make progress or to be more conscious or to be better or do better than aspire for a spiritual experience; because that might open the door to more or less imaginary and falsified experiences, to movements of the vital which take on the appearance of higher things. One may deceive oneself by having an aspiration for experiences. In fact, the experience must come spontaneously, as the result of inner progress, but not for itself or in itself." (CWM 6: 432)

10.

"It is certain that an ardent aspiration for the Divine helps to progress, but patience is also needed." (CWSA 29: 110)

11.

"To begin with, the first thing to tell yourself is that you are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long—sometimes long, but in any case not endless—preparation for a leap forward.

We sometimes seem to be marking time for weeks or months, and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain.... Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for *that* is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it." (CWM 9: 316–317)

12.

"So we say, first point: we have an aspiration but we don't really know the true result we ought to obtain. Only the Divine can know that." (CWM 9:317)

13.

"As usual I will tell you to be quiet and peaceful.

Our only aspiration must be for spiritual progress. It is only for that that we must pray.

With love and blessings." (CWM 14: 75)

14.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I put my question badly last time. I did not mean the progress one has made, that is to say, the results of the past, but the state one is in. I do not want to assess the ground I have covered, but to know whether I am advancing on the path continually, without stoppage.

The advance is rarely in a straight and continuous line because a human being is made up of many different parts, and generally one part or another progresses in its turn while the other parts remain quiescent until their turn comes. It is only when the consciousness grows enough to have an overall view that one can see exactly what is happening. But in order to be sure of advancing

progressively and regularly, one must always keep alive the flame of one's aspiration." (CWM 16: 303)

15.

"There are two complementary aspects of the liberating action of the Divine Grace upon earth among men. These two aspects are equally indispensable, but are not equally appreciated.

The sovereign immutable peace that liberates from anxiety, tension and suffering.

The dynamic all-powerful progress that liberates from fetters, bondages and inertia.

The peace is universally appreciated and recognised as divine, but the progress is welcomed only by those whose aspiration is intense and courageous." (CWM 15: 185)

CIV—Aspiration and Silence

1.

"In silence lies the greatest aspiration.

We pray that the greatest receptivity may also be there." (CWM 17: 373)

2.

"Q: *Sweet Mother,*

Help me to become your true child.

A: This is a good resolution. You can be sure of my help and of the presence of my consciousness which is with you to light your way and to guide you whenever you call on it. It is in silent aspiration that you can become conscious of this presence and be able to receive its aid.

With love and blessings." (CWM 17: 359)

3.

"It is very good to remain silent and concentrated in your aspiration; …" (CWM 16: 87)

4.

"It is not easy to get into the silence. That is only possible by throwing out the mental and vital activities. It is easier to let the silence get into you, i.e., to open yourself and let it descend. The way to do this and the way to call down

the higher powers is the same. It is to remain quiet at the time of meditation, not fighting with the mind or making mental efforts to pull down the power of the Silence but keeping only a silent will and aspiration for them. If the mind is active, one has only to learn to look at it, drawn back and not giving any sanction from within, until its habitual or mechanical activities begin to fall quiet for want of support from within. If it is too persistent, a steady rejection without strain or struggle is the one thing to be done." (CWSA 36: 300)

5.

"If intellectual culture is carried to its furthest limit, it leads the mind to the unsatisfactory acknowledgement that it is incapable of knowing the Truth and, in those who aspire sincerely, to the necessity of being quiet and opening in silence to the higher regions which can give you knowledge." (CWM 10: 254)

6.

"Q: *Do you think that solely through an intense aspiration one can gain silence of the whole being and do sadhana by that silence?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Can all the impurities of the mind, vital and physical disappear by the descent of this silence?*

A: Silence cannot cure all the impurities, but it alleviates a great many of them." (CWM 17: 20)

7.

"In the entirely silent mind there is usually the static sense of the Divine without any active movement. But there can come into it all higher thought and aspiration and movements. There is then no absolute silence but one feels a fundamental silence behind which is not disturbed by any movement." (CWSA 29: 158)

8.

"*Do you think that solely through an intense aspiration one can gain silence of the whole being and do sadhana by that silence?*

Yes." (CWM 17: 20)

9.

"The mind must learn to be silent—remain calm, attentive, without making a noise. If you try to silence your mind directly, it is a hard job, almost impossible; for the most material part of the mind never stops its activity—it goes on and on like a non-stop recording machine. It repeats all

that it records and unless there is a switch to stop it, it continues and continues indefinitely. If, on the other hand, you manage to shift your consciousness into a higher domain, above the ordinary mind, this opening to the Light calms the mind, it does not stir any longer, and the mental silence so obtained can become constant. Once you enter into this domain, you may very well never come out of it—the external mind always remains calm.

The only true solution is aspiration for the higher light." (CWM 4: 182)

10.

"It is quite certain that to create absolute silence is of all things the most difficult, for many things of which one was not aware, become *enormous*! There were all kinds of suggestions, movements, thoughts, formations which went on as though *automatically* in the outer consciousness, almost outside the consciousness, on the frontiers of consciousness; and as soon as one wants to be absolutely silent, one becomes aware of all these things which go on moving, moving, moving and make a lot of noise and prevent you from being silent. That is why it is better to remain very quiet, very calm and at the same time very attentive to something which is above you and to which you aspire, and if there is this kind of noise passing like that around you (*Mother moves her hands around her head*), not to pay attention, not to look, not to heed it. If

there are thoughts which go round and round and round like this (*gestures*), which come and go, do not look, do not pay attention, but concentrate upwards in a great aspiration which one may even formulate—because often it helps the concentration—towards the light, the peace, the quietude, towards a kind of inner impassiveness, so that the concentration may be strong enough for you not to attend to all that continues to whirl about all around. But if suddenly you say, "Ah, there's some noise! Oh, here is a thought!", then it is finished. You will never succeed in being quiet. Have you never seen those people who try to stop a quarrel by shouting still louder than the ones who are quarrelling? Well, it is something like that. (*Mother laughs*.)" (CWM 6: 309–310)

11.

"*Mother, when you speak we try to understand with the mind, but when you communicate something in silence, on what part of the being should we concentrate?*

It is always better, for meditation—you see, we use the word 'meditation', but it does not necessarily mean 'moving ideas around in the head', quite the contrary—it is always better to try to concentrate in a centre, the centre of aspiration, one might say, the place where the flame of aspiration burns, to gather in all the energies there, at the solar plexus centre and, if possible, to obtain an attentive

silence as though one wanted to listen to something extremely subtle, something that demands a complete attention, a complete concentration and total silence. And then not to move at all. Not to think, not to stir, and make that movement of opening so as to receive all that can be received, but taking good care not to try to know what is happening while it is happening, for if one wants to understand or even to observe actively, it keeps up a sort of cerebral activity which is unfavourable to the fullness of the receptivity—to be silent, as totally silent as possible, in an attentive concentration, and then be still.

If one succeeds in this, then, when everything is over, when one comes out of meditation, some time later—usually not immediately—from within the being something new emerges in the consciousness: a new understanding, a new appreciation of things, a new attitude in life—in short, a new way of being." (CWM 9: 115–116)

CV—Aspiration and Peace and Calm

1.

"Sri Aurobindo says in reply to your letter that you can meditate on the Mother in the heart and call on her—remember her and dedicate or offer to her all your life and thoughts and actions. If you like you can make a japa of her name. You can call to her to purify your being and change your nature.

Or you can concentrate to call down from above you (where it always is) first her calm and peace, then her power and light and her ananda. It is always there above the head—but superconscient to the human mind—by aspiration and concentration it can become conscient to it and the adhar can open to it so that it descends and enters into mind, life and body." (CWSA 32: 154–155)

2.

"*Do calm and equality come down from above by the Mother's Grace?*

When they descend, it is by the soul's aspiration and the Mother's grace. (CWSA 32: 165)

3.

"Inner calm and peace and an ardent aspiration towards the Divine are the best preparation for receiving the help

we can give, and you can be assured of receiving it from us." (CWM 17: 188)

4.

"Calm, even if it seems at first only a negative thing, is so difficult to attain that to have it at all must be regarded as a great step in advance.

In reality, calm is not a negative thing; it is the very nature of the Sat-Purusha and the positive foundation of the divine consciousness. Whatever else is aspired for and gained, this must be kept. Even Knowledge, Power, Ananda, if they come and do not find this foundation, are unable to remain and have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there.

Aspire for the rest of the divine consciousness, but with a calm and deep aspiration. It can be ardent as well as calm, but not impatient, restless or full of rajasic eagerness.

Only in the quiet mind and being can the supramental Truth build its true creation." (CWSA 29: 146–147)

5.

"*I am completely ignorant, totally lacking in consciousness— so in this condition how can I understand and judge You!*

Do not get upset—keep calm. Certainly the part of you that is speaking now has never tried to judge me. It is in calm that one can unify one's being around the highest aspiration." (CWM 17: 81–82)

6.

"There was a time, not so long ago, when the spiritual aspiration of man was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all worldly things, a flight from life, precisely to avoid battle, to rise above the struggle, escape all effort; it was a spiritual peace in which, along with the cessation of all tension, struggle, effort, there ceased also suffering in all its forms, and this was considered to be the true and only expression of a spiritual and divine life. It was considered to be the divine grace, the divine help, the divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension, hypertension, this sovereign peace is the best received aid of all, the most welcome, the solace people ask and hope for. For many it is still the true sign of a divine intervention, of divine grace." (CWM 9: 298)

7.

"To live within in a constant aspiration for the Divine enables us to look at life with a smile and to remain peaceful whatever the outer circumstances may be." (CWM 10: 266)

CVI—Aspiration and Freedom

1.

"Q: *He also told me this: 'Mother says that there is full freedom and every facility for those who are gifted in a particular subject and want to pursue it to the full. But where is this freedom to become, for instance, a great musician?' Sweet Mother, can you please say a few words on the subject of this freedom?*

A: The freedom I speak of is the freedom to follow the will of the soul, not all the whims of the mind and vital.

The freedom I speak of is an austere truth which strives to surmount all the weaknesses and desires of the lower, ignorant being.

The freedom I speak of is the freedom to consecrate oneself wholly and without reserve to one's highest, noblest, divinest aspiration.

Who among you sincerely follows this path? It is easy to judge, but more difficult to understand, and far more difficult still to realise." (CWM 16: 276) (CWM 12: 391)

CVII—Joy, a Feeling of Plenitude in Aspiration

1.

"*Aspiration always gives joy, doesn't it?*

Rather a feeling of plenitude—'joy' is a misleading word; a feeling of plenitude [*state of being completeness*], of force, of an inner flame which fills you. Aspiration can give you joy, but a very special joy, which has no excitement in it." (CWM 4: 137)

2.

"As soon as the presence of the psychic consciousness is united with the aspiration, the intensity takes on quite a different character, as if it were filled with the very essence of an inexpressible joy. This joy is something that seems contained in everything else. Whatever may be the outer form of the aspiration, whatever difficulties and obstacles it may meet, this joy is there as though it filled up everything, and it carries you in spite of everything.

That is the sure sign of the psychic presence. That is to say, you have established a contact with your psychic consciousness, a more or less complete, more or less constant contact, but at that moment it is the psychic being, the psychic consciousness which fills your aspiration, gives it its true contents. And that's what is translated into joy.

When that is not there, the aspiration may come from different parts of the being; it may come mainly from the mind or mainly from the vital or even from the physical, or it may come from all the three together—it may come from all kinds of combinations. But in general, for the intensity to be there, the vital must be present. It is the vital which gives the intensity; and as the vital is at the same time the seat of most of the difficulties, obstacles, contradictions, it is the friction between the intensity of the aspiration and the intensity of the difficulty which creates this anguish.

This is no reason to stop one's aspiration." (CWM 8: 250–251)

3.

"Many things go on in the head. I have told you this already several times, the head is like a public square. Anything at all can enter there, come, cross over, go out, and create a lot of disorder. And people who are in the habit of playing with ideas are the ones most hampered from going farther. It is a game that's pretty, attractive; it gives you the impression that you are not altogether ordinary, at the level of ordinary life, but it cuts the wings.

It's not the head which has wings: it's the heart. It's this... yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. That's everything. Only that.

And so, after all, one doesn't care a rap for obstacles and difficulties. What can that do to you?... It doesn't

count. One laughs at time also. What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

For this is the one true joy. And this joy fades away when there is something egoistic, and because there is a demand— which one calls a need—which is mixed in the consecration. Otherwise the joy never disappears.

This is the first thing one obtains, and the last one realises. And it is the sign of Victory.

So long as you can't be in joy, a constant, calm, peaceful, luminous, invariable joy, well, it means that you have still to work to purify yourself, and sometimes work hard. But this is the sign." (CWM 7:396)

CVIII—Aspiration for Total Perfection

1.

"In our Ashram here we have found it necessary to establish a school for the education of the children of the resident sadhaks, teaching upon familiar lines though with certain modifications and taking as part and an important part of their development an intensive physical training which has given form to the sports and athletics practised by the Jeunesse Sportive of the Ashram and of which this Bulletin is the expression. It has been questioned by some what place sports can have in an Ashram created for spiritual seekers and what connection there can be between spirituality and sports. The first answer lies in what I have already written about the connections of an institution of this kind with the activities of the general life of men and what I have indicated in the previous number as to the utility such a training can have for the life of a nation and its benefit for the international life. Another answer can occur to us if we look beyond first objects and turn to the aspiration for a total perfection including the perfection of the body.

In the admission of an activity such as sports and physical exercises into the life of the Ashram it is evident that the methods and the first objects to be attained must belong to what we have called the lower end of the being. Originally they have been introduced for the physical

education and bodily development of the children of the Ashram School, and these are too young for a strictly spiritual aim or practice to enter into their activities and it is not certain that any great number of them will enter the spiritual life when they are of an age to choose what shall be the direction of their future. The object must be the training of the body and the development of certain parts of mind and character so far as this can be done by or in connection with this training, and I have already indicated in a previous number how and in what directions this can be done. It is a relative and human perfection that can be attained within these limits; anything greater can be reached only by the intervention of higher powers, psychic powers, the power of the spirit." (CWSA 13: 525–526)

2.

ATHLETICS COMPETITION 1962

"Replace the ambition to be first by the will to do the best possible.

Replace the desire for success by the yearning for progress.

Replace the eagerness for fame by the aspiration for perfection.

Physical Education is meant to bring into the body, consciousness and control, discipline and mastery, all things necessary for a higher and better life.

Keep all that in mind, practise sincerely and you will become a good athlete; this is the first step on the way to be a true man.

Blessings.” (CWM 12: 273–274)

3.

“Perfection is all that we want to become in our highest aspiration.” (CWM 15: 79)

4.

“Thirst for perfection: constant and multiple aspiration.” (CWM 15: 79)

CIX—Aspiration and Sincerity

1.
"[*Sincerity*:] To allow no part of the being to contradict the highest aspiration towards the Divine." (CWSA 29: 50)

2.
"As the sadhak aspires to be an instrument of the Divine and one with the Divine, sincerity in him means that he is really in earnest in his aspiration and refuses all other will or impulse except the Divine's." (CWSA 29: 50)

3.
"Q: *What do You mean by a life of true sincerity?*

A: To make all your actions conform to your highest aspiration and purest will." (CWM 17: 130)

4.
"But if you, whoever it may be, become truly sincere—what I call sincere, you see, what Sri Aurobindo calls sincere, that is, when nothing in the being contradicts the aspiration and the will to consecration, nothing disguises itself to continue living its own independent life... The disguises are countless, they are full of craftiness and malice, very deceptive, and unfortunately the human being has a very great innate tendency to deceive himself; and the more

one deceives himself, the less one recognises the self-deception. But if one is *really* sincere, the Adversary can't even approach him any longer; and he doesn't try it, because that would be courting his own destruction." (CWM 7: 398)

5.

"It is to the sincerity of your aspiration that the Love answers spontaneously." (CWM 14: 72)

6.

"Each one is responsible only for the sincerity of his aspiration." (CWM 14: 74)

7.

"I mean by the measure of the soul's sincerity a yearning after the Divine and its aspiration towards the higher life." (CWSA 29: 55–56)

8.

"I tell you: If you are sincere in all the elements of your being, to the very cells of your body and if your whole being integrally wants the Divine, you are sure of victory but for nothing less than that. That is what I call being sincere.

I am not speaking of glaring things like obeying your impulses, your caprices and then saying: 'I do not belong

to myself any more, I belong to the Divine; it is the Divine who is doing everything in me, who is acting in me', that indeed is crude enough. I am speaking of more refined people, a little more noble, who put on a pretty cloak to cover their desires.

How many things in the course of the day, how many thoughts, sensations, gestures are turned exclusively towards the Divine in an aspiration? How many? I believe if you have a single one in the whole day, you may mark that in red letters.

When I say, 'If you are sincere, you are sure of victory', I mean true sincerity: to be constantly the true flame that burns like an offering. That intense joy of existing only by the Divine and for the Divine and feeling that without Him nothing exists, that life has no longer any meaning, nothing has any purpose, nothing has any value, nothing has any interest, unless it is this call, this aspiration, this opening to the supreme Truth, to all that we call the Divine (because you must use some word or other), the only reason for the existence of the universe. Remove that and everything disappears." (CWM 5: 7)

9.

"*Sweet Mother, what does 'sincerity' mean, exactly?*

There are several degrees of sincerity.

The most elementary degree is not to say one thing and think another, claim one thing and want another. For example, what happens quite often: to say, 'I want to make progress, and I want to get rid of my defects' and, at the same time, to cherish one's defects in the consciousness and take great care to hide them so that nobody intervenes and sends them off. This indeed is a very common phenomenon. This is already the second degree. The first degree, you see, is when someone claims, for example, to have a very great aspiration and to want the spiritual life and, at the same time, does completely... how to put it?... shamelessly, things which are most contradictory to the spiritual life. This is indeed a degree of sincerity, rather of insincerity, which is most obvious.

But there is a second degree which I have just described to you, which is like this: there is one part of the being which has an aspiration and says, even thinks, even feels that it would very much like to get rid of defects, imperfections; and then, at the same time, other parts which hide these defects and imperfections very carefully so as not to be compelled to expose them and get over them. This is very common.

And finally, if we go far enough, if we push the description far enough, so long as there is a part of the being which contradicts the central aspiration for the Divine, one is not perfectly sincere. That is to say, a perfect sincerity is something extremely rare. And most commonly,

very very frequently, when there are things in one's nature which one does not like, one takes the greatest care to hide them from oneself, one finds favourable explanations or simply makes a little movement, like this (*gesture*). You have noticed that when things move like this you can't see them clearly. Well, where the defect is seated, there is a kind of vibration which does this, and so your sight is not clear, you no longer see your defects. And this is automatic. Well, all these are insincerities." (CWM 6: 397–398)

10.

"We are formed of all kinds of different pieces. They become active one after another. According to the part that is active, one is quite another person, becomes almost another personality. For instance, one had an aspiration at first, felt that everything existed only for the Divine, then something happens, somebody comes along, one has to do something, and everything disappears. One tries to recall the experience, not even the memory of the experience remains. One is completely under another influence, one wonders how this could have happened. … It is because one is made of all kinds of different things. The body is like a bag with pebbles and pearls all mixed up, and it is only the bag which keeps all that together." (CWM 5: 8–9)

11.

"*Will our victory act for the whole world?*

It will not change the whole world. For your victory is too small for the whole world. Millions of such victories are needed. It is a very small victory if compared with the whole. But it gets mingled with other things.... It could be said that it is like bringing into the world the *capacity* of doing a thing. But for this to act effectively, at times centuries are necessary; it is a question of proportion. You can try it out (and it is much more difficult) even with those around you. You must be absolutely sincere, not do it with the idea of getting a result, but because you want to gain a victory. If you gain it, it will necessarily have an effect on those around you. But if a bargaining element is mixed up in it, if you do this thing because you want to get that other: 'I want to overcome my defects, but that person must also overcome his', then that doesn't work. It is a merchant's attitude: 'I give this, but I shall take that.' That spoils everything. There is neither sincerity nor purity. It is bargaining.

Nothing must be mixed with your sincerity, your aspiration, your motive. You do things for love of the Divine, for truth, for perfection, without any other motive, any other idea. And that brings results." (CWM 5: 20)

12.

"*What should we do to remain always in contact with the Divine, so that no person or event can draw us away from this contact?*

Aspiration. Sincerity." (CWM 14: 287)

CX—Aspiration to Find the Truth

1.

"My experience is like this: whenever you sincerely want to know the truth, you do know it. There is *always* something to point out the error to you, to make you recognise the truth. And if you observe yourself attentively you find out that it is because you prefer error that you do not find the truth.

Even in small details, the very smallest—not to speak of the big things of life, the big decisions that one has to take—even in the smallest things, whenever the aspiration for the truth and the will to be true are wholly sincere, the indication always comes. And precisely, with the method of the Buddhist discipline, if you follow up within yourself the causes of your way of being, you always find out that persistence in error comes from desire. It is because you have the preference, the desire to feel, to act, to think in a particular way, that you make the mistake. It is not simply because you do not know what is true. You do not know it precisely because you say in a vague, general, imprecise way, "Oh, I want the truth." In fact, if you take a detail, each detail, and put your finger on it, you discover that you are playing the ostrich in order not to see. You put up something uncertain, something vague, a veil, in order not to see behind it.

Whenever there is sincerity, you find that the help, the guidance, the grace are always there to give you the answer and you are not mistaken for long.

It is this sincerity in the aspiration for progress, in the will for truth, in the need to be truly pure—pure as it is understood in the spiritual life—it is this sincerity which is the key to all progress. With it you know—and you *can*.

There is always, somewhere in the being, something which prefers to deceive itself, otherwise the light is there, always ready to guide, but you shut your eyes in order not to see it. (CWM 3: 192)

2.

"In reality, in order to discern exactly what is false requires such sincerity in the aspiration, such resolution in the will to be true that even this little phrase 'to know the true to be true and the false to be false' means a very considerable realisation. And the conclusion, 'they attain the supreme goal' is a great promise.

There are teachings which say that one must have no desire at all; they are the ones that aim at a complete withdrawal from life in order to enter into the immobility of the Spirit, the absence of all activity, all movement, all form, all external reality. To attain that one must have no desire at all, that is to say, one must completely leave behind all will for progress; progress itself becomes something unreal and external. But if in your conception of

Yoga you keep the idea of progress, and if you admit that the whole universe follows a progression, then what you have to do is to shift the objective of desire; instead of turning it towards things that are external, artificial, superficial and egoistical, you must join it as a force of realisation to the aspiration directed to the truth.

These few words, 'they pursue right desires', are a proof that the teaching of the Buddha, in its essence, did not turn away from the realisation upon earth, but only from what is false in the conception of the world and in activities as they are carried on in the world. Thus when he teaches that one must escape from life, it is not to escape from a life that would be the expression of the truth but from the illusory life as it is ordinarily lived in the world.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that in order to reach the Truth and to have the power of realising this Truth you must join the spiritual consciousness to a progressive mental consciousness.

And these few words certainly prove that such was the original conception of the Buddhist teaching." (CWM 3: 193–194)

3.

"If you want to cure yourself of a defect or a difficulty, there is but one method: to be perfectly vigilant, to have a very alert and vigilant consciousness. First you must see very clearly what you want to do. You must not hesitate, be full of doubt and say, 'Is it good to do this or not, does

this come into the synthesis or should it not come in?' You will see that if you trust your mind, it will always shuttle back and forth: it vacillates all the time. If you take a decision it will put before you all the arguments to show you that your decision is not good, and you will be tossed between the 'yes' and 'no', the black and white, and will arrive at nothing. Hence, first, you must know exactly what you want—know, not mentally, but through concentration, through aspiration and a very conscious will. That is the important point. Afterwards, gradually, by observation, by a sustained vigilance, you must realise a sort of method which will be personal to you—it is useless to convince others to adopt the same method as yours, for that won't succeed. Everyone must find his own method, everyone must have his own method, and to the extent you put into practice your method, it will become clearer and clearer, more and more precise. You can correct a certain point, make clear another, etc. So, you start working.... For a while, all will go well. Then, one day, you will find yourself facing an insurmountable difficulty and will tell yourself, 'I have done all that and look, everything is as bad as before!' Then, in this case, you must, through a yet more sustained concentration, open an inner door in you and bring into this movement a force which was not there formerly, a state of consciousness which was not there before. And there, there will be a power, when your own personal power will be exhausted and no longer effective. When the

personal power runs out ordinary people say, "That's good, I can no longer do anything, it is finished." But I tell you that when you find yourself before this wall, it is the beginning of something new. By an obstinate concentration, you must pass over to the other side of the wall and there you will find a new knowledge, a new force, a new power, a new help, and you will be able to work out a new system, a new method which surely will take you very far.

I do not say this to discourage you; only, things happen like that. And the worst of all is to get discouraged when it happens. You must tell yourself, 'With the means of transport at my disposal I have reached a certain point, but these means do not allow me to go further. What should I do?... Sit there and not stir any longer?—not at all. I must find other means of transport.' This will happen quite often, but after a while you will get used to it. You must sit down for a moment, meditate, and then find other means. You must increase your concentration, your aspiration and your trust and with the new help which comes to you, make a new programme, work out other means to replace those you have left behind. This is how one progresses stage by stage." (CWM 4: 180–181)

4.

"The world has been so made—at least up to now, let us hope that it will not be so for much longer—that,

spontaneously, a man who is not cultured, when he is brought into contact with ideas, always chooses wrong ideas.

And a child who is not educated always chooses bad company. It is a thing I experience constantly and concretely. If you keep a child in a special atmosphere and if, from a very early age, you instill in him a special atmosphere, a special purity, he has a chance of not making a wrong choice. But a child who is taken from the world as it is and is placed in a society where there are good and bad elements will go straight to those who can spoil him, teach him wrong things, that is to say, towards the worst company.

A man who has no intellectual culture, if you give him some mixed ideas, just at random, to choose from, he will always choose the stupid ones; because, as Sri Aurobindo has told us, this is a world of falsehood, of ignorance and an effort is needed, an aspiration; one must come in contact with one's inmost being—a conscious and luminous contact—if one is to distinguish the true from the false, the good influence from the bad. If you let yourself go, you sink into a hole.

Things are like that because what rules the world—oh! let us put it in the past tense, so that it becomes true—what ruled the world was falsehood and ignorance.

In fact, for the moment, it is still like that; one should have no illusions about it. But perhaps with a great effort

and great vigilance we shall be able to make it otherwise... soon—the ‘perhaps’ is for ‘soon’.

Surely it will come one day, but we want it soon, and that is why the last two recommendations please me: ‘Arise. Cast off Negligence’.” (CWM 3: 244–245)

CXI—Aspiration and Passivity

1.

"*But Mother, to be able to become passive an effort has to be made, hasn't it?*

Not necessarily, that depend upon people. An effort? One must, yes, one must want it. But is the will an effort?... Naturally, one must think about it, must want it. But the two things can go together, you see, there is a moment when the two—aspiration and passivity—can not only be alternate but simultaneous. You can be at once in the state of aspiration, of willing, which calls down something—exactly the will to open oneself and receive, and the aspiration which calls down the force you want to receive—and *at the same time* be in that state of complete inner stillness which allows full penetration, for it is in this immobility that one can be penetrated, that one becomes permeable by the Force. Well, the two can be simultaneous without the one disturbing the other, or can alternate so closely that they can hardly be distinguished. But one can be like that, like a great flame rising in aspiration, and at the same time as though this flame formed a vase, a large vase, opening and receiving all that comes down.

And the two can go together. And when one succeeds in having the two together, one can have them constantly, whatever one may be doing. Only there may

be a slight, very slight displacement of consciousness, almost imperceptible, which becomes aware of the flame first and then of the vase of receptivity —of what seeks to be filled and the flame that rises to call down what must fill the vase—a very slight pendular movement and so close that it gives the impression that one has the two at the same time." (CWM 6: 113)

2.

"*How and why does this pressure come?*

If you mean the pressure of inert passivity, it comes from the resistance of the lower vital and the obscurity of the material nature. It can be overcome by an untiring will and aspiration." (CWM 17: 25)

CXII—Aspiration and Transformation

1.

"This sadhana is a Yoga of transformation of the human consciousness into the divine consciousness. The sadhaks who come here are human beings with all the human weaknesses, but with a possibility of the transformation and an aspiration for it. For getting rid of their human weaknesses—such as lust, greed, vanity, pride, falsehood—they must become conscious of them, must always reject them, must call in the Mother's presence, the divine Consciousness, the divine Force to help them in rejecting their defects and to transform them. If they do that, then all that is necessary for the change will be done." (CWSA 31: 696)

2.

"Q: " *'All things shall change in God's transfiguring hour.' Can man delay or hasten the coming of this hour?*

A: Neither the one nor the other in their apparent contradiction created by the separative consciousness, but something else that our words cannot express.

In the present state of human consciousness, it is good for it to think that aspiration and human effort can hasten the advent of the divine transformation, because effort and aspiration are needed for the transformation to take place." (CWM 16: 391)

3.

"If your soul always aspires for the transformation, then that is what you have to follow after. To seek the Divine or rather some aspect of the Divine—for one cannot entirely realise the Divine if there is no transformation—may be enough for some, but not for those whose soul's aspiration is for the entire divine change." (CWSA 29: 24)

4.

"This transformation is only possible after certain steps of a divine ascent have been mastered and to climb these steps is the object of the Yoga of Works as it is conceived by the Gita. The extirpation of desire, a wide and calm equality of the mind, the life soul and the spirit, annihilation of the ego, an inner quietude and expulsion or transcendence of ordinary Nature, the Nature of the three gunas and a total surrender to the Supreme are the successive steps of this preliminary change. Only after all this has been done, can we live securely in an infinite consciousness not bound like our mental human nature. And only then can we receive the Light, know perfectly the will of the Supreme, attune all our movements to the rhythm of its Truth and execute perfectly from moment to moment its imperative commandments. Till then there is no firm achievement, but only an endeavour, seeking and aspiration, all the stress and struggle of a great and uncertain spiritual adventure. Only when these things are

accomplished is there for the dynamic parts of our nature the beginning of a divine security in its acts and a transcendent peace." (CWSA 12: 352)

5.

"We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities. But there is an absolutely indispensable first step that must be accomplished before anything else can be undertaken: the transformation of the consciousness. The starting-point is of course the aspiration for this transformation and the will to realise it; without that nothing can be done. But if in addition to the aspiration there is an inner opening, a kind of receptivity, then one can enter into this transformed consciousness at a single stroke and maintain oneself there. This change of consciousness is abrupt, so to say; when it occurs, it occurs all of a sudden, although the preparation for it may have been long and slow. I am not speaking here of a mere change in mental outlook, but of a change in the consciousness itself." (CWM 12: 80)

6.

" *Transformation demands a very high degree of aspiration, surrender and receptivity, doesn't it?*

Transformation demands a total and integral consecration. But isn't that the aspiration of every sincere sadhak?

Total means vertically in all the states of being, from the most material to the most subtle.

Integral means horizontally in all the different and often contradictory parts which make up the outer being (physical, vital and mental).” (CWM 16: 371)

CXIII—Aspiration and Openness

1.

"The supramental Yoga is at once an ascent towards God and a descent of Godhead into the embodied nature.

The ascent can only be achieved by a one–centred all–gathering upward aspiration of the soul and mind and life and body; the descent can only come by a call of the whole being towards the infinite and eternal Divine. If this call and this aspiration are there, or if by any means they can be born and grow constantly and seize all the nature, then and then only a supramental uplifting and transformation becomes possible.

The call and the aspiration are only first conditions; there must be along with them and brought by their effective intensity an opening of all the being to the Divine and a total surrender.

This opening is a throwing wide of all the nature on all its levels and in all its parts to receive into itself without limits the greater divine Consciousness which is there already above and behind and englobing this mortal half–conscious existence." (CWSA 12: 169)

2.

"Openness is the will to receive and to utilise for progress the force and influence; the constant aspiration to remain in touch with the Consciousness; the faith that the force

and consciousness are always with you, around you, inside you and that you have only to let nothing stand in the way of your receiving them." (CWM 14: 144)

3.

"One has only to aspire sincerely and keep oneself as open as possible to the Mother's Force. Then whatever difficulties come, they will be overcome—it may take some time, but the result is sure." (CWSA 29: 55)

4.

"Q: *Mother, if there is a part in one's nature that does not open, what is the method of aspiring so that this part may open?*

A: You may aspire that this part may open—let the part that is open aspire for the other to open. It will open after a certain time; one must continue, persist. That is the only thing to do." (CWM 6: 116)

5.

"It is certainly not by merely repeating 'to will' and 'to open' (with the mental idea), that the will or the opening will come. It is by using the will that the will becomes effective, it is by using the aspiration and the will also that the opening comes. The first thing is to call down the calm into the mind and the vital; with the calm established or in

course of preparation to invite more and more the Mother's workings and grow conscious of them within you and give your assent to them and refuse all else. All the rest then comes in its time and by the proper process." (CWSA 29: 109)

6.

"Opening is a thing that happens of itself by sincerity of will and aspiration. It means to be able to receive the higher forces that come from the Mother. (CWSA 29: 105)

CXIV—Aspiration for the Total Delight of Existence

1.

"The gnostic evolution at a certain stage must bring about a completeness of this reversal and of this power of self-protection which will fulfil the claim of the body for immunity and serenity of its being and for deliverance from suffering and build in it a power for the total delight of existence. A spiritual Ananda can flow into the body and inundate cell and tissue; a luminous materialisation of this higher Ananda could of itself bring about a total transformation of the deficient or adverse sensibilities of physical Nature.

An aspiration, a demand for the supreme and total delight of existence is there secretly in the whole make of our being, but it is disguised by the separation of our parts of nature and their differing urge and obscured by their inability to conceive or seize anything more than a superficial pleasure. In the body consciousness this demand takes shape as a need of bodily happiness, in our life parts as a yearning for life happiness, a keen vibrant response to joy and rapture of many kinds and to all surprise of satisfaction; in the mind it shapes into a ready reception of all forms of mental delight; on a higher level it becomes apparent in the spiritual mind's call for peace and divine ecstasy. This trend is founded in the truth of the being; for Ananda is the very essence of the Brahman, it is

the supreme nature of the omnipresent Reality. The supermind itself in the descending degrees of the manifestation emerges from the Ananda and in the evolutionary ascent merges into the Ananda. It is not, indeed, merged in the sense of being extinguished or abolished but is there inherent in it, indistinguishable from the self of awareness and the self-effectuating force of the Bliss of Being." (CWSA 22: 1025)

2.

"Next, it was not my intention to say that it was wrong to aspire for the Ananda. What I wanted to point out was the condition for the permanent possession of the Ananda (intimations, visits, down rushes of it one can have before); the essential condition for it is a change of consciousness, the coming of peace, light, etc., all that brings about the transition from the normal to the spiritualised nature. And that being so, it is better to make this change of consciousness the first object of the sadhana. On the other hand, to press for the constant Ananda immediately in a consciousness which is not yet able to retain it, still more to substitute for it lesser (vital) joys and pleasures may very well stop the flow of these spiritual experiences which make the continuous ecstasy eventually possible. But I certainly never intended to say that the Ananda was not to be attained or to insist on your moving towards a *nirānanda* (joyless) Brahman. On the contrary, I said that

Ananda was the crown of the Yoga, which surely means that it was part of the highest final siddhi. Whatever one wants sincerely and persistently from the Divine, the Divine is sure to give. If then you want Ananda and go on wanting, you will surely have it in the end." (CWSA 29: 9–10)

3.

"Quite naturally we ask ourselves what this secret is, towards which pain leads us. For a superficial and imperfect understanding, one could believe that it is pain which the soul is seeking. Nothing of the kind. The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, an unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through it and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.

I am not speaking of pleasure because pleasure turns its back constantly and almost completely on this profound divine Delight. (CWM 9: 41)

CXV—Aspiration and Agni, the Will

1.

"If he [Agni] is the Will in our nervous being and purifies it by action, he is also the Will in the mind and clarifies it by aspiration. When he enters into the intellect, he is drawing near to his divine birthplace and home. He leads the thoughts towards effective power; he leads the active energies towards light.

His divine birth-place and home,—though he is born everywhere and dwells in all things,—is the Truth, the Infinity, the vast cosmic Intelligence in which Knowledge and Force are unified. For there all Will is in harmony with the truth of things and therefore effective; all thought part of Wisdom, which is the divine Law, and therefore perfectly regulative of a divine action. Agni fulfilled becomes mighty in his own home—in the Truth, the Right, the Vast. It is thither [to that place] that he is leading upward the aspiration in humanity, the soul of the Aryan, the head of the cosmic sacrifice." (CWSA 15: 278)

2.

"Agni is the power of conscious Being, called by us will, effective behind the workings of mind and body. Agni is the strong God within (*maryaḥ*, the strong, the masculine) who puts out his strength against all assailing powers, who forbids inertia, who repels every failing of heart and of

force, who spurns out all lack of manhood. Agni actualises what might otherwise remain as an ineffectual thought or aspiration. He is the doer of the Yoga (*sādhu*); divine smith labouring at his forge, he hammers out our perfection. Here he is said to become the charioteer of the Supreme." (CWSA 15: 282–283)

CXVI—Aspiration in Children

1.

"Q: *Is there an aspiration for growth in children also, as there is in plants?*

A: Yes. Even, very often it is conscious: they want to be tall.

Q: *Does it then depend upon their aspiration—their being tall or short?*

A: At a particular time, yes. Indeed, I have known children who have grown tall because they had a very strong will to grow.

Yes, that has an effect even when one is no longer quite a child. I have seen cases of people who grew taller even at twenty–five, so very anxious were they to grow tall. And I am not speaking of those who have practised physical culture, for that's different; with physical training one can considerably change one's body; I am just speaking of an aspiration, an inner will. The body is sufficiently plastic till twenty–five. Later one must introduce more scientific methods, like physical culture; and if that is done wisely and methodically, one can obtain wonderful results. But always, behind it, there must be a will, that is very important; a kind of tenacious aspiration,

a knowledge, or even a faith that one is not necessarily tied down by atavism.

For obviously, like plants, one is limited by the original seed, the species to which one belongs. But all the same there is a wide margin. For instance, I have very many times seen children who were considerably taller than their parents, and had truly wanted to be so. Of course, it was against a certain resistance and within a certain limit, but one can push back the limit a good deal.

And in fact, according to the theories of heredity and atavism, it is said that heredity can skip generations, and there are few families where at least one member was not tall and so could justify the height of his grandchildren or great–grandchildren." (CWM 8: 25)

2.

"*What qualities are necessary for one to be called 'a true child of the Ashram'?*

Sincerity, courage, discipline, endurance, absolute faith in the Divine work and unassailable trust in the Divine Grace. All this must be accompanied by a sustained, ardent and persevering aspiration, and by a limitless patience." (CWM 13: 113)

3.

"But precisely, I believe that someone who has grown up here [in the Ashram school] from childhood and felt things

quite subconsciously when very young, and who has in spite of everything... that leaves a trace, it cannot go without any effect; and when one sees children brought up here beside those who come from outside, there is truly a great difference (perhaps not outwardly in the mechanical part of training, but in the understanding, the intelligence, in the inner awakening), there is a considerable difference, and the new ones need some time to come up to the same level. It is something beyond books, don't you see? It is like the difference between living in a pure atmosphere, filling the lungs with pure air every time one breathes and living in an infected atmosphere and poisoning oneself every time one breathes. From the point of view of consciousness it is the same phenomenon, and it is essentially the most important thing. And it is this which completely escapes the superficial consciousness. You are plunged in a sea of consciousness full of light, aspiration, true understanding, essential purity, and whether you want it or not it enters. Even for those who are shut up in their outer consciousness, well, they cannot sleep in vain. There is an action here during sleep which is quite considerable, considerable. So that has an effect, it is visible. I have seen people who had come altogether from outside, who knew nothing (only they had spent their life taking interest in children), well, the impression of these people—visitors, people just passing by— they are all quite bewildered: 'But you have children here as I have never seen elsewhere!'

As for us, we are used to it, aren't we? They are spontaneously like that, quite naturally. But there is an awakening in the consciousness, there is a kind of inner response and a feeling of blossoming, of inner freedom which is not found elsewhere." (CWM 5: 415–416)

4.

"Let us take simply a question about your class, shall we?—the school class. Even as an undisciplined, disobedient and ill-willed child can disorganise the class—and this is why at times one is obliged to put him out, because simply by his presence he can completely disorganise the class—so too, if there is a student who has the absolutely right attitude, the will to learn in everything, so that not a word is pronounced, not a gesture made, but it becomes for him an opportunity to learn something—his presence can have the opposite effect and help the class to rise in education. If, consciously, he is in this state of intensity of aspiration to learn and correct himself, he communicates this to the others.... It is true that in the present state of things the bad example is much more contagious than the good one! It is much easier to follow the bad example than the good, but the good too is useful, and a class with a true student who is there only because he wants to learn and apply himself, who is deeply interested in every opportunity to learn—this creates a solid atmosphere." (CWM 6: 155)

5.

"The first rule of moral training is to suggest and invite, not command or impose. The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily converse and the books read from day to day. These books should contain, for the younger student, the lofty examples of the past given, not as moral lessons, but as things of supreme human interest, and, for the elder student, the great thoughts of great souls, the passages of literature which set fire to the highest emotions and prompt the highest ideals and aspirations, the records of history and biography which exemplify the living of those great thoughts, noble emotions and aspiring ideals. This is a kind of good company, satsaṅga, which can seldom fail to have effect, so long as sententious sermonising is avoided, and becomes of the highest effect if the personal life of the teacher is itself moulded by the great things he places before his pupils. It cannot, however, have full force unless the young life is given an opportunity, within its limited sphere, of embodying in action the moral impulses which rise within it." (CWSA 1: 390–391)

6.

"In order to increase the suppleness and comprehensiveness of his mind, one should see not only that he studies many varied topics, but above all that a single subject is approached in various ways, so that the

child understands in a practical manner that there are many ways of facing the same intellectual problem, of considering it and solving it. This will remove all rigidity from his brain and at the same time it will make his thinking richer and more supple and prepare it for a more complex and comprehensive synthesis. In this way also the child will be imbued with the sense of the extreme relativity of mental learning and, little by little, an aspiration for a truer source of knowledge will awaken in him." (CWM 12: 26–27)

7.

"The Centre of Education [the Ashram School] does not award degrees or diplomas, since it seeks to awaken in its students a joy of learning and an aspiration for progress that are independent of outer motives." (CWM 12: 110)

8.

MESSAGES FOR THE ANNUAL RE-OPENING OF CLASSES

"Another year has passed, leaving behind it its burden of lessons, some hard, some even painful.

Now, a new year begins, bringing possibilities of progress and of realisation. But to take full advantage of these possibilities, we must understand the previous lessons.

It is more important to know that all accidents are the effect of unconsciousness. However, externally, one of

their chief causes is a spirit of indiscipline, a kind of contempt for discipline.

It is left to us to prove, by a sustained and disciplined effort, that we are sincere in our aspiration for a life more conscious and more true.

Let the Truth be your master and your guide.

We aspire for the Truth and its triumph in our being and our activities.

Let the aspiration for the Truth be the dynamism of our efforts.

O Truth! We want to be guided by Thee. May Thy reign come upon earth.

When one lives in the truth, one is above all contradictions." (CWM 12: 113–114)

9.

"I do not approve of these literature classes in which, ostensibly for the sake of knowledge, they flounder in the mud of a state of mind which is out of place here and which cannot in any way help to build up the consciousness of tomorrow. I repeated this to X yesterday in connection with your letter, and I explained briefly to him how I saw the transition period between what was and what will be.

If we could discover, either here or there, the expression of a sincere and luminous aspiration, it could be made into an opportunity for study and become an interesting development.

Examine the matter together and let me know what you decide.

In any case: no more 'literature classes'." (CWM 12: 143–144)

10.

"Bonne Fête.

With a whole bunch of roses (surrender) so that your aspiration may be fulfilled and you become my ideal child *aware* of your soul and the true goal of your life.

With my blessings and my love." (CWM 12: 127)

11.

"Bonne Fête.

I embrace you with all my heart and give you my blessings for the fulfilment of your highest aspiration.

With my love." (CWM 12: 127)

12.

"We all want to be the true children of our Divine Mother. But for that, sweet Mother, give us patience and courage, obedience, goodwill, generosity and unselfishness, and all the necessary virtues. This is our prayer and aspiration." (CWM 12: 127–128)

13.

To Big Boys' Boarding

"May this day be for you the beginning of a new life in which you will strive to understand better and better why you are here and what is expected of you.

Live always in the aspiration of realising your most complete and most true perfection." (CWM 12: 128)

14.

"In connection with a question on the need for continuity in organising the work with young children, Mother made the following remarks:

But there is one thing, one thing which is the main difficulty: it is the parents. When the children live with their parents I consider that it is hopeless, because the parents want their child to be educated as they were themselves, and they want them to get good jobs, to earn money—all the things that are contrary to our aspiration.

The children who are with their parents... really, I don't know what to do. The parents have such a great influence on them that in the end they ask to go away to a school somewhere else.

And that, of all the difficulties—*all* of them—that is the greatest: the influence of the parents. And if we try to counteract that influence the parents will begin to detest us and it will be even worse than before, because they will say unpleasant things about us. There.

That is my experience. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the children have taken a bad turn because of the parents.

This seems indispensable to me. We should write a circular letter saying: 'Parents who want their children to be educated in the ordinary way and learn in order to get a good job, to earn their living and have brilliant careers, should not send them here.' There. (CWM 12: 432)

CXVII—Aspiration in Animals to Become Human Beings

1.

"As man aspires to be a god?... I knew animals which aspired to become human beings, but they were living with human beings. Cats and dogs, for example, which lived in a close intimacy with human beings, truly had an aspiration. I had a cat which was very, very unhappy for being a cat, it wanted to be a man. It had an untimely death. It used to meditate, it certainly did a kind of sadhana of its own, and when it left, even a portion of its vital being reincarnated in a human being. The little psychic element that was at the centre of the being went directly into a man, but even what was conscious in the vital of the cat went into a human being. But these are rather exceptional cases." (CWM 5: 227–228)

2.

