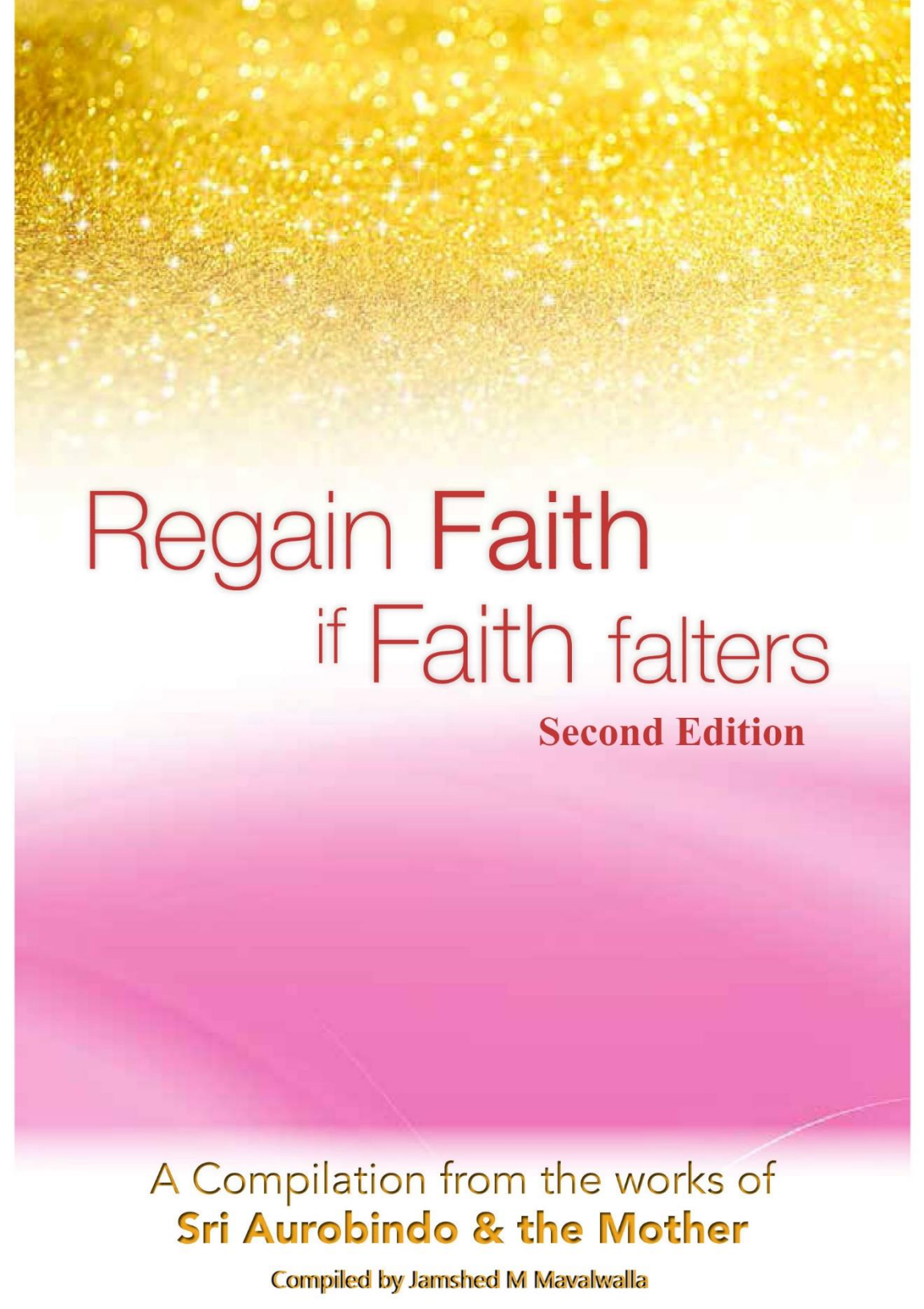




Regain Faith if Faith falters

Second Edition

A Compilation from the works of
Sri Aurobindo & the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Regain Faith if Faith Falters

Second 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

This compilation, *Regain Faith if Faith Falters*, is the third book in the series of books on Faith. To know what Faith really means, it is recommended that the reader refer to the first book, *Fundamental Faith Required in Yoga*, and to understand the importance of Faith in Yoga, please refer to the second book, *Faith Precedes Spiritual Experience*.

The Mother 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 gain an understanding of how to regain faith when faith falters. The headings are intended to guide the reader towards a clearer and deeper understanding. However, it is important to read the quotations themselves, for the words of Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother are infused with a consciousness infinitely higher than our own.

Therefore, reading these quotations will help the reader not only to understand how to regain faith but, most importantly, to elevate one's 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 have also been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

"This *śraddhā* ... is in reality an influence from the supreme Spirit ... a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is ... the inner soul ..." (CWSA 24: 774)

"Faith is a spiritual certitude of the spiritual, the divine, the soul's ideal, something that clings to that even when it is not fulfilled in life, even when the immediate facts or the persistent circumstances seem to deny it." (CWSA 29: 89–90)

"... faith is only a will aiming at greater truth ..." (CWSA 24: 733)

"I [Sri Aurobindo] mean by it [faith] a dynamic intuitive conviction in the inner being of the truth of supersensible things which cannot be proved by any physical evidence but which are a subject of experience." (CWSA 28: 347)

"The fundamental faith in Yoga is this, inherent in the soul, that the Divine exists and the Divine is the one thing to be followed after—nothing else in life is worth having in comparison with that." (CWSA 29: 93)

Contents

I—Faith Is Latent in Man's Nature	1
II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters	3
III—The Soul That Fails to Get Faith in the Higher Truth	24
IV—Have Faith, Do Not Be Afraid	29
V—Never Take Away Faith.....	33
VI—Faith and Doubt.....	35
VII—Reason and Faith.....	43
VIII—From <i>Prayers and Meditation</i> on Faith	46
IX—From <i>Thoughts and Aphorisms</i> on Faith	52
X—Other Quotations on Faith	55
Other Comprehensive Compilations by Jamshed M. Mavalwalla	77

I—Faith Is Latent in Man's Nature

1.

"Pranayam and Asans, concentration, worship, ceremonies, religious practice are not themselves Yoga but only a means towards Yoga. Nor is Yoga a difficult or dangerous path, it is safe and easy to all who take refuge with the Inner Guide and Teacher. All men are potentially capable of it, for there is no man who has not strength or faith or love developed or latent in his nature, and any one of these is a sufficient staff for the Yogin. All cannot, indeed, reach in a single life the highest in this path, but all can go forward; and in proportion as a man advances he gets peace, strength and joy. And even a little of this *dharma* delivers man or nation out of great fear." (CWSA 13: 11–12)

2.

"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

I—Faith Is Latent in Man's Nature

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)

II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters

1.

“If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure ... But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence.” (CWSA 23: 245)

2.

“And yet faith is necessary throughout and at every step because it is a needed assent of the soul and without this assent there can be no progress. Our faith must first be abiding in the essential truth and principles of the Yoga, and even if this is clouded in the intellect, despondent in the heart, outwearied and exhausted by constant denial and failure in the desire of the vital mind, there must be something in the innermost soul which clings and returns to it, otherwise we may fall on the path or abandon it from weakness and inability to bear temporary defeat, disappointment, difficulty and peril. In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in the

face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradicting events and powers who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible." (CWSA 24: 773)

3.

"You speak of your possible unfitness, but it is not a question of fitness or unfitness. There is nobody who can go on in his own strength or by right of his fitness to the goal of the sadhana. It is only by the Divine Grace and reliance on the Divine Grace that it can be done. It is in a strength greater than your own that you must put your first and last reliance. If your faith falters you have to call on that to sustain you; if your force is insufficient against the ill-will and opposition that surround you, open yourself to receive that force in its place." (CWSA 29: 33–34)

"Q: Does the intervention of the Grace come through a call?"

A: 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." (CWM 5:366)

4.

"We must always aspire to be free from all ignorance and to have a true faith." (CWM 14: 73)

"What I want of you besides aspiring for faith? Well, just a little thoroughness and persistence in the method! Don't aspire for two days and then sink into the dumps, evolving a gospel of earthquake and Schopenhauer plus the jackal and all the rest of it. Give the Divine a full sporting chance." (CWSA 29: 115)

"You must aspire especially for quietness, peace, a calm faith, an increasing steady wideness, for more and more knowledge, for a deep and intense but quiet devotion." (CWSA 31: 124)

"Q: How can I have more and more faith and calm, Mother?"

