

Silence in SADHANA

Second Edition



A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**



Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Silence in Sadhana

Second Edition

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The photograph of the flower on the cover has been given
the spiritual significance 'Silence' by the Mother.

(The Spiritual Significance of Flowers, Part I, page 131)

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

The thirteenth book in the series of comprehensive compilations on virtues and qualities prescribed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as necessary for doing Yoga is *Silence in Sadhana*.

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 the virtue of silence. 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 also help the reader elevate their consciousness.

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

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

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—Silence Means

1.

“Silence means freedom from thoughts and vital movements—when the whole consciousness is quite still.” (CWSA 29: 158)

2.

“It is the silence of the mind and vital—silence implying here not only cessation of thoughts but a stillness of the mental and vital substance. There are varying degrees of depth of this stillness.” (CWSA 29: 158)

3.

“In a more outward sense the word silence is applied to the condition in which there is no movement of thought or feeling etc., only a great stillness of the mind.

But there can be an action in the Silence, ...” (CWSA 29: 163)

4.

“It is not necessary [*in a calm mind*] that there should be no thought. When there is no thought, it is silence. But the mind is said to be calm when thoughts, feelings, etc. may pass through it, but it is not disturbed. It feels that the thoughts are not its own; it observes them perhaps; but it is not perturbed by anything.” (CWSA 29: 146)

5.

“The words ‘peace, calm, quiet, silence’ have each their own shade of meaning, but it is not easy to define them.

Peace— *śānti*

Calm—*sthīratā*

Quiet—*acāñcalatā*

Silence—*nīścala-nīravatā*

Quiet is a condition in which there is no restlessness or disturbance.

Calm is a still, unmoved condition which no disturbance can affect—it is a less negative condition than quiet.

Peace is a still more positive condition; it carries with it a sense of settled and harmonious rest and deliverance.

Silence is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter.” (CWSA 29: 137)

6.

“Quiet is rather negative—it is the absence of disturbance.

Calm is a positive tranquillity which can exist in spite of superficial disturbances.

Peace is a calm deepened into something that is very positive amounting almost to a tranquil waveless Ananda.

Silence is the absence of all motion of thought or other vibration of activity.” (CWSA 29: 137)

7.

“Calm is a strong and positive quietude, firm and solid—ordinary quietude is mere negation, simply the absence of disturbance.

Peace is a deep quietude where no disturbance can come—a quietude with a sense of established security and release.

In complete silence there are either no thoughts or, if they come, they are felt as something coming from outside and not disturbing the silence.

Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things that are very close together and bring each other.” (CWSA 29: 138)

8.

“These [*tranquillity and stillness*] are general words, of a general and not a special Yogic significance. Quiet, calm and peace can all be described as tranquillity, silence is akin [similar] to what is meant by stillness.” (CWSA 29: 138)

9.

“If there is absolute silence within it is quite natural that the thoughts on entering and touching it should fall off. It

is the way in which silence of the outer mind usually comes.” (CWSA 29: 158)

10.

“It is quite possible for thoughts to pass without disturbing the silence—but for that you must be perfectly detached from the thoughts and indifferent to them.”(CWSA 29: 158)

11.

“Philosophy knows nothing about peace and silence or the inner and outer vital. These things are discovered only by Yoga.” (CWSA 28: 321)

12.

“Integral silence: the source of true force.” (CWM 14: 171)

13.

“In a quiet silence strength is restored.” (CWM 14: 142)

14.

“In silence is the greatest power.” (CWM 13: 64)

15.

“It is out of the silence that all things originated. All is contained in what you call Shunyam.” (CWSA 35: 486)

16.

“It is no part of this Yoga to dry up the heart; but the emotions must be turned towards the Divine. There may be short periods in which the heart is quiescent, turned away from the ordinary feelings and waiting for the inflow from above; but such states are not states of dryness but of silence and peace. The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.” (CWSA 29: 350)

II—What Is Not Silence

1.

"That is absurd. Doing nothing with the mind is not quiet or silence. It is inactivity that keeps the mind thinking mechanically and discursively instead of concentrating on an object—that is all." (CWSA 29: 144)

2.

"Keeping the mind without occupation is not the same thing as peace or silence." (CWSA 29: 145)

3.

"Silence need not bring lassitude; there is all possible strength in silence. But it is possible that in your trend towards silence there is a tendency to draw back the energy from the body consciousness. That would bring physical inertia." (CWSA 31: 394)

4.

*"Sweet Mother,
What is the use of Japa? Is it a good method to repeat words like 'Silence' and 'Peace' in order to establish silence and peace in oneself when one sits down to meditate?"*

A mere repetition of words cannot have much effect.

II—What Is Not Silence

There are classical or traditional Japas which are intended to subdue the lower mind and establish a connection with higher forces or with deities. These Japas must be given by the Guru, who at the same time infuses them with the power of realisation. They are useful only for those who want to do an intensive yoga and spend five or six hours a day in yogic practices.

Japa such as you describe it cannot have much effect except to create a tamasic dullness, which should not be mistaken for mental silence.” (CWM 16: 304)

5.

“Why should you think the Mother does not approve of expression,—provided it is the right expression of the right thing,—or suppose that silence and true expression are contradictory? The truest expression comes out of an absolute inner silence. The spiritual silence is not a mere emptiness; nor is it indispensable to abstain from all activity in order to find it.” (CWSA 32: 573)

6.

“I cannot have written that it is only you who feel the silence as empty, as there are plenty who do so feel it at first. One feels it empty because one is accustomed to associate existence with thought, feeling and movement or with forms and objects, and there are none of these there. But it is not really empty.” (CWSA 30: 80)

7.

"This is the ordeal into which you have entered; but unhappily you seem to have departed from the guidance of the Mother in the crucial point. You seem to have deliberately rejected the peace and silence of the vital being in the fear that it would bring stagnation. As a result the strong habit [of] vital formation came into play and you began to call down lights and powers and build things in [yourself]⁷ in your own way. In this condition, when the disciple is not accustomed to complete trust in his masters the one thing that can be done is to stand aside and let the disciple take his own way, for to insist is likely to raise in him doubt and revolt and decide him in the opposite way. According to whatever may be the supreme decision in his case, he will feel the need of guidance and return to the straight way or he will depart on his own path wherever his inner destiny calls him." (CWSA 36: 394)

8.

"No, certainly not [*thinkers and philosophers do not have a silent mind*]. It is the active mind they have; only, of course, they concentrate, so the common incoherent mentalising stops and the thoughts that rise or enter and shape themselves are coherently restricted to the subject or activity in hand. But that is quite a different matter from the whole mind falling silent." (CWSA 31: 55)

9.

“But in silent meditation does he not make himself a complete blank? Then how can anything depend upon him?”

Even if you make yourself an absolute blank, that does not change the nature of your aspiration or alter its domain. In some the aspiration moves on the mental level or in the vital field; some have a spiritual aspiration. On the quality of the aspiration depends the force that answers and the work that it comes to do. To make yourself blank in meditation creates an inner silence; it does not mean that you have become nothing or have become a dead and inert mass. Making yourself an empty vessel, you invite that which shall fill it. It means that you release the stress of your inner consciousness towards realisation.” (CWM 3: 97–98)

III—Silence Is a Part of Higher Consciousness

1.

“The silence and peace are themselves part of the higher consciousness—the rest comes in the silence and peace.” (CWSA 29: 162)

2.

“The silence in which all is quiet and one remains as a witness while something in the consciousness spontaneously calls down the higher things is the complete silence which comes when the full force of the higher consciousness is upon mind and vital and body.” (CWSA 30: 233)

3.

“Your first experience is an opening into the inner mental self—the space between the eyebrows is the centre of the inner mind, vision, will and the blue light you saw was that of a higher mental plane, a spiritual mind, one might say, which is above the ordinary human mental intelligence. An opening into this higher mind is usually accompanied by a silence of the ordinary mental thought.” (CWSA 30: 258)

4.

“The voidness (if by that you mean silence and emptiness of thoughts, movements etc.) is the basic condition into which the higher consciousness can flow.” (CWSA 30: 77)

5.

"Sweet Mother,

There are moments when I feel it would be better to sit silently instead of reading or doing something else. But I am afraid of wasting time. What should I do?

It all depends on the quality of the silence—if it is a luminous silence, full of force and conscious concentration, it is good. If it is a tamasic and unconscious silence, it is harmful." (CWM 16: 279)

6.

"But any transformation in the being, on any plane, always has some repercussion on the lower planes. There is always an effect; even things which seem to be purely intellectual certainly have some repercussion on the structure of the brain.

This kind of revelation [knowledge of transformation of Matter and the body] can only occur in a silent mind—at least in a mind that is at rest, completely quiet and still, otherwise they do not come. Or if they come, you do not notice them, because of all the noise you are making. And of course, they help this quiet, this silence, this receptivity to become better and better established. This feeling of something so still—but not closed, still but open, still but receptive—is something which becomes established through repeated experiences. There is a great difference

III—Silence Is a Part of Higher Consciousness

between a silence that is dead, dull, unresponsive and the receptive silence of a quietened mind. That makes a great difference. But that is the result of these experiences. All the progress we make always results, quite naturally, from truths coming from above.

They have an effect, all these things have an effect on the functioning of the body—the functioning of the organs, of the brain, of the nerves, etc. That will surely happen before—long before—there is any effect on the external form.” (CWM 10: 143)

IV—The Silent Mind

1.

“A silent mind is the first step towards true knowledge and the experience of the Divine.” (CWSA 29: 159)

2.

“In the entirely silent mind there is usually the static sense of the Divine without any active movement. But there can come into it all higher thought and aspiration and movements. There is then no absolute silence but one feels a fundamental silence behind which is not disturbed by any movement.” (CWSA 29: 159)

3.

“When the mind is silent, there is peace and in peace all things that are divine can come.” (CWSA 29: 162)

4.

“It is not an undesirable thing for the mind to fall silent, to be free from thoughts and still—for it is oftenest when the mind falls silent that there is the full descent of a wide peace from above and in that wide tranquillity the realisation of the silent Self above the mind spread out in its vastnesses everywhere.” (CWSA 29: 160)

5.

"... when the mind is at peace, when it is silent one can become aware of the Purusha, silent also, separate from the action of the nature." (CWSA 29: 160)

6.

"I have read again the message of the Yogi quoted in X's letter but apart from the context nothing much or very definite can be made out of it. There are two statements which are clear enough—

'In Silence is wisdom'—it is in the inner silence of the mind that true knowledge can come; for the ordinary activity of the mind only creates surface ideas and representations which are not true knowledge. Speech is usually only the expression of the superficial nature—therefore to throw oneself out too much in such speech wastes the energy and prevents the inward listening which brings the word of true knowledge.

'In listening you will win what you are thinking of' means probably that in the silence will come the true dynamic thought formations which can effectuate or realise themselves. Thought can be a force which realises itself, but the ordinary surface thinking is not of that kind, there is in it more waste of energy than anything else. It is in the thought that comes in a quiet or silent mind that there is power.

‘Talk less and gain power’ has essentially the same meaning. Not only a truer knowledge, but a greater power comes to one in the quietude and silence of a mind that instead of bubbling on the surface can go into its own depths and listen for what comes from a higher consciousness.

It is probably this that is meant—these are things known to all who have some experience of Yoga.” (CWSA 29: 159)

7.

“There is very often a complaint of this kind [*weakening of memory*] made during the course of the sadhana. I suppose that the usual action of memory is for a time suspended by the mental silence or else by the physical *tamas*.” (CWSA 28: 225)

8.

“An entire silence and inactivity of the mind cannot come at first—what is possible is a quietude of the mind, that is to say, a cessation of its absorption in its restless miscellaneous activity of ill-connected or unconnected thoughts and a concentration on the object of the sadhana. The imagination which the Mother recommended to you was a means of such concentration. A mental idea of the omnipresence such as comes to you is a good help for that also, especially if it brings the strong faith and reliance. The

feeling of the vibration of the Mother's Force around the head is more than a mental idea or even a mental realisation, it is an experience. This vibration is indeed the action of the Mother's Force which is first felt above the head or around it, then afterwards within the head. The pressure means that it is working to open the mind and its centres so that it may enter." (CWSA 30: 473–474)

9.

"Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work." (CWSA 29: 263)

10.

"But still when I speak of the mind's brightness, clearness, stillness, I have no idea of calling metaphor to my aid; it is meant to be a description quite precise and positive—as precise, as positive as if I were describing in the same way an expanse of air or a sheet of water. For the mystic's experience of mind, especially when it falls still, is not that of an abstract condition or impalpable activity of the consciousness; it is rather an experience of a substance—an extended subtle substance in which there can be and are waves, currents, vibrations not physically material but still as definite, as perceptible, as tangible and controllable by an inner sense as any movement of material energy or substance by the physical senses. The stillness of the mind

means, first, the falling to rest of the habitual thought movements, thought formations, thought currents which agitate this mind-substance. That repose, vacancy of movement, is for many a sufficient mental silence. But, even in this repose of all thought movements and all movements of feeling, one sees, when one looks more closely at it, that the mind-substance is still in a constant state of very subtle formless but potentially formative vibration—not at first easily observable, but afterwards quite evident—and that state of constant vibration may be as harmful to the exact reflection or reception of the descending Truth as any formed thought movement or emotional movement; for these vibrations are the source of a mentalisation which can diminish or distort the authenticity of the higher Truth or break it up into mental refractions. When I speak of a still mind, I mean then one in which these subtler disturbances too are no longer there. As they fall quiet one can feel an increasing stillness which is not the lesser quietude of repose and also a resultant clearness as palpable as the stillness and clearness of a physical atmosphere.” (CWSA 28: 362–363)

11.

“You are here to contact your soul, and that is why you live. Aspire persistently and try to silence your mind. The aspiration must come from the heart.” (CWM 14: 6)

12.

"Can one have silence without having peace?"

Perhaps, yes; that is to say, one may have silence in the mind and not have peace in the heart. It can very well happen that the mind is quite silent and immobile but that, all the same, here, in the heart something vibrates and throbs. This usually proves that one is pretty divided. But many people are divided. One can indeed have mental silence and not have peace in the heart. It can very well happen that the mind is quite silent and immobile, but that, despite this, there are still tremblings in the nerves which continue vibrating and jumping there, and yet the mind is quite silent. But if the silence is kept long enough, the rest must necessarily follow." (CWM 6: 321)

13.

"Descents of peace are good, but an increasingly stable quietude and silence of the mind is something more valuable. When that is there then other things can come—usually one at a time, light or strength and force or knowledge or ananda. It is not necessary to go on for ever having always the same preparatory experiences—a time comes when the consciousness begins to take a new poise and another state." (CWSA 30: 232)

14.

"The automatic mind is a part of the lower action, it can only stop by the acquirement of mental silence or the descent of a higher consciousness." (CWSA 28: 184)

15.

"Stopping the movements of the chitta [*is what is meant by cittavrttinirodha*]. In our Yoga it is more necessary to transform these movements than to stop them altogether, but the power to stop them is necessary—it is usually done by the mind falling into silence and then imposing the same silence on the vital nature." (CWSA 29: 437)

16.

"In the mental life ideas and ideals rule, ideas that are halflights wearing the garb of Truth, ideals formed by the mind as a result of a growing but still imperfect intuition and experience. Whenever the mental life prevails and the bodily diminishes its brute insistence, man the mental being feels pushed by the urge of mental Nature to mould in the sense of the idea or the ideal the life of the individual, and in the end even the vaguer more complex life of the society is forced to undergo this subtle process. In the spiritual life, or when a higher power than Mind has manifested and taken possession of the nature, these limited motive-forces [of desire, mental ideas and ideals] recede, dwindle, tend to disappear. The spiritual or

IV—The Silent Mind

supramental Self, the Divine Being, the supreme and immanent Reality, must be alone the Lord within us and shape freely our final development according to the highest, widest, most integral expression possible of the law of our nature. ... The individual has nothing further to gain, no desire to fulfil; he has become a portion of the impersonality or the universal personality of the Eternal. No other object than the manifestation and play of the Divine Spirit in life and the maintenance and conduct of the world in its march towards the divine goal can move him to action. Mental ideas, opinions, constructions are his no more; for his mind has fallen into silence, it is only a channel for the Light and Truth of the divine knowledge. Ideals are too narrow for the vastness of his spirit; it is the ocean of the Infinite that flows through him and moves him for ever." (CWSA 23: 209)

V—Silence in the Inner Consciousness

1.

“The silence is the silence of the inner consciousness and it is in that silence unmoved by outward things that the true activity of the consciousness can come without disturbing the silence—true perceptions, will, feelings, action. There also one can feel more easily the Mother’s working.” (CWSA 29: 162)

2.

“It is really an inner silence that is needed—a something silent within that looks at outer talk and action but feels it as something superficial, not as itself and is quite indifferent and untouched by it. It can bring forces to support speech and action or it can stop them by withdrawal or it can let them go on and observe without being involved or moved.” (CWSA 31: 93)

3.

“There is nothing out of the normal in what you describe—it happens in the course of the change of consciousness. What has to be remedied is that you feel the stillness, emptiness, but seem to have no joy of it or the satisfied peace of the self or sense of wideness or quiet release and freedom. Usually the cessation of the lower activities brings a sense of freedom, release, repose. The inner

consciousness does not miss the mental jumpings or the vital swirl—it feels as if the silence were its native element.” (CWSA 30: 75)

4.

“But, apart from that, one can very well, as you say, realise the Atman if one stands back from the mind and heart, detaches oneself from the parts of Prakriti, ceases to identify oneself with mind, life and body, falls into an inner silence.” (CWSA 28: 69–70)

5.

“Another method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life, physical being, to regard their activities as only a habitual formation of general Nature in the individual imposed on us by past workings, not as any part of our real being; in proportion as one succeeds in this, becomes detached, sees mind and its activities as not oneself, life and its activities as not oneself, the body and its activities as not oneself, one becomes aware of an inner Being within us—inner mental, inner vital, inner physical—silent, calm, unbound, unattached which reflects the true Self above and can be its direct representative; from this inner silent Being proceeds a rejection of all that is to be rejected, an acceptance only of what can be kept and transformed, an inmost Will to perfection or a call to the

Divine Power to do at each step what is necessary for the change of the Nature.” (CWSA 29: 7–8)

6.

“As the vital difficulties can be fought down and conquered, so can the mental. Only one has to see that these are the inevitable obstacles and neither cling to them nor be terrified or overwhelmed because they are there. One has to persevere till one can stand back from the mind as from the vital and feel the deeper and larger mental and vital Purushas within one which are capable of silence, capable of a straight receptivity of the true Word and Force as of the true silence.” (CWSA 31: 21)

7.

“Mother, how to change one’s consciousness?”

...

Suddenly one plunges into a depth, one moves away from the thing one perceived, it seems distant, superficial, unimportant; one enters an inner silence or an inner calm or an inward vision of things, a profound feeling, a more intimate perception of circumstances and things, in which all values change. And one becomes aware of a sort of unity, a deep identity which is one in spite of the diverse appearances.” (CWM 8: 403)

8.

“It is not possible for the spontaneous silent condition to last always at once, but that is what must grow in one till there is a constant inner silence—a silence which cannot be disturbed by any outward activity or even by any attempt at attack or disturbance.

The condition you describe shows precisely the growth of this inner silence. It has to fix itself eventually as the basis of all spiritual experience and activity. It does not matter if one does not know what is going on within behind the silence. For there are two conditions in the Yoga, one in which all is silent and there is no thought, feeling or movement even though one is acting outwardly as others do—another in which a new consciousness becomes active bringing knowledge, joy, love and other spiritual feelings and inner activities, but yet at the same time there is a fundamental silence or quietude. Both are necessary in the development of the inner being. The absolutely silent state, which is one of lightness, voidness and release, prepares the other and supports it when it comes.” (CWSA 29: 162–163)

9.

“What you feel as the new life is the growth of the inner being in you; the inner being is the true being and as it grows the whole consciousness begins to change. This feeling and your new attitude towards people are signs of

the change. The seeing of inner things also usually comes with this growth of the inner being and consciousness; it is an inner vision which awakes in most sadhaks when they enter this stage.

It is also a characteristic of this inner consciousness that even when it is active, there is felt behind the action or containing it a complete quietude or silence. The more one concentrates, the more this quietude and silence increases. That is why there seems to be all quiet within even though all sorts of things may be taking place within.

It is also quite usual that what takes place in the inner consciousness should not express itself at present in the outer physical. It at first creates changes inside, but takes possession of the outer instruments only afterwards." (CWSA 30: 223–224)

10.

"I am glad to hear of the development you speak of in your dealing with others. It is a power proper to the Yoga consciousness that is developing in you, because the Mother's force is at work and is developing the inner consciousness. For it is one of the powers of this inner consciousness to bring about what it sees to be the right thing by simply communicating in entire silence to the consciousness of another. That is the true way of acting—through the power of the inner consciousness, its knowledge, vision and will." (CWSA 30: 225)

11.

“Obviously to live in the silent Brahman, the best way is to live within where one can have the silence and resist all outward pulls. As much avoidance of outer pulls—contact does not matter, if there is no pull outward—as will help that, can be very helpful. It is only an entire seclusion that for occult rather than mental reasons is not altogether desirable unless one has already a great inner strength and poise.” (CWSA 30: 228)

12.

“The condition you describe in your work shows that the inner being is awake and that there is now the double consciousness. It is the inner being which has the inner happiness, the calm and quiet, the silence free from any ripple of thought, the inwardly silent repetition of the name. The automatic repetition of the mantra is part of the same phenomenon—that is what ought to happen to the mantra, it must become a conscious but spontaneous thing repeating itself in the very substance of the consciousness itself, no longer needing any effort of the mind. All these doubts and questionings of the mind are useless. What has to happen is that this inner consciousness should be always there not troubled by any disturbance with the constant silence, inner happiness, calm quietude, etc., while the outer consciousness does what is necessary in the way of work etc. or, what is better, has that done through it—it is

the latter experience that you have some days as someone pushing the work with so much continuous force without your feeling tired.” (CWSA 30: 232)

13.

“This condition you had of the inner being and its silence, separated from the surface consciousness and its little restless workings, is the first liberation, the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti, and it is the fundamental experience. The day when you can keep it, you can know that the Yogic consciousness has been founded in you. This time it has increased in intensity, but it must also increase in duration.

These things do not ‘drop’—what you have felt was there in you all the time, but you did not feel it because you were living on the surface altogether and the surface is all crowd and clamour. But in all men there is this silent Purusha, base of the true mental being, the true vital being, the true physical being. It was by your prayer and aspiration that the thing came, to show you in what direction you must travel in order to have the true rasa of things, for it is only when one is liberated that one can get the real rasa. For after this liberation come others and among them the liberation and Ananda in action as well as in the static inner silence.” (CWSA 30: 234)

14.

"It [*concentration of the inner consciousness*] can happen in several forms. It can become concentrated in silence as the witness—it can become concentrated in the feeling of the Divine Force flowing through it, the work being a result—it can become concentrated in the feeling of the presence of the Divine or the Ananda or love of the Divine while the working goes on separately in front. All this becomes so habitual that it goes on of itself without the need of call or effort or even of the mind's attention—it simply *is* there." (CWSA 29: 255)

15.

"Each time there is a purification of the outer nature, it becomes more possible for the inner being to reveal itself, to become free and to open to the higher consciousness above.

When this happens, several other things can happen at the same time. First, one becomes aware of the silent Self above—free, wide, without limits, pure, untroubled by the mental, vital and physical movements, empty of ego and limited personality,—this is what you have described in your letter. Secondly, the Divine Power descends through this silence and freedom of the Self and begins to work in the Adhara. This is what you felt as a pressure; its coming through the top of the head, the forehead and eyes and nose meant that it was working to open the mental

centres—especially the two higher centres of thought and will and vision in the inner mental being. These two centres are called the thousand-petalled lotus and the *ājñā-cakra* between the eyebrows.” (CWSA 30: 322–323)

16.

“The turmoil of mental (intellectual) activity has also to be silenced like the vital activity of desire in order that the calm and peace may be complete. Knowledge has to come but from above. In this calm the ordinary mental activities like the ordinary vital activities become surface movements with which the silent inner self is not connected. It is the liberation necessary in order that the true knowledge and the true life activity may replace or transform the activities of the Ignorance.” (CWSA 31: 54)

17.

“The failure [*in studies and in sadhana*] is due not to want of capacity but to want of steadiness—a restlessness in the vital and a sort of ardent hastiness that lacks in care of detail and in perseverance. What you need is the inner silence and the solid strength and force that can act through this inner silence, making the vital its instrument but not allowing it to condition the action by its defects.” (CWSA 31: 213–214)

18.

“When one begins to feel the inner being and live in it (the result of the experience of peace and silence) the ordinary time sense disappears or becomes purely external.” (CWSA 28: 404)

19.

“You have attained the silent inner consciousness, but that can be covered over by disturbance—the next step is for calm and silence to be established as the basis in the more and more outer consciousness—probably these [*higher*] forces are working for that. Then the play of the ordinary forces will be only on the surface and can be more easily dealt with.” (CWSA 29: 162)

20.

“Certainly, the realisation of the Spirit comes long before the development of Overmind or Supermind; hundreds of sadhaks in all times have had the realisation of the Atman on the higher mental plane, *buddheḥ parataḥ*, but the supramental realisation was not theirs. One can get *partial* realisations of the Self or Spirit or the Divine on any plane, mental, vital, physical even, and when one rises above the ordinary mental plane of man into a higher and larger mind, the Self begins to appear in all its conscious wideness. It is by full entry into this wideness of the Self that cessation of mental activity becomes possible; one

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gets the inner Silence. After that this inner Silence can remain even when there is activity of any kind; the being remains silent within, the action goes on in the instruments and one receives all the necessary indications and execution of action whether mental, vital or physical from a higher source without the fundamental peace and calm of the Spirit being troubled.” (CWSA 29: 413)

VI—Why Silence Is Required in Yoga

1.