"There was a cat... what its name was I don't know; and I had many cats, you know, so I don't remember now; there was one called Kiki, it was the first son of this cat, and then there was another, its second son (that is to say, born another time) which was called Brownie.

This one was admirable and it died of the cat disease—as there is a disease of the dogs, there is a disease of the kittens—I don't know how it caught the

thing, but it was wonderful during its illness and I was taking care of it as of a child. And it always expressed a kind of aspiration. There was a time before it fell ill... we used to have in those days meditation in a room of the Library House, in the room there—Sri Aurobindo's own room —and we used to sit on the floor. And there was an armchair in a corner, and when we gathered for the meditation this cat came every time and settled in the armchair and literally it entered into a trance, it had movements of trance; it did not sleep, it was not asleep, it was truly in a trance; it gave signs of that and had astonishing movements, as when animals dream; and it didn't want to come out from it, it refused to come out, it remained in it for hours. But it never came in until we were beginning the meditation. It settled there and remained there throughout the meditation. We indeed had finished but it remained, and it was only when I went to take it, called it in a particular way, brought it back into its body, that it consented to go away; otherwise no matter who came and called it, it did not move. Well, this cat always had a great aspiration, a kind of aspiration to become a human being; and in fact, when it left its body it entered a human body. Only it was a very tiny part of the consciousness, you see, of the human being; it was like the opposite movement from that of the woman with the other cat. But this one was a cat which leaped over many births, so to say, many psychic stages to enter into contact with a

human body. It was a simple enough human body, but still, all the same...

There is a difference in the development of a cat and of a human being…

It happens… I think these are exceptional cases, but still it happens

In these cases is the psychic conscious?

The aspiration is conscious, yes, conscious. The aspiration was very conscious in it, very conscious. It is not a formed psychic as when the psychic becomes a completely independent being, it is not that; but it is an aspiration, it is an ardent aspiration for progress—as we, you know, we have the aspiration to become supramental beings instead of remaining human beings, well, it was something absolutely similar: it was a cat doing yoga— exactly—to become a man.

It was perhaps because its mother had in it a movement, a formation, an emanation of consciousness which had belonged to a human being; it is probably that which had left a kind of nostalgia for the human life which gave it this intensity of aspiration. But truly it did yoga for that." (CWM 7: 98–100)

CXVIII—Aspiration in Plants and Trees

1.

"And in any case, it (plants) has an aspiration; plants grow because they aspire for the light, for the sun, for open air.

And it's a kind of competition. If one goes into a wood, for instance, into a park where there are many different plants, one can observe very clearly that there is a sort of competition among plants to pass each other and reach the light and open air above. It is indeed quite wonderful to see." (CWM 8: 24)

2.

"The force of love in the world is trying to find consciousnesses that are capable of receiving this divine movement in its purity and expressing it. This race of all beings towards love, this irresistible push and seeking out in the world's heart and in all hearts, is the impulse given by a Divine love behind the human longing and seeking. It touches millions of instruments, trying always, always failing; but this constant touch prepares these instruments and suddenly one day there will awake in them the capacity of self-giving, the capacity of loving.

The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in other worlds than in the human. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put

yourself into communion with Nature: you will feel rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration of an intense love and longing,—a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness, for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here. Once you have come in contact with this large, pure and true Divine love, if you have felt it even for a short time and in its smallest form, you will realise what an abject thing human desire has made of it. It has become in human nature something low, brutal, selfish, violent, ugly, or else it is something weak and sentimental, made up of the pettiest feeling, brittle, superficial, exacting. And this baseness and brutality or this self-regarding weakness they call love!" (CWM 3: 71–72)

3.

"Have you never watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than

men. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is of course the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the Supreme Consciousness. The plants have felt it quite distinctly in their own simple, blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know how to become aware of it. On the plane of Matter they are the most open to my influence—I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure psychic consciousness is instinctive to it. When, therefore, you offer flowers to me their condition is almost always an index to yours. There are persons who never succeed in bringing a fresh flower to me—even if the flower is fresh it becomes limp in their hands. Others, however, always bring fresh flowers and even revitalise drooping ones. If your aspiration is strong your flower-offerings will be fresh. And if you are receptive you will be also very easily able to absorb the message I put in the flowers I give you. When I give them, I give you states of consciousness; the flowers are the mediums and it all depends on your receptivity whether they are effective or not." (CWM 3: 132)

4.

"I have noticed a first rudiment of the psychic presence and vibration in vegetable life, and truly this blossoming one calls a flower is the first manifestation of the psychic

presence. The psychic is individualised only in man, but it was there before him; but it is not the same kind of individualisation as in man, it is more fluid: it manifests as force, as consciousness rather than as individuality. Take the rose, for example; its great perfection of form, colour, scent expresses an aspiration and a psychic giving. Look at a rose opening in the morning at the first touch of the sun, it is a magnificent self-giving in aspiration." (CWM 4: 166–167)

5.

"There is already an active consciousness at work in plants.

And in the genius of the species there is a beginning—quite embryonic, but still—there is a beginning of response to the psychic influence, and certain flowers are clearly the expression of a psychic attitude and aspiration in the plant, not very conscious of itself, but existing like a spontaneous impetus." (CWM 8: 26)

CXIX—Aspiration in Inanimate Things

1.

"There is a certain state of consciousness in which one perceives this divine Love wherever it is found, and one does not feel so great a difference between creatures as it appears physically. There is much more aspiration than one would think in things we call inanimate. Much more. In stones also there is a kind of spontaneous sense of what is higher, more noble, more pure, and though they cannot express it in any way, they feel it, and this affects them differently.

Even in things, even in objects, even in stones, there is a strange receptivity which comes from this Presence. There are stones—if you know how to do it—that can accumulate forces. They can accumulate forces, keep them and transmit them. One can take stones (what are called precious stones) and concentrate forces into them and they keep them. And these forces irradiate slowly, very gradually. But if one knows how to do it one can accumulate such a quantity as would last, so to speak, indefinitely." (CWM 5: 228)

CXX—Mental Aspiration

1.

"A mental aspiration means that the thought–power aspires to have knowledge, for instance, or else to have the power to express itself well or have clear ideas, a logical reasoning. One may aspire for many things; that all the faculties and capacities of the mind may be developed and placed at the service of the Divine. This is a mental aspiration." (CWM 5: 292)

2.

"Mental aspiration: its expression is clear and precise and very reasonable." (CWM 14: 79)

3.

"Q: *Mother,*

Each time that I try to rise a little in my consciousness, I get a great setback and it seems to fall instead of rise. When I give up the effort, it becomes normal.

A: As for the progress, it is because you are trying *mentally* and the mental is always a limitation to the consciousness. It is only the aspiration from the heart and the psychic that can be effective. (And when you stop trying, you let me

work in you and I know the proper way!)" (CWM 17: 279) (CWM 14: 366)

4.

"*Does the mind aspire?*

That means? When the mind aspires, it aspires.

'*... the mental will and the psychic aspiration must be your support*.'

Yes, but the mind also can aspire. But psychic aspiration is more powerful than mental aspiration, and the mind must have its own will. If one speaks of the mental will and the psychic aspiration it does not mean that the mind has no aspiration and the psychic no will. It is just saying what is the most important thing in each of these. But it doesn't mean that it has only this. It can have all the other movements too." (CWM 7: 8–9)

5.

"Q: *What is the exact way of feeling that we belong to the Divine and that the Divine is acting in us?*

A: You must not feel with your head (because you may think so, but that's something vague); you must feel with your sense–feeling. Naturally one begins by wanting it

with the mind, because that is the first thing that understands. And then one has an aspiration here (*pointing to the heart*), with a flame which pushes you to realise it. But if you want it to be truly *the* thing, well, you must feel it." (CWM 5: 55)

6.

"Q: *Sweet Mother,*

How can one silence the mind, remain quiet, and at the same time have an aspiration, an intensity or a widening? Because as soon as one aspires, isn't it the mind that aspires?

A: No; aspiration, as well as widening and intensity, comes from the heart, the emotional centre, the door of the psychic or rather the door leading to the psychic.

The mind by its nature is curious and interested; it sees, it observes, it tries to understand and explain; and with all this activity, it disturbs the experience and diminishes its intensity and force.

On the other hand, the more quiet and silent the mind is, the more can aspiration rise up from the depths of the heart in the fullness of its ardour." (CWM 16: 223–224)

7.

"Our mind must be silent and quiet but our heart must be full of an ardent aspiration." (CWM 14: 350)

8.

"However, there is a very great difference, always, between a kind of mental curiosity which plays with words and ideas, and a true aspiration of the being which means that truly, really, it is *that* which counts, essentially, and nothing else—that aspiration, that inner will because of which nothing has any value except *that*, that realisation; nothing counts except *that*; there is no other reason for existence, for living, than *that*." (CWM 8: 206)

9.

"Aspiration of the mind for the supramental guidance: the mind feels that its complexity is powerless and asks for a greater light to illumine it." (CWM 14: 340)

10.

"What value have mental ideas about the Divine, ideas about what he should be, how he should act, how he should not act— they can only come in the way. Only the Divine Himself matters. When your consciousness embraces the Divine, then you can know what the Divine is, not before. Krishna is Krishna, one does not care what he did or did not do; only to see Him, meet Him, feel the Light, the Presence, the Love, the Ananda is what matters. So it is always for the spiritual aspiration—it is the law of the spiritual life.

Don’t waste time any longer in these ideas of the mind or in any starts of the vital—blow these clouds away. Keep fixed on the one thing indispensable.” (CWSA 29: 56)

11.

“The mind of man is not only a vital and physical, but an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, psychic, emotional and dynamic intelligence, and in the sphere of each of its tendencies its highest and strongest nature is to strain towards some absolute of them which the frame of life will not allow it to capture wholly and embody and make here entirely real. The mental absolute of our aspiration remains as a partly grasped shining or fiery ideal which the mind can make inwardly very present to itself, inwardly imperative on its effort, and can even effectuate partly, but not compel all the facts of life into its image.” (CWSA 19: 566)

12.

“This kind of spirituality linked on in some way to the demands of the normal mind of man, persuaded to the acceptance of useful social duty and current law of social conduct, popularised by cult and ceremony and image is the outward substance of the world’s greater religions. These religions have their individual victories, call in some ray of a higher light, impose some shadow of a larger spiritual or semi-spiritual rule, but cannot effect a complete

victory, end flatly in a compromise and in the act of compromise are defeated by life. Its problems remain and even recur in their fiercest forms— even such as this grim problem of Kurukshetra. The idealising intellect and ethical mind hope always to eliminate them, to discover some happy device born of their own aspiration and made effective by their own imperative insistence, which will annihilate this nether untoward aspect of life; but it endures and is not eliminated. The spiritualised intelligence on the other hand offers indeed by the voice of religion the promise of some victorious millennium hereafter, but meanwhile half convinced of terrestrial impotence, persuaded that the soul is a stranger and intruder upon earth, declares that after all not here in the life of the body or in the collective life of mortal man but in some immortal Beyond lies the heaven or the Nirvana where alone is to be found the true spiritual existence." (CWSA 19: 567–568)

13.

"From our ascending point of view we may say that the Real is behind all that exists; it expresses itself intermediately in an Ideal which is a harmonised truth of itself; the Ideal throws out a phenomenal reality of variable conscious-being which, inevitably drawn towards its own essential Reality, tries at last to recover it entirely whether by a violent leap or normally through the Ideal which put it forth. It is this that explains the imperfect reality of

human existence as seen by the Mind, the instinctive aspiration in the mental being towards a perfectibility ever beyond itself, towards the concealed harmony of the Ideal, and the supreme surge of the spirit beyond the ideal to the transcendental. The very facts of our consciousness, its constitution and its necessity presuppose such a triple order; they negate the dual and irreconcilable antithesis of a mere Absolute to a mere relativity." (CWSA 21: 126)

14.

"If we want to progress integrally, we must build within our conscious being a strong and pure mental synthesis which can serve us as a protection against temptations from outside, as a landmark to prevent us from going astray, as a beacon to light our way across the moving ocean of life.

Each individual should build up this mental synthesis according to his own tendencies and affinities and aspirations. But if we want it to be truly living and luminous, it must be centred on the idea that is the intellectual representation symbolising That which is at the centre of our being, That which is our life and our light.

This idea, expressed in sublime words, has been taught in various forms by all the great Instructors in all lands and all ages.

The Self of each one and the great universal Self are one. Since all that is exists from all eternity in its essence and principle, why make a distinction between the being

and its origin, between ourselves and what we place at the beginning?

The ancient traditions rightly said:

'Our origin and ourselves, our God and ourselves are one.'

And this oneness should not be understood merely as a more or less close and intimate relationship of union, but as a true identity." (CWM 2: 40)

15.

"*How should one practise this consciousness?*

You must establish this will to be conscious constantly and then change the mental will into an aspiration. You must have this movement. And then never to forget. You must look, look at yourself, and look at your life with the sincerity not to make a mistake, never to deceive yourself." (CWM 5: 63)

16.

"There comes a moment when, free from everything, one needs practically nothing, and one can use anything, do anything without this having any real influence on the state of consciousness one is in. This is what really matters. To try through outer gestures or arbitrary decisions which come from a mental consciousness aspiring for a higher life can be a means, not a very effective one but still a sort of reminder to the being that it ought to be something other

than what it is in its animality—but it's not that, it's not that at all! A person who could be entirely absorbed in his inner aspiration, to the point of not giving any thought or care to these external things, who would take what comes and not think about it when it doesn't, would be infinitely farther on the path than someone who undertakes ascetic practices with the idea that this will lead him to realisation.

The only thing that is truly effective is the change of consciousness; it is the inner liberation through an intimate, constant union, absolute and inevitable, with the vibration of the supramental forces. The preoccupation of every second, the will of all the elements of the being, the aspiration of the entire being, including all the cells of the body, is this union with the supramental forces, the divine forces. And there is no longer any need at all to be preoccupied with what the consequences will be. What has to be in the play of the universal forces and their manifestation will be, quite naturally, spontaneously, automatically, there is no need to be preoccupied with it." (CWM 9: 119)

CXXI—Vital Aspiration

1.

"It is the resistance of the vital that takes the form of this dryness—a form of passive resistance, just as revolt or an excited activity of desire is its active form of resistance. But you should not be discouraged—these phases are normal and almost everybody has to face them. It is not really a sign of failure or inability, but a trying part of the process of change. Hold fast and aspire always for the love and the opening. The inner heart is there and that will receive an answer to the aspiration and one day quickly open the outer and make it also receive. To call to the Mother always is the main thing and with that to aspire and assent to the light when it comes, to reject and detach oneself from desire and any dark movement. But if one cannot do these other things successfully, then call and still call.

The Mother's force is there with you even when you do not feel it. Trust to it, remain quiet and persevere." (CWSA 31: 134)

2.

"*To aspire that the light from above may come and purify it [vital]?*

Obviously, but the problem remains. You aspire for a change, perhaps for a specific change; but the answer to

your aspiration will not come immediately and in the meantime your nature will resist. Things happen like this: at a given moment the nature seems to have yielded and you think you have got the desired result. Your aspiration diminishes in intensity because you think you have the desired result. But the other fellow, who is very cunning and is waiting quietly in his corner, when you are off your guard, he springs up like a jack-in-the-box, and then you must begin all over again." (CWM 4: 179)

3.

"You should not allow yourself to be invaded by this suggestion of not being fit or able to go through. The vital is the most difficult part of the being to change or control and even sadhaks who have advanced far have to struggle with it at times. But its more fundamental resistances can be overcome more quickly, and you have only to persevere in aspiration and opening to the Mother and this kind of denial will after a time come no more." (CWSA 31: 137)

4.

"*Is the vital distorted from the very birth?*

If your birth was not an accident, you could very well think there was no distortion, but what you are at your birth is most of the time almost absolutely what your mother and father have made you, and also, through them, what your grandparents have made you. There are certain vital

traditions in families and, besides, there is the state of consciousness in which you were formed, conceived—the moment at which you were conceived—and that, not once in a million times does that state conform to true aspiration; and it is only a true aspiration which could make your vital pure of all mixture, make the vital element attracted for the formation of the being a pure element, free from all contagion; I mean that if a psychic being enters there, it can gather elements favourable to its growth. In the world as it is, things are so mixed up, have been so mixed up in every way, that it is almost impossible to have elements of the vital sufficiently pure not to suffer the contagion of all other contaminated beings.

I think I have already spoken about that, I have said what kind of aspiration ought to be there in the parents before the birth; but as I said, this does not happen even once in a hundred thousand instances. The willed conception of a child is extremely rare; mostly it is an accident. Among innumerable parents it is quite a small minority that even simply bothers about what a child could be; they do not even know that what the child will be depends on what they are. It is a very small *élite* which knows this. Most of the time things go as they can; anything at all happens and people don't even realise what is happening. So, in these conditions how do you expect to be born with a vital being sufficiently pure to be of help to

you? One is born with a slough to clean before one begins to live." (CWM 4: 260)

5.

"Anutāp—remorse, repentance, is the natural movement of the vital mind when it sees it has done a mistake. It is certainly better than indifference. Its disadvantage is that it disturbs the vital stuff and sometimes leads to depression or discouragement. For that reason what is usually recommended to the sadhak is a quiet recognition of the mistake with a sincere aspiration and will that it should not be repeated or at least that the habit of making such mistakes should soon be eliminated. At a higher stage of development when the inner calm is established, one simply observes the defects of the nature as defects of a machinery that one has to put right and calls down the Light and Force for its rectification. In the beginning however the movement of repentance even helps provided it does not bring discouragement or depression." (CWSA 31: 188)

6.

"Or you may have an aspiration in the vital; if you have desires or troubles, storms, inner difficulties, you may aspire for peace, to be quite impartial, without desire or preference, to be a good docile instrument without any

personal whims, always at the Divine's disposal. This is a vital aspiration." (CWM 5: 292)

7.

"Vital receptivity happens only when the vital understands that it must be transformed.

The vital blossoms in aspiration for the Divine." (CWM 14 : 154)

8.

"Q: *If, for example, one wants to know something or one needs guidance, or something else, how can one have it from the Divine, according to one's need?*

A: By asking the Divine for it. If you do not ask Him, how can you have it?

If you turn to the Divine and have full trust and ask Him, you will get what you need—not necessarily what you imagine you need; but the true thing you need, you will get. But you must ask Him for it. …

But if you ask Him, as He is the Divine He knows a little better than you what you need; He will give you what you need.

Or else, if you insist and want to impose your own will, He may give you what you want in order to enlighten you and make you conscious of your mistake, that it was truly not the thing you needed. And then you begin to

protest—I don't mean you personally, I am speaking of all human beings—and you say, 'Why has the Divine given me something which harms me?'—completely forgetting that it was you who asked for it!

In both cases you protest all the same. …

Only, if instead of all that, you simply have an aspiration within you, an urge, an intense ardent need to find That, which you conceive more or less clearly to be the Truth of your being, the Source of all things, the supreme Good, the Answer to all we desire, the Solution to all problems; if there is this intense need in you and you aspire to realise it, you won't any longer say to the Divine, 'Give me this, give me that', or, 'I need this, I must have that.' You will tell Him, 'Do what is necessary for me and lead me to the Truth of my being. Give me what Thou in Thy supreme Wisdom seest as the thing I need.'

And then you are sure of not being mistaken, and He will not give you something which harms you. …

And after much seeking, making many mistakes, suffering a good deal and being very disappointed, then, sometimes, one begins to grow wise and wonders if there isn't a way out of all this, that is to say, a way to come out of one's own ignorance.

And it is then, at that moment that one can do this (*Mother opens her arms*): 'Here I am, take me and lead me along the true path.'

Then all begins to go well." (CWM 8: 121–124)

9.

"Q: *Isn't it true, Mother, that the vital will soon be surrendered to you?*

A: Yes, if it is sincere in its aspiration, it will soon be converted." (CWM 17: 21)

10.

"The impatience and restless disquietude come from the vital which brings that even into the aspiration. The aspiration must be intense, calm and strong (that is the nature of the true vital also) and not restless and impatient,—then alone it can be stable." (CWSA 29: 60)

11.

"It is the psychic that gives the true aspiration—if the vital is purified and subjected to the psychic, then the vital gives intensity— but if it is unpurified it brings in a rajasic intensity with impatience and reactions of depression and disappointment. As for the calm and equality needed, it must come down from above through the mind." (CWSA 29: 60)

12.

"They [*the vital and the psychic*] cannot be reconciled except by the submission of the vital to the psychic. Any other combination means either the submergence of the

psychic by vital delusions or a confused and misleading mixture or the use of the psychic aspirations by the vital to justify things that are not spiritual.” (CWSA 31:120)

13.

“The only way to get rid of these vital movements is to do persistently what he describes himself as doing with the invading forces—i.e. he must be always vigilant, try always at every moment to be conscious, always reject these things, refusing to take pleasure in them, call on the Mother, bring down the descent of the Light. If they return persistently he must not be discouraged; it is not possible to change the nature at once, it takes a long time. If, however, he can keep the psychic consciousness in the front, then it will be much easier and there will be much less difficulty and trouble in the change. That can be done by constant aspiration and abhyāsa.” (CWSA 31:146–147)

14.

“There is only one way of escape from this siege of the lower vital nature. It is the entire rejection of all egoistic vital demand, claim and desire and the replacement of the dissatisfied vital urge by the purity of psychic aspiration. Not the satisfaction of these vital clamours nor, either, an ascetic retirement is the true solution, but the surrender of the vital being to the Divine and a single-minded consecration to the supreme Truth into which desire and

demand cannot enter. For the nature of the supreme Truth is Light and Ananda, and where desire and demand are there can be no Ananda.

It is not the vital demand but the psychic urge that alone can bring the nature towards the supramental transformation; for it alone can change the mental and vital and show them their own true movement. But constantly the vital demand is being taken for the psychic aspiration; and yet the difference is clear. In the psychic aspiration there are none of these reactions; there is no revolt, no justification of revolt: for the psychic aspires through inner union with the Divine and surrender. It does not question and challenge, but seeks to understand through unity with the Divine Will. (CWSA 31: 160–161)

15.

"The cardinal defect, that which has been always standing in the way and is now isolated in an extreme prominence, is seated or at least is at present concentrated in the lower vital being. I mean that part of the vital-physical nature with its petty and obstinate egoism which actuates the external human personality,—that which supports its surface thoughts and dominates its habitual ways of feeling, character and action. I am not concerned here with the other parts of the being and I do not speak of anything in the higher mind, the psychic self or the higher and larger vital nature; for when the lower vital rises, these are

pushed into the background, if not covered over for the time, by this lower vital being and this external personality. Whatever there may be in these higher parts, aspiration to the Truth, devotion or will to conquer the obstacles and the hostile forces, it cannot become integral, it cannot remain unmixed or unspoilt or continue to be effective so long as the lower vital and the external personality have not accepted the Light and consented to change. It was inevitable that in the course of the sadhana these inferior parts of the nature should be brought forward in order that like the rest of the being they may make the crucial choice and either accept or refuse transformation." (CWSA 31: 151)

16.

"Sometimes the aspiration is felt at the navel, but that is part of the larger vital. The lower vital is below. The lower vital aspires by offering all its small movements in the fire of purification, by calling for the light and power to descend into it and rid it of its little greeds, jealousies, resistances and revolts over small matters, angers, vanities, sexualities etc. to be replaced by the right movements governed by selflessness, purity, obedience to the urge of the Divine Force in all things. (CWSA 31: 168–169)

17.

"There must be something in the vital itself that insists on its true aspiration and refuses even the vital consent or any vital pleasure in the wrong movements. If they come, they must feel their own fallen, ignorant, merely material brute character." (CWSA 31: 389)

18.

"If you want a true mastery and transformation of the vital movements, it can be done only on condition you allow your psychic being, the soul in you, to awake fully, to establish its rule and, opening all to the permanent touch of the divine Shakti, impose its own way of pure devotion, whole-hearted aspiration and complete uncompromising urge to all that is divine on the mind and heart and vital nature. There is no other way and it is no use hankering after a more comfortable path. *Nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya*." (CWSA 31: 126–127)

19.

"What has sunk in you is not the pure psychic urge, even if that is temporarily veiled, but a vital flame that was not entirely pure. It is because these foreign elements have been discouraged, that the vital nature in you feels despondent and refuses its support to the belief of the mind and to the psychic call. This often happens in the process of purification; what is needed is the conversion

and surrender of the vital part. It must learn to demand only the highest Truth and to forego all insistence on the satisfaction of its inferior impulses and desires. It is this adhesion of the vital being that brings the full satisfaction and joy of the whole nature in the spiritual life. When that is there, it will be impossible even to think of returning to the ordinary existence. Meanwhile the mental will and the psychic aspiration must be your support; if you insist, the vital will finally yield and be converted and surrender.

Fix upon your mind and heart the resolution to live for the Divine Truth and for that alone; reject all that is contrary and incompatible with it and turn away from all lower desires; aspire to open yourself to the Divine Power and to no other. Do this in all sincerity and the present and living help you need will not fail you." (CWSA 31: 713)

20.

"It is evident that the lower vital has received the Divine Consciousness when even in the small movements of life there is an aspiration to the Divine, a reference as it were to the Divine Light for guidance or some feeling of offering to the Divine or guidance by the Divine. The lower vital commands the little details of emotion, impulse, sensation, action—it is these that, when converted, it offers to the Divine control for transformation." (CWSA 31: 169)

21.

"It is of course a fluctuation of the mental will that often prevents a knowledge gained from being put into steady practice. If the will is not strong enough, then the greater Will behind which is the will of the Mother, her conscious Force in which knowledge and will are united, must be called in to strengthen and support it. Very often, however, even if the will as well as the knowledge are there, the habit of the vital nature brings in the old reactions. This can only be overcome by a steady undiscouraged aspiration which will bring out more and more of the psychic and its true movements to push out and displace the wrong ones." (CWSA 31: 717)

22.

"*Sweet Mother, here I have not understood. You have said: '... a great aspiration for progress comes to it [vital] from above by the infusion and absorption of spiritual forces and inspiration.'*

What haven't you understood?

The meaning, Sweet Mother.

You are breaking up the sentence wrongly. (*Mother looks at the text*.)

There are three sources, you know. The third source is usually closed to people; it comes to them only in moments of great aspiration. When they have a very great aspiration and rise towards higher forces, at that time the vital can receive these higher forces into itself; and then this becomes a source of considerable energy for it. But in its ordinary, habitual life it is not in contact with these forces—unless, of course, it is transformed; but I am speaking of the ordinary vital in ordinary life. It is not open to this source of higher forces, and for it this is even altogether non-existent. In the immense majority of people all their vital force comes to them from below, from the earth, from food, from all the sensations. From food... they draw vital energy out of food, and they... it is by seeing, hearing, touching, feeling that they contact the energies contained in matter. They draw them in this way. This is their customary food.

Now, some people have a very developed vital which they have subjected to a discipline—and they have a sense of immensity and are in contact with the world and the movements of world-forces. And so they can receive... if they aspire and call... they can receive the universal vital forces which enter them and renew the amount of energy they need.

There are others, very rare ones—or maybe in very rare moments of their individual life—who have an aspiration for the higher consciousness, higher force,

higher knowledge, and who, by this call, draw to themselves the forces of higher domains. Then this also renews in them very special energies, of a special value.

But unless one is practising yoga, a regular discipline, usually one does not often contact this source; one draws from the same level or from below." (CWM 6: 81–82)

23.

"*Sweet Mother,*

How can we know that our acts, our thoughts and our aspirations are not tainted by vital desire, though they may seem right to our common sense?

It is a question of *inner sincerity*. Common sense is not a judge because it is a mental function of a rather inferior order.

Moreover, there is a very simple way of knowing. One has only to imagine that the thing one wants to do will not be done, and if this imagination creates the least uneasiness, then one can be sure of the presence of desire." (CWM 16: 342)

24.

"The Mother's help is always there for those who are willing to receive it. But you must be conscious of your vital nature, and the vital nature must consent to change. It is

no use merely observing that it is unwilling and that, when thwarted, it creates depression in you. Always the vital nature is not at first willing and always when it is thwarted or asked to change, it creates this depression by its revolt or refusal of consent. You have to insist till it recognises the truth and is willing to be transformed and to accept the Mother's help and grace. If the mind is sincere and the psychic aspiration complete and true, the vital can always be made to change." (CWSA 32: 301)

25.

"The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At such moments it is good to remain quiet and refuse to act; for these are the times when one does stupid things and in a few moments one can destroy or spoil the progress that has been made during months of regular effort. These crises are shorter and less dangerous for those who have established a contact with their psychic being which is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a rebellious child, with patience and perseverance, showing

it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which has been veiled for a time. By means of such patient intervention each crisis can be turned into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. Progress may be slow, relapses may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained, one is sure to triumph one day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiance of the truth-consciousness." (CWM 12: 6–7)

26.

"In fact, the vital has three sources of subsistence. The one most easily accessible to it comes from below, from the physical energies through the sensations.

The second is on its own plane, when it is sufficiently vast and receptive, by contact with the universal vital forces.

The third, to which it usually opens only in a great aspiration for progress, comes to it from above by the infusion and absorption of spiritual forces and inspiration." (CWM 12: 55)

27.

"In truth, a cultivated and illumined vital can be as noble and heroic and disinterested as it is now spontaneously vulgar, egoistic and perverted when it is left to itself without education. It is enough for each one to know how

to transform in himself the search for pleasure into an aspiration for the supramental plenitude. If the education of the vital is carried far enough, with perseverance and sincerity, there comes a time when, convinced of the greatness and beauty of the goal, the vital gives up petty and illusory sensorial satisfactions in order to win the divine delight." (CWM 12: 56–57)

CXXII—Physical Aspiration

1.

"Yes, each part of the being has its own aspiration which has the nature of the aspiring part. There is even a physical aspiration; the body can... The cells of the body understand what the transformation will be, and with all their strength, all the consciousness they contain, they aspire for this transformation.

The very cells of the body—not the central will, thought or emotion—the cells of the body open in this way to receive the Force." (CWM 6: 391–392)

2.

"You may have a physical aspiration also; that the body may feel the need to acquire a kind of equipoise in which all the parts of the being will be well balanced, and that you may have the power to hold off illness at a distance or overcome it fast when it enters trickily, and that the body may always function normally, harmoniously, in perfect health. That is a physical aspiration." (CWM 5: 292)

3.

"*Mother, does aspiration come from the psychic?*

Not necessarily. Each part of the being can have its own aspiration.

How can the physical manage to aspire, since it is the mind that thinks?

As long as it is the mind that thinks, your physical is something that's three-fourths inert and without its own consciousness. There is a physical consciousness proper, a consciousness of the body; the body is conscious of itself, and it has its own aspiration. So long as one thinks of one's body, one is not in one's physical consciousness. The body has a consciousness that's quite personal to it and altogether independent of the mind. The body is completely aware of its own functioning or its own equilibrium or disequilibrium, and it becomes absolutely conscious, in quite a precise way, if there is a disorder somewhere or other, and (how shall I put it?) it is in contact with that and feels it very clearly, even if there are no external symptoms." (CWM 5: 293)

4.

"Unless one practises yoga in the physical being (outer being), it remains ignorant—even its aspiration is ignorant and so is its goodwill; all its movements are ignorant and so they distort and disfigure the Divine Presence.

That is why the yoga of the body–cells is indispensable." (CWM 16: 359)

5.

"Those who think they can advance in yoga by leaving their body completely inert, their vital asleep and their mind in a kind of stupefaction (for often, what they call 'silence' is just stupefaction), get completely upset, you may be sure, when an experience comes to them. They lose their head, they do extravagant things or otherwise something very unfortunate happens to them.... One must have a solid well–balanced body, a well controlled vital and a mind organised, supple, logical; then, if you are in a state of aspiration and you receive an answer, all your being will feel enriched, enlarged, splendid, and you will be perfectly happy and you will not spill your cup because it is too full, like a clumsy fellow who does not know how to hold a full tumbler. It is like that, you see, it is as if you had a small vase there, quite small, which will remain small if you do not take care to make it bigger; then if all of a sudden it is filled up with something which is too strong, everything overflows!" (CWM 4: 99)

6.

"In the course of the sadhana a state of blankness, of 'neutral quiet' like this often comes—especially when the sadhana is in the physical consciousness. It is not that the aspiration is gone, but that it does not manifest for the time being, because all has become neutrally quiet. This condition is trying for the human mind and vital which are

accustomed to be in some kind of activity always and regard this as a lifeless state. But one must not feel disturbed or disappointed when this comes, but remain calm in the full confidence that it is a stage only, a ground that has to be crossed in the sadhana. In whatever condition, the faith and the fixed idea of surrender must be kept before the mind. As for the brief movements of restlessness, they will still down if this is kept and the quiet mind and vital reassert themselves quickly." (CWSA 30: 78–79)

7.

"There is always a difficulty in keeping the physical mind within or silent, because it has been its nature to occupy itself with outward things and it finds a difficulty in accustoming itself to a contrary movement. You must not be depressed by that, but persist in the aspiration and will till it is done. The Mother's Force will be there to bring it about as soon as possible." (CWSA 31: 39)

8.

"Apart from the individual difficulty there is a general difficulty in the physical earth-nature. Physical nature is slow and inert and unwilling to change; its tendency is to be still and take long periods of time for a little progress. It is very difficult for even the strongest mental or vital or even psychic will to overcome this inertia. It is only by

bringing down constantly the consciousness and force and light from above that it can be done. Therefore there must be a constant will and aspiration for that and for the change and it must be a steady and patient will not tired out even by the utmost resistance of the physical nature. (CWSA 31: 359)

9.

"There is nothing to be discouraged about. The fact is that after being so long in the mental and vital plane you have become aware of the physical consciousness, and the physical consciousness in everybody is like that. It is inert, conservative, does not want to move, to change—it clings to its habits (what people call their character) or its habits (habitual movements) cling to it and repeat themselves like clockwork in a persistent mechanical way. When you have cleared your vital somewhat, things go down and stick there. You see, if you have become self-conscious, you put pressure, perhaps, but the physical responds very slowly, hardly at first seems to move at all. The remedy? Aspiration steady and unchanging, patient work, wakening the psychic in the physical, calling down the light and force into these obscure parts. The light brings the consciousness of what is there; the force has to follow and work on them till they change or disappear." (CWSA 31: 360)

10.

"I understand that you have arrived at a prolonged lull or period of emptiness in your sadhana. This often happens especially when one is thrown out into the physical and external consciousness. The nervous and physical parts then become prominent and seem to become the standard of the being with that disappearance of the Yoga consciousness and the sensitiveness to small and outward things which you describe. A stage like this however may very well be an interval before a fresh progress. What you have to do is to insist on making time for meditation—at any time of the day when you are least likely to be disturbed—and through the meditation getting back the touch. There may be some difficulty because the physical consciousness is uppermost, but a persistent aspiration will bring it back. When once you again feel the connection reestablished between the inner being and the outer, call down the peace and light and power into the latter so as to build up a basis for a constant consciousness in the most external mind and being which will accompany you in work and action as much as in meditation and solitude." (CWSA 31: 368)

11.

"The difficulty of the physical nature comes inevitably in the course of the development of the sadhana. Its obstruction, its inertia, its absence of aspiration or

movement have to show themselves before they can be got rid of—otherwise it will always remain undetected, hampering even the best sadhana and preventing its completeness. This coming up of the physical nature lasts longer or less according to the circumstances, but there is none who does not go through it. What is necessary is not to get troubled or anxious or impatient, for that only makes it last more, but to put entire confidence in the Mother and quietly persist in faith, patience and steady will for the complete change. It is so that the Mother's force can best work in the being." (CWSA 31: 389–390)

12.

"There is nobody who is free from difficulties, even those who seem the most advanced have them, and all have this obstinacy of the habitual movements in the physical consciousness which recur always in spite of the mind's knowledge and do not want to cease or change. It is only by perseverance in aspiration or will that this difficulty can disappear." (CWSA 31: 401)

13.

"As for the feeling of being driven, compelled, that is quite usual when it is the physical nature that is being dealt with; there is no need to be upset or think it cannot be got over. The physical is the slave of certain forces which create a habit and drive it through the mechanical force of the habit.

So long as the mind gives consent, you do not notice the slavery; but if the mind withdraws its consent, then you feel the servitude, you feel a force pushing you in spite of the mind's will. It is very obstinate and repeats itself till the habit—the inner habit revealing itself in the outward act—is broken. It is like a machine which once set in motion repeats the same movement. You need not be alarmed or distressed; a quiet persistent aspiration will bring you to the point where the habit breaks and you are free." (CWSA 31: 405–406)

14.

"Everyone whose psychic being calls him to the spiritual path has a capacity for that path and can arrive at the goal if or as soon as he develops a single-pointed will towards that alone. But also every sadhak is faced with two elements in him, the inner being which wants the Divine and the sadhana and the outer mainly vital and physical being which does not want them but remains attached to the things of the ordinary life. The mind is sometimes led by one, sometimes by the other. One of the most important things he has to do, therefore, is to decide fundamentally the quarrel between these two parts and to persuade or compel by psychic aspiration, by steadiness of the mind's thought and will, by the choice of the higher vital in his emotional being the opposing elements to be first quiescent and then consenting. So long as he is not able

to do that his progress must be either very slow or fluctuating and chequered as the aspiration in him cannot have a continuous action or a continuous result. Besides so long as this is so, there are likely to be periodical revolts of the vital, repining at the slow progress, despairing, desponding, declaring the Adhar unfit; calls from the old life will come; circumstances will be attracted which seem to justify it, suggestions will come from men and unseen powers pressing the sadhak away from the sadhana and pointing backward to the former life. And yet in that life he is not likely to get any real satisfaction." (CWSA 31: 643–644)

15.

"What you are experiencing is the condition which comes when the whole consciousness has come down into the physical—with the object of bringing down the higher consciousness into the external nature. At first there seems to be the external nature only with a tendency to more peace and quiet than before, but no new positive experience. The first thing the physical consciousness is worked on to acquire is quiet, peace and equanimity as a basis for other things—but what comes is a tendency to neutral quiet which looks like inertia with occasional peace and silence. What is necessary is to bring down peace and silence and a strong equanimity within into the external nature and the very cells of the body. But the difficulty is

that the physical nature has little tendency to aspiration, its habit is to wait for the higher forces to do their work and remain passive. I think it is this difficulty that you are feeling. I felt it myself very often and for long periods at that stage of the sadhana. A steady development of the habit of a very quiet but persistent tapasya in the form of a quiet concentration of will to progress could be very helpful at this stage." (CWSA 35: 378)

16.

"When formerly the sadhana was going on on higher levels (mind, higher vital etc.), there was plenty of vigour and verve and interest in the details of the Asram work and life as well as in an inner life; the physical vital was carried in the stream. But for many this has dropped; they live in the unsatisfied vital physical and find everything desperately dull, gloomy and without interest or issue. In their inner life the tamas from the Inconscient has created a block or a bottleneck and they do not find any way out. If one can keep the right condition and attitude, a strong interest in work or a strong interest in sadhana, then this becomes quiescent. That is the malady. Its remedy is to keep the right condition and to bring gradually or, if one can, swiftly the light of the higher aspiration into this part of the being also, so that whatever the conditions of the environment, it may keep also the right poise. Then the sunlit path should be less impossible." (CWSA 35: 366)

17.

"Even in the body, for instance, when there is something like an attack, an accident, an illness trying to come in—something—an attack on the body, a body that is left to its natural spontaneity has an urge, an aspiration, a spontaneous will to call for help. But as soon as it goes to the head, it takes the form of things to which one is accustomed: everything is spoilt. But if the body is seen in itself, just as it is, there is something which suddenly wakes up and calls for help, and with such a faith, such an intensity, just as the tiny little baby calls its mamma, you know—or whoever is there, it says nothing if it cannot speak. But the body left to itself without this kind of constant action of the mind upon it... well, it has this: as soon as there is some disturbance, immediately it has an aspiration, a call, an effort to seek help, and this is very powerful. If nothing intervenes, it is very powerful. It is as though the cells themselves sprang up in an aspiration, a call.

In the body there are invaluable and unknown treasures. In all its cells, there is an intensity of life, of aspiration, of the will to progress which one does not usually even realise. The body-consciousness would have to be completely warped by the action of the mind and vital for it not to have an immediate will to reestablish the equilibrium. When this will is not there, it means that the entire body-consciousness has been spoilt by the

intervention of the mind and vital. In people who cherish their malady [sickness] more or less subconsciously with a sort of morbidity under the pretext that it makes them interesting, it is not their body at all—poor body!—it is something they have imposed upon it with a mental or vital perversion. The body, if left to itself, is remarkable, for, not only does it aspire for equilibrium and well-being but it is capable of restoring the balance. If one leaves one's body alone without intervening with all those thoughts, all the vital reactions, all the depressions, and also all the so-called knowledge and mental constructions and fears—if one leaves the body to itself, spontaneously it will do what is necessary to set itself right again.

The body in its natural state likes equilibrium, likes harmony; it is the other parts of the being which spoil everything." (CWM 6: 139–140)

18.

"I understand that it is the physical consciousness which has come up forcibly with the old vital human movements and feelings and this has clouded for the moment the sense of higher things and the aspiration for Truth and Purity that is their atmosphere." (CWSA 29:334)

19.

"The ease and peace are felt very deep and far within because they are in the psychic and the psychic is very

deep within us, covered over by the mind and vital. When you meditate you open to the psychic, become aware of your psychic consciousness deep within and feel these things. In order that this ease and peace and happiness may become strong and stable and felt in all the being and in the body, you have to go still deeper within and bring out the full force of the psychic into the physical. This can most easily be done by regular concentration and meditation with the aspiration for this true consciousness. It can be done by work also, by dedication, by doing the work for the Divine only without thought of self and keeping the idea of consecration to the Mother always in the heart. But this is not easy to do perfectly." (CWSA 29: 299)

20.

"The leg indicates the physical (material) consciousness. All below the Muladhara is the range of the physical consciousness proper including the mental physical, vital physical, material physical. This [*aspiration rising from the legs*] would indicate therefore an aspiration from Matter (bodily Matter)." (CWSA 28:247)

21.

"*Can the very physical cells of one's body have more aspiration than the rest of the being?*

It is quite possible as the ‘sadhana’ is done now in the body itself.” (CWM 14: 361)

CXXIII—Aspiration in the Cells of the Physical Body

1.

Aspiration in the cells

"It has become a certainty, because in all the cells there is born the aspiration, which is becoming more and more intense and which wonders at the resistance; but they have observed that whenever something goes wrong in the working (that is to say, instead of being supple, spontaneous, natural, the working becomes a painful effort, a struggle against something which takes the appearance of a bad will, but is only a reticence that does not understand), at that moment, the intensity of the aspiration, of the call, is tenfold, becomes constant. The difficulty is to remain at that state of intensity. Generally everything falls back, I cannot say into a somnolence, but a kind of relaxation: … it is only when the inner disorder becomes painful that the intensity grows and remains permanent. For hours—hours together—without slackening, the call, the aspiration, the will to be united with the Divine, to become the Divine, is maintained at its maximum. Why? Because there was externally what is called a physical disorder, a suffering. Otherwise, when there is no suffering, from time to time one soars up, then one falls back into a slackening; …" (CWM 11: 41–42)

2.

"It is the *body* that ends by saying the mantra! Spontaneously, so spontaneously that even if you by chance think of other things, your body will be saying the mantra. You do not have this experience?

No.

And it is the body that aspires, the body that says the mantra, the body that wants the light, the body that wants the consciousness —you, you can think of other things, Tom, Dick or Harry, a book, etc., it has no importance." (CWM 11: 98)

3.

"*My body is very weak and full of unconsciousness and tamas. How can this body become Your good instrument?*

At the centre of each cell lies the Divine Consciousness. By aspiration and repeated self-giving, the cells must be made transparent." (CWM 16: 360)

4.

"*You have taught me the importance of awakening the divine consciousness in the body, and now I pray to You to awaken my body's aspiration towards You.*

The cells of the body thirst for the Divine Consciousness and when they are brought into contact with It their aspiration becomes very intense." (CWM 16: 369)

5.

"No, the physical mind, as soon as you take up an integral yoga, must be dealt with; but this material mind, the cellular one, I assure you, is altogether new, yes, altogether new.

It is the mind which was like an unco-ordinated substance, which was constantly active, but not organised (*Mother makes a gesture of continuous trepidation*). It is this which is now being organised. It is that which is important—for Sri Aurobindo had said that it was unorganisable and it had only to be thrown out of existence. And I too had the same impression. But when the action for transformation upon the cells is constant, this material mind begins to be organised. It is this that is wonderful—it begins to be organised. And as it is being organised, it learns to keep silent—that is most remarkable! It learns to *keep quiet*, keep silent and allow the supreme Force to act without interfering.

The greatest difficulty is in the nerves, because they are so accustomed to the ordinary conscious will that when it stops and the direct Action from the highest is asked for, they go mad, as it were. The other day I had this experience, which lasted more than an hour, and it was

difficult; but this taught me many things—many. And all this is what can be called the 'transfer of power'; the former power withdraws; and then before the body adapts itself to the new power, there is a period which is critical. As all the cells are in a state of constant aspiration, it goes relatively quickly, but all the same... the minutes are long.

But more and more there is a kind of certitude in the cells that whatever happens is in view of this transformation and this transfer of directing power. And even at the time when it is materially painful (not even physically: materially painful), the cells keep this certitude. And then they resist, they bear the suffering without depression, without being affected in any way, with this certitude that it is to prepare for the transformation, the process of transformation and of the transfer of directing power." (CWM 11: 19–20)

CXXIV—Aspiration Reaching the Subconscient

1.

"You have to start [*becoming conscious in sleep*] by concentrating before you sleep always with a specific will or aspiration. The will or aspiration may take time to reach the subconscient, but if it is sincere, strong and steady, it does reach after a time—so that an automatic consciousness and will are established in the sleep itself which will do what is necessary." (CWSA 31: 451)

2.