A: Aspiration and will." (CWM 14: 76)

"Q: What are the conditions in which there is a descent of faith?"

II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters

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." (CWM 6: 403)

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." (CWM 6: 121)

6.

"It is possible for anyone to attain to a complete and living faith in the Divine if he has the sincere will to do so, even though he may not be sattwic in his nature; but, if he is sattwic, it will be easier for him—he will not be hampered by doubts and revolts such as afflict the rajasic man on his way." (CWSA 29: 98)

7.

"Turn from these dark thoughts and look to the Mother only, not with impatience for the result and desire, but with trust and confidence and let her workings bring you quietude and the renewal of the progress towards the psychic opening and realisation. That will bring surely and

without doubt the fuller faith and the love which you seek.” (CWSA 29: 34–35)

8.

“If you want to get back your faith and keep it, you must first quiet your mind and make it open and obedient to the Mother’s force. If you have an excited mind at the mercy of every influence and impulse, you will remain a field of conflicting and contrary forces and cannot progress. You will begin to listen to your own ignorance instead of the Mother’s knowledge and your faith will naturally disappear and you will get into a wrong condition and a wrong attitude.” (CWSA 32: 212)

9.

“The next process is to stand aside and watch the working of the divine power in yourself. This working is often attended with disturbance and trouble in the system, therefore faith is necessary, though perfect faith is not always possible at once; for whatever impurity is in you, harboured openly or secretly lurking, is likely to rise at first and be repeated so long as it is not exhaustively swept out, and doubt in this age is an almost universal impurity. But even when doubt assails, stand by and wait for it to pass, availing yourself if possible of the *satsaṅga* of those who are already advanced on the path, but when that is absent, still holding fast to the principle of the

II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters

yoga, self-surrender. When distressed within or assailed from without, remember the words of the Gita,

...

‘By giving thyself up in heart and mind to Me, thou shalt cross over all difficulties and perils by My grace,’ and again,

...

‘Abandon all *dharma*s (all law, rule, means and codes of every kind whether formed by previous habit and belief or imposed from outside) and take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver thee from all sin and evil,—do not grieve.’ ‘I will deliver’,—you have not to be troubled or struggle yourself as if the responsibility were yours or the result depended on your efforts, a mightier than you is busy with the matter. Neither disease nor calamity nor the rising of sin and impurity in you should cause any alarm. Hold fast only to him. ‘I will deliver thee from all sin and evil.’ But the release does not come by a sudden miracle, it comes by a process of purification and these things are a part of the process. They are like the dust that rises in clouds when a room long uncleaned is at last swept out. Though the dust seem to choke you, yet persevere, *mā śucaḥ*.” (CWSA 13: 74–75)

10.

“Q: *Sweet Mother, can faith be increased by personal effort?*

A: 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)

11.

"It is quite sufficient if there is the firm and constant will towards faith and self-offering. It is understood that it is not possible for the human nature to be always without movements of doubt, obscurity or things not yet offered until the inner consciousness has sufficiently grown to make these impossible. It is because it is so that the will

is necessary so that the Force may work to remove these things with full consent and will of the mind and heart of the sadhak. To try to reject these things and make the will permanent is sufficient,—for it is this effort that brings eventually the permanence.” (CWSA 29: 98)

12.

“In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument, scepticism. *This* is where human effort must be put in: the refusal to admit them, the refusal to listen to them and still more the refusal to follow them. No game is more dangerous than playing mentally with doubt and scepticism. They are not only enemies, they are terrible pitfalls, and once one falls into them, it becomes tremendously difficult to pull oneself out.

Some people think it is a very great mental elegance to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict their faith; they think that this gives them a very superior attitude, that in this way they are above ‘superstitions’ and ‘ignorance’; but if you listen to suggestions of doubt and scepticism, *then* you fall into the grossest ignorance and stray away from the right path. You enter into confusion, error, a maze of contradictions.... You are not always sure you will be able to get out of it. You go so far away from the inner truth that you lose sight of it and sometimes lose too all possible contact with your soul.

II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters

Certainly a personal effort is needed to preserve one's faith, to let it grow within. Later—much later—one day, looking back, we may see that everything that happened, even what seemed to us the worst, was a Divine Grace to make us advance on the way; and then we become aware that the personal effort too was a grace. But before reaching that point, one has to advance much, to struggle much, sometimes even to suffer a great deal.

To sit down in inert passivity and say, 'If I am to have faith I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me', is an attitude of laziness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad-will.

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one doesn't feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and then, not years but lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal.

One must watch over one's faith as one watches over the birth of something *infinitely* precious, and protect it very carefully from everything that can impair it.

In the ignorance and darkness of the beginning, faith is the most direct expression of the Divine Power which comes to fight and conquer." (CWM 9: 351–352)

13.

“What I mean by the central faith is a faith in the soul or the central being behind, a faith which is there even when the mind doubts and the vital despairs and the physical wants to collapse, and after the attack is over, reappears and pushes on the path again. It may be strong and bright, it may be pale and in appearance weak, but if it persists each time in going on, it is the real thing. Fits of despair and darkness are a tradition in the path of sadhana—in all Yogas oriental and occidental they seem to have been the rule. I know all about them myself—but my experience has led me to the perception that they are an unnecessary tradition and could be dispensed with if one chose. That is why whenever they come in you or others I try to lift up before them the gospel of faith. If still they come, one has only to get through them as soon as possible and get back into the sun. Your dream of the sea was a perfectly true one—in the end the storm and swell do not prevent the arrival of the state of Grace in the sadhak and with it the arrival of the Grace itself. That I suppose is what something in you is always asking for—the suprarational miracle of Grace, something that is impatient of the demand for tapasya and self-perfection and long labour. Well, it can come, it has come to several here after years upon years of blank failure and difficulty or terrible internal struggles. But it comes usually in that way—as opposed to a slowly

developing Grace—after much difficulty and not at once. If you go on asking for it in spite of the apparent failure of response, it is sure to come.” (CWSA 29: 96)

14.

“... but the healing by faith in the cells is an actual fact and a law of Nature and has been demonstrated often enough even apart from Yoga. The way to get faith and everything else is to insist on having them and refuse to flag or despair or give up until one has them—it is the way by which everything has been got since this difficult world began to have thinking and aspiring creatures upon it. It is to open always, always to the Light and turn one’s back on the darkness. It is to refuse the voices that cry persistently, ‘You cannot, you shall not, you are incapable, you are the puppet of a dream’—for these are the enemy voices, they cut one off from the result that was coming by their strident clamour and then triumphantly point to the barrenness of result as a proof of their thesis. The difficulty of the endeavour is a known thing, but the difficult is not the impossible—it is the difficult that has always been accomplished and the conquest of difficulties makes up all that is valuable in the earth’s history. In the spiritual endeavour also it shall be so.” (CWSA 29: 100)

15.

"Pleasure is a deceptive and perverse disguise which turns us away from our goal and we certainly should not seek it if we are eager to find the truth. Pleasure vaporises us; it deceives us, leads us astray. Pain brings us back to a deeper truth by obliging us to concentrate in order to be able to bear it, be able to face this thing that crushes us. It is in pain that one most easily finds the true strength again, when one is strong. It is in pain that one most easily finds the true faith again, the faith in something which is above and beyond all pain." (CWM 9: 41–42)

16.

"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)

17.

“Even the mind’s questionings have been a groping after some justification by which it can get an excuse for believing in spite of its difficulties. The vital’s eagerness and its vairagya are shadows of this faith, forms which it has taken in order to keep the vital from giving up in spite of the pressure of despondency and struggle. Even in the mind and vital of the man of strongest mental and vital faith there are periods when the knowledge in the psychic gets covered up—but it persists behind the veil. In you the eclipse has been strong and long because, owing to certain mental and vital formations, the assent of the mind and vital got clouded over and could only take negative forms. But there is always the knowledge or intuition in the soul that started you on the way. I have been pressing on you the need of faith because the assent has again to take a positive form so as to give free way to the Divine Force; but the persistent drive in the soul (which is a hidden and externally suppressed faith) is itself sufficient to warrant the expectation of the Grace to come.” (CWSA 28: 350)

18.

"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." (CWSA 24: 693–694)

19.