“Silence of the being is the first natural aim of the Yoga. You and some others do not find satisfaction in it because you have not overcome the vital mind which wants always some kind of activity, change, doing something, making something happen. The eternal immobility of the silent Brahman is a thing it does not relish. So when emptiness comes, it finds it dull, inert, monotonous.” (CWSA 30: 79)

2.

“As to doubts and argumentative answers to them I have long given up the practice as I found it perfectly useless. Yoga is not a field for intellectual argument or dissertation. It is not by the exercise of the logical or the debating mind that one can arrive at a true understanding of Yoga or follow it. A doubting spirit, ‘honest doubt’ and the claim that the intellect shall be satisfied and be made the judge on every point is all very well in the field of mental action outside. But Yoga is not a mental field, the consciousness which has to be established is not a mental, logical or debating consciousness—it is even laid down by Yoga that unless and until the mind is stilled, including the intellectual or logical mind, and opens itself in quietude or silence to a higher and deeper consciousness, vision and knowledge,

sadhana cannot reach its goal.” (CWSA 28: 337) (CWSA 32: 380)

3.

“But so long as the mind does not become capable of a complete silence, this higher knowledge, thought, perception either does not come down or, if partially it does, it is liable to get mixed up with or imitated by the lower, and that is a bother and a hindrance. So the silence is necessary.” (CWSA 28: 184)

4.

“Detachment, silence, inner peace are certainly indispensable for the spiritual progress—a quiet peace-filled detachment. In that peace the Force must do its work.” (CWSA 29: 127)

5.

“But one thing perhaps needs to be kept in view—that this pure stillness of the mind is indeed always the required condition, the desideratum, but for bringing it about there are more ways than one.” (CWSA 28: 360) (CWSA 35: 246)

6.

“Yes, the inward move is the right one. To live within in the peace and silence is the first necessity. I spoke of the wideness because in the wideness of silence and peace

(which the Yogins recognise as the realisation of self at once individual and universal) is the basis for harmonising the inward and the outward.” (CWSA 29: 154)

7.

“In the liberation of the soul from the Ignorance the first foundation is peace, calm, the silence and quietude of the Eternal and Infinite; but a consummate power and greater formation of the spiritual ascension takes up this peace of liberation into the bliss of a perfect experience and realisation of the eternal beatitude, the bliss of the Eternal and Infinite. This Ananda would be inherent in the Gnostic consciousness as a universal delight and would grow with the evolution of the gnostic nature.” (CWSA 22: 1026)

8.

“The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. Otherwise you may have experiences, but nothing will be permanent. It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built.” (CWSA 29: 149–150)

9.

“The basis of your Sadhana must be silence and quiet, *santi, niravata*.

You must remain and grow always more and more deeply quiet and still both in yourself and in your attitude

to the world around you. If you can do this, the sadhana is likely to go on progressing and enlarging itself with a minimum of trouble and disturbance.” (CWSA 32: 208)

10.

“In silence, the consciousness grows. It aspires to know You more and more perfectly.” (CWM 17: 373)

11.

“In silence lies the greatest devotion.” (CWM 17: 374)

12.

“You had the same idea, I believe, about my acceptance of your former experiences, this current and the descent of stillness in the body, as signs of the Yogi in you. ... Any Yogi who knows something about pranayama or japa can tell you that the running of the name in the breath is not a small phenomenon but of great importance in these practices and, if it comes naturally, a sign that something in the inner being has done that kind of sadhana in the past. As for the current it is the familiar sign of a first touch of the higher consciousness flowing down in the form of a stream—like the ‘wave’ of light of the scientist—to prepare its possession of mind, vital and physical in the body. So is the stillness and rigidity of the body in your former experience a sign of the same descent of the higher consciousness in its form or tendency of stillness and

silence. It is a perfectly sound conclusion that one who gets these experiences at the beginning has the capacity of Yoga in him and can open, even if the opening is delayed by other movements belonging to his ordinary nature. These things are part of the science of Yoga, as familiar as the crucial experiences of physical Science are to the scientific seeker.” (CWSA 30: 16)

13.

“Next, it is precisely by action in silence that we can best do our work much more than by speech or writing, which can only be subordinate and secondary. For in this Yoga those will succeed best who know how to obey and follow the written and spoken word, but can also bear the silence and feel in it and receive (without listening to other voices or mistaking mental and vital suggestions and impulses for the divine Truth and the divine Will) help, support and guidance.” (CWSA 31: 164)

14.

“What exactly should I do to accelerate the sadhana?”

Wait quietly for the exact indication; all mental intervention and decisions are arbitrary. The clear indication comes in the silence of the mind.” (CWM 14: 348)

“The other way, [of doing our Yoga] which is the way to knowledge, is the meditation in the head by which there

comes the opening above, the quietude or silence of the mind and the descent of peace etc. of the higher consciousness generally till it envelops the being and fills the body and begins to take up all the movements. But this involves a passage through silence, a certain emptiness of the ordinary activities—they being pushed out and done as a purely superficial action—and you strongly dislike silence and emptiness.” (CWSA 29:210–211)

15.

“I have asked the Supreme Lord to help you to find Him, and I am ready to give you a moment every day to help you to make this discovery.

All I ask is that you try to remain silent during the time we are concentrating together.

If you can relax and feel at ease, it will be very good; if you can enter into the silence, that will be perfect. Every day we shall begin with the prayer: ‘Grant that I may become conscious of Your presence’; and together we shall aspire for a moment in the silence and ardour of our aspiration.” (CWM 17: 372–373)

16.

“The third way [of doing Yoga] which is one of the two ways towards Yoga by works is the separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti, the inner silent being from the outer active one, so that one has two consciousnesses or

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a double consciousness, one behind watching and observing and finally controlling and changing the other which is active in front. But this also means living in an inner peace and silence and dealing with the activities as if they were a thing of the surface.” (CWSA 29: 211)

17.

Message given by the Mother on SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE of The New Age Association: 17 August 1969

“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 make of you what He wants you to be.

With love and blessings.” (CWM 12: 309–310)

18.

“This silence is synonymous with peace and it is all-powerful; it is the perfectly effective remedy for the fatigue, tension and exhaustion arising from that internal over-activity and noise which generally escape our control and cease neither by day nor night.

This is why the first thing required when one wants to do Yoga is to bring down and establish in oneself the calm, the peace, the silence.” (CWM 16: 229–230)

19.

“There is nothing wrong in having intervals of passive peace without anything happening—they come naturally in the sadhana as a basis for fresh action when the nature is ready for it. It is only the vital attitude that turns it into a disharmony, because somewhere in its being there is not the assent to or participation in the peace and passivity. To be able often to rest, repose in all the being outspread in the silent Brahman is an indispensable thing for the Yogi. But the vital wants always fuss, action, to feel that it is somebody doing something, getting on, having progress, on the move. The counterpart to this rajasic fuss is inertia. If the whole being can widen itself out, rest satisfied in the silence, then progressively inertia fades out and gives place to *śama*.” (CWSA 30: 64)

20.

“An inner silence is a condition favourable to the sadhana even if for a time it means the cessation of all activity within, all thoughts, emotions or mental perceptions. But it is possible and it does happen that the unaccustomed physical consciousness feels the silence to be dull and a deprivation of intelligence rather than a release and repose, and the strangeness of this inactive condition causes it apprehension and an alarmed perplexity.” (CWSA 30: 79)

21.

"The emptiness, silence and peace are the basic condition for the spiritual siddhi—it is the first step towards it. It enables the Purusha to be free from the movements of Prakriti, to see and know where they come from since they no longer rise from within the mind, heart etc., these being in a state of quietude, and to reject the lower movements and to call in the knowledge, will etc. of the higher Consciousness which is above." (CWSA 30: 81)

22.

"I do not think, however, that the statement of supra intellectual things necessarily involves a making of distinctions in the terms of the intellect. For, fundamentally, it is not an expression of ideas arrived at by speculative thinking. One has to arrive at spiritual knowledge through experience and a consciousness of things which arises directly out of that experience or else underlies or is involved in it. This kind of knowledge, then, is fundamentally a consciousness and not a thought or formulated idea. For instance, my first major experience—radical and overwhelming, though not, as it turned out, final and exhaustive—came after and by the exclusion and silencing of all thought—there was, first, what might be called a spiritually substantial or concrete consciousness of stillness and silence, then the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality in whose presence things existed only as

forms, but forms not at all substantial or real or concrete; but this was all apparent to a spiritual perception and essential and impersonal sense and there was not the least concept or idea of reality or unreality or any other notion, for all concept or idea was hushed or rather entirely absent in the absolute stillness. These things were known directly through the pure consciousness and not through the mind, so there was no need of concepts or words or names.” (CWSA 28: 357–358)

23.

“It is true that both kinds of thought [bad thoughts and good thoughts] come equally to the mind in its ordinary state; but if the mind and mental will are well developed, one can establish a control over one’s thoughts as well as over one’s acts and prevent the bad ones from having their play. But this mental control is not enough for the sadhak.

He must attain to a quiet mind and in the silence of the mind receive only the Divine thought-forces or other divine Forces and be their field and instrument.

To silence the mind it is not enough to throw back each thought as it comes, that can only be a subordinate movement. One must get back from all thought and be separate from it, a silent consciousness observing the thoughts if they come, but not oneself thinking or identified with the thoughts. Thoughts must be felt as outside things altogether. It is then easier to reject thoughts or let them

pass without their disturbing the quietude of the mind.”
(CWSA 31: 334–335)

24.

(A sadhak asked how to get rid of the invasion of wrong suggestions.)

“The only radical way is to concentrate and go beyond your mental.

Silence and contemplation.” (CWM 14: 349)

25.

“Man did not begin with reason, neither will he end with it. There are faculties within us which transcend reason and are asleep to our waking consciousness, just as life is asleep in the metal, consciousness in the tree, reason in the animal. Our evolution is not over, we have not completed even half of the great journey. And if now we are striving to purify the intellect & to carry reason to its utmost capacities, it is in order that we may discourage the lower movements of passion and desire, self-interest and prejudice and dogmatic intolerance which stand in the way of the illumination. When the intellectual buddhi is pure by vichara & abhyasa of these things, then it becomes ready to rise up out of the mind into the higher levels of consciousness and there lose itself in a much mightier movement which because of its greatness & perfection is called in the Rigveda mahas and in the Vedanta vijnana.

This is what [is] meant in the Veda by Saraswati awakening the great ocean. Pavaka nah saraswati maho arnash chetayati. This is the justification of the demand in our own Yoga that desire shall be expelled, the mind stilled, the very play of reason & imagination silenced before a man shall attain to knowledge,—as the Gita puts it, na kinchid api chintayet.” (CWSA 18: 428–429)

26.

“If one feels [*the Mother’s Force working while in a state of quietness*] it is all right—but it does not always happen. The quietness, silence or peace is a basis for the extension of consciousness, the coming of higher experiences or realisations etc. In what way or order they come differs according to the individual nature.” (CWSA 30: 44)

27.

“The special experiences you are having are glimpses of what is to be and what is growing and preparing and are helping to make the consciousness ready for it. It is not therefore surprising that they change and are replaced by others—that is what usually happens; for it is not these forms that are to be perpetuated, but the essence of the thing which they are bringing. Thus the one thing that has to grow most now is the silence, the quietude, the peace, the free emptiness into which experiences can come, the sense of coolness and release. When that is in possession

of the consciousness fully, then something else will come into it which is also essential to the true consciousness and fix itself—it proceeds usually like that. There is nothing strange therefore in the special forms of experience ceasing and being followed by others after you have written about or brought them to the Mother. When the more permanent forms of realisation begin to come, it will no longer be like that.” (CWSA 30: 46)

28.

“You must be able to find the Mother in work and action as well as in concentration and silence. It is quite possible even if there is the silence within you and no restless movement, to move and act and do all that is needful. It is in fact when all within is silent, free from desire and with no restless movement that the Mother’s force can act best and do things in the right way. You should aspire to the Mother for the right force to act and do work and find her in the work and action.” (CWSA 32: 241)

29.

“The quietude and silence which you feel and the sense of happiness in it are indeed the very basis of successful sadhana. When one has got that, then one may be sure that the sadhana is placing itself on a sound footing. You are also right in thinking that if this quietude is fully established all that is concealed within will come out.” (CWSA 29: 148)

30.

“Our own force acts in this play of forces to help the sadhak through till he gets himself into the silence within and the cosmic consciousness as a whole with the Higher Force action to regulate and harmonise the progress—after which it is plainer sailing. There can be no question of our withdrawing protection and help.” (CWSA 35: 333)

31.

“If ugly forms or sounds are seen and heard, one has not to fear but reject them and call in the Mother’s protection. If she feels calmness in the meditation, that is the necessary basis—with that basis one can safely practise the Yoga. It is not indispensable that the mind should be entirely *blank*—it is sufficient that it is quiet with a fundamental silence which is not disturbed even if thoughts pass across it.” (CWSA 31: 279)

32.

“As for the actual action, a smooth, harmonious working is generally better than the difficulties created by too rigid principles, but that also is not absolute—and the ideal condition is at each occasion to receive in the inner silence the guidance from above.

With constant practice and goodwill, it becomes possible.” (CWM 14: 334)

33.

"X's talk is certainly not very helpful to his sadhana and I think he knows it—but he has not made any real attempt to control his tongue as yet. Talk—of the usual kind—does very easily disperse or bring down the inner condition because it usually comes out of the lower vital and the physical mind only and expresses that part of the consciousness—it has a tendency to externalise the being. That is of course why so many Yogis take refuge in silence." (CWSA 31: 82)

34.

"There should be no useless talking or mere chat, still less anything untrue or prompted by egoism and desire. One can talk, but with silence within and quietude in the speech." (CWSA 31: 83)

35.

"In the silence of a simple and faithful heart one can understand the mystery of incarnation." (CWM 14: 350)

36.

"Whatever you do, do it in a quiet and composed poise. In peace and silence is the greatest strength." (CWM 12: 123)

37.

"In the silence of our heart there is always peace and joy." (CWM 14: 142)

38.

“Certain silences are revelations and are more expressive than words.” (CWM 14: 142)

39.

“Silence is far superior to inexactitude.” (CWM 14: 202)

40.

“To know how to observe in silence is the source of skilfulness.” (CWM 14: 308)

41.

“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)

42.

“A silent help seems to be more effective and sure, more constant and detailed.” (CWM 14: 142)

43.

“In silence is the greatest respect.” (CWM 14: 142)

VII—How to Establish Silence

1.

“Of course [a silent mind is the result of Yoga]; the ordinary mind is never silent.” (CWSA 31: 55)

2.

“Silence is a state of the consciousness which comes of itself from above when you open to the Divine Consciousness—you need not trouble about that now.

A quiet mind, receiving things and looking at them without effervescence or haste, not rushing about or throwing up random ideas, is what is necessary.” (CWSA 29: 159–160)

3.

“It is not possible to establish a deep silence all at once unless you can separate yourself from the thoughts, feel them as coming from outside and reject them before they enter. But everybody cannot do that at once.” (CWSA 29: 158)

4.

“Silence is good, but absolute silence is not indispensable, at least at this stage. I do not know that to wrestle with the mind to make it quiet is of much use; usually the mind gets the better of that game. It is this standing back,

detaching oneself, getting the power to listen to something else other than the thoughts of the external mind that is the easier way.” (CWSA 29: 161)

5.

“What should be done to get rid of mental intervention?”

The mind must learn to be silent—remain calm, attentive, without making a noise. If you try to silence your mind directly, it is a hard job, almost impossible; for the most material part of the mind never stops its activity—it goes on and on like a non-stop recording machine. It repeats all that it records and unless there is a switch to stop it, it continues and continues indefinitely. If, on the other hand, you manage to shift your consciousness into a higher domain, above the ordinary mind, this opening to the Light calms the mind, it does not stir any longer, and the mental silence so obtained can become constant. Once you enter into this domain, you may very well never come out of it—the external mind always remains calm.

The only true solution is aspiration for the higher light.” (CWM 4: 182)

6.

“As for calm and silence, there is no need of the supramental to get that. One can get it even on the level of Higher Mind which is the next above the human intelligence.” (CWSA 28: 150)

7.

“What is happening in you is that the consciousness is trying to fix itself in this liberation [the consciousness rises out of the body and take its station above]. When one is there in that higher station, one finds the freedom of the Self and the vast silence and immutable calm—but this calm has to be brought down also into the body, into all the lower planes and fix itself there as something standing behind and containing all the movements.” (CWSA 30: 437)

8.

“Do you think that solely through an intense aspiration one can gain silence of the whole being and do sadhana by that silence?”

Yes.

Can all the impurities of the mind, vital and physical disappear by the descent of this silence?

Silence cannot cure all the impurities, but it alleviates [lessen, improve] a great many of them.” (CWM 17: 20)

9.

“Not to be disturbed by either joy or grief, pleasure or displeasure by what people say or do or by any outward

things is called in Yoga a state of *samatā*, equality to all things. It is of immense importance in sadhana to be able to reach this state. It helps the mental quietude and silence as well as the vital to come. It means indeed that the vital itself and the vital mind are already falling silent and becoming quiet. The thinking mind is sure to follow.” (CWSA 31: 334–335)

10.

“Is it possible to distinguish the moment when one attains perfect concentration from the moment when, starting from this concentration, one opens oneself to the universal Energy?”

You concentrate on something or simply you gather yourself together as much as is possible for you and when you attain a kind of perfection in concentration, if you can sustain this perfection for a sufficiently long time, then a door opens and you pass beyond the limit of your ordinary consciousness—you enter into a deeper and higher knowledge. Or you go within. Then you may experience a kind of dazzling light, an inner wonder, a beatitude, a complete knowledge, a total silence. There are, of course, many possibilities but the phenomenon is always the same.

To have this experience all depends upon your capacity to maintain your concentration sufficiently long at its highest point of perfection.” (CWM 4: 8–9)

11.

"Mother, how can one prevent the mind from intervening?"

Ah! First you must will it, and then you must say, as to people who make a lot of noise, 'Keep quiet, be quiet, be quiet!'; you must do this when the mind comes along with all its suggestions and all its movements. You must tranquillise it, pacify it, make it silent. The first thing is not to listen to it. Most of the time, as soon as all these come, all these thoughts, one looks, seeks to understand, one listens; then naturally that imbecile believes that you are very much interested: it increases its activity. You must not listen, must not pay attention. If it makes too much noise, you must tell it: 'Be still! Now then, silence, keep quiet!' without making a lot of noise yourself, you understand? You must not imitate those people who begin shouting: 'Keep quiet', and make such a noise themselves that they are even noisier than the others!" (CWM 6: 140–141)

12.

"It is from the Silence that the peace comes; when the peace deepens and deepens, it becomes more and more the Silence." (CWSA 29: 163)

13.

"How can we establish a settled peace and silence in the mind?"

First of all, you must want it.

And then you must try and must persevere, keep on trying. What I have just told you is a very good means. Yet there are others also. You sit quietly, to begin with; and then, instead of thinking of fifty things, you begin saying to yourself, 'Peace, peace, peace, peace, peace, calm, peace!' You imagine peace and calm. You aspire, ask that it may come: 'Peace, peace, calm.' And then, when something comes and touches you and acts, say quietly, like this, 'Peace, peace, peace.' Do not look at the thoughts, do not listen to the thoughts, you understand. You must not pay attention to everything that comes. You know, when someone bothers you a great deal and you want to get rid of him, you don't listen to him, do you? Good! You turn your head away (*gesture*) and think of something else. Well, you must do that: when thoughts come, you must not look at them, must not listen to them, must not pay any attention at all, you must behave as though they did not exist, you see! And then, repeat all the time like a kind of—how shall I put it?—as an idiot does, who repeats the same thing always. Well, you must do the same thing; you must repeat, 'Peace, peace, peace.' So you try this for a few minutes and then do what you have to do; and then, another time, you begin again; sit down again and then try. Do this on getting up in the morning, do this in the evening when going to bed. You can do this... look, if you want to digest your food properly, you can do

this for a few minutes before eating. You can't imagine how much this helps your digestion! Before beginning to eat you sit quietly for a while and say, 'Peace, peace, peace!' and *everything* becomes calm. It seems as though all the noises were going far, far, far away (*Mother stretches out her arms on both sides*) and then you must continue; and there comes a time when you no longer need to sit down, and no matter what you are doing, no matter what you are saying, it is always 'Peace, peace, peace.' Everything remains here, like this, it does not enter (*gesture in front of the forehead*), it remains like this. And then one is always in a perfect peace... after some years.

But at the beginning, a very small beginning, two or three minutes, it is very simple. For something complicated you must make an effort, and when one makes an effort, one is not quiet. It is difficult to make an effort while remaining quiet. Very simple, very simple, you must be very simple in these things. It is as though you were learning how to call a friend: by dint of being called he comes. Well, make peace and calm your friends and call them: 'Come, peace, peace, peace, peace, come!' " (CWM 6: 313–314)

14.

"Silence in the vital: a powerful help for inner peace." (CWM 14: 355)

15.

Prayers for Silence

“Supreme Lord, teach us to be silent so that in silence we may receive Thy force and understand Thy will.” (CWM 15: 217) (CWM 16: 435)

“Lord, give us the silence of Your contemplation, the silence rich with Your effective Presence.” (CWM 16: 437)

“Grant that our silence may be filled with Your Presence and that we may be fully conscious of it.

Grant that we may know that You are our life, our consciousness and our being, and that without You everything is merely illusion.” (CWM 16: 437)

16.

“The seventh [the thousand petalled lotus above the head] is sometimes confused with the brain, but that is an error—the brain is only a channel of communication situated between the thousand-petalled and the forehead centre. The former is sometimes called the void centre, *sunya*, either because it is not in the body, but in the apparent void above or because rising above the head one enters first into the silence of the self or spiritual being.” (CWSA 28: 231)

17.

"Mother, when one gets a shock, some kind of pain, should one try to express it either through music or poetry, unless it comes spontaneously?"

Express it? If one has the gift; otherwise it is not worthwhile.

But if one has the gift it is good.

There are different depths in these shocks. They are not all on the same plane. Usually people receive emotional or sentimental shocks altogether superficially, and that is why they weep, they cry, they... sometimes gesticulate. Anyway, these are shocks in the outer crust. But there is a greater depth where usually you receive silently, but which awakens in you a creative vibration and a need to formulate. Then, if one is a poet he writes poetry, if one is a musician he composes music, if one is a writer he writes a story, and if one is a philosopher he expresses his state, describes his state.

Now, there is a greater depth of pain which leaves you in an absolute silence and opens the inner doors to greater depths which can put you in immediate touch with the Divine. But this indeed is not expressed in words. It changes your consciousness; but usually a long time elapses before one can say anything about it.

Berlioz, of course, was in the second category."
(CWM 6: 382–383)

18.

"Sweet Mother,

Often after a long meditation (an effort to meditate), I feel very tired and want to rest. Why is this and how can I feel differently?

So long as you are making an effort, it is not meditation and there is not much use in prolonging this state.

To obtain mental silence, one must learn to relax, to let oneself float on the waves of the universal force as a plank floats on water, *motionless* but relaxed.

Effort is never silent." (CWM 16: 310)

19.

"Sweet Mother,

How can one empty the mind of all thought? When one tries during meditation, the thought that one must not think of anything is always there.

It is not *during* meditation that one must learn to be silent, because the very fact of trying makes a noise.

One must learn to concentrate one's energies in the heart—then, when one succeeds in that, silence comes automatically." (CWM 16: 309)

20.

"But when the spiritualisation begins and, as its greater results manifest themselves,—silence of the mind, the

VII—How to Establish Silence

admission of our being into the cosmic consciousness, the Nirvana of the little ego in the sense of universal self, the contact with the Divine Reality,—the interventions of the higher dynamis and our openness to them can increase, they can assume a fuller, more direct, more characteristic power of their working, and this progression continues until some complete and mature action of them is possible. (CWSA 22: 971–972)

VIII—Silence Can Descend from Above

1.

“At the same time one can look up, as it were, imaging to oneself the Force as there just above and calling it down or quietly expecting its help. That is how most people do it till the mind falls gradually quiet or silent of itself or else silence begins to descend from above. But it is important not to allow the depression or despair to come in because there is no immediate success; that can only make things difficult and stop any progress that is preparing.” (CWSA 29: 161–162)

2.

“It is not easy to get into the silence. That is only possible by throwing out the mental and vital activities. It is easier to let the silence get into you, i.e., to open yourself and let it descend. The way to do this and the way to call down the higher powers is the same. It is to remain quiet at the time of meditation, not fighting with the mind or making mental efforts to pull down the power of the Silence but keeping only a silent will and aspiration for them. If the mind is active, one has only to learn to look at it, drawn back and not giving any sanction from within, until its habitual or mechanical activities begin to fall quiet for want of support from within. If it is too persistent, a steady

rejection without strain or struggle is the one thing to be done.

The mental attitude you are taking with regard to ‘the Lord is the Yogeswara’ can be made a first step towards this quietude.” (CWSA 36: 300)

3.