"There is no reason to be depressed to this extent or to have these imaginations about failure in the Yoga. It is not at all a sign that you are unfit for the Yoga. It simply means that the sexual impulse rejected by the conscious parts has taken refuge in the subconscient, somewhere probably in the lower vital physical and the most physical consciousness where there are some regions not yet open to the aspiration and the light. The persistence in sleep of things rejected in the waking consciousness is a quite common occurrence in the course of the sadhana.

The remedy is (1) to get the higher consciousness, its light and the workings of its power down into the obscurer parts of the nature, (2) to become progressively more conscious in sleep, with an inner consciousness which is aware of the working of the sadhana in sleep as in

waking, (3) to bring to bear the waking will and aspiration on the body in sleep.

One way to do the last is to make a strong and conscious suggestion to the body, before sleeping, that the thing should not happen; the more concrete and physical the suggestion can be made and the more directly on the sexual centre, the better." (CWSA 31: 530)

3.

"Until they [*the material and subconscient parts of the being*] aspire or at least assent fully to the aspiration and will of the higher being, there can be no lasting change in them." (CWSA 31:598)

4.

"What you describe seems to be in its nature an uncontrolled rushing up of the subconscient taking the form of a mechanical recurrence of old thoughts, interests or desires with which the physical mind is usually occupied. If that were all, the only thing would be to reject them, detach yourself and let them pass till they quieted down. But I gather from what you write that there is an attack, an obscure force using these recurrences to invade and harass the mind and body. It would be helpful if you could give an exact description of the main character of the thoughts that come, what things and ideas they are concerned with etc. But in any case the one thing to do is

to open yourself to the Mother's force by aspiration, thought of the Mother or any other way and let it drive out the attack. We shall send Force continually till this is done. It will be better to let us know every three days or so how you go on, for that will help to make the action of the Force more precise." (CWSA 31: 605)

5.

"I have explained to you why so many people (not by any means all) are in this gloomy condition, dull and despondent. It is the tamas, the inertia of the Inconscient, that has got hold of them. But also it is the small physical vital which takes only an interest in the small and trivial things of the ordinary daily and social life and nothing else. When formerly the sadhana was going on on higher levels (mind, higher vital etc.), there was plenty of vigour and verve and interest in the details of the Asram work and life as well as in an inner life; the physical vital was carried in the stream. But for many this has dropped; they live in the unsatisfied vital physical and find everything desperately dull, gloomy and without interest or issue. In their inner life the tamas from the Inconscient has created a block or a bottleneck and they do not find any way out. If one can keep the right condition and attitude, a strong interest in work or a strong interest in sadhana, then this becomes quiescent. That is the malady. Its remedy is to keep the right condition and to bring gradually or, if one can, swiftly

the light of the higher aspiration into this part of the being also, so that whatever the conditions of the environment, it may keep also the right poise. Then the sunlit path should be less impossible." (CWSA 31: 618)

6.

"It is an obsession from the subconscient physical bringing back habitual thoughts, 'I can't call rightly—I have no real aspiration' etc.; the depression, the memory etc. are from the same source. It is no use indulging in these ideas. If you cannot call the Mother in what you think the right way, call her in any way—if you can't call her, think of her with the will to be rid of these things. Don't worry yourself with the idea whether you have true aspiration or not—the psychic being wants and that is sufficient. The rest is the Divine Grace, on which one must steadfastly rely—one's own merit, virtue or capacity is not the thing that brings the realisation.

I shall put the force to rid you of this obsession in any case, but if you can abandon these habitual ideas, it will make the disappearance of the attack easier. (CWSA 32: 313)

7.

"*From the morning I was feeling an intense aspiration to get lost in the Mother's consciousness. Then I felt my consciousness frequently rising and stationing itself above.*

Before Pranam I felt as if even the parts near the navel and below were being drawn upwards. After Pranam I experienced for some time a different kind of atmosphere almost concretely around me, so I imagined that the Mother may have put a strong spiritual influence on my subconscient and environmental consciousness.

It is very good. You are right about the subconscient and environmental,—for it is there that the influence must fall so that the consciousness may go upward and spread itself out widely in a free peace, light and joy connecting them down to the subconscient with the higher consciousness. It is then that the loss of the ego in the Mother's consciousness becomes possible." (CWSA 32: 287)

CXXV—Aspiration and Desire and Demand

1.

"Q: *Sweet Mother,*

What is the difference between desire and aspiration, …?

A: Desire is a vital movement, aspiration is a psychic movement.

When one has had a true aspiration, unselfish and sincere, one cannot even ask the question anymore; for the vibration of aspiration, luminous and calm, has nothing to do with the vibration of desire, which is passionate, dark and often violent." (CWM 16: 411)

2.

"Q: *What is the difference between aspiration and a demand?*

A: When you have experienced both, you can easily make the distinction. In aspiration there is what I might call an unselfish flame which is not present in desire. Your aspiration is not a turning back upon self—desire is always a turning back upon oneself. From the purely psychological point of view, aspiration is a self–giving, always, while desire is always something which one draws to oneself; aspiration is something which gives itself, not necessarily

in the form of thought but in the movement, in the vibration, in the vital impulse.

True aspiration does not come from the head; even when it is formulated by a thought, it springs up like a flame from the heart. I do not know if you have read the articles Sri Aurobindo has written on the Vedas. He explains somewhere that these hymns were not written with the mind; they were not, as one thinks, prayers, but the expression of an aspiration which was an impulse, like a flame coming from the heart (though it is not the "heart" but the psychological centre of the being, to use the exact words). They were not 'thought out', words were not set to experiences, the experience came wholly formulated with the precise, exact, inevitable words—they could not be changed. This is the very nature of aspiration: you do not seek to formulate it, it springs up from you like a ready flame. And if there are words (sometimes there aren't any), they cannot be changed: you cannot replace one word by another, every word is just the right one. When the aspiration is formulated, this is done categorically, absolutely, without any possibility of change. And it is always something that springs up and gives itself, whereas the very nature of desire is to pull things to oneself.

The essential difference between love in aspiration and love in desire is that love in aspiration gives itself entirely and asks nothing in return—it does not claim anything; whereas love in desire gives itself as little as

possible, asks as much as possible, it pulls things to itself and always makes demands." (CWM 4: 135–136)

3.

"Aspiration is always good, and if some demand is mixed up with it, you can be sure that it will not be granted." (CWM 17: 264) (CWM 14: 73)

4.

"And, to take an example, you can understand it in this way: if you have an aspiration, say, suddenly you think of the possibility of progress and have an aspiration for progress; but if a desire is mixed with your aspiration, you will have the desire to progress for the powers this will give you or the importance it will give you or the improvement in your living conditions. You go and immediately mix all kinds of little very personal reasons with your aspiration. And to tell the truth, very few people have a very pure aspiration. An aspiration, a will to progress, just that; it stops there. Because one aspires for progress and then, there we are, let us not go farther. We want progress. But usually there get mixed up with it all kinds of desires for the results of this progress. And so desire comes in, you see; this brings exactly what he says, a consciousness which is impure and muddy, and inside this nothing higher can come. This must be completely eliminated to begin with. If one looks at oneself very sincerely, very

straightforwardly and very severely, one very quickly perceives that very few things, very few movements of consciousness are free from being mixed with desires. Even in what you take for a higher movement, there is always... no, happily not always, but most often there is a desire mixed. The desire of the sense of one's importance, if only this, that kind of self–satisfaction, the satisfaction of being someone superior." (CWM 6: 337–338)

5.

" *'Desire... leads to pulling down the force': what does this mean?*

You see, one has an aspiration for Light, for Knowledge, for all kinds of things. Now, if a desire is mixed with your aspiration, instead of simply aspiring and awaiting the answer, you begin to pull, as one draws things when one desires them—you draw them to yourself. So instead of waiting for the Force and Light and Consciousness and Truth to answer your aspiration, you pull them down like that, towards yourself with a very egoistical movement, as though you were pulling a rope or something, and so anything at all can come in answer. Instead of its being, for example, a true light, it can be a false light which takes brilliant appearances to deceive you; instead of its being a true force, it can be an adverse force of the vital which wants to take possession of you. It means that when one

has an aspiration, it is better that no desires get mixed up in it, because desires always spoil everything." (CWM 6: 409)

6.

"These people try to progress through violence. They have no patience, they have no persistence; and when a desire arises in them they must realise it immediately. Now, they want to have something—let us say a change in their character or a change in the circumstances or a set of things—and then, they want it at once; and as this usually does not happen all at once, they pull it down from above. This is what he calls 'clutching'. They seize it, pull it towards themselves. But in this way one has neither the real thing nor the true movement; one mixes violence with one's aspiration and this always produces some confusion somewhere, and moreover one cannot have the true thing, one can only have an imitation of the true thing; because this is not how it comes, not by pulling it as though one were pulling it by the tail; it will not come. Clutching! One clutches the rope when one wants to climb up. That's how it is when one pulls! That's exactly the movement one should not have once one holds the rope. That's all." (CWM 6: 420–421)

7.

"As long as they have desires, they are not true Aurovilians.

Let them not play with words: there is a world of difference between desires and aspiration. Every sincere person knows this. And above all let them not mistake *their ego and their desires* for the Divine. It is because they deceive themselves that they make this confusion." (CWM 13: 219)

8.

"If desire is rejected and no longer governs the thought, feeling or action and there is the steady aspiration of an entirely sincere self-giving, the psychic usually after a time opens of itself." (CWSA 30:349)

9.

"Q: *Mother, what is the difference between an ardent aspiration and a pulling down of force?*

A: It is the vital that pulls down and the psychic that aspires." (CWM 14: 80)

10.

"Pulling comes usually from a desire to get things for oneself—in aspiration there is a self–giving for the higher consciousness to descend and take possession—the more intense the call, the greater the self–giving." (CWSA 29: 61)

11.

"It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force—to pull it down. The supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself—but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste." (CWSA 29: 61)

12.

"There is certainly a great difference between calling and pulling—you can and must always call for help and the rest—the answer will be proportionate to your capacity of reception and assimilation. Pulling is a selfish movement that may bring down forces quite disproportionate to your capacities and thus are harmful." (CWM 14: 81)

13.

"To aspire and to call for help are quite indispensable." (CWM 14: 80)

14.

"For as long as your aspiration hides a desire and as long as in your heart there is the spirit of bargaining with the Divine, things will come and give you blows till you wake up to the true consciousness within you which makes no conditions, no bargains." (CWM 4: 101–102)

15.

"Q: *How can we know what the divine Will is?*

A: One does not know it, one feels it. And in order to feel it one must will with such an intensity, such sincerity, that every obstacle disappears. As long as you have a preference, a desire, an attraction, a liking, all these veil the Truth from you. Hence, the first thing to do is to try to master, govern, correct all the movements of your consciousness and eliminate those which cannot be changed until all becomes a perfect and permanent expression of the Truth.

And even to will this is not enough, for very often one forgets to will it.

What is necessary is an aspiration which burns in the being like a constant fire, and every time you have a desire, a preference, an attraction it must be thrown into this fire. If you do this persistently, you will see that a little gleam of true consciousness begins to dawn in your ordinary consciousness. At first it will be faint, very far behind all the din of desires, preferences, attractions, likings. But you must go behind all this and find that true consciousness, all calm, tranquil, almost silent." (CWM 4: 2)

16.

"There is no doubt the mixture of desire in what you do, even in your endeavour of sadhana, that is the difficulty.

The desire brings a movement of impatient effort and a reaction of disappointment and revolt when difficulty is felt and the immediate result is not there and other confusing and disturbing feelings. Aspiration should be not a form of desire, but the feeling of an inner soul's need, and a quiet settled will to turn towards the Divine and seek the Divine. It is certainly not easy to get rid of this mixture of desire entirely—not easy for anyone; but when one has the will to do it, this also can be effected by the help of the sustaining Force." (CWSA 29: 60–61)

17.

"If there are good desires, bad desires will come also. There is a place for will and aspiration, not for desire.

If there is desire there will be attachment, demand, craving, loss of equanimity, sorrow at not getting, all that is unyogic." (CWSA 29: 61)

18.

"The vital always wants the things of ordinary life, sex, rich food, enjoyments of all kinds; it does not get full satisfaction out of them, but it feels dissatisfied without them. The only way to get rid of it is to reject desire of these things from the vital itself and to have only the aspiration for the Divine in all parts of the being. Everything which it hankers after is desirable to the vital—but the desire has to be rejected. 'I won't desire' is quite the right

thing to say, even if 'I don't desire' cannot yet be said by the vital. Still there is something in the being that can even say 'I don't desire' and refuse to recognise the vital desire as part of the true being. It is that consciousness which the peace and power bring that has to be recognised as the true 'I' and made permanent in front." (CWSA 31: 261–262)

19.

"*How can one 'learn of pure delight'?*

First of all, to begin with, one must through an attentive observation grow aware that desires and the satisfaction of desires give only a vague, uncertain pleasure, mixed, fugitive and altogether unsatisfactory. That is usually the starting-point.

Then, if one is a reasonable being, one must learn to discern what is desire and refrain from doing anything that may satisfy one's desires. One must reject them without trying to satisfy them. And so the first result is exactly one of the first observations stated by the Buddha in his teaching: there is an infinitely greater delight in conquering and eliminating a desire than in satisfying it. Every sincere and steadfast seeker will realise after some time, sooner or later, at times very soon, that this is an absolute truth, and that the delight felt in overcoming a desire is incomparably higher than the small pleasure, so fleeting and mixed,

which may be found in the satisfaction of his desires. That is the second step.

Naturally, with this continuous discipline, in a very short time the desires will keep their distance and will no longer bother you. So you will be free to enter a little more deeply into your being and open yourself in an aspiration to... the Giver of Delight, the divine Element, the divine Grace. And if this is done with a sincere self-giving— something that gives itself, offers itself and expects nothing in exchange for its offering— one will feel that kind of sweet warmth, comfortable, intimate, radiant, which fills the heart and is the herald of Delight.

After this, the path is easy." (CWM 9: 21)

20.

"Also often the desire may not be yours, but may come on you from outside, imposed on you silently or otherwise by suggestion by the others; you must learn to see when it is like that and then you must reject it. Your aspiration must be for an inner change so that there will be no longer any need to indulge the desires, because they will no longer have a hold on you." (CWSA 31: 423)

21.

"It is necessary if you want to progress in your sadhana that you should make the submission and surrender of which you speak sincere, real and complete. This cannot

be as long as you mix up your desires with your spiritual aspiration. It cannot be as long as you cherish vital attachment to family, child or anything or anybody else. If you are to do this Yoga, you must have only one desire and aspiration, to receive the spiritual Truth and manifest it in all your thoughts, feelings, actions and nature. You must not hunger after any relations with anyone. The relations of the sadhaka with others must be created for him from within, when he has the true consciousness and lives in the Light. They will be determined within him by the power and will of the Divine Mother according to the supramental Truth for the divine life and the divine work; they must not be determined by his mind and his vital desires. (CWSA 32: 141–142)

22.

"It is true that the mere suppression or holding down of desire is not enough, not by itself truly effective, but that does not mean that desires are to be indulged; it means that desires have not merely to be suppressed, but to be rejected from the nature. In place of desire there must be a single-minded aspiration towards the Divine." (CWSA 31: 265)

23.

"It means that some vital demand has got hold of them which wants to satisfy itself and, if indulged, would remain

dissatisfied and ask for more and more and revolt and make things impossible. The very fact that you talk of going home if Mother does not yield to your demand shows that it is such a demand that has awoke in you and is returning again and again—it is not a psychic aspiration, for the psychic aspiration always respects the judgment and will of the Mother. It is after long years of experience of the disastrous result of yielding to these vital demands that Mother has drawn back from them and now no longer sees many people whom she saw before. You must not expect her to go back upon her resolution so long as the vital of the sadhaks is not changed and clear of these demands and insistences. You should throw this demand away and go on quietly with your sadhana.

The first thing a Yogi should have is a constant inner peace and quiet and no excitement, no clamour of desires which he cannot control. You must arrive at that first. Moreover as I have told you, it is the inner reality of the Mother's presence and not only of her presence but of her control that must be now the aim of the sadhana. Any insistence on the outer thing is a departure from the true line and can only lead astray. In all these matters it is the Divine Will that must rule and the will of the Guru.

Respect always the will and decision of the Mother." (CWSA 32: 519)

24.

"To be turned to the Mother is all right and call to her—but more is needed; for that is only the first thing needed. There must also be a complete self-giving and surrender. For instance to follow your own fancies is not the right thing—e.g. this idea that to stop eating is the proper way to get rid of desires—it is absurd for one may fast and yet be full of desires. You know that the Mother and I disapprove of this kind of self-starvation and yet at the least excuse you bring it up and want to follow it. These and other insistences are your own fancies you must learn to give up. As for the desires, the proper way is to have a sincere aspiration and call on the Mother's force to work in you. When the Mother's light and force are working in you they will show you all that has to be changed in you and will change it provided you give your sincere and full consent." (CWSA 32: 393)

25.

"The desire for the Divine or of bhakti for the Divine is the one desire which can free one from all the others—at the core it is not a desire, but an aspiration, a soul need, the breath of existence of the inmost being and as such it cannot be counted among desires." (CWSA 32: 476)

CXXVI—Aspiration and Ego

1.

"If you are becoming so conscious of the ego and the animal which fill so large a place in every human being, it is really a progress, because to be conscious is the first step. But along with it you must have an aspiration and a confident faith in the Divine Power and Grace and in the divine element within you, psychic and spiritual, that through these the nature will be transformed and the ego replaced by the true person and the animal by the true vital and physical being become fit instruments of the Divine Mother." (CWSA 31: 219–220)

2.

"Nobody can become more than human if he refuses to make a sacrifice of his ego—for 'human' means a vital animal ego mentalised by a little outward thought and knowledge. So long as one is satisfied with remaining that, one will remain human 'even here' or anywhere." (CWSA 31: 102)

3.

"It is only by a resolute will to get rid of the vital and the ego through their reactions that you can keep yourself open to the Mother. Success may take time, but the steady will and aspiration must be there." (CWSA 31:226)

4.

"What you say [*about the need to purify oneself of ego*] is perfectly correct—I am glad you are becoming so lucid and clear-sighted, the result surely of a psychic change. Ego is a very curious thing and in nothing more than in its way of hiding itself and pretending it is not the ego. It can always hide even behind an aspiration to serve the Mother. The only way of getting rid of it is to chase it out of all its veils and corners." (CWSA 31:232)

5.

"This Yoga can only be done to the end by those who are in total earnest about it and ready to abolish their little human ego and its demands in order to find themselves in the Divine." (CWSA 31: 154)

6.

"Our human consciousness has windows that open upon the Infinite. But generally men keep these windows carefully closed. We have to open them wide and allow the Infinite to enter us freely in order to transform us.

Two conditions are necessary to open the windows:

(1) ardent aspiration;

(2) progressive abolition of the ego.

The divine help is assured to those who set to work sincerely." (CWM 16: 425)

7.

"I have read your account of your sadhana. There is nothing to say, I think,—for it is all right—except that the most important thing for you is to develop the psychic fire in the heart and the aspiration for the psychic being to come forward as the leader of the sadhana. When the psychic does so, it will show you the 'undetected ego-knots' of which you speak and loosen them or burn them in the psychic fire. This psychic development and the psychic change of mind, vital and physical consciousness is of the utmost importance because it makes safe and easy the descent of the higher consciousness and the spiritual transformation without which the supramental must always remain far distant. Powers etc. have their place, but a very minor one so long as this is not done." (CWSA 30: 381)

8.

"Depression should not be indulged, for all who do the Yoga have difficulties with their ego; but the higher consciousness will always prevail with a true aspiration." (CWSA 31: 187)

9.

"Your ego, at the slightest thing that displeases it, is in the habit of opening the door of your being to an evil spirit of arrogant and impudent disbelief which passes its time in

throwing mud and filth on all that is sacred and beautiful and especially on the aspiration of your soul and the help from the Divine's Grace.

If this is allowed to continue, it will end in a sure catastrophe and ruin. Strong steps must be taken to put an end to this, and for that the collaboration of your soul is needed. It must wake up and join in the fight against the ego by resolutely closing the door to this evil spirit." (CWM 15: 23)

CXXVII—Aspire to Get Rid of Jealousy

1.

"This jealousy (which is a very common affliction of the vital) will go like the rest. If you have the aspiration to get rid of it, it can only come by force of habit, and with the psychic growing in you and the Mother's force acting, the power of the habit is sure to diminish and fade away. Do not be discouraged by its occasional return, but reject it so that it may be unable to stay long and will be obliged to retire. Very soon then it will cease to come at all." (CWSA 31: 244–245)

CXXVIII—Aspiration in Ascetic Yoga

1.

"In the ascetic Yoga all human feelings are regarded as illusory and have to disappear—'the knots of the heart are cut'—so as to leave only the one supreme aspiration." (CWSA 31: 287)

CXXIX—Aspiration and Hostile Forces

1.

"The hostile forces have a certain self-chosen function: it is to test the condition of the individual, of the work, of the earth itself and their readiness for the spiritual descent and fulfilment. At every step of the journey, they are there attacking furiously, criticising, suggesting, imposing despondency or inciting to revolt, raising unbelief, amassing difficulties. No doubt, they put a very exaggerated interpretation on the rights given them by their function, making mountains even out of what seems to us a mole-hill. A little trifling false step or mistake and they appear on the road and clap a whole Himalaya as a barrier across it. But this opposition has been permitted from of old not merely as a test or ordeal, but as a compulsion on us to seek a greater strength, a more perfect self-knowledge, an intenser purity and force of aspiration, a faith that nothing can crush, a more powerful descent of the Divine Grace." (CWSA 31: 758)

2.

"It is better not to trouble about the hostile forces. Keep your aspiration strong and sincere and call in the Divine in each thing and at each moment for support and in all that you feel keep yourself open to us. That is the easiest way to the Divine. If you begin to concern yourself about the

hostile forces, you will only make the path more difficult." (CWSA 31: 783)

3.

"Then when you are back to your right walk and stature they wait a little and strike again and the whole thing repeats itself with a mechanical regularity. It takes time, steadfast endeavour, long continued aspiration and a calm perseverance to get anywhere in Yoga; that time you do not give yourself because of these recurrent swingings away from the right attitude." (CWSA 31: 774–775)

4.

"Attacks are always going about and it is a period when they have fallen on many. But with a strong faith founded in the Mother and a whole-hearted aspiration, no attack can leave any lasting result." (CWSA 31: 797)

5.

"*How is it possible for someone who feels aspiration and the Divine call in his heart to come to live at the Mother's feet and then afterwards to leave them? Is it through vital depression or something else?*

Through the suggestions of the hostile forces, because of pride, egoism, ambition, sexual desire, vanity, greed or any

other vital impulse used by the hostile Powers." (CWSA 32: 367)

6.

"These suggestions are what we call hostile suggestions—they come from a Force which is wandering about in the atmosphere trying to do harm to the sadhana. Its suggestions are always the same, to whomever they come—the suggestion of going away, the suggestion of unfitness and failure, this suggestion of madness, and a certain fixed number of others with the same purpose. There is only one thing to do with them—never to listen to them; one must reply as you have done and dismiss them summarily from the consciousness. If one takes this simple stand, 'I have come for the Yoga—I will allow nothing to divert me from my aim; I have the demand of the soul within and the help and protection of the Mother', then these things can no longer approach or approach in vain.

I am glad you have the aspiration and the push awake; it is always bound to revive after every interval and to carry you farther. Keep it and progress." (CWSA 32: 320–321)

7.

"Aspire to the Mother for this settled quietness and calm of the mind and this constant sense of the inner being in you

standing back from the external nature and turned to the Light and Truth.

The forces that stand in the way of sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine." (CWSA 29: 150)

8.

"*How is one to meet adverse forces—forces that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible?*

A great deal depends upon the stage of development of your consciousness. At the beginning, if you have no special occult knowledge and power, the best you can do is to keep as quiet and peaceful as possible. If the attack takes the form of adverse suggestions try quietly to push them away, as you would some material object. The quieter you are, the stronger you become. The firm basis of all spiritual power is equanimity. You must not allow anything to disturb your poise: you can then resist every kind of attack. If, besides, you possess sufficient discernment and can see and catch the evil suggestions as they come to you, it becomes all the more easy for you to push them away; but sometimes they come unnoticed, and

then it is more difficult to fight them. When that happens, you must sit quiet and call down peace and a deep inner quietness. Hold yourself firm and call with confidence and faith: if your aspiration is pure and steady, you are sure to receive help.

Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.

It is true, however, that they exist because you gave them reason to exist. So long as there is something in you which answers to them, their intervention is perfectly legitimate. If nothing in you responded, if they had no hold upon any part of your nature, they would retire and leave you. In any case, they need not stop or hamper your spiritual progress.

The only way to fail in your battle with the hostile forces is not to have a true confidence in the divine help. Sincerity in the aspiration always brings down the required succour. A quiet call, a conviction that in this ascension towards the realisation you are never walking all alone and a faith that whenever help is needed it is there, will lead you through, easily and securely. (CWM 3: 33–34)

9.

"*When we come to the spiritual life with an aspiration, can the adverse forces attack us?*

Everybody, without exception. (CWM 5:155)

10.

"The best way of facing hostile forces is always to aspire, always to remember the Divine. And never to fear." (CWM 4: 169)

11.

"You know the story of Durga, don't you? Durga who every year has to destroy her asura; and always she is compelled to begin again. It goes on in this way till the end of the reign allotted to the titans. When they will be banished from this world, it will not be thus any longer. But till then, that is as long as they are useful (as I have said in this book) for intensifying the aspiration, clarifying the consciousness, for putting to the test the sincerity of people, they will be there. The day the test will not be needed, the day the sincerity will be pure and self-existent they will disappear. Then that day, Durga will no longer need to begin her battle over again every year. (CWM 5: 96–97)

CXXX—Aspiration and Poetry

1.

"Poetry by itself does not bring to the goal, but it can help as a means to express and deepen one's aspiration while it gives the vital an activity which can keep it from rusting and maintains its energy. Otherwise it may droop or go dry or sulk or non–cooperate." (CWSA 29: 211)

2.

"But do not listen to these suggestions of the voice that says, 'You shall not succeed and it is no use trying.' That is a thing that need never be said in the Way of the Spirit, however difficult it may seem at the moment to be. Keep through all the aspiration which you express so beautifully in your poem; for it is certainly there and comes out from the depths, and if it is the cause of suffering—as great aspirations usually are in a world and nature where there is so much to oppose them—it is also the promise and surety of emergence and victory in the future." (CWSA 29: 388)

3.

"It is obvious that poetry cannot be a substitute for sadhana; it can be an accompaniment only. If there is a feeling (of devotion, surrender etc.), it can express and confirm it; if there is an experience, it can express and

strengthen the force of experience. … If these things [*purification, consecration, opening of the psychic contact and presence of the Divine, the realisation of the Divine in all things, surrender, devotion, the widening of the consciousness, the Self one in all, the psychic and the spiritual transformation of the nature*] are neglected and only poetry and mental development and social contacts occupy all the time, then that is not sadhana. Also the poetry must be written in the true spirit, not for fame or self-satisfaction, but as a means of contact with the Divine through aspiration or of the expression of one's own inner being, as it was written formerly by those who left behind them so much devotional and spiritual poetry in India; it does not help if it is written only in the spirit of the Western artist o*r littérateur.*" (CWSA 31: 78–79)

4.

"Anything that carries the Word, the Light in it, spoken or written, can light this fire within, open a sky, as it were, bring the effective vision of which the Word is the body. In all ages spiritual seekers have expressed their aspirations or their experiences in poetry or inspired language and it has helped themselves and others. Therefore there is nothing absurd in my assigning to such poetry a spiritual or psychic value and effectiveness to poetry of a psychic or spiritual character." (CWSA 29: 322–323)

5.

"This is what a future poetry may do for us in the way and measure in which poetry can do these things, by vision, by the power of the word, by the attraction of the beauty and delight of what it shows us. What philosophy or other mental brooding makes precise or full to our thought, poetry can by its creative power, imaging force and appeal to the emotions make living to the soul and heart. This poetry will present to us indeed in forms of power and beauty all the actual life of man, his wonderful and fruitful past, his living and striving present, his yet more living aspiration and hope of the future, but will present it more seeingly as the life of the vast self and spirit within the race and the veiled divinity in the individual, as an act of the power and delight of universal being, in the greatness of an eternal manifestation, in the presence and intimacy of Nature, in harmony with the beauty and wonder of the realms that stretch out beyond earth and its life, in the march to godhead and the significances of immortality, in the ever clearer letters and symbols of the self-revealing mystery and not only in its first crude and incomplete actualities; these actualities will themselves be treated with a firmer and finer vision, find their own greater meaning and become to our sight thread of the fine tissue and web of the cosmic work of the Spirit." (CWSA 26: 252–253)

6.

"*Jyoti says formerly she used to aspire for beautiful things, etc. instead of letting herself go. Now she remains passive—and this poem is the result. Any answer?*

There is no incompatibility between aspiring and letting the thing come through. The aspiration gives the necessary intensity so that what comes has a better chance of being a true transcription. In this case probably the pain she felt in the neck etc. was a proof of some fatigue in the physical parts which spoiled the transmission." (CWSA 27: 587)

7.

"And in the much older Yajur Veda we find breaking out with a different, a more moved and less reflective voice the same truth of experience, the same touch on the soul, 'Where I am wounded, make me firm and whole. May all creatures gaze on me with the eye of the Friend, may I gaze on all creatures, may we all gaze on all with the eye of the Friend.' There poetry and religious emotion become powerfully fused and one in the aspiration to the heart's perfection and the loving unity of all life. The same uniting alchemy and fusion can take place between truth of philosophy and poetic truth and it is continually found in Indian literature. And so too all the old Rig Veda, all the Vaishnava poetry of North and South had behind it an elaborate Yoga or practised psychical and spiritual science,

without which it could not have come into birth in that form. Today much of the poetry of Tagore is the sign of such a Sadhana, a long inheritance of assured spiritual discovery and experience. But what is given whether directly or in symbol or in poetic image is not the formal steps of the Sadhana, the strongly felt movement and the living outcome, the vision and life and inner experience, the spirit and power and body of sweetness and beauty and delight." (CWSA 26: 236–237)

CXXXI—Aspiration and Games

1.

"Take games. There too you find days when everything goes well; you have done nothing special previously, but even so you succeed in everything; but if you have practised well beforehand, the result is still more magnificent. If, for example, you find yourself facing someone who has trained himself slowly, seriously, with patience and endurance, and who all of a sudden has a strong aspiration, well, this one will beat you in spite of your aspiration unless your aspiration is very much superior to that of your adversary. If you have opposite you someone who knows only the technique of the game but has no conscious aspiration, while you are in a fully conscious state, evidently it is you who will defeat him because the quality of consciousness is superior to the quality of technique. But one cannot replace the other. The one which is superior is more important, granted, but you must also have nerves which respond quickly, spontaneous movements; you must know all the secrets of the game to be able to play perfectly. You must have both the things. What is higher is the consciousness which enables you to make the right movement at the right moment but it is not exclusive. When you seek perfection, you must not neglect the one under the pretext that you have the other." (CWM 4: 41–42)

CXXXII—Symbols of Aspiration

1.
"The Blue Bird is always a symbol of aspiration towards something Beyond." (CWSA 30: 174)

2.
"It is a temple and the temple is the symbol of spiritual aspiration. This one being complex meant a rich and many-sided aspiration." (CWSA 30: 181)

3.
"The pyramid is usually a symbol of aspiration—reddish perhaps because it is in the physical." (CWSA 30: 181–182)

4.
"The conch is often the symbol of call or aspiration." (CWSA 30: 184)

5.
"The Giraffe symbolises aspiration". (CWSA 30: 168)

6.
"(1) The lid of the skull opening means that the mental being has opened to the Divine Light and the flames indicate aspiration filled with the Light arising to join the mental part to what is above Mind." (CWSA 30:120)

7.

"The white fire is the fire of aspiration, the red fire is the fire of renunciation and tapasya, the blue fire is the fire of spirituality and spiritual knowledge which purifies and dispels the Ignorance." (CWSA 30:147)

8.

"The wheel is the sign of an action of Force (whatever force may be indicated by the nature of the symbol) and as it was surging upwards it must be the fire of aspiration rising from the vital (navel centre) to the Higher Consciousness above." (CWSA 30: 185)

9.

"In a general way, the moon is associated with spiritual force, spiritual progress, spiritual aspiration.

The waxing moon used to be considered as the symbol of spiritual aspiration for transformation, and spiritual plenitude was symbolised by the full moon. Moonlight has always been considered to be very favourable to visions, to poetic inspiration and all other-worldly activity." (CWM 9:284)

10.

"*A dream: I saw a papaya tree with very ripe fruits. Some crows and a monkey were on the tree to eat the fruits. I threw dust at them and they all ran away except the*

monkey. He sprang at me and I tore him to pieces. I think that this dream has a meaning.

The monkey usually symbolises the uncontrolled physical mind. In this case he probably wanted to steal the fruits of your spiritual aspiration." (CWM 17: 156)

CXXXIII—The Purity Aspect in Ethics Is an Aspiration towards the Purity of God's Being

1.

"In fact ethics is not in its essence a calculation of good and evil in the action or a laboured effort to be blameless according to the standards of the world,—those are only crude appearances,—it is an attempt to grow into the divine nature. Its parts of purity are an aspiration towards the inalienable purity of God's being; its parts of truth and right are a seeking after conscious unity with the law of the divine knowledge and will; its parts of sympathy and charity are a movement towards the infinity and universality of the divine love; its parts of strength and manhood are an edification of the divine strength and power. That is the heart of its meaning. Its high fulfilment comes when the being of the man undergoes this transfiguration; then it is not his actions that standardise his nature but his nature that gives value to his actions; then he is no longer laboriously virtuous, artificially moral, but naturally divine. Actively, too, he is fulfilled and consummated when he is not led or moved either by the infrarational impulses or the rational intelligence and will, but inspired and piloted by the divine knowledge and will made conscious in his nature." (CWSA 25: 153–154)

CXXXIV—Start When Young So That There Is Enough Ardour and Intensity in Aspiration

1.

"But it is also obvious that if one wants this material existence to *participate* in the divine life, to be the field of action and realisation, it is preferable not to wait until with wear and tear the body becomes sufficiently... quiet so as not to obstruct the yoga. It is much better, on the contrary, to take it quite young when it is full of all its energies and can put enough ardour and intensity into its aspiration. In this case, instead of relying on a weariness which no longer demands anything, one should rely on a kind of inner enthusiasm for the unknown, the new—for perfection. And if you have the good fortune to be in conditions where you can receive help and guidance from childhood, try while still very young to discern between the fugitive joys and superficial pleasures life can give and the marvellous thing that life, action, growth would be in a world of perfection and truth, where all the ordinary limitations, all the ordinary incapacities would be done away with.

When one is very young and as I say 'well-born', that is, born with a conscious psychic being within, there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for its child's consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious,

constant success, a perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. This is what one should rely on. When the body feels its miseries, its limitations, one must establish this dream in it–of a strength which would have no limit, a beauty which would have no ugliness, and of marvellous capacities: one dreams of being able to rise into the air, of being wherever it is necessary to be, of setting things right when they go wrong, of healing the sick; indeed, one has all sorts of dreams when one is very young.... Usually parents or teachers pass their time throwing cold water on it, telling you, 'Oh! It's a dream, it is not a reality.' They should do the very opposite! Children should be taught, 'Yes, this is what you must try to realise and not only is it possible but it is *certain* if you come in contact with the part in you which is capable of doing this thing. This is what should guide your life, organise it, make you develop in the direction of the *true reality* which the ordinary world calls illusion'." (CWM 9: 161–162)

2.

"When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water on it, never tell him, 'You know, life is not like that!' You should always encourage him, tell him, 'Yes, at present things are not always like that, they *seem* ugly, but behind

this there is a beauty that is trying to realise itself. This is what you should love and draw towards you, this is what you should make the object of your dreams, of your ambitions.'

And if you do this when you are very small, you have much less difficulty than if later on you have to undo, undo all the bad effects of a bad education, undo that kind of dull and vulgar common sense which means that you expect nothing good from life, which makes it insipid, boring, and contradicts all the hopes, all the so-called illusions of beauty. On the contrary, you must tell a child—or yourself if you are no longer quite a baby—'Everything in me that seems unreal, impossible, illusory, *that* is what is true, *that* is what I must cultivate.' When you have these aspirations: 'Oh, not to be always limited by some incapacity, all the time held back by some bad will!', you must cultivate within you this certitude that *that* is what is essentially true and *that* is what must be realised.

Then faith awakens in the cells of the body. And you will see that you find a response in your body itself. The body itself will feel that if its inner will helps, fortifies, directs, leads, well, all its limitations will gradually disappear.

And so, when the first experience comes, which sometimes begins when one is very young, the first contact with the inner joy, the inner beauty, the inner light, the first contact with *that*, which suddenly makes you feel, 'Oh!

that is what I want,' you must cultivate it, never forget it, hold it constantly before you, tell yourself, 'I have felt it once, so I can feel it again. This has been real for me, even for the space of a second, and that is what I am going to revive in myself'.... And encourage the body to seek it—to seek it, *with the confidence* that it carries that possibility within itself and that if it calls for it, it will come back, it will be realised again.

This is what should be done when one is young. This is what should be done every time one has the opportunity to recollect oneself, commune with oneself, seek oneself." (CWM 9: 163–164)

CXXXV—By Strong Aspiration, Bring Higher Forces from Above to Heal the Illness

1.

"Wait, take an example which is quite concrete: sunstroke. This upsets you considerably, it is one of the things which makes you most ill—a sunstroke upsets everything, it disturbs the inner functions, it generally causes a congestion in the head and very high fever. So, if this has happened, if it has succeeded in getting through the protection and entering you, well, if you can just go into a quiet place, stretch yourself out flat, go out of your body (naturally, you must learn this; there are people who do this spontaneously, for others a long discipline is necessary), go out of your body, remain above in a way to be able to see the body (you know the phenomenon, seeing one's body when one is outside? This can be done at will, going out of one's body and remaining just above it), the body is stretched out on a bed, a bench, on the ground, anywhere; you are stretched just above it and from there, consciously, you pull the Force from above, and if you are used to doing it, if your aspiration is strong enough, you get the answer; and then, from there, taking care not to re-enter your body, you begin to push these forces into the body, like that, regularly, until you see the body receiving them (for, the first few moments they don't enter, because the body is quite upset by the illness, it is

not receptive, it is tensed up), you push them gently, gently, quietly, without nervousness, very peacefully, into the body. But you must not be disturbed by anyone. If someone comes along, sees you stretched out and shakes you, it is extremely dangerous. You must do this in quiet conditions, ask people not to disturb you or better shut yourself up where they can't disturb you. But you can concentrate slowly (this takes more or less time—ten minutes, half an hour, one hour, two hours—it depends upon the seriousness of the disorder which has set in, slowly, from above, you concentrate the Force until you see that the body is receiving, that the Force is entering, the disorder is being set right and there is a relaxation in the body itself." (CWM 4: 270)

2.

"Things that do not want to change in your nature join together and come out in the form of illness. The only thing to be done is to have a strong aspiration and a total change. Then everything will be all right. (CWM 15: 139)

CXXXVI—By Aspiration, Body Disorder or Pain Can Cease

1.

"*When there is a clearly localised illness in the body, what is the best way of opening the physical consciousness to receive the healing Force?"*

…

But there is a preparation which may be of a general kind. That is, to accustom the body methodically to understand that it is only the outer expression of a truer and deeper reality and that it is this truer and deeper reality which governs its destiny–though it is not usually aware of it.

…

If you know how to concentrate, to be quiet, and if you can bring into yourself a certain peace, of any kind–it may be a mental peace, it may be a vital peace, it may be a psychic peace; they have different values and qualities, this is an individual question –you try to realise within yourself a state of peace or attempt to enter into a conscious contact with a force of peace.... Suppose you succeed more or less completely. Then, if you can draw the peace into yourself and bring it down into the solar plexus—for we are not talking of inner states but of your physical body—and from there direct it very calmly, very

slowly I might say, but very persistently, towards the place where the pain is more or less sharp, and fix it there, this is very good.

This is not always enough.

But if by widening this movement you can add a sort of mental formation with a little life in it—not just cold, but with a little life in it—that the only reality is the divine Reality, and all the cells of this body are a more or less deformed expression of this divine Reality—there is only one Reality, the Divine, and our body is a more or less deformed expression of this sole Reality—if by my aspiration, my concentration, I can bring into the cells of the body the consciousness of this *sole* Reality, all disorder must necessarily cease.

If you can add to that a movement of complete and trusting surrender to the Grace, then I am sure that within five minutes your suffering will disappear. If you know how to do it.

You may try and yet not succeed. But you must know how to try again and again and again, until you do succeed. But if you do those three things at the same time, well, there is no pain which can resist." (CWM 8: 211–213)

2.

"But with this sadhana that I am following, there are some leading strings which one can pursue. I have some phrases of Sri Aurobindo.... … There are a few remarks that have

been so retained by me and they are, yes, like leading strings; for example, "Endure... endure."

Suppose you have a pain somewhere; the instinct (the instinct of the body, the instinct of the cells) is to shrink and to seek to reject—that is the worst thing, that increases it invariably. Therefore, the first thing to teach the body is to remain immobile, to have no reaction; above all, no shrinking, not even a movement of rejection—a perfect immobility. That is bodily equality.

A perfect immobility.

After the perfect immobility comes the movement of inner aspiration (I always speak of the aspiration of the cells— I use words for what has no word, but there is no other way of expressing it), the surrender, that is to say, the *spontaneous and total* acceptance of the supreme Will (which one does not know). Does the All-Will want things to go this way or that way, that is to say, towards the disintegration of some elements or towards...? And there also, there are infinite shades: there is the passage between two heights (I speak of cellular realisations, do not forget that); I mean one has a certain inner poise, a poise of movement, of life, and it is understood that while passing from one movement to a higher movement, almost always there occurs a descent and then an ascent—it is a transition. Then, does the shock you receive push you downward to make you rise again or does it push you downward to abandon the old movements?—for there are

cellular ways of being that should disappear in order to give place to other ways. There are others that tend to rise upward again with a higher harmony and organisation. This is the second point. And one must wait and see, *without postulating in advance* what should be. Above all, there is the desire—the desire to be at ease, the desire to be in peace, all that—which must absolutely cease, disappear. One must be absolutely without reaction, like this (*gesture with palms open, of motionless offering upward*). And then, when one is like that ('one' means the cells), after a time comes the perception of the category to which the movement belongs, and one has only to follow in order to see whether it is something that has to disappear and be replaced by another thing (which is not known for the moment) or it is something that has to be transformed.

And so on. All the while it is like that.

All this is to tell you that the thought is absolutely immobile; everything happens directly: a matter of vibration. Well, it is only in this way that one can know what one should do. If the thing passes through the mind, especially this physical thinking which is absolutely imbecile, absolutely, you cannot know; so long as it is working you are always led to do what you should not do, to have particularly the bad reaction—the reaction that helps the forces of disorder and obscurity instead of counteracting them. And I am not speaking of anxiety,

because for a very long time now there has been no anxiety in my body—a long time, many years—but anxiety is like swallowing a cup of poison.

This is what is called physical yoga.

One must overcome all that. And the only way to do it: at every second all the cells must be (*gesture of motionless offering upward*) in an adoration, in an aspiration—an adoration, an aspiration, an adoration... and nothing else. Then after a time there is also delight, then that ends in blissful trust. When this trust is established all will be well. But... it is easy to say, it is much more difficult to do. Only, for the moment I am convinced that this is the only means, there is no other. (CWM 11:13–15)

CXXXVII—The Divine Never Purposely Sends an Illness

1.

"*Are illnesses tests in the Yoga?*

Tests? Not at all.

You are given an illness purposely to make you progress? Surely it is not like that. Actually, you may turn the thing round and say that there are people whose aspiration is so constant, whose goodwill so total that whatever happens to them they take as a trial on the path to make progress. I knew people who, whenever they fell ill, took that as a proof of the Divine Grace to help them to progress. They told themselves: it is a good sign, I am going to find out the cause of my illness and I shall make the necessary progress. I knew a few of this kind and they moved on magnificently. There are others, on the contrary, who, far from making use of the thing, let themselves fall flat on the ground. So much the worse for them. But the true attitude when one is ill, is to say: 'There is something that is not all right; I am going to see what it is.' You must never think that the Divine has purposely sent an illness, for that would truly be a very wicked Divine!" (CWM 5: 168–169)

2.

"There are other kinds of imbalance and they are more or less a part of what you were saying just now. There is an aspiration within you (I am now speaking of people who do yoga or at any rate know what the spiritual life is and try to walk on the path), within you there is a part of the being—either mental or vital or sometimes even physical—that has understood well, has much aspiration, its special aptitudes, that receives the forces well and is making good progress. And then there are others that cannot, others still that don't want to (that of course is very bad), but there are yet others that want to very much but cannot, do not have the capacity, are not ready. So there is something that rises upward and something that does not move. That causes a terrible imbalance. And usually this translates itself into some illness or other, for you are in such a state of inner tension between something that cannot or something that clings, that does not want to move and something else that wants to: that produces a frightful unease and the result usually is an illness." (CWM 5:174–175)

3.

"But if somewhere in your being—either in your body or even in your vital or mind, either in several parts or even in a single one—there is an incapacity to receive the descending Force, this acts like a grain of sand in a

machine. You know, a fine machine working quite well with everything going all right, and you put into it just a little sand (nothing much, only a grain of sand), suddenly everything is damaged and the machine stops. Well, just a little lack of receptivity somewhere, something that is unable to receive the Force, that is completely shut up (when one looks at it, it becomes as it were a little dark spot somewhere, a tiny thing hard as a stone: the Force cannot enter into it, it refuses to receive it—either it cannot or it will not) and immediately that produces a great imbalance; and this thing that was moving upward, that was blooming so wonderfully, finds itself sick, and sometimes just when you were in the normal equilibrium; you were in good health, everything was going on well, you had nothing to complain about. One day when you grasped a new idea, received a new impulse, when you had a great aspiration and received a great force and had a marvellous experience, a beautiful experience opening to you inner doors, giving you a knowledge you did not have before; then you were sure that everything was going to be all right.... The next day, you are taken ill. So you say: 'Still that? It is impossible! That should not happen.' But it was quite simply what I have just said: a grain of sand. There was something that could not receive; immediately it brings about a disequilibrium. Even though very small it is enough, and you fall ill.