"The imagination is like a knife which may be used for good or evil purposes. If you always dwell in the idea and feeling that you are going to be transformed, then you will help the process of the Yoga. If, on the contrary, you give in to dejection and bewail that you are not fit or that you are incapable of realisation, you poison your own being. It is just on account of this very important truth that I am so tirelessly insistent in telling you to let anything happen but, for heaven's sake, not to get depressed. Live rather in the constant hope and conviction that what we are doing will prove a success. In other words, let your imagination be moulded by your faith in Sri Aurobindo; for, is not such faith the very hope and conviction that the will of Sri Aurobindo is bound to

be done, that his work of transformation cannot but end in a supreme victory and that what he calls the supramental world will be brought down on earth and realised by us here and now?" (CWM 3: 157)

20.

"As for the Divine working, the experience of the Vedantic realisation is that behind the confused mixture of good and evil something is working that he realises as the Divine and in his own life he can look back and see what each step, happy or unhappy, meant for his progress and how it led towards the growth of his spirit. Naturally this comes fully as the realisation progresses; before that he had to walk by faith and may have often felt his faith fail and yielded to grief, doubt and despair for a time." (CWSA 29: 502)

"Q: 'To be always observing faults and wrong movements brings depression and discourages the faith.' How does it discourage the faith?"

A: The faith spoken about is faith in the divine Grace and the final success of the undertaking. You have begun the yoga and have faith that you will go through to the end of your yoga. But if you spend your time looking at all that prevents you from advancing, then finally you say, 'Ah, I shall never succeed! It is not possible. If it goes on in this

way, I shall never get there.’ So this is to lose one’s faith. One must always keep the faith that one is sure to succeed.

Many people begin, and then after some time come and tell you, ‘Oh, I shall never be able to go through. I have too many difficulties.’ So this means not having faith. If one has started, one begins with the faith that one will reach the goal. Well, this faith should be kept till the very end. Keeping one’s faith, one attains the end. But if in the middle of the road you turn back saying, ‘No, I can’t’, then, obviously you will not reach the end. Some people start on the way and then, after some time, they find it heavy-going, tiring, difficult, and also that they themselves, their legs, don’t walk well, their feet begin to ache, etc. You see, they say, ‘Oh, it is very hard to go forward.’ So instead of saying, ‘I have started, I shall go through’, which is the only thing to do, they stand there, stop there, lamenting and saying, ‘Oh, I shall never be able to succeed’, and then they leave the path. So, obviously, if they leave the path, they will never succeed. This is to lose one’s faith.

To keep one’s faith is to say, ‘Good, I have difficulties but I am going on.’ Despair—that’s what cuts off your legs, stops you, leaves you like this: ‘It is over, I can’t go on any longer.’ It is indeed finished, and that’s something which should not be allowed.

When you have started, you must go to the very end. Sometimes, you see, to people who come to me with enthusiasm I say, 'Think a little, it is not an easy path, you will need time, you will need patience. You will need much endurance, much perseverance and courage and an untiring goodwill. Look and see if you are capable of having all this, and then start. But once you have started, it is finished, there is no going back any more; you must go to the very end'." (CWM 6: 440–441)

21.

"... he [man's consciousness] has a faith, which grows greater as his soul develops, in another and an inner reality of existence. In this inner reality the truth of existence is no longer Nature but Soul and Spirit, Purusha rather than Prakriti." (CWSA 19: 574)

22.

"It takes time of course to make the transition from one state of consciousness to another. The depth of feeling will come more and more as your consciousness draws back from the claim of external things and goes deeper in into the heart region seeing and feeling from there with the psychic to prompt and enlighten it. Faith also will increase with that movement—for it is the outer intellect that is infirm or deficient in faith, the inner being in the heart has it always." (CWSA 30: 219–220)

23.

"In any case anyone can receive the force who has faith and sincerity, whose psychic being has begun to wake and who opens himself,—whether he knows or not that he is receiving. If X even imagines that he is receiving, that may open the way to a real reception,—if he *feels* it, why question his feeling?" (CWSA 32: 239)

24.

"It is an undoubted fact proved by hundreds of instances that for many the exact statement of their difficulties to us is the best and often, though not always, an immediate, even an instantaneous means of release. This has often been seen by sadhaks not only here, but far away, and not only for inner difficulties, but for illness and outer pressure of unfavourable circumstances. But for that a certain attitude is necessary—either a strong faith in the mind and vital or a habit of reception and response in the inner being. Where this habit has been established, I have seen it to be almost unfailingly effective, even when the faith was uncertain or the outer expression in the mind vague, ignorant or in its form mistaken or inaccurate. Moreover, this method succeeds most when the writer can write as a witness of his own movements and state them with an exact and almost impartial precision as a phenomenon of his nature or the

movement of a force affecting him from which he seeks release.” (CWSA 35: 451)

25.

“... even if it [faith] is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure. But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances. Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transfigured at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, ‘Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking.’ Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, ‘I will surely deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve.’ At the end, the flickering of

II— How to Regain Faith if Faith Falters

faith will cease; for we shall see his face and feel always the Divine Presence.” (CWSA 23: 245)

III—The Soul That Fails to Get Faith in the Higher Truth

1.

“But faith is necessary; if faith is absent, if one trusts to the critical intelligence which goes by outward facts and jealously questions the revelatory knowledge because that does not square with the divisions and imperfections of the apparent nature and seems to exceed it and state something which carries us beyond the first practical facts of our present existence, its grief, its pain, evil, defect, undivine error and stumbling, *aśubham*, then there is no possibility of living out that greater knowledge. The soul that fails to get faith in the higher truth and law, must return into the path of ordinary mortal living subject to death and error and evil: it cannot grow into the Godhead which it denies. For this is a truth which has to be lived,—and lived in the soul’s growing light, not argued out in the mind’s darkness. One has to grow into it, one has to become it,—that is the only way to verify it.” (CWSA 19: 309–310)

2.

“Finally, we must have a faith which no intellectual doubt can be allowed to disturb, *śraddhāvān labhate jñānam* [the one who has faith attains to knowledge]. ‘The ignorant who has not faith, the soul of doubt goeth to

III—The Soul That Fails to Get Faith in the Higher Truth

perdition [complete and utter ruin]; neither this world, nor the supreme world, nor any happiness is for the soul full of doubts.' In fact, it is true that without faith nothing decisive can be achieved either in this world or for possession of the world above, and that it is only by laying hold of some sure basis and positive support that man can attain any measure of terrestrial or celestial success and satisfaction and happiness; the merely sceptical mind loses itself in the void. But still in the lower knowledge doubt and scepticism have their temporary uses; in the higher they are stumbling-blocks: for there the whole secret is not the balancing of truth and error, but a constantly progressing realisation of revealed truth." (CWSA 19: 204)

3.

"Whatever incompleteness there is in the knowledge attained, it must be got rid of, not by questioning in its roots what has already been realised, but by proceeding to further and more complete realisation through a deeper, higher and wider living in the Spirit. And what is not yet realised must be prepared for by faith, not by sceptical questioning, because this truth is one which the intellect cannot give and which is indeed often quite opposed to the ideas in which the reasoning and logical mind gets entangled: it is not a truth which has to be proved, but a truth which has to be lived inwardly, a

greater reality into which we have to grow.” (CWSA 19: 205)

4.

“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.” (CWSA 7: 937)

5.

“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)

6.

“The sense of calm and light and divine guidance can never be an illusion. It is the dark state which is the state of Ignorance, of Maya—if faith fails then, it is because the darkness of the Ignorance shuts the mind to the Truth, obscuring the buddhi. What is thought when the buddhi is obscured cannot be the Truth; it is not darkness but the Light that brings Truth. Therefore you must take what you feel when you are in the light to be true, not what you feel when you are in the darkness.” (CWSA 28: 350)

7.

“So, in all circumstances of life you must always be very careful to guard against despair. Besides, this habit of being sombre, morose, of despairing, does not truly depend on events, but on a lack of faith in the nature. One who has faith, even if only in himself, can face all difficulties, all circumstances, even the most adverse, without discouragement or despair. He fights like a man to the end. Natures that lack faith also lack endurance and courage.” (CWM 10: 56)

8.

“It is our lack of faith that creates our limitations.” (CWM 14: 88)

9.

“All pessimism is to that extent a denial of the Spirit, of its fullness and power, an impatience with the ways of God in the world, an insufficient faith in the divine Wisdom and Will that created the world and for ever guide it. It admits a wrong notion about that supreme Wisdom and Power and therefore cannot itself be the supreme wisdom and power of the spirit to which the world can look for guidance and for the uplifting of its whole life towards the Divine.” (CWSA 25: 179)

10.