“The first step is a quiet mind—silence is a farther step, but quietude must be there, and by a quiet mind I mean a mental consciousness within which sees thoughts arrive to it and move about, but does not itself feel that it is thinking or identify itself with the thoughts or call them its own. Thoughts, mental movements may pass through it as wayfarers appear and pass from elsewhere through a silent country — the quiet mind observes them or does not care to observe them but in either case does not become active or lose its quietude. Silence is more than quietude; it can be gained by banishing thought altogether from the inner mind keeping it voiceless or quite outside; but more easily it is established by a descent from above—one feels it coming down, entering and occupying, or surrounding the personal consciousness which then tends to merge itself in the vast impersonal silence.” (CWSA 29: 141–142)

4.

“This is always one of the chief difficulties in Yoga when the experiences have begun and the mind wants to be

always either concentrated or quiet. Some do what you propose [*direct rejection of thoughts*] and after a time succeed in quieting the mind altogether or the silence comes down from above and does it." (CWSA 29: 302–303)

5.

"If your consciousness rises above the head, that means that it goes beyond the ordinary mind to the centre above which receives the higher consciousness or else towards the ascending levels of the higher consciousness itself. The first result is the silence and peace of the Self which is the basis of the higher consciousness; this may afterwards descend into the lower levels, into the very body. Light also can descend and Force." (CWSA 30: 417)

6.

"There are two movements that are necessary—one is the ascent through the increasing of peace and silence to its source above the mind,—that is indicated by the tendency of the consciousness to rise out of the body to the top of the head and above where it is easy to realise the Self in all its stillness and liberation and wideness and to open to the other powers of the Higher Consciousness. The other is the descent of the peace, silence, the spiritual freedom and wideness and the powers of the higher consciousness as they develop into the lower down to the most physical and even the subconscient." (CWSA 30: 419)

7.

“What seems to be best is that the movement of rising above should be completed and if you can feel there the wideness, peace, calm, silence of the Self and that can come down into the body through all the centres and there can be the working of the Force in that condition of the physical being, then the vital physical difficulty can be faced.” (CWSA 31: 513)

8.

“The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental-vital-physical) consciousness to rise up to meet the higher Consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual or divine) Consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this Yoga the spiritual transformation.” (CWSA 30: 415)

9.

“That [*thoughts about others*] can be only a temporary result of past activities. The endeavour should now be to make the ascent above into the silence of the Self in the higher universal consciousness above, for that was evidently what was trying to come when the disturbance broke in. That would probably bring also the descent of the

permanent spiritual peace into all the being as a basis for the higher activities.” (CWSA 30: 423–424)

10.

“It is the silence and calm of the higher consciousness pressing down into the body. When it comes down fully then there is the ‘still statue’ feeling at first. Afterwards the calm or silence becomes free and normal.” (CWSA 30: 454)

11.

“To still the mind *absolutely* is not so easy. It can be done usually only by the descent of the Silence from above and even then it is not complete until the whole system has been occupied by the higher silence and peace.” (CWSA 30: 454)

12.

“The experience you had was simply the descent of the Divine Force into the body. By your attitude and aspiration you called for it to work in you, so it came. Such a descent brings naturally a deep inward condition and a silence of the mind, and it may bring much more—peace, a sense of liberation, happiness, Ananda.” (CWSA 30: 456)

13.

“The descent of the Silence is not usually associated with sadness, though it does bring a feeling of calm detachment, unconcern and wide emptiness, but in this

emptiness there is a sense of ease, freedom, peace.”
(CWSA 30: 464)

14.

“The silence and peace are there waiting to manifest. Let the mind and vital give all themselves and they will pour in and reveal themselves.” (CWSA 29: 152)

15.

“The silence descends into the inner being first—as also other things from the higher consciousness. One can become aware of this inner being, calm, silent, strong, untouched by the movements of Nature, full of knowledge or light, and at the same time be aware of another lesser being, the small personality on the surface which is made up of the movements of Nature or else still subject to them or else, if not subject to them, still open to invasion by them. This is a condition that any number of sadhaks and Yogis have experienced. The inner being means the psychic, the inner mind, the inner vital, the inner physical.”
(CWSA 30: 213)

16.

“As for the subconscious that is best dealt with when the opening of the consciousness to what comes down from above is complete. Then one becomes aware of the

subconscious as a separate domain and can bring down into it the silence and all else that comes from above.

The subconscious can be entirely dealt with only when the other parts are sufficiently open and changed—but meanwhile it can feel the pressure of the change in the mind and vital.” (CWSA 31: 608–609)

17.

“The sense of peace, purity and calm is brought about by the union of the lower with the higher consciousness. It cannot be permanent at first, but it can become so by increased frequency and endurance of the calm and peace and finally by the full descent of the eternal peace and calm and silence of the higher consciousness into the lower nature.” (CWSA 35: 150)

18.

“To be able to detach oneself from the action of the mechanical mind is the first necessity so that it may be like a noise in the street which passes and which one can ignore. It is easier then for the quiet and peace of the mind to remain undisturbed by this action even if it occurs.

If the peace and silence continue to come down, they usually become so intense as to seize the physical mind also after a time.” (CWSA 29: 314–315)

19.

“There is no necessity of feeling pressure. One feels force when something is being done or the force is flowing in or if it is there manifest in the body—but not when what is manifesting is peace and silence.” (CWSA 30: 473)

20.

“What is trying to come down in you is the silence and peace of the Self—when that comes fully, then there is no ego-perception, it is drowned in the wideness of the silence and peace of the Self. But this realisation is at first in the static condition of the Self only—in the dynamic movements the ego may still be there owing to past habits—but each time an ego-movement is abandoned, the sense of the loss of ego becomes deeper and more complete. It is perhaps some impression of what is trying to come that has touched you.” (CWSA 30: 453)

21.

“But one thing perhaps needs to be kept in view—that this pure stillness of the mind ... for bringing it about there are more ways than one. It is not, for instance, only by an effort of the mind itself to get clear of all intrusive emotion or passion, to quiet its own characteristic vibrations, to resist the obscuring fumes of a physical inertia which brings about a sleep or a torpor of the mind instead of its wakeful silence, that the thing can be done. This is indeed an

ordinary process of the Yogic path of knowledge; but the same end can be brought about or automatically happen by other processes—for instance, by the descent from above of a great spiritual stillness imposing silence on the mind and heart, on the life stimuli, on the physical reflexes. A sudden descent of this kind or a series of descents accumulative in force and efficacy is a well-known phenomenon of spiritual experience. Or again one may start a mental process of one kind or another for the purpose which would normally mean a long labour and yet may pull down or be seized midway, or even at the outset, by an overmind influx, a rapid intervention or manifestation of the higher Silence, with an effect sudden, instantaneous, out of all proportion to the means used at the beginning. One commences with a method, but the work is taken up by a Grace from above, by a response from That to which one aspires or by an irruption of the infinitudes of the Spirit. It was in this last way that I myself came by the mind's absolute silence, unimaginable to me before I had the actual experience." (CWSA 28: 360–361) (CWSA 35: 246)

22.

"It must have been the descent of the higher silence, the silence of the Self or Atman. In this silence one perceives, but the mind is not active,—things are sensed, but without any responsive connection or vibration. The silent Self is there as a separate reality, not bound or involved in the

activity of Nature, aloof, detached and self-existent. Even if thoughts come across this silence, they do not disturb it; the Self is separate from the thinking mind also. In this connection the feeling 'I think' is a survival from the old consciousness; in the full silence what one feels is 'thought occurs in me'—the identification with thoughts as well as with the perception of objects ceases." (CWSA 30: 453–454)

23.

"But if through meditation or concentration we turn inward or upward, we can bring down into ourselves or raise up from the depths calm, quiet, peace and finally silence. It is a concrete, positive silence (not the negative silence of the absence of noise), immutable so long as it remains, a silence one can experience even in the outer tumult of a hurricane or battlefield." (CWM 16: 229–230)

24.

"After reading your reply, Sweet Mother, I became serious. I thought that I should keep silent, at least for today. A moment later another part of my being said, 'It is not a real silence but rather a dissatisfaction of the vital, for you can very well see that there is not much happiness and enthusiasm in it.' I thought that the second part was right.

VIII—Silence Can Descend from Above

Both are partly true and partly false. It is wise to receive the descending Force in silence and concentration, but this silence and concentration should not come from the vital's resentment at not being allowed to follow its whims.

This concentration and silence should not only be full of a *great peace* but also of a *very intense happiness*. Then one knows that the movement is true and unmixed." (CWM 17: 54)

25.

"Of course one can sit down and try... not to meditate, because that's an activity of thought which does not lead to experience, but to concentrate and aspire and open oneself to the force from above; and if one does it persistently enough, there is a moment when one feels this force, this peace or this silence, this quietude descending, penetrating and descending into the being quite far. The first day it may be very little, and then gradually it becomes more. This also is an experience. All these are easy things to do." (CWM 7: 79)

IX—Cessation of Thoughts for Inner Silence

1.

“The sudden cessation of thought and all movements—this is very important, as it means the beginning of the capacity for the inner silence. It lasts only for a short while at the beginning of its manifestation but increases afterwards its hold and duration.” (CWSA 30: 467)

2.

“All these thoughts and influences come really from outside, from universal Nature—they create formations in us or get habitual responses from the individual being. When they are rejected, they go back into the external universal Nature and if one becomes conscious, one can feel them coming from outside and trying to get a lodging inside again or reawaken the habitual response. One has to reject them persistently till no possibility of response remains any longer. This is hastened much if a certain inner calm, purity and silence can be established from which these things fall away without being able to touch it.” (CWSA 31: 42–43)

3.

“To get rid of the random thoughts of the surface physical mind is not easy. It is sometimes done by a sudden miracle as in my own case, but that is rare. Some get it done by a

slow process of concentration, but that may take a very long time. It is easier to have a quiet mind with things that come in passing on the surface, as people pass in the street, and one is free to attend to them or not—that is to say, there develops a sort of double mind, one inner silent and concentrated when it pleases to be so, a quiet witness when it chooses to see thoughts and things,—the other meant for surface dynamism. It is probable in your case that this will come as soon as these descents of peace, intensity or Ananda get strong enough to occupy the whole system.” (CWSA 29: 142) (CWSA 31: 39) (CWSA 35: 245)

4.

“However that may be, I believe it is a practice to be recommended to everyone: to keep a certain time every day for trying to make the mind quiet, even, still. And it is an undeniable fact that the more mentally developed one is, the quicker one succeeds; and the more the mind is in a rudimentary state, the more difficult it is.

Those who are at the bottom of the scale, who have never trained their minds, find it necessary to speak in order to think. It happens even that it is the sound of their voice which enables them to associate ideas; if they do not express them, they do not think. At a higher level there are those who still have to move words about in their heads in order to think, even though they do not utter them aloud. Those who truly begin to think are those who are able to

think without words, that is to say, to be in contact with the idea and express it through a wide variety of words and phrases. There are higher degrees—many higher degrees—but those who think without words truly begin to reach an intellectual state and for them it is much easier to make the mind quiet, that is to say, to stop the movement of associating the words that constantly move about like passers-by in a public square, and to contemplate an idea in silence.

I emphasise this fact because there are quite a few people who, when mental silence has been transmitted to them by occult means, are immediately alarmed and afraid of losing their intelligence. Because they can no longer think, they fear they may become stupid! But to cease thinking is a much higher achievement than to be able to spin out thoughts endlessly and it demands a much greater development.” (CWM 3: 195–196)

5.

“Its entire disappearance [of mechanical thoughts] comes only when there is a complete silence in the being, but even before complete disappearance, one can arrive at a point when, in spite of it, one can go inside at will and remain there.” (CWSA 31: 31)

6.

“Meditation means thinking on one subject in a concentrated way. In concentration proper there is not a

series of thoughts, but the mind is silently fixed on one object, name, idea, place etc.

There are other kinds of concentration, e.g. concentrating the whole consciousness in one place, as between the eyebrows, in the heart, etc. One can also concentrate to get rid of thought altogether and remain in a complete silence." (CWSA 29: 297)

7.

"One can stop thinking by rejecting the thoughts and in the silence discover oneself. One can do it by letting the thoughts run down while one detaches oneself from them. There are a number of other ways. ... There is also the separation of Purusha from Prakriti till one becomes the witness only and feels separate from all the activities as the Witness Consciousness." (CWSA 29: 302)

8.

"When one wants to concentrate, why do all kinds of thoughts come which never came before?"

Perhaps they came and you did not know it! Perhaps it is because you want to concentrate that you become aware that they are there. It may also happen that there is an element of contradiction in the consciousness and that when you want to be silent, something says, 'No, I won't be silent!'

I think that many of you have an inner contradiction like this. When you have resolved to be good, there is something which would like to push you into being wicked, and when you want to be quiet, there is something which pushes you into being agitated, and when you want to be silent, immediately thoughts begin to wander. It is a contradiction inherent in man's nature. It may be this; it may be what I said: that all these thoughts are there but as you were not paying any attention to them, you were not aware of them.

It is quite certain that to create absolute silence is of all things the most difficult, for many things of which one was not aware, become *enormous*! There were all kinds of suggestions, movements, thoughts, formations which went on as though *automatically* in the outer consciousness, almost outside the consciousness, on the frontiers of consciousness; and as soon as one wants to be absolutely silent, one becomes aware of all these things which go on moving, moving, moving and make a lot of noise and prevent you from being silent. That is why it is better to remain very quiet, very calm and at the same time very attentive to something which is above you and to which you aspire, and if there is this kind of noise passing like that around you (*Mother moves her hands around her head*), not to pay attention, not to look, not to heed it. If there are thoughts which go round and round and round like this (*gestures*), which come and go, do not look, do

not pay attention, but concentrate upwards in a great aspiration which one may even formulate—because often it helps the concentration—towards the light, the peace, the quietude, towards a kind of inner impassiveness, so that the concentration may be strong enough for you not to attend to all that continues to whirl about all around. But if suddenly you say, ‘Ah, there’s some noise! Oh, here is a thought!’, then it is finished. You will never succeed in being quiet. Have you never seen those people who try to stop a quarrel by shouting still louder than the ones who are quarrelling? Well, it is something like that. (*Mother laughs.*)” (CWM 6: 309–310)

9.

“The recurrence of the experience of the receding away of thoughts, the cessation of the thought-generating mechanism and its replacement by the mental self-space, is normal and as it should be; for this silence or at any rate the capacity for it has to grow until one can have it at will or even established in an automatic permanence. For this silence of the ordinary mind mechanism is necessary in order that the higher mentality may manifest, descend, occupy by degrees the place of the present imperfect mentality and transform the activities of the latter into its own fuller movements. The difficulty of its coming when you are at work is only at the beginning—afterwards when it is more settled one finds that one can carry on all the

activities of life either in the pervading silence itself or at least with that as the support and background. The silence remains behind and there is the necessary action on the surface or the silence is our wide self and somewhere in it an active Power does the works of Nature without disturbing the silence. It is therefore quite right to suspend the work while the visitation of the experience is there—the development of this inner silent consciousness is sufficiently important to justify a brief interruption or pause.” (CWSA 30: 259)

10.

“I do not think . . . that the statement of supra-intellectual things necessarily involves a making of distinctions in the terms of the intellect. For, fundamentally, it is not an expression of ideas arrived at by speculative thinking. One has to arrive at spiritual knowledge through experience and a consciousness of things which arises directly out of that experience or else underlies or is involved in it. This kind of knowledge, then, is fundamentally a consciousness and not a thought or formulated idea. For instance, my first major experience—radical and overwhelming, though not, as it turned out, final and exhaustive—came after and by the exclusion and silencing of all thought—there was, first, what might be called a spiritually substantial or concrete consciousness of stillness and silence, then the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality in whose presence things

existed only as forms but forms not at all substantial or real or concrete; but this was all apparent to a spiritual perception and essential and impersonal sense and there was not the least concept or idea of reality or unreality or any other notion, for all concept or idea was hushed or rather entirely absent in the absolute stillness. These things were known directly through the pure consciousness and not through the mind, so there was no need of concepts or words or names. At the same time this fundamental character of spiritual experience is not absolutely limitative; it can do without thought, but it can do with thought also.” (CWSA 35: 252)

11.

“When we perform a sort of practical analysis of the thinking mind, cut away this element and hold back the higher reason free, observing and silent, we find that this current understanding begins to run about in a futile circle, repeating all its formed opinions and responses to the impressions of things, but incapable of any strong adaptation and initiation. As it feels more and more the refusal of sanction from the higher reason, it begins to fail, to lose confidence in itself and its forms and habits, to distrust the intellectual action and to fall into weakness and silence. The stilling of this current, running, circling, repeating thought-mind is the principal part of that silencing of the thought which is one of the most effective disciplines of Yoga.” (CWSA 24: 670)

12.

"If the difficulty in meditation is that thoughts of all kinds come in, that is not due to hostile forces but to the ordinary nature of the human mind. All sadhaks have this difficulty and with many it lasts for a very long time. There are several ways of getting rid of [thoughts during the meditation] it. One of them is to look at the thoughts and observe what is the nature of the human mind as they show it but not to give any sanction and to let them run down till they come to a standstill—this is a way recommended by Vivekananda in his *Rajayoga*. Another is to look at the thoughts as not one's own, to stand back as the witness Purusha and refuse the sanction—the thoughts are regarded as things coming from outside, from Prakriti, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. In this way it usually happens that after a time the mind divides into two, a part which is the mental witness watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet and a part which is the object of observation, the Prakriti part in which the thoughts cross or wander. Afterwards one can proceed to silence or quiet the Prakriti part also. There is a third, an active method by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as it were; if one can detect them coming, then, *before they enter*, they have to be thrown away altogether. This is

perhaps the most difficult way and not all can do it, but if it can be done it is the shortest and most powerful road to silence.” (CWSA 29: 301–302)

13.

“When we try to concentrate, this stream of self-moved mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is the first normal obstacle ... to the effort towards Yoga.

The first thing to do is to realise that this thought-flow is not yourself, it is not you who are thinking, but thought that is going on in the mind. It is Prakriti with its thought-energy that is raising all this whirl of thought in you, imposing it on the Purusha. You as the Purusha must stand back as the witness observing the action, but refusing to identify yourself with it. The next thing is to exercise a control and reject the thoughts—though sometimes by the very act of detachment the thought habit falls away or diminishes during the meditation and there is a sufficient silence or at any rate a quietude which makes it easy to reject the thoughts that come and fix oneself on the object of meditation. If one becomes aware of the thoughts as coming from outside, from the universal Nature, then one can throw them away before they reach the mind; in that way the mind finally falls silent. If neither of these things happens, a persistent practice of rejection becomes necessary—there should be no struggle or

wrestling with the thoughts, but only a quiet self separation and refusal. Success does not come at first, but if consent is constantly withheld, the mechanical whirl eventually lessens and begins to die away and one can then have at will an inner quietude or silence.” (CWSA 29: 303–304)

14.

“There is another phenomenon which is considered spiritual, but which is spiritual only indirectly: it is when you find yourself near someone who has controlled his thought and achieved mental silence. You suddenly feel this silence coming down into yourself and something which was impossible for you half an hour earlier suddenly becomes a reality. This is a rather unusual phenomenon.” (CWM 15: 313)

X—How the Average Mind Regards Silence

1.

"Ordinary human minds, Europeans especially, are accustomed to regard thought as indispensable and as the highest thing—so they are alarmed at silence. X when he was here asked for Yoga. I told him how to make his mind silent and it became silent. He immediately got frightened and said, 'I am becoming a fool, I can't think',—so I took what I had given away from him. That is how the average mind regards silence." (CWSA 31: 55) (CWSA 35: 437)

2.

"Sweet Mother, what does 'artistry' mean?"

What most men call 'artistry' is just contrast. Artists say and feel that it is the shadows which make the light, that if there were no contrasts, they would not be able to make a picture. It is the same thing with music: the contrast between 'forte' and 'piano' is one of the greatest charms of music.

I knew some poets who used to say, 'It is my enemies' hatred which makes me value the affection of my friends....' And it is the almost inevitable likelihood of misfortune which gives all its savour to happiness, and so on. And they value repose only in contrast with the daily agitation, silence only because of the usual noise, and

some of them even tell you, 'Oh! it is because there are illnesses that good health is cherished.' It goes so far that a thing is valued only when it is lost. And as Sri Aurobindo says here: When this fever of action, of movement, this agitation of creative thought is not there, one feels one is falling into inertia. Most people fear silence, calm, quietude. They no longer feel alive when they are not agitated.

I have seen many cases in which Sri Aurobindo had given silence to somebody, had made his mind silent, and that person came back to him in a kind of despair, saying: "But I have become stupid!" For his thought was no longer excited.

What he says here is terribly true. Men want freedom but they are in love with their chains, and when one wants to take them away, when one wants to show them the path of true liberation, they are afraid, and often they even protest." (CWM 9: 28)

3.

"People will certainly regard it [*maintaining absolute silence*] as unnatural and there will be a lot of hubbub for a time." (CWSA 31: 342)

4.

"In Your Conversations You have said that the intellect is like a mediator between the true knowledge and its realisation down here. Does it not follow that intellectual

culture is indispensable for rising above the mind to find there the true knowledge?

Intellectual culture is indispensable for preparing a good mental instrument, large, supple and rich, but its action stops there.

In rising above the mind, it is more often a hindrance than a help, for, in general, a refined and educated mind finds its satisfaction in itself and rarely seeks to silence itself so as to be surpassed." (CWM 12: 138–139) (CWM 16: 194)

5.

"A silence, an entry into a wide or even immense or infinite emptiness is part of the inner spiritual experience; of this silence and void the physical mind has a certain fear, the small superficially active thinking or vital mind a shrinking from it or dislike,—for it confuses the silence with mental and vital incapacity and the void with cessation or non-existence: but this silence is the silence of the spirit which is the condition of a greater knowledge, power and bliss, and this emptiness is the emptying of the cup of our natural being, a liberation of it from its turbid contents so that it may be filled with the wine of God; it is the passage not into non-existence but to a greater existence. Even when the being turns towards cessation, it is a cessation not in non-existence but into some vast ineffable of spiritual

being or the plunge into the incommunicable superconscience of the Absolute.” (CWSA 22: 1065)

6.

“But for the knowledge of the Self it is necessary to have the power of a complete intellectual passivity, the power of dismissing all thought, the power of the mind to think not at all which the Gita in one passage enjoins. This is a hard saying for the occidental mind to which thought is the highest thing and which will be apt to mistake the power of the mind not to think, its complete silence for the incapacity of thought. But this power of silence is a capacity and not an incapacity, a power and not a weakness. It is a profound and pregnant stillness. Only when the mind is thus entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the Self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being. In a complete silence only is the Silence heard; in a pure peace only is its Being revealed. Therefore to us the name of That is the Silence and the Peace.” (CWSA 23: 316) (CWSA 35: 437)

7.

“Sweet Mother, why do men take pleasure in making a lot of noise?”

In making a noise? Because they like to deaden themselves. In silence they have to face their own difficulties, they are in front of themselves, and usually they don't like that. In the noise they forget everything, they become stupefied. So they are happy.

Constantly man rushes into external action in order not to have time to observe himself and how he lives. For him this is expressed by the desire to escape from boredom." (CWM 7: 24–25)

8.

"Why does one always go in for useless talking? Why do we speak uselessly?"

Why do people speak uselessly? Yes, that's probably because man is instinctively very proud of being able to formulate words. He is the first being on earth who can speak, who emits articulate sounds. So it is a kind of... it is like a child who has a new toy it likes to play with very much. Man is the only animal on earth who has articulate sounds at his disposal, so he plays with them, you see... I think it's that...

And then there's all the stupidity.... You know, I also said that some people could begin to think only when they talked.... When they do not speak, they do not even think! They are not able to think in silence, so they get into the habit of speaking. But the more developed one is, the more

intelligent one is and the less need one has to express oneself. It is always at a lower level that one needs to talk. And truly, a being who is very conscious, who is mentally, intellectually, very developed, talks only when it is necessary. He does not utter useless words.” (CWM 6: 222)

9.

“The emptiness that you described in your letter yesterday was not a bad thing—it is this emptiness inward and outward that often in Yoga becomes the first step towards a new consciousness. Man’s nature is like a cup of dirty water—the water has to be thrown out, the cup left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it. The difficulty is that the human physical consciousness feels it difficult to bear this emptiness—it is accustomed to be occupied by all sorts of little mental and vital movements which keep it interested and amused or even if in trouble and sorrow still active. The cessation of these things is hard to bear for it. It begins to feel dull and restless and eager for the old interests and movements. But by this restlessness it disturbs the quietude and brings back the things that had been thrown out. It is this that is creating the difficulty and the obstruction for the moment. If you can accept emptiness as a passage to the true consciousness and true movements, then it will be easier to get rid of the obstacle.

X—How the Average Mind Regards Silence

All in the Asram are not suffering from the sense of dullness and want of interest, but many are because the Force that is descending is discouraging the old movements of the physical and vital mind which they call life and they are not accustomed to accept the renunciation of these things, or to admit the peace or joy of silence.”
(CWSA 30: 74)

XI—When All Is Silenced Why Men Commit Stupidities

1.

“For instance, when the Lord draws closest to men, to establish a conscious contact with them, it is then that in their folly they commit the grossest stupidities.

This is true, altogether true, it is at the moment when all is silenced in order that man may become conscious of his origin that he, in his folly, in order to distract himself, conceives or carries out the worst stupidities.

To distract himself because he is unable to bear the force of the Light?

Yes.

The pressure is too strong?