You see there are reasons!—many reasons, numberless reasons. For all these things combine in an extraordinarily complex way, and in order to know, in order to be able to cure an illness, one must find out its cause, not its microbe. For it happens that (excuse me, I hope there are no doctors here!), it happens that when microbes are there, they find out magnificent remedies to kill the microbes, but these remedies cure some and make others much more ill! Nobody knows why.... Perhaps I know why. Because the illness had another cause than the purely physical one; there was another. The first was only an outer expression of a different disorder, and unless you touched that, discovered that disorder, never would you be able to prevent the illness from coming." (CWM 5: 176–177)

4.

"So there are two things you have to do when you have discovered the disorder, big or small—the disharmony. … So the first thing to do is to quieten oneself, bring peace, calm, relaxation, with a total confidence, in this little corner (not necessarily in the whole body). Afterwards you see what is the cause of the disorder. You look. Of course, there are many, but still you try to find out approximately the cause of this disorder, and through the pressure of light and knowledge and spiritual force you re-establish the harmony, the proper functioning. And if the ailing part is

receptive, if it does not offer any obstinate resistance, you can be cured in a few seconds." (CWM 5: 184–185)

5.

"But I say that the situation gets complicated if behind this there is an attack, a pressure from adverse forces who really want to harm you. You may have opened the door through spiritual error, through a movement of vanity, of anger, of hatred or of violence; even if it is merely a movement that comes and goes, that can open the door. There are always germs watching and only waiting for an occasion. That is why one should be very careful. Anyhow, for some reason or other, the influence has pierced through the shell of protection and acts there encouraging the illness to become as bad as it can be. In that case the first means is not quite sufficient. Then you have to add something; you must add the Force of spiritual purification which is such an absolutely perfectly constructive force that nothing that's in the least destructive can survive there. If you have this Force at your disposal or if you can ask for it and get it, you direct it on the spot and the adverse force usually runs away immediately, for if it happens to be in the midst of this Force it gets dissolved, it disappears; for no force of disintegration can survive within this Force; therefore disintegration disappears and with it that also disappears. It can be changed into a constructive force, that is possible, or it may be simply

dissolved and reduced to nothing. And with that not only is the illness cured, but all possibility of its return is also eliminated. You are cured of the illness once for all, it never comes back." (CWM 5: 185–186)

CXXXVIII—Get Rid of Petty, Narrow, Self-interested Periods which Come after Periods of Aspiration

1.

"One goes from one extreme to the other. You see, you can say, to put it in very simple words: one day I am good, the next day I am bad. And this seems quite natural.... Or even, sometimes for one hour you are good and the next hour you are wicked; or else, sometimes the whole day through one is good and suddenly one becomes wicked, for a minute very wicked, all the more wicked as one was good! Only, one doesn't observe it, thoughts cross one's mind, violent, bad, hateful things, like that... Usually one pays no attention to it. But this is what must be caught! As soon as it manifests, you must catch it like this (*Mother makes a movement*) with a very firm grip, and then hold it, hold it up to the light and say, 'No! I don't want you! I —don't—want—you! I have nothing to do with this! You are going to get out of here, and you won't return!'

(*After a silence*) And this is something—an experience that one can have daily, or almost... when one has those movements of great enthusiasm, great aspiration, when one suddenly becomes conscious of the divine goal, the urge towards the Divine, the desire to take part in the divine work, when one comes out of oneself in a great joy and great force... and then, a few hours later,

one is miserable for a tiny little thing; one indulges in so petty, so narrow, so commonplace a self-interestedness, has such a dull desire... and all the rest has evaporated as if it did not exist. One is quite accustomed to contradictions; one doesn't pay attention to this and that is why all these things live comfortably together as neighbours. One must first discover them and prevent them from intermingling in one's consciousness: decide between them, separate the shadow from the light. Later one can get rid of the shadow." (CWM 6: 264)

CXXXIX—Aspiration at the Time of Death

1.

"… for the destiny which follows after death, the last state of consciousness is usually the most important. That is, if at the moment of death one has the intense aspiration to return to continue his work, then the conditions are arranged for it to be done. But, you see, there are all the possibilities for what happens after death. There are people who return in the psychic. You see, I have told you that the outer being is very rarely preserved; so we speak only of the psychic consciousness which, indeed, always persists. And then there are people for whom the psychic returns to the psychic domain to assimilate the experience they have had and to prepare their future life. This may take centuries, it depends on the people.

The more evolved the psychic is, the nearer it is to its complete maturity, the greater the time between the births. There are beings who reincarnate only after a thousand years, two thousand years." (CWM 7: 86)

CXL—If We All Aspire, Nature's Need to Destroy Can Be Prevented

1.

"There is a wonderful civilisation with all kinds of extraordinary productions, from the scientific point of view, the artistic point of view, even the political, organisational and social point of view. There were fine civilisations like those which have left a kind of occult memory … There are civilisations like that which disappear suddenly and then follows a whole period full of darkness, unconsciousness, ignorance, of altogether primitive races which seem so close to animals that one asks whether there is really any difference. And so there is a big hole in the darkness, passing through all kinds of disorders. Then all of a sudden it emerges above, at an even higher level, with greater virtues, a greater realisation... as though all those hours in the night, of labour in the night had prepared Matter so that it might express something higher. Then again another darkness, an oblivion: the earth becomes again barbarous, obscure, ignorant, painful. And suddenly some thousands of years later, a new civilisation comes....

… And then yet once more suddenly there is an illumination. And while one is in the midst of the illumination one says, 'Now, we have it, it is the right thing, now we must not fall again....'

So far there has always been a relapse.

We shall see.

Will there be a fall once again?

That, my child, I have not said. I have said nothing, I said: 'We shall see.'

In reality, I believe it depends somewhat upon each one of us and on our aspiration. If everyone does all that is needed and the maximum he can do, there is a chance of arriving at a stabilised stage where the upward movement will go on without the need to destroy anything in order to begin again.

It is not indispensable, but it has always been so till now, and indeed, I don't know if Nature does not take great pleasure in it....

It happens we are obliged to take our support on what Nature has done, because it is she who has been at work till now. But at the same time we do not approve of her ways of working. So, that produces a small inner conflict (in the family, if I may say so!); but it makes things somewhat difficult, because she does not like her way of being to be disturbed. And yet, if one goes on doing as she wants, then it will always be the same story, always there will have to be this disappearing and beginning again, for it is her play. Hence one must be able to prevent her from destroying. But if by chance a good way is found to get her interested and make her collaborate, then with her

collaboration it would be possible to succeed." (CWM 5: 247–249)

CXLI—When a Double or Triple Dose of Energy Is Given, Utilise the Energy to Change into an Aspiration

1.

"Human beings do not know how to preserve energy. When something happens, an accident or an illness, they ask for help and a double or triple dose of energy is administered. They feel that they are receptive and they receive it. This energy is given for two reasons: to repair the disorder caused by the accident or illness, and to give a power for transformation in order to mend, to change what was the true cause of the illness or accident.

Instead of utilising energy in that way, immediately, immediately they throw it out. They begin to move about, they begin to be active, they begin to work, they begin to speak, they begin... they feel themselves full of energy and throw everything out! They can keep nothing. Then naturally, since the energy was not meant to be wasted like that, but for an inner use, they fall quite flat. And this is universal. They do not know, they do not know how to make this movement: to go within, to utilise the energy—not to keep it, it cannot be kept—to utilise it to mend the damage done to the body and to go deep down to find out the reason for the accident or the malady, and there, to change that into an aspiration, an inner transformation. Instead of this, people begin immediately to chatter, to move about, to act, to do this, to do that!

Indeed, the great majority of human beings feel that they are alive only when they waste energy; otherwise it does not look like life.

Not to waste energy means to utilise it for the purposes for which it was given. If the energy is given for transformation, for the sublimation of the being, it must be used for that; if the energy is given to set right something that has been disorganised in the body, it must be used for that." (CWM 15: 350)

CXLII—In the True Consciousness the Soul's Aspiration Is Needed for an Entire Change

1.

"The only truth in your other experience—which, you say, seems at the time so true to you,—is that it is hopeless for you or anyone to get out of the inferior consciousness by your or his unaided effort. That is why when you sink into this inferior consciousness, everything seems hopeless to you, because you lose hold for a time of the true consciousness. But the suggestion is untrue, because you have an opening to the Divine and are not bound to remain in the inferior consciousness.

When you are in the true consciousness, then you see that everything can be done, even if at present only a slight beginning has been made; but a beginning is enough, once the Force, the Power is there. For the truth is that it can do everything and only time and the soul's aspiration are needed for the entire change and the soul's fulfilment." (CWSA 31: 723)

2.

"It is no doubt the pressure of the psychic in you which you express in the letter. That is how the psychic being wants it to be. But it is a mistake to accept any suggestion of self-distrust or incapacity on the ground that it is not like that yet or is not always like that. These things always take

time; even after they have begun, they always take time. It is impossible to expect from the mixed and confused nature of the human being that it should be constantly in a state of ardent aspiration, perfect faith and love or full and constant openness to the Divine Force. There is the mental with its limited knowledge and its hesitations, there is the vital with its desires, unwillingnesses and its struggles; there is the physical with its obscurity, slowness and inertia. Even to clear the field sufficiently for a beginning of experience is usually a very long labour. But afterwards if the peace begins or any other right condition, it comes and stays for a time—then what is left of the lower nature surges up on some excuse or with no excuse and veils the condition." (CWSA 31: 727)

CXLIII—One Who Aspires to the Supreme Realisation

1.

"It is good and necessary to possess all the divine qualities that these gods represent and symbolise; that is why Sri Aurobindo invokes them and asks them to take possession of his nature. But for one who wants union with the Supreme, for one who aspires for the supreme Realisation, this (all the divine qualities that these gods represent) cannot be sufficient. This is why at the end he calls upon Kali to give him the power to go beyond them all.

For Kali is the most powerful aspect of the universal Mother and her power is greater than that of all the gods in her creation. To unite with her means therefore to become more vast, more complete, more powerful than all the gods together and that is why Sri Aurobindo places union with her above and beyond all the others." (CWM 10: 85)

2.

"This is the condition of the earth, and it is not very bright. But for us one possibility remains—I have spoken about it to you several times already—even if, outside, things are deteriorating completely and the catastrophe cannot possibly be avoided, there remains for us, I mean those for whom the supramental life is not a vain dream, those who

have faith in its reality and the aspiration to realise it—I don't necessarily mean those who have gathered here in Pondicherry, in the Ashram, but those who have as a link between them the knowledge Sri Aurobindo has given and the will to live according to that knowledge—there remains for them the possibility of intensifying their aspiration, their will, their effort, to gather their energies together and shorten the time for the realisation. There remains for them the possibility of working this miracle—individually and to a small extent collectively—of conquering space, duration, the time needed for this realisation; of replacing time by intensity of effort and going fast enough and far enough in the realisation to liberate themselves from the consequences of the present condition of the world; of making such a concentration of force, strength, light, truth, that by this very realisation they can be above these consequences and secure against them, enjoy the protection bestowed by the Light and Truth, by Purity—the divine Purity through the inner transformation—and that the Storm may pass over the world without being able to destroy this great hope of the near future; that the tempest may not sweep away this beginning of realisation.

Instead of falling asleep in an easy quietude and letting things happen according to their own rhythm, if one strains to the utmost one's will, ardour, aspiration and springs up into the light, then one can hold one's head higher; one can have, in a higher region of consciousness,

enough room to live, to breathe, to grow and develop above the passing cyclone." (CWM 9: 170)

3.

"A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature."

The Supramental Manifestation

This was certainly what he [Sri Aurobindo] expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being *created* in the supramental way, that is,

no longer belonging to animality at all and delivered from all animal needs.

…

I think—I know—that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill... and the *importance* we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all.

It is for you to know whether this interests you more than everything else in the world.... There comes a moment when the body itself finds that there is *nothing in the world* which is so worth living for as this transformation; that there is nothing which can have as great an interest as this passionate interest of transformation. It is as though all the cells of the body were a thirst for that Light which wants to manifest; they cry out for it, they find an intense joy in it and are *sure* of the Victory.

This is the aspiration that I am trying to communicate to you, and you will understand that

everything else in life is dull, insipid, futile, worthless in comparison with that: the transformation in the Light." (CWM 9: 192)

4.

"The material universe is a concretisation of a certain aspect, a certain emanation of the Supreme. But this concretisation is progressive—and not necessarily constant, not necessarily regular, but answering to a much more subtle law of freedom.

In this compound new elements penetrate and change the whole organisation. So, this organisation which was in itself perfect and unfolding itself according to its own law, is almost suddenly changed and all the internal relations become different. So this gives the impression of something either incoherent or unexpected or of a miracle according to how one looks at the problem. And this makes for two concomitant things: a determinism which would be absolute in itself if there were not this freedom, absolute also, of the unexpected and additional in the universe. I don't know if you have followed, but I have tried to express that.

But how is this addition made?

Eh, this addition?...

This addition of a new element...

Yes. By the aspiration of the supreme Consciousness.

The aspiration of the supreme Consciousness?

Yes. It is at work in this world and, working in this world, for the necessity of the work, it works for a certain end, you see, to bring the darkened consciousness back to its normal state of divine consciousness. And each time in its work it meets with a new obstacle, a new thing to conquer or transform, it calls to a new Force. (*Mother opens her hand*.) And this new Force is like a new creation. And so, as everything has its correspondence, it may be said in the same way that each being has in its different domains—a human being—it has in its different domains a destiny which is, so to speak, *absolute*. But it has also the capacity, through aspiration, to enter into contact with a higher domain and introduce the action of this higher domain in these more material determinisms. And there it is still the same thing; these two things combined: a determinism which we could call "horizontal" (to make it understandable) in each domain, which is absolute, and the intervention of other domains or a much higher domain, in that determinism, which changes it completely. So, everyone *at the same time* is a set of determinisms which seem quite absolute, and has a total freedom to

bring in the intervention of states of being or states of consciousness or forces of a higher domain; and calling these forces and bringing them into the external determinisms alters everything completely. And it is only thus that things can give the impression of the unexpected, the unknown and of freedom.

Mother is this what we call 'Grace'?

(*After a silence*) From a certain point of view, yes. That is, without the Grace this could not happen. (*Silence*) But it is not... unless one brings everything back to the Grace. There is certainly a state of consciousness and a vision of things which make you refer everything back to the Grace and finish by discovering that it alone exists, and that it alone does everything. But unless one goes to this extreme, before this, one can very well imagine that there is an element of personal aspiration in the being and that the Grace answers. That's a way of speaking. The other one also is a way of speaking. The thing is more subtle than that, more unseizable. It is very difficult to express these things in words, because, necessarily, it takes on a mental rigidity and there is a whole part of reality which disappears. But if one has the experience, one understands very well. The conclusion: one must have the experience." (CWM 6: 285–286)

CXLIV—Aspiration from the Mother's *Prayers and Meditation*

1.

"… Thou that makest the experience fertile, Thou who renderest life progressive, Thou who compellest the darkness to vanish in an instant before the Light, Thou who givest to Love all its power, Thou who everywhere raisest up matter in this ardent and wonderful aspiration, in this sublime thirst for Eternity." (CWM 1: 5)

2.

February 5, 1913

"Thy voice is heard as a melodious chant in the stillness of my heart, and is translated in my head by words which are inadequate and yet replete with Thee. And these words are addressed to the Earth and say to her:—Poor sorrowful Earth, remember that I am present in thee and lose not hope; each effort, each grief, each joy and each pang, each call of thy heart, each aspiration of thy soul, each renewal of thy seasons, all, all without exception, what seems to thee sorrowful and what seems to thee joyous, what seems to thee ugly and what seems to thee beautiful, all infallibly lead thee towards me, who am endless Peace, shadowless Light, perfect Harmony, Certitude, Rest and Supreme Blessedness." (CWM 1: 14)

3.

January 1, 1914

"To Thee, supreme Dispenser of all boons, to Thee who givest life its justification, by making it pure, beautiful and good, to Thee, Master of our destinies and goal of all our aspirations, was consecrated the first minute of this new year.

May it be completely glorified by this consecration; may those who hope for Thee, seek Thee in the right path; may those who seek Thee find Thee, and those who suffer, not knowing where the remedy lies, feel Thy life gradually piercing the hard crust of their obscure consciousness." (CWM 1: 43)

4.

January 6, 1914

Thou art the one and only goal of my life and the centre of my aspiration, the pivot of my thought, the key of the synthesis of my being. (CWM 1: 48)

5.

January 10, 1914

My aspiration rises towards Thee ever the same in its almost childlike form, so ordinary in its simplicity, but my call is ever more ardent, and behind the faltering words there is all the fervour of my concentrated will. And I implore Thee, O Lord, in spite of the naïveté of this

expression that is hardly intellectual, I implore Thee for more true light, true purity, sincerity and love, and all this for all, for the multitude constituting what I call my being, and for the multitude constituting the universal being; I implore Thee, though I know that it is perfectly useless to implore Thee, for we alone, in our ignorance and ill will, can stand in the way of Thy glorious and total manifestation, but something childlike within me finds a support in this mental attitude; I implore Thee that the peace of Thy reign may spread throughout the earth. (CWM 1: 52)

6.

February 5, 1914

"What could be said that is not always the very same aspiration: the law of divine love, the purest expression of what we can conceive of Thee, must be realised more and more upon earth and triumph over all ignorant egoism; we must become more and more perfectly the faithful servitors of that power of love and light, we must live in it, by it; that alone must live and act in us.

O Lord, become the sovereign Master of our lives and dispel all the obscurities which can still prevent us from seeing Thee and constantly communing with Thee. Liberate us from all ignorance, liberate us from ourselves that we may open wide the doors of Thy glorious manifestation." (CWM 1: 66)

7.

February 8, 1914

O Lord, sweet Master of love, Thou who bringest us out of the darkness to awaken us to consciousness, who deliverest us from suffering to make us commune within Thy eternal peace, every morning my aspiration soars ardently towards Thee, and I implore that my being, integrally awake to Thy knowledge, may now live only by Thee, in Thee, for Thee; I implore that more and more perfectly identified with Thee, I may now be only Thyself manifested in word and act; (CWM 1: 68)

8.

February 9, 1914

"Whatever names may be given to Thee, O Lord, by the *élite* of humanity, a thirst for something absolute, it seeks ardently for Thee. Even those who seem to move farthest away from Thee, even those who are exclusively occupied with themselves, are they not searching for an absolute in sensation, an absolute in satisfaction, and in spite of its vanity that search also can some day lead to Thee; Thou art far too much at the core, at the heart of all things for even the very worst egoisms not to be transformed by Thee into aspirations. . . . The only thing we must fear and avoid is the inertia of inconscience, of blind and heavy ignorance." (CWM 1: 69)

9.

February 17, 1914

O Lord, how ardently my aspiration rises to Thee: give us the full consciousness of Thy law, the constant perception of Thy will, so that our decision may be Thy decision and our life solely consecrated to Thy service and as perfect an expression as possible of Thy inspiration.

O Lord, dispel all darkness, all blindness; may every one enjoy the calm certitude that Thy divine illumination brings!" (CWM 1: 77)

10.

"But my aspiration to Thee is constant, and truly speaking, it is very often Thou and Thou alone who livest in this body, this imperfect means of manifesting Thee.

May all beings be happy in the peace of Thy illumination!" (CWM 1: 82)

11.

"This morning my prayer rises to Thee, always with the same aspiration: to live Thy love, to radiate Thy love, with such potency and effectiveness that all may feel fortified, regenerated and illumined by our contact. To have power to heal life, to relieve suffering, to generate peace and calm confidence, to efface anguish and replace it by the sense of the one true happiness, the happiness that is founded in Thee and never fades. . . . O Lord, O marvellous Friend,

O all-powerful Master, penetrate all our being, transfigure it till Thou alone livest in us and through us!" (CWM 1: 91)

12.

"Then I thought of those we had left far behind and whose affection goes with us, and with a great tenderness I wanted Thy conscious and lasting Peace for them, the plenitude of Thy Peace as far as they could receive it. Then I thought of all those towards whom we are going, who are troubled by childish preoccupations and fight in ignorance and egoism for petty rivalries of interest; and ardently, in a great aspiration, I asked for them the full light of Thy Peace. Then I thought of all those we know, all those we do not know, all the life in the making, all that has changed its form, all that is not yet in form, and for all these, …" (CWM 1: 94)

13.

March 12, 1914

O Lord, my one aspiration is to know Thee and serve Thee better every day. What do outer circumstances matter? They seem to me each day more vain and illusory, and I take less and less interest in what is going to happen to us in the outer life; but more and more am I intensely interested in the one thing which seems important to me: to know Thee better in order to serve Thee better." (CWM 1: 96)

14.

"Lord, my aspiration rises to Thee like a silent canticle, a mute adoration, and Thy divine Love illumines my heart." (CWM 1: 101)

15.

March 21, 1914

Every morning my aspiration rises ardently to Thee, and in the silence of my satisfied heart I ask that Thy law of Love may be expressed, that Thy will may manifest. (CWM 1: 105)

16.

March 22, 1914

"O Lord, divine Master of Love, enlighten their consciousness and their hearts. They have made an effort to reach out towards Thee but because of their ignorance their prayers probably did not rise to Thee, and their false conceptions have barred the way to their aspiration. Yet in Thy mercy Thou dost turn all goodwill to account and a flash of sincerity is enough for Thy divine light to use it to illumine the intelligence, for Thy sublime love to penetrate into all hearts and fill them with that pure and lofty benevolence which is one of the best expressions of Thy law. What I willed for them, with Thy will, in moments when I could be in true communion with Thee—grant that they may have received it on the day when, striving to

forget all outer contingencies, they turned to their noblest thought, their best feelings.

May the supreme serenity of Thy sublime Presence awake in them." (CWM 1: 106)

17.

March 30, 1914

"In the presence of those who are integrally Thy servitors, those who have attained the perfect consciousness of Thy presence, I become aware that I am still far, very far from what I yearn to realise; and I know that the highest I can conceive, the noblest and purest is still dark and ignorant beside what I should conceive. But this perception, far from being depressing, stimulates and strengthens the aspiration, the energy, the will to triumph over all obstacles so as to be at last identified with Thy law and Thy work.

Gradually the horizon becomes distinct, the path grows clear, and we move towards a greater and greater certitude." (CWM 1: 113)

18.

April 4, 1914

O Lord, my adoration rises ardently to Thee, all my being is an aspiration, a flame consecrated to Thee. (CWM 1: 118)

Grant that my aspiration may be intense enough to awaken the same aspiration everywhere: oh, may goodness, justice and peace reign as supreme masters, may ignorant egoism be overcome, darkness be suddenly illuminated by Thy pure Light; may the blind see, the deaf hear, may Thy law be proclaimed in every place and, in a constantly progressive union, in an ever more perfect harmony, may all, like one single being, stretch out their arms towards Thee to identify themselves with Thee and manifest Thee upon earth. (CWM 1:121)

19.

May 2, 1914

Beyond all human conceptions, even the most marvellous, beyond all human feelings, even the most sublime, beyond the most magnificent aspirations and the purest flights, beyond Love, Knowledge and the Oneness of Being, I would enter into constant communion with Thee, O Lord. Free from all shackles I shall be Thyself; it will be Thou who wilt see the world through this body; it will be Thou who wilt act in the world through this instrument.

In me is the calm serenity of perfect certitude. (CWM 1:133)

20.

"That precise knowledge, that clear-sightedness has given place to a great love for Thee, O Lord, which has seized

my whole being from the outer organism to the deepest consciousness, and all lies prostrate at Thy feet in an ardent aspiration for a definitive identification with Thee, an absorption in Thee. I implored Thee with all the energy I could summon. And once again, just when it seemed to me that my consciousness was going to disappear in Thine, just when all my being was nothing but a pure crystal reflecting Thy Presence, someone came and interrupted my concentration.

Such is, indeed, the symbol of the existence Thou givest me as my share, in which outer usefulness, the work for all, holds a much greater place even than the supreme realisation. All the circumstances of my life seem always to tell me on Thy behalf: "It is not through supreme concentration that thou wilt realise oneness, it is by spreading out in all." May Thy will be done, O Lord." (CWM 1:143)

21.

May 17, 1914

O Lord, deliver me from the mental influences which weigh upon me, so that, completely free, I may soar towards Thee.

O Thou, Universal Being, Supreme Unity in perceptible form, through an irresistible aspiration I nestled within Thy heart, then I was Thy heart itself, and I knew then that Thy heart is no other than the Child who

plays and creates the worlds. Thou didst tell me, "One day thou wilt be my head but for the moment turn thy gaze towards the earth." And on the earth now I am the joyful child who plays. (CWM 1:145)

22.

May 19, 1914

"This mental being which throughout my individual existence had the power to set all my faculties working: deep devotion for Thee, infinite compassion for men, ardent aspiration for knowledge, effort for self-perfection —seems to have fallen into a deep sleep and no longer sets anything at all in movement. All the individual faculties slumber and the consciousness is not yet fully awake in the transcendent states; that is, its wakefulness in them is intermittent and in between there is sleep. Something in this being aspires for solitude and absolute silence for a little while, so as to come out of this unsatisfactory transition; and something else knows that it is Thy will that this instrument be consecrated to the service of all, even if this must apparently be harmful to its self-perfecting." (CWM 1:147)

23.

"All the hearts of men beat within my heart, all their thoughts vibrate in my thought, the slightest aspiration of a docile animal or a modest plant unites with my formidable

aspiration, and all this rises towards Thee, for the conquest of Thy love and light, scaling the summits of Being to attain Thee, ravish Thee from Thy motionless beatitude and make Thee penetrate the darkness of suffering to transform it into divine Joy, into sovereign Peace. And this violence is made of an infinite love which gives itself and a trustful serenity which smiles with the certitude of Thy perfect Unity." (CWM 1:156)

24.

May 31, 1914

"… If there is a sweetness in being Thy divine love at work in the world, there is as great a sweetness in being the infinite aspiration which rises towards that infinite love." (CWM 1: 162)

25.

"Such is the assurance Thou givest me in answer to my aspiration for Thee.

An immense wave of love descends over all things and penetrates all things.

Peace, peace upon all the earth, victory, plenitude, wonder . . .

O beloved children, unhappy and ignorant, O thou, rebellious and violent Nature, open your hearts, calm your forces, for here comes the sweet omnipotence of Love, here is the pure radiance of the light that penetrates you. This human hour, this earthly hour is beautiful over all

other hours. Let each and all know it and rejoice in the plenitude that is given." (CWM 1:167)

26.

June 13, 1914

"First of all, knowledge must be conquered, that is, one must learn to know Thee, to be united with Thee, and all means are good and may be used to attain this goal. But it would be a great mistake to believe that all is done when this goal is attained. All is done in principle, the victory is gained in theory, and those whose motive is only an egoistic aspiration for their own salvation may feel satisfied and live only in and for this communion, without caring at all for Thy manifestation.

But those whom Thou hast appointed as Thy representatives upon earth cannot rest content with the result so obtained. To know Thee first and before all else, yes; but once Thy knowledge is acquired there remains all the work of Thy manifestation; and then there intervene the quality, force, complexity and perfection of this manifestation. Very often those who have known Thee, dazzled and rapt in ecstasy by this knowledge, have been content to see Thee for themselves and express Thee somehow or other in their outermost being. He who wants to be perfect in Thy manifestation cannot be satisfied with that; he must manifest Thee on all the planes, in all the states of being and thus turn the knowledge he has

acquired to the best account for the whole universe." (CWM 1:171)

27.

June 16, 1914

"Like a sun Thy splendour descends upon the earth and Thy rays will illumine the world. All those elements which are pure enough, plastic enough, sufficiently receptive to manifest the very splendour of the central fire-nucleus are grouping themselves together. This grouping is not arbitrary and does not depend on the will or aspiration of one element or another, it depends on what it is, it is independent of any individual decision. Thy splendour wants to radiate; what is capable of manifesting it manifests it, and these elements gather together to reconstitute as perfectly as possible in this world of division the divine Centre which has to be manifested." (CWM 1:175)

28.

June 17, 1914

"All that has been conceived and realised so far is mediocre, banal, insufficient beside what ought to be. The perfections of the past no longer have any force now. A new puissance is needed to transform the new powers and to subject them to Thy divine will. 'Ask and this shall be', is Thy constant answer. And now, O Lord, Thou must

create in this being a constant aspiration, uninterrupted, intense, passionate, in an immutable serenity. Silence, peace are there: there must also be the persistence of the intensity. Oh, Thy heart sings a hallelujah of gladness as if what Thou willest were on the way to its fulfilment. … Destroy all these elements, that from their ashes may emerge new elements adapted to the new manifestation." (CWM 1: 176)

29.

"But the religious being turns to Thee, O Lord, in a great aspiration of love, and implores Thy help so that it may be *the best* that shall be realised, so that as many obstacles as possiblemay be overcome, all possible obscurities dispelled, all possible egoistic ill-will vanquished. It is not *the best* possible in circumstances of the present disorder which must happen—for that always happens —it is these circumstances themselves which, through a greater effort than ever yet was made, must be transfigured, so that a 'best', new in quality, new in quantity, an altogether exceptional 'best' may be manifested.

So let it be." (CWM 1: 183)

30.

July 23, 1914

"Lord, Thou art all-powerful: become the fighter, gain the victory. May Thy Love be the sovereign Master of our

hearts and Thy Knowledge never leave our thoughts. . . . Do not abandon us to impotence and darkness; break every limit, shatter every chain, dispel every illusion. Our aspiration rises to Thee in ardent prayer." (CWM 1: 209)

31.

August 13, 1914

"The being stands before Thee, with arms lifted, palms open, in an ardent aspiration.

O sweet Master, it is a Love more wonderful and formidable than any manifested so far which the earth needs; it is for this Love that it yearns. . . . Who will be capable and worthy of being its intermediary to it? Who? That matters little; but it must be done. O Lord, answer my call, accept the offering of my being despite its little worth and its limitations: Come.

More, always more; may the regenerating streams roll over the earth in beneficent waves. Transfigure and illumine. Work this supreme miracle so long awaited, and break all ignorant egoisms; awaken Thy sublime flame in every heart. Do not let us become benumbed in a tranquil serenity. We ought not to take any rest before Thy new and sovereign Love is manifested.

Listen to our prayer; answer our call: Come!" (CWM 1: 222)

32.

"To retrace the path in all innocence as though one had never before travelled it, is the true purity, the perfect sincerity—the sincerity that brings an uninterrupted progress, growth, an integral perfectioning.

Despite myself, in the silence of all thought, that is, of all conscious formulas, something in my being, deeper than words, turns to Thee, O ineffable Lord, in an ardent aspiration, giving Thee in offering all its activities, all its elements, all its modes of being, and imploring for all these the supreme illumination.

. . . O Thou, whom I cannot think, but whom with certitude I know!" (CWM 1: 227)

33.

August 25, 1914

"O Lord, let Thy Will be done, Thy work be accomplished. Fortify our devotion, increase our surrender, give us light upon the path. We erect Thee within us as our supreme Master that Thou mayst become supreme Master of all the earth.

Our speech is still ignorant: enlighten it.

Our aspiration is still imperfect: purify it.

Our action is still powerless: make it effective. O Lord, the earth groans and suffers; chaos has made this world its abode.

The darkness is so deep that Thou alone canst dispel it. Come, manifest Thyself, that Thy work may be accomplished." (CWM 1: 231)

34.

"The whole universe lives in Thy breast with all its life innumerable and Thou livest in Thy immensity in the least of its atoms.

And the aspiration of Thy infinitude turns towards That which is not manifested to cry to it for a manifestation ever more complete and more perfect.

All *is*, in one time, in a triple and clairvoyant total Consciousness, the Individual, the Universal, the Infinite." (CWM 1:237)

35.

September 13, 1914

"With fervour I hail Thee, O divine Mother, and in deep affection identify myself with Thee. United with our divine Mother I turn, O Lord, to Thee, and bow to Thee in mute adoration and in an ardent aspiration identify myself with Thee.

Then all becomes a marvellous Silence; Being is absorbed in Non-Being, all is suspended, at rest, motionless.

How shall one express the inexpressible?" (CWM 1: 245)

36.

September 22, 1914

"O Lord, Thou who art on the threshold of the Unknowable, I greet Thee!

And is it not Thou greeting Thy own self in the Unthinkable Essence of Being, in its immeasurable depths, and even in its most external realisations? For the Being is Thyself, whatever its mode of existence, and the Unthinkable Eternal is also Thyself in Thy essence. And this integral consciousness Thou hast made ours, so that we may be Thyself, not only in fact but consciously and effectively. And thus all is an interchange of salutations full of love and joyous adoration, in an ardent aspiration of our Mother towards Thee and an infinite and powerful response from Thee to our Mother, and finally from the totality of Thyself to all that is not yet manifested, to all the Unknowable which we shall know more and more, better and better, but which will ever remain the Unknowable." (CWM 1: 250)

37.

"All is calm, serene; there is no more struggle, no more anguish; aspiration itself becomes sovereignly peaceful in its immensity, yet loses nothing of its intensity; and through a curious opposition in the consciousness, like the obverse and reverse sides of a medal, the being perceives at one and the same time, the immutable calm of the

infinite Reality in which all is for ever without any possibility of change, and the ardent and rapid march of all that becomes without cessation in an uninterrupted progression . . . And to Thee, O Lord, both are equally true." (CWM 1: 257)

38.

October 14, 1914

"Mother Divine, Thou art with us; every day Thou givest me the assurance and, closely united in an identity that grows more and more total, more and more constant, we turn to the Lord of the Universe and to That which is beyond in a great aspiration towards the new Light. All the earth is in our arms like a sick child who must be cured and for whom one has a special affection because of his very weakness. Cradled on the immensity of the eternal becomings, ourselves those becomings, we contemplate hushed and glad the eternity of the immobile Silence where all is realised in the perfect Consciousness and immutable Existence, miraculous gate of all the unknown that is beyond." (CWM 1: 263)

39.

October 25, 1914*

"My aspiration to Thee, O Lord, has taken the form of a beautiful rose, harmonious, full in bloom, rich in fragrance. I stretch it out to Thee with both arms in a gesture of

offering and I ask of Thee: If my understanding is limited, widen it; if my knowledge is obscure, enlighten it; if my heart is empty of ardour, set it aflame; if my love is insignificant, make it intense; if my feelings are ignorant and egoistic, give them the full consciousness in the Truth. And the "I" which demands this of Thee, O Lord, is not a little personality lost amidst thousands of others. It is the whole earth that aspires to Thee in a movement full of fervour.

In the perfect silence of my contemplation all widens to infinity, and in the perfect peace of that silence Thou appearest in the resplendent glory of Thy Light." (CWM 1: 267)

40.

November 8, 1914

"For the plenitude of Thy Light we invoke Thee, O Lord! Awaken in us the power to express Thee.

All is mute in the being as in a desert crypt; but in the heart of the shadow, in the bosom of the silence burns the lamp that can never be extinguished, the fire of an ardent aspiration to know Thee and totally to live Thee." (CWM 1: 270)

41.

December 12, 1914

"We must know at each moment how to lose everything that we may gain everything; we must be able to shed the past like a dead body that we may be reborn into a greater plenitude. . . . It is so that the constant aspiration of the inner being expresses itself; turned to Thee, it wants to reflect Thee in an ever purer mirror; and Thy unchanging Beatitude is translated in it into a propelling force of progress of an incomparable intensity; and this force is transformed in the most external being into a calm and assured will which no obstacle can vanquish.

O divine Master, with what an ardent love I serve Thee! With what a pure, still and infinite joy I am Thyself in all that is and beyond all existence in form.

And the two consciousnesses unite in an unequalled plenitude." (CWM 1: 283)

42.

"It is true to say that the divisions of time are purely arbitrary, that the date assigned to the renewal of the year varies according to the latitude, the climate, the customs, and that it is purely conventional. This is the mental attitude which smiles at the childishness of men and wants to let itself be guided by profounder truths. And then suddenly the mind itself feels its powerlessness to translate these truths precisely, and, renouncing all wisdom of this kind, it lets the song of the aspiring heart arise, the heart for which every circumstance is an opportunity for a

deeper, vaster and more intense aspiration. . . . The year of the West renews itself: why not profit by it to will with renewed ardour that this symbol should become a reality and the deplorable things of the past give place to things which must exist in all glory?" (CWM 1: 286)

43.

January 11, 1915

"More than ever before, the aspiration of the mental being rose to Thee with great fervour. . . . The perception of infinity and eternity is always there. But it is as if Thou hadst willed to cut me off from all religious joy, all spiritual ecstasy, in order to plunge me into the most strictly material circumstances. Everywhere, O Lord, is Thy perfect bliss, and nothing can take away from me that grand gift Thou hast made of it to me; in every place and every circumstance it is with me, it is myself as I am Thou. But all this is nothing beside what should be. Thou wantest that from the heart of this heavy and obscure Matter I make the volcano of Thy Love and Light burst forth; Thou wantest that breaking all the old conventions of language there may arise a Word fit to express Thee, a Word never heard before; Thou wouldst that the union between the smallest things below and the vastest, sublimest things above might become integral; and that is why, O Lord, cutting me off from all religious joy and all spiritual ecstasy, depriving me of all freedom to concentrate exclusively

upon Thee, Thou saidst to me, "Work like an ordinary man in the midst of ordinary people; learn to be nothing more than they in everything that manifests; participate in all their ways of life; for beyond all that they know, all that they are, thou carriest within thee the torch of the eternal splendour which does not flicker, and by associating with them this is what thou wilt bring in their midst. Dost thou need to enjoy this light, so long as it radiates to all from thee? Is it necessary for thee to feel my love vibrating in thee, so long as thou givest it? Must thou taste fully the bliss of my presence, so long as thou canst serve as its intermediary to all?"

May Thy will be done, O Lord—done integrally.

It is my happiness and my law." (CWM 1: 288–289)

44.

March 3, 1915:

On board the Kamo Maru

"Solitude, a harsh, intense solitude, and always this strong impression of having been flung headlong into a hell of darkness! Never at any moment of my life, in any circumstances, have I felt myself living in surroundings so entirely opposite to all that I am conscious of as true, so contrary to all that is the essence of my life. Sometimes when the impression and the contrast grow very intense, I cannot prevent my total submission from taking on a hue of melancholy, and the calm and mute converse with the

Master within is transformed for a moment into an invocation that almost supplicates, "O Lord, what have I done that Thou hast thrown me thus into the sombre Night?" But immediately the aspiration rises, still more ardent, "Spare this being all weakness; suffer it to be the docile and clear-eyed instrument of Thy work, whatever that work may be."

For the moment the clear-sightedness is lacking; never was the future more veiled. It is as though we were moving towards a high, impenetrable wall, so far as the destiny of individual men is concerned. As for the destinies of nations and of the earth, they appear more distinctly. But of these it is useless to speak: the future will reveal them clearly to all eyes, even of the most blind." (CWM 1: 294)

45.

"The consciousness of the universe sprang towards the Divine in an ardent aspiration, a perfect surrender, and it saw in the splendour of the immaculate Light the radiant Being standing on a many-headed serpent whose body coiled infinitely around the universe. The Being in an eternal gesture of triumph mastered and created at one and the same time the serpent and the universe that issued from him; erect on the serpent he dominated it with all his victorious might, and the same gesture that crushed the hydra enveloping the universe gave it eternal birth. Then

the consciousness became this Being and perceived that its form was changing once more; it was absorbed into something which was no longer a form and yet contained all forms, something which, immutable, sees,—the Eye, the Witness. And what It sees, is. Then this last vestige of form disappeared and the consciousness itself was absorbed into the Unutterable, the Ineffable." (CWM 1:311–312)

46.

January 22, 1916

"Thou hast taken entire possession of this miserable instrument and if it is not yet perfected enough for Thee to complete its transformation, its transmutation, Thou art at work in each one of its cells to knead it and make it supple and enlighten it, and in the whole being, to arrange, organise and harmonise it. Everything is in movement, everything is changing; Thy divine action makes itself felt as an ineffable spring of a purifying fire that circulates through all the atoms. And this flowing spring has brought into the being an ecstasy more marvellous than any it had ever felt before: thus to Thy action there answers the aspiration of that on which Thou workest and the aspiration is all the more ardent because the instrument has seen itself as it really is in all its infirmity.

O Lord, I implore Thee, hasten the blessed day when the divine miracle will be accomplished, hasten the day of the realisation of the Divine upon earth." (CWM 1: 315)

47.

January 14, 1917

"May all who are unhappy become happy, may the wicked become good, may the sick become healthy!" Thus was formulated the aspiration within me concerning the manifestation of Thy divine Love through this instrument. It was like a request, a request a child makes to its father with the certitude that it will be granted. For the certitude was in me when I asked: it seemed to me so simple and easy; I felt so clearly in myself how it was possible. To grow from joy to joy, from beauty to beauty, is this not more natural and also more fruitful than always to suffer and toil in an ignorant struggle unwillingly undergone? If Thou allowest the heart to blossom freely at the touch of Thy divine Love, this transformation is easy and comes of itself.

Wilt Thou not grant this, O Lord, as a pledge of Thy mercy?

It is with the confidence of a child that my heart implores Thee this evening." (CWM 1: 349)

48.

October 15, 1917

"I have cried to Thee in my despair, O Lord, and Thou hast answered my call.

I have no right to complain of the circumstances of my existence; are they not consonant with what I am?

Because Thou ledst me to the threshold of Thy splendour and gavest me the joy of Thy harmony, I thought I had reached the goal: but, in truth, Thou hast regarded Thy instrument in the perfect clarity of Thy light and plunged it back into the crucible of the world that it may be melted anew and purified.

In these hours of an extreme and anguished aspiration I see, I feel myself drawn by Thee with a dizzy rapidity along the road of transformation and my whole being vibrates to a conscious contact with the Infinite.

It is so that Thou givest me patience and the strength to surmount this new ordeal." (CWM 1: 372)

49.

"Silence comes and the flame of aspiration is lit, the body is suffused with warmth, and in this warmth there is a blissful impulse towards transformation; the song of divine harmony is heard, calm and smiling: it is a sweet symphony, almost imperceptible and yet full of power. Then silence returns, deeper and vaster, yes, vast unto infinity, and the being exists beyond all bounds of time or space." (CWM 2: 123)

CXLV—Experiences of The Mother and Her Aspiration of the Body

1.

"I experienced this morning, for two hours, a kind of blissful state in which there was such a clear consciousness that all the forms of life, in all the worlds and at all moments, are the expression of a choice—one chooses to be like that.

It is very difficult to say with words.... The kind of obligation in which one believes oneself to be living, to which one believes oneself to be submitted, had completely disappeared, and it was quite a spontaneous and natural perception that the life upon earth, and the life in other worlds, and all kinds of life upon earth and all kinds of life in other worlds are simply a question of choice: you have chosen to be like that and you choose constantly to be like this or to be like that, or whether it happens like this or it happens like that; and you choose also to believe that you are submitted to a fatality or to a necessity or to a law which compels you—everything is a question of choice. And there was a feeling of lightness, of freedom, and then a smile for everything. At the same time it gives you a tremendous power. All feeling of compulsion, of necessity—of fatality still more—had disappeared completely. All the illnesses, all the happenings, all the

dramas, all that: disappeared. And this concrete and so brutal reality of the physical life: gone completely.

…

… I remember, just before the experience, there was in the body an aspiration for harmony, for light, for a kind of smiling peace. The body aspired above all for a harmony, because of all these things that grind and scrape. And probably the experience has been the result of this aspiration." (CWM 11: 30–32)

2.

"I am speaking here of physical suffering, because all the other sufferings—vital, mental, emotional sufferings—are due to a wrong working of the mind, and these... may simply be classed together as Falsehood, that's all. But physical suffering gives me the impression of a child being beaten, because here, in Matter, Falsehood has become ignorance; that is to say, there is no bad will—no bad will is there in Matter, all is inertia and ignorance: complete ignorance of the Truth, ignorance of the Origin, ignorance of the Possibility and ignorance even of what is to be done in order not to suffer physically. This ignorance is everywhere in the cells, and it is only the experience, the experience of what is translated in this rudimentary consciousness as suffering, which can awaken, bring forth the need to know and to cure, and the aspiration to transform oneself.

It has become a certainty, because in all the cells there is born the aspiration, which is becoming more and more intense and which wonders at the resistance; but they have observed that whenever something goes wrong in the working (that is to say, instead of being supple, spontaneous, natural, the working becomes a painful effort, a struggle against something which takes the appearance of a bad will, but is only a reticence that does not understand), at that moment, the intensity of the aspiration, of the call, is tenfold, becomes constant. The difficulty is to remain at that state of intensity. Generally everything falls back, I cannot say into a somnolence, but a kind of relaxation: you take things easy; and it is only when the inner disorder becomes painful that the intensity grows and remains permanent. For hours— hours together—without slackening, the call, the aspiration, the will to be united with the Divine, to become the Divine, is maintained at its maximum. Why? Because there was externally what is called a physical disorder, a suffering. Otherwise, when there is no suffering, from time to time one soars up, then one falls back into a slackening; again another time one soars up once more... there is no end to it. That lasts eternally. If we want things to go fast (relatively fast according to the rhythm of our life), this smack of the whip is necessary. I am convinced of it, because as soon as you are within your inner being you look upon that with contempt (as regards oneself).

But then, all of a sudden, when there comes this true Compassion of the Divine Love, and when one sees all these things that appear so horrible, so abnormal, so absurd, this great pain which is upon all beings and even upon all things... then there takes birth in this physical being the aspiration to soothe, to cure, to remove that. There is in Love, at its Origin, something which is translated constantly as the intervention of Grace: a force, a sweetness, something like a vibration of solace spread everywhere, but which an illumined consciousness can direct, concentrate on some points. And it is there, there itself that I saw the true use one can make of thought: thought serves as a kind of channel to carry this vibration from place to place, wherever it is necessary. This force, this vibration of sweetness is there in a static way upon the world, pressing in order to be received, but it is an impersonal action. And thought—illumined thought, surrendered thought, thought which is no longer anything but an instrument, which tries no longer to initiate things, which is satisfied with being moved by the higher Consciousness— thought serves as an intermediary to establish a contact, a relation, and to enable this impersonal Force to act wherever it is necessary, upon definite points. (CWM 11: 41–43)

3.