"You are disturbed because of your vital ego. It is evident that your faith and attitude cannot be perfect, if because Mother makes other arrangements for her work, you at once regard her as unjust, false and tricky. Every sadhak ought to realise that the work given him is not his property—it is not his work but hers; she must be perfectly free to make an arrangement and to change it whenever she thinks right to do so." (CWSA 32: 426)

11.

"If they are sufficiently open to the Divine it can be done—but most sadhaks have too much egoism and lack of faith and obscurity and self-will and vital desires,—it is that that shuts them to the Mother and calls in the action of the hostile forces." (CWSA 32: 620)

IV—Have Faith, Do Not Be Afraid

1.

“Fear is hidden consent. When you are afraid of something, it means that you admit its possibility and thus strengthen its hand. It can be said that it is a subconscious consent. Fear can be overcome in many ways. The ways of courage, faith, knowledge are some of them.” (CWM 14: 243–244)

2.

“Why do children have fear? Because they are weak.

Physically they are weaker than the grown-ups around them and, generally, they are also weaker vitally and mentally.

Fear stems from a sense of inferiority.

However, there is a way to be free from it: it is to have faith in the Divine Grace and to rely on It to protect you in all circumstances.” (CWM 12: 125)

3.

Q: Why does one feel afraid?

A: I suppose it is because one is egoistic.

There are three reasons. First, an excessive concern about one’s security. Next, what one does not know always gives an uneasy feeling which is translated in the

consciousness by fear. And above all, one doesn't have the habit of a spontaneous trust in the Divine. If you look into things sufficiently deeply, this is the true reason. There are people who do not even know that That exists, but one could tell them in other words, 'You have no faith in your destiny' or 'You know nothing about Grace'—anything whatever, you may put it as you like, but the root of the matter is a lack of trust. If one always had the feeling that it is the best that happens in all circumstances, one would not be afraid." (CWM 4: 211)

4.

"If you have faith and are consecrated to the Divine, there is a very simple way, it is to say: 'Let Your will be done. Nothing can frighten me because it is You who are guiding my life. I belong to You and You are guiding my life.' That acts immediately. Of all the means this is the most effective: indeed, it is. That is, one must be truly consecrated to the Divine. If one has that, it acts immediately; all fear vanishes immediately like a dream. And the being with the bad influence also disappears like a dream along with the fear. You should see it running away at full speed, prrt! *Voilà*." (CWM 5: 118)

5.

"Yes, you should not fear, you should keep an entire faith in the Divine Grace. The second point is to keep your

body well balanced by getting enough sleep—seven hours out of twenty-four—and enough food.” (CWM 17: 7)

6.

“Ah, my child, we have no faith. As soon as one has faith... We say, ‘We want the divine life’—yet we are afraid of it! But as soon as fear goes away and we are sincere... everything changes truly.

We say, ‘We do not want any more this life’, and (*Mother laughs*) something is there that clings to it!

It is so ridiculous.” (CWM 11: 312)

7.

“Thus the method to be followed in order to overcome the fear of death will differ according to the nature of the case and the state of the consciousness. ...

The third method is for those who have faith in a God, their God, and who have given themselves to him. They belong to him integrally; all the events of their lives are an expression of the divine will and they accept them not merely with calm submission but with gratitude, for they are convinced that whatever happens to them is always for their own good. They have a mystic trust in their God and in their personal relationship with him. They have made an absolute surrender of their will to his and feel his unvarying love and protection, wholly independent of the accidents of life and death. They have

IV—Have Faith, Do Not Be Afraid

the constant experience of lying at the feet of their Beloved in an absolute self-surrender or of being cradled in his arms and enjoying a perfect security. There is no longer any room in their consciousness for fear, anxiety or torment; all that has been replaced by a calm and delightful bliss.” (CWM 12: 83–84)

V—Never Take Away Faith

1.

"It is a spiritual principle not to take away any faith or support of faith unless the persons who have it are able to replace it by something larger and more complete."
(CWSA 29: 365)

2.

"I may expose, too, the weaknesses and narrownesses of an existing form of religion, even if I have no new & better form to preach of my own, but I must not so rage against those weaknesses as to destroy all religious faith and I should remember before the end of my criticism that even a bad religion is better than no religion,—that it is wiser to worship energy in my surroundings with the African savage than to be dead to all faith and all spirituality like the drunkards of a little knowledge—for even in that animal and unintelligent worship there is a spark of the divine fire which keeps humanity living, while the cultured imperial Roman or the luxurious modern wealth gatherer and body worshipper drags his kind into a straight & well-built road which is so broad only to lead more easily to a mighty perdition [state of eternal damnation into which a sinful person passes after death]—*na ched ihavedin mahati vinashtih*." (CWSA 12: 43–44)

3.

"If they have been clinging to a religion, it is because that religion has helped them in one way or another, it has helped in them precisely something which wanted to have a certitude, not to have to search but to be able to rest on something solid without being responsible for the solidity—somebody else is responsible (*Mother laughs*) and it goes on like that. It is a lack of compassion to want to pull them out of that—it is better to leave them where they are. I never dispute with someone who has a faith—let him keep his faith! I take care not to tell him anything that might shake his faith, because it would not be good—they are not capable of having another." (CWM 15: 395)

VI—Faith and Doubt

1.

“To go on perpetually answering persistent and always recurring doubts such as for long have filled this Asram and obstructed the sadhana, is merely to frustrate the aim of the Yoga and go against its central principle with no spiritual or other gain whatever. If anybody gets over his fundamental doubts, it is by the growth of the psychic in him or by an enlargement of his consciousness, not otherwise. Questions which arise from the spirit of enquiry, not aggressive or self-assertive, but as a part of a hunger for knowledge can be answered, but the ‘spirit of doubt’ is insatiable and unappeasable.” (CWSA 32: 380–381)

2.

“I do not ask ‘undiscriminating faith’ from anyone, all I ask is fundamental faith, safeguarded by a patient and quiet discrimination—because it is these that are proper to the consciousness of a spiritual seeker and it is these that I have myself used and found that they removed all necessity for the quite gratuitous dilemma of ‘either you must doubt everything supraphysical or be entirely credulous’, which is the stock-in-trade of the materialist argument. Your doubt, I see, constantly returns to the charge with a repetition of this formula in spite of my

denial—which supports my assertion that Doubt cannot be convinced, because by its very nature it does not want to be convinced; it keeps repeating the old ground always.” (CWSA 28: 348)

3.

“The enemy of faith is doubt, and yet doubt too is a utility and necessity, because man in his ignorance and in his progressive labour towards knowledge needs to be visited by doubt, otherwise he would remain obstinate in an ignorant belief and limited knowledge and unable to escape from his errors. This utility and necessity of doubt does not altogether disappear when we enter on the path of Yoga.” (CWSA 24: 772)

4.

“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.” (CWSA 28: 271)

5.

“A power to distinguish between truth of the Divine and the lies of the Asura is a cardinal necessity for Yoga. The question is whether that can best be done by the negative and destructive method of doubt, which often kills falsehood but rejects truth too with the same impartial blow, or a more positive, helpful and luminously searching power can be found which is not compelled by its inherent ignorance to meet truth and falsehood alike with the stiletto of doubt and the bludgeon of denial.” (CWSA 28: 342)

6.

“Your reasonings about faith and doubt have been of a rather extravagant kind because they came to this that one must either doubt everything or believe everything however absurd that anybody says. I have repeatedly told you that there is not only room for discrimination in Yoga, but a need for it at every step—otherwise you will get lost in the jungle of things that are not spiritual—as for instance the tangle of what I call the intermediate zone. I have also told you that you are not asked to believe everything told you by anybody and that there is

no call to put faith in all the miraculous things narrated about Bijoykrishna or another.” (CWSA 28: 344)

7.

“The abnormal abounds in this physical world; the supernormal is there also. In these matters, apart from any question of faith, any truly rational man with a free mind (not tied up like the rationalist’s or so-called freethinker’s at every point with triple cords of a priori irrational disbelief) must not cry out at once, ‘Humbug! falsehood!’, but suspend judgment until he has the necessary experience and knowledge. To deny in ignorance is no better than to affirm in ignorance.” (CWSA 28: 346)

8.