Yes, there are those who are afraid, they are panic-stricken. They cannot bear it so they turn to anything at all to get out of it.” (CWM 4: 205–206)

2.

“I have seen hundreds of cases where someone’s difficulty had been removed (with a particular power a certain difficulty had been removed), but after a few days he

brought it back with enthusiasm. He said, 'But without that I do not exist any longer!' I have known people who had been given mental silence almost spontaneously and who, after a day or two, came back frightened: 'Have I become an idiot?'—for the mental machine was not working all the time.... You cannot imagine it, you don't know how very difficult it is to separate oneself from this little ego; how much it gets into the way though it is so small. It takes up so much room while being so microscopic. It is very difficult." (CWM 4: 332–333)

3.

"One ... asked me how to do Yoga. I said: 'Make your mind quiet first.' He did and his mind became quite silent and empty. Then he rushed to me saying: 'My brain is empty of thoughts, I cannot think. I am becoming an idiot.' He did not pause to look and see where these thoughts he uttered were coming from! Nor did he realise that one who is already an idiot cannot become one. Anyhow I was not patient in those days and I dropped him and let him lose his miraculously achieved silence." (CWSA 35: 247)

XII—Disturbers of the Silent Mind and How to Reject Them

1.

“The descent of the peace is often one of the first major positive experiences of the sadhana. In this state of peace the normal thought-mind (*buddhi*) is apt to fall silent or abate most of its activity and, when it does, very often either this vital mind can rush in, if one is not on one’s guard, or else a kind of mechanical physical or random subconscious mind can begin to come up and act; these are the chief disturbers of the silence. Or else the lower vital mind can try to disturb; that brings up the ego and passions and their play. All these are signs of elements that have to be got rid of, because if they remain and other of the higher powers begin to descend, Power and Force, Knowledge, Love or Ananda, those lower things may come across with the result that either the higher consciousness retires or its descent is covered up and the stimulation it gives is misused for the purposes of the lower nature. This is the reason why many sadhaks after having big experiences fall into the clutch of a magnified ego, upheavals, ambition, exaggerated sex or other vital passions or distortions. It is always well therefore if a complete purification of the vital can either precede or keep pace with the positive experience—at least in natures in which the vital is strongly active.” (CWSA 28: 180–181)

2.

“Only, when there is the peace and the mental silence, the vital mind tries to rush in and occupy the place or else the mechanical mind tries to raise up for the same purpose its round of trivial habitual thoughts. What the sadhaka has to do is to be careful to reject and hush these outsiders, so that during the meditation at least the peace and quietude of the mind and vital may be complete. This can be done best if you keep a strong and silent will. That will is the will of the Purusha behind the mind ...” (CWSA 29: 160)

3.

“That is the nature of the mental physical to go on repeating without use the movement that has happened. It is what we call the mechanical mind—it is strong in childhood because the thinking mind is not developed and has besides a narrow range of interests. Afterwards it becomes an undercurrent in the mental activities. It must now have risen up with the other characteristics of the mental physical because it is in the physical that the action has come down. Sometimes also when there is silence of the mind, these things come up till they also are quieted down.” (CWSA 28: 207)

4.

“There are always two things that can rise up and assail the silence,—vital suggestions, the physical mind’s

XII—Disturbers of the Silent Mind and How to Reject Them

mechanical recurrences. Calm rejection for both is the cure. There is a Purusha within who can dictate to the nature what it shall admit or exclude, but its will is a strong, quiet will; if one gets perturbed or agitated over the difficulties, then the will of the Purusha cannot act effectively as it would otherwise.

The dynamic realisation will probably take place when the higher consciousness comes fully down into the vital. When it comes into the mental it brings the peace of the Purusha and liberation and it may bring also knowledge. It is when it comes into the vital that the dynamic realisation becomes present and living.” (CWSA 29: 304–305)

5.

“A greater readiness of essential doubt and sceptical reserve; a habit of mental activity as a necessity of the nature which makes it more difficult to achieve a complete mental silence; a stronger turn towards outside things born of the plenitude of active life ... a habit of mental and vital self-assertion and sometimes an aggressively vigilant independence which renders difficult any completeness of internal surrender even to a greater Light and Knowledge, even to the divine Influence—these are frequent obstacles.” (CWSA 29: 39)

6.

“There are some who have the flow of speech by nature and those who are very vital cannot do without it. But the latter case (not being able to do without it) is obviously a disability from the spiritual point of view. There are also certain stages in the sadhana when one has to go inward and silence is at that time very necessary while unnecessary speech becomes a dispersion of the energies or externalises the consciousness. It is especially this chat for chat’s sake tendency that has to be overcome.” (CWSA 31: 81)

7.

“It is also better to be more strict about not talking of others and criticising them with the ordinary mind—not only in the case of X or Y but all. It is necessary in order to develop a deeper consciousness and outlook on things that understands in silence the movements of Nature in oneself and others and is not moved or disturbed or superficially interested and drawn into an external movement.” (CWSA 31: 88)

8.

“There is always a difficulty in keeping the physical mind within or silent, because it has been its nature to occupy itself with outward things and it finds a difficulty in accustoming itself to a contrary movement. You must not be depressed by that, but persist in the aspiration and will

XII—Disturbers of the Silent Mind and How to Reject Them

till it is done. The Mother's Force will be there to bring it about as soon as possible." (CWSA 31: 39)

9.

"That [*incessant activity*] is always the difficulty with the mind. It must learn to be silent and let the knowledge come without trying to catch hold of it for its own play." (CWSA 31: 54)

XIII—Silence Is the Ideal Condition for True Progress

1.

“Silence: the ideal condition for progress.” (CWM 14: 141)

2.

“It is in Silence that true progress can be made.” (CWM 14: 141)

3.

“It is *only in silence* that a true progress can be made; it is *only in silence* that one can rectify a wrong movement; it is only *in silence* that one can be of help to somebody else.

If you have found out a truth, or rectified a mistake in yourself, or made a progress, to speak or to write about it to anybody else than the Guru is to lose at once the truth or the progress.” (CWM 14: 141)

XIV—In Silence the Eternal Manifests

1.

December 5, 1912

“In Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there. . . . Yes, we should not put too much intensity, too much effort into our seeking for Thee; the effort and intensity become a veil in front of Thee; we must not desire to see Thee, for that is still a mental agitation which obscures Thy Eternal Presence; it is in the most complete Peace, Serenity and Equality that all is Thou even as Thou art all, and the least vibration in this perfectly pure and calm atmosphere is an obstacle to Thy manifestation. No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising, and Thou art there without a possible doubt, for all becomes a Holy Peace and a Sacred Silence. And that is better than all the meditations in the world.”
[Prayers and Meditations] (CWM 1: 10)

2.

“In peace and inner silence you will more and more become conscious of the constant Presence.” (CWM 14: 140)

3.

“In the perfect silence of the contemplation all widens to infinity, and in the perfect peace of that silence the Divine appears in the resplendent glory of His light.” (CWM 14: 142)

4.

“It is in quietness, peace and silence that the spiritual forces act.

All agitation and excitement come from an adverse influence.” (CWM 14: 137)

5.

“Why do you want to break your silence? Silence is the door to all true spiritual realisations.

And I am with you always. Draw on my force in the silence; it will never fail you.

Our blessings.” (CWM 17: 195)

6.

“The peace of the Godhead is not a disintegration of energy or a vacant inertia; it would keep all that Infinity has known and done gathered up and concentratedly conscious in an omnipotent silence even if the Power everywhere ceased for a time actively to know and create. The Eternal does not need to sleep or rest; he does not get tired and flag; he has no need of a pause to refresh and recreate his

exhausted energies; for his energy is inexhaustibly the same, indefatigable and infinite. The Godhead is calm and at rest in the midst of his action; and on the other hand his very cessation of action would retain in it the full power and all the potentialities of his kinesis.” (CWSA 19: 465–466)

7.

“The infinite Being in rest aware of its own eternal oneness. There is the everlasting silence of the Absolute. The infinite Conscious Power in movement aware of its own eternal many-ness—the everlasting movement and creation of the Supreme.” (CWSA 12: 198)

8.

“A bodiless, lifeless, mindless infinite breadth and supreme silence shows to us that we are in contact with the Absolute.” (CWSA 12: 346)

9.

“All Yoga has one supreme object; a permanent liberation from the ignorance and weakness of this limited and suffering human and earthly consciousness is its purpose and either an escape or a growth and swift flowering into a greater consciousness beyond mind, life and body, into a wider and diviner existence.

But this greater consciousness is differently conceived by different seekers, for in itself it is to the mind unseizably infinite. One, but multitudinously one, it presents itself in a million aspects. To some it appears as a great permanent Negative or a magnificent, a happy annihilation of all that we know as an existence. To others it is a featureless Absolute; the annihilation of personality and world-Nature is its key and silence and an ineffable peace its gate of our entrance. To others it is a Supreme, positive beyond all positives, an Existence, an absolute Consciousness, an illimitable Beatitude. To others it is the one Divine beyond all Divinities, an ineffable Person of whom all these three supreme things are the attributes. And so through an endless chapter. As is the power of our spirit and the cast of our nature, so we conceive of the one Eternal and Infinite.” (CWSA 12: 363)

10.

“The Absolute it seeks after is featureless, indefinable, relationless, not this, not that, *neti neti*. And yet we can say of it that it is One, that it is Infinite, that it is ineffable Bliss, Consciousness, Existence. Although unknowable to the mind, yet through our individual being and through the names and forms of the universe we can approach the realisation of the supreme Self that is Brahman, and by the realisation of the self we come to a certain realisation also of this utter Absolute of which our true self is the essential

form in our consciousness (*svarūpa*). These are the devices the human mind is compelled to use if it is to form to itself any conception at all of a transcendent and unconditioned Absolute. ... But if we can once cross beyond the Mind's frontier twilight into the vast plane of supramental Knowledge, these devices cease to be indispensable. Supermind has quite another, a positive and direct and living experience of the supreme Infinite. The Absolute is beyond personality and beyond impersonality, and yet it is both the Impersonal and the supreme Person and all persons. ... It [The Absolute] is the cosmic and the supracosmic Spirit, the supreme Lord, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha and supreme Shakti, the Ever Unborn who is endlessly born, the Infinite who is innumerably finite, the multitudinous One, the complex Simple, the many-sided Single, the Word of the Silence Ineffable, the impersonal omnipresent Person, the Mystery translucent in highest consciousness to its own spirit, but to a lesser consciousness veiled in its own exceeding light and impenetrable for ever. These things are to the dimensional mind irreconcilable opposites, but to the constant vision and experience of the supramental Truth-consciousness they are so simply and inevitably the intrinsic nature of each other that even to think of them as contraries is an unimaginable violence." (CWSA 23: 297–298)

11.

“The silence of the Ineffable is a truth of divine being, but the Word which proceeds from that silence is also a truth, and it is this Word which has to be given a body in the conscious form of the nature.” (CWSA 24: 707)

XV—Silence as a Means to Discover the Divine Presence

1.

“Feeling alone in the midst of human beings is the sign that you are beginning to feel the need to find in your own being contact with the Divine Presence. So you must concentrate in silence and try to enter deep within to discover the Divine Presence in the depths of your consciousness, beyond all mental activity.” (CWM 16: 426–427)

2.

“The Absolute is in itself indefinable by reason, ineffable to the speech; it has to be approached through experience. It can be approached through an absolute negation of existence, as if it were itself a supreme Non-Existence, a mysterious infinite Nihil. It can be approached through an absolute affirmation of all the fundamentals of our own existence, through an absolute of Light and Knowledge, through an absolute of Love or Beauty, through an absolute of Force, through an absolute of peace or silence. It can be approached through an inexpressible absolute of being or of consciousness, or of power of being, or of delight of being, or through a supreme experience in which these things become inexpressibly one; for we can enter into such an ineffable state and, plunged into it as if into a

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luminous abyss of existence, we can reach a superconscience which may be described as the gate of the Absolute. It is supposed that it is only through a negation of individual and cosmos that we can enter into the Absolute. But in fact the individual need only deny his own small separate ego-existence; he can approach the Absolute through a sublimation of his spiritual individuality taking up the cosmos into himself and transcending it; or he may negate himself altogether, but even so it is still the individual who by self-exceeding enters into the Absolute.” (CWSA 22: 493)

3.

“In the very depths of your being, deep within your breast, the Divine Presence is always there, luminous and peaceful, full of love and wisdom. It is there so that you may unite with it and it may transform you into a luminous and radiant consciousness.

Together you and I shall try to silence all the external noise on the surface of your being, so that in silence and peace you may unite with this inner glory.

Then that day will become the day of your new birth.” (CWM 17: 365–366)

4.

“Sweet Mother, I will try to do whatever You wish. Where are You?”

Cross beyond the ignorance of a mind that judges without knowing, plunge into the depths of a calm and unassuming silence: there you will find me.” (CWM 17: 167)

5.

“You used to be in my heart; why aren’t You there any more? Because I am blind, I do not see You: silence, silence, peace.

Yes, you are right; I am always there in your heart, but something in your outer consciousness is too active and makes too much noise for you to be aware of this presence. It is only in silence and calm that you can become aware of it.” (CWM 17: 122)

6.

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

Aspiration.

Silence.

Concentration in the solar plexus region. [The Mother is probably referring to the heart region.]” (CWM 14: 41)

7.

“In the depths of our being, in the silence of contemplation, a luminous force floods our consciousness with a vast and

luminous peace which prevails over all petty reactions and prepares us for union with the Divine—the very purpose of individual existence.” (CWM 16: 434)

8.

“Allow me to observe silence, let me go into solitude.

Observe silence in your mind, go into the solitude of your psychic being and you will find me there.

You tell me to observe silence and to go into the solitude of my psychic being, but how can I do that? Only You can put me in that state.

This is a completely tamasic reply. My consciousness is always at work, but you on your side must *exert your will and make an effort.*” (CWM 17: 99)

9.

“My nature will not obey my resolve. You seem so far from me, as if You were not there. I ask You for only one thing: peaceful solitude, so that everything may be all right.

My dear child, you have to find the peace, the silence and the solitude within yourself, and in that solitude you will become conscious of my presence.” (CWM 17: 125)

10.

“Remain very quiet, open your mind and your heart to Sri Aurobindo’s influence and mine, withdraw deep into an inner silence (which may be had in all circumstances), call me from the depths of this silence and you will see me standing there in the centre of your being.” (CWM 16: 165)

11.

“But perfection is only one special way of approaching the Divine; it is one side, and in the same way there are innumerable sides, angles or aspects, innumerable ways of approaching the Divine, for example: will, truth, purity, perfection, unity, immortality, eternity, infinity, silence, peace, existence, consciousness, etc. The number of approaches is almost unlimited. With each one you approach or draw near or enter into contact with the Divine through one aspect and if you really do it, you find that the difference is merely in the most external form, but the contact is identical. It is as if you were turning around a centre, a globe, and seeing it from many different angles as in a kaleidoscope; but once the contact is made, it is the same thing.” (CWM 10: 104)

12.

“Rasa of poetry, painting or physical work is not the thing to go after. What gives the interest in Yoga is the rasa of the Divine and of the divine consciousness which means

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the rasa of Peace, of Silence, of inner Light and Bliss, of growing inner Knowledge, of increasing inner Power, of the Divine Love, of all the infinite fields of experience that open to one with the opening of the inner consciousness.”
(CWSA 30: 234)

XVI—Aspiration Rises More in Silence

1.

“In silence lies the greatest aspiration.

We pray that the greatest receptivity may also be there.” (CWM 17: 373)

2.

“*Sweet Mother,*

How can one silence the mind, remain quiet, and at the same time have an aspiration, an intensity or a widening? Because as soon as one aspires, isn't it the mind that aspires?

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

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

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

3.

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

4.

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

5.

"Silence comes and the flame of aspiration is lit, the body is suffused with warmth, and in this warmth there is a blissful impulse towards transformation; the song of divine harmony is heard, calm and smiling: it is a sweet symphony, almost imperceptible and yet full of power. Then silence returns, deeper and vaster, yes, vast unto infinity, and the being exists beyond all bounds of time or space." (CWM 2: 123)

6.

"What I have said there (*Mother shows 'The Four Austerities'*) is that one must keep the right attitude and be mentally silent: an attitude not expressed through words or through formulated thoughts, but through a living state of consciousness. An attitude of aspiration, you understand. I am obliged to put it in words because it must be printed on paper (this is why all this loses three-fourths of its force), but still otherwise it would not be acceptable at all; if I gave you a blank sheet, you would not know

exactly what I have put there! I am obliged to put it into words.

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

XVII—To Truly Understand, Listen in Silence

1.

“There is one thing certain about the mind and its workings; it is that you can understand only what you already know in your own inner self. What strikes you in a book is what you have already experienced deep within you. Men find a book or a teaching very wonderful and often you hear them say, ‘That is exactly what I myself feel and know, but I could not bring it out or express it as well as it is expressed here.’ When men come across a book of true knowledge, each finds himself there, and at every new reading he discovers things that he did not see in it at first; it opens to him each time a new field of knowledge that had till then escaped him in it. But that is because it reaches layers of knowledge that were waiting for expression in the subconscious in him; the expression has now been given by somebody else and much better than he could himself have done it. But, once expressed, he immediately recognises it and feels that it is the truth. The knowledge that seems to come to you from outside is only an occasion for bringing out the knowledge that is within you.

The experience of misrepresentation of something we have said is a very common one and it has a similar source. We say something that is quite clear, but the way in which it is understood is stupefying! Each sees in it

something else than what was intended or even puts into it something that is quite the contrary of its sense. If you want to understand truly and avoid this kind of error, you must go behind the sound and movement of the words and learn to listen in silence. If you listen in silence, you will hear rightly and understand rightly; but so long as there is something moving about and making a noise in your head, you will understand only what is moving in your head and not what is told you.” (CWM 3: 51–52)

2.

“How can one learn to listen in silence?”

It is a matter of attention. If you concentrate your attention on what is being said, with the will to understand it correctly, the silence is created spontaneously—it is attention that creates the silence.” (CWM 4: 199)

3.

“Practise *silence* of mind, it gives power of understanding.” (CWM 14: 348)

4.

“We spoke once of individual minds as worlds that are distinct and separate from one another; each is shut up in itself and has almost no direct point of contact with any other. But that is in the region of the inferior mind; there

your own formations close you in; you cannot get out of them or out of yourself; you can understand only yourself and your own reflection in things. But here in this higher region of the unexpressed mind and its purer altitudes you are free; when you enter there, you go out of yourself and penetrate into a universal mental plane in which each individual mental world is dipping as if into a huge sea. There you can understand entirely what is going on in another and read his mind as if it were your own, because there no separation divides mind from mind. It is only when you unite in that region with others that you can understand them; otherwise you are not attuned, you do not touch, you have no means of knowing precisely what is happening in another mind than yours. Most often when you are in the presence of another you are quite ignorant of what he thinks or feels; but if you are able to go beyond and above this external plane of expression, if you can enter into a plane where a silent communion is possible, then you can read in that other as you would in yourself. Then the words you use for your expression are of very little importance, because the full comprehension lies beyond them in something else and a minimum of words is sufficient for your purpose. Long explanations are not necessary there; you do not need that a thought should be brought out into full expression, for the direct vision of what is meant is with you." (CWM 3: 65–66)

5.

"It is only in the silence that one can understand. It often happens that two persons speak about a certain subject and all of a sudden, for some reason, both fall silent for a time; then, abruptly, one says a word which corresponds exactly to what the other was thinking. These are people who understand each other in silence. They have followed the same curve, they have come to the same result and one completes the thought of the other. This happens often to those who have lived together a long time and have developed a sort of mental affinity which enables them to truly understand each other behind the words. I have known people who belong to different countries—and you know the mode of thinking is very different according to the country, the manner of relating the sequence of ideas is different, even contrary to that of another country—but I have had experiences with persons of very far-removed races who succeeded so well in harmonising mentally with each other that there was this understanding without words.

If one is silent and the other is not, can they understand each other?

It is possible. Perhaps the one who is silent will understand the other who is not!... But when there is this full accord, even if it is not permanent, when you are with someone

and follow a thought far enough to come out of the external agitation, if the other too has followed the same thought, you may find yourselves suddenly agreeing without having spoken or made any effort towards that. Generally the silence comes to both at the same time or almost the same time—it is as though you slid into the silence. Of course, it may happen also that one continues to make a noise in his head, while the other has stopped, but the one who has stopped has a much greater chance of understanding what is happening to the other!” (CWM 4: 227–228)

6.

“When I speak of the psychic or the spiritual, I mean things that are very deep and real behind the flat surface of the words and intimately connected even in their difference. Intellectual definitions and distinctions are too external and rigid to seize the true truth of things. And yet, unless you are very much in the habit of speaking to one another, there is almost a necessity of defining the sense of your words, if you are to understand each other. The ideal condition for a conversation is when the minds are so well attuned that the words are only a support for a spontaneous mutual understanding and you need not explain at each step what you utter. This is the advantage when you talk always with the same persons; an attuned

harmony is established between their minds and the significance of the things spoken penetrates them at once.

... If you are to be sure of understanding one another, you must be able to understand in silence. There is a condition in which your minds are so well attuned and harmonised together that one perceives the thought of the other without any necessity of words. But if there is not this attunement, there will always be some deformation of your meaning, because to what you speak the other mind supplies its own significance." (CWM 3: 64)

7.

"There is a world of ideas without form and it is there that you must enter if you want to seize what is behind the words. So long as you have to draw your understanding from the forms of words, you are likely to fall into much confusion about the true sense; but if in a silence of your mind you can rise into the world from which ideas descend to take form, at once the real understanding comes." (CWM 3: 64)

8.

"I use a word in a certain sense or shade of its sense; you are accustomed to put into it another sense or shade. Then, evidently, you will understand, not my exact meaning in it, but what the word means to you. This is true not of speech only, but of reading also. If you want to understand a book with a deep teaching in it, you must be

able to read it in the mind's silence; you must wait and let the expression go deep inside you into the region where words are no more and from there come slowly back to your exterior consciousness and its surface understanding. But if you let the words jump at your external mind and try to adapt and adjust the two, you will have entirely missed their real sense and power. There can be no perfect understanding unless you are in union with the unexpressed mind that is behind the centre of expression." (CWM 3: 64–65)

9.

"Similarly, when you have an experience, you must never, during the period of the experience, try to understand what it is, for you immediately cause it to vanish, or you deform it and take away its purity; in the same way, if you want a spiritual teaching to enter into you, you must be absolutely *immobile* in your head, immobile like a mirror which not only reflects but absorbs the ray of light, lets it enter and go deep within, so that from the depths of your consciousness it may spring up again, some day or other, in the form of knowledge.

If you don't do that, you are wasting your time, and, into the bargain, wasting mine. That's a proved fact. I thought I had already told you this several times, but still perhaps I didn't tell you clearly enough. If you come here, come with the intention of *listening in silence*. What

happens you will know later; the effect of this silent attitude you will recognise later; but for the moment, the only thing to do is to be like this (*gesture*), silent, immobile, attentive, concentrated.” (CWM 8: 236)

10.

“It is in the silence of complete identification with the Divine that true understanding is obtained.” (CWM 14: 143)

11.

“With words one can at times understand, but only in silence one knows.” (CWM 14: 143)

12.

“...one speaks of reversal [*of consciousness*]. It is like... it is always compared with a prism: if you look at it from one side, the light is white, and if you turn it over, it splits up into all its elements. This is something similar.

Words are not good and useful unless through a special grace they put you into contact with the Thing, but in themselves they have no value.

In fact, the ideal condition—which has already been partially realised by some people—is to transmit the essential idea and even something that is higher than the idea: the state—the state of consciousness, of knowledge, of perception—directly through the vibration. When you

think, the mental substance vibrates in a certain way in accordance with the form your consciousness gives to your thought, and it is this vibration which should be perceived by the other mind if it is well attuned.

Indeed, words serve only to draw the attention of the other consciousness or the other centre of consciousness, so that it may be attentive to the vibration and receive it; but if it is not attentive and doesn't have the capacity to receive in comparative silence, you may pour out miles of words without making yourself understood in the least. And there comes a time when the brain, which is very active in emanating certain vibrations, can only receive vibrations which are clear and precise, otherwise it is a kind of vague mixture of something confused, imprecise, which gives the impression of a cloudy, woolly mass and doesn't evoke any idea. So one speaks, the sound is clearly heard, but it conveys nothing—it is not a question of sound, it is a matter of precision in the vibrations." (CWM 9: 287)

13.

"This seems to be an illustration of the besetting sin of metaphysics—to exalt a word into a reality or an idea into a reality—without fathoming what is the reality which it tries to indicate. For to label with a word or name is not to fathom [understand] and to define, to erect a concept is not to fathom. Fathom for us then what is change before you ask us to accept it as the only reality. You may say I

XVII—To Truly Understand, Listen in Silence

have fathomed [understood] it, I have seen it to be the one constant real, but do not ask me to define what it is; 'listen rather in silence to the silence of Nature and you too will fathom'. But what if, so listening, I fathom other realities than change—let us say, immutable being as well as mutable force, status as well as change? To prevent that you plunge into speech and not silence, into dialectics of the intellect instead of the undebatable certitudes of intuition, and so abandon your own methodology. ...

In the world of our experience contradictories [are] often complements and necessary to each other's existence." (CWSA 12: 202–203)

XVIII—Silence to Know the Divine Will

1.