"It may be said in an absolute way that an evil always carries its own remedy. One might say that the cure of any suffering coexists with the suffering. So, instead of seeing an evil "useless" and "stupid" as it is generally thought to be, you see that the progress, the evolution which has made the suffering necessary—which is the cause of the suffering and the very reason for its existence—attains the intended result; and at the same time the suffering is cured, for those who are able to open themselves and receive. The three things—suffering as a means of progress, progress, and the cure of suffering—are coexistent, simultaneous; that is to say, they do not follow each other, they are there at the same time.

If, at the moment when the transforming action creates a suffering, there is in that which suffers the necessary aspiration and opening, the remedy also is taken in at the same time, and the effect is total, complete: transformation, with the action necessary to obtain it, and, at the same time, cure of the false sensation produced by the resistance. And the suffering is replaced by... something which is not known upon this earth, but which is akin to joy, well-being, trust and security. It is a supersensation, in a perfect peace, and which is obviously the only thing that can be eternal.

This analysis expresses very imperfectly what one would call the 'content' of Ananda.

I believe it is something that has been felt, experienced, partially and in a very fleeting manner, through all the ages, but which has just begun to concentrate and almost concretise itself upon earth. But physical Matter, in its cellular form, has, one cannot say fear or anxiety, but a kind of apprehension of new vibrations, and this apprehension naturally takes away from the cells their receptivity and assumes the appearance of uneasiness—it is not suffering, but an uneasiness. When, however, this apprehension is counterbalanced and cured by aspiration and the will for total surrender and by the act of total surrender, then this sort of apprehension, having disappeared, becomes a supreme well-being." (CWM 11: 43–44)

4.

"The body had the habit of performing its functions automatically, as a natural thing; that is to say, for it there was no question of their importance or usefulness. It had not, for example, this mental or vital view of things, of what is 'important' or what is 'interesting' and what is not. That did not exist. And then, now that the cells are becoming conscious, they stand back, as it were (*Mother makes a gesture of withdrawal*), they look at themselves, they are beginning to look at themselves in action, and they are very much questioning to what purpose all that is. And then, an aspiration: 'How? How should it be truly? What is

our function, our utility, our basis? Yes, what is our basis and our standard of life?' One might say, translating once more in mental terms: 'How will one be when one is divine? What difference will there be? What is the divine way of being?' And there, what speaks is all this sort of physical basis, which is entirely made up of thousands of small things, absolutely indifferent in themselves, which have no reason for existing except as a whole, as a totality, as a support for another action; but in themselves they seem to have no meaning. And then, once more it is the same thing: a kind of receptivity, of silent opening allowing the thing to enter; and a very subtle perception of a way of being that would be luminous, harmonious.

This way of being is still very undefinable; but in this quest, there is a constant perception (translated by a vision) of a multicoloured light, of all the colours—all the colours, not in layers but as though (*gesture of dotting*) it was a grouping of all the colours by dots." (CWM 11: 57)

5.

"Then the cells aspire, and there is something like a central consciousness of the body which aspires intensely, with a surrender as complete as it can make: 'Thy Will, Lord, Thy Will, Thy Will.' Then there is a kind of—not anything bursting aloud, not any dazzling flash, but a kind of... yes, it gives the feeling of a condensation of this current of disorganisation, and then something stops; at first a peace,

then a light, then the Harmony—and the disorder disappears. And when the disorder has disappeared, at once there is this feeling *in the cells* that they live the eternity, for the eternity.

Well, this, in this way, with all the intensity of concrete reality, is happening not only daily but many times in a day. At times it is very severe, that is to say, like a mass. Sometimes it is only a thing that touches; then in the consciousness of the body it translates itself in this way, as a kind of thanksgiving: a progress in fact over the inconscience. Only, these are not resounding events; the human neighbour does not even know it, he can perhaps notice a kind of cessation in the outward activity, a kind of concentration, but that's all. So one does not speak of the matter, one cannot write books on it, one does not do propaganda about it.... It is this, the work.

All, all the mental aspirations are not satisfied with this." (CWM 11: 88–89)

6.

"And what was strange is that this time, the 24th, when I went to the balcony, it was someone... (and this happens to me from time to time, but more and more often) someone who looks from a sort of plane of eternity with a great benevolence mixed in (something like benevolence, I do not know how to express it), but with an absolute calmness, almost indifference, and the two are together,

looking like that (*Mother describes waves far down below*), as if it was seen from very far away, from very high up, from very—how to say it?—seen with a rather eternal vision. It was that which my body was feeling when I came out to the balcony. The body was saying: 'I must aspire, there must be an aspiration so that the Force may descend upon all these people', and That, it was like this (*sweeping gesture from above*). Oh! Very benevolent but a sort of indifference—the indifference of eternity, I do not know how to explain it. And all this the body feels as though something were making use of it." (CWM 11: 104–105)

7.

"And then the cells themselves told of their effort to be transformed, and there was a Calm there.... How to explain this? The body told of its aspiration and of its will to prepare itself; and it did not ask, but made the effort to be what it ought to be: all that always with this question (the body does not put the question, it is... the environment, the surrounding—the world, as if the world put the question): 'Will it continue or will it have to get dissolved?'... Itself, it is like this (*gesture of self-abandon, palms opened upward*); it says, 'What Thou willest, Lord.' But then, the body knows that it has been decided and it is not to be told to it. It accepts, it is not impatient, it accepts, it says, 'It is all right, it shall be what Thou willest.' But That which knows and That which does not respond is... something

that cannot be expressed. It is... yes, I believe the only word that describes the sensation one has, is: it is an Absolute—an Absolute. Absolute. It is that, the sensation: of being in the presence of the Absolute. The Absolute: absolute Knowledge, absolute Will, absolute Power.... Nothing, nothing can resist it. And then, it is an Absolute which is (one has this kind of sensation, concrete) of compassion! But by the side of that, all that we consider as kindness, compassion... pooh! it is nothing at all. That is Compassion with power absolute, and... it is not Wisdom, it is not Knowledge, it is... It has nothing to do with our procedure. And it is That, everywhere. That is everywhere. And it is the experience of the body; and to That, the body gives itself entirely, totally, asking for nothing, nothing at all. Only one aspiration (*same gesture, palms opened upward*): to *be* able to be That, what That wants—to serve That; not even so: to *be* That." (CWM 11: 158)

8.

"When you are assailed by the vision of such disorder and confusion, you have to do only one thing, to enter into the consciousness where you see only *one* Being, *one* Consciousness, *one* Power—there is only a single Unity—and all this is taking place within this Unity. And all our insignificant visions and knowings and judgments and... all that is mere nothing, it is microscopic in comparison with the Consciousness presiding over All. Therefore, if one had

the least sense of the reason why separate individualities existed, one would see that it was only for allowing aspiration, the existence of aspiration, of this movement of self-giving and surrender, trust and *faith*. And it is this that is the very reason why individuals were built up; and then, for you to become that in all sincerity and intensity... it is all that is needed.

It is all that is needed, it is the *only* thing, the only thing that stays; all the rest... phantasmagoria.

And it is the only thing valid in every case: when you want to do a thing, when you cannot do a thing, when you move, when the body is no more able to move... in *every*, every case, that only, only that: to come in conscious contact with the Supreme Consciousness, to be united with it; and... to wait. There!

It is then that you receive the exact indication of what you ought to do at each minute—to do or not to do, to act or to be stone still. That is all. And even to be or not to be. That is the only solution. More and more, more and more, the certitude is there: this is the *only* solution. All the rest is mere childishness." (CWM 11: 185)

9.

"Yes, they are together. That is what it succeeded in getting: a complete immobility and an *intense* aspiration. It is only when immobility is there without the aspiration that it falls into a frightful anguish which wakes it up

immediately. It is that, an intense aspiration. And it is absolutely immobile, immobile within, as though all the cells became immobile.... It must be that. What we call intense aspiration must be the supramental vibration. It must be the divine vibration, the true divine vibration. That I have said to myself often.

But if, even for a single minute, the body falls into the state of inertia—immobility without aspiration—it is awakened by an anguish as though it were going to die! You understand? It is to that degree. For it, immobility means... yes, it has the feeling that the highest vibration, the vibration of the true Consciousness, is so intense that it is... it is equivalent to the inertia of immobility—an intensity which is not perceptible to us. So great is this intensity that it is, for us, equivalent to inertia." (CWM 11: 193–194)

10.

"*Before, your look was a 'diamond look', a look... it was yourself, powerfully yourself. Now it is becoming like that of the infinite.*

Oh! But my way of seeing is not the same.

Yes, just so, I wanted to ask you: when you look at people in this way, what is it that you see?

I believe I see... most exactly, it is their condition, the state in which they are. Especially, there are some who seem as though closed, who, as far as I am concerned, do not see, who are altogether in their outward consciousness; and then there are those who are open—there are... some children, a remarkable thing, who were as though entirely open (*gesture as of a flower to the sun*), ready to absorb. It is particularly the receptivity of people which I see, the state in which they are: those who come with an aspiration, those who come with a curiosity, those who come... as though with a kind of obligation, and then there are those who thirst for light—there are not many of them, but there are quite a few children. Today I saw one who was charming! ... Oh, wonderful!

And I see only that. Not what they think, what they say (all that appears to me superficial, uninteresting); it is the state of receptivity in which they happen to be. It is that particularly which I see." (CWM 11: 251)

11.

"O Supreme Reality, O Supramental Truth, this body is totally vibrant with an intense gratitude. Thou hast given to it, one after another, all the experiences that can lead it most certainly towards Thee. It has come to the point where identification with Thee is not merely the one thing desirable, but the only thing possible and natural.

How am I to describe these experiences that are at two opposite extremes? From one end I would say:

'Lord, to be truly near Thee, to be truly worthy of Thee, one must drink to the dregs the cup of humiliation and yet not feel humiliated. The contempt of man makes one truly free and ready to belong to Thee alone.'

And from the other end I would say:

'Lord, to be truly near Thee, to be truly worthy of Thee, one must be lifted to the peak of human appreciation and yet not feel glorified. It is when men call one divine that one feels one's inadequacy and the need to be truly and totally identified with Thee.'

The two experiences are simultaneous: the one does not blot out the other; on the contrary, they seem to complete each other and thereby become more intense. In this intensity the aspiration grows formidable, and in answer to it Thy Presence becomes evident in the cells themselves, giving to the body the appearance of a multicoloured kaleidoscope in which innumerable luminous particles in constant motion are sovereignly reorganised by an invisible and all-powerful Hand." (CWM 15: 282)

CXLVI—Human Aspiration Is a Sure Sign of Nature's Will for a Higher Way of Fulfilment

1.

"It must be observed that the appearance of human mind and body on the earth marks a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of the evolution; it is not merely a continuation of the old lines. Up till this advent of a developed thinking mind in Matter evolution had been effected, not by the self-aware aspiration, intention, will or seeking of the living being, but subconsciously or subliminally by the automatic operation of Nature. This was so because the evolution began from the Inconscience and the secret Consciousness had not emerged sufficiently from it to operate through the self-aware participating individual will of its living creature. But in man the necessary change has been made,—the being has become awake and aware of himself; there has been made manifest in Mind its will to develop, to grow in knowledge, to deepen the inner and widen the outer existence, to increase the capacities of the nature. Man has seen that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the evolutionary oestrus [passion, frenzy] is there in his parts of mind and life, the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him: he has become conscious of a soul, discovered the self and spirit. In him, then, the substitution of a conscious for a subconscious

evolution has become conceivable and practicable, and it may well be concluded that the aspiration, the urge, the persistent endeavour in him is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way of fulfilment, the emergence of a greater status.

In the previous stages of the evolution Nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organisation, for only so could there be a change of consciousness; this was a necessity imposed by the insufficiency of the force of consciousness already in formation to effect a change in the body. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be effected." (CWSA 22: 876)

2.

"Man's greatness is not in what he is but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is made ready by a divine Craftsman.

But he is admitted to a yet greater greatness and it is this that, unlike the lower creation, he is allowed to be partly the conscious artisan of his divine change. His free assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace

him. His aspiration is earth's call to the supramental Creator.

If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation." (CWSA 12: 160)

3.

"This necessary preparation is proceeding in human development as the corresponding preparations were developed in the lower stages of the evolution,—with the same gradations, retardations, inequalities; but still it is more enlightened, increasingly self-conscious, nearer to a conscious sureness. And the very fact that this progress is attended by less absorption in the detail, less timidity of error, a less conservative attachment to the step gained suggests as much as it contradicts the hope and almost the assurance that when the new principle emerges it will not be by the creation of a new and quite different type which, separated after its creation, will leave the rest of mankind in the same position to it as are the animals to man, but, if not by the elevation of humanity as a whole to a higher level, yet by an opening of the greater possibility to all of the race who have the will to rise. For Man, first among Nature's children, has shown the capacity to change himself by his own effort and the conscious aspiration to transcend.

These considerations justify to the reason the idea of a Mind beyond our mind, but only as a final evolution out of Matter. The Upanishad, however, enthrones it as the already existing creator and ruler of Mind; it is a secret principle already conscient and not merely contained inconsciently in the very stuff of things. But this is the natural conclusion—even apart from spiritual experience—from the nature of the supramental principle. For it is at its highest an eternal knowledge, will, bliss and conscious being and it is more reasonable to conclude that it is eternally conscious, though we are not conscious of it, and the source of the universe, than that it is eternally inconscient and only becomes conscient in Time as a result of the universe." (CWSA 18: 40)

4.

"*Yes, but will one be transformed into the [higher form] other?*

One will be transformed and will be like a rough outline of the other. And the other, the perfect one, will appear when this one comes into being. For both have their beauty and their purpose, therefore they will both be there.

The mind always tries to choose—but it's not like that. Even all that we can imagine is much less than what will be. Truly speaking, everyone who has an intense

aspiration and an inner certitude will be called upon to realise it.

Everywhere, in all the fields, always, eternally, everything will be possible. And everything that is possible, everything will exist at a given moment—a given moment that will be more or less delayed, but everything will exist.

Just as all sorts of possibilities have been found between the animals and man, possibilities which have not remained, so there will be all sorts of possibilities: each individual will try in his own way. And all this together will help to prepare the future realisation." (CWM 9: 235)

CXLVII—Aspiration Works towards Evolution

1.

"The fact is that when we have reached the cult of absolute ethical qualities and erected the categorical imperative of an ideal law, we have not come to the end of our search or touched the truth that delivers. There is, no doubt, something here that helps us to rise beyond limitation by the physical and vital man in us, an insistence that overpasses the individual and collective needs and desires of a humanity still bound to the living mud of Matter in which it took its roots, an aspiration that helps to develop the mental and moral being in us: this new sublimating element has been therefore an acquisition of great importance; its workings have marked a considerable step forward in the difficult evolution of terrestrial Nature. And behind the inadequacy of these ethical conceptions something too is concealed that does attach to a supreme Truth; there is here the glimmer of a light and power that are part of a yet unreached divine Nature. But the mental idea of these things is not that light and the moral formulation of them is not that power. These are only representative constructions of the mind that cannot embody the divine spirit which they vainly endeavour to imprison in their categorical formulas. Beyond the mental and moral being in us is a greater divine being that is spiritual and supramental; for it is only through a large

spiritual plane where the mind's formulas dissolve in a white flame of direct inner experience that we can reach beyond mind and pass from its constructions to the vastness and freedom of the supramental realities." (CWSA 23: 201)

2.

"All conduct and action are part of the movement of a Power, a Force infinite and divine in its origin and secret sense and will even though the forms of it we see seem inconscient or ignorant, material, vital, mental, finite, which is working to bring out progressively something of the Divine and Infinite in the obscurity of the individual and collective nature. This power is leading towards the Light, but still through the Ignorance. It leads man first through his needs and desires; it guides him next through enlarged needs and desires modified and enlightened by a mental and moral ideal. It is preparing to lead him to a spiritual realisation that overrides these things and yet fulfils and reconciles them in all that is divinely true in their spirit and purpose. It transforms the needs and desires into a divine Will and Ananda. It transforms the mental and moral aspiration into the powers of Truth and Perfection that are beyond them." (CWSA 23: 205)

3.

"Evidently, the activities and aspirations of men are not trivial and worthless, for all life is a growth of the soul out of the darkness towards the Light. But our attitude is that humanity cannot grow out of its limitations by the ordinary means adopted by the human mind, politics, social reform, philanthropy, etc.—these can only be temporary or local palliatives. The only true escape is a change of consciousness, a change into a greater, wider and purer way of being, and a life and action based upon that change. It is therefore to that that the energies must be turned, once the spiritual orientation is complete. This implies no contempt, but the preference of the only effective means over those which have been found ineffective." (CWSA 29: 43)

4.

"A spiritual consciousness is emerging and it is through this spiritual consciousness that one can meet the Divine. … The spiritual is a new consciousness that has to evolve and has been evolving. It is quite natural that at first and for a long time only a few should get the full light, while a greater number but still only a few compared with the mass of humanity, should get it partially. But what has been gained by the few can at a stage of the evolution be completed and more generalised and that is the attempt which we are making. But if this greater consciousness of

light, peace and joy is to be gained, it cannot be by questioning and scepticism which can only fall back on what is and say, 'It is impossible, impossible —what has not been in the past cannot be in the future; what is so imperfectly realised as yet, cannot be better realised in the future.' A faith, a will or at least a persistent demand and aspiration are needed—a feeling that with this and this alone I can be satisfied and a push towards it that will not cease till it is done. That is why a spirit of denial and scepticism stands in the way, because they stand against the creation of the conditions under which spiritual experience can unroll itself. In the absence of faith and firm will to achieve, the Divine has to manifest in conditions which are the most adverse to that manifestation. It can be done, but you cannot expect it to be easily done." (CWSA 28: 271)

5.

"But we must limit to these indispensable hints our description of the superman, and push no further our attempt to picture him, as we are convinced that any endeavour to be more precise would prove not only vain but useless. For it is not a number of imaginings, more or less exact, which can help us in the formation of the future type. It is by holding firm in our heart and mind the dynamism, the irresistible impetus given by a sincere and ardent aspiration, by maintaining in ourselves a certain

state of enlightened receptivity towards the supreme Idea of the new race which wills to be manifested on earth, that we can take a decisive step in the formation of the sons of the future, and make ourselves fit to serve as intermediaries for the creation of those who shall save Humanity." (CWM 2: 168)

6.

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"Mother divine, thou art with us, each day thou givest me the assurance, and closely united in an identification which grows more and more integral, more and more constant, we turn to the Lord of the universe and to That which is beyond in a great aspiration towards the new Light." (CWM 15: 192)

7.

"*Mother, when mind descended into the earth-atmosphere, the apes had not made any effort to change into man, had they? It was Nature which provided the effort. But here…*

But it is not man who is going to change himself into superman!

No?

Just try! (*Laughter*)

That's it, you see, it is something else which is going to work.

So, we are…

Only—yes, there is an only, I don't want to be so cruel: Now MAN CAN COLLABORATE. That is to say, he can lend himself to the process, with goodwill, with aspiration, and help as best he can. And that is why I said it would go faster. I hope it will go *much* faster.

But even so, much faster is still going to take a little time!" (CWM 8: 130)

8.

"There was a possibility of coming into contact with the Thing individually—Sri Aurobindo had even described it as the necessary process: a certain number of people who, through their inner effort and aspiration, enter into contact with this Force [Supermind]. That was what we used to call the ascent to the Supermind. And so, even if it were by an inner ascent—that is to say, by freeing themselves from the material consciousness—if by an inner ascent they had touched the Supermind, they should *naturally* have recognised it the moment it came. But it was indispensable to have had a previous contact: if they had not touched it, how could they have recognised it?

That is to say, the universal movement is like that—I read that to you some days ago—certain individuals, who are the pioneers, the vanguard, through inner effort and inner progress enter into communication with the new Force which is to manifest and receive it into themselves. And then, as there are calls of this kind, the thing is made possible, and the age, the time, the moment of the manifestation comes. This is how it happened— and the Manifestation took place." (CWM 8: 132)

9.

"*'Grant that we may effectuate Thy Victory' if the time has come... but it is for You to answer, O Sweet Mother.*

It is by the concentration of our will and the intensity of our aspiration that we can hasten the day of victory." (CWM 16: 23)

10.

"Superhumanity: the aim of our aspirations." (CWM 15: 109)

CXLVIII—An Aspirant to a Higher Life Need Not Worry about Prolongation of the Race

1.

"There is one problem raised by sex for those who would reject *in toto* the obligations imposed by the animality of the body and put forward by it as an insistent opposition in the way of the aspirant to a higher life: it is the necessity of the prolongation of the race for which the sex activity is the only means already provided by Nature for living beings and inevitably imposed upon the race. It is not indeed necessary for the individual seeker after a divine life to take up this problem or even for a group who do not seek after it for themselves alone but desire a wide acceptance of it by mankind as at least an ideal. There will always be the multitude who do not concern themselves with it or are not ready for its complete practice and to these can be left the care for the prolongation of the race. The number of those who lead the divine life can be maintained and increased, as the ideal extends itself, by the voluntary adhesion of those who are touched by the aspiration and there need be no resort to physical means for this purpose, no deviation from the rule of a strict sexual abstinence. But yet there may be circumstances in which, from another standpoint, a voluntary creation of bodies for souls that seek to enter the earth-life to help in the creation and extension of the divine life upon earth might be found to

be desirable. Then the necessity of a physical procreation for this purpose could only be avoided if new means of a supraphysical kind were evolved and made available. A development of this kind must necessarily belong to what is now considered as the sphere of the occult and the use of concealed powers of action or creation not known or possessed by the common mind of the race. Occultism means rightly the use of the higher powers of our nature, soul, mind, life-force and the faculties of the subtle physical consciousness to bring about results on their own or on the material plane by some pressure of their own secret law and its potentialities, for manifestation and result in human or earthly mind and life and body or in objects and events in the world of Matter." (CWSA 13: 547–548)

CXLIX—Aspiration for the Immortality of Mind and Vital to Carry Over into the Next Birth

1.

"This is the war of our members which the mind cannot satisfactorily resolve because it has to deal with a problem insoluble to it, the aspiration of an immortal being in a mortal life and body. It can only arrive at a long succession of compromises or end in an abandonment of the problem either by submission with the materialist to the mortality of our apparent being or with the ascetic and the religionist by the rejection and condemnation of the earthly life and withdrawal to happier and easier fields of existence. But the true solution lies in finding the principle beyond Mind of which Immortality is the law and in conquering by it the mortality of our existence." (CWSA 21: 228)

2.

"And when in man life becomes wholly self-conscious, this unavoidable struggle and effort and aspiration reach their acme and the pain and discord of the world become finally too keenly sensible to be borne with contentment. Man may for a long time quiet himself by seeking to be satisfied with his limitations or by confining his struggle to such mastery as he can gain over this material world he inhabits, some mental and physical triumph of his progressive knowledge over its inconscient fixities, of his small,

concentrated conscious will and power over its inertly driven monstrous forces. But here, too, he finds the limitation, the poor inconclusiveness of the greatest results he can achieve and is obliged to look beyond. The finite cannot remain permanently satisfied so long as it is conscious either of a finite greater than itself or of an infinite beyond itself to which it can yet aspire." (CWSA 21: 261)

3.

"This conception of the Person and Personality, if accepted, must modify at the same time our current ideas about the immortality of the soul; for, normally, when we insist on the soul's undying existence, what is meant is the survival after death of a definite unchanging personality which was and will always remain the same throughout eternity. It is the very imperfect superficial 'I' of the moment, evidently regarded by Nature as a temporary form and not worth preservation, for which we demand this stupendous right to survival and immortality. But the demand is extravagant and cannot be conceded; the 'I' of the moment can only merit survival if it consents to change, to be no longer itself but something else, greater, better, more luminous in knowledge, more moulded in the image of the eternal inner beauty, more and more progressive towards the divinity of the secret Spirit. It is that secret spirit or divinity of Self in us which is imperishable, because it is unborn and eternal.

The psychic entity within, its representative, the spiritual individual in us, is the Person that we are; but the 'I' of this moment, the 'I' of this life is only a formation, a temporary personality of this inner Person: it is one step of the many steps of our evolutionary change, and it serves its true purpose only when we pass beyond it to a farther step leading nearer to a higher degree of consciousness and being. It is the inner Person that survives death, even as it pre-exists before birth; for this constant survival is a rendering of the eternity of our timeless spirit into the terms of Time.

What our normal demand of survival asks for is a similar survival for our mind, our life, even our body; the dogma of the resurrection of the body attests to this last demand,—even as it has been the root of the age-long effort of man to discover the elixir of immortality or any means magical, alchemic or scientific to conquer physically the death of the body. But this aspiration could only succeed if the mind, life or body could put on something of the immortality and divinity of the indwelling spirit. There are certain circumstances in which the survival of the outer mental personality representative of the inner mental Purusha could be possible. It could happen if our mental being came to be so powerfully individualised on the surface and so much one with the inner mind and inner mental Purusha and at the same time so open plastically to the progressive action of the Infinite that the soul no

longer needed to dissolve the old form of mind and create a new one in order to progress. A similar individualisation, integration and openness of the vital being on the surface would alone make possible a similar survival of the life-part in us, the outer vital personality representative of the inner life-being, the vital Purusha. What would really happen then is that the wall between the inner self and the outer man would have broken down and the permanent mental and vital being from within, the mental and vital representatives of the immortal psychic entity, would govern the life." (CWSA 22:853–854)

4.

"But such a survival could only persist in the subtle body; the being would still have to discard its physical form, pass to other worlds and in its return put on a new body. The awakened mental Purusha and vital Purusha, preserving the mind sheath and the life sheath of the subtle body which are usually discarded, would return with them into a new birth and keep a vivid and sustained sense of a permanent being of mind and life constituted by the past and continuing into the present and future; but the basis of physical existence, the material body, could not be preserved even by this change. The physical being could only endure, if by some means its physical causes of decay and disruption could be overcome7 and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure

and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it must be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence. This consummation of a triple immortality,—immortality of the nature completing the essential immortality of the spirit and the psychic survival of death,—might be the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the material Inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of the reign of Matter. But the true immortality would still be the eternity of the spirit; the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the spirit's victory here over Death and Matter." (CWSA 22: 854–855)

5.

"Aspiration for immortality: pure, aspiring, trusting." (CWM 15: 116)

6.

"Physical aspiration for immortality: intense aspiration but ignorant of the means." (CWM 15: 116)

7.

"Aspiration for integral immortality: an organised, tenacious and methodical development of consciousness." (CWM 15: 116)

CL—Religion's Essential Work Is to Bring out the Soul's Aspiration

1.

"The knowledge of our superficial mentality and the laws of our bodily life is not enough; it brings us always to all that mysterious and hidden depth of subjective existence below and behind of which our surface consciousness is only a fringe or an outer court. We come to see that what is present to our physical senses is only the material shell of cosmic existence and what is obvious in our superficial mentality is only the margin of immense continents which lie behind unexplored. To explore them must be the work of another knowledge than that of physical science or of a superficial psychology.

Religion is the first attempt of man to get beyond himself and beyond the obvious and material facts of his existence. Its first essential work is to confirm and make real to him his subjective sense of an Infinite on which his material and mental being depends and the aspiration of his soul to come into its presence and live in contact with it. Its function is to assure him too of that possibility of which he has always dreamed, but of which his ordinary life gives him no assurance, the possibility of transcending himself and growing out of bodily life and mortality into the joy of immortal life and spiritual existence." (CWSA 23: 458–459)

2.

"The deepest heart, the inmost essence of religion, apart from its outward machinery of creed, cult, ceremony and symbol, is the search for God and the finding of God. Its aspiration is to discover the Infinite, the Absolute, the One, the Divine, who is all these things and yet no abstraction but a Being. Its work is a sincere living out of the true and intimate relations between man and God, relations of unity, relations of difference, relations of an illuminated knowledge, an ecstatic love and delight, an absolute surrender and service, a casting of every part of our existence out of its normal status into an uprush of man towards the Divine and a descent of the Divine into man. All this has nothing to do with the realm of reason or its normal activities; its aim, its sphere, its process is suprarational. The knowledge of God is not to be gained by weighing the feeble arguments of reason for or against his existence: it is to be gained only by a self-transcending and absolute consecration, aspiration and experience." (CWSA 25: 131)

3.

"The initial function of religion again is to make clear the approaches of the soul to the Highest, to God. And it does that at first by laying on the mind a scheme of religious knowledge or guiding creed and dogma, a taming yoke of moral instruction or purifying law of religious conduct and an awakening call of religious emotion, worship, cult, and

so far it is a thing apart in its own field, but in its truly revealing side of intuitive being and experience we find that the essence of religion is an aspiration and adoration of the soul towards the Divine, the Self, the Supreme, the Eternal, the Infinite, and an effort to get close to and live with or in that or to enjoy in love and be like or one with that which we adore." (CWSA 26: 234)

4.

"In all religions we find invariably a certain number of people who possess a great emotional capacity and are full of a real and ardent aspiration, but have a very simple mind and do not feel the need of approaching the Divine through knowledge. For such natures religion has a use and it is even necessary for them; for, through external forms, like the ceremonies of the Church, it offers a kind of support and help to their inner spiritual aspiration. In every religion there are some who have evolved a high spiritual life. But it is not the religion that gave them their spirituality; it is they who have put their spirituality into the religion. Put anywhere else, born into any other cult, they would have found there and lived there the same spiritual life. It is their own capacity, it is some power of their inner being and not the religion they profess that has made them what they are. This power in their nature is such that religion to them does not become a slavery or a bondage." (CWM 3: 78)

5.

"But if you can see all that and, for example, take all the religions, one after another and see how they have expressed the same aspiration of the human being for some Absolute, it becomes very interesting; and then you begin... yes, you begin to be able to juggle with all that. And then when you have mastered it all, you can rise above it and look at all the eternal human discussions with a smile. So there you are master of the thought and can no longer fly into a rage because someone else does not think as you, something that's unfortunately a very common malady here." (CWM 7: 93)

6.

"In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that characteristically the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this 'one single thing' which is behind all these manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier, it is something that still belongs *completely* to the

Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to be looking towards this 'other thing' which is a new creation it cannot grasp—which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary—such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods." (CWM 9: 150–151)

CLI—Sincere Aspiration Is Higher than Religious Ceremonies

1.

"I assure you what I am telling you is very serious: if you seat a real god in a chair and oblige him to remain there all the while you are doing puja, he may perhaps have a little fun watching you do it, but it certainly gives him no satisfaction. None at all! He does not feel either flattered or happy or glorified by your puja. You must get rid of that idea. There is an entire domain between the spiritual and the material worlds which belongs to vital beings, and it is this domain that is full of all these things, because these beings live upon that, are happy with it, and it immediately gives them importance; and the one who has the greatest number of believers, devotees and worshippers is the happiest and the most puffed up. But how can anyone imagine that the gods could value... The gods—I am speaking of the true gods, even those of the Overmind, though they are still a bit... well, so-so... they seem to have taken on many human defects, but still, despite all that, they really have a higher consciousness—it does not please them at all. An act of true goodness, intelligence, unselfishness or a subtle understanding or a very sincere aspiration are for them infinitely higher than a small religious ceremony. Infinitely! There is no comparison. Religious ceremony! For example, there are so many of

these entities called Kali—who are given, besides, quite terrible appearances— so many are even placed in houses as the family goddess; they are full of a terrible vital force! I knew people who were so frightened of the Kali they had at home that indeed they trembled to make the least mistake, for when catastrophes came they thought it was Kali who sent them! It is a frightful thing, thought. I know them, those entities. I know them very well, but they are vital beings, vital forms which, so to say, are given a form by human thought, and what forms!" (CWM 6: 196)

2.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I was surprised to see this new ritual, "Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama", introduced into the cemetery ceremonies. X stands in meditation in front of the body and pronounces the phrase, 'Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama', and the others, standing round the body, must repeat it after him. This is done a hundred times. Personally, I don't like this ceremony. I find it empty of feeling. I don't like Sri Aurobindo's name to be invoked without feeling and turned into a ritual. It is much better to read one of Your prayers and then invoke the Divine Grace in silence, each in his own way, for the departed person, as was done before. That is my opinion.

The ceremony in itself is only of secondary importance. It is merely a form and more a matter of custom than anything else.

What is important is to infuse into whatever ceremony one adopts the sincere fervour and ardent aspiration which give life to any ceremony, whatever it may be, and yet do not depend on it." (CWM 16: 269)

CLII—The Aspiration of a Teacher or Head of State Can Help the World Become Better

1.

"You see, individual, human authority, like the authority of a father of the family, of a teacher, of the head of a state, is a symbolic thing. They have no real authority but authority is given to them to enable them to fulfil a role in social life as it now is, that is to say, a social life founded upon falsehood and not at all on truth, for truth means unity and society is founded on division. … But he who takes his role seriously, tries to fill it as honestly as possible, may receive inspirations which enable him to play his part a little more truly than an ordinary man. If the teacher who gives marks kept in mind that he was the representative of the divine truth, if he constantly took sufficient trouble to be in tune with the divine Will as much as this is possible for him, well, that could be very useful; for the ordinary teacher acts according to his personal preferences—what he does not like, what he likes, etc.—and he belongs to the general falsehood, but if at the time of giving marks, the teacher tries sincerely to put himself in harmony with a truth deeper than his small narrow consciousness, he may serve as an intermediary of this truth and, as such, help his students to become conscious of this truth within themselves.

… Education is a sacerdocy [priesthood], teaching is a sacerdocy, and to be at the head of a State is a sacerdocy. Then, if the person who fulfils this role aspires to fulfil it in the highest and the most true way, the general condition of the world can become much better. Unfortunately, most people never think about this at all, they fill their role somehow—not to speak of the innumerable people who work only to earn money, but in this case their activity is altogether rotten, naturally. That was my very first basis in forming the Ashram: that the work done here be an offering to the Divine.

Instead of letting oneself go in the stream of one's nature, of one's mood, one must constantly keep in mind this kind of feeling that one is a representative of the Supreme Knowledge, the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Law, and that one must apply it in the most honest, the most sincere way one can; then one makes great progress oneself and can make others also progress. And besides, one will be respected, there will be no more indiscipline in the class, for there is in every human being something that recognises and bows down before true greatness; even the worst criminals are capable of admiring a noble and disinterested act. Therefore when children feel in a teacher, in a school master, this deep aspiration to act according to the truth, they listen to you with an obedience which you would not get if one day you were in a good

mood and the next day you were not, which is disastrous for everybody.” (CWM 4: 93)

CLIII—If the Aspiration to Perfection Is Taken Away by the Spiritual Urge

1.

"For by spirituality religion seems often to mean something remote from earthly life, different from it, hostile to it. It seems to condemn the pursuit of earthly aims as a trend opposed to the turn to a spiritual life and the hopes of man on earth as an illusion or a vanity incompatible with the hope of man in heaven. The spirit then becomes something aloof which man can only reach by throwing away the life of his lower members. Either he must abandon this nether life after a certain point, when it has served its purpose, or must persistently discourage, mortify and kill it. If that be the true sense of religion, then obviously religion has no positive message for human society in the proper field of social effort, hope and aspiration or for the individual in any of the lower members of his being. For each principle of our nature seeks naturally for perfection in its own sphere and, if it is to obey a higher power, it must be because that power gives it a greater perfection and a fuller satisfaction even in its own field. But if perfectibility is denied to it and therefore the aspiration to perfection taken away by the spiritual urge, then it must either lose faith in itself and the power to pursue the natural expansion of its energies and activities or it must reject the call of the spirit in order to follow its own bend and law,

dharma. This quarrel between earth and heaven, between the spirit and its members becomes still more sterilising if spirituality takes the form of a religion of sorrow and suffering and austere mortification and the gospel of the vanity of things; in its exaggeration it leads to such nightmares of the soul as that terrible gloom and hopelessness of the Middle Ages in their worst moment when the one hope of mankind seemed to be in the approaching and expected end of the world, an inevitable and desirable Pralaya." (CWSA 25: 178–179)

2.

"The aim of a spiritual age of mankind must indeed be one with the essential aim of subjective religions, a new birth, a new consciousness, an upward evolution of the human being, a descent of the spirit into our members, a spiritual reorganisation of our life; but if it limits itself by the old familiar apparatus and the imperfect means of a religious movement, it is likely to register another failure. A religious movement brings usually a wave of spiritual excitement and aspiration that communicates itself to a large number of individuals and there is as a result a temporary uplifting and an effective formation, partly spiritual, partly ethical, partly dogmatic in its nature. But the wave after a generation or two or at most a few generations begins to subside; the formation remains. If there has been a very powerful movement with a great spiritual personality as its

source, it may leave behind a central influence and an inner discipline which may well be the starting point of fresh waves; but these will be constantly less powerful and enduring in proportion as the movement gets farther and farther away from its source. For meanwhile in order to bind together the faithful and at the same time to mark them off from the unregenerated outer world, there will have grown up a religious order, a Church, a hierarchy, a fixed and unprogressive type of ethical living, a set of crystallised dogmas, ostentatious ceremonials, sanctified superstitions, an elaborate machinery for the salvation of mankind." (CWSA 25: 263–264)

CLIV—Dangers of the Premature Movement of a Strong Force of Aspiration

1.

"The outer nature has to undergo a change of poise, a quieting, a purification and fine mutation of its substance and energy by which the many obstacles in it rarefy, drop away or otherwise disappear; it then becomes possible to pass through to the depths of our being and from the depths so reached a new consciousness can be formed, both behind the exterior self and in it, joining the depths to the surface. There must grow up within us or there must manifest a consciousness more and more open to the deeper and the higher being, more and more laid bare to the cosmic Self and Power and to what comes down from the Transcendence, turned to a higher Peace, permeable to a greater light, force and ecstasy, a consciousness that exceeds the small personality and surpasses the limited light and experience of the surface mind, the limited force and aspiration of the normal life consciousness, the obscure and limited responsiveness of the body.

Even before the tranquillising purification of the outer nature has been effected or before it is sufficient, one can still break down the wall screening our inner being from our outer awareness by a strong force of call and aspiration, a vehement will or violent effort or an effective discipline or process; but this may be a premature

movement and is not without its serious dangers. In entering within one may find oneself amidst a chaos of unfamiliar and supernormal experiences to which one has not the key or a press of subliminal or cosmic forces, subconscient, mental, vital, subtle-physical, which may unduly sway or chaotically drive the being, encircle it in a cave of darkness, or keep it wandering in a wilderness of glamour, allurement, deception, or push it into an obscure battlefield full of secret and treacherous and misleading or open and violent oppositions; beings and voices and influences may appear to the inner sense and vision and hearing claiming to be the Divine Being or His messengers or Powers and Godheads of the Light or guides of the path to realisation, while in truth they are of a very different character." (CWSA 22: 938–939)

2.

"The lid thins, is slit, breaks asunder or opens and disappears under the pressure of the psycho-spiritual change and the natural urge of the new spiritualised consciousness towards that of which it is an expression here. This effectuation of an aperture [opening] and its consequences may not at all take place if there is only a partial psychic emergence satisfied with the experience of the Divine Reality in the normal degrees of the spiritualised mind: but if there is any awakening to the existence of these higher supernormal levels, then an aspiration

towards them may break the lid or operate a rift in it. This may happen long before the psycho-spiritual change is complete or even before it has well begun or proceeded far, because the psychic personality has become aware and has an eager concentration towards the superconscience. An early illumination from above or a rending of the upper velamen [covering] can come as an outcome of aspiration or some inner readiness, or it may even come uncalled-for or not called for by any conscious part of the mind,—perhaps by a secret subliminal necessity or by an action or pressure from the higher levels, by something which is felt as the touch of the Divine Being, the touch of the Spirit,—and its results can be exceedingly powerful. But if it is brought about by a premature pressure from below, it can be attended with difficulties and dangers which are absent when the full psychic emergence precedes this first admission to the superior ranges of our spiritual evolution. The choice, however, does not always rest with our will, for the operations of the spiritual evolution in us are very various, and according to the line it has followed will be the turn taken at any critical phase by the action of the Consciousness-Force in its urge towards a higher self-manifestation and formation of our existence." (CWSA 22: 944)

3.

"There is a very great power of attraction in low, obscure, ordinary things—the impression of being drawn by the feet into a deep mire... certain contacts, certain actions, certain movements of consciousness give you the impression that you are sliding into a dark and muddy hole.

Often when one has made an effort and progressed, one has the feeling of rising above himself into a purer, clearer, truer light and consciousness. But if one doesn't keep this aspiration and is not definitively settled there, a very tiny thing is enough, a kind of physical disharmony, for example, or a meeting, a word exchanged or a movement made unconsciously, for one to feel that something is falling; and one can no longer get hold of that height where one was, that light. So one has to withdraw again, climb the slope, escape from the attraction from below. Sometimes it takes time; one slides down very fast but usually climbs back with a certain difficulty." (CWM 7: 103)

4.

"If one uses these forces for a purely selfish action of a base kind, well, one makes it almost totally impossible for himself to receive any new ones of as fine a quality. All depends on the utilisation of the forces one receives. If, on the other hand, you use them to make progress, to perfect yourself, it gives you... it increases your capacity of

receiving enormously, and the next time you can have a lot more. All depends (in any case, principally) on the use made of them. There are people, for instance, who are short-tempered by nature and haven't succeeded in controlling their anger. Well, if with an aspiration or by some method or other they have managed to receive some higher vital forces, instead of this calming their irritation or anger... because they have no self-control it increases their anger, that is, their irritability, their movement of violence is full of a greater force, a greater energy, and becomes much more violent. So it is well said that to be in contact with universal forces does not make one progress. But this is because they make a bad use of them. Yet naturally in the long run, this bad use diminishes the capacity of receiving; but it takes time, it is not immediate. So it is very important to put yourself in a good condition to receive the higher forces and not the lower ones, and secondly, when you have received them use them for the best thing possible, in order to prepare yourself to receive those which are of a higher quality. But if you open yourself, receive the forces and afterwards, being satisfied with having received them you let yourself fall into all the ordinary movements, well, you close the door and the force no longer returns." (CWM 7: 139)

5.

"*Sweet Mother, I have heard that the magicians who use occult powers for their work suffer a great deal after their death. Is it true?*

What sort of magicians are you speaking about? Any kind?

Those who have occult powers and use them for their personal interest? You mean these?

Yes.

I don't know whether they suffer after their death or lose their consciousness, but in any case, obviously they are not in any state of peace or happiness, that's absolutely certain. For it is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they

want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good for anything, they just destroy you." (CWM 7: 260–261)

6.

"But for the least of these things to be possible, there must first be a basis of *perfect* balance, the balance given by a total absence of egoism, a perfect surrender to the Supreme, the true purity: identification with the Supreme. Without this basis of perfect balance, the supramental power is dangerous, and one must *on no account* seek it or want to pull it down, for even in an infinitesimal quantity it is so powerful and so formidable that it can unbalance the entire system.

Since I am speaking to you about it, I would like to recommend something to you. In your desire for progress and your aspiration for realisation, take great care not to attempt to pull the forces towards you. Give yourself, open yourself with as much disinterestedness as you can attain through a constant self-forgetfulness, increase your receptivity to the utmost, but *never* try to *pull* the Force towards you, for wanting to pull is already a dangerous egoism. You may aspire, you may open yourself, you may give yourself, but never seek to take. When things go wrong, people blame the Force, but it is not the Force that is responsible: it is ambition, egoism, ignorance and the weakness of the vessel.

Give yourself generously and with a perfect disinterestedness and from the deeper point of view nothing bad will ever happen to you. Try to take and you will be on the brink of the abyss." (CWM 9: 241–242)

7.

"Equally, one who is under the domination of his passions, would find the Yoga difficult and, unless supported by a true inner call and a sincere and strong aspiration for the spiritual consciousness and union with the Divine, might very easily fall fatally and his effort come to nothing." (CWSA 29: 116)

CLV—The Culture of the People and Their Soul's Aspiration

1.

"The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation. A people's philosophy and higher thinking give us its mind's purest, largest and most general formulation of its consciousness of life and its dynamic view of existence. Its religion formulates the most intense form of its upward will and the soul's aspirations towards the fulfilment of its highest ideal and impulse. Its art, poetry, literature provide for us the creative expression and impression of its intuition, imagination, vital turn and creative intelligence. Its society and politics provide in their forms an outward frame in which the more external life works out what it can of its inspiring ideal and of its special character and nature under the difficulties of the environment." (CWSA 20: 106–107)

2.

"Just as each individual has a psychic being which is his true self and which governs his destiny more or less overtly, so too each nation has a psychic being which is its

true being and moulds its destiny from behind the veil: it is the soul of the country, the national genius, the spirit of the people, the centre of national aspiration, the fountainhead of all that is beautiful, noble, great and generous in the life of the country. True patriots feel its presence as a tangible reality. In India it has been made into an almost divine entity, and all who truly love their country call it 'Mother India' (Bharat Mata) and offer her a daily prayer for the welfare of their country. It is she who symbolises and embodies the true ideal of the country, its true mission in the world." (CWM 12: 42–43)

3.

"One would like to see in all countries the same veneration for the national soul, the same aspiration to become fit instruments for the manifestation of its highest ideal, the same ardour for progress and self-perfection enabling each people to identify itself with its national soul and thus find its true nature and role, which makes each one a living and immortal entity regardless of all the accidents of history." (CWM 12: 44)

CLVI—The Highest and Perfect Art Can Satisfy Human Aspiration

1.