“If I insist so much on faith—but even less on positive faith than on the throwing away of a *priori* doubt and denial—it is because I find that this doubt and denial have become an instrument in the hands of the obstructive forces and clog your steps whenever I try to push you to an advance. If you can’t or won’t get rid of it, (‘won’t’ out of respect for the reason and fear of being led into believing things that are not true, ‘can’t’ because of contrary experience) then I shall have to manage for you without it, only it makes a difficult instead of a straight and comparatively easy process.” (CWSA 28: 347)

9.

“There are others who cultivate doubt because it is a kind of dilettantism [having superficial interest but lacks real knowledge]—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.” (CWM 6: 121)

10.

“You already know, and I mention it only to remind you, that an experiment made in a spirit of reserve and doubt is not an experiment, and that outer circumstances will always conspire to justify these doubts, and this for a reason which is very easy to understand: doubt veils the consciousness and the subconscious sincerity, and into the action some small factors creep in which may seem unimportant, but which are just sufficient to alter all the factors of the problem and to bring about the result that one had anticipated by doubting.” (CWM 16: 41)

11.

“And even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession than the sceptical doubt which turns its back

on our spiritual possibilities or the constant carping of the narrow pettily critical uncreative intellect, *asūyā*, which pursues our endeavour with a paralysing incertitude. The seeker of the integral Yoga must however conquer both these imperfections.” (CWSA 24: 773)

12.

“Doubts do not matter, if the faith central and fundamental is there. Doubts may come, but they cannot prevail against [the rock] of faith in the centre of the being. The rock may be covered awhile by surges of doubt and despondency, but the rock will emerge firm and indestructible. Faith is of the heart, the inner heart where lives the psychic being. The outer heart is the seat of the vital being, the life personality. That like the mind may believe and then lose its belief, doubt comes from the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness. [The greater the intensity] of the psychic fire, the less will be the power of doubt to soil and darken the mind, the life and the consciousness of the body.” (CWSA 12: 347–348)

13.

“Q: *Sweet Mother, what does a 'candid' faith mean?*

A: Candid? It is simple, sincere and does not doubt. We speak mostly of the candour of a child, who has a simple faith without any doubts.” (CWM 6: 236)

14.

"... if it is the spirit that has been touched, the inward soul that has received the call, the *śraddhā* will remain firm and resist all attempts to defeat or slay it. It is not that the doubts of the intellect may not assail, the heart waver, the disappointed desire of the life mind sink down exhausted on the wayside. That is almost inevitable at times, perhaps often, especially with us, sons of an age of intellectuality and scepticism and a materialistic denial of spiritual truth which has not yet lifted its painted clouds from the face of the sun of a greater reality and is still opposed to the light of spiritual intuition and inmost experience. There will very possibly be many of those trying obscurations of which even the Vedic Rishis so often complained, 'long exiles from the light', and these may be so thick, the night on the soul may be so black that faith may seem utterly to have left us. But through it all the spirit within will be keeping its unseen hold and the soul will return with a new strength to its assurance which was only eclipsed and not extinguished, because extinguished it cannot be when once the inner self has known and made its resolution. The Divine holds our hand through all and if he seems to let us fall, it is only to raise us higher. This saving return we shall experience so often that the denials of doubt will become eventually impossible and, when once the foundation of equality is firmly established and still more when the sun of the

gnosis has risen, doubt itself will pass away because its cause and utility have ended.” (CWSA 24: 774–775)

15.

“Change...

1. Hatred into harmony
2. Jealousy into generosity
3. Ignorance into knowledge
4. Darkness into light
5. Falsehood into truth
6. Wickedness into goodness
7. War into peace
8. Fear into fearlessness
9. Uncertainty into certainty
10. Doubt into faith” (CWM 15: 223)

VII—Reason and Faith

1.

“Certainly, you are right to follow directly the truth for yourself and need not accept X’s or anybody else’s proposition or solution. Man needs both faith and reason so long as he has not reached a surer insight and greater knowledge. Without faith he cannot walk certainly on any road, and without reason he might very well be walking, even with the staff of faith to support him, in the darkness. X himself founds his faith, if not on reason, yet on reasons; and the rationalist, the rationaliser or the reasoner must have some faith even if it be faith only in reason itself as sufficient and authoritative, just as the believer has faith in his faith as sufficient and authoritative. Yet both are capable of error, as they must be since both are instruments of the human mind whose nature is to err, and they share that mind’s limitations. Each must walk by the light he has even though there are dark spots in which he stumbles.” (CWSA 28: 349)

2.

“As a mystery of faith this can hold and need not be examined, for the mysteries of faith are intended to be beyond question and scrutiny; but for reason and philosophy it lacks convincingness and does not fit into the known order of things.” (CWSA 22: 773)

3.

"The peculiar character of our age is the divorce that has been pronounced between reason and faith, the logical mind and the intuitive heart. At first, the declaration of war between them was attended by painful struggles, a faith disturbed or a scepticism dissatisfied. But now their divorce has created exaggerated tendencies which impoverish human life by their mutual exclusiveness, on the one side a negative and destructive critical spirit, on the other an imaginative sentiment which opposes pure instinct and a faith founded on dreams to the sterile fanaticism of the intellect.

Yet a real divorce is impossible. Science could not move a step without faith and intuition and today it is growing full of dreams. Religion could not stand for a moment if it did not support itself by the intellectual presentation, however inadequate, of profound truths. Today we see it borrowing many of its weapons from the armoury of its opponent. But a right synthesis in virtue of a higher and reconciling truth can alone dissipate their mutual misunderstandings and restore to the race its integral self-development." (CWSA 13: 439)

4.

"We have to recognise that human reason, moving as it does from a starting-point of ignorance and in a great environing circle of ignorance, must proceed by

hypothesis, assumption and theory subject to verification of some kind convincing to our reason and experience. But there is this difference that the religious mind accepts the theory or assumption,—to which it does not at all give these names, for they are to it things felt,—with faith, with a will of belief, with an emotional certainty, and finds its verification in an increasing spiritual intuition and experience.” (CWSA 13: 287)

5.

“We have pointed out that in our idea of faith it includes the logical analysing reason, it includes experience and exceeds it. It exceeds logical reason because it uses the higher intuitive reason; it exceeds experience because experience often gives the balance of its support to one conclusion where faith using intuition inclines to the opposite conclusion.” (CWSA 8: 134)

VIII—From *Prayers and Meditation* on Faith

February 10, 1913*

"...

All who seek Thee with ardour should understand that Thou art there whenever there is need of Thee; and if they could have the supreme faith to give up seeking Thee, but rather to await Thee, at each moment putting themselves integrally at Thy service, Thou wouldst be there whenever there was need of Thee; and is there not always need of Thee with us, whatever may be the different, and often unexpected, forms of Thy manifestation?" (CWM 1: 16)

January 11, 1914

"EVERY moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us, every moment the universe is created anew in its entirety and in every one of its parts. And if we had a truly living faith, if we had the absolute certitude of Thy omnipotence and Thy sole reality, Thy manifestation could at each moment become so evident that the whole universe would be transformed by it. But we are so enslaved to everything that is around us and has gone before us, we are so influenced by the whole totality of manifested things, and our faith is so weak that we are yet unable to serve as intermediaries for the great miracle of transfiguration. ... But, Lord, I know that it will

come one day. I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, liberated completely from the bonds of the past, they will begin to live in Thee an entirely new life, a life made solely of Thee, with Thee as its sovereign Lord.” (CWM 1: 54)

February 1, 1914*

“...

But from time to time Thy sublime light shines in a being and radiates through him over the world, and then a little wisdom, a little knowledge, a little disinterested faith, heroism and compassion penetrates men’s hearts, transforms their minds and sets free a few elements from that sorrowful and implacable wheel of existence to which their blind ignorance subjects them.” (CWM 1: 63)

June 23, 1914

“THOU art the sovereign power of transformation, why shouldst Thou not act on all who are brought into contact with Thee through our mediation? We lack faith in Thy power: always we think that men should in their conscious thought want this integral transformation for it to come about; we forget that it is Thou who willest in them and that Thou canst will in such a way that all their being is illumined by it. ... We doubt Thy power, O Lord,

and thus become bad intermediaries for it and veil the major part of its transforming force.

Oh, give us the faith which we lack; give us the certitude of detail which is wanting in us. Deliver us from the ordinary way of thinking and judging; grant that we may live in the consciousness of Thy infinite love and see it at work at every moment and that by our consciousness of it we may bring it into touch with the most material states of being. ...

O Lord, deliver us from all ignorance, give us true faith.” (CWM 1: 182)

September 5, 1914

“...