“We have said that there is only one safety, never to act except in harmony with the divine Will. There is one question: how to know that it is the divine Will which makes you act? I replied to the person who put to me this question (although this person did not agree with me) that it is not difficult to distinguish the voice of the Divine: one cannot make a mistake. You need not be very far on the path to be able to recognise it; you must listen to the still, small peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart.

I forgot one thing: to hear it you must be absolutely sincere, for if you are not sincere, you will begin by deceiving yourself and you will hear nothing at all except the voice of your ego and then you will commit with assurance (thinking that it is the real small voice) the most awful stupidities. But if you are sincere, the way is sure. It is not even a voice, not even a sensation, it is something extremely subtle—a slight indication. When ... you do nothing contrary to the divine Will, you will not perhaps have any definite impression, everything will seem to you normal. Of course, you should be eager to know whether you are acting in accordance with the divine Will, that is the first point, naturally, without which you can know nothing at all. But once you are eager and you pay attention, ... then all of a sudden, you feel a little

uneasiness somewhere in the head, in the heart or even in the stomach—... then, at that moment, you must stop, no matter what you may be doing, and look, and if you are sincere, you will notice a small black spot (a tiny wicked idea, a tiny false movement, a small arbitrary decision) and that's the source of the uneasiness. You will notice then that the little black spot comes from the ego which is full of preferences; ... Then with patience, from the height of your consciousness, you must explain to this thing its mistake, and in the end it will disappear." (CWM 4: 87–88)

2.

My dear child,

All your letters are answered, but in the silence of your heart; you must learn to hear the answers there and not through the mouth of others. All help is given to you always, but you must learn to receive it in the silence of your heart and not through exterior means. It is in the silence of your heart that the Divine will speak to you and will guide you and will lead you to your goal.

But for that you must have full faith in the Divine Grace and Love." (CWM 13: 96)

3.

"None can say to the Divine, 'I have known Thee', and yet all carry Him in themselves, and in the silence of their soul can hear the echo of the Divine's voice." (CWM 14: 19)

4.

"Let us adore in silence and listen to the Divine in a deep concentration." (CWM 14: 142)

5.

"But it is difficult to know the divine Will, isn't it?"

... There are four conditions for knowing the divine Will:

The first essential condition: an absolute sincerity.

Second: to overcome desires and preferences.

Third: to silence the mind and listen.

Fourth: to obey immediately when you receive the order." (CWM 4: 208)

6.

"Mother, Your Voice said to me, 'The Supermind is coming down in you.' Mother, is it a false voice? Because I know that I am not at all ready for the Supermind."

It is only in mental silence that you can hear the voice without distorting it—be very peaceful." (CWM 14: 349)

7.

"Silence: the condition of the being when it listens to the Divine." (CWM 14: 143)

8.

"Should not one offer all one's willed actions to the Divine? That is, first do the willed actions and then offer them?"

Perhaps you could first silence your will and wait for the inner voice before acting! That would be wiser." (CWM 4: 114)

9.

"But this abstention is not all the truth nor the true truth of Yoga; it is rather a deformation, a diminution of the dynamic freedom of Yoga by the more negative spirit of Sannyasa. The will of the Divine is to manifest, not to remain altogether withdrawn in inactivity and an absolute silence; if the Divine Consciousness were really an inaction of unmanifesting bliss, there would never have been any creation." (CWM 3: 113)

10.

"I am not a Jnani, for I have no knowledge except what God gives me for His work. How am I to know whether what I see be reason or folly? Nay, it is neither; for the thing seen is simply true and neither folly nor reason."

Thoughts and Aphorisms

'I am not a Jnani...' The Jnani is one who follows the path of Knowledge, one who wants to realise Yoga exclusively

through Knowledge, and who follows a purely intellectual path with the will to go beyond it and attain Knowledge, which is no longer intellectual, but spiritual. And Sri Aurobindo says: I am not a Jnani.... I do not seek knowledge. I have given myself to the Divine to accomplish His work and, by the divine Grace, at every moment I know what must be known in order to accomplish this work.

It is an admirable state; it is perfect peace of mind. There is no longer any need to accumulate acquired knowledge, received ideas which have to be memorised; it is no longer necessary to clutter one's brain with thousands and thousands of things in order to have at one's command, when the time comes, the knowledge that is needed to perform an action, to impart a teaching, to solve a problem. The mind is silent, the brain is still, everything is clear, quiet, calm; and at the right moment, by divine Grace a drop of light falls into the consciousness and what needs to be known is known. Why should one care to remember—why try to retain that knowledge? On the day or at the moment that it is needed one will have it again. At each second one is a blank page on which what must be known will be inscribed—in the peace, the repose, the silence of a perfect receptivity.

One knows what must be known, one sees what must be seen, and since what must be known and seen comes directly from the Supreme, it is Truth itself; and it completely eludes all notions of reason or folly. What is

true is true—that is all. And one has to sink very low to wonder whether it is folly or reason.

Silence and a modest, humble, attentive receptivity; no concern for appearances or even any anxiety to be—one is quite modestly, quite humbly, quite simply the instrument which of itself is nothing and knows nothing, but is ready to receive everything and transmit everything.”
(CWM 10: 9–10)

XIX—The True Knowledge Can Come in Silence

1.

“The thinking mind has to learn how to be entirely silent. It is only then that true knowledge can come.” (CWSA 31: 54)

2.

“The important point is to know that the mind is incapable of understanding the One Supreme—that is why all that is said and thought about it is a travesty and an approximation and is necessarily full of irreconcilable contradictions.

That is also why it has always been taught that mental silence is indispensable in order to have true knowledge.” (CWM 12: 139)

3.

“To know how to be silent is sometimes of priceless value.

Silence opens the door to true knowledge.” (CWM 17: 366)

4.

‘Aspiration Talks’ [The following conversation was with a group from an Auroville community called Aspiration.]

“Good. So now, do you want a meditation? Not a meditation: silence. If possible, mental silence. In order to

have true knowledge one must achieve mental silence. You are still... who among you can be silent mentally?" (CWM 13: 342–343)

5.

"To believe or not to believe in the possibility of avatarhood can make no difference to the bare fact. If God chooses to manifest in a human body I do not see how any human thought, approval or disapproval can affect in the least His decision; and if He takes birth in a body, the denial of men cannot prevent the fact from being a fact. So what is there to get excited about. It is only in perfect quietness and silence, free from all prejudices and preferences, that the consciousness can perceive the truth." (CWM 13: 50)

6.

"Every kind of realisation—infinite self, cosmic consciousness, the Mother's Presence, Light, Force, Ananda, Knowledge, Sachchidananda realisation, the different layers of consciousness up to the Supermind—all these can come in the silence which remains but ceases to be blank." (CWSA 30: 80)

7.

"It [*knowledge*] comes through the mind, so the mind can always modify its expression unless it is entirely and absolutely still." (CWSA 31: 55)

8.

“Let us prepare, as best we can, the coming of the New Being.

The mind must be silenced and replaced by the Truth-Consciousness—a consciousness of the whole harmonised with a consciousness of detail.” (CWM 15: 108)

9.

“Sweet Mother, has each person’s number a different significance for each one?”

If one wants to give it, yes.

If one doesn’t think about it, it doesn’t signify anything at all. It’s the importance one gives it which counts.

Numbers are a way of speaking. It is a language, as all the sciences, all the arts, everything that man produces; it is always a way of speaking, it is a language. If one adopts this language it becomes living, expressive, useful. As we need words to make ourselves understood usually—unfortunately it is liable to all kinds of confusions, but still we haven’t yet reached the state where we can communicate in silence, which, obviously, would be a very much higher state—well, if you want to give numbers a meaning in your life, they can reveal to you quite a lot of things. But it’s like that. It is like astrology: if one wants to study the relation between his life and the movement of the stars, one can also find all kinds of useful information.

Fundamentally it is a way of knowing, nothing else—a process. True knowledge is beyond words, beyond systems, beyond languages; it is in a silent identity. It is in fact the only one which does not err.” (CWM 7: 364)

10.

“111 – Knowledge is a child with its achievements; for when it has found out something, it runs about the streets whooping and shouting; Wisdom conceals hers for a long time in a thoughtful and mighty silence.” (CWSA 12: 436)
Thoughts and Aphorisms

Silence... Oh! It is better to practise it than to talk about it.

It is an experience I had here, long ago: the difference between wanting to spread and make use of what one has learnt, immediately, and the contact with higher knowledge, where one remains as quiet as one can so that it can have a transforming effect. I have had the living experience of this—half a day of living experience—but now that seems old to me, old, far behind.” (CWM 10: 211)

11.

“How far can ‘intellectual culture’ help us on our path?”

If intellectual culture is carried to its furthest limit, it leads the mind to the unsatisfactory acknowledgement that it is

incapable of knowing the Truth and, in those who aspire sincerely, to the necessity of being quiet and opening in silence to the higher regions which can give you knowledge." (CWM 10: 254)

12.

"In the morning I was feeling that the mind is quite empty. In the afternoon I saw an intense compact golden light there in front, at some distance outside the mind.

The golden light is the promise of the higher knowledge. For the coming of that knowledge the silence of the frontal exterior mind is necessary." (CWSA 32: 284)

13.

""You have asked what is the discipline to be followed in order to convert the mental seeking into a living spiritual experience. The first necessity is the practice of concentration of your consciousness within yourself. The ordinary human mind has an activity on the surface which veils the real self. But there is another, a hidden consciousness within behind the surface one in which we can become aware of the real self and of a larger, deeper truth of nature, can realise the self and liberate and transform the nature. To quiet the surface mind and begin to live within is the object of this concentration. Of this true consciousness other than the superficial there are two

main centres, one in the heart (not the physical heart, but the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest), one in the head. ... That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. ... It is important, however, to remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there." (CWSA 29: 6–7)

14.

"The absence of thought is quite the right thing—for the true inner consciousness is a silent consciousness which has not to think out things, but gets the right perception,

understanding and knowledge in a spontaneous way from within and speaks or acts according to that. It is the outer consciousness which has to depend on outside things and to think about them because it has not this spontaneous guidance." (CWSA 30: 233)

15.

"Good; cessation of thought and other vibrations is the climax of the inner silence. When once one has got that, it is easier for the true knowledge to come from above in place of the mental thought." (CWSA 31: 55)

16.

"For a knowledge from above begins to descend, frequently, constantly, then uninterruptedly, and to manifest in the mind's quietude or silence; intuitions and inspirations, revelations born of a greater sight, a higher truth and wisdom, enter into the being, a luminous intuitive discrimination works which dispels all darkness of understanding or dazzling confusions, puts all in order; a new consciousness begins to form, the mind of a high wide self-existent thinking knowledge or an illumined or an intuitive or an over mental consciousness with new forces of thought or sight and a greater power of direct spiritual realisation which is more than thought or sight, a greater becoming in the spiritual substance of our present being; the heart and the sense become subtle, intense, large to

embrace all existence, to see God, to feel ... (CWSA 22: 946)

17.

"This obstacle will be there,—even though it may progressively diminish,—at each stage of this greater ascent. In order to allow at all to the higher Light an adequate entry and force of working, it is necessary to acquire a power for quietude of the nature, to compose, tranquillise, impress a controlled passivity or even an entire silence on mind and heart, life and body: but even so a continued opposition, overt and felt in the Force of the universal Ignorance or subliminal and obscure in the substance energy of the individual's make of mind, his form of life, his body of Matter, an occult resistance or a revolt or reaffirmation of the controlled or suppressed energies of the ignorant nature, is always possible and, if anything in the being consents to them, they can resume dominance." (CWSA 22: 978)

18.

"The silence in the head and heart and the emptiness are both necessary and desirable. When they are there, the consciousness finds them natural and they give it the sense of lightness and release; that is why the thoughts or speech of the old kind are foreign to it and when they come give fatigue. This silence and emptiness must grow, so that the

higher consciousness with its knowledge, light, Ananda, peace can come down in it and progressively replace the old things. They must indeed occupy not only head and heart but the whole body.” (CWSA 30: 278–279) (CWSA 30: 397)

19.

“The immutable Brahman is only a base for the transcendent action which comes down into its peace and silence and fills it with power also and Ananda and the light of knowledge.” (CWSA 28: 29)

20.

“The vital mind is usually energetic and creative even in its more mechanical rounds, so it must be the physical that is turning. It is that and the mechanical that last longest, but these too fall silent when the peace and silence become massive and complete. Afterwards knowledge begins to come from the higher planes—the Higher Mind to begin with, and this creates a new action of thought and perception which replaces the ordinary mental. It does that first in the thinking mind, but afterwards also in the vital mind and physical mind, so that all these begin to go through a transformation. This kind of thought is not random and restless, but precise and purposeful—it comes only when needed or called for and does not disturb the silence. Moreover the element of what we call thought

there is secondary and what might be called a seeing perception (intuition) takes its place.” (CWSA 28: 183–184)

21.

“I have said that the most decisive way for the Peace or the Silence to come is by a descent from above. In fact, in reality though not always in appearance, that is how they always come;—not in appearance always, because the sadhak is not always conscious of the process; he feels the peace settling in him or at least manifesting, but he has not been conscious how and whence it came. Yet it is the truth that all that belongs to the higher consciousness comes from above, not only the spiritual peace and silence, but the Light, the Power, the Knowledge, the higher seeing and thought, the Ananda come from above. It is also possible that up to a certain point they may come from within, but this is because the psychic being is open to them directly and they come first there and then reveal themselves in the rest of the being from the psychic or by its coming into the front.” (CWSA 30: 323–324)

22.

“The second opening [the opening of the mind centres, behind and above mind] is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into

the being—the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature.” (CWSA 30: 328) (CWSA 32: 205–206)

23.

“Who told you that whenever there was silence or genuine silence knowledge would come down? The silence is a fit vessel for anything from above, but it does not follow that when there is silence, everything is bound to come down automatically.” (CWSA 30: 454)

24.

“The danger of the mental forces is that when the higher consciousness descends they tend (unless there is a deep silence) to become active in the consciousness for forming ideas of a mental type which can always be misapplied. First, there should be a basis of entire calm, peace and silence—if there is activity, it should be that of a knowledge coming down and the mind silent receiving it accurately. This you can easily have, provided the mind is quiet.” (CWSA 30: 490)

25.

“Real knowledge comes from above the mind. What literature gives is the play of a lot of common or petty ideas. Only on a rare occasion does some ray from above come in. If you look into thousands and thousands of books, you will find just one small intuition here and there. The rest is nothing.

I can't say that the reading of literature equips one better to understand Sri Aurobindo. On the contrary, it can be a hindrance. ... To get to Sri Aurobindo's light we must empty our minds of all that literature has said and done. We must go inward and stay in a receptive silence and turn it upward. Then alone we get something in the right way. At the worst, I have seen that the study of literature makes one silly and perverse enough to sit in judgment on Sri Aurobindo's English and find fault with his grammar!”
(CWM 12: 144–145)

26.

“It is an experience of the extension of consciousness. In Yoga experience the consciousness widens in every direction, around, below, above, in each direction stretching to infinity. When the consciousness of the Yogin becomes liberated, it is not in the body, but in this infinite height, depth and wideness that he lives always. Its basis is an infinite void or silence, but in that all can manifest—Peace, Freedom, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda. This

consciousness is usually called the consciousness of the Self or Atman, for it is a pure existence or self that is the source of all things and contains all things.” (CWSA 30: 275)

27.

“To know about the sadhana with the mind is not indispensable. If one has bhakti and aspires in the heart’s silence, if there is the true love for the Divine, then the nature will open of itself, there will be the true experience and the Mother’s power working within you, and the necessary knowledge will come.” (CWSA 29: 227)

28.

“If there is an eternal Existence which is a conscious being, it must be beyond Time which it contains, timeless as we say; it must be the Eternal of the Vedanta who, we may then conjecture, uses Time only as a conceptual perspective for His view of His self-manifestation. But the timeless self-knowledge of this Eternal is beyond mind; it is a supramental knowledge superconscious to us and only to be acquired by the stilling or transcending of the temporal activity of our conscious mind, by an entry into Silence or a passage through Silence into the consciousness of eternity.” (CWSA 22: 522–523)

XX—The Silence Is the Foundation of Spiritual Experience

1.

“There is too, usually or very often, a massive immobility of the body which corresponds to the silence that comes on the mind when it is released from itself—the Silence that is the foundation of spiritual experience. What you have felt (the former experiences were probably preparatory touches) is indeed the beginning of this foundation—a consciousness free, wide, empty at will, able to rise into the supraphysical planes, open to the descent of whatever the Mother will pour into it.” (CWSA 30: 430)

2.

“Silence does not mean absence of experiences. It is an inner silence and quietude in which all experiences happen without producing any disturbance. It would be a great mistake to interfere with the images rising in you. It does not matter whether they are mental or psychic. One must have experience not only of the true psychic but of the inner mental, inner vital and subtle physical worlds or planes of consciousness. The occurrence of the images is a sign that these are opening and to inhibit them would mean to inhibit the expansion of consciousness and experience without which this Yoga cannot be done.” (CWSA 36: 300)

3.

"All experiences come in the silence but they do not come all pell-mell in a crowd at the beginning. The inner silence and peace have first to be established." (CWSA 30: 233)

4.

"First condition, know how to keep silent. And not only keep your tongue quiet, but silence your mind, keep the head silent. If you wish to have a true, sincere experience upon which you can build, you must know how to be silent, otherwise you have nothing but what you fabricate yourself, which is equivalent to zero. All that one can say is, 'Heavens, what a fashioner my mind is!'" (CWM 4: 231)

5.

"Yes, and all spiritual books which speak of the experiences of another world are always full of paradoxes. They say, 'It is like this, it is like that', in an attempt to give you a suppleness which will allow you to understand—but even so you do not understand.

The truth is that these experiences can be communicated only in silence.

... After all, the ancient initiatory systems were good in a way, in the sense that they revealed the Knowledge only to those who had reached a stage where they could receive it directly without the help of words." (CWM 4: 222)

6.

“We read, we try to understand, we explain, we try to know. But a single minute of true experience teaches us more than millions of words and hundreds of explanations.

So the first question is: “How to have the experience?”

To go within yourself, that is the first step.

And then, once you have succeeded in going within yourself deeply enough to feel the reality of that which is within, to widen yourself progressively, systematically, to become as vast as the universe and lose the sense of limitation.

These are the first two preparatory movements.

And these two things must be done in the greatest possible calm, peace and tranquillity. This peace, this tranquillity brings about silence in the mind and stillness in the vital.

This effort, this attempt must be renewed very regularly, persistently. And after a certain lapse of time, which may be longer or shorter, you begin to perceive a reality that is different from the reality perceived in the ordinary, external consciousness.

Naturally, by the action of Grace, the veil may suddenly be rent from within, and at once you can enter the true truth; but even when that happens, in order to obtain the full value and full effect of the experience, you must maintain yourself in a state of inner receptivity, and

to do that, it is indispensable for you to go within each day.” (CWM 10: 19–20)

7.

“There are two main things to be secured as the foundations of sadhana—the opening of the psychic being and the realisation of the Self above. ... For the self-realisation, peace and silence of the mind are the first condition. Afterwards one begins to feel release, freedom, wideness, to live in a consciousness silent, tranquil, untouched by any or all things, existing everywhere and in all, one with or united with the Divine.” (CWSA 30: 321)

8.

“Could a vision of the Mother or seeing her in dream or in waking be called a realisation?”

That would be an experience rather than a realisation. A realisation would be of the Mother’s presence within, her force doing the work—or of the Peace or Silence everywhere, of universal Love, universal Beauty or Ananda etc. etc.” (CWSA 32: 276)

9.

“The quiet and silence you feel in your heart is the result of the pressure of the higher consciousness to come down. That always brings a quietude in mind and heart and as it

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

10.

"When the concentration is at the top of the head, it means that the mental being is joining the higher consciousness there and there is not much resistance or none. The other place indicates the joining is of the psychic being to the higher consciousness, hence the greater silence, as the psychic is more central than the mental being; but also there is the attempt to join through the psychic the rest of the lower consciousness to the higher and there there is a resistance. The mental joining does not affect the vital and physical, so they remain quiet or can do so for the present—the psychic joining puts on them a pressure to which the first reaction is the sense of fatigue and the last might be a turmoil. But the psychic joining if effectual is much more powerful for the change of the whole being." (CWSA 30: 383)

11.

"... the flow from above and the silence it creates is a sign of the opening above being still there; for the silence, the

quietude of the nature is a touch from above and very necessary for purification and release.” (CWSA 30: 384)

12.

“As I have written often, there are two transformations in this Yoga. The first is when the psychic being comes forward and controls and changes the nature. This is what has happened in you with great rapidity; it must complete itself, but that it will do naturally. The second is the descent of the Mother’s consciousness from above the head and its transformation of the whole being and nature. This also is now preparing in you. It is the reason of the pressure, the silence in the heart etc. What you experienced this time when you went above was the wideness of the higher being in that higher consciousness above with the Light coming down through it. That wideness and that light will afterwards come down into you and your consciousness will be changed into the light and wideness and all that is in them.” (CWSA 30: 385)

13.

“I have the impression that it was at the Playground, and it was as though the inconscient immobility—the immobility of the Inconscient, the inert immobility of the Inconscient—were the starting-point of the evolution and it was like the *translation* of this... how to say it? (this is also another kind of immobility! but an immobility containing all movements)

XX—The Silence Is the Foundation of Spiritual Experience

of this immobility of the Origin, this stability, and that the whole evolution is so that this may find back That, with the whole passage (*same gesture of a great curve*) ... In the ancient tradition, they say it is the 'Conscient' that became the Inconscient because it was 'cut off from the Origin'—this gives me the impression of stories told to children.

It is curious, in the silence and in the vision, it is very clear and very luminous, understandable; but as soon as you want to tell it, it becomes foolish. ...

Oh! Words are worth nothing, I do not know what to do, I do not know if it is because I have not enough of them or because truly... all mental expression seems artificial. It gives the feeling of a lifeless film. It is curious. And all language belongs to that domain. When I want to relate this experience... with some people I enter into a relation very, very well, very easily, in silence, and I tell them infinitely more things than I would be able to with words; it is more supple, more exact, more profound.... Well! Words, phrases, things written leave me with the impression of a two-dimensional picture, the ordinary picture; and that, that contact which I have in a way with people when I do not talk, that adds the depth and something more true (it is not, it is far from being altogether true, but it is more true) and there is a depth. " (CWM 11: 161–162)

14.

"This morning during my meditation before the Mother, a very tender feeling rose from within me. She was sitting before us with an ocean of compassion and love which she wants to give away unconditionally and without reserve. But we cannot receive it; and instead of reproaching ourselves for our inability, we put the blame on the Mother, pouring our venom on her which she swallows and offers back to us as Amrita in return.

This experience brought me a mixed feeling of peaceful silence, self-reproach and a touch of sadness. It has remained with me all day, but now I apprehend a reaction; for usually my experiences recede, leaving me with depression or emptiness.

What you felt was an opening of the psychic being in your heart and the perceptions that came to you were perfectly true. The reaction you speak of does often come after an experience. But if the depression can be avoided, emptiness does not matter. Up to a certain stage the nature needs after an experience a quiescent period to assimilate experience. One has then not to be depressed but to remain quiet waiting and aspiring for more experience, more opening, a more continuous flow of the truth." (CWSA 32: 286)

15.

"Sometimes, if you are a little more active and intense in your aspiration, it [experience] will return sooner. But if you commit the same stupidity again, the same thing will happen—while if, immediately, you are very vigilant and when the mind starts nosing around to understand what is happening you tell it, 'Silence, keep quiet', then the experience can continue. When the vital begins to say, 'I want lots and lots, more and more', you say, 'Quiet, quiet, don't move, calm yourself, don't get excited.' Or when the physical being, 'Oh! I shall be crushed....'—'A little endurance, if you please; you are a coward, you don't know how to stand the test.' If you manage to do this in time, with the necessary calmness, with the necessary determination and will, you will arrive at something." (CWM 4: 361–362)

16.

"It is the Atman, the spiritual being above the mind—the first experience of it is a silence and calm (which one perceives afterwards to be infinite and eternal) untouched by the movements of mind and life and body. The higher consciousness lives always in touch with the Self—the lower is separated from it by the activities of the Ignorance." (CWSA 30: 391)

17.

"The vastness, the overwhelming calm and silence in which you feel merged is what is called the Atman or the silent Brahman. It is the whole aim of many Yogas to get this realisation of Atman or silent Brahman and live in it. In our Yoga it is only the first stage of the realisation of the Divine and of that growing of the being into the higher or divine Consciousness which we call transformation." (CWSA 30: 393)

18.

"The experiences you relate mark a great progress—the passage from the perception of the ascending Force to that of the descending Shakti. For the spiral coils of Light you saw and whose effects you felt—the merging in silence and peace, the peace of the Atman or the Brahman consciousness—are usually a first effect, they are visual forms of the dynamic descent of the Divine Force from above; also the passage from the realisation of the static Brahman with the sense of the unreality of the world existence to the realisation of the status of the dynamic one. This is a considerable step in the integral Yoga.

The Brahman consciousness is sometimes described as a static one, but it has two aspects, static and dynamic, and it is when both are united that it becomes integral. This is the greater consciousness I speak of in the sentence quoted by you, greater than either that which perceives

the Brahmic silence and immobility alone or that which perceives the cosmic existence and action alone.” (CWSA 30: 427)

19.

“A true spiritual experience must be free from the claim of the ego. What the ego can do however is to get proud of having the experience and think, ‘What a great one am I.’ Or it may think, ‘I am the Self, the Divine, so let me go and do what I will, for it is the Divine who wills in me.’ It is only if the experience of Self imposes silence on the other parts and frees the psychic that the ego disappears. Even if not ego itself, numerous fragments and survivals of ego-habit can remain and have to be eliminated.” (CWSA 30: 29–30)

20.