"But beyond and above this intellectual utility of Art, there is a higher use, the noblest of all, its service to the growth of spirituality in the race. European critics have dwelt on the close connection of the highest developments of art with religion, and it is undoubtedly true that in Greece, in Italy, in India, the greatest efflorescence of a national Art has been associated with the employment of the artistic genius to illustrate or adorn the thoughts and fancies or the temples and instruments of the national religion. This was not because Art is necessarily associated with the outward forms of religion, but because it was in the religion that men's spiritual aspirations centred themselves. Spirituality is a wider thing than formal religion and it is in the service of spirituality that Art reaches its highest self-expression. Spirituality is a single word expressive of three lines of human aspiration towards divine knowledge, divine love and joy, divine strength, and that will be the highest and most perfect Art which, while satisfying the physical requirements of the aesthetic sense, the laws of formal beauty, the emotional demand of humanity, the portrayal of life and outward reality, as the best European Art satisfies these requirements, reaches beyond them and expresses inner spiritual truth, the deeper not obvious

reality of things, the joy of God in the world and its beauty and desirableness and the manifestation of divine force and energy in phenomenal creation." (CWSA 1:450)

2.

"India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, *dharma*. This achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole dharma or law of being is founded upon it. Progress she admits, but this spiritual progress, not the externally self-unfolding process of an always more and more prosperous and efficient material civilisation. It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation. And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal that

has made her people a nation apart in the human world." (CWSA 20: 56–57)

3.

"Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to return, something which belongs to the future. An Indian temple, to whatever godhead it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite. As that and in the light of that seeing and conception it must in the first place be understood, and everything else must be seen in that setting and that light, and then only can there be any real understanding. No artistic eye however alert and sensible and no aesthetic mind however full and sensitive can arrive at that understanding, if it is attached to a Hellenised conception of rational beauty or shuts itself up in a materialised or intellectual interpretation and fails to open itself to the great things here meant by a kindred close response to some touch of the cosmic consciousness, some revelation of the greater spiritual self, some suggestion of the Infinite." (CWSA 20:273)

4.

"Moslem architecture suggests not only unbridled luxury, but effeminacy and decadence! But in that case, whatever its beauty, it belongs entirely to a secondary plane of artistic creation and cannot rank with the great spiritual aspirations in stone of the Hindu builders.

I do not demand 'moral suggestions' from architecture, but is it true that there is nothing but a sensuous outward grace and beauty and luxury in these Indo-Moslem buildings? It is not at all true of the characteristic greater work. The Taj is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a fairy enchantment hewn from the moon's lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death. The great mosques embody often a religious aspiration lifted to a noble austerity which supports and is not lessened by the subordinated ornament and grace. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of Paradise. The buildings of Fatehpur-Sikri are not monuments of an effeminate luxurious decadence,—an absurd description for the mind of the time of Akbar,—but give form to a nobility, power and beauty which lay hold upon but do not wallow on the earth. There is not here indeed the vast spiritual content of the earlier Indian mind, but it is still an Indian mind which in these delicate creations absorbs the West Asian influence, and lays stress on the sensuous as before in the poetry of Kalidasa, but uplifts it to a certain

immaterial charm, rises often from the earth without quite leaving it into the magical beauty of the middle world and in the religious mood touches with a devout hand the skirts of the Divine." (CWSA 20: 283–284)

5.

"The straight way here is not to detach the temple from its surroundings, but to see it in unity with the sky and low-lying landscape or with the sky and hills around and feel the thing common to both, the construction and its environment, the reality in Nature, the reality expressed in the work of art. The oneness to which this Nature aspires in her inconscient self-creation and in which she lives, the oneness to which the soul of man uplifts itself in his conscious spiritual upbuilding, his labour of aspiration here expressed in stone, and in which so upbuilt he and his work live, are the same and the soul-motive is one. Thus seen this work of man seems to be something which has started out and detached itself against the power of the natural world, something of the one common aspiration in both to the same infinite spirit of itself,—the inconscient uplook and against it the strong single relief of the self-conscient effort and success of finding. One of these buildings climbs up bold, massive in projection, up-piled in the greatness of a forceful but sure ascent, preserving its range and line to the last, the other soars from the strength of its base, in the grace and emotion of a curving mass to a rounded

summit and crowning symbol. There is in both a constant, subtle yet pronounced lessening from the base towards the top, but at each stage a repetition of the same form, the same multiplicity of insistence, the same crowded fullness and indented relief, but one maintains its multiple endeavour and indication to the last, the other ends in a single sign." (CWSA 20: 277)

6.

"You have followed very little of this movement of art I am speaking about, which is related to European civilisation, it has not been felt much here—just a little but not deeply. Here, the majority of creations (this is a very good example), the majority of works, I believe even almost all the beautiful works, are not signed. All those paintings in the caves, those statues in the temples—these are not signed. One does not know at all who created them. And all this was not done with the idea of making a name for oneself as at present. One happened to be a great sculptor, a great painter, a great architect, and then that was all, there was no question of putting one's name on everything and proclaiming it aloud in the newspapers so that no one might forget it! In those days the artist did what he had to do without caring whether his name would go down to posterity or not. All was done in a movement of aspiration to express a higher beauty, and above all with the idea of giving an appropriate abode to the godhead who was

evoked. In the cathedrals of the Middle Ages, it was the same thing, and I don't think that there too the names of the artists who made them have remained. If any are there, it is quite exceptional and it is only by chance that the name has been preserved. Whilst today, there is not a tiny little piece of canvas, painted or daubed, but on it is a signature to tell you: it is Mr. So-and-so who made this!" (CWM 5: 341)

7.

"*Are the images we see of Mahasaraswati true?*

Oh, Lord! (*Laughter*) When a very small child tries to make someone's portrait, does it resemble that person? It is very much like this, sometimes worse! Because the child is frank and sincere, whereas the one who makes the images of the gods is full of fixed notions and preconceived ideas, or else of all that others have said about the subject and of what has been written in the scriptures and what has been seen by people. And so he is bound by all that. *At times, from time to time*, there are artists who have an inner vision, a great aspiration, a great purity of soul and of vision, who have made things which are reasonably good. But this is extremely rare. And generally, I believe it is almost the opposite." (CWM 6: 275)

CLVII—The Pulsation of Indian Aspiration During the Freedom Movement

1.

"The Indian mind with its passionate attachment to the very soil of the mother-country, its deep reverent feeling that mother and motherland are more to be cherished than paradise itself, must feel the deprivation with a force which no European race, except perhaps the passionate and emotional Italian, could understand. In jail the floor we tread is at least made of Indian soil; when we exercise in the prison yard, the air that visits our cheeks is Indian air; the pulsation of Indian aspiration, Indian emotion, Indian life, Indian joys and sorrows beats around our prison walls and floods our hearts with the magnetic pervasiveness of which the air of India is more full than that of any other country." (CWSA 6: 434)

2.

"If the Indian harbours aspirations towards freedom, towards independence, towards self-government in his mind, let him crush them back and keep them close-locked in his heart; for from English Secretary or Anglo-Indian pro-consul, from Conservative or from Liberal they can expect neither concession nor toleration. Indian aspirations and bureaucratic autocracy cannot stall together; one of them must go. The growth of the new spirit had been so long

tolerated in Bengal because the rulers, though alarmed at the new portent, could not at once make up their mind whether it was a painted monster or a living and formidable force. Even when its real nature and drift had become manifest, they waited to see whether it was likely to take hold of the people. They were not prepared for the enormous rapidity with which like a sudden conflagration in the American prairies, the new spirit began to rush over the whole of India. By the time they had realised it, it was too late to crush it in Bengal by prosecuting a few papers or striking at a few tall heads. For the new spirit in Bengal does not depend on the presence of a few leaders or the inspiration from one or two great orators." (CWSA 6:396)

3.

"The object of the education given to the slave is not to fit him for freedom but to make him a more useful servant and one whose appearance and manners shall reflect credit on the master. Needless to say, this is not sympathy but a very undesirable form of arrogance and selfishness masquerading as benevolence. True sympathy means 'putting oneself in another's skin', understanding and appreciating his view of things, his feelings, hopes and aspirations and feeling his struggles and sufferings as one's own." (CWSA 7: 548–549)

4.

"The *Bengalee* reports Srijut Bal Gangadhar Tilak to have made a definite pronouncement on the caste system. 'The prevailing idea of social inequality is working immense evil', says the Nationalist leader of the Deccan. This pronouncement is only natural from an earnest Hindu and a sincere Nationalist like Srijut Tilak. The baser ideas underlying the degenerate perversions of the original caste system, the mental attitude which bases them on a false foundation of caste, pride and arrogance, of a divinely ordained superiority depending on the accident of birth, of a fixed and intolerant inequality, are inconsistent with the supreme teaching, the basic spirit of Hinduism which sees the one invariable and indivisible Divinity in every individual being. Nationalism is simply the passionate aspiration for the realisation of that Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions as political, social or economic factors, are yet really and fundamentally one and equal. In the ideal of Nationalism which India will set before the world, there will be an essential equality between man and man, between caste and caste, between class and class, all being as Mr. Tilak has pointed out different but equal and united parts of the Virat Purusha as realised in the nation." (CWSA 7: 679)

5.

"Mighty aspirations are in the heart of the people and he is false to the inspiration within him who tries to dwarf them. Let us work practically at the smallest details, but let us never forget that the work is not for its own sake but for the sake of Swaraj. We shall be false to our inspiration if we forget the goal in the details; we shall condemn ourselves to the fate of the man who in the eagerness of picking up pebbles on the seashore threw away the alchemic stone which God had for a moment given into his hands. Swaraj is the alchemic stone, the *parash-pathar*, and we have it in our hands. It will turn to gold everything we touch. Village samitis are good, not for the sake of village samitis but for the sake of Swaraj. Boycott is good, not for the sake of Boycott but for the sake of Swaraj. Swadeshi is good, not for the sake of Swadeshi but for the sake of Swaraj. Arbitration is good, not for the sake of arbitration but for the sake of Swaraj. If we forget Swaraj and win anything else we shall be like the seeker whose belt was turned indeed to gold but the stone of alchemy was lost to him for ever." (CWSA 7: 874)

6.

"The aspiration towards freedom has for some time been working in some hearts, but they relied on their own strength for the creation of the necessary conditions and they failed. Of those who worked, some gave up the work,

others persisted, a few resorted to *tapasya*, the effort to wake in themselves a higher Power to which they might call for help. The tapasya of those last had its effect unknown to themselves, for they were pouring out a selfless aspiration into the world and the necessary conditions began to be created. When these conditions were far advanced, the second class who worked on began to think that it was the result of their efforts, but the secret springs were hidden from them. They were merely the instruments through which the purer aspiration of their old friends fulfilled itself." (CWSA 7: 938)

7.

"If the conditions of success are to be yet more rapidly brought about, it must be by yet more of the lovers of freedom withdrawing themselves from the effort to work through the lower self. The aspiration of these strong souls purified from self will create fresh workers in the field, infuse the great desire for freedom in the heart of the nation and hasten the growth of the necessary material strength." (CWSA 7: 938)

8.

"What is needed now is a band of spiritual workers whose *tapasya* will be devoted to the liberation of India for the service of humanity. The few associations already started have taken another turn and devoted themselves to special

and fragmentary work. We need an institution in which under the guidance of highly spiritual men workers will be trained for every field, workers for self-defence, workers for arbitration, for sanitation, for famine relief, for every species of work which is needed to bring about the necessary conditions for the organisation of Swaraj. If the country is to be free, it must first organize itself so as to be able to maintain its freedom. The winning of freedom is an easy task, the keeping of it is less easy. The first needs only one tremendous effort in which all the energies of the country must be concentrated; the second requires an united, organized and settled strength. If these two conditions are satisfied, nothing more is needed, for all else is detail and will inevitably follow. For the first condition the requisite is a mighty selfless faith and aspiration filling the hearts of men as in the day of Mazzini. For the second India, which has no Piedmont to work out her salvation, requires to organize her scattered strengths into a single and irresistible whole." (CWSA 7: 939)

9.

"For both these ends an institution of the kind we have named is essential. The force of a great stream of aspiration must be poured over the country, which will sweep away as in a flood the hesitations, the selfishnesses, the fears, the self-distrust, the want of fervour and the want of faith which stand in the way of the spread of the

great national awakening of 1905. A mightier fountain of the spirit must be prepared from which this stream of aspiration can be poured to fertilise the heart of the nation. When this is done, the aspiration towards liberty will become universal and India be ready for the great effort." (CWSA 7: 939)

10.

"The work is enormous, the time is short, but the workers are few. One institution is required which will train and support men to help those who are now labouring under great disadvantages to organize education, to build up the life of the villages, to spread the habit of arbitration, to help the people in time of famine and sickness, to preach Swadeshi. These workers must be selfless, free from the desire to lead or shine, devoted to the work for the country's sake, absolutely obedient yet full of energy. They must breathe the strength of the spirit, of selfless faith and aspiration derived from the spiritual guides of the institution. The material is ready and even plentiful, but the factory which will make use of the material has yet to be set on foot. When the man comes, who is commissioned by God to do it, we must be ready to recognize him." (CWSA 7:940)

11.

"Academical knowledge, power of debate, laborious study of problems, the habit of ease and luxury at home and slow and tentative work abroad, the attitude of patience and leisurely self-preparation are not for this era or for this country. An immense and incalculable revolution is at hand and its instruments must be themselves immense in their aspiration, uncalculating in their self-immolation. A sacrifice of which the mightiest *yajna* of old can only be a feeble type and far-off shadow, has to be instituted and the victims of that sacrifice are ourselves, our lives, our property, our hopes, our ambitions, all that is personal and not of God, all that is devoted to our own service and taken from the service of the country. The greatest must fall as victims before the God of the sacrifice is satisfied. Whoever is afraid for himself, afraid for his property, afraid for his kith and kin, afraid for his vanity, self-interest, glory, ease or liberty, had better stand aside from the sacrifice, for at any time the call may come to him to lay down all these upon the altar. If he then refuses, his fate will be worse than that of the fugitive who prefers safety to the struggle, for he will be a recusant doomed to suffer without reward and fall without glory." (CWSA 7: 1071)

12.

"For good or for evil the middle class now leads in India, and whatever saving impulse comes to the nation, must

come from the middle class, whatever upward movement begins, it must initiate and lead. But for that to happen the middle class must by a miracle be transfigured and lifted above itself; the natural breeding ground of the bourgeois, it must become the breeding ground of the Samurai. It must cease in fact to be a middle class and turn itself into an aristocracy, an aristocracy not of birth or landed possessions, not of intellect, not of wealth and commercial enterprise, but of character and action. India must recover her faculty for self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration. Such a transformation is the work which has been set before itself by the new Nationalism; this is at the back of all its enthusiasm, audacity & turbulence and provides the explanation of all that has shocked and alarmed the wise men and the elders in the movement in Bengal. The new Nationalism is a creed, but it is more than a creed; it is a method, but more than a method. The new Nationalism is an attempt at a spiritual transformation of the nineteenth century Indian; it is a notice of dismissal or at least of suspension to the bourgeois and all his ideas and ways and works, a call for men who will dare & do impossibilities, the men of extremes, the men of faith, the prophets, the martyrs, the crusaders, the [. . .] & rebels, the desperate venturers and reckless doers, the initiators of revolutions. It is the rebirth in India of the Kshatriya, the Samurai." (CWSA 7: 1107–1108)

CLVIII—The Spiritual Ideal Has Always Been the Aspiration of India

1.

"A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God's mighty creation. Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga." (CWSA 13: 509)

2.

"Philosophy and religion are the soul of Indian culture, inseparable from each other and inter-penetrative. The whole objective of Indian philosophy, its entire *raison d'être*, is the knowledge of the spirit, the experience of it and the right way to a spiritual existence; its single aim coincides with the highest significance of religion. Indian religion draws all its characteristic value from the spiritual philosophy which illumines its supreme aspiration and colours even most of what is drawn from an inferior range of religious experience." (CWSA 20: 110)

3.

"The Veda is thus the spiritual and psychological seed of Indian culture and the Upanishads the expression of the truth of highest spiritual knowledge and experience that has always been the supreme idea of that culture and the ultimate objective to which it directed the life of the individual and the aspiration of the soul of the [*Indian*] people: and these two great bodies of sacred writing, its first great efforts of poetic and creative self-expression, coming into being at a time preceding the later strong and ample and afterwards rich and curious intellectual development, are conceived and couched in the language of a purely psychic and spiritual mentality." (CWSA 20: 342)

4.

"The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge. … Chants of inspired knowledge, they [Upanishads] breathe like all hymns a tone of religious aspiration and ecstasy, not of the narrowly intense kind proper to a lesser religious feeling, but raised beyond cult and special forms of devotion to the universal Ananda of the Divine which comes to us by approach to and oneness with the self-existent and universal spirit. 'And though mainly concerned with an inner vision and not directly with outward human action, all the highest ethics of Buddhism and later Hinduism are still emergences of the very life and significance of the truths to which they give expressive form and force,—and there is something greater than any ethical precept and mental rule of virtue, the supreme ideal of a spiritual action founded on oneness with God and all living beings.

… These supreme and all-embracing truths, these visions of oneness and self and a universal divine being are cast into brief and monumental phrases which bring them at once before the soul's eye and make them real and imperative to its aspiration and experience or are couched in poetic sentences full of revealing power and suggestive thought colour that discover a whole infinite through a finite image. The One is there revealed, but also disclosed the many aspects, and each is given its whole significance by the amplitude of the expression and finds as if in a

spontaneous self-discovery its place and its connection by the illumining justness of each word and all the phrase." (CWSA 20: 332–333)

5.

"The whole root of difference between Indian and European culture springs from the spiritual aim of Indian civilisation. It is the turn which this aim imposes on all the rich and luxuriant variety of its forms and rhythms that gives to it its unique character. For even what it has in common with other cultures gets from that turn a stamp of striking originality and solitary greatness. A spiritual aspiration was the governing force of this culture, its core of thought, its ruling passion. Not only did it make spirituality the highest aim of life, but it even tried, as far as that could be done in the past conditions of the human race, to turn the whole of life towards spirituality. But since religion is in the human mind the first native, if imperfect form of the spiritual impulse, the predominance of the spiritual idea, its endeavour to take hold of life, necessitated a casting of thought and action into the religious mould and a persistent filling of every circumstance of life with the religious sense; it demanded a pervadingly religio-philosophic culture. The highest spirituality indeed moves in a free and wide air far above that lower stage of seeking which is governed by religious form and dogma; it does not easily bear their limitations

and, even when it admits, it transcends them; it lives in an experience which to the formal religious mind is unintelligible." (CWSA 20: 178–179)

6.

"It [the ancient Indian culture] accepted four legitimate motives of human living,—man's vital interests and needs, his desires, his ethical and religious aspiration, his ultimate spiritual aim and destiny,—in other words, the claims of his vital, physical and emotional being, the claims of his ethical and religious being governed by a knowledge of the law of God and Nature and man, and the claims of his spiritual longing for the Beyond for which he seeks satisfaction by an ultimate release from an ignorant mundane existence. It provided for a period of education and preparation based on this idea of life, a period of normal living to satisfy human desires and interests under the moderating rule of the ethical and religious part in us, a period of withdrawal and spiritual preparation, and a last period of renunciation of life and release into the spirit." (CWSA 22: 703)

7.

"For an age out of sympathy with the ascetic spirit—and throughout all the rest of the world the hour of the Anchorite may seem to have passed or to be passing—it is easy to attribute this great trend to the failing of vital energy in an ancient race tired out by its burden, its once

vast share in the common advance, exhausted by its many-sided contribution to the sum of human effort and human knowledge. But we have seen that it corresponds to a truth of existence, a state of conscious realisation which stands at the very summit of our possibility. In practice also the ascetic spirit is an indispensable element in human perfection and even its separate affirmation cannot be avoided so long as the race has not at the other end liberated its intellect and its vital habits from subjection to an always insistent animalism.

We seek indeed a larger and completer affirmation. We perceive that in the Indian ascetic ideal the great Vedantic formula, 'One without a second', has not been read sufficiently in the light of that other formula equally imperative, 'All this is the Brahman'. The passionate aspiration of man upward to the Divine has not been sufficiently related to the descending movement of the Divine leaning downward to embrace eternally Its manifestation. Its meaning in Matter has not been so well understood as Its truth in the Spirit. The Reality which the Sannyasin seeks has been grasped in its full height, but not, as by the ancient Vedantins, in its full extent and comprehensiveness. But in our completer affirmation we must not minimise the part of the pure spiritual impulse. As we have seen how greatly Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so we must acknowledge the still greater service rendered by Asceticism to Life. We shall

preserve the truths of material Science and its real utilities in the final harmony, even if many or even if all of its existing forms have to be broken or left aside. An even greater scruple of right preservation must guide us in our dealing with the legacy, however actually diminished or depreciated, of the Aryan past." (CWSA 21: 27–28)

8.

(*Message for broadcast by All India Radio, Pondicherry*)

"Today is the first day of Sri Aurobindo's centenary year. Though he has left his body he is still with us, alive and active.

Sri Aurobindo belongs to the future; he is the messenger of the future. He still shows us the way to follow in order to hasten the realisation of a glorious future fashioned by the Divine Will.

All those who want to collaborate for the progress of humanity and for India's luminous destiny must unite in a clairvoyant aspiration and in an illumined work." 15 August 1971 (CWM 13: 14)

9.

"*How to prepare ourselves for it [Sri Aurobindo's centenary]?*

By communion with the psychic being, the incarnate Divine, deep within us,

an intense aspiration,
a perfect concentration,
a constant dedication." (CWM 13: 148)

10.

"It is only India's soul who can unify the country.

Externally the provinces of India are very different in character, tendencies, culture, as well as in language, and any attempt to unify them artificially could only have disastrous results. But her soul is one, intense in her aspiration towards the spiritual truth, the essential unity of the creation and the divine origin of life, and by uniting with this aspiration the whole country can recover a unity that has never ceased to exist for the superior mentality." (CWM 13: 368)

CLIX—The Tantric System's Aspiration Is One of the Greatest Attempts to Embrace the Whole of God

1.

"The cause and Mother of the world,
She whose form is that of the Shabdabrahman,
And whose substance is bliss.

Thou art the primordial One,
Mother of countless creatures,
Creatrix of the bodies of the Lotus-born, Vishnu and Shiva,
Who creates, preserves and destroys the worlds. . . .
Although Thou art the primordial cause of the world,
Yet art Thou ever youthful.
Although Thou art the Daughter of the Mountain-King,
Yet art Thou full of tenderness.
Although Thou art the Mother of the Vedas,
Yet they cannot describe Thee.
Although men must meditate upon Thee,
Yet cannot their mind comprehend Thee.

This hymn is quoted as culled from a Tantric compilation, the Tantrasara. Its opening is full of the supreme meaning of the great Devi symbol, its close is an entire self-abandonment to the adoration of the body of the Mother. This catholicity is typical of the whole Tantric system, which is in its aspiration one of the greatest attempts yet made

to embrace the whole of God manifested and unmanifested in the adoration, self-discipline and knowledge of a single human soul." (CWSA 1: 574–575)

CLX—The Spiritual Divorce from Universities Has Beggared the Nation of High Aspiration

1.

'The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commercial, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact on which the young Nationalism has always insisted. The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our productions pre-eminence, distinction and mastery of the European markets, is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great. To reverse the process and recover what we have lost, is undoubtedly the first object to which we ought to devote ourselves. And as the loss of originality, aspiration and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective. The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism was to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present, that because temporary causes had brought us low and made us weak, low therefore must be our aims and weak our methods." (CWSA 8: 245)

CLXI—Vedas and Upanishads Bring Aspirations for the Supreme

1.

"Srikrishna has indeed said that the knowledge in the Vedas is sufficient for a holy mind that is capable of knowing God, just as the water in a well is sufficient for a man's purpose though there may be whole floods of water all around. But this does not apply to ordinary men. The ordinary man who wishes to reach God through knowledge, must undergo an elaborate training. He must begin by becoming absolutely pure, he must cleanse thoroughly his body, his heart and his intellect, he must get himself a new heart and be born again; for only the twice-born can understand or teach the Vedas. When he has done this he needs yet four things before he can succeed, the Sruti or recorded revelation, the Sacred Teacher, the practice of Yoga and the Grace of God. The business of the Sruti and especially of the Upanishads is to seize the mind and draw it into a magic circle, to accustom it to the thought of God and aspirations after the Supreme, to bathe it in certain ideas, surround it with a certain spiritual atmosphere; for this purpose it plunges & rolls the mind over & over in an ocean of marvellous sound thro' which a certain train of associations goes ever rolling. In other words it appeals through the intellect, the ear and the imagination to the soul. The purpose of the Upanishad

cannot therefore be served by a translation; a translation at best prepares him for & attracts him to the original. But even when he has steeped himself in the original, he may have understood what the Upanishad suggests, but he has not understood all that it implies, the great mass of religious truth that lies behind, of which the Upanishad is but a hint or an echo." (CWSA 18: 169–170)

CLXII—If India Has to Become a Leader of Thought and Faith, then Her Aspirations Must be Great

1.

"There is no question so vital to the future of this nation as the spirit in which we are to set about the regeneration of our national life. Either India is rising again to fulfil the function for which her past national life and development seem to have prepared her, a leader of thought and faith, a defender of spiritual truth and experience destined to correct the conclusions of materialistic Science by the higher Science of which she has the secret and in that power to influence the world's civilisation, or she is rising as a faithful pupil of Europe, a follower of methods and ideas borrowed from the West, a copyist of English politics and society. In the one case her aspiration must be great, her faith unshakable, her efforts and sacrifices such as to command the admiration of the world; in the other no such greatness of soul is needed or possible;—a cautious, slow and gradual progress involving no extraordinary effort and no unusual sacrifices is sufficient for an end so small. In the one case her destiny is to be a great nation remoulding and leading the civilisation of the world, in the other it is to be a subordinate part of the British Empire sharing in the social life, the political privileges, the intellectual ideals and attainments of the Anglo- Celtic race. These are the two ideals before us, and an ideal is not mere breath, it is a

thing compelling which determines the spirit of our action and often fixes the method. No policy can be successful which does not take into view the end to be attained and the amount and nature of the effort needed to effect it." (CWSA 8: 92)

2.

"A reshaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give to it new and powerful thought-significances, culture-values, a new instrumentation, greater figures. And so long as we recognise these essential things and are faithful to their spirit, it will not hurt us to make even the most drastic mental or physical adaptations and the most extreme cultural and social changes. But these changes themselves must be cast in the spirit and mould of India and not in any other, not in the spirit of America or Europe, not in the mould of Japan or Russia. We must recognise the great gulf between what we are and what we may and ought to strive to be. But this we must do not in any spirit of discouragement or denial of ourselves and the truth of our spirit, but in order to measure the advance we have to make. For we have to find its true lines and to find in ourselves the aspiration and inspiration, the fire and the force to conceive them and to execute. An original truth-seeking thought is needed if we are to take this stand and

make this movement, a strong and courageous intuition, an unfailing spiritual and intellectual rectitude." (CWSA 20: 89)

CLXIII—What Is Not Spiritual Aspiration

1.

"It is a very beautiful character that you describe in your letter, a perfect type of the sattwic man, a fine and harmonised ethical nature supported and vivified by a fine and developed psychic being. But still, although it may be regarded as an excellent preparation for the spiritual life, it cannot by itself be called spirituality—unless indeed we reduce the meaning of the word to the connotation ordinarily given to it in the West where mental ideation, ethical striving, a flowering of fine character, altruism, self-sacrifice, self-denial, philanthropy, service to men or mankind are considered the height of spiritual aspiration or spiritual attainment. Obviously if that is to be the last word of earthly achievement, there is no need for anything farther; the close and vivid discovery of soul or self, the straining towards that which is behind life and above mind, the passion for the Eternal or the Infinite, the hunger for a freedom and wideness of consciousness and existence not limited by the narrow moulds of intellect, character and the past life-aims of humanity, the thirst for union with the Divine or for the pure bliss and beauty of spiritual existence not tied down to mental and vital values must be dismissed as a superfluous dream for which there is neither place nor necessity here." (CWSA 28: 424–425)

CLXIV—Notice for Members of the Ashram in May 1928

1.

"It has been found necessary to change some of the forms and methods hitherto used to help by external means the individual and collective sadhana. This has to be done especially in regard to the consecration of food, the collective meditation and the individual contact of the sadhaka with the Mother. The existing forms were originally arranged in order to make possible a spiritual and psychic communion on the most physical and external planes by which there would be an interchange of forces, a continuous increase of the higher consciousness on the physical plane, a more and more rapid change of the external nature of the sadhakas and afterwards an increasing descent of the supramental light and power into Matter. But for this to be done there was needed a true and harmonious interchange, the Mother leading, the sadhakas following her realisation and progress. The Mother would raise all by a free self-giving of her forces, the sadhakas would realise in themselves her realisations and would by the force of an unfaltering aspiration and a surrender free from narrow personal demand and self-regarding littleness, consecrated wholly to the divine work, return her forces for a new progress. At first partly realised, this rhythm of interchange has existed less and less. The

whole burden of the progress has fallen physically on the body of the Mother; for the forces it gives it receives little or nothing in exchange; the more its consciousness advances in the light, the more it is pulled back towards the unchanged obscurity of an unprogressive external nature. These conditions create an intolerable and useless strain and make the forms used at once unprofitable and unsafe. Other means will have to be found hereafter for the purpose. Meanwhile modifications of form will have to be made in several details and others suppressed altogether." 26 May 1928 (CWSA 36: 532–533)

CLXV—The Condition for the Descent of the Supramental Divine into Matter

1.

"The supramental creation, since it is to be a creation upon earth, must be not only an inner change but a physical and external manifestation also. And it is precisely for this part of the work, the most difficult of all, that surrender is most needful; for this reason, that it is the actual descent of the supramental Divine into Matter and the working of the Divine Presence and Power there that can alone make the physical and external change possible. Even the most powerful self-assertion of human will and endeavour is impotent to bring it about; as for egoistic insistence and vital revolt, they are, so long as they last, insuperable obstacles to the descent. Only a calm, pure and surrendered physical consciousness, full of the psychic aspiration, can be its field; this alone can make an effective opening of the material being to the Light and Power and the supramental change a thing actual and practicable. It is for this that we are here in the body, and it is for this that you and other sadhaks are in the Asram near us." (CWSA 31: 162) (CWSA 32: 86)

2.

"An opposition and intolerance or even a persecution of all that is new or tries to rise above or break away from the

established order of the human Ignorance, or if it is victorious, an intrusion of the lower forces into it, an acceptance by the world more dangerous than its opposition, and in the end an extinction, a lowering or a contamination of the new principle of life, have been a frequent phenomenon of the past; that opposition might be still more violent and a frustration might be still more likely if a radically new light or new power were to claim the earth for its heritage. But it is to be supposed that the new and completer light would bring also a new and completer power. It might not be necessary for it to be entirely separate; it might establish itself in so many islets and from there spread through the old life, throwing out upon it its own influences and filtrations, gaining upon it, bringing to it a help and illumination which a new aspiration in mankind might after a time begin to understand and welcome.

But these are evidently problems of the transition, of the evolution before the full and victorious reversal of the manifesting Force has taken place and the life of the gnostic being becomes as much as that of the mental being an established part of the terrestrial world-order. If we suppose the gnostic consciousness to be established in the earth-life, the power and knowledge at its disposal would be much greater than the power and knowledge of mental man, and the life of a community of gnostic beings, supposing it to be separate, would be as safe against

attack as the organised life of man against any attack by a lower species. But as this knowledge and the very principle of the gnostic nature would ensure a luminous unity in the common life of gnostic beings, so also it would be sufficient to ensure a dominating harmony and reconciliation between the two types of life. The influence of the supramental principle on earth would fall upon the life of the Ignorance and impose harmony on it within its limits." (CWSA 22: 1100–1101)

3.

"All our life, all our work must be a constant aspiration towards the supramental perfection." (CWM 15: 93)

CLXVI—By the Descent of the Supramental, True Aspiration Becomes Miraculous in Its Result

1.

"It is, as it were, to give an idea of the change in the world by the descent of the Supramental. Truly things that were neutral become absolute: a little error becomes categorical in its consequences, and a little sincerity, a little true aspiration becomes miraculous in its result. The values have intensified in people, and even from the material point of view the smallest fault, the very smallest, has big consequences, and the least sincerity in the aspiration has wonderful results. The values have intensified, become precise." (CWM 11: 314)

2.

"Sri Aurobindo tells us that man is a transitional being and that from all the sufferings of the world will emerge a being of light capable of manifesting the Divine.

Thus, all those who are not satisfied with the world as it is, know that their aspiration does not rise in vain and that the world is changing.

If consecration and effort are associated with the aspiration, things will move faster." (CWM 10: 300)

3.

"The life of the mental being could be harmonised with the life of the Supermind which will then be the highest order

above it, and become even an extension and annexe of the truth-consciousness, a part and province of the divine life. It is obvious that if the Supermind is there and an order of supramental being is established as the leading principle in earth-nature, as mind is now the leading principle, but with a sureness, a complete government of the earthly existence, a capacity of transformation of all upon their level and within their natural boundaries of which the mind in its imperfection was not capable, an immense change of human life, even if it did not extend to transformation, would be inevitable.

It remains to consider what might be the obstacles in the way of this possibility, especially those offered by the nature of the earth-order and its function as a field of a graded evolution in which our humanity is a stage and, it might be argued, its very imperfection an evolutionary necessity, how far could or would Supermind by its presence and government of things overcome this difficulty while respecting the principle of gradation, and whether it could not rectify the wrong and ignorant order imposed by the Ignorance and Inconscience and substitute for it a right gradation in which the perfection and divinisation would be possible. Certainly, the way for the individual would be open; whatever group of human beings aspire as united in an endeavour at a perfect individual and collective living or aspire to the divine life, would be assisted towards the attainment of its aspiration: that at least the Supermind

would make its minimum consequence. But the greater possibility is also there and might even be offered to the whole of humanity. This, then, we have to consider, what would the descent of the Supermind mean for mankind and what would be its result or its promise for the whole life and evolutionary future and destiny of the human race?" (CWSA 13: 566–567)

CLXVII—Other Quotations on Aspiration

1.

"The Western mind is still burdened with its scientific vision of the universe as a play of brute force, of life as a struggle, the world a material entity, and therefore of the Spirit of the world, if any there be, conceived agnostically or with a sort of materialistic Pantheism as standing for these things only, the Breath of a physical universe, a sort of mechanical, inconscient Soul of things. Out of this pure materiality mind and soul inexplicably evolve. God appears only in man and his aspiration, his longings for a higher order of things, for love, universal sympathy, immortality. This God and the mechanical inconscient Spirit of the world the Western mind finds it difficult—and no wonder—to bring under the same term. The simple harmonious truth that God is veiled in the material universe which is only the lowest term, the first appearance of the cosmic Reality, that he unveils himself partially and progressively in man and to man, and that man by growth into self-knowledge and God-knowledge can grow into the whole truth of God and existence, which is one truth,—this seems still to be hidden from these wise men of the West. His partial unveiling in man seems to them a birth of the once nonexistent Divine, a coming of God into the world, one knows not whence; and because man appears to be finite, God whom they conceive of as the sum of human

aspiration to good, truth, beauty, immortality, is also conceived of as finite. But how is that which has begun in Time secure against ending in Time? and how can a finite God be infinite love, courage, strength? Only that which was from ever, can be for ever, and only that which is infinite in being, can be infinite in force and quality. We have here an echo of the inconsequent Christian paradox of a soul born by the birth of the body, yet immortal to all eternity, combined with the metaphysical dogma of a God existent, not in being, but in becoming. There is an element of truth and value in this belief, but it brings disabling limitations into our inner realisation of God and the practice of a divine life to which it gives a foundation." (CWSA 1: 588–589)

2.

"But if this fundamental point of Dayananda's is granted, if the character given by the Vedic Rishis themselves to their gods is admitted, we are bound, whenever the hymns speak of Agni or another, to see behind that name present always to the thought of the Rishi the one Supreme Deity or else one of His powers with its attendant qualities or workings. Immediately the whole character of the Veda is fixed in the sense Dayananda gave to it; the merely ritual, mythological, polytheistic interpretation of Sayana collapses, the merely meteorological and naturalistic European interpretation collapses. We have instead a real

Scripture, one of the world's sacred books and the divine word of a lofty and noble religion.

All the rest of Dayananda's theory arises logically out of this fundamental conception. If the names of the godheads express qualities of the one Godhead and it is these which the Rishis adored and towards which they directed their aspiration, then there must inevitably be in the Veda a large part of psychology of the Divine Nature, psychology of the relations of man with God and a constant indication of the law governing man's Godward conduct. Dayananda asserts the presence of such an ethical element, he finds in the Veda the law of life given by God to the human being. And if the Vedic godheads express the powers of a supreme Deity who is Creator, Ruler and Father of the universe, then there must inevitably be in the Veda a large part of cosmology, the law of creation and of cosmos. Dayananda asserts the presence of such a cosmic element, he finds in the Veda the secrets of creation and law of Nature by which the Omniscient governs the world." (CWSA 1: 671)

3.

"The ideas of the Century of Morals are not in themselves extraordinary, nor does Bhartrihari, though he had a full share of the fine culture of his age, appear to have risen in intellectual originality beyond the average level; it is the personality which appears in the Centuries that is striking.

Bhartrihari is, as Matthew Arnold would have said, in the grand style. He has the true heroic turn of mind and turn of speech; he breathes a large and puissant atmosphere. High-spirited, high-minded, high of temper, keen in his sympathies, admiring courage, firmness and daring aspiration above all things, thrilling to impulses of humanity, kindliness and self-sacrifice in spite of his rugged strength, dowered with a trenchant power of scorn and sombre irony, and occasionally of stern invective, but sweetening this masculine severity of character with varied culture and the old high Indian worship of knowledge, goodness and wisdom, such is the man who emerges from the one hundred and odd verses of the Shataka." (CWSA 5: 372–373)

4.

"The genius of the Hindu is not for pure action, but for thought and aspiration realized in action, the spirit premeditating before the body obeys the inward command. The life of the Hindu is inward and his outward life aims only at reproducing the motions of his spirit. This intimate relation of his thought and his actions is the secret of his perpetual vitality. His outward life, like that of other nations, is subject to growth and decay, to periods of greatness and periods of decline, but while other nations have a limit and a term, he has none. Whenever death claims his portion, the Hindu race takes refuge in the

source of all immortality, plunges itself into the fountain of spirit and comes out renewed for a fresh term of existence. The elixir of national life has been discovered by India alone. This immortality, this great secret of life, she has treasured up for thousands of years, until the world was fit to receive it. The time has now come for her to impart it to the other nations, who are now on the verge of decadence and death." (CWSA 7: 1019)

5.

"A National festival is the symbol of the national vitality. All outward action depends eventually on the accepted ideas and imaginations of the doer. As these are, so is his aspiration; and although it is not true that as is his aspiration, so is his action, yet it is true that as is his aspiration, so will his action more and more tend to be. If it is the idea that finally expresses itself in all material forms, actions, institutions and consummations, it is the imagination that draws the idea out, suggests the shape and gives the creative impulse." (CWSA 8: 174)

6.

"Freedom is the first requisite of full working power, the freedom of the higher from the lower. The mind must be free from the body if it is to be purified from the grossness which clogs its motions, the heart must be free from the obsessions of the body if love and high aspiration are to

increase, the reason must be free from the heart and the lower mind if it is to reflect perfectly,—for the heart can inspire, it cannot think, it is a vehicle of direct knowledge coloured by emotion, not of ratiocination." (CWSA 12: 24)

7.

"The aim of Nature is also the aim of Yoga. Yoga, like Nature at its summit, seeks to break this mould of ego, this mould of mentalised life body and materialised mind, in order to achieve ideal action, ideal truth and infinite freedom in our spiritual being. … We may even say that Yoga is the appointed means Nature holds in reserve for the accomplishment of her end, when she has finished her long labour of evolving at least a part of humanity temperamentally equal to the effort and intellectually, morally & physically prepared for success. Nature moves toward supernature, Yoga moves towards God; the world-impulse & the human aspiration are one movement and the same journey." (CWSA 12: 121)

8.

"We leave aside those who regard all such beliefs as mysticism, self-delusion or imposture; but even those who reverence and believe in the high things of Hinduism have the impression that one must remove oneself from a full human activity in order to live the spiritual life. Yet the spiritual life finds its most potent expression in the man

who lives the ordinary life of men in the strength of the Yoga and under the law of the Vedanta. It is by such a union of the inner life and the outer that mankind will eventually be lifted up and become mighty and divine. It is a delusion to suppose that Vedanta contains no inspiration to life, no rule of conduct, and is purely metaphysical and quietistic. On the contrary, the highest morality of which humanity is capable finds its one perfect basis and justification in the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita. The characteristic doctrines of the Gita are nothing if they are not a law of life, a *dharma*, and even the most transcendental aspirations of the Vedanta presuppose a preparation in life, for it is only through life that one can reach to immortality. The opposite opinion is due to certain tendencies which have bulked large in the history and temperament of our race." (CWSA 13: 9–10)

9.

"It is the constant exercise of this desireless will, an intent aspiration and constant remembrance of the path and its goal which are the dhṛti and utsāha needed, the necessary steadfastness and zeal of the sadhak; vyākulatā or excited, passionate eagerness is more intense, but less widely powerful, and it is disturbing and exhausting, giving intense pleasure and pain in the pursuit but not so vast a bliss in the acquisition. The followers of this path must be like the men of the early yugas, *dhīrāḥ*, the great word of praise in the Upanishads. In the remembrance, the *smṛti*

or *smaraṇa*, you must be *apramatta*, free from negligence. It is by the loss of the *smṛti* owing to the rush and onset of the *guṇas* that the yogin becomes *bhraṣṭa*, falls from his firm seat, wanders from his path. But you need not be distressed when the *pramāda* comes and the state of fall or clouded condition seems to persist, for there is no fear for you of a permanent fall since God himself has taken entire charge of you and if you stumble, it is because it is best for you to stumble, as a child by frequent stumbling and falling learns to walk." (CWSA 13: 86)

10.

"I may play entirely at cross-purposes with the All-Will in me. That is when I lend my will-power to be a servant of the nervous part of my mind which, ignorant and passionate, adores self, openly or under many pretences, as its own god. It is this in me, this egoist, this hungerer that feels upon it in the heavy hand of Fate the oppression of a tyrant or the resistance of a blind and unintelligent power. For always absorbed in its own need and view-point it helps the All by that friction and opposition which are so essential to the mechanism of the world. Therefore it misunderstands the firm Teacher and His stern, yet loving compulsion in things and must progress by self-will and struggle and suffering because it cannot yet learn to progress by obedience. But also I may, by an intuition in my nature, an aspiration in my heart and a reason in my

mind, put myself at the service of some strong ideal, some intelligent Force that serves God with or without knowledge of Him. Then is my will a true will; it does its share, it leaves its quota, it returns to its Master with its talent used or increased. And to a certain extent it is free; for a great liberty is this, to be delivered from the Animal and the Rakshasa in ourselves, free to choose the right or be chosen by it." (CWSA 13: 161–162)

11.

"*What is the significance of the name, 'Arya'?*

The question has been put from more than one point of view. To most European readers the name figuring on our cover is likely to be a hieroglyph which attracts or repels according to the temperament. Indians know the word, but it has lost for them the significance which it bore to their forefathers. Western Philology has converted it into a racial term, an unknown ethnological quantity on which different speculations fix different values. Now, even among the philologists, some are beginning to recognise that the word in its original use expressed not a difference of race, but a difference of culture. For in the Veda the Aryan peoples are those who had accepted a particular type of self-culture, of inward and outward practice, of ideality, of aspiration. The Aryan gods were the supraphysical powers who assisted the mortal in his struggle towards the nature of

the godhead. All the highest aspirations of the early human race, its noblest religious temper, its most idealistic velleities of thought are summed up in this single vocable.

In later times, the word Arya expressed a particular ethical and social ideal, an ideal of well-governed life, candour, courtesy, nobility, straight dealing, courage, gentleness, purity, humanity, compassion, protection of the weak, liberality, observance of social duty, eagerness for knowledge, respect for the wise and learned, the social accomplishments. It was the combined ideal of the Brahmana and the Kshatriya. Everything that departed from this ideal, everything that tended towards the ignoble, mean, obscure, rude, cruel or false, was termed un-Aryan. There is no word in human speech that has a nobler history." (CWSA 13: 441)

12.

"The divine life will reject nothing that is capable of divinisation; all is to be seized, exalted, made utterly perfect. The mind now still ignorant, though struggling towards knowledge, has to rise towards and into the supramental light and truth and bring it down so that it shall suffuse our thinking and perception and insight and all our means of knowing till they become radiant with the highest truth in their inmost and outermost movements. Our life, still full of obscurity and confusion and occupied with so many dull and lower aims, must feel all its urges

and instincts exalted and irradiated and become a glorious counterpart of the supramental super-life above. The physical consciousness and physical being, the body itself must reach a perfection in all that it is and does which now we can hardly conceive. It may even in the end be suffused with a light and beauty and bliss from the Beyond and the life divine assume a body divine.

But first the evolution of the nature must have reached a point at which it can meet the Spirit direct, feel the aspiration towards the spiritual change and open itself to the workings of the Power which shall transform it. A supreme perfection, a total perfection is possible only by a transformation of our lower or human nature, a transformation of the mind into a thing of light, our life into a thing of power, an instrument of right action, right use for all its forces, of a happy elevation of its being lifting it beyond its present comparatively narrow potentiality for a self-fulfilling force of action and joy of life. There must be equally a transforming change of the body by a conversion of its action, its functioning, its capacities as an instrument beyond the limitations by which it is clogged and hampered even in its greatest present human attainment. In the totality of the change we have to achieve, human means and forces too have to be taken up, not dropped but used and magnified to their utmost possibility as part of the new life. Such a sublimation of our present human powers of mind and life into elements of a divine life on earth can be

conceived without much difficulty; but in what figure shall we conceive the perfection of the body?" (CWSA 13: 522–523)

13.

"Aryaman within us develops our various forms of birth in the ascending planes of our existence by which the Fathers climbed, travellers on his path, and by which it must be the aspiration of the Aryan soul to climb, to the highest summit of Immortality.