We must look the danger straight in the face with faith in Thy Omnipotence, and Thy Omnipotence will triumph.

Give me integrally the heart of the fighter, O Lord, and Thy victory is sure.” (CWM 1: 240)

December 4, 1914

“...

So Thou didst break all my forms of thought, and I found myself before Thee stripped of all mental constructions, as ignorant about this as a new-born child; and in the darkness of this void lay once again the sovereign peace of something which is not expressed in words but which IS. And I wait without impatience and without fear, for

VIII—From Prayers and Meditation on Faith

Thee to construct once again from the heart of the unfathomable depths the intellectual form which seems to Thee the most suitable for manifesting Thee in this instrument moulded out of surrender and ardent faith.” (CWM 1: 279)

March 7, 1915

“...

Strong is the growing sense of rejection, and it needs all the ardour of an untiring faith to keep the external consciousness thus abandoned to itself from being invaded by an irremediable sorrow ...” (CWM 1: 297)

December 8, 1916

“THIS was our conversation today morning, O Lord:

Thou didst wake up the vital being with the magic wand of Thy impulsion and say to it: ‘Awake, bend the bow of thy will, for soon the hour of action will come.’ Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose up, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpidity; from the elasticity of its members it realised that it was still vigorous and fit for action. And with an ardent faith it answered the sovereign call: ‘Here I am, what dost Thou want of me, O Lord?’.” (CWM 1: 324)

November 25, 1917*

"O LORD, because in an hour of cruel distress I said in the sincerity of my faith: 'Thy Will be done', Thou camest garbed in Thy raiment of glory. At Thy feet I prostrated myself, on Thy breast I found my refuge. Thou hast filled my being with Thy divine light and flooded it with Thy bliss. Thou hast reaffirmed Thy alliance and assured me of Thy constant presence. Thou art the sure friend who never fails, the Power, the Support, the Guide." (CWM 1: 373)

November 24, 1931*

"...

But in my heart was the Remembrance, from my heart there leaped the call which could arrive to Thee: 'Lord, Lord, everywhere Thy enemies appear triumphant; falsehood is the monarch of the world; life without Thee is a death, a perpetual hell; doubt has usurped the place of Hope and revolt has pushed out Submission; Faith is spent, Gratitude is not born; blind passions and murderous instincts and a guilty weakness have covered and stifled Thy sweet law of love. Lord, wilt Thou permit Thy enemies to prevail, falsehood and ugliness and suffering to triumph? Lord, give the command to conquer and victory will be there. I know we are unworthy, I know the world is not yet ready. But I cry to Thee with an

VIII—From Prayers and Meditation on Faith

absolute faith in Thy Grace and I know that Thy Grace will save.'

Thus, my prayer rushed up towards Thee; and, from the depths of the abyss, I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: 'Lose not courage, be firm, be confident,—I COME'." (CWM 1: 381)

October 23, 1937*

"...

Give us a faith active and ardent, absolute and unshakable in Thy Victory." (CWM 1: 382)

"Let this year bring you the true faith—a faith that no darkness can obscure." (CWM 15: 199)

"Grant me a quiet trust, a peaceful strength, an ardent faith and devotion." (CWM 15: 213)

"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)

IX—From *Thoughts and Aphorisms* on Faith

254. "So long as a cause has on its side one soul that is intangible in faith, it cannot perish." (CWSA 12: 458)

255. "Reason gives me no basis for this faith, thou murmurest. Fool! if it did, faith would not be needed or demanded of thee." (CWSA 12: 458)

256. "Faith in the heart is the obscure & often distorted reflection of a hidden knowledge. The believer is often more plagued by doubt than the most inveterate sceptic. He persists because there is something subconscious in him which knows. That tolerates both his blind faith & twilit doubts and drives towards the revelation of that which it knows." (CWSA 12: 458)

257. "The world thinks that it moves by the light of reason but it is really impelled by its faiths and instincts." (CWSA 12: 458)

258. "Reason adapts itself to the faith or argues out a justification of the instincts, but it receives the impulse subconsciously; therefore men think that they act rationally." (CWSA 12: 458)

260. "Until Wisdom comes to thee, use the reason for its God-given purposes and faith and instinct for theirs. Why shouldst thou set thy members to war upon each other?" (CWSA 12: 458)

266. There are three forms in which the command may come, the will and faith in thy nature, thy ideal on which heart and brain are agreed and the voice of Himself or His angels." (CWSA 12: 459)

381. "For nearly forty years I believed them when they said I was weakly in constitution, suffered constantly from the smaller & the greater ailments & mistook this curse for a burden that Nature had laid upon me. When I renounced the aid of medicines, then they began to depart from me like disappointed parasites. Then only I understood what a mighty force was the natural health within me & how much mightier yet the Will & Faith exceeding mind which God meant to be the divine support of our life in this body." (CWSA 12: 474)

388. "We laugh at the savage for his faith in the medicine man; but how are the civilised less superstitious who have faith in the doctors? The savage finds that when a certain incantation is repeated, he often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. The civilised patient finds that when he doses himself according to a certain

prescription, he often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. Where is the difference? (CWSA 12: 475)

390. "It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed." (CWSA 12: 475)

397. "God within is infinite and self-fulfilling Will. Unappalled by the fear of death, canst thou leave to Him, not as an experiment, with a calm & entire faith thy ailments? Thou shalt find in the end that He exceeds the skill of a million doctors." (CWSA 12: 476)

466. "The sceptic mind doubts always because it cannot understand, but the faith of the God-lover persists in knowing although it cannot understand. Both are necessary to our darkness, but there can be no doubt which is the mightier. What I cannot understand now, I shall some day master, but if I lose faith & love, I fall utterly from the goal which God has set before me." (CWSA 12: 488)

X—Other Quotations on Faith

“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.” (CWM 13: 75)

“If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and bhakti seem to me to be at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender. I do not see how without them there can be *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti* (one-pointed adoration).” (CWSA 35: 240)

“It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste and at each step despair or murmur. It is what I have always seen ... I only say that if you could maintain ‘hope and fervour and faith’, there would be a much bigger chance—that is all.” (CWSA 35: 241)

“Remaining quiet and keeping the faith that there is the Divine Guidance behind, one has to do what is needed till the phase [of sadhana in the subconscious] is over.” (CWSA 35: 342)

“The Divine knows best and one has to have trust in His wisdom and attune oneself with His will. Length of time is no proof of an ultimate incapacity to arrive—it is only a sign that there is something in oneself which has to be overcome and if there is the will to reach the Divine it can be overcome.” (CWSA 29: 174)

“Cases differ, each has his own way of sadhana. But for you what I would recommend is constant openness, a quiet steady aspiration, no over-eagerness, a cheerful trust and patience.” (CWSA 29: 275)

"I don't think that real faith is so very superabundant in this Asram. There are some who have it, but for the most part I have met not only doubt, but sharp criticism, constant questioning, much mockery of faith and spiritual experience, violent attacks on myself and the Mother—and that has been going on for the last fourteen years and more. Things are not so bad as they were, but there is plenty of it left still, and I do not think the time has come when the danger of an excessive faith is likely to take body." (CWSA32: 114)

"The inmost being, the psychic, accepts without question, because it has faith in the Divine; by that psychic acceptance the soul opens, the mind clarifies, the vital is purified and enlightened and a spiritual change becomes possible." (CWSA 32: 472)

"How does one 'open'?