“But if you have that [*peace, calm, silence, wideness*] when you concentrate, it is a true spiritual realisation—that which accompanies or prepares the experience of the Atman. It is not merely a mental realisation.” (CWSA 30: 1112)

21.

“Yes—in the silence of the self there is no time—it is *akāla*.” (CWSA 30: 398)

“Yes, that is correct. In the first realisation of silence in the higher consciousness there is no Time—there is only the

sense of pure existence, consciousness, peace or a strong featureless Ananda. If anything else comes in it is a minor movement on the surface of this timeless self-existence. This and the sense of liberation that comes with it is the result of the mind's quiescence. At a higher level this peace and liberation remain, but can be united with a greater and freer dynamic movement." (CWSA 30: 398)

22.

"Both the logician and the philosopher are apt to forget that they are dealing with words and words divorced from experience can be the most terrible misleaders in the world. ... This sort of word worship and its resultant luminous darkness is very common in India and nowhere more than in the intellectualities of religion, so that when a man talks to me about the One and Maya and the Absolute, I am tempted to ask him, 'My friend, how much have you experienced of these things in which you instruct me or how much are you telling me out of a vacuum or merely from intellectual appreciation? If you have merely ideas and no experience, you are no authority for me and your logic is to me but the clashing of cymbals good to deafen an opponent into silence, but of no use for knowledge'." (CWSA 12: 11)

23.

"... it is true also that the ultimate Truth has been described as unthinkable, ineffable, unknowable—'speech cannot

reach there, mind cannot arrive to it.' But I may observe that it is so to human mind, but not to itself, since it is not an abstraction, but a superconscious (not unconscious) Existence,—for it is described as to itself self-evident and self-luminous,—therefore in some direct supramental or at least overmind way knowable and known, eternally self-aware. But here the question is not of an ultimate realisation of the ultimate Ineffable which according to many can only be reached in a supreme trance withdrawn from all outer mental or other awareness; we are speaking rather of an experience in a luminous silence of the mind and any such experience presupposes that before there is any last unspeakable experience of the Ultimate or disappearance into it, there is possible a reflection or descent of at least some Power or Presence of the identical Reality into the mind-substance. Along with it there is a modification of mind-substance, an illumination of it,—and of this experience an expression of some kind, a rendering into thought ought to be possible. Moreover an immense mass of well-established spiritual experience would have been impossible unless we suppose that the Ineffable and Unknowable has truths of itself, aspects, revealing presentations of it to our consciousness which are not utterly unthinkable and ineffable." (CWSA 28: 366)

24.

"Is this what Sri Aurobindo speaks about when he says: 'the separative aspect is liberative'?"

Yes. It liberates, precisely. It's just that. One practises it for that, don't you see, for liberation, in order to be free from attachments, free from reactions, free from consequences. Those who understand the Gita in this way, tell you that—they don't understand much further than that—they tell you, 'Why do you want to try and change the world? The world will always be what it is and remain what it is, you have only to step back, to detach yourself, to watch it as a witness watches something which doesn't concern him—and leave it alone.' That was my first contact with the Gita in Paris. I met an Indian who was a great Gita enthusiast and a very great lover of silence. He used to say, 'When I go to my disciples, if they are in the right state I don't need to speak. So we observe silence together, and in the silence something is realised. But when they are not in a good enough state for this, I speak a little, just a little, to try to put them in the right state. And when they are in a worse state still, they ask questions!' (*Laughter*) (CWM 8: 103–104)

25.

"Our great Rishis of old did not cry out upon Siddhis, but recognised them as a part, though not the most important part of Yogic accomplishment, and used them with an abundant and unhesitating vigour. They are recognised in our sacred books, formally included in Yoga by so devotional a Purana as the Bhagawat, noted and some of

their processes carefully tabled by Patanjali. Even in the midnight of the Kali great Siddhas and saints have used them more sparingly, but with power and effectiveness. It would be difficult for many of them to do otherwise than use the siddhis since by the very fact of their spiritual elevation, these powers have become not exceptional movements, but the ordinary processes of their thought and action. It is by the use of the siddhis that the Siddhas sitting on the mountains help the world out of the heart of their solitude and silence. Jesus Christ made the use of the siddhis a prominent feature of his pure, noble and spiritual life, nor did he hesitate to communicate them to his disciples the laying of hands, the healing of the sick, the ashirvada, the abhishap, the speaking with many tongues were all given to them. The day of Pentecost is still kept holy by the Christian Church. Joan of Arc used her siddhis to liberate France. Socrates had his siddhis, some of them of a very material nature. Men of great genius are usually born with some of them and use them unconsciously. Even in natures far below the power and clarity of genius we see their occasional or irregular operation.” (CWSA 12: 15)

XXI—Silence as a Means to Profit from Sri Aurobindo's Writings

1.

"In a general and almost absolute way, if you truly wish to profit from these readings, as from all of Sri Aurobindo's writings, the best method is this: having gathered your consciousness and focused your attention on what you are reading, you must establish a minimum of mental tranquillity—the best thing would be to obtain perfect silence—and achieve a state of immobility of the mind, immobility of the brain, I might say, so that the attention becomes as still and immobile as a mirror, like the surface of absolutely still water. Then what one has read passes through the surface and penetrates deep into the being where it is received with a minimum of distortion. Afterwards—sometimes long afterwards—it wells up again from the depths and manifests in the brain with its full power of comprehension, not as knowledge acquired from outside, but as a light one carried within.

In this way the faculty of understanding is at its highest, whereas if, while you read, the mind remains agitated and tries to understand at once what it is reading, you lose more than three-quarters of the force, the knowledge and the truth contained in the words. And if you are able to refrain from asking questions until this process of absorption and inner awakening is completed, well, then

you will find that you have far fewer questions to ask because you will have a better understanding of what you have read." (CWM 10: 7)

2.

"To read what Sri Aurobindo writes is more difficult because the expression is highly intellectual and the language far more literary and philosophic. The brain needs a preparation to really be able to understand and generally this preparation takes time, unless one is specially gifted with an innate intuitive faculty.

In any case, I always advise reading *a little* at a time, keeping the mind as quiet as one can, without making an effort to understand, but keeping the head as silent as possible and letting *the force* contained in what one reads *enter deep inside*. This force, received in calm and silence, will do its work of illumining and will create in the brain, if necessary, the cells required for understanding. Thus, when one re-reads the same thing some months later, one finds that the thought expressed has become much clearer and closer and even at times quite familiar.

It is preferable to read regularly, a little every day and at a fixed hour if possible; this facilitates the brain's receptivity." (CWM 16: 231) (CWM 12: 203)

3.

"What is the true method for studying Sri Aurobindo's works?"

The true method is to read a little at a time, with concentration, keeping the mind as silent as possible, without actively trying to understand, but turned upwards, in silence, and aspiring for the light. Understanding will come little by little.

And later, in one or two years, you will read the same thing again and then you will know that the first contact had been vague and incomplete, and that true understanding comes later, after having tried to put it into practice." (CWM 12: 204)

XXII—Intuition and Inspiration Come in Silence

1.

“In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence one’s mind, hold it still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

... whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form—at the top of the head and a little further above if possible—a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can—perhaps not immediately—but you can have the perception of the drops of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is

the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.” (CWM 9: 358–359)

2.

“The cure is not in trying to wake up the mind but in turning it, immobile and silent, upward towards the region of intuitive light, in a steady and quiet aspiration, and to wait in silence, for the light to come down and flood your brain which will, little by little, wake up to this influence and become capable of receiving and expressing the intuition.” (CWM 12: 136–137)

3.

“It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a ‘mirror’, still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.” (CWM 9: 359)

4.

"I shall try to work with the help of intuition. Help me in my efforts.

Calm the vital.

Silence the mind.

Keep the brain silent and still like an even surface turned upwards and attentive.

And wait...." (CWM 12: 140)

5.

"At present, man governs his life through reason; all the activities of the mind are of common use for him; his means of knowledge are observation and deduction; it is by and through reasoning that he takes his decision and chooses his way—or believes he does—in life.

The new race shall be governed by intuition, that is to say, direct perception of the divine law within. Some human beings actually know and experience intuition—as, undoubtedly, certain big gorillas of the forests have glimpses of reasoning.

In mankind, the very few who have cultivated their inner self, who have concentrated their energies on the discovery of the true law of their being, possess more or less the faculty of intuition. When the mind is perfectly silent, pure like a well polished mirror, immobile as a pond on a breezeless day, then, from above, as the light of the

stars drops in the motionless waters, so the light of the supermind, of the Truth within, shines in the quieted mind and gives birth to intuition. Those who are accustomed to listen to this voice out of the Silence, take it more and more as the instigating motive of their actions; and where others, the average men, wander along the intricate paths of reasoning, they go straight their way, guided through the windings of life by intuition, this superior instinct, as by a strong and unfailing hand.

This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quite common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man, this ability to deceive himself and others.

Thus, man's road to supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, is now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within, shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its

power into our human existence. And this discovery is that of our real, because our highest self and nature.” (CWM 2: 163–164)

6.

“Animals have an intuitional sense, they have not the intuitional intellect; man has access to a true intuitional mentality, and there is his right door to release from subjection to the sensational mentality he shares with the lower creatures. When he has fulfilled reason,—not before,—he has to surmount reason, to silence it just as reason has silenced the brute passions, and lift up its faculties nearer to their true nature, mode and function, to the intuitional mind, which then, unbesieged by the sense mind & the erring intellect, can receive the pure rays from above of the luminous & divine Vijnana.” (CWSA 17: 547–548)

7.

“It appears at once that there are two necessary lines of progress which we must follow, and the first is to extend the action of the intuition and make it more constant, more persistent and regular and all-embracing until it is so intimate and normal to our being that it can take up all the action now done by the ordinary mind and assume its place in the whole system. This cannot wholly be done so long as the ordinary mind continues to assert its power of

independent action and intervention or its habit of seizing on the light of the intuition and manipulating it for its own purposes. The higher mentality cannot be complete or secure so long as the inferior intelligence is able to deform it or even to bring in any of its own intermixture. And either then we must silence altogether the intellect and the intellectual will and the other inferior activities and leave room only for the intuitive action or we must lay hold on and transform the lower action by the constant pressure of the intuition. Or else there must be an alternation and combination of the two methods if that be the most natural way or at all possible. The actual process and experience of Yoga manifests the possibility of several methods or movements none of which by itself produces the entire result in practice, however it may seem at first sight that logically each should or might be adequate. ...

At first it might seem the straight and right way to silence the mind altogether, to silence the intellect, the mental and personal will, the desire mind and the mind of emotion and sensation, and to allow in that perfect silence the Self, the Spirit, the Divine to disclose himself and leave him to illuminate the being by the supramental light and power and Ananda. And this is indeed a great and powerful discipline. It is the calm and still mind much more readily and with a much greater purity than the mind in agitation and action that opens to the Infinite, reflects the Spirit, becomes full of the Self and awaits like a consecrated and

purified temple the unveiling of the Lord of all our being and nature. It is true also that the freedom of this silence gives a possibility of a larger play of the intuitive being and admits with less obstruction and turmoil of mental groping and seizing the great intuitions, inspirations, revelations which emerge from within or descend from above. It is therefore an immense gain if we can acquire the capacity of always being able at will to command an absolute tranquillity and silence of the mind free from any necessity of mental thought or movement and disturbance and, based in that silence, allow thought and will and feeling to happen in us only when the Shakti wills it and when it is needful for the divine purpose. It becomes easier then to change the manner and character of the thought and will and feeling. Nevertheless it is not the fact that by this method the supramental light will immediately replace the lower mind and reflective reason. When the inner action proceeds after the silence, even if it be then a more predominatingly intuitive thought and movement, the old powers will yet interfere, if not from within, then by a hundred suggestions from without, and an inferior mentality will mix in, will question or obstruct or will try to lay hold on the greater movement and to lower or darken or distort or minimise it in the process. Therefore the necessity of a process of elimination or transformation of the inferior mentality remains always imperative,—or perhaps both at once, an elimination of all that is native to

the lower being, its disfiguring accidents, its depreciations of value, its distortions of substance and all else that the greater truth cannot harbour, and a transformation of the essential things our mind derives from the supermind and spirit but represents in the manner of the mental ignorance." (CWSA 24: 802–803)

8.

"In silence lies the source of the highest inspirations." (CWM 16: 195)

9.

"My mind does not know precisely how to silence itself. The same is true of Dilip. How then does he manage to receive from Above?"

The difference is that as his mind has opened to the Above, the Above can turn its activity into an activity of the Inspiration—its quickness, energy, activity enable it to transcribe quickly, actively, energetically what comes into it from the Above. Of course if one day it becomes silent also, it may probably become the channel of a still higher Inspiration.

Is silencing the mind to be done only at the time of writing or at other times too?

Silencing the mind at the time of writing should be sufficient—even not silencing it, but its falling quiet to receive.” (CWSA 27: 584–585)

10.

“Please send me some inspiration to complete my Triumph of Dante. What is the best way of receiving it? I’ll be thankful if you’ll teach me how to be able to fill up those gaps.

Good Lord! it is not a thing that can be taught. As for the best way—well, silence of the mind, relative silence if one can’t get the absolute.” (CWSA 27: 574)

11.

“You give me Force for English poetry—some lines come all right, others are jumbled, wrong, etc., and these things you correct by outer guidance, i.e. by correcting, checking, etc. till I become sufficiently receptive and then only a few changes will be necessary.

I do so in your English poetry because I am an expert in English poetry. In Bengali poetry I don’t do it. I only select among alternatives offered by yourself. Mark that for Amal I nowadays avoid correcting or changing as far as possible—that is in order to encourage the inspiration to act in himself. Sometimes I see what he should have

written but do not tell it to him, leaving him to get it or not from my silence.” (CWSA 27: 570)

12.

“The Mother does not usually give specific advice such as you ask for in regard to the Insurance company. You must learn to get the true inspiration in the mind’s silence.” (CWSA 32: 325)

“You have to become conscious [*in writing poetry*] as in Yoga. The mind has to be silent and you have to become aware of the inspiration as it comes and its source and of the mixture that comes on the way. The more the mind becomes quiet, the more all this is possible.” (CWSA 29: 143)

13.

“Sweet Mother, when can we say that a poet is inspired?”

Why shouldn’t he be?

Then he doesn’t think when he is writing a poem?

Doesn’t think? That means...?

It comes from above!

It's not that. You mean: when do we say that a poet is inspired? Usually we say that a poet is inspired when he receives inspirations. (*Laughter*)

What you mean but don't say... it's those who go beyond thought, silence their thoughts, those who have an absolutely silent and immobile mind, who open to inner regions and write almost automatically what comes to them from above. That's what you meant but didn't say. But that's quite a different thing, and it happens once in a thousand years. It's not a frequent phenomenon. First of all one must be a yogi to be able to do all that. But an inspired poet, as we call him... that's something absolutely different. All men of some genius, that is, those who have an opening upon a world slightly higher than the ordinary mind, are called 'inspired'. One who makes some discoveries is also inspired. Each time one is in contact with something a little higher than the ordinary human field, one is inspired. So when one is not altogether limited by the ordinary consciousness one receives inspirations from above; the source of his production is higher than the ordinary mental consciousness." (CWM 7: 276)

14.

"As soon as one is developed in the region of higher reason, one knows that all these notions are almost essentially false, and that one can in no way rely on them. But the knowledge one receives from this supramental or

divine region surpasses all that can be conceived or understood by reason, at least to the same extent that reason surpasses the knowledge of the senses.

Several questions concern a practical point: 'How to develop the capacity for inspiration?'; 'What are the conditions needed to receive inspiration and is it possible to have it constantly?'

I have already replied to this. When one opens oneself to the supramental regions, one puts oneself in the right state for receiving constant inspirations. Until then, the best method is to silence the mind as much as possible, to turn it upwards and to remain in a state of silent and attentive receptivity. The more one is able to establish a silent, perfect calm in the mind, the more one becomes capable of receiving inspirations.

It was also asked whether inspirations are of different qualities.

In their origin, no. They always come down from the regions of pure Knowledge and penetrate whatever part of the human being is most receptive, best adapted to receive them—but these inspirations may apply to different domains of action. They can be inspirations of pure knowledge, they can also be inspirations that contribute to one's effort to progress, and they can also be inspirations for action which help in the practical and outer realisation." (CWM 10: 5–6)

15.

"When the mind is active it interferes with the inspiration, puts in its own small ideas which get mixed up with the inspiration or starts something from a lower level or simply stops the inspiration altogether by bubbling up with all sorts of mere mental suggestions. So also intuitions or action etc. can come more easily when the ordinary inferior movement of the mind is not there. It is also in the silence of the mind that it is easiest for knowledge to come from within or above, from the psychic or from the higher consciousness." (CWSA 31: 56)

16.

"There are imitation higher experiences when the mind or vital catches hold of an idea or suggestion and turns it into a feeling, and while there is a rush of forces, a feeling of exultation and power etc. All sorts of 'inspirations' come, visions, perhaps 'voices'. There is nothing more dangerous than these voices—when I hear from somebody that he has a 'voice', I always feel uneasy, though there can be genuine and helpful voices, and feel inclined to say, 'No voices please,—silence, silence and a clear discriminating brain.' I have hinted about this region of imitation experiences, false inspirations, false voices into which hundreds of Yogis enter and some never get out of it in my letter about the intermediate zone. If a man has a strong clear head and a certain kind of spiritual scepticism, he can

XXII—Intuition and Inspiration Come in Silence

go through and does—but people without discrimination like X or Y get lost. Especially ego enters in and makes them so attached to their splendid (?) condition that they absolutely refuse to come out. ... I notice that those who enter into this region of the intermediate zone usually make for retirement and seclusion and insist on it. These are the reasons why I prefer usually that sadhaks should not take to an absolute retirement, but keep a certain poise between silence and action, the inner and the outer together.” (CWSA 30: 313)

XXIII—Silence to Make Work Perfect

1.

“(1) Do work as sadhana. You offer to the Divine the work you do to the best of your capacities and you leave the result to the Divine.

(2) Try to become conscious first above your head, keeping the brain as silent as possible.

If you succeed and the work is done in that condition, then it will become perfect.” (CWM 14: 301)

2.

“At last you have the true foundation of the sadhana. This calm, peace and surrender are the right atmosphere for all the rest to come, knowledge, strength, Ananda. Let it become complete.

It does not remain when engaged in work because it is still confined to the mind proper which has only just received the gift of silence. When the new consciousness is fully formed and has taken entire possession of the vital nature and the physical being (the vital as yet is only touched or dominated by the silence, not possessed by it), then this defect will disappear.

The quiet consciousness of peace you now have in the mind must become not only calm but wide. You must feel it everywhere, yourself in it and all in it. This also will

help to bring the calm as a basis into the action.” (CWSA 29: 124–125)

3.

“The peace starts in the inner being—it is spiritual and psychic but it overflows the outer being—when it is there in the activity, it means either that the ordinary restless mind, vital, physical has been submerged by the flood of the inner peace or, at a more advanced stage, that they have been partially or wholly changed into thoughts, forces, emotions, sensations which have in their very stuff an essence of inner silence and peace.” (CWSA 29: 153)

4.

“It is a very good sign that even in spite of full work the inner working was felt behind and succeeded in establishing the silence. A time comes for the sadhak in the end when the consciousness and the deeper experience go on happening even in full work or in sleep, while speaking or in any kind of activity.” (CWSA 29: 255)

5.

“If one feels a consciousness not limited by the work, a consciousness behind supporting that which works, then it is easier [*to keep higher thoughts during work*]. That usually comes either by the wideness and silence fixing and

extending itself or by the consciousness of a Force not oneself working through the worker.” (CWSA 29: 257)

6.

“But the original preoccupation remains throughout, the original difficulty and problem, how Arjuna, dislodged by a strong revulsion of thought and feeling from the established natural and rational foundations and standards of action, is to find a new and satisfying spiritual norm of works, or how he is to live in the truth of the Spirit—since he can no longer act according to the partial truths of the customary reason and nature of man—and yet to do his appointed work on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. To live inwardly calm, detached, silent in the silence of the impersonal and universal Self and yet do dynamically the works of dynamic Nature, and more largely, to be one with the Eternal within us and to do all the will of the Eternal in the world expressed through a sublimated force, a divine height of the personal nature uplifted, liberated, universalised, made one with God-nature,—this is the Gita’s solution.” (CWSA 19: 450–451)

XXIV—Silence in Meditation

1.

“The experience you had is of course the going inside of the consciousness which is usually called trance or samadhi. The most important part of it however is the silence of the mind and vital which is fully extended to the body also. To get the capacity of this silence and peace is a most important step in the sadhana. It comes at first in meditation and may throw the consciousness inward in trance, but it has to come afterwards in the waking state and establish itself as a permanent basis for all the life and action. It is the condition for the realisation of the Self and the spiritual transformation of the nature.” (CWSA 30: 248)

2.

“In all initiatory groups, in all the spiritual schools of ancient times, group meditation was always practised and in that case the motive was quite different. They assembled for a collective progress, to open together to a force, a light, an influence, and... this is more or less what we want to try to do.

However, there are two methods, and this is what I am going to explain to you. In both cases, one must practise as one does in individual meditation, that is, sit in a position at once comfortable enough for one to be able to keep it and yet not too comfortable for one to fall asleep

in it! And then you do what I had asked you to do while I used to go for the distribution over there, that is, prepare for the meditation, try to become calm and silent; not only to avoid chattering outwardly, but to try to silence your mind and gather your consciousness which is dispersed in all the thoughts you have and your preoccupations; to gather it, bring it back within yourself as completely as possible and concentrate it here, in the region of the heart, near the solar plexus, so that all the active energies in the head and all that keeps the brain running, may be brought back and concentrated here. This can be done in a few seconds, it can take a few minutes: that depends on each one. Well, this is a preparatory attitude. ...

... then you open yourself as one opens a door; you see, you have a door here (*gesture at the level of the heart*) and once you are concentrated, you open the door and stay like this (*gesture of immobility*). Or else, you may take another image, as if it were a book, and you open your book very wide with its pages completely blank, that is, quite silent, and you stay like that waiting for what is going to happen.

These are the two attitudes. You may take one or the other, according to the day, the occasion, or you may adopt one of them, out of preference, if it helps you more. Both are effective and can have equally good results.” (CWM 9: 38)

3.

"In any case, if he wants to go into the inner consciousness and move in the inner planes—which will inevitably happen if he shuts off the waking consciousness in his meditation—he must cast away fear. Probably he expected to get the silence or the touch of the divine consciousness by following out the suggestion of the Gita. But the silence or the touch of the divine consciousness can be equally and for some more easily got in the waking meditation through the Mother's presence and the descent from above. The inward movement, however, is probably unavoidable and he should try to understand and, not shrinking or afraid, to go to it with the same confidence and faith in the Mother as he has in the waking meditation." (CWSA 30: 221)

4.

"Mother, when you speak we try to understand with the mind, but when you communicate something in silence, on what part of the being should we concentrate?"

It is always better, for meditation—you see, we use the word 'meditation', but it does not necessarily mean 'moving ideas around in the head', quite the contrary—it is always better to try to concentrate in a centre, the centre of aspiration, one might say, the place where the flame of aspiration burns, to gather in all the energies there, at the solar plexus centre and, if possible, to obtain an attentive

silence as though one wanted to listen to something extremely subtle, something that demands a complete attention, a complete concentration and total silence. And then not to move at all. Not to think, not to stir, and make that movement of opening so as to receive all that can be received, but taking good care not to try to know what is happening while it is happening, for if one wants to understand or even to observe actively, it keeps up a sort of cerebral activity which is unfavourable to the fullness of the receptivity—to be silent, as totally silent as possible, in an attentive concentration, and then be still.

If one succeeds in this, then, when everything is over, when one comes out of meditation, some time later—usually not immediately—from within the being something new emerges in the consciousness: a new understanding, a new appreciation of things, a new attitude in life—in short, a new way of being. This may be fugitive, but at that moment, if one observes it, one finds that something has taken one step forward on the path of understanding or transformation. It may be an illumination, an understanding truer or closer to the truth, or a power of transformation which helps you to achieve a psychological progress or a widening of the consciousness or a greater control over your movements, over the activities of the being.” (CWM 9: 115–116)

5.

"Meditation is a purely mental activity, it interests only the mental being. One can concentrate while meditating but this is a mental concentration; one can get a silence but it is a purely mental silence, and the other parts of the being are kept immobile and inactive so as not to disturb the meditation. You may pass twenty hours of the day in meditation and for the remaining four hours you will be an altogether ordinary man because only the mind has been occupied—the rest of the being, the vital and the physical, is kept under pressure so that it may not disturb. In meditation nothing is directly done for the other parts of the being." (CWM 4: 7–8)

6.

"Your objection was to learning languages and especially French as inimical to peace and silence because it meant activity. The mind, when it is not in meditation or in complete silence, is always active with something or another—with its own ideas or desires or with other people or with things or with talking etc. None of these is any less an activity than learning languages. Now you shift your ground and say it is because owing to their study they have no time for meditation that you object. That is absurd, for if people want to meditate, they will arrange their time of study for that; if they don't want to meditate, the reason must be something else than study and if they do not study

they will simply go on thinking about 'small things'. Want of time is not the cause of their non-meditation and passion for study is not the cause." (CWSA 31: 72)

7.