Thus Aryaman sums up in himself the whole aspiration and movement of man in a continual self-enlargement and self transcendence to his divine perfection. By his continuous movement on the unbroken path Mitra and Varuna and the sons of Aditi fulfil themselves in the human birth." (CWSA 15: 515–516)

14.

"Because this Eternal & Immutable is there, the parts & constituents of Nature vary, but its sum is unalterable; its appearances are a whirl of mutable forms, its essence is stable and immutable. Nature herself, manifest to the senses & the material reason only as motion and knowable only in the terms of motion, is equally manifest to the poised & considering soul, dhíra, samáhita, as an infinite power of peace & stillness. On a basis of eternal stability the world exists, to the expression of the stable Eternal it

feels itself to be proceeding. Imperfection is its apparent starting point & medium, and the essential term of imperfection is mobility; perfection is its aspiration & goal and the essential term of perfection is acquired status. Through imperfection therefore Nature moves, in perfection it rests. But the perfections which are attainable in the movements of Nature are only perfections of the part and therefore their stability is temporary, illusory and precedent to a fresh motion. Only in an infinite perfection can there be an eternal stability. This perfection is a concealed completeness in us which we have to manifest; we are already an infinite perfection in our being, we have to manifest that hidden thing in our becoming. It is towards this infinite perfection that all things in Nature are, consciously or unconsciously, by her inborn tendency and movement irresistibly impelled. (CWSA 17: 484)

15.

"Only those who use their awakened self and enlightened powers to distinguish and discover that One and Immortal in all existences, the all-originating self, the all-inhabiting Lord, can make the real passage which transcends life and death, can pass out of this mortal status, can press beyond and rise upward into a world-transcending immortality.

This, then, and no other is the means to be seized on and the goal to be reached. 'There is no other path for the great journey.' The Self and the Lord are that

indeterminable, unknowable, ineffable Parabrahman and when we seek rather that which is indeterminable and unknowable to us, it is still the Self and the Lord always that we find, though by an attempt which is not the straight and possible road intended for the embodied soul seeking here to accomplish its true existence. They are the self-manifested Reality which so places itself before man as the object of his highest aspiration and the fulfilment of all his activities." (CWSA 18: 78)

16.

"From its assertion of the relative knowableness of the unknowable Brahman and the justification of the soul's aspiration towards that which is beyond its present capacity and status the Upanishad turns to the question of the means by which that high-reaching aspiration can put itself into relation with the object of its search. How is the veil to be penetrated and the subject consciousness of man to enter into the master consciousness of the Lord? What bridge is there over this gulf? Knowledge has already been pointed out as the supreme means open to us, a knowledge which begins by a sort of reflection of the true existence in the awakened mental understanding. But Mind is one of the gods; the Light behind it is indeed the greatest of the gods, Indra. Then, an awakening of all the gods through their greatest to the essence of that which they are, the one Godhead which they represent. By the

mentality opening itself to the Mind of our mind, the sense and speech also will open themselves to the Sense of our sense and to the Word behind our speech and the life to the Life of our life. The Upanishad proceeds to develop this consequence of its central suggestion by a striking parable or apologue." (CWSA 18: 79)

17.

"The Upanishad closes with two verses which seem to review and characterise the whole work in the manner of the ancient writings when they have drawn to their close. This Upanishad or gospel of the inmost Truth of things has for its foundation, it is said, the practice of self-mastery, action and the subdual of the sense-life to the power of the Spirit. In other words, life and works are to be used as a means of arriving out of the state of subjection proper to the soul in the ignorance into a state of mastery which brings it nearer to the absolute self-mastery and all-mastery of the supreme Soul seated in the knowledge. The Vedas, that is to say, the utterances of the inspired seers and the truths they hold, are described as all the limbs of the Upanishad; in other words, all the convergent lines and aspects, all the necessary elements of this great practice, this profound psychological self-training and spiritual aspiration are set forth in these great Scriptures, channels of supreme knowledge and indicators of a supreme discipline. Truth is its home; and this Truth is not merely intellectual verity,—for that is not the sense of the word in

the Vedic writings,—but man's ultimate human state of true being, true consciousness, right knowledge, right works, right joy of existence, all indeed that is contrary to the falsehood of egoism and ignorance. It is by these means, by using works and self-discipline for mastery of oneself and for the generation of spiritual energy, by fathoming in all its parts the knowledge and repeating the high example of the great Vedic seers and by living in the Truth that one becomes capable of the great ascent which the Upanishad opens to us." (CWSA 18: 90–91)

18.

"Our spirit too must turn from its absorption in its figure of itself as it sees it involved in the movement of individual life, mind, body and subject to it and must direct its gaze upward to its own supreme Self who is beyond all this movement and master of it all. Therefore the mind must indeed become passive to the divine Mind, the sense to the divine Sense, the life to the divine Life and by receptivity to constant touches and visitings of the highest be transfigured into a reflection of these transcendences; but also the individual self must through the mind's aspiration upwards, through upliftings of itself beyond, through constant memory of the supreme Reality in which during these divine moments it has lived, ascend finally into that Bliss and Power and Light.

But this will not necessarily mean the immersion into an all-oblivious Being eternally absorbed in His own inactive self-existence. For the mind, sense, life going beyond their individual formations find that they are only one centre of the sole Mind, Life, Form of things and therefore they find Brahman in that also and not only in an individual transcendence; they bring down the vision of the superconscient into that also and not only into their own individual workings. (CWSA 18: 93)

19.

"War typifies and embodies physically the aspect of battle and struggle which belongs to all life, both to our inner and our outer living, in a world whose method is a meeting and wrestling of forces which progress by mutual destruction towards a continually changing adjustment expressive of a progressive harmonising and hopeful of a perfect harmony based upon some yet ungrasped potentiality of oneness. The Kshatriya is the type and embodiment of the fighter in man who accepts this principle in life and faces it as a warrior striving towards mastery, not shrinking from the destruction of bodies and forms, but through it all aiming at the realisation of some principle of right, justice, law which shall be the basis of the harmony towards which the struggle tends. The Gita accepts this aspect of the world energy and the physical fact of war which embodies it, and it addresses itself to the man of action, the striver and

fighter, the Kshatriya,—war which is the extreme contradiction of the soul's high aspiration to peace within and harmlessness without, the striver and fighter whose necessary turmoil of struggle and action seems to be the very contradiction of the soul's high ideal of calm mastery and self-possession,—and it seeks for an issue from the contradiction, a point at which its terms meet and a poise which shall be the first essential basis of harmony and transcendence." (CWSA 19: 52)

20.

"The body is abandoned, but the soul goes on its way, *tyaktvā kalevaram*. Much then depends on what he is at the critical moment of his departure. For whatever form of becoming his consciousness is fixed on at the time of death and has been full of that always in his mind and thought before death, to that form he must attain, since the Prakriti by Karma works out the soul's thoughts and energies and that is in real fact her whole business. Therefore, if the soul in the human being desires to attain to the status of the Purushottama, there are two necessities, two conditions which must be satisfied before that can be possible. He must have moulded towards that ideal his whole inner life in his earthly living; and he must be faithful to his aspiration and will in his departing. 'Whoever leaves his body and departs' says Krishna 'remembering me at his time of end, comes to my *bhāva*,' that of the

Purushottama, my status of being. He is united with the original being of the Divine and that is the ultimate becoming of the soul, *paro bhāvaḥ*, the last result of Karma in its return upon itself and towards its source. The soul which has followed the play of cosmic evolution that veils here its essential spiritual nature, its original form of becoming, *svabhāva*, and has passed through all these other ways of becoming of its consciousness which are only its phenomena, *taṁ taṁ bhāvam*, returns to that essential nature and, finding through this return its true self and spirit, comes to the original status of being which is from the point of view of the return a highest becoming, *mad-bhāvam.* In a certain sense we may say that it becomes God, since it unites itself with nature of the Divine in a last transformation of its own phenomenal nature and existence." (CWSA 19: 294–295)

21.

"The condition to which the soul arrives when it thus departs from life is supracosmic. The highest heavens of the cosmic plan are subject to a return to rebirth; but there is no rebirth imposed on the soul that departs to the Purushottama. Therefore whatever fruit can be had from the aspiration of knowledge to the indefinable Brahman, is acquired also by this other and comprehensive aspiration through knowledge, works and love to the self-existent Godhead who is the Master of works and the Friend of

mankind and of all beings. To know him so and so to seek him does not bind to rebirth or to the chain of Karma; the soul can satisfy its desire to escape permanently from the transient and painful condition of our mortal being. And the Gita here, in order to make more precise to the mind this circling round of births and the escape from it, adopts the ancient theory of the cosmic cycles which became a fixed part of Indian cosmological notions. There is an eternal cycle of alternating periods of cosmic manifestation and non-manifestation, each period called respectively a day and a night of the creator Brahma, each of equal length in Time, the long aeon of his working which endures for a thousand ages, the long aeon of his sleep of another thousand silent ages." (CWSA 19: 297–298)

22.

"The way of works too turns into an adoration and a devotion of self-giving because it is an entire sacrifice of all our will and its activities to the one Purushottama. The outward Vedic rite is a powerful symbol, effective for a slighter though still a heavenward purpose; but the real sacrifice is that inner oblation in which the Divine All becomes himself the ritual action, the sacrifice and every single circumstance of the sacrifice. All the working and forms of that inner rite are the self-ordinance and self-expression of his power in us mounting by our aspiration towards the source of its energies. The Divine Inhabitant

becomes himself the flame and the offering, because the flame is the Godward will and that will is God himself within us. And the offering too is form and force of the constituent Godhead in our nature and being; all that has been received from him is given up to the service and the worship of its own Reality, its own supreme Truth and Origin." (CWSA 19: 328–329)

23.

"All sincere religious belief and practice is really a seeking after the one supreme and universal Godhead; for he always is the sole master of man's sacrifice and askesis and infinite enjoyer of his effort and aspiration." (CWSA 19: 332)

24.

"On the other hand, the weakness of a contemplative quietistic spirituality is that it arrives at this result by a too absolute abstraction and in the end it turns into a nothing or a fiction the human soul whose aspiration was yet all the time the whole sense of this attempt at union; for without the soul and its aspiration liberation and union could have no meaning." (CWSA 19: 339)

25.

"A knowledge which embraces oneness with the Divine and arrives through the Divine at conscious oneness with all things and beings, a will emptied of egoism and acting only

by the command and as an instrumentation of the secret Master of works, a divine love whose one aspiration is towards a close intimacy with the supreme Soul of all existence, accomplished by the unity of these three perfected powers an inner all-comprehending unity with the transcendent and universal Spirit and Nature and all creatures are the foundation offered for his activities to the liberated man." (CWSA 19: 396)

26.

"To rise out of our lower personal egoism, to enter into the impersonal and equal calm of the immutable eternal all-pervading Akshara Purusha, to aspire from that calm by a perfect self-surrender of all one's nature and existence to that which is other and higher than the Akshara, is the first necessity of this Yoga [*of the Gita*]. In the strength of that aspiration one can rise to the immortal Dharma. There, made one in being, consciousness and divine bliss with the greatest Uttama Purusha, made one with his supreme dynamic nature-force, *svā prakṛtiḥ*, the liberated spirit can know infinitely, love illimitably, act unfalteringly in the authentic power of a highest immortality and a perfect freedom. The rest of the Gita is written to throw a fuller light on this immortal Dharma." (CWSA 19: 406)

27.

"The sattwic ideals of our enlightened will and reason are either themselves compromises, at best progressive compromises, subject to a constant imperfection and flux of change, or if absolute in their character, they can be followed only as a counsel of perfection ignored for the most part in practice or successful only as a partial influence. … The best human knowledge is a half knowledge and the highest human virtue a thing of mixed quality and, even when most sincerely absolute in standard, sufficiently relative in practice. As a general law of living the absolute sattwic ideals cannot prevail in conduct; indispensable as a power for the betterment and raising of personal aspiration and conduct, their insistence modifies life but cannot wholly change it, and their perfect fulfilment images itself only in a dream of the future or a world of heavenly nature free from the mixed strain of our terrestrial existence. It cannot be otherwise because neither the nature of this world nor the nature of man is or can be one single piece made of the pure stuff of sattwa." (CWSA 19: 545)

28.

"It is not the austerity of knowledge alone that can help us; there is room and infinite room for the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge, a more mystically clear, a greater calmly passionate knowledge. It

is by the perpetual unified closeness of our heart-consciousness, mind-consciousness, all consciousness, *satataṁ maccittaḥ*, that we get the widest, the deepest, the most integral experience of our oneness with the Eternal." (CWSA 19: 551)

29.

"There will be needed a will that shall make this new knowledge, vision, consciousness a motive of action and the sole motive. And it must be the motive not of an action grudging, limited, confined to a few necessary operations of Nature or to the few things that seem helpful to a formal perfection, apposite to a religious turn or to an individual salvation, but rather all action of human life taken up by the equal spirit and done for the sake of God and the good of all creatures. There will be needed an uplifting of the heart in a single aspiration to the Highest, a single love of the Divine Being, a single God-adoration. And there must be a widening too of the calmed and enlightened heart to embrace God in all beings. There will be needed a change of the habitual and normal nature of man as he is now to a supreme and divine spiritual nature. There will be needed in a word a Yoga which shall be at once a Yoga of integral knowledge, a Yoga of the integral will and its works, a Yoga of integral love, adoration and devotion and a Yoga of an integral spiritual perfection of the whole being and of all its

parts and states and powers and motions." (CWSA 19: 575–576)

30.

"For if some immobile Self were all, there could be no possibility of world-existence; if mobile Nature were all, there might be a cycle of universal becoming, but no spiritual foundation for the evolution of the Conscient out of the Inconscient and for the persistent aspiration of our partial Consciousness or Ignorance to exceed itself and arrive at the whole conscious Truth of its being and the integral conscious knowledge of all Being.

Our surface existence is only a surface and it is there that there is the full reign of the Ignorance; to know we have to go within ourselves and see with an inner knowledge. All that is formulated on the surface is a small and diminished representation of our secret greater existence. The immobile self in us is found only when the outer mental and vital activities are quieted; for since it is seated deep within and is represented on the surface only by the intuitive sense of self-existence and misrepresented by the mental, vital, physical ego-sense, its truth has to be experienced in the mind's silence." (CWSA 21: 541)

31.

"The true solution can intervene only when by our spiritual growth we can become one self with all beings, know them

as part of our self, deal with them as if they were our other selves; for then the division is healed, the law of separate self-affirmation leading by itself to affirmation against or at the expense of others is enlarged and liberated by adding to it the law of our self-affirmation for others and our self-finding in their self-finding and self-realisation. It has been made a rule of religious ethics to act in a spirit of universal compassion, to love one's neighbour as oneself, to do to others as one would have them do to us, to feel the joy and grief of others as one's own; but no man living in his ego is able truly and perfectly to do these things, he can only accept them as a demand of his mind, an aspiration of his heart, an effort of his will to live by a high standard and modify by a sincere endeavour his crude ego-nature. It is when others are known and felt intimately as oneself that this ideal can become a natural and spontaneous rule of our living and be realised in practice as in principle. But even oneness with others is not enough by itself, if it is a oneness with their ignorance; for then the law of ignorance will work and error of action and wrong action will survive even if diminished in degree and mellowed in incidence and character. Our oneness with others must be fundamental, not a oneness with their minds, hearts, vital selves, egos,—even though these come to be included in our universalised consciousness,—but a oneness in the soul and spirit, and that can only come by our liberation into soul-awareness and self-knowledge." (CWSA 21: 652–653)

32.

"The transition to Supermind through overmind is a passage from Nature as we know it into Super-Nature. It is by that very fact impossible for any effort of the mere Mind to achieve; our unaided personal aspiration and endeavour cannot reach it: our effort belongs to the inferior power of Nature; a power of the Ignorance cannot achieve by its own strength or characteristic or available methods what is beyond its own domain of Nature. All the previous ascensions have been effectuated by a secret Consciousness-Force operating first in Inconscience and then in the Ignorance: it has worked by an emergence of its involved powers to the surface, powers concealed behind the veil and superior to the past formulations of Nature, but even so there is needed a pressure of the same superior powers already formulated in their full natural force on their own planes; these superior planes create their own foundation in our subliminal parts and from there are able to influence the evolutionary process on the surface." (CWSA 22: 955)

33.

"But the Spirit, the Divine is not only above Nature; it is master of Nature and cosmos; the soul rising into its spiritual poise must at least be capable of the same mastery by its unity with the Divine. It must be capable of controlling its own nature not only in calm or by forcing it

to repose, but with a sovereign control of its play and activity.

To arrive by an intense spirituality at the absolute of the soul is our possibility on one side of our dual existence; to enjoy the absolute of Nature and of everything in Nature is our possibility on the other side of this eternal duality. To unify these highest aspirations in a divine possession of God and ourselves and the world, should be our happy completeness. In the lower poise this is not possible because the soul acts through the mind and the mind can only act individually and fragmentarily in a contented obedience or a struggling subjection to that universal Nature through which the divine knowledge and the divine Will are worked out in the cosmos. But the Spirit is in possession of knowledge and will, of which it is the source and cause and not a subject; therefore in proportion as the soul assumes its divine or spiritual being, it assumes also control of the movements of its nature. It becomes, in the ancient language, Swarat, free and a self-ruler over the kingdom of its own life and being. But also it increases in control over its environment, its world." (CWSA 23: 430–431)

34.

"There is a movement of love, as in the aspiration of human love, to separate the lover and the loved in the enjoyment of their exclusive oneness away from the world

and from all others, shut up in the nuptial chambers of the heart." (CWSA 24: 551)

35.

"Even if the Supreme be capable of relations with us but only of impersonal relations, religion is robbed of its human vitality and the Path of Devotion ceases to be effective or even possible. We may indeed apply our human emotions to it, but in a vague and imprecise fashion, with no hope of a human response: the only way in which it can respond to us, is by stilling our emotions and throwing upon us its own impersonal calm and immutable equality; and this is what in fact happens when we approach the pure impersonality of the Godhead. We can obey it as a Law, lift our souls to it in aspiration towards its tranquil being, grow into it by shedding from us our emotional nature; the human being in us is not satisfied, but it is quieted, balanced, stilled. But the Yoga of devotion, agreeing in this with Religion, insists on a closer and warmer worship than this impersonal aspiration. It aims at a divine fulfilment of the humanity in us as well as of the impersonal part of our being; it aims at a divine satisfaction of the emotional being of man. It demands of the Supreme acceptance of our love and a response in kind; as we delight in Him and seek Him, so it believes that He too delights in us and seeks us. Nor can this demand be condemned as irrational, for if the supreme and universal Being did not take any delight in us,

it is not easy to see how we could have come into being or could remain in being, and if He does not at all draw us towards him,—a divine seeking of us,—there would seem to be no reason in Nature why we should turn from the round of our normal existence to seek Him." (CWSA 24: 556–557)

36.

"For in his study of himself and the world he cannot but come face to face with the soul in himself and the soul in the world and find it to be an entity so profound, so complex, so full of hidden secrets and powers that his intellectual reason betrays itself as an insufficient light and a fumbling seeker: it is successfully analytical only of superficialities and of what lies just behind the superficies. The need of a deeper knowledge must then turn him to the discovery of new powers and means within himself. He finds that he can only know himself entirely by becoming actively self-conscious and not merely self-critical, by more and more living in his soul and acting out of it rather than floundering on surfaces, by putting himself into conscious harmony with that which lies behind his superficial mentality and psychology and by enlightening his reason and making dynamic his action through this deeper light and power to which he thus opens. In this process the rationalistic ideal begins to subject itself to the ideal of intuitional knowledge and a deeper self-awareness; the

utilitarian standard gives way to the aspiration towards self-consciousness and self-realisation; the rule of living according to the manifest laws of physical Nature is replaced by the effort towards living according to the veiled Law and Will and Power active in the life of the world and in the inner and outer life of humanity." (CWSA 25: 29)

37.

"Neither in the individual nor in the society will it seek to imprison, wall in, repress, impoverish, but to let in the widest air and the highest light. A large liberty will be the law of a spiritual society and the increase of freedom a sign of the growth of human society towards the possibility of true spiritualisation. To spiritualise in this sense a society of slaves, slaves of power, slaves of authority, slaves of custom, slaves of dogma, slaves of all sorts of imposed laws which they live under rather than live by them, slaves internally of their own weakness, ignorance and passions from whose worst effect they seek or need to be protected by another and external slavery, can never be a successful endeavour. They must shake off their fetters first in order to be fit for a higher freedom. Not that man has not to wear many a yoke in his progress upward; but only the yoke which he accepts because it represents, the more perfectly the better, the highest inner law of his nature and its aspiration, will be entirely helpful to him. The rest buy their good results at a heavy cost and may retard as much

as or even more than they accelerate his progress." (CWSA 25: 228)

38.

"We must feel and obey the compulsion of the Spirit if we would establish our inner right to escape other compulsion: we must make our lower nature the willing slave, the conscious and illumined instrument or the ennobled but still self-subjected portion, consort or partner of the divine Being within us, for it is that subjection which is the condition of our freedom, since spiritual freedom is not the egoistic assertion of our separate mind and life but obedience to the Divine Truth in ourself and our members and in all around us. But we have, even so, to remark that God respects the freedom of the natural members of our being and that he gives them room to grow in their own nature so that by natural growth and not by self-extinction they may find the Divine in themselves. The subjection which they finally accept, complete and absolute, must be a willing subjection of recognition and aspiration to their own source of light and power and their highest being. Therefore even in the unregenerated state we find that the healthiest, the truest, the most living growth and action is that which arises in the largest possible freedom and that all excess of compulsion is either the law of a gradual atrophy or a tyranny varied or cured by outbreaks of rabid disorder. And as soon as man comes to know his spiritual

self, he does by that discovery, often even by the very seeking for it, as ancient thought and religion saw, escape from the outer law and enter into the law of freedom." (CWSA 25: 258)

39.

"The united progress of mankind would thus be realised by a general principle of interchange and assimilation between individual and individual and again between individual and community, between community and community and again between the smaller commonalty and the totality of mankind, between the common life and consciousness of mankind and its freely developing communal and individual constituents. As a matter of fact, although this interchange is what Nature even now contrives to bring about to a certain extent, life is far from being governed by such a principle of free and harmonious mutuality. There is a struggle, an opposition of ideas, impulses and interests, an attempt of each to profit by various kinds of war on the others, by a kind of intellectual, vital, physical robbery and theft or even by the suppression, devouring, digestion of its fellows rather than by a free and rich interchange. This is the aspect of life which humanity in its highest thought and aspiration knows that it has to transcend, but has either not yet discovered the right means or else has not had the force to apply it. It now endeavours instead to get rid of strife and the

disorders of growth by a strong subordination or servitude of the life of the individual to the life of the community and, logically, it will be led to the attempt to get rid of strife between communities by a strong subordination or servitude of the life of the community to the united and organised life of the human race. To remove freedom in order to get rid of disorder, strife and waste, to remove diversity in order to get rid of separatism and jarring complexities is the impulse of order and regimentation by which the arbitrary rigidity of the intellectual reason seeks to substitute its straight line for the difficult curves of the process of Nature." (CWSA 25: 422–423)

40.

"The connection is between the Divine suppressed in its opposites and the Divine eternal in its own unveiled and undescended nature. The idea is that the other worlds are not evolutionary but typal and each presents in a limited perfection some aspect of the Infinite, but each complete, perfectly satisfied in itself, not asking or aspiring for anything else, for self-exceeding of any kind. That aspiration, on the contrary, is self-imposed on the imperfection of Earth; the very fact of the Divine being there, but suppressed in its phenomenal opposites, compels an effort to arrive at the unveiled Divine—by ascent, but also by a descent of the Divine Perfection for evolutionary manifestation here. That is why the Earth

declares itself a deeper Power than Heaven because it holds in itself that possibility implied in the presence of the suppressed Divine here,—which does not exist in the perfection of the vital (or even the mental) Heavens." (CWSA 27: 241–242)

41.

"There is nothing harmful in the thing [*aspiration for beauty*] itself—on the contrary to awake to the universal beauty and refinement of the Mahalakshmi force is good. It is not an expression of greed or lust—only into these things a perversion can always come if one allows it, as into the Mahakali experience there may come rajasic anger and violence, so here there may come vital passion for possession and enjoyment. One must look at the beauty as the artist does without desire of possession or vital enjoyment of the lower kind." (CWSA 27: 705)

42.

"It is not by 'thinking out' the entire reality, but by a change of consciousness that one can pass from the ignorance to the Knowledge—the Knowledge by which we become what we know. To pass from the external to a direct and intimate inner consciousness; to widen consciousness out of the limits of the ego and the body; to heighten it by an inner will and aspiration and opening to the Light till it passes in its ascent beyond Mind; to bring down a descent of the

supramental Divine through self-giving and surrender with a consequent transformation of mind, life and body—this is the *integral* way to the Truth. It is this that we call the Truth here and aim at in our Yoga." (CWSA 28: 354–355)

43.

"These questions [whether Krishna really existed or is a poetic invention] and the speculations to which they have given rise have no indispensable connection with the spiritual life. There what matters is the contact with Krishna and the growth towards the Krishna consciousness, the presence, the spiritual relation, the union in the soul and, till that is reached, the aspiration, the growth in bhakti and whatever illumination one can get on the way. To one who has had these things, lived in the presence, heard the voice, known Krishna as Friend or Lover, Guide, Teacher, Master or, still more, has had his whole consciousness changed by the contact, or felt the presence within him, all such questions have only an outer and superficial interest. So also, to one who has had contact with the inner Brindavan and the lila of the Gopis, made the surrender and undergone the spell of the joy and the beauty or even only turned to the sound of the flute, the rest hardly matters. But from another point of view, if one can accept the historical reality of the incarnation, there is this great spiritual gain that one has a *point d'appui* for a more concrete realisation in the conviction that once at least the

Divine has visibly touched the earth, made the complete manifestation possible, made it possible for the divine supernature to descend into this evolving but still very imperfect terrestrial nature." (CWSA 28: 484)

44.

"The Divine is more than a man or woman, a stretch of land or a creed, opinion, discovery or principle. He is the Person beyond all persons, the Home and Country of all souls, the Truth of which truths are only imperfect figures. And can He then not be loved and sought for his own sake, as and more than these have been by men even in their lesser selves and nature?

What your reasoning ignores is that which is absolute or tends towards the absolute in man and his seeking as well as in the Divine—something not to be explained by mental reasoning or vital motive. A motive, but a motive of the soul, not of vital desire; a reason not of the mind, but of the self and spirit. An asking too, but the asking that is the soul's inherent aspiration, not a vital longing. That is what comes up when there is the sheer self-giving, when 'I seek you for this, I seek you for that' changes to a sheer 'I seek you for you.' It is that marvellous and ineffable absolute in the Divine that Krishnaprem means when he says, 'Not knowledge nor this nor that, but Krishna.' The pull of that is indeed a categorical imperative, the self in us drawn to the Divine because of the imperative call of its

greater Self, the soul ineffably drawn towards the object of its adoration, because it cannot be otherwise, because it is it and He is He. That is all about it." (CWSA 29: 12)

45.

"If one concentrates on a thought or a word, one has to dwell on the essential idea contained in the word with the aspiration to feel the thing which it expresses." (CWSA 29: 305)

46.

"A divine Name or a Mantra (like the So'ham) can enter the adhara and move in the breathing as in your experience. When it does so, that is not the opening of which I speak in the sentence you quote, but it may come to make the aspiration effective by helping in the opening—by removing something that prevents the opening and by leading to the experience it carries in it.

The experience to which the So'ham mantra leads is the realisation of one Being everywhere, all as the Divine, oneself and all as essentially one with that Divine. … It is the 'cosmic consciousness' that comes by this mantra. For our Yoga this is a beginning only, not the end as it is in the ordinary Yoga,—a liberation, not the Siddhi." (CWSA 29: 324–325)

47.

"The true automatic action (full of consciousness and light) begins only when one gets into touch with the supermind. Till then aspiration and tapasya (concentration) are needed; otherwise there is a wrong automatism due to inert passivity in which wrong forces can act." (CWSA 29: 264)

48.

"Vairagya means a positive detachment from things of this life— but it does not *immediately* carry with it a luminous aspiration except for a few fortunate people. For the positive detachment is often a pulling away by the soul while the vital clings and is gloomy and reluctant." (CWSA 29: 387)

49.

"There is the sattwic vairagya—but many people have the rajasic or tamasic kind. The rajasic is carried by a revolt against the conditions of one's own life, the tamasic arises from dissatisfaction, disappointment, a feeling of inability to succeed or face life, a crushing under the grips and pains of life. These bring a sense of the vanity of existence, a desire to seek something less miserable, more sure and happy or else to seek a liberation from existence here, but they do not bring immediately a luminous aspiration or pure aspiration with peace and joy for the spiritual attainment." (CWSA 29: 389)

50.

"No, I didn't say that you chose the rajasic or tamasic vairagya. I only explained how it came, of itself, as a result of a movement of the vital in place of the sattwic vairagya which is supposed to precede and cause or accompany or result from a turning away from the world to seek the Divine. The tamasic vairagya comes from the recoil of the vital when it feels that it has to give up the joy of life and becomes listless and joyless; the rajasic comes when the vital begins to lose the joy of life but complains that it is getting nothing in its place. Nobody chooses such movements; they come independently of the mind as habitual reactions of the human nature. To replace these things by detachment, an increasing quiet aspiration, a pure bhakti, an ardent surrender to the Divine, was what I suggested as the true forward movement." (CWSA 29: 389–390)

51.

"For the transformation I aim at is not from sin to sainthood but from the lower nature of the Ignorance to the Divine Nature of Light, Peace, Truth, Divine Power and Bliss beyond the Ignorance. It journeys towards a supreme self-existent good and leaves behind it the limited struggling human conception of sin and virtue; it is not an intellectual light that is the sun of its aspiration but a spiritual supra-intellectual supramental light; it is not sainthood that is its

culmination but divine consciousness—or if you like, soul-hood, spirit-hood, conscious self-hood, divine-hood." (CWSA 29: 507)

52.

"There are no fixed rules [*about fluctuations in the working of the Force*]. There are simply a mass of tendencies and forces with which one has to become familiar. It is not a fixed machinery which one can manage by devices or by pulling this or that button. It is only by the inner Will, the constant aspiration, by detachment and rejection, by bringing down the true consciousness, force etc. that it can be done." (CWSA 30: 62)

53.

"These things [*the seeing of Buddha, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Shankaracharya in vision*] are the result of past thoughts and influences. They are of various kinds—sometimes merely thought-forms created by one's own thought-force to act as a vehicle for some mental realisation—sometimes Powers of different planes that take these forms as a support for their work through the individual,—but sometimes one is actually in communion with that which had the name and form and personality of Buddha or Ramakrishna or Vivekananda or Shankara.

It is not necessary to have an element akin to these personalities—a thought, an aspiration, a formation of the

mind or vital are enough to create the connection—it is sufficient for a vibration of response anywhere to what these Powers represent." (CWSA 30: 104–105)

54.

"There are many voices, and all are not divine; this may be only a voice of desire. All that keeps one faithful to the Truth and insists on peace, purity, devotion, sincerity, a spiritual change of the nature can be listened to with profit; the rest must be observed with discrimination and not followed blindly. Keep the fire of aspiration burning, but avoid all impatient haste." (CWSA 30: 308)

55.

"Not these human and animal demands, but the divine Ananda which is above and beyond them and which the indulgence of these degraded forms would prevent from descending, is the great thing that the aspiration of the vital being must demand in the sadhaka." (CWSA 31: 310)

56.

"The mind in you is able to separate itself from these things and recognise (when not too much clouded) their true character, the higher vital also has another aim and aspiration; but the physical, especially the more material parts of it are still responding mechanically to the old movements which are wearing out indeed under the

pressure, but are still strong enough to possess a great part of the consciousness when they come." (CWSA 31: 388)

57.

"What you have written has some power of thought and style and vision though of a mixed character. There is no harm in writing these things when they of themselves come; it may help the inner element of aspiration to grow in you." (CWSA 31: 626–627)

58.

"*Some months ago in a vision, I offered the Mother three flowers of "Divine Love". Has this any meaning for my sadhana?*

It is not quite clear what this number 3 means in this connection. Possibly it is the aspiration for the Divine's love in the three parts of the being." (CWSA 32: 279)

59.

"*These days I have an aspiration to be on the right path and do what is right and advance.*

The right path is the path on which the Mother's will wants you to go, no other." (CWSA 32: 520)

60.

"*I was not going to send this letter, thinking it will make Mother angry and that she will irritate me still more at Pranam by putting her hand only just a little, as yesterday. Anyway, it is now becoming impossible to live.*

Why should you think that Mother will be angry? We have ourselves told you to write everything frankly and conceal nothing —so there is not the least likelihood that she will resent what you write. Moreover she knows perfectly well the difficulties of the sadhana and of human nature and, if there is goodwill and a sincere aspiration such as you have, any stumblings or falterings of the moment will not make any difference in her attitude to the sadhak. The Mother thinks you must have had a wrong impression about her putting her hand just a little only—for she was just the same with you inwardly as always and there had been no reason why there should be any change." (CWSA 32: 550–551)

61.

"Sri Aurobindo's way of Yoga is of a special character—it is neither sannyasa nor does it accept the ordinary way of human life. Its first stages can be practised anywhere. But unless there is a personal call to this particular way, there is no use in anybody taking to it. For it is a difficult path and there is little chance of success unless the aspiration

is clear and fixed and the demand of the soul sincere and unbreakable. Sri Aurobindo does not admit anyone to this Yoga unless he has some ground to decide that there is in him this special call and that he has an evident capacity for this way—usually it is only after seeing personally at the time of one of the three darshans he gives to disciples and others that he decides whether or not to admit. On the strength of correspondence only he very seldom makes any decision of this kind." (CWSA 35: 555)

62.

"*When the Mother gives us flowers, are we to aspire for the things they stand for or does she give these things with the Flowers?*

There is no fixed rule—sometimes it is the one, sometimes the other. But even when the thing is given, it is given in power—it has to be realised by the sadhak in consciousness and for that aspiration is necessary." (CWSA 32: 557)

63.

"But the influences of the outside world are not favourable to the psychic contact and the psychic development and, if the sadhak is not sufficiently careful or concentrated, the psychic contact may easily be lost after a time or get covered over and the development may become retarded, stationary or even diminished by adverse influences or

movements. It is therefore that the necessity exists and is often felt of a return to the place of the central influence in order to fortify or recover the contact or to restore or give a fresh forward impulse to the development. The aspiration for such nearness from time to time is not a vital desire; it becomes a vital desire only when it is egoistically insistent or mixed with a vital motive,—but not if it is an aspiration of the psychic being calm, deep and without clamour in it or perturbing insistence.

This is for those who are not called upon or are not *yet* called upon to live in the Asram under the direct pressure of the central Force and Presence. Those who must so live are those called from the beginning or who have become ready or who are for some reason or another given a chance to form part of the work or creation which is being prepared by the Yoga. For them the stay here in the atmosphere, the nearness are indispensable; to depart would be for them a renunciation of the opportunity given them, a turning of the back upon the spiritual destiny." (CWSA 35: 575)

64.

"*Or can it be said that whoever has some aspiration for the Light or Truth or God vaguely, has some sort of conversion of consciousness, for the reason that he has come to the Ashram and lives here?*

No. Aspiration can lead hereafter to conversion; but aspiration is not conversion.

Mother spoke of three different things: conversion, the turning of the soul decisively towards the Divine,—inner realisation of the Divine,—transformation of the nature. The first two can happen swiftly and suddenly and once for all, the third always takes time and cannot be done at one stroke, in a moment. One may become aware of a rapid change in this or that detail of the transformation, but even this is a rapid result of a long working." (CWSA 35: 664)

65.

"Ideal love is a triune energy, neither a mere sensual impulse, nor mere emotional nor mere spiritual. These may exist, but they are not love. By itself the sensual is only an animal need, the emotional a passing mood, the spiritual a religious aspiration which has lost its way. Yet all these are necessary elements of the highest passion. Sense impulse is as necessary to it as the warm earth-matter at its root to the tree, emotion as the air which consents with its life, spiritual aspiration as the light and the rain from heaven which prevent it [love] from withering. My conception being an ideal struggle between love and death, two things are needed to give it poetical form, an adequate picture of love and adequate image of Death. The love pictured must be on the ideal plane, and touch therefore the farthest limit

of strength in each of its three directions. The sensual must be emphasised to give it firm root and basis, the emotional to impart to it life, the spiritual to prolong it into infinite permanence. And if at their limits of extension the three meet and harmonise, if they are not triple but triune, then is that love a perfect love and the picture of it a perfect picture. Such at least is the conception of the poem; whether I have contrived even faintly to execute it, do you judge." (CWSA 36: 132)

66.

"The light playing in his head means that there has been an opening to the higher force and knowledge which is descending as light from above and working on the mind to illumine it. The electrical current is the force descending in order to work in the lower centres and prepare them for the light. The right condition will come when instead of the vital forces trying to push upward the Prana becomes calm and surrendered and waiting with full assent for the light and when instead of the chasm in between there is a constant aspiration of the heart towards the truth above. The light must descend into these lower centres so as to transform the emotional and vital and physical being as well as the mental thought and will." (CWSA 36: 336)

67.

"For the future if he wishes to accept my [Sri Aurobindo] yoga the conditions are a steady resolve and aspiration towards the truth I am bringing down, a calm passivity and an opening upward towards the source from which the light is coming. The Shakti is already working in him and if he takes and keeps this attitude and has a complete confidence in me there is no reason why he should not advance safely in the sadhana in spite of the physical and vital damage that has been done to his system." (CWSA 36: 337)

68.

A Message to America

"I have been asked to send on this occasion of the fifteenth August a message to the West, but what I have to say might be delivered equally as a message to the East. It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but, for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or

mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before." (CWSA 36: 551)

69.

"In one of the Upanishads a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the

Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit." (CWSA 36: 553)

70.

"For example, there is a subtle joy, both sweet and profound, in the sensation one feels while walking alone or with a companion with whom one is in perfect harmony, through seldom trod or virgin tracts of countryside unspoiled by any human atmosphere, where Nature is tranquil, vast, pure like an aspiration, holy like a prayer; on mountains, in forests, along stray paths beside limpid streams, or on the shores of a boundless ocean. So long as the prana remains individual, this joy can only be experienced when certain outer conditions are fulfilled. On the other hand, when the *prana* is truly impersonalised, universalised, *one becomes this delightful bliss in all those who feel it*; one no longer needs, in order to enjoy it, to be surrounded by certain specific material conditions." (CWM 2:119–120)

71.

"I listened to the voice of the waves and it told me of many marvels. It spoke to me of the joy of life and of the

ecstasies of movement. O Sea, in a song without end and ever renewed, thou didst tell me again of the power of love which makes all things true. Contemplating the splendour of thy invincible action, I perceived the irresistible surge that carries the universe towards the Supreme Reality. The force that lifts thee and changes thy surface into mountains is like the force that raises the world out of its inertia and awakens in it the aspiration for the Divine.

Then as I watched thee in the silence, thou didst speak to me more deeply still, and thou didst tell me of the great mystery of eternal Love that loves itself in all forms and is self-revealed in all activities. Already in my being this ineffable Love lived self aware, but at that hour its life took on an exceptional intensity, or perhaps the individual perception was exceptionally clear." (CWM 2: 120)

72.

"Aspiration towards the Divine Essence of all things that we have perceived in a moment of integral illumination.

Then self-consecration to this Divine Essence, to this Eternal Law, integral self-giving, at every moment, in all one's actions. Complete surrender: one is now only a docile instrument, a faithful servant before the Supreme Master. The Love is so complete that it causes a detachment from all that is not the Divine Absolute and perfect concentration on Him." (CWM 2: 130)

73.

"Japan is essentially the country of sensations; she lives through her eyes. Beauty rules over her as an uncontested master; and all her atmosphere incites to mental and vital activity, study, observation, progress, effort, not to silent and blissful contemplation. But behind this activity stands a high aspiration which the future of her people will reveal." (CWM 2: 154)

74.

"An attachment to a rule of the mind is an indication of a blindness still hiding somewhere. Take, for example, the very universal superstition, prevalent all over the world, that asceticism and spirituality are one and the same thing. If you describe someone as a spiritual man or a spiritual woman, people at once think of one who does not eat or sits all day without moving, one who lives in a hut in great poverty, one who has given away all he had and keeps nothing for himself. This is the picture that immediately arises in the minds of ninety-nine people out of a hundred, when you speak of a spiritual man; the one proof of spirituality for them is poverty and abstinence from everything that is pleasant or comfortable. This is a mental construction which must be thrown down if you are to be free to see and follow the spiritual truth. For you come to the spiritual life with a sincere aspiration and you want to meet the Divine and realise the Divine in your

consciousness and in your life; and then what happens is that you arrive in a place which is not at all a hut and meet a Divine One who is living a comfortable life, eating freely, surrounded by beautiful or luxurious things, not distributing what he has to the poor, but accepting and enjoying all that people give him. At once with your fixed mental rule you are bewildered and cry, 'Why, what is this? I thought I was to meet a spiritual man!' This false conception has to be broken down and disappear. Once it is gone, you find something that is much higher than your narrow ascetic rule, a complete openness that leaves the being free. If you are to get something, you accept it, and if you are to give up the very same thing, you with an equal willingness leave it. Things come and you take them up; things go and you let them pass, with the same smile of equanimity in the taking or the leaving." (CWM 3: 53–54)

75.

"Chance is not merely a conception to cover our ignorance of the causes at work; it is a description of the uncertain *melée* [confusion] of the lower Nature which lacks the calm one-pointedness of the divine Truth. The world has forgotten its divine origin and become an arena of egoistic energies; but it is still possible for it to open to the Truth, call it down by its aspiration and bring about a change in the whirl of chance. What men regard as a mechanical sequence of events, owing to their own mental

associations, experiences and generalisations, is really manipulated by subtle agencies each of which tries to get its own will done. The world has got so subjected to these undivine agencies that the victory of the Truth cannot be won except by fighting for it. It has no right to it: it has to gain it by disowning the falsehood and the perversion, an important part of which is the facile notion that, since all things owe their final origin to the Divine, all their immediate activities also proceed directly from it. The fact is that here in the lower Nature the Divine is veiled by a cosmic Ignorance and what takes place does not proceed directly from the divine knowledge. That everything is equally the will of God is a very convenient suggestion of the hostile influences which would have the creation stick as tightly as possible to the disorder and ugliness to which it has been reduced." (CWM 3: 163–164)

76.

"Hence it [psychic being] decides that at a certain moment it will take a body. Having already had a number of experiences, it knows that in a certain country, a certain part of the consciousness has developed; in another, another part, and so on; so it chooses the place which offers it easy possibilities of development: the country, the conditions of living, the approximate nature of the parents, and also the condition of the body itself, its physical structure and the qualities it needs for its experiences. It

takes rest, then at the required moment, wakes up and projects its consciousness upon earth centralising it in the chosen domain and the chosen conditions—or almost so; there is a small margin you know, for in the psychic consciousness one is too far away from the material physical consciousness to be able to see with a clear vision; it is an approximation. It does not make a mistake about the country or the environment and it sees quite clearly the inner vibrations of the people chosen, but there may happen to be a slight indecision. But if, just at this moment, there is a couple upon earth or rather a woman who has a psychic aspiration herself and, for some reason or other, without knowing why or how, would like to have an exceptional child, answering certain exceptional conditions; if at this moment there is this aspiration upon earth, it creates a vibration, a psychic light which the psychic being sees immediately and, without hesitation it rushes towards it. Then, from that moment (which is the moment of conception), it watches over the formation of the child, so that this formation may be as favourable as possible to the plan it has; consequently its influence is there over the child even before it appears in the physical world.

If all goes well, if there is no accident (accidents can always happen), if all goes well at the moment the child is about to be born, the psychic force (perhaps not in its totality, but a part of the psychic consciousness) rushes

into the being and from its very first cry gives it a push towards the experiences it wants the child to acquire." (CWM 4: 145–146)

77.

"The human mind is a public place open on all sides, and in this public place, things come, go, cross from all directions; and some settle there and these are not always the best. And there, to obtain control over that multitude is the most difficult of all controls. Try to control the thought coming into your mind, you will see. Simply, you will see to what a degree you have to be watchful, like a sentinel, with the eyes of the mind wide open, and then keep an extremely clear vision of the ideas which conform to your aspirations and those which do not. And you must police at every minute that public place where roads from all sides meet, so that all passers-by do not rush in. It is a big job. Then, don't forget that even if you make sincere efforts, it is not in a day, not in a month, not in a year that you will reach the end of all these difficulties. When one begins, one must begin with an unshakable patience. One must say, "Even if it takes fifty years, even if it takes a hundred years, even if it takes several lives, what I want to accomplish, I shall accomplish." (CWM 4: 334–335)

78.

"Aspiration in the cellular consciousness for perfect sincerity of consecration.

And the lived experience—lived intensely—that it is only this absolute sincerity of consecration which allows existence.

The least pretension is an alliance with the forces of dissolution and of death.

Well, it is like a song of the cells—but they must not even have the insincerity of watching themselves do it—the song of the cells: "Thy Will, O Lord, Thy Will."

And the great habit of depending upon the will of others, the consciousness of others, the reactions of others (of others and of all things), this kind of universal comedy which all play with all and everything plays to everything, ought to be replaced by an absolute, spontaneous sincerity of consecration.

It is evident that this perfection of sincerity is possible only in the most material part of the consciousness.

It is there that one can succeed in being, existing, doing, without watching oneself being, watching oneself existing, watching oneself doing, with an absolute sincerity. (CWM 4: 338–339)

79.