By faith and surrender in a quiet mind." (CWSA 32: 151)

"Transcendence of the three gunas is a state of liberation in which one is not affected by the action of the gunas; but even before that is attained there can be a complete and living faith in the Divine." (CWSA 28: 47)

"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)

“You must put aside what you want and wish to know what God wants; distrust what your heart, your passions or your habitual opinions prefer to hold as right and necessary, and passing beyond them, like Arjuna in the Gita, seek only to know what God has set down as right and necessary. Be strong in the faith that whatever is right and necessary will inevitably happen as the result of your due fulfilment of the *kartavyam karma*, even if it is not the result that you preferred or expected. The power that governs the world is at least as wise as you and it is not absolutely necessary that you should be consulted or indulged in its management; God is seeing to it.” (CWSA 13: 79)

“In the region of politics faith is the result of imagination working in the light of history; it takes its stand on reason and experience and aspires into the future from the firm ground of the past. Other nations have risen from the lowest depths of degradation—the weaknesses which prevent us from trying bold and effective remedies were common to all subject nations before us. It is by nerving the nation’s heart with inspiring literature and inciting it to struggle for emancipation that freedom has been recovered. For a subject people there is no royal road to

emancipation. They must wade to it through struggle, sacrifice, slaughter, if necessary. History suggests no short-cut. Why should it then involve a strain on our faith to believe that if we are only prepared for the necessary sacrifice, we also shall gain the end? Other nations also were weak, disunited and denationalised like ourselves. It is the rallying cry of freedom that combined their scattered units drawing them together with a compelling and magical attraction. Those who would win freedom, must first imbue the people with an overpowering conviction that freedom is the one thing needful. Without a great ideal there can be no great movement. Small baits of material advantages will not nerve them to high endeavour and heroic self-sacrifice; it is only the idea of national freedom and national greatness that has that overmastering appeal. We must not bend the knee to others but try to be worthy of our past—here is an ideal which, if set forth with conviction and power, cannot fail to inspire self-sacrificing action. We need faith above all things, faith in ourselves, faith in the nation, faith in India's destiny. A dozen men rendered invincible by a strong faith in their future have in other times spread the contagion of nationalism to the remotest corner of vast countries. Unbelief is blind—it does not see far ahead, neither stimulates strength nor inspires action. The lack of this faith has kept our moderate politicians tied down to a worn-out ideal which has lost its credibility. No man

can lead a rising nation unless he has this faith first of all, that what other great men have done before him he also can do as well, if not better,—that the freedom other nations have won we also can win, if only we have the faith, the will.” *Bande Mataram* (CWSA 6: 347–348)

The Leverage of Faith

“It is said of Guru Nanak that on the eve of his departure from the body he was asked to name a successor to his *gadi*. A great storm was raging at the time—the disturbance of nature synchronising with the passing away of a great spirit. Nanak was then sitting under a tree surrounded by his disciples. It was evening and the Guru perceiving that his chelas badly needed food and drink, asked his sons Shrichand and Lakshichand to go in quest of food. But the sons inherited none of the spiritual qualities of their father; they thought him to be no better than a maniac and were not inclined to take his request seriously; rather they mocked at the idea of a search for food when none could stir out of doors for the wild rain and storm without. Nanak then turned to a devoted disciple who simply enquired where he should go for food and was told that he had only to ask of the tree under which they were then sitting and it would give them all they required. The disciple did Nanak’s bidding and, as the story goes, was rewarded with sufficiency of sweetmeats. Nanak went afterwards

with his disciples to the riverside and when, on the way, they came across a dead body, he bade his sons partake of this strange food. His sons took the command as conclusive proof of their father's lunacy, but the disciple was prepared to obey unquestioningly and only paused to ask from where to begin, whether from the head or from the foot. Nanak, entirely satisfied with the steadfast faith of his disciple, named him the successor to his *gadi* in preference to his own sons.

It is not given to all to possess this heroic spiritual faith which all religious teachers have insisted on as the first preliminary to any difficult *sadhana*; but the moral underlying it is one which all experience justifies. Faith is the first condition of success in every great undertaking. It is no exaggeration to say that faith moves mountains." (CWSA 6: 346)

"If you have not the divine strength of faith and unselfishness, you will not be able to escape from other attachments, you will not like to bear affliction simply for the sake of a change by which you will not profit. How can courage come from such a source? But when you have a higher idea, when you have realised that you have nothing, that you are nothing and that the three hundred millions of people of this country are God in the nation, something which cannot be measured by so much land, or by so much money, or by so many lives, you will then

realise that it is something immortal, that the idea for which you are working is something immortal and that it is an immortal power which is working in you. All other attachments are nothing. Every other consideration disappears from your mind, and, as I said, there is no need to cultivate courage. You are led on by that power. You are protected through life and death by One who survives. In the very hour of death, you feel your immortality. In the hour of your worst sufferings, you feel you are invincible.” (CWSA 7: 829–830)

“We have faith and we believe in the great rule of life in the Gita, ‘Remember me and fight.’ We believe in the mighty word of assurance to the bhakta, *Macchittah sarvadurgani matprasadat tarishyasi*, ‘If thou reposest thy heart and mind in Me by My grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficulties and dangers.’” (CWSA 8: 135–136)

“The obstacles and difficulties in the way of success are formidable and demand either a strength and patience or a faith and unquestioning reliance on the Guru who is the pathfinder and leader.” (CWSA 35: 529)

“All is possible if there is a true faith, a complete consecration, a sincere and pure aspiration and a persistent endeavour.” (CWSA 35: 539)

“Write to your friend that we do not ask for any financial help from your father and therefore you are not called upon to answer the questions in his letter. It is not everyone who has the *adhikāra* to help in the work of the Asrama. Those only can do so who have faith in it or sympathy or at least confidence in Sri Aurobindo.” (CWSA 35: 541)

“It is impossible without an entirely free intelligence (or, in its place, a strong psychic faith and ardour) to follow the movement here.” (CWSA 35: 563)

“What is true is that there is a strong force going out from here and it is naturally strongest at the centre. But how it affects there, depends on how one receives it. If it is received with simple trust, faith, openness, confidence, then it works as a complete protection. But it can so work too at a distance.” (CWSA 35: 630)

“In faith and confidence and joy on the quiet and sunlit path towards the home of Light and Ananda.” (CWSA 35: 840)

“My blessings for the day and the year. Grow in faith, grow in light, grow in consciousness.” (CWSA 35: 841)

“Keep yourself ready by faith and self-opening to receive the Light when it comes.”(CWSA 35: 842)

“Keep firm faith in the victory of the Light and face with calm equanimity the resistances of Matter and human personality to their own transformation.” (CWSA 35: 844)

“A steady inner calm and quiet will and psychic faith and bhakti are the one true foundation for your sadhana.” (CWSA 36: 323)

“Q: *What is the ideal of physical beauty for a woman?*

A: Perfect harmony of proportions, suppleness and strength, grace and force, plasticity, endurance and, above all, an excellent health, unvarying, unchanging, the result of a pure soul, of a joyful trust in life and an unshakable faith in the divine Grace.” (CWM 8: 242)

“... religion which is more a habit than a faith ...” (CWM 9: 16)

“He who has a spiritual experience and a faith, formulates it in the most appropriate words for himself.

But if he is convinced that this expression is the only correct and true one for this experience and faith, he becomes dogmatic and tends to create a religion.” (CWM 13: 22)

“You express your faith in Sri Aurobindo with certain words which are for you the best expression of this faith; this is quite all right. But if you are convinced that these very words are the only correct ones to express what Sri Aurobindo is, then you become dogmatic and are ready to create a religion.” (CWM 15: 27)

“We call ‘religion’ any concept of the world or the universe which is presented as the exclusive Truth in which one must have absolute faith, generally because this Truth is declared to be the result of a revelation.” (CWM 15: 29)

“If you can have the experience that it is the Divine who is doing everything, then with an unshakable faith you say, ‘All your arguments have no value; the delight of being with the Divine, conscious of the Divine, surpasses everything—surpasses the creation, surpasses life, surpasses happiness, surpasses success, surpasses everything.’ (*Mother raises a finger*) That!

Then everything is all right, there is an end of the thing.

It is as though That was pushing into the light, was forcing into the light, into contact with this Force all the worst that there is in the nature... so that it may be ended.” (CWM 11: 310)

MESSAGE FOR THE INAUGURATION OF SRI MIRAMBIKA
HIGH SCHOOL, AHMEDABAD

Faith and Sincerity are the twin agents of success.

Blessings.”(CWM 12: 115)

AN IDEAL CHILD

He has faith in the future which is rich with all the realisations that are to come, full of beauty and light.

Childhood is the symbol of the future and the Hope of all the victories to come.” (CWM 12: 151)

“Appearances and rules change, but our faith and our aim remain the same.” (CWM 13: 108)

“I told you already—no such politics can originate from the Ashram; it could bring a mountain of trouble.

In the present case of this fray I ask you to be true to your faith in Sri Aurobindo and myself and to leave his fate to our responsibility. If it is the truth of his being that he should be liberated, he will surely be liberated.” (CWM 13: 122)

“Where is your faith in the Divine? Having faith in the Divine you ought to rejoice that X has received the inner call and decided to lead the divine life; you ought to be made happy by this sign of the Divine’s Grace and feel grateful for it.