"A continual resort to meditation, *dhyāna-yoga-paro nityam*, is the firm means by which the soul of man can realise its self of Power and its self of silence. And yet there must be no abandonment of the active life for a life of pure meditation; action must always be done as a sacrifice to the supreme Spirit." (CWSA 19: 535)

8.

"That is, instead of being in a state of tension, instead of making a tremendous effort to silence the inner machine and be able to concentrate your thought upon what you want, when you do it quite simply, naturally, without effort, automatically, and you decide to meditate for some reason or other, what you want to see, learn or know remains in your consciousness and all the rest disappears as by a miracle; everything falls quiet in you, all your being becomes silent, your nerves are altogether soothed, your consciousness is wholly concentrated—naturally, spontaneously—and you enter with an intense delight into a yet more intense contemplation.

This is the sign that you have succeeded; otherwise it is not the thing." (CWM 4: 120–121)

9.

"Among people who meditate there are some who know how to meditate, who concentrate not on an idea, but in silence, in an inner contemplation in which they say they reach even a union with the Divine; and that is perfectly all right. There are others, just a few, who can follow an idea closely and try to find exactly what it means; that too is all right. ... People who know how to meditate are very few in number. Besides, admitting that through much discipline and years of effort you have in your meditation succeeded in coming into conscious relation with the divine Presence, evidently this is a result, and this result should necessarily have an effect upon your character and your life." (CWM 5: 41–42)

10.

"Last night after eight o'clock after returning from work, I sat for meditation. My mind and vital became quiet and opened to the Mother. My heart became vast and opened to her. Then in this quietness something very soothing descended from my chest down to my navel and below it. Then, below the navel, I saw a bright white light penetrating and it filled the whole area with light; then it rose up above the navel till even the head was filled with light. I am unable to express the peace and quietness I felt at that time. The peace was very pure. Now whenever I sit for meditation, I see a very white light coming around me.

The white Light is the Mother's light. Wherever it descends or enters, it brings peace, purity, silence and the openness to the higher forces. If it comes below the navel, that means that it is working in the lower vital." (CWSA 32: 265)

11.

"What I have said is merely an explanation of these experiences but it seems to me that he has advanced far enough to make a foundation for the beginning of the higher Yoga. If he wishes to do that he must replace his mental control by a belief in and a surrender to the Supreme Presence and Force above the mind, an aspiration in the heart and a will in the higher mind to the supreme truth and the transformation of the whole conscious being by its descent and power. He must, in his meditation, open himself silently to it and call down first a deeper calm and silence, next the strength from [] above working in the whole system and last the higher [] glory of which he had a glimpse pouring through his whole being and illuminating it with the divine truth-movement." (CWSA 36: 366–367)

12.

"But to rise above the mental consciousness, not into a higher speculative mind, but far beyond all mental movements is not an easy thing. To begin with, the mind must be absolutely silent and quiet, otherwise one can't do

it. It is only when the mind enters into a complete silence, a perfect quietude, that it becomes just a mirror for reflecting what is above; then one can rise above. But so long as *that* goes on, there's no hope." (CWM 7: 248–249)

13.

"Mother, sometimes one feels a silence, but feels himself outside this silence. Why is it like that?"

One feels a silence, and then?

In things.

No. If you, in your consciousness, reach a state of silence, you perceive your state of silence everywhere, but others don't necessarily perceive it. You perceive it because you are in that state. It is the same as with those who become aware of the Divine in themselves: they see the Divine everywhere, but others are not necessarily conscious of that. It's because you have entered into that state; as you are conscious of this state, you are conscious of it wherever it is; and in fact it is everywhere, somewhere, not superficially and outwardly, but inwardly.

One feels that one is outside the silence, that it is not in me.

That one is outside the silence? Then one is in the noise! I don't quite understand what...

I mean that the silence is in things, but not in myself.

Probably because you are more in things than in yourself at that time. It means that you have become aware of the silence more outside yourself than within yourself.

Sweet Mother, sometimes it happens that one was not ready for a meditation or concentration and then suddenly one is forced into something and obliged to be silent; even if one wanted to get out then, one can't; one remains like that, sometimes for a long time, absolutely carried away by the torrent of things. Does this enter the category of meditation?

This simply means that one suddenly comes under the influence of a higher force of which one is not conscious; one is conscious only of the effect, but not of the cause. That's all. It's nothing more than that. If you were conscious you would know what makes you silent, what makes you meditate, what kind of force has entered into you or acts upon you or influences you and puts you in the silence. But as you are not conscious, you are aware only of the effect, the result, that is, the silence that comes into you." (CWM 7: 277–278)

14.

"I think the most important thing is to know why one meditates; this is what gives the quality of the meditation and makes it of one order or another.

You may meditate to open yourself to the divine Force, you may meditate to reject the ordinary consciousness, you may meditate to enter the depths of your being, you may meditate to learn how to give yourself integrally; you may meditate for all kinds of things. You may meditate to enter into peace and calm and silence—this is what people generally do, but without much success. But you may also meditate to receive the Force of transformation, to discover the points to be transformed, to trace out the line of progress. And then you may also meditate for very practical reasons: when you have a difficulty to clear up, a solution to find, when you want help in some action or other. You may meditate for that too.

I think everyone has his own mode of meditation. But if one wants the meditation to be dynamic, one must have an aspiration for progress and the meditation must be done to help and fulfil this aspiration for progress. Then it becomes dynamic." (CWM 8: 89)

15.

"The number of hours spent in meditation is no proof of spiritual progress. It is a proof of your progress when you no longer have to make an effort to meditate. Then you

have rather to make an effort to stop meditating: it becomes difficult to stop meditation, difficult to stop thinking of the Divine, difficult to come down to the ordinary consciousness. Then you are sure of progress, then you have made real progress when concentration in the Divine is the necessity of your life, when you cannot do without it, when it continues naturally from morning to night whatever you may be engaged in doing. Whether you sit down to meditation or go about and do things and work, what is required of you is consciousness; that is the one need,—to be constantly conscious of the Divine.” (CWM 3: 20)

16.

“The experience you relate, the stillness, the emptiness of mind and vital and cessation of thoughts and other movements, was the coming of the state called ‘samadhi’ in which the consciousness goes inside in a deep stillness and silence. This condition is favourable to inner experience, realisation, the vision of the unseen truth of things, though one can get these in the waking condition also. It is not sleep but the state in which one feels conscious within, no longer outside.” (CWSA 30: 248)

17.

“It is a state of inner immobile silence that one gets in Samadhi when the outer mind is stilled and there is only

some inner or some higher consciousness which may itself be either in silent concentration or else experiencing some state of Knowledge or Ananda or Peace.” (CWSA 30: 249)

18.

“Trance is a going inside away from the waking state. What corresponds to trance in the waking state would be a complete concentration indifferent to outward movements or else a silence of the whole being in Brahman realisation, the *samāhita* state of the Gita.” (CWSA 30: 252)

19.

“The difficulty you have in sadhana may come from the vital or physical mind becoming active. That often happens after the first experiences of calm and silence. One has to detach oneself from these activities in meditation as a witness and call down the original calm into these parts also. But this may take time. If one can in meditation sufficiently isolate oneself from the surroundings and go inside, the quietude comes more quickly.” (CWSA 31: 462)

20.

“People who know how to meditate are very few in number. Most of the time people try to concentrate and enter into a kind of half sleepy and, in any case, very tamasic state. They become some kind of inert thing; the mind is inert, the feeling is inert, the body is immobile.

They can remain like that for hours, for there is nothing more durable than inertia! All this that I am telling you now—these are experiences of people I have met. And these people, when they come out of their meditation, sincerely believe they have done something very great. But they have simply gone down into inertia and unconsciousness. People who know how to meditate are very few in number.” (CWM 5: 42)

21.

“When one meditates there are moments when one sees very unpleasant forms in front of himself for some days. It begins and later ends. What does it mean?”

Yes, it means probably that instead of meditating in a silent concentration, one has opened one’s consciousness either in a vital domain or in a not very pleasant mental domain. That’s what it means. It can also mean—it depends on the degree of development one has reached—it can mean in certain cases, when one is master of one’s concentration and knows where one goes—still this already requires a fairly great discipline—it may be that it is a particular attack of adverse forces, of bad wills, coming either from certain beings or from certain domains; but it is not necessarily attacks; it can simply be that one has opened one’s consciousness in a place that’s not very desirable or else sometimes, often, that one had in himself a number of

movements of the vital and the mind which were not very desirable, and when one enters the silence of meditation or that kind of passive attitude of expectation of something which is going to happen, all these vibrations which have gone out of him come back to him in their real appearance which is not very pleasant. This happens often: one had bad feelings, not positively wicked but still things which are not desirable, bad thoughts, movements of dissatisfaction, revolt or impatience, or a lack of contentment or... you see, one may be angry with somebody, even in thought, no need of speaking... things like that. When one is quiet and tries to be still so as to have an experience, all these things come back to him in their true form, that is, not very pleasant forms: very ugly, forms which are at times very ugly." (CWM 7: 8081)

22.

"Meditation and silence are not necessary for everyone; there are some, even among those spoken of by you and others as the most advanced sadhaks, who do their sadhana not through meditation, for which they have no turn, but through activity, work or creation supported or founded on love and bhakti." (CWSA 29: 210)

XXV—Silence to Reach the Psychic

1.

“Quietude, peace and silence in the heart and therefore in the vital part of the being are necessary to reach the psychic, to plunge in it, for the perturbations of the vital nature, desire, emotion turned ego-wards or world-wards are the main part of the screen that hides the soul from the nature.” (CWSA 30: 465–466)

2.

Birthday Messages for a Disciple

“Go below the surface of the consciousness deep within, for there you will find the soul’s profound quietude, luminous silence, freedom and spiritual wideness, there the direct touch and presence of the Divine.” (CWSA 35: 838)

3.

“To find the psychic one must conquer the desires of the vital and silence the mind and then make a sincere submission to the Divine of whom the psychic is the instrument in man.

The inner contact with the psychic is a concrete and undeniable fact which imposes itself on all sincere consciousness.” (CWM 14: 335)

4.

"It is in silence that the soul best expresses itself." (CWM 14: 143)

5.

"If you asked yourselves this, you would be obliged to seek the answer somewhere, within—because it is *within* you, the answer. 'What is there in us that has made us come here?' The answer is within. There is nothing outside. And if you go deep enough, you will find a very clear answer... (*silence*) and an interesting answer. If you go deep enough, into a sufficiently complete silence from all outer things, you will find within you that flame about which I often speak, and in this flame you will *see your destiny*. You will see the aspiration of centuries which has been concentrated gradually, to lead you through countless births *to the great day of realisation*—that preparation which has been made through thousands of years, and is reaching its culmination.

And as you will have gone very deep to find this, all your incapacities, all your weaknesses, everything in you that denies and does not understand, all that—you will feel that it is not yourself, it is just like a garment which serves in some way and which you have put on for the time being. But you will understand that in order to be truly capable of profiting fully by the opportunity to do what you wanted to do, what you have aspired to do for such a long time, you

must gradually bring the light, the consciousness, the truth into all these obscure elements of the external garment, so that you may be able to understand integrally *why you are here!* And not only that you may understand it, but that you may be able to do it." (CWM 6: 271–272)

6.

"But once this entry into the inner being is accomplished, the inner Self is found to be capable of an opening, an ascent upwards into things beyond our present mental level; that is the second spiritual possibility in us. The first most ordinary result is a discovery of a vast static and silent Self which we feel to be our real or our basic existence, the foundation of all else that we are." (CWSA 21: 290–291)

7.

"The plants are very psychic, but they can express it only by silence and beauty." (CWSA 28: 407)

XXVI—In Silence One Can Communicate the Truth

1.

“Truth is above mind; it is in silence that one can enter into communication with it.

To pray to the Divine and to surrender oneself entirely and in all sincerity to Him are the essential preliminary conditions.” (CWM 14: 199)

2.

“The upward movement and the silence are indispensable for the Truth to manifest.” (CWSA 30: 431)

3.

“Naturally, all these discussions (or exchanges of opinion) are purely mental and have no value from the viewpoint of the Truth. Each mind has its way of seeing and understanding things, and even if you could unite and bring together all these ways of seeing, you would still be very far from attaining the Truth. It is only when, in the silence of the mind, you can lift yourself above thought, that you are ready to know by identity.

From the viewpoint of outer discipline it is indispensable, when you have an opinion and express it, to remember that it is only an opinion, a way of seeing and feeling, and that other people’s opinions, and ways of seeing and feeling are as legitimate as your own, and that

instead of opposing them you should *total them up* and try to find a more comprehensive synthesis.” (CWM 14: 200)

4.

“Because man is a mental being, he naturally imagines that mind is the one great leader and actor and creator or the indispensable agent in the universe. But this is an error; even for knowledge mind is not the only or the greatest possible instrument, the one aspirant and discoverer. Mind is a clumsy interlude between Nature's vast and precise subconscious action and the vaster infallible superconscious action of the Godhead.

There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.

When mind is still, then Truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

Truth cannot be attained by the mind's thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate.

Thought in the mind can at most be Truth's brilliant and transparent garment; it is not even her body. Look through the robe, not at it, and you may see some hint of her form.” (CWSA 12: 255)

XXVII—In Sleep Enter into Absolute Silence

1.

“What is the nature of dreamless sleep?”

Generally, when you have what you call dreamless sleep, it is one of two things; either you do not remember what you dreamt or you fell into absolute unconsciousness which is almost death—a taste of death. But there is the possibility of a sleep in which you enter into an absolute silence, immobility and peace in all parts of your being and your consciousness merges into Sachchidananda. You can hardly call it sleep, for it is extremely conscious. In that condition you may remain for a few minutes, but these few minutes give you more rest and refreshment than hours of ordinary sleep. You cannot have it by chance; it requires a long training.” (CWM 3: 16)

2.

“As for these stages of sleep which are spoken about here, if one is conscious of one’s nights, one can cover them in a few minutes. ...

But if you are conscious, after having calmed your vital, when you begin to come out from your physical consciousness and enter a more subtle consciousness, you put your vital to sleep, you say to it, ‘Rest now, keep very quiet’, and then you enter your mental activity and say to

the mind, 'Rest now, remain very quiet', and you put it to sleep also; and then you come out of the mind into a higher region, and there, if it begins to interest you, for instance, if it is the first time you have gone there, you may look at what is happening, have your experience, learn things—at times one learns very interesting things; and then, sometimes one can become aware of a certain general state also, have ideas about other people, other things; it is interesting! And later, if you have had enough of this, you say, 'Keep quiet, sleep, don't move", and you put that to sleep, and rise to a still higher consciousness, and so on, till you reach a state where you are on the borders of *form*, I am not speaking of physical form—on the borders of all form, much higher than the form of thought, naturally; on the borders of all form and all vibration, in the perfect silence, what here we call Sachchidananda. And when you are there, everything stops, all vibrations subside, and if you remain there just three minutes, you come back to your body *absolutely* rested, refreshed, fortified, as though you had slept for hours! This is something one can learn to do. I don't say it can be done overnight, a little work is necessary and also some persistence, but still... this one must learn to do; and when you are very anxious, very tired, very... for instance, when you have just undergone violent attacks from hostile forces in one form or another and are very tired, if you follow this process consciously, well, within a few minutes all that disappears completely.

It is something worth learning. Only, one must be very, very, very persevering, for..." (CWM 6: 185–186)

3.

"In any case one thing you can do in all security is, before going to sleep, to concentrate, relax all tension in the physical being, try... that is, in the body try so that the body lies like a soft rag on the bed, that it is no longer something with twitchings and cramps; to relax it completely as though it were a kind of thing like a rag. And then, the vital: to calm it, calm it as much as you can, make it as quiet, as peaceful as possible. And then the mind also—the mind, try to keep it like that, without any activity. You must put upon the brain the force of great peace, great quietude, of silence if possible, and not follow ideas actively, not make any effort, nothing, nothing; you must relax all movement there too, but relax it in a kind of silence and quietude as great as possible.

Once you have done all this, you may add either a prayer or an aspiration in accordance with your nature, to ask for the consciousness and peace and to be protected against all the adverse forces throughout the sleep, to be in a concentration of quiet aspiration and in the protection; ask the Grace to watch over your sleep; and then go to sleep. This is to sleep in the best possible conditions. What happens afterwards depends on your inner impulses, but

if you do this persistently, night after night, night after night, after some time it will have its effect.” (CWM 7: 66)

4.

“Only, people don’t know, they sleep because they sleep, as they eat, as they live—by a kind of instinct, a semi-conscious impulse. They don’t even ask themselves the question. You are asking the question now: Why does one sleep? But there are millions and millions of beings who sleep without ever having asked themselves the question why one sleeps. They sleep because they feel sleepy, they eat because they are hungry, and they do foolish things because their instincts push them, without thinking, without reasoning; but for those who know, sleep is a school, an excellent school for something other than the school of waking hours.

It is another school for another purpose, but it is a school. If one wants to make the maximum progress possible, one must know how to use one’s nights as one uses one’s days; only, usually, people don’t at all know what to do, and they try to remain awake and all that they create is a physical and vital imbalance—and sometimes a mental one also—as a result.

The physical and all material physical parts should be absolutely at rest, but a repose which is not a fall into the unconscious—this is one of the conditions. And the vital must be in a repose of silence. Then if you have these three

things at rest, the inner being which is rarely in relation with the outer life, because the outer life is too noisy and too unconscious for it to be able to manifest itself, can become aware of itself and awaken, become active and act upon the lower parts, establish a conscious contact. This is the real reason for sleep, apart from the necessity that, in the present conditions of life, activity and rest, rest and activity must alternate.

The body needs rest but there are very few people, as I said, who know how to sleep. They sleep in such conditions that they don't wake up refreshed or are hardly rested at all. But this is an entire science to learn." (CWM 7: 70–71)

5.

"Sweet Mother, to profit by one's nights, to have good dreams, is it necessary that one should have done nothing very intellectual late at night, or that one should not eat too late at night or do anything external?"

This depends on each one; but certainly if you want to sleep quietly at night, you must not study till just before sleeping. If you read something which requires concentration, your head will continue to work and so you won't sleep well. When the mind continues working one doesn't rest.

The ideal, you see, is to enter an integral repose, that is, immobility in the body, perfect peace in the vital, absolute silence in the mind—and the consciousness goes out of all activity to enter into *Sachchidananda*. If you can do this, then when you wake up you get up with the feeling of an extraordinary power, a perfect joy. But it is not very, very easy to do this. It can be done; this is the ideal condition.

Usually it is not at all like this, and most of the time almost all the hours of sleep are wasted in some kind of disordered activities; your body begins to toss about in your bed, you give kicks, you turn, you start, you turn this way and that, and then you do this (*gesture*) and then this... So you don't rest at all." (CWM 7: 123–124)

6.

"In sleep one very commonly passes from consciousness to deeper consciousness in a long succession until one reaches the psychic and rests there or else from higher to higher consciousness until one reaches rest in some silence and peace. The few minutes one passes in this rest are the real sleep which restores—if one does not get it, there is only a half rest. It is when you come near to either of these domains of rest, that you begin to see these higher kind of dreams." (CWSA 31: 441–442)

7.

“According to a recent medical theory one passes in sleep through many phases until one arrives at a state in which there is absolute rest and silence—it lasts only for ten minutes, the rest of the time is taken up by travelling to that and travelling back again to the waking state. I suppose the ten minutes sleep can be called *susupti* in the Brahman or Brahmaloaka, the rest is *svapna* or passage through other worlds (planes or states of conscious existence). It is these ten minutes that restore the energies of the being, and without it sleep is not refreshing.

According to the Mother’s experience and knowledge one passes from waking through a succession of states of sleep consciousness which are in fact an entry and passage into so many worlds and arrives at a pure Sachchidananda state of complete rest, light and silence; afterwards one retraces one’s way till one reaches the waking physical state. It is this Sachchidananda period that gives sleep all its restorative value. These two accounts, the scientific and the occult-spiritual, are practically identical with each other. But the former is only a recent discovery of what the occult-spiritual knowledge knew long ago.” (CWSA 31: 442–443)

8.

“The sleep you describe in which there is a luminous silence or else the sleep in which there is Ananda in the

cells, these are obviously the best states. The other hours, those of which you are unconscious, may be spells of a deep slumber in which you have gone out of the physical into the mental, vital or other planes. ... There is another ... state of inertia, ... but heavy and unremembering; but that is when one goes deeply and crassly into the subconscious; this subterranean plunge is very undesirable, obscuring, lowering, often fatiguing rather than restful, the reverse of the luminous silence." (CWSA 31: 447)

9.

"It is very difficult to put one's mind into repose. The majority of men get up very tired, more tired than when they went to sleep. One must learn how to quieten one's mind, make it completely blank, and then when one wakes up, one feels refreshed. One must relax the whole mind in the pure white silence, then one has the least number of dreams." (CWM 5: 25)

10.

"The rest must not be one which goes down into the inconscience and tamas. The rest must be an ascent into the Light, into perfect Peace, total Silence, a rest which rises up out of the darkness. Then it is true rest, a rest which is an ascent." (CWM 7: 283)

XXVIII—Areas of Sadhana Where One Needs to Be in Silence

1. Inner silence is needed in sadhana

"... I also insisted that the main object of his Sadhana should be the purification and calming of the mind, the vital being and the body. After returning to Bhowanipore I see that just the contrary has happened,—a feverish psychomental activity and a much too eager attempt at rapid progress. Instead of calmly receiving he has been seizing at everything that came and trying to translate it and throw it out into form. He has also been pulling at realisation and trying, as Mirra has put it, to swallow the world in a minute. The result is that there has been an uprush of some undesirable kind from the imperfect vital being and the physical mind unable to bear the strain has been thrown into disorder. It is evident also that the atmosphere of the Bhowanipore centre is not favourable to him. There is there an intense mental and psychic activity and a constant push towards rapid experience and progress which are just the things that are dangerous for him and there is not yet the assured basis of calm, peace, serenity and inner silence which is what he needs above all things." (CWSA 36: 345)

2. Silence, one of the safeguards in sadhana

“But to open the centres is only a beginning, for then comes one of the most difficult periods for the disciple. The consciousness opens not only to the true Light and Power, but to all kinds of experiences and all sorts of influences from all the planes and from all sources and quarters. There is a period of intense and overpowering internal activity of formation, vision and movements of new consciousness and new power. If then the disciple is carried away [] by the brilliance and splendour and delight of his experiences, he can easily wander far from the highest way. But the Forces and Beings that are behind them are sometimes adverse Forces, sometimes the lesser Gods of the mental and vital planes. In either case they try to occupy and use the instrument, but for their own purpose, for the play of the Ideas and Forces they represent, not the highest Truth. There are only three safeguards for the disciple. One is to call down first the eternal peace, calm and silence of the Divine into the mind and the vital and physical being. In that peace and silence there is a true possibility that the mental and vital formations will fall to rest and the supramental creation can have free space. The second safeguard is to remain entirely detached even from the most absorbing experiences and observe them without being carried away by their brilliance. The power of discernment and

discrimination will slowly form from above and he will be able to distinguish between the higher truth and the lower truth as between truth and falsehood. The third safeguard is to follow implicitly the instructions of the spiritual guides who have already trod the path and to follow their guidance.” (CWSA 36: 393)

3. Adopt the attitude of profound and unthinking silence towards the Absolute

“If thou wouldst know Paratpara brahman [*Brahman* higher than the highest], then know It as It chooses to manifest Itself in world and transcending it—for transcendence also is a relation to world & not the sheer Absolute,—since otherwise It is unknowable. This is the simultaneous knowing & not knowing spoken of in the Vedanta.

Of Parabrahman we should not say that ‘It is world transcendent or world-immanent or related or non-related to the world; for all these ideas of world and not-world, of transcendence and immanence and relation are expressions of thought by which mind puts its own values on the self-manifestation of Parabrahman to Its own principle of knowledge and we cannot assert any, even the highest of them to be the real reality of that which is at once all and beyond all, nothing and beyond nothing. A profound and unthinking silence is the only attitude which

XXVIII—Areas of Sadhana Where One Needs to Be in Silence
the soul manifested in world should adopt towards the
Absolute.” (CWSA 12: 94)

4. In the silence of one’s mind one can perceive the coming of help from the Divine

“If one has the trust, does the help come automatically?”

Even an atom of sincerity suffices, and it comes. And if, truly, one calls very sincerely (not just calling and at the same time saying, ‘We are going to see now if it is going to succeed’—that naturally is not a very good condition), but if one calls very sincerely and sincerely needs the answer, one waits and it *always* comes. And if one can silence one’s mind and be a little quiet, one even perceives the coming of the help and what form it takes.” (CWM 5: 370–371)

5. In inner silence, all activities can take place

“If by passivity of the mind you mean laziness and inability to use it, then what Yoga makes that its basis? The mind has to be quieted and transformed, not made indolent and useless. Is there any old Yoga that makes it a rule not to allow those who practise it to study Sanskrit or philosophy? Does that prevent the Yogis from attaining mental quietude? Do you think that the Mother and myself never

read anything and have to sit all day inactive in order to make our minds quiet? Are you not aware that the principle of this Yoga is to arrive at an inner silence in which all activities can take place without disturbing the inner silence?" (CWSA 35: 749)

6. The preparation of a Truth has to be done in silence

"What is being done here [in the Ashram] is the preparation of a Truth which includes all other Truth but is limited to no single religion or creed, and this preparation has to be done apart and in silence until things are ready." (CWSA 35: 699–700)

7. The preparation to remove the resistance of material Nature has to be done in silence

"After November the push for descent stopped and the resistance of material Nature arose—that is always a sign of something that has still to be conquered before the descent can be complete. In the silence the necessary preparation is being done. No doubt, I expect something to be done by the 21st, but I say nothing because I do not want to raise the buzz again—it is not good for the realisation that there should be any buzz about it." (CWSA 35: 336)

8. Periods of silence are needed for assimilation

“As regards your own sadhana and those of others in Bhowanipore I think it necessary to make two or three observations. First I have for some time the impression that there is a too constant activity and pressure for rapidity of progress and a multitude of experiences. These things are all right in themselves, but there must be certain safeguards. First there should be sufficient periods of rest and silence, even of relaxation, in which there can be a quiet assimilation. Assimilation is very important and periods necessary for it should not be regarded with impatience as stoppages of the Yoga. Care should be taken to make calm and quiet strength and inner silence, the basic condition for all activity. There should be no excessive strain; any fatigue, disturbance, or inordinate sensitiveness of the nervous and physical parts, of which you mention certain symptoms in your letters, should be quieted and removed, as they are often signs of overstrain or too great an activity or rapidity in the Yoga. It must also be remembered that experiences are only valuable as indications and openings and the main thing always is the steady harmonious and increasingly organised opening and change of the different parts of the consciousness and the being.” (CWSA 36: 348)

9. Before forming a mental opinion, keep silent

“Above the thoughts, there are pure ideas; thoughts serve to express pure ideas. And Knowledge is well above the domain of pure ideas, as these are well above thought. One must hence know how to climb from thought to pure idea, and pure idea is itself nothing but a translation of Knowledge. And Knowledge can be obtained only by a total identification. So, when you put yourself in your small human mentality, the mentality of the physical consciousness which is at work all the time, which looks at everything, judges everything from the height of its derisive superiority, which says, ‘That is bad, it should not be like that’, you are sure to be always mistaken, without exception. The best is to keep silent and look well at things, and little by little you make notes within yourself and keep the record without pronouncing any judgment. When you are able to keep all that within you, quietly, without agitation and present it very calmly before the highest part of your consciousness, with an attempt to maintain an attentive silence, and wait, then perhaps, slowly, as if coming from a far distance and from a great height, something like a light will manifest and you will know a little more of truth.

But as long as you excite your thoughts and cut them up into little bits, you will never know anything. I shall repeat this to you a hundred times if necessary, but I can

assure you that so long as you are not convinced of this you will never come out of your ignorance.” (CWM 4: 47)

10. Work is always best done in silence

“Work is always best done in silence except so far as it is necessary to speak for the work itself. Conversation is best kept for leisure hours. So nobody should object to your silence during work.” (CWSA 31: 322–323)

11. To get rid of hostile formations, you must be in a state of inner silence

“How many times, you know, when someone boasts... it may be very childish... but when someone boasts about something: ‘Oh, I am sure of that, I shall never make that mistake’, immediately I see a hostile formation passing there, like that, and it enters by the little hole made by the boasting. It enters within, like that, and then penetrates, and so prepares everything for you to do exactly what you didn’t want to. But this is an amusement, it is certainly not to help you to progress. (*Mother laughs*) But if you know how to take it, it does help you to progress. You say, ‘Good, another time I won’t boast.’

And as these forces are very conscious on the mental and vital plane, one doesn’t even need to pronounce the words. If the thought... for example, if you have worked

well to correct something, either a bad habit or a material weakness, anything, you have worked hard to correct this thing, and as you have worked well you have succeeded to a certain extent. Then, if simply mentally you state that you have succeeded, the next minute it begins again. It is... you see, you must not even think, it is not a question of saying, the question is simply of thinking: 'Why, it was like that before, and now it is like this. Ah, it is fine!' Finished. The next minute it begins again.

And this is certain, because there are witnesses all around you who are notoriously malicious, and this amuses them terrifically. Sometimes I actually even hear them laughing when someone says something frankly. I hear a little laugh like that. Oh, it amuses them very much. And the next minute or the next day, crash! It is undone.

How can we get rid of these witnesses?

Ah! From the practical point of view, you must be in a state of inner silence, with a mental activity exclusively occupied with forming the thing you want to do, the progress you want to accomplish, that is to say, the mental construction you need for your work. And your capacity for observation—it is infinitely preferable, I could say absolutely indispensable, to use it to observe your field of action, the processes you employ for your action, the results obtained, the principle you can arrive at from the

experience, the knowledge you can obtain, indeed, all these things... but not to turn back on yourself and look at yourself acting. It is this movement of making oneself the object of observation which is dangerous.” (CWM 7: 18–19)

12. A mental silence strong enough to prevent vibrations that bring back what one has succeeded in controlling

“This play of the mind’s working is extremely subtle and no ordinary human means can succeed in controlling it perfectly. For instance, this is well known among people who practise yoga and want to control their body: if through an assiduous yogic effort they have succeeded in controlling something in themselves—a particular weakness of the body, an opening to a certain disequilibrium—if they have managed to do this and had some result, for instance the disappearance of this disequilibrium for a very long time, for years, well, if one day at a particular moment, suddenly, the thought crosses their mind that ‘Ah! Now it is done’, the very next minute it returns. That is enough. For it proves that they have come into contact with the vibrations of the thing they had rejected, on a plane where they are vulnerable, the plane of thought, and that for some reason or other in the play of forces, they are open, and it comes back.

This is something very well known in yoga. The simple fact of observing the victory one has gained—observing it mentally, you see, thinking about it—is enough to destroy the effect of the yoga which may have existed for years. A mental silence strong enough to prevent all outer vibrations from coming in, is indispensable. Well, that is something so difficult to achieve that one must really have passed from what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘the lower hemisphere’ to the higher, exclusively spiritual hemisphere, for it not to happen.” (CWM 9: 125–126)

13. Silence to develop concentration to understand the deeper meaning

“To be able to offer my mind to Sri Aurobindo in all sincerity, is it not very necessary to develop a great power of concentration? Will you tell me by what method I could cultivate this precious faculty?”

Fix a time when you can be quiet every day.

Take one of Sri Aurobindo’s books. Read a sentence or two. Then remain silent and concentrated to understand the deeper meaning. Try to concentrate deeply enough to obtain mental silence and begin again daily until you obtain a result.

Naturally you should not fall asleep.” (CWM 12: 205)

14. Keep silent instead of proclaiming an opinion on the present situation of the country

"Mother,

A state of emergency has been declared by the President of India. The Government can take drastic action. Our people right from A down to X, Y and Z are speaking vehemently against Nehru and his Government at the gate, in the streets, in the Dining Room, etc. Some even go on involving your and Sri Aurobindo's name. This may invite unnecessary trouble for the Ashram. I bring it to your notice.

I am sending you a notice to put up in the dining room.
We shall have it on the notice board also.

Silence! Silence!

This is a time for gathering energies, and not for wasting them away in useless and meaningless words.

Anyone who proclaims loudly his opinions on the present situation of the country, must understand that his opinions are of no value and cannot, in the least, help Mother India to come out of her difficulties. If you want to be useful, first control yourself and keep silent.

Silence! Silence! Silence!

It is only in silence that anything great can be done.”

28 October 1962 (CWM 17: 215–216) (CWM 13: 356–357)

15. Silence the movements of the material or physical mind to go to a plane in the mind where the memory of everything is stored

“Behind the common idea that a Yogi can know all things and answer all questions is the actual fact that there is a plane in the mind where the memory of everything is stored and remains always in existence. All mental movements that belong to the life of the earth are memorised and registered in this plane. Those who are capable of going there and care to take the trouble, can read in it and learn anything they choose. But this region must not be mistaken for the supramental levels. And yet to reach even there you must be able to silence the movements of the material or physical mind; you must be able to leave aside all your sensations and put a stop to your ordinary mental movements, whatever they are; you must get out of the vital; you must become free from the slavery of the body. Then only you can enter into that region and see. But if you are sufficiently interested to make this effort, you can arrive there and read what is written in the earth’s memory.

Thus, if you go deep into silence, you can reach a level of consciousness on which it is not impossible for you to receive answers to all your questions.” (CWM 3: 94)

“All that has happened upon earth—from the beginning of the earth till now, all the movements of the mind have been exactly inscribed, all of them. So when you need any accurate information about something, you have only to go there, you find your way. It is a very strange place; it is made as though of small cells, they are like small pigeon-holes; and so, following the shelves and some kind of... how to put it? There are libraries of that kind. Why, I saw a picture shown to us at the cinema, the picture of a library in New York. Well, it is arranged somewhat like that. It is a similar arrangement. It interested me because of that. But instead of being books, these are like small squares. They are all closed. You put your finger, press a button and the thing opens. And then something like a scroll comes out and you unroll it and can read it—all that is written about a subject. There are millions and millions and millions of these. And happily, in the mind, one can go down, one can go up, one can go right on the top. You do not need a ladder!

How does one read? As one reads a book?

Yes, it is a kind of mental perception. It corresponds to that. You see quite, quite well all the description or the information (that depends on what it is). Sometimes they are pictures: it is as though a picture had been preserved. Sometimes it is a story. Sometimes it is simply an answer to a question. All possible and imaginable things recorded mentally are there. You can find many corrections too (exactly of those facts that have been put in books and are not correct). And you need not walk on or climb up: you send along quite simply something like a concentrated mental consciousness and that goes forward and touches the thing. Only, if you do this without completely detaching yourself from your own mental activity, I am afraid you will see only what is in your own head! Instead of seeing the thing as it is, perhaps you take a walk in your own brain and see only what is there—it is a danger. You must be able to silence your head absolutely and be completely detached, not to have (for example, when you are looking for the solution of a problem), not to have already in your head the solution that seems to you right or the best or most profitable. That must not be there. You must become absolutely like a blank paper, with nothing on it. And you proceed in that way, with a very sincere aspiration to know the truth, without assuming beforehand that it will be like this or like that; because otherwise you will see only your own formation. The very first condition is that the head

must keep completely silent during the time one is observing.

And in order to be more sure (but here one must be fully trained, one must have a very good education), in order to be altogether sure of reporting clearly the knowledge received without deforming it in any way, it is better to say what one sees and what one reads (we say 'reads', but rather it is what one perceives), to say it as one perceives it, and it should be someone else who notes it down.... I repeat: You lie quietly stretched in your easy-chair, without moving and altogether quiet, and you send a messenger from your head. Now, someone should be sitting by your side and when you reach the place and open the door and pull out the manuscript (or whatever you like to call it), you begin, instead of reading only with your eyes that are absent, to describe what you see. You acquire the habit of speaking aloud and as you go on observing up there, you speak here. You narrate precisely your journey through those vast halls and how you reached that place and how it had a small mark that was the sign of what you wanted to see. Then you open that little place and pull out the scroll and start reading. And you read it out aloud. And the person who is there, sitting by your side, goes on noting down what you are reading. In this way there is no danger of the thing getting changed when you return. For, the experience is very clear and precise to that part of your being which is there at the moment, but when you come

back into the material world as it is, almost always something escapes and this does not escape when you speak directly at the ...” (CWM 5: 279–280)

16. Silence to relieve tension

“Oh no, no drugs! The more drugs you take, the more you undermine your body’s natural resistance.

To relieve tension, ten minutes of *real calm*, inner and outer, are more effective than all the remedies in the world. In silence lies the most effective help.” (CWM 17: 193)

17. Cooking and eating meals in silence

“All quarrels in the place where food is prepared make food indigestible. The cooking must be done in silence and harmony.” (CWM 15: 270)

“It is much better to eat the meal in silence or at any rate in quietness.” (CWSA 31: 421)

XXIX—In Silence We Can Hear the Voice of God

1.

“There is a silence behind life as well as within it and it is only in this more secret, sustaining silence that we can hear clearly the voice of God. In the noise of the world we hear only altered & disturbed echoes of it; for the Voice comes always—who else speaks to us on our journey?—but the gods of the heart, the gods of the mind, the gods of desire, the gods of sense take up the divine cry, intercept it and alter it for their purposes. Krishna calls to us, but the first note, even the opening power or sweetness, awakes a very brouhaha [confusion] of these echoes. It is not the fault of these poor gods. The accent of power is so desirable, the note of sweetness is so captivating that they must seize it, they would be dull & soulless, there would be no hope of their redemption if they did not at once leap at it and make it their own. But in becoming their own, it ceases to be entirely his.” (CWSA 12: 88)

2.

“In the silence of the heart, you will receive the command.” (CWM 14: 142)

3.

“It is obviously in the silence of the mind that it is possible to perceive the Divine Command. The true way of knowing is above words and thoughts.

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When this phenomenon occurs, it becomes very clear, because one knows the Divine Command *first*, and the words to describe it come later.” (CWM 10: 290)

XXX—Receptive Silence of the Mind to Become an Instrument of the Divine

1.

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

That there was no mental expectation was all to the good; if there had been an expectation, the mind might have been active and interfered and either prevented the experience or else stood in the way of its being pure and complete.

The silence of the mind does not of itself bring in the supramental consciousness; there are many states or planes or levels of consciousness between the human mind and the Supermind. The silence opens the mind and the rest of the being to greater things, sometimes to the cosmic consciousness, sometimes to the experience of the silent Self, sometimes to the presence or power of the Divine, sometimes to a higher consciousness than that of the human mind; the mind's silence is the most favourable

condition for any of these things to happen. In this Yoga it is the most favourable condition (not the only one) for the Divine Power to descend first upon and then into the individual consciousness and there do its work to transform that consciousness, giving it the necessary experiences, altering all its outlook and movements, leading it from stage to stage till it is ready for the last (supramental) change.” (CWSA 29: 266–267)

2.

“Whatever has been done in the world has been done by the very few who can stand outside the action in silence; for it is they who are the instruments of the Divine Power. They are dynamic agents, conscious instruments; they bring down the forces that change the world. Things can be done in that way, not by a restless activity. In peace, in silence and in quietness the world was built; and each time that something is to be truly built, it is in peace and silence and quietness that it must be done. It is ignorance to believe that you must run from morning to night and labour at all sorts of futile things in order to do something for the world.

Once you step back from these whirling forces into quiet regions, you see how great is the illusion! Humanity appears to you like a mass of blind creatures rushing about without knowing what they do or why they do it and only knocking and stumbling against each other. And it is this

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the Divine

that they call action and life! It is empty agitation, not action, not true life.

I said once that, to speak usefully for ten minutes, you should remain silent for ten days. I could add that, to act usefully for one day, you should keep quiet for a year! Of course, I am not speaking of the ordinary day-to-day acts that are needed for the common external life, but of those who have or believe that they have something to do for the world. And the silence I speak of is the inner quietude that those alone have who can act without being identified with their action, merged into it and blinded and deafened by the noise and form of their own movement. Stand back from your action and rise into an outlook above these temporal motions; enter into the consciousness of Eternity. Then only you will know what true action is.” (CWM 3: 67–68)

3.

(The disciple could not decide upon a course of action because different parts of his being put forth contradictory arguments, each of which seemed correct. He asked the Mother what to do in this case.)

I am quite willing to answer—but once more the answer will probably be bewildering...

In fact all your different parts are correct in their argument, and the wisdom is to go deep enough in the

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consciousness to find the place where they meet and agree, completing one another rather than contradicting.

As for the actual action, a smooth, harmonious working is generally better than the difficulties created by too rigid principles... but that also is not absolute—and the ideal condition is, at each occasion, to receive in the inner silence the guidance from above.

With constant practice and goodwill, it becomes possible.

With love and blessings.” (CWM 17: 279)

XXXI—Silence Can Support or Produce Action

1.

"I got these things [calm and silence] in 1908, twenty-seven years ago and I can assure you they were solid enough and marvellous enough without any need of supramentality to make it more so! Again, a calm that 'seems like motion' is a phenomenon of which I know nothing. A calm or silence which can support or produce action—that I know and that is what I have had—the proof is that out of an absolute silence of the mind I edited the *Bande Mataram* for four months and wrote 61 1/2 volumes of the *Arya*, not to speak of all the letters and messages etc. etc. I have written since. If you say that writing is not an action or motion but only something that seems like it, a jugglery of the consciousness,—well, still out of that calm and silence I conducted a pretty strenuous political activity and have also taken my share in keeping up an Asram which has at least an appearance to the physical senses of being solid and material! If you deny that these things are material or solid (which of course metaphysically you can), then you land yourself plump into Shankara's illusionism, and there I will leave you." (CWSA 28: 150)

2.

"It is in the silence of the mind that the strongest and freest action can come, e.g. the writing of a book, poetry, inspired speech etc." (CWSA 31: 55–56)

3.

"The nature of my work is such that I have constantly to go on reading and writing and thinking—with the result that I live mostly in my mind. This constant preoccupation in mental activity stands in the way of the opening of the psychic centre. It has also made my life very dry and top-heavy. You have said in the Bulletin that this sort of constant mental activity is not good for receiving the New Consciousness that is now manifesting. But, then, if the work that I have to do demands it, how can I help it?"

You seem to forget that Sri Aurobindo wrote for so many years the whole of the Arya in perfect mental silence leaving the inspiration from above to go through and manifest through his hands on the typewriter." (CWM 12: 213–214)

4.

"All speech and action comes prepared out of the eternal Silence." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 460) (CWM 10: 292)

5.

"We give the name of Non-Being to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence,—freedom, that is to say, from all positive terms of actual existence which consciousness in the universe can formulate to itself, even

from the most abstract, even from the most transcendent. It does not deny them as a real expression of Itself, but It denies Its limitation by all expression or any expression whatsoever. The Non-Being permits the Being, even as the Silence permits the Activity.” (CWSA 21: 33)

6.

“If by passivity of the mind you mean laziness and inability to use it, then what Yoga makes that its basis? The mind has to be quieted and transformed, not made indolent and useless. Is there any old Yoga that makes it a rule not to allow those who practise it to study Sanskrit or philosophy? Did that prevent the Yogis from attaining mental quietude? Do you think that the Mother and myself never read anything and have to sit all day inactive in order to make our minds quiet? Are you not aware that the principle of this Yoga is to arrive at an inner silence in which all activities can take place without disturbing the inner silence?” (CWSA 31: 61)

7.

“In silence lies the greatest receptivity. And in an immobile silence the vastest action is done.

Let us learn to be silent so that the Lord may make use of us.” (CWM 16: 427)

8.

“The stress of the Power is all right, but there is really nothing incompatible between the inner silence and action. It is to that combination that the sadhana must move.” (CWSA 29: 255)

9.

“In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.” (CWM 14: 142)

10.

“When the consciousness is fully awakened to Your Presence, a moment comes when in silence also lies the most powerful action.” (CWM 17: 374)

11.

“The dynamic action when it comes acts without disturbing the silence and peace. There is the vast peace and silence and in that the Force or the Will works to do what is necessary—in that also is the action of Agni or the psychic.” (CWSA 29: 271)

12.

“In fact, if one reads attentively what Sri Aurobindo has written, all that he has written, one would have the answer to every question. But there are certain moments and certain ways of presenting ideas which have a dynamic

effect on the consciousness and help you to make a spiritual progress. The presentation, to be effective, must necessarily be the spontaneous expression of an immediate experience. If things which have already been said are repeated in the same manner, things which belong to past experiences, it becomes a sort of teaching, what could be called didactic talk, and it sets off some cells in the brain, but in fact is not very useful.

For me, for what I am trying to do, action in silence is *always* much more important.... The force which is at work is not limited by words, and this gives it an infinitely greater strength, and it expresses itself in each consciousness in accordance with its own particular mode, which makes it infinitely more effective. A certain vibration is given out in silence, with a special purpose, to obtain a definite result, but according to the mental receptivity of each person it is expressed in each individual consciousness exactly in the form which can be the most effective, the most active, the most immediately useful for each individual; while if it is formulated in words, this formula has to be received by each person in its fixity—the fixity of the words given to it—and it loses much of its strength and fullness of action because, first, the words are not always understood as they are said and then they are not always adapted to the understanding of each one.” (CWM 9: 113–114)

13.

“When we examine the Infinite and the Finite, Form and the Formless, the Silence and the Activity, our oppositions are equally baffled. Try however hard we will, God will not allow us to exclude any of them from His fathomless universality. He carries all Himself with Him into every transcendence.” (CWSA 12: 143)

14.

“The solitude of the self in the Divine has no doubt to be active as well as static and passive; but none who has not arrived at the silence and motionless solitude of the eternal Self can have the free and integral activity of the higher divine Nature. For the action is based on the silence and by the silence it is free.” (CWSA 29: 509–510)

15.

“As the Vedic Rishis insisted in the beginning, the words of the supreme wisdom are expressive only to those who are already of the wise. The Gita at its cryptic close may seem by its silence to stop short of that solution for which we are seeking; it pauses at the borders of the highest spiritual mind and does not cross them into the splendours of the supramental Light. And yet its secret of dynamic, and not only static, identity with the inner Presence, its highest mystery of absolute surrender to the Divine Guide, Lord and Inhabitant of our nature, is the central secret. This

surrender is the indispensable means of the supramental change and, again, it is through the supramental change that the dynamic identity becomes possible. ...

The Gita promises us freedom for the spirit even in the midst of works and the full energies of Nature, if we accept subjection of our whole being to that which is higher than the separating and limiting ego. It proposes an integral dynamic activity founded on a still passivity; a largest possible action irrevocably based on an immobile calm is its secret,—free expression out of a supreme inward silence.” (CWSA 23: 94–95)

16.

“It [perfect spiritual equality] is not a mental quiet, aloofness, indifference, not an inert vital quiescence, not a passivity of the physical consciousness consenting to no movement or to any movement that is the condition aimed at, though these things are sometimes mistaken for this spiritual condition, but a wide comprehensive unmoved universality such as that of the Witness Spirit behind Nature. For all here seems to be a mobile half-ordered half-confused organisation of forces, but behind them one can feel a supporting peace, silence, wideness, not inert but calm, not impotent but potentially omnipotent with a concentrated, stable, immobile energy in it capable of bearing all the motions of the universe. This Presence behind is equal-souled to all things: the energy it holds in

it can be unloosed for any action, but no action will be chosen by any desire in the Witness Spirit; a Truth acts which is beyond and greater than the action itself or its apparent forms and impulses, beyond and greater than mind or life-force or body, although it may take for the immediate purpose a mental, a vital or a physical appearance." (CWSA 23: 177–178)

XXXII—Silence and Creative Activity

1.

“It would be a mistake to silence the poetic flow on principle. Creative activity is a tonic to the vital and keeps it in good condition, and a strong and widening vital is helpful as a support to the practice of sadhana. There is no real incompatibility between the creative power and silence; for the real silence is something inward and it does not or at least need not cease when a strong activity or expression rises to the surface.” (CWSA 27: 590)

2.

“[In the Upanishads] There are separate phrases, single couplets, brief passages which contain each in itself the substance of a vast philosophy and yet each is only thrown out as a side, an aspect, a portion of the infinite self-knowledge. All here is a packed and pregnant and yet perfectly lucid and luminous brevity and an immeasurable completeness. A thought of this kind cannot follow the tardy, careful and diffuse development of the logical intelligence. The passage, the sentence, the couplet, the line, even the half line follows the one that precedes with a certain interval full of an unexpressed thought, an echoing silence between them, a thought which is carried in the total suggestion and implied in the step itself, but which the mind is left to work out for its own profit, and

these intervals of pregnant silence are large, the steps of this thought are like the paces of a Titan striding from rock to distant rock across infinite waters. There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each Upanishad; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. The rhythm in verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. (CWSA 20: 333–334)

3.

“Sudden efflorescences of capacity, intuitions, wellings up of all sorts of things point to the same inner power or inner working. It is what we mean when we speak of the word, knowledge or activity coming out of the silence, of a working behind the veil of which the outer mind is unconscious but which one day bears its results, of the inner manifesting itself in the outer. It makes at once true and practical what sounds only a theory to the uninitiated,—the strong distinction made by us between the inner being and the outer consciousness. It is how also unexpected Yogic capacity reveals itself, sometimes no doubt as a result of long and apparently fruitless effort, sometimes as a spontaneous outflowering of what was concealed there all the time or else as a response to a call

which had been made but at the time and for long seemed to be without an answer.” (CWSA 27: 718)

4.

“This sudden opening can come if the Power within wishes to express itself in that way. I have seen more than once a sudden flowering of capacities in every kind of activity come by a rapid opening of the consciousness, so that one who laboured long without the least success to express himself in rhythm becomes a master of poetic language and cadences almost in a day. Poetry is a question of the right concentrated silence or seeking somewhere in the mind with the right openness to the Word that is trying to express itself—for the Word is there ready to descend in those inner planes where all artistic forms take birth, but it is the transmitting mind that must change and become a perfect channel and not an obstacle.” (CWSA 27: 124)

XXXIII—Silence and Transformation

1.

"The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental vital-physical) consciousness to rise up to meet the higher Consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual or divine) Consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this Yoga the spiritual transformation." (CWSA 29: 307)

2.

"Can silence bring all the force needed for purification and transformation?"

Not exactly bring, but in silence one can receive it." (CWM 17: 106)

3.

"The greatest transformations have been achieved in the silence of concentration." (CWM 17: 366)

4.

"It is the wideness and silence of the being which makes transformation possible, because the lower movements

disappear and in the emptiness the Truth from above can descend.” (CWSA 30: 454)

5.

“Silence all outside noise, aspire for the Divine’s help; open integrally to it when it comes and surrender to its action, and it will effectively bring about your transformation.” (CWM 15: 87)

6.

“My sweet little Mother,