"*If the lower nature is completely ignorant, how can it 'choose'?*

It is not absolutely ignorant. Things are not so absolute; it can feel there is something lacking. All depends upon that. Naturally, those who are quite satisfied with themselves as they are—it is not worth the trouble trying to change them, because they don't want it. But in fact, even in the lower nature, it is possible to have a kind of feeling that things could be better. For example, take someone whose health is bad or who is weak, who has desires but is too weak to fulfil them, who has ambitions but no capacity; such a person will perhaps tell himself, 'Oh! If I were better than I am, if I knew a little more, if I were a little stronger, if I understood a little what ought to be done...' Or suppose, for instance, in ordinary life, someone who needs to earn his living and must choose a job, and the job offered is not to his liking; he is caught in this dilemma: not to have anything to eat or to accept this unpleasant situation; he finds himself facing this problem and says, 'What should I do?' He does not know, does not understand; but even in his stupidity he will have a sort of impression that it would be better if he could see a little more clearly, could know a little better, could have some elements of foresight. Then this awakens a slight aspiration for progress—it is the beginning of a choice. Someone has said that if there were no ticks to bite the dogs, they would always be in a state of inertia, stretched out on the ground, motionless. Now, these trouble them, they begin to scratch, they move, and this awakens them a little from

their tamas. For men, it is the same thing. When they have a small desire which they cannot satisfy, they are a little shaken up: they come out of their inertia and try to find a solution to their problem. It is like that. There is no absolute unconsciousness—there is no absolute ignorance, no absolute night. Behind all unconsciousness, behind all ignorance, behind the night, there is always the supreme Light which is everywhere. The least little thing suffices for a beginning of contact to be established. (CWM 4: 347–348)

80.

"*How can one know whether the little dirty things have hidden themselves or have gone?*

One can always try little experiments. I have said that one must use a torch, a strong light; then one must take a round within one's being. If one is very attentive, one can very easily find these ugly corners. Suppose you have a beautiful experience, that suddenly in answer to your aspiration a great light comes; you feel all flooded with joy, force, light, beauty, and have the impression that you are on the point of being transfigured... and then, it passes away—it always passes away, doesn't it? especially at the beginning—suddenly, it stops. Then you tell yourself, when you are not vigilant, 'There, it came and it has gone! Poor me! It came and has gone, it just gave me a taste of the

thing and then let me fall.' Well, that's foolish. What you should tell yourself is, 'Look, I was not able to keep it, and why was I not able to keep it?' So, you take your torch and go on a round within yourself trying to find a very close relation between the change of consciousness and the movements accompanying the cessation of the experience. And if you are very, very attentive, and make your round very scrupulously, you will find that suddenly some part of the vital or some part of the mind or of the body, something has not kept up, in this sense that mentally, instead of being immobile and attentive, something has begun to ask, 'Wait a minute, what is this experience? What does it mean?', begun to try to find an explanation (what it calls an 'understanding'). Or maybe in the vital something has begun to enjoy the experience: 'How pleasant it is, how I would like it to grow, how good if it were constant, how...' Or something in the physical has said, 'Oh! It is a bit hard to endure that, how long am I going to be able to keep it?' It is perhaps not as obvious as all this, but it is a wee bit hidden like this, somewhere. You will always find one of these three things or others analogous." (CWM 4: 359–360)

81.

"There will always be something which will rise suddenly and eat up your experience. And then, instead of progressing, you will be stuck there marking time because

you cannot advance. But if, immediately, you take the opportunity.... Note, sometimes it hurts a little; if you go and brutally put the light upon the thing which wants to enjoy the experience or wants to get knowledge or control the experience by a mental understanding or is too lazy to make the necessary effort to receive the experience and bear it or to change quickly enough, if you put the will with the light of consciousness upon this thing, with firmness, it may hurt just a little. And you say, 'Oh! Not so fast! I need rest, I tired myself uselessly.' Then everything has to be begun all over again. Sometimes days, even months, sometimes years will pass without its coming back. Sometimes, if you are a little more active and intense in your aspiration, it will return sooner. But if you commit the same stupidity again, the same thing will happen—while if, immediately, you are very vigilant and when the mind starts nosing around to understand what is happening you tell it, 'Silence, keep quiet', then the experience can continue. When the vital begins to say, 'I want lots and lots, more and more', you say, 'Quiet, quiet, don't move, calm yourself, don't get excited.' Or when the physical being, 'Oh! I shall be crushed....'—'A little endurance, if you please; you are a coward, you don't know how to stand the test.' If you manage to do this in time, with the necessary calmness, with the necessary determination and will, you will arrive at something." (CWM 4: 361)

82.

"A universe was created out of nothing—that is foolish! It is very awkward for a logical mind. And over and above all that, you are told that He did this consciously, deliberately, and when he had finished he exclaimed, "Look, it is very good." Then, those who are in the universe reply, "We don't find it so good. It is perhaps very good for you but not for us." These are naive conceptions. They are simply ignorant and naive conceptions which make the problem of the universe absolutely incomprehensible. And all these explanations are inadmissible for a mind which is ever so slightly awakened. That is why you are told, "Don't try to understand, you will never understand." But that is mental laziness, it is the mind's bad will. You see, one feels within oneself that, because one has this kind of power of thought-activity, this aspiration to find a light, a solution, it must correspond to something, otherwise... otherwise, truly (I think I have written this somewhere), if the universe were reduced to that simple notion, well, it would be the most sinister of farces and I should very well understand those who have declared, 'Run away, get out of it as fast as possible.' Unfortunately, I don't see how they would be able to get out of it, for there is nothing else—how can you get out of something which alone exists? So, one enters a vicious circle, one turns round and round and this leads quite naturally to mental despair. But

when one has the key—there are one or two keys, but there is one which opens all the doors—when one has the key, one follows one's road and little by little understands *the* Thing." (CWM 4: 370–371)

83.

"When you are playing and suddenly become aware that something is going wrong—you are making mistakes, are inattentive, sometimes opposing currents come across what you are doing—if you develop the habit, automatically at this moment, of calling as by a mantra, of repeating a word, that has an extraordinary effect. You choose your mantra; or rather, one day it comes to you spontaneously in a moment of difficulty. At a time when things are very difficult, when you have a sort of anguish, anxiety, when you don't know what is going to happen, suddenly this springs up in you, the word springs up in you. For each one it may be different. But if you mark this and each time you face a difficulty you repeat it, it becomes irresistible. For instance, if you feel you are about to fall ill, if you feel you are doing badly what you are doing, if you feel something evil is going to attack you, then.... But it must be a spontaneity in the being, it must spring up from you without your needing to think about it: you choose your mantra because it is a spontaneous expression of your aspiration; it may be one word, two or three words, a sentence, that depends on each one, but it must be a

sound which awakens in you a certain condition. Then, when you have that, I assure you that you can pass through everything without difficulty. Even in the face of a real, veritable danger, an attack, for instance, by someone who wants to kill you, if, without getting excited, without being perturbed, you quietly repeat your mantra, one can do nothing to you. Naturally, you must truly be master of yourself; one part of the being must not be trembling there like a leaf; no, you must do it entirely, sincerely, then it is all-powerful. The best is when the word comes to you spontaneously: you call in a moment of great difficulty (mental, vital, physical, emotional, whatever it may be) and suddenly that springs up in you, two or three words, like magical words. You must remember these and form the habit of repeating them in moments when difficulties come." (CWM 4: 388–389)

84.

"There are some who come to a state in which an arm or a leg or any part of the body has become completely stiff due to their ascetic posture. They cannot move any more; anybody else would die under such conditions; they continue to live because they have faith and they do it purposely, because it is a thing they have imposed on themselves.

Therefore, the moral condition is much more important than the physical. If you were in surroundings

where everyone was tidy and then you remained three days without taking a bath, you would fall ill. This is not to say that you should not take a bath! Because we do not want to be sadhus, we want to be yogis. It is not the same thing. And we want the body to take part in the yoga. So we must do whatever is necessary to keep it fit. However, this is only to tell you that the moral condition is much more important than the physical.

Besides, these people, by their asceticism, wilfully spoil their body, torture themselves, yet if it was someone else who did the same thing, people would shout, protest, declare he is a monster. But one does it by one's own choice. And one bears it very well because it is imposed on one's own self and one feels a kind of glory in having done something very 'remarkable', through one's aspiration for the divine life!" (CWM 5: 170)

85.

"It [psychic being] naturally remembers its choice and, before coming down once more, when it has finished its assimilation, when it is time to return, to come down upon earth, it cannot, from that domain, see material things as we see them, you know: they appear to it in another form. But still the differences can be foreseen: the differences of environment, differences of activity in the environment are clearly seen, quite perceptible. It can have a vision that is total or global. It can choose. At times it chooses the

country; when it wants a certain kind of education, civilisation, influence, it can choose its country beforehand. Sometimes it can't, sometimes it chooses only its environment and the kind of life it will lead. And then from up there, before it comes down, it looks for the kind of vibrations it wants; it sees them very clearly. It is as though it was aiming at the place where it is going to drop. But it is an approximation because of the fact that another condition is necessary: not only its choice but also a receptivity from below and an aspiration. There must be someone in the environment it has chosen, generally the mother (sometimes both the parents, but the most indispensable is the mother), she must have an aspiration or a receptivity, something sufficiently passive and open or a conscious aspiration towards something higher. And that kindles for the psychic being a little light. In the mass representing for it the environment in which it wants to be born, if under the influence of its own projected will a small light is kindled, then it knows that it is there it must go." (CWM 5: 214–215)

86.

"*After death, does the inner being continue to progress?*

That depends altogether upon the person. For everyone it is different. There are people—for example, writers, musicians, artists—people who have lived on intellectual

heights, who feel that they still have something further to do, that they have not finished what they had undertaken to do, have not reached the goal they had fixed for themselves, so they are ready to remain in the earth atmosphere as long as they can, with as much cohesiveness as possible and they try to manifest themselves and continue their progress in other human bodies. I have seen many such cases, I have seen the very interesting case of a musician who was a pianist (a pianist of great worth), who had hands which were a marvel of skill, accuracy, precision, force, rapidity of movement, indeed, it was absolutely remarkable. This man died relatively young with the feeling that if he had continued to live he would have continued to progress in his musical expression. And such was the intensity of his aspiration that his subtle hands maintained their form without being dissolved, and each time he met anyone a little receptive and passive and a good musician, his hands would enter the hands of those who were playing—the person who was playing at the time could play well but in an ordinary way; but at that moment he became not merely a virtuoso but a wonderful artist during the time he played. It was the hands of the other that were making use of his. This is a phenomenon I know. I have seen the same thing in the case of a painter: it was also a matter of hands. The same thing with regard to some writers, and here it was the brain that kept quite a precise form and entered the brain of

someone who was sufficiently receptive and suddenly made him write extraordinary things, infinitely more beautiful than anything he had written before." (CWM 5: 260–261)

87.

"*Can a psychic being take birth in two bodies?*

It is not quite so simple as that.... The psychic being is the result of evolution, that is to say, evolution of the divine Consciousness which spread into Matter and slowly lifted up Matter, made it develop to return to the Divine. The psychic being was formed by this divine centre progressively through all the births. There comes a time when it reaches a kind of perfection, perfection in its growth and formation. Then, most often, as it has an aspiration for realisation, for a greater perfection to manifest yet better the Divine, it generally draws towards itself a being from the involution, that is to say, one of those entities belonging to what Sri Aurobindo calls Overmind, who comes then to incarnate in this psychic being. It can be one of those entities men generally call gods, some kind of deities. And when this fusion occurs the psychic being naturally is magnified and shares in the nature of the being incarnated in it. And then it has the power to produce emanations. These beings have the power to produce emanations, that is to say, they project

out of themselves a part of themselves which becomes independent and goes into others to incarnate itself. So there can be not only two, but three, four or five emanations." (CWM 5: 264)

88.

"All that has happened upon earth—from the beginning of the earth till now, all the movements of the mind have been exactly inscribed, all of them. So when you need any accurate information about something, you have only to go there, you find your way. It is a very strange place; it is made as though of small cells, they are like small pigeon-holes; and so, following the shelves and some kind of... how to put it? … They are all closed. You put your finger, press a button and the thing opens. And then something like a scroll comes out and you unroll it and can read it—all that is written about a subject. There are millions and millions and millions of these. And happily, in the mind, one can go down, one can go up, one can go right on the top. You do not need a ladder!" (CWM 5: 279)

89.

"*How does one read? As one reads a book?*

Yes, it is a kind of mental perception. It corresponds to that. You see quite, quite well all the description or the information (that depends on what it is). Sometimes they

are pictures: it is as though a picture had been preserved. Sometimes it is a story. Sometimes it is simply an answer to a question. All possible and imaginable things recorded mentally are there. You can find many corrections too (exactly of those facts that have been put in books and are not correct). And you need not walk on or climb up: you send along quite simply something like a concentrated mental consciousness and that goes forward and touches the thing. Only, if you do this without completely detaching yourself from your own mental activity, I am afraid you will see only what is in your own head! Instead of seeing the thing as it is, perhaps you take a walk in your own brain and see only what is there—it is a danger. You must be able to silence your head absolutely and be completely detached, not to have (for example, when you are looking for the solution of a problem), not to have already in your head the solution that seems to you right or the best or most profitable. That must not be there. You must become absolutely like a blank paper, with nothing on it. And you proceed in that way, with a very sincere aspiration to know the truth, without assuming beforehand that it will be like this or like that; because otherwise you will see only your own formation. The very first condition is that the head must keep completely silent during the time one is observing.

And in order to be more sure (but here one must be fully trained, one must have a very good education), in

order to be altogether sure of reporting clearly the knowledge received without deforming it in any way, it is better to say what one sees and what one reads (we say 'reads', but rather it is what one perceives), to say it as one perceives it, and it should be someone else who notes it down.... I repeat: You lie quietly stretched in your easy-chair, without moving and altogether quiet, and you send a messenger from your head. Now, someone should be sitting by your side and when you reach the place and open the door and pull out the manuscript (or whatever you like to call it), you begin, instead of reading only with your eyes that are absent, to describe what you see. You acquire the habit of speaking aloud and as you go on observing up there, you speak here. You narrate precisely your journey through those vast halls and how you reached that place and how it had a small mark that was the sign of what you wanted to see. Then you open that little place and pull out the scroll and start reading." (CWM 5: 279–280)

90.

"It [supermind] seeks, looks, and if there is any receptivity anywhere, it intensifies its action. It does not see men in their outward appearance but as vibrations more or less receptive and more or less dark or luminous, and wherever it sees a light it projects its force so that it may have its full effect. … And at times someone comes to you with ready-made words which he has learnt generally from books, but

nevertheless, full of aspiration and goodwill, and he is answered by a strong rebuff and told that he should try to be sincere—he does not understand. This is because the Force sees that there is no sincerity—the Force does not see the words, does not hear the words, doesn't even see the ideas in the head but only the state of consciousness, whether the state of consciousness is sincere or not. There are other instances of people who seem to be quite frivolous and stupid and busy with useless things, and suddenly one helps them, encourages them, treats them like friends and comrades, for one sees shining in the depth of all that a sincerity, an aspiration which may have a childish form outwardly but which is there and very pure at times. And so one does many things for them which people don't understand, for they cannot see the reality behind the appearance. That is why I say that it is in an entirely different way that the supermind is interested, an entirely different way that it sees, an entirely different way that it knows." (CWM 5: 301–302)

91.

"But before the progress is coherent, total, there must be an inner organisation of life, different from that of Nature, arranged in accordance with a plan. For Nature—her plan is only made with an aspiration, a decision and a goal. And the road seems quite fantastic, following the impulses of every minute —trials, set-backs, contradictions, progress

and demolition of what has already been done; and it is such a chaos that one can understand nothing there. She has the air of somebody doing things impulsively—giving out certain impulses and destroying them, beginning others again, and going on and on like that. She makes and unmakes, she remakes and again demolishes, she mixes, destroys, constructs and all this at the same time. It is incomprehensible. And yet, she evidently has a plan, and herself goes towards a certain goal which is very clear to her but quite veiled to human consciousness....” (CWM 5: 335)

92.

“*In Savitri the ‘Mother of Sorrows’ says:*

‘Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace.’ Savitri, Book VII, Canto 4

Ah! that, that is the human consciousness. It is the human consciousness. It is the idea of the human consciousness that when all suffering will be over, well, ‘I shall sleep’. It is indeed of this that Sri Aurobindo speaks. When there is this aspiration for a supreme peace, one feels that if there were a *pralaya* and the world disappeared, well, at least there would be peace. But the phrase itself is self-contradictory, for if there were a *pralaya*, there would be

no more peace to be felt—there would be nothing at all any longer!

But this is just one of the contradictions of the human consciousness: 'As long as the world is there and suffering there, I shall suffer with the world. But if ever the world enters into peace, disappears in the peace of Non-Being, then I too shall rest.' It is a poetic way of saying that as long as misery is there in the world, I shall suffer with the world. Only when it ceases to be there, it shall cease for me also'." (CWM 5: 389)

93.

"… so too the state of consciousness in which the parents are at the moment of conception gives a sort of stamp to the child, which it will reflect throughout its life. So, these are apparently such little things—the mood of the moment, the moment's aspiration or degradation, anything whatsoever, everything that takes place at a particular moment—it seems to be so small a thing, and it has so great a consequence: it brings into the world a child who is incomplete or wicked or finally a failure. And people are not aware of that.

Later, when the child behaves nastily, they scold it. But they should begin by scolding themselves, telling themselves: 'In what a horrible state of consciousness I must have been when I brought that child into the world.' For it is truly that." (CWM 5: 412)

94.

"*How can depressions be controlled?*

Oh! There's a very simple way. Depression occurs generally in the vital, and one is overpowered by depression only when one keeps the consciousness in the vital, when one remains there. The only thing to do is to get out of the vital and enter a deeper consciousness. Even the higher mind, the luminous, highermind, the most lofty thoughts have the power to drive away depression. Even when one reaches just the highest domains of thought, usually the depression disappears. But in any case, if one seeks shelter in the psychic, then there is no longer any room for depression.

Depression may come from two causes: either from a want of vital satisfaction or from a considerable nervous fatigue in the body. Depression arising from physical fatigue is set right fairly easily: one has but to take rest. One goes to bed and sleeps until one feels well again, or else one rests, dreams, lies down. The want of vital satisfaction comes up rather easily and usually one must face it with one's reason, must ferret out the cause of the depression, what has brought about the lack of satisfaction in the vital; and then one looks at it straight in the face and asks oneself whether that indeed has anything to do with one's inner aspiration or whether it is simply quite an ordinary movement. Generally one discovers that it has

nothing to do with the inner aspiration and one can quite easily overcome it and resume one's normal movement. If that is not enough, then one must go deeper and deeper until one touches the psychic reality. Then one has only to put this psychic reality in contact with the movement of depression, and instantaneously it will vanish into thin air.

As for fighting in the vital domain itself—well, some people are good fighters and love to struggle with their vital—but to tell you the truth, that is much more difficult. (CWM 6: 32–33)

95.

"If the aspiration and surrender are total, it is done automatically. But you must see to it that they are total; and besides, as I was saying just now, you become very clearly aware of it, for the moment they are not total, you are no longer happy. You feel uneasy, very miserable, dejected, a bit unhappy: 'Things are not quite pleasant today. They are the same as they were yesterday; yesterday they were marvellous, today they are not pleasing!'—Why? Because yesterday you were in a perfect state of surrender, more or less perfect—and today you aren't any more. So, what was so beautiful yesterday is no longer beautiful today. That joy you had within you, that confidence, the assurance that all will be well and the great Work will be accomplished, that certitude—all this, you see, has become veiled, has been replaced by a kind of doubt

and, yes, by a discontent: 'Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant'." (CWM 6: 215)

96.

"*Mother, you said there are very few, one in a million perhaps, who are really conscious.*

Oh, if you take humanity at large, certainly! And the great mass of mankind will never become individuals, it will always be an amorphous mass, all intermingled, like that (*gesture*). To become an individual is what Sri Aurobindo calls becoming truly a mental man. Well, if you have read *The Human Cycle*, you will see that already it is not so easy to become a truly mental man who thinks by himself, is free from all outer influences, who has an individuality, who exists, has his reality; even that is not so easy.

But, by a kind of Grace, it can happen that before becoming an individual, if someone has within himself an aspiration, if he feels the need to awaken to something which would want more, want something better, which feels how very small it is to be an individual, something which really seeks beyond the ordinary limits, well, even before becoming an individual, he may suddenly have the experience of a contact with his psychic which opens all the doors for him. They close again later, but once they have opened you never forget it. The remembrance

remains very vividly; and this helps. It should happen to you here." (CWM 6: 333)

97.

"Now, when people are divided in their mind, and in one part of their mind aspire for the truth and transformation and in another don't want them, and not only resist but revolt—which happens often—this indeed creates a terrible inner cerebral struggle, first mental and then cerebral, and this may bring about a serious mental imbalance.

There are cases in which it is precisely the opening to a suggestion, an adverse influence, an opening which is the result of a wrong movement—a movement of revolt or of hatred or of violent desire. One can, in a wrong movement, open oneself—in a rage, for example—one can open to an adverse force and bring in an influence which could end up by a possession. At the beginning these things are relatively easy to cure if there is a conscious part of the being and a very strong will to get rid of this bad movement and this influence. One succeeds easily enough, relatively speaking, if the aspiration is sincere; but if one looks on the thing with complacency and tells oneself, 'Ah, it is like that, it can't be otherwise', then this becomes dangerous. One must not tolerate the enemy in the place. As soon as one notices his presence, one must throw him out very far, as far as one can, pitilessly." (CWM 6: 437–438)

98.

"I think that those who have dreams, what they call dreams, and who are conscious of them, are in a much better position; even if their dreams are not very beautiful, they are in a much more favourable condition than those who are quite unconscious. Because once one has left his body, whether one is conscious or unconscious, whether one is developed or not, one always goes out into the same domain to begin with—unless one is a yogi who can do what he likes with himself, but that, you know, is so rare a case that one can't consider it. All men when they leave their body are flung into a domain of the lower vital which has nothing particularly pleasant about it.

And strange, there is still another thing I was speaking about today.

The most important thing in this case is the last state of consciousness in which one was while both were joined together, when the vital being and the body were still united. So the last state of consciousness, one may say the last desire or the last hope or the last aspiration, has a colossal importance for the first impact the being has with the invisible world. And here the responsibility of the people around the dying man is much greater than they think. If they can help him to enter his highest consciousness, they will do him the greatest service they can. But usually what they do is to cling to him as much as they can, and to pull him towards them with a fierce

selfishness; the result, you see, is that instead of being able to withdraw in a slightly higher consciousness which will protect him in his exit, he is gripped by material things and it is a terrible inner battle to free himself from both his body and his attachments. (CWM 6: 449)

99.

"But if you want to unite with the supramental Force which wants to come down, you have the feeling of gathering all your aspiration and making it rise up in a vertical ascent to the higher forces which have to descend." (CWM 7: 266)

100.

"So if each one who comes, comes with a kind of trust, of inner opening, and is ready to receive what is given, and naturally is not dispersed... there are people there who pass their time looking at what is happening, what the others are doing; and in this way they don't have much chance to receive anything very much... but if one comes concentrated on what he can receive and is as quiet as possible, and as though he were open to receive something, as though he were opening his consciousness, like this (*gesture*) to receive something—if one has a particular difficulty or problem, one can put it in an aspiration, but it is not very necessary, because usually between what people think about themselves and the condition in which they are, there is always a little

difference, in the sense that it's not quite the thing; their way of feeling or seeing the thing creates a little deformation, so I am obliged to cross over their deformation; whereas if they don't think about anything, if they are simply like this (*gesture*), open and awaiting the Force—I go straight in and what has to be done I do. And that's the moment when I know exactly, you see, I do this (*gesture*), quite slowly—from above I see very well, very well—exactly the condition in which each one is. That's the morning's work. (CWM 7: 254)

101.

"*Sweet Mother, when we concentrate on one of your photos— there are many photos, each one with a different expression—does it make a difference for us, the one on which we concentrate?*

If you do it purposely, yes, of course. If you choose this photo for a particular reason or that other one for another reason, surely. It has an effect. It is as though you were choosing to concentrate on one aspect of the Mother rather than another; for example, if you choose to concentrate on Mahakali or Mahalakshmi or on Maheshwari, the results will be different. That part of you which answers to these qualities will awaken and become receptive. So, it is the same thing. But somebody who has only one photo, whichever it may be, and concentrates, without choosing

this one or that, because he has only one, then it is of no importance which one it is. For the fact of concentrating on the photograph puts one in contact with the Force, and that is what is necessary in the case of everyone who responds automatically.

It is only when the person who concentrates puts a special will, with a special relation, into his concentration that it has an effect. Otherwise the relation is more general, and it is always the expression of the need or the aspiration of the person who concentrates. If he is absolutely neutral, if he does not choose, does not aspire for any particular thing, if he comes like this, like a white page and absolutely neutral, then it is the forces and aspects he needs which will answer to the concentration and perhaps even the person himself will not know what particular things he needs, because very few people are conscious of themselves. They live in a vague feeling, they have a vague aspiration and it is almost unseizable; it is not something organised, coordinated and willed, with a clear vision, for example, of the difficulties one wants to overcome or the capacities one wants to acquire; this, usually, is already the result of a fairly advanced discipline. One must have reflected much, observed much, studied much in order to be able to know exactly what he needs. Otherwise it is something hazy, this impression: one tries to catch it and it escapes...” (CWM 7: 271–272)

102.

"*Is there a relation, Sweet Mother, between concentration and contemplation?*

There can always be a relation between everything, but usually one means by contemplation a kind of opening upwards. It is rather a state of passive opening upwards. It is a fairly passive form of aspiration. One makes this movement rather like something opening, opening in an aspiration; but if the contemplation is sufficiently total, it becomes a concentration. Yet it is not necessarily a concentration." (CWM 7: 273–274)

103.

"*Sweet Mother, how should one choose one's books?*

It would be better to ask someone who knows. If you ask someone who, at least, has taste and some knowledge of literature, he won't make you read badly written books. Now, if you want to read something which helps you from the spiritual point of view, that's another matter, you must ask someone who has a spiritual realisation to help you.

You see, there are two very different lines; they can converge because everything can be made to converge; but as I said, there are two lines really very different. One is a perpetual choice, not only of what one reads but of what one does, of what one thinks, of all one's activities,

of strictly doing only what can help you on the spiritual path; it does not necessarily have to be very narrow and limited, but it must be on a little higher plane than the ordinary life, and with a concentration of will and aspiration which does not allow any wandering on the path, going here and there uselessly. This is austere; it is difficult to take up this when one is very young, because one feels that the instrument that he is has not been sufficiently formed or is not rich enough to be allowed to remain what it is without growing and progressing. So, generally speaking, except for a very small number, it comes later, after a certain development and some experience of life. The other path is that of as complete, as integral a development as possible of all human faculties, of all that one carries in himself, all one's possibilities, then, spreading out as widely as possible in all directions, in order to fill one's consciousness with all human possibilities, to know the world and life and men and their work as it now is, to create a vast and rich base for the future ascent." (CWM 7: 308–309)

104.

"… I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without attaching any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to you about 'Bonjour', 'Good Day', didn't I? When people meet and say 'Bonjour', they do so

mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying 'Good Day' which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: 'Ah! I hope he has a good day', without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, 'Good Day', you make it more concrete and more effective.

It's the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and says bad things to people. This can do them as much harm—more harm sometimes—than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction". (CWM 7: 343)

105.

"*Can the being who is chosen by the Divine know it from his very birth?*

Even before his birth.

Perhaps his birth is the result of this choice; generally it is like that. But at any time at all in his life this can happen. Yet for those who are predestined it is before birth; usually they come to earth with an intention and a specific purpose.

You would like to know very much if this has happened to you, yes? *(Laughter*) Well, try—try to find out: have this inner aspiration, concentrate, and then try. If you get a result, tell me; I shall tell you if it is right." (CWM 8: 28)

106.

"There was a very old tradition, very, very old, even older than the Vedic tradition here, which said, 'If twelve men of goodwill unite and call the Divine, the Divine is obliged to come.' Well, perhaps this is a truth, perhaps a superstition. Perhaps it depends on the twelve men of goodwill and what they are. Perhaps it depends on other things also. If you ask me, I think that it probably happened like this, that in the beginning twelve men gathered together—there happened to be twelve, perhaps they didn't even know why—and they were so united in their aspiration, an aspiration so intense and powerful, that they received the response. But to say, 'If twelve men of goodwill unite in an aspiration, they are sure to make the Divine descend' is a superstition.

In fact, things must have happened like that, and the person who noted it put it down carefully: 'If twelve men of goodwill unite their aspiration, the Divine is obliged to come.' And since then, I can tell you that a considerable number of groups of twelve men have united in a common aspiration... and they did not bring down the Divine! But

all the same the tradition has been left intact." (CWM 8: 93)

107.

"*Mother, when we come to you, we try to be at our best possible, that is, to have very good thoughts; but often, on the contrary, all the bad impulses, bad thoughts we had during the day come forward.*

That is perhaps so that you can get rid of them.

If they come, one can offer them and ask to be rid of them.

That perhaps is the reason, it is because the Consciousness acts for purification. It is no use at all hiding things and pushing them behind, like this, and imagining they are not there because one has put a veil in front. It is much better to see oneself as one is—provided one is ready to give up this way of being. If you come allowing all the bad movements to rise to the surface, to show themselves; if you offer them, if you say, 'Well, this is how I am', and if at the same time you have the aspiration to be different, then this second of presence is extremely useful; you can, yes, in a few seconds receive the help you need to get rid of them; while if you come like a little saint and go away content, without having received anything, it is not very useful.

Automatically the Consciousness acts like that, it is like the ray that brings light where there wasn't any. Only,what is needed is to be in a state where one *wants* to give up the thing, to get rid of it—not to cling to it and keep it. If one sincerely wants to pull it out of oneself, make it disappear, then it is very useful." (CWM 8: 308)

108.

"*Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way." How is it possible to fuse into one all these views?*

It is not in the mental consciousness that these things can be harmonised and synthesised. For this it is necessary to rise above and find the idea behind the thought. Sri Aurobindo shows here, for example, what each of these religions represents in human effort, aspiration and realisation. Instead of taking these religions in their outward forms which are precisely dogmas and intellectual conceptions, if we take them in their spirit, in the principle they represent, there is no difficulty in unifying them. They are simply different aspects of human progress which complete each other perfectly well and should be united with many others yet to form a more total and more complete progress, a more perfect understanding of life, a

more integral approach to the Divine. And even this unification which already demands a return to the Spirit behind things, is not enough; there must be added to it a vision of the future, the goal towards which humanity is moving, the future realisation of the world, that last 'spiritual revolution' Sri Aurobindo speaks about, which will open a new age, that is, the supramental revolution. In the supramental consciousness all these things are no longer contradictory or exclusive. They all become complementary. It is only the mental form which divides. What this mental form represents should be united to what all the other mental forms represent in order to make a harmonious whole. And that is the essential difference between a religion and the true spiritual life." (CWM 9: 77–78)

109.

"And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of intellectual realisation, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and super-human. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual life, all spiritual aspiration. One can be a genius without having any spiritual aspiration. One can have all

the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life. And even, usually, those who have a very great power of human realisation are satisfied—more or less satisfied—with their condition." (CWM 9: 92)

110.

"As soon as there is a faculty of thought, there is necessarily an aspiration for something higher than the most brutal daily existence from minute to minute, and this is what gives the energy and possibility of living.

… We can say that without some expression of this aspiration for the Unknown and the highest, human existence would be very difficult. If there were not at the heart of every being the hope of something better—of whatever kind—he would have difficulty in finding the energy needed to go on living." (CWM 9: 355)

111.

"Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not 'finding' by reasoning, it is 'finding' by aspiration; it is not by study and analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening." (CWM 9: 406)

112.

"It might be said that what is called 'spirit' is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace

so that it may awaken to the consciousness of its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as 'spirit'. All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to go—this is what man has called 'spirit'. It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen." (CWM 9: 429)

113.

"*Is there really nothing ugly and repellent in the world? Is it our reason alone that sees things in that way?*

To understand truly what Sri Aurobindo means here, you must yourself have had the experience of transcending reason and establishing your consciousness in a world higher than the mental intelligence. For from up there you can see, firstly, that everything that exists in the universe is an expression of Sachchidananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) and therefore behind any appearance whatever, if you go deeply enough, you can perceive Sachchidananda,

which is the principle of Supreme Beauty. Secondly, you see that everything in the manifested universe is relative, so much so that there is no beauty which may not appear ugly in comparison with a greater beauty, no ugliness which may not appear beautiful in comparison with a yet uglier ugliness.

When you can see and feel in this way, you immediately become aware of the extreme relativity of these impressions and their unreality from the absolute point of view. However, so long as we dwell in the rational consciousness, it is, in a way, natural that everything that offends our aspiration for perfection, our will for progress, everything we seek to transcend and surmount, should seem ugly and repellent to us, since we are in search of a greater ideal and we want to rise higher.

And yet it is still only a half-wisdom which is very far from the true wisdom, a wisdom that appears wise only in the midst of ignorance and unconsciousness.

In the Truth everything is different, and the Divine shines in all things." (CWM 10: 45–46)

114.

"He [Sri Aurobindo] himself used to say that when he was in possession of the supramental power, when he could use it at will and focus it on a specific point with a definite purpose, it was irrevocable, inevitable: the effect was absolute. That can be called a miracle.

For example, take someone who was sick or in pain; when Sri Aurobindo was in possession of this supramental power— there was a time when he said that it was completely under his control, that is, he could do what he wanted with it, he could apply it where he liked—then he would apply this Will, for example, to some disorder, either physical or vital or, of course, mental—he would apply this force of greater harmony, of greater order, this supramental force, and focus it there, and it would act immediately. And it was an order: it created an order, a harmony greater than the natural harmony. That is, if it was a case of healing, for example, the healing would be more perfect and more complete than any obtained by ordinary physical and mental methods.

There were a great many of them. But people are so blind, so embedded in their ordinary consciousness that they always give "explanations", they can always give an explanation. Only those who have faith and aspiration and something very pure in themselves, that is, who truly want to know, they were able to perceive it.

When the Power was there, he even used to say that it was effortless; all he had to do was to apply this supramental power of order and harmony and instantly the desired result was achieved." (CWM 10: 159–160)

115.

"A nation is not made by a common blood, a common tongue or a common religion; these are only important helps and powerful conveniences. But wherever communities of men not bound by family ties are united in one sentiment and aspiration to defend a common inheritance from their ancestors or assure a common future for their posterity, there a nation is already in existence." On Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWM 10: 307)

116.

"With the present morality of the human race a sound and durable human unity is not yet possible; but there is no reason why a temporary approximation to it should not be the reward of strenuous aspiration and untiring effort. By constant approximations and by partial realisations and temporary successes Nature advances. On Thoughts and Aphorisms

As Sri Aurobindo has predicted, things are moving fast, and the situation of humanity has changed much since Sri Aurobindo began to work in the subtle physical: the idea of human unity has made great headway and is more widely understood." (CWM 10: 307–308)

117.

"To the Divine Vision, all sincere human aspirations are acceptable, whatever diversity or even apparent contradiction there may be in their forms.

And all of them together are not enough to express the Divine Reality." (CWM 10: 345)

118.

"*What should be done so that Mother can act in the class?*

There is nothing, no method, no process, which is bad in itself; everything depends on the spirit in which it is done.

If you want my help, it is not by accepting one principle of action and rejecting another that you can have it, but by concentrating before the class, by establishing silence and peace in your heart (and in your head too, if possible) and *by calling my presence* with a sincere aspiration that I should be behind all your actions, not in the way you think that I would act (for that can only be an arbitrary opinion and therefore necessarily wrong), but in silence and calm and inner spontaneity. This is the only true way of getting out of your difficulty.

And until you are able to achieve this, do your best quietly and perseveringly, according to your own capacities and the circumstances, with simplicity and without tormenting yourself.

The Grace is always there with anyone who wishes to do well." (CWM 12: 333–334)

119.

From the Play written by the Mother '*Towards the Future*'

"Women who are sensitive and sincere have the right to freely choose the person who will be their protector and guide in life. You have acted according to the natural law and all is well. Our way of looking at things and our behaviour may surprise you; they are new to you and you do not know the reasons for them. (*Pointing to the Poet*) He will explain them to you. I am going away, but before I go let me join your hands. (*She places the hand of the Clairvoyant in the hand of the Poet*.) No blessing can ever be equal to the blessing of love. And yet I shall give you mine, knowing that it will be dear to you. And if you permit, I shall add some advice which is almost a request. Do not allow your union to serve as an excuse for the satisfaction of animal appetites or sensual desires. On the contrary, make it a means of mutual support so that you may transcend yourselves in a constant aspiration and an effort for progress towards the growing perfection of your being. May your association be both noble and generous, noble in quality, generous in action. Be an example to the world and show all men of goodwill the true aim of human life." (CWM 12: 469)

120.

"I have never noticed anything bad in you when you come for pranam. Your aspiration is very clear and I always answer it. Do not worry about what other people may say—I am entirely satisfied with you and my blessings are always with you." (CWM 13: 87)

121.

"You are quite conscious of the aspiration and the aim of your soul; you are quite conscious of what your soul wants you and expects you to become. It is only some consequences of this present physical formation that stand in the way, and now, it is only a steady and patient working out of these impediments that can solve the difficulty.

So, from the yoga point of view, any 'taking leave' would be a kind of 'giving way' to the obstinacy of the resistance. This, for me, is quite clear." (CWM 13: 142)

122.

"The three types of examination are: those set by the forces of Nature, those set by spiritual and divine forces, and those set by hostile forces. These last are the most deceptive in their appearance and to avoid being caught unawares and unprepared requires a state of constant watchfulness, sincerity and humility.

The most commonplace circumstances, the events of everyday life, the most apparently insignificant people and

things all belong to one or other of these three kinds of examiners. In this vast and complex organisation of tests, those events that are generally considered the most important in life are the easiest examinations to undergo, because they find you ready and on your guard. It is easier to stumble over the little stones in your path, because they attract no attention.

Endurance and plasticity, cheerfulness and fearlessness are the qualities specially needed for the examinations of physical nature.

Aspiration, trust, idealism, enthusiasm and generous self-giving, for spiritual examinations.

Vigilance, sincerity and humility for the examinations from hostile forces.

And do not imagine that there are on the one hand people who undergo the examinations and on the other people who set them. Depending on the circumstances and the moment we are all both examiners and examinees, and it may even happen that one is at the same time both examiner and examinee. And the benefit one derives from this depends, both in quality and in quantity, on the intensity of one's aspiration and the awakening of one's consciousness.

To conclude, a final piece of advice: never set yourself up as an examiner. For while it is good to remember constantly that one may be undergoing a very important examination, it is extremely dangerous to

imagine that one is responsible for setting examinations for others. That is the open door to the most ridiculous and harmful kinds of vanity. It is the Supreme Wisdom which decides these things, and not the ignorant human will." (CWM 14: 42–43)

123.

"Integral harmony: harmony between things, harmony between people, harmony of circumstances and above all harmony of all aspiration directed towards the Supreme Truth." (CWM 14: 184)

124.

"Hypocrisy and pretension are the homage ignorance pays to the truth.

Hypocrisy and pretension are the first signs of the inconscient's aspiration towards consciousness." (CWM 14: 194)

125.

"When we have to work collectively, it is always better to insist, in our thoughts, feelings and actions, on the points of agreement rather than on the points of divergence.

We must give importance to the things that unite and ignore, as much as possible, those that separate.

Even when physically the lines of work differ, the union can remain intact and constant if we keep always in

mind the essential points and principles which unite, and the Divine Goal, the Realisation which must be the one unchanging object of our aspiration and works." (CWM 14: 313)

126.

(A sadhak wrote that devotees were performing ceremonies much like the worship of deities in front of the photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Stating that for proper worship there should be a bija-mantra [seed-mantra] to invoke the deity, he asked whether there was such a mantra for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Mother replied:)

I always advise to let the mantra rise from the depth of the heart as a sincere aspiration." (CWM 15: 32–33)

127.

"*When we have to answer specific questions on such matters as Bank Nationalisation, Privy Purses, Press Bill etc., then, unless we have had already direct and specific replies from Sri Aurobindo or You, our answer has been that all these actions are only arrangements on the surface and, therefore, by themselves cannot solve the basic problems they try to solve. It is only by a change of consciousness or, at least, by the aspiration for the truth and the resultant opening to a change of consciousness*

that such specific problems can be really solved. Because whatever is the form of any arrangement or scheme, it has to be implemented by people. If the people continue to remain in darkness and falsehood, then no arrangement or scheme, however fine it may appear to be, can succeed.

So, there is only one solution to all problems; that given by You—to obey the Eternal Truth alone and live according to Truth.

Is this answer correct and sufficient?

Yes. True." (CWM 15: 57)

128.

(Message for the inauguration of a house)

"Let this new house be filled with an ardent aspiration for the Divine Realisation and, in answer to the call, the Divine Presence will be there." (CWM 15: 206)

129.

"First of all, what maintains the relation with the earth is not only vital desire but any specifically human movement, and affections certainly form part of this. One is bound to the necessity of reincarnation as much by one's affections, by one's feelings, as by one's desires. However, in the matter of reincarnation as in all things, each case has its own solution, and it is certain that a constant aspiration for

liberation from rebirth, together with a sustained effort towards the elevation and sublimation of the consciousness, should have the result of severing the chain of earthly existences, although it does not for all that put an end to individual existence, which is prolonged in another world. But why think that his existence in another, more ethereal world should be the 'following state' which, relative to man, would be what man is to the animal? It seems to me more logical to think (and a deeper knowledge confirms this certitude) that the following state too will be a physical one, although we may conceive of this physical as magnified, transfigured by the descent, the infusion of Light and Truth. All the ages and millennia of human life that have elapsed so far have prepared the advent of this *new state*, and now the time has come for its concrete and tangible realisation. That is the very essence of Sri Aurobindo's teaching, the aim of the group he has allowed to form around him, the purpose of his Ashram." (CWM 15: 244–245)

130.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I admit that I have much to learn from X. I bow to Sweet Mother in X. Make our relationship one through which I may benefit and come to know you.

I appreciate this attitude and this effort. It proves the sincerity of your aspiration. But I did not have that particular point in mind—I was speaking in a much more general way. All of you, in your relationships with one another, have much to change and much to learn." (CWM 16: 37)

131.

"*My dear Mother,*

This morning You gave me a flower which signifies 'Consciousness turned towards the supramental Light'. What does this mean? I don't understand.

If you put 'Divine' instead of 'supramental', does that make it clearer to you?

It means the consciousness that is not filled with the activities and influences of ordinary life, but is concentrated in an aspiration towards the divine light, force, knowledge, joy.

Now do you understand?" (CWM 16: 79)

132.

"*If I find some solace in books, how can I say that nothing sustains me and that I am plunged in the divine life through an absolute emptiness?*

'The absolute emptiness' is more of an image than a reality. It is better to keep in one's heart a high aspiration rather than an obscure somnolence." (CWM 16: 170)

133.

"It is not this person or that who attracts you... it is the eternal feminine in the lower nature which attracts the eternal masculine in the lower nature and creates an illusion in the mind; it is the great play, obscure and semi-conscious, of the forces of unillumined nature; and as soon as one succeeds in escaping from its blind and violent whirlwind, one finds very quickly that all desires and all attractions vanish; only the ardent aspiration for the Divine remains." (CWM 16: 174)

134.

"*Sweet Mother,*

What do you give us in the morning at the balcony, and what should we try to do in order to receive what you are giving?

Every morning at the balcony, after establishing a conscious contact with each of those who are present, I identify myself with the Supreme Lord and dissolve myself completely in Him. Then my body, completely passive, is nothing but a channel through which the Lord passes His forces freely and pours upon all His Light, His

Consciousness and His Joy, according to each one's receptivity.

The best way to receive what He gives is to come to the balcony with trust and aspiration and to keep oneself as *calm and quiet* as one can in a *silent and passive state of expectation*. If one has something precise to ask, it is better to ask it *beforehand*, not while I am there, because any activity lessens the receptivity." (CWM 16: 228–229)

135.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Today I did not have that feeling of apprehension about coming to You, but I was in a passive state. I want, on the contrary, to feel an intense joy, a moment of ecstasy. How can I obtain it?

Come with the aspiration to give yourself, to offer your whole being, without reserve, to the Divine Grace, and you will feel the felicity for which you aspire." (CWM 16: 262)

136.

Will and in force of consciousness can be acquired if one is sincere in one's aspiration

"*Sweet Mother,*

We know that we should not do certain things and we do not really want to do them, but still we do them. Why does this happen? How can we avoid it?

That's how it is when one is lacking in will and in force of consciousness.

Both of these can be acquired if one is sincere in one's aspiration." (CWM 16: 327)

137.

"One thirsts for a certain perfection, perhaps even to transcend oneself, to arrive at something higher than what one is; if one is a philanthropist, one has an aspiration that mankind should become better, or less unhappy, less miserable; all sorts of things like that." (CWM 16: 340)

138.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I have the impression that Your Force responds according to the intensity of our prayer. But my case seems to be different. Or am I not conscious of my prayers? Or is everything done for me, for my good, in spite of Myself?

It is always that way for everyone. The difference lies in each one's state of consciousness. Some are entirely conscious of what is done for them. Those who make an effort become conscious of the answer they receive, and there are those whose aspiration is sufficiently strong and sincere for them to be constantly conscious of the help they are given." (CWM 16: 354)

139.

"*Aswapathy was very fortunate. For him,*

'Each day was a spiritual romance,...

Each happening was a deep experience.' [Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book I, Canto 3.]

This possibility is open to all whose aspiration is fervent." (CWM 16: 385)

140.

"In this way the more one spends the more one receives, and one becomes an inexhaustible channel rather than a vessel that empties itself by giving.

It is through steadfast aspiration that one learns." (CWM 16: 431)

141.

"*Today is my birthday. I want this day to be the beginning of a more spiritual life and therefore something has to be done. Please tell me what I must do.*

It is not with the mind that one should decide what has to be done. It should be a spontaneous movement taking place in a sincere and constant aspiration." (CWM 17: 169)

142.

"I have asked the Supreme Lord to help you to find Him, and I am ready to give you a moment every day to help you to make this discovery.

All I ask is that you try to remain silent during the time we are concentrating together.

If you can relax and feel at ease, it will be very good; if you can enter into the silence, that will be perfect. Every day we shall begin with the prayer: 'Grant that I may become conscious of Your presence'; and together we shall aspire for a moment in the silence and ardour of our aspiration." (CWM 17: 372–373)

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