Quietly face the social difficulties with equality and cheerfulness; then you will know that my love and blessings are with you.” (CWM 13: 133)

“Divine Power alone can help India. If you can build faith and cohesion in the country it is much more powerful than any man-made power.” (CWM 13: 353)

“Never forget that you are not alone. The Divine is with you helping and guiding you. He is the companion who never fails, the friend whose love comforts and strengthens. Have faith and He will do everything for you.” (CWM 14: 9)

“If you have faith and confidence, it is not the human form of the guru that you worship, but the Supreme Lord who manifests through him.” (CWM 14: 60)

“The assertions you quote in your letter are the hard assertions of a mental belief leading to a great vehement assertion of one’s creed and god because they are one’s own and must therefore be greater than those of others—an attitude which is universal in human nature. Even the atheist is not tolerant, but declares his credo of Nature and Matter as the only truth and on all who disbelieve it or believe in other things he pours scorn as unenlightened morons and superstitious half-wits. I bear

him no grudge for thinking me that; but I note that this attitude is not confined to religious faith but is equally natural to those who are free from religious faith and do not believe in Gods or Gurus.” (CWSA 28: 432)

“They who have faith will go through.” (CWM 14: 79)

“It is indispensable to keep the faith and the will to conquer.” (CWM 14: 80)

“Faith: you flame up and triumph.” (CWM 14: 80)

“At every moment all the unforeseen, the unexpected, the unknown is before us—and what happens to us depends mostly on the intensity and purity of our faith.” (CWM 14: 80)

“Have faith in the Divine, and go deep inside yourself. My help is always with you.” (CWM 14: 81)

“Have faith and go on.” (CWM 14: 81)

“Our best help is faith—the Divine is all merciful.
With love and blessings.” (CWM 14: 81)

“All depends on the intensity of the faith and the firmness of the right attitude.” (CWM 14: 87)

“Why disappointing? If there is one in a hundred who has a true faith, it is already a miracle!” (CWM 14: 88)

“The Supreme’s power is infinite—it is our faith that is small.” (CWM 14: 88)

“In an ardent faith lies salvation.

In the final analysis, it is the Supreme Lord who does all. We must be faithful instruments.” (CWM 14: 90)

“Very few are those who can stand firm on the rock of their faith and trust in the Divine.” (CWM 14: 92)

“So, the only thing to do is to accept quietly the conditions in which you find yourself, knowing that for him who has faith in the Divine it is always the best for him that happens. The Divine does not want human beings to suffer, but, in their ignorance, human beings react in such a way that they bring suffering upon themselves. In peace, quietness and surrender is the only solution.” (CWM 14: 96)

“Above all words, above all thoughts in the luminous silence of an aspiring faith give yourself totally, unreservedly, absolutely to the Supreme Lord of all existences and He will do of you what He wants you to be.

With love and blessings.” (CWM 14: 103)

“... pray in all sincerity, with faith and trust. Your prayer will surely be granted one day.” (CWM 14: 133)

“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)

“There is a time for action and there is a time for concentration; if, by mistake, one chooses the time for concentration to start an action, the action is bound to fail.

But if one keeps faith alive, even failure can become a shortcut for reaching the Divine.” (CWM 14: 324)

“When I spoke at the beginning of the year I insisted on the necessity of being especially vigilant because when times are bad whatever mistake one makes brings immediately its full consequences, the action of the Grace being hampered by the intensity of the adverse attack; the faith must be more total, the vigilance more constant, the trust in the Divine more absolute.” (CWM 15: 25)

“O Lord, Thou hast decided to test the quality of our faith and to pass our sincerity on Thy touchstone. Grant that

we come out greater and purer from the ordeal.” (CWM 15: 170)

“Never forget that you are not alone. The Divine is with you helping and guiding you. He is the companion who never fails, the friend whose love comforts and strengthens. Have faith and He will do everything for you.” (CWM 15: 189)

“To walk on the path you must have a dauntless intrepidity, you must never turn back upon yourself with this mean, petty, weak, ugly movement that fear is. An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity, a total self-giving to the extent that you do not calculate or bargain, you do not give with the idea of receiving, you do not offer yourself with the intention of being protected, you do not have a faith that needs proofs,—this is indispensable for advancing on the path,—this alone can shelter you against all dangers.” (CWM 15: 190)

“We are at least mentally convinced about our misunderstanding and error and we are determined to give a vital push for their rectification and we believe by Your Gracious Power it will be materialised rapidly. Of course, it may not be within a very short time, but surely it will come.

Why should it not be at once? With good will and faith nothing is impossible.” (CWM 15: 237)

“What has happened was more or less expected. Each one in life acts according to his own nature, and those who are not steady in their faith cannot be steady in their love either.” (CWM 15: 250)

“Finding one’s psychic being implies a kind of conviction, a faith in the existence of this psychic being. One must become aware of it and then allow it to take up the direction of life and action; one must refer to it and make it one’s guide. One becomes aware of the movements of one’s being by referring more and more to the psychic being.” (CWM 15: 302)

“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: 319)

“But even here, there are quite a number who by tradition have a ‘family deity’, yet it doesn’t bother them at all to take their deity and throw it into the Ganges when they get displeased! It does happen—I know some

people who did it. They had a family Kali in their house, they actually did take her and throw her into the Ganges because they were displeased with her. If one believes in the Divine, one cannot do things like that.

I don't know—believe in the Divine? 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. One can practise yoga for that, but that is not believing. To believe is to have the faith that there cannot be a world without the Divine, that the very existence of the world proves the existence of the Divine. And not just a 'belief', not something one has thought out or been taught, nothing like that: faith. A faith that is a living knowledge, not an acquired one, that the existence of the world is enough to prove the Divine. Without the Divine, no world. And this is so obvious, you see, that one has the impression that in order to think otherwise, one has to be a bit dense. And the 'Divine' not in the sense of 'purpose' or 'goal' or 'end', not that sort of thing: the world as it is proves the Divine. Because it is the Divine under a certain aspect—a rather distorted one, but still..." (CWM 16: 341)

"Is it good to go to the temple? The idea came to me that if one believes in the Divine without form, one will not

believe in the Divine with form—as a human being, I mean.

You mean: if one has faith in the god of a religion, how can one have faith in the incarnate Divine? That is quite right.” (CWM 17: 43)

“Mother,

There is an all-round deterioration of work and workers, and the demands are increasing by leaps and bounds.

Yes, the disorder is general. The only help is FAITH.

Blessings.” (CWM 17: 228)

“Sweet Mother,

When I heard that X was drowned in a lake at Gingee during the outing, I was unable to believe it or to be shocked by this news. The only question that arose in me was: How is it possible! Mother knew we were at Gingee, so Her protection was with us. Then how is it possible?

The protection is over the group—and if the action of the group is coordinated and disciplined, the protection acts. But when an individual acts independently, the protection acts only in the measure of his faith.” (CWM 16: 345)

"I have faith in my strength and believe I am capable of doing all the work.

It is not in your own strength that you should have faith. It is in *the* divine force, which works in all who are consecrated to the Divine and sustains them in their action.

I have faith that I am capable of doing all the work. I like the work a lot; so if you don't mind, I would like to continue.

I repeat: having faith in *yourself* cannot take you very far and it is certain that sooner or later you will feel a reaction and be obliged to stop.

First establish the true attitude, which is to find your base, your support and your help *in the Divine alone*—then all possibility of fatigue will disappear. Until then it is better to let the servant do at least part of the work, which you can supervise if you like." (CWM 17: 11–12)

"What does 'Certitude' mean, in the spiritual sense?

Faith confirmed by the spiritual experience of what one has faith in." (CWM 17: 176)

"I hope that the trouble in Kashmir is the first step towards the unity of India and Pakistan.

The Supreme Wisdom is seeing to it.

Of one thing we must be convinced—all that happens is exactly what must happen in order to lead us and the world as quick as possible to the goal—the union with the Divine and ultimately the manifestation of the Divine.

And this faith—sincere and constant—is at once our help and protection." (CWM 17: 260)

"Surely, all this comes to teach us to have a *quiet faith* that what is *truly needed* we shall have and that, for the rest, we must not bother!" (CWM 17: 300)

"There must have been a serious fall in your faith; because the force is working in the same way (it has even often proved to be stronger), but the more the faith is genuine the more the force is effective." (CWM 17: 316)

"Sweet Mother,

What attitude should we take towards the war?

Psychologically, the only thing to do is to keep a quiet and unshakable faith.

Materially, it will depend on circumstances.

Blessings." (CWM 17: 369)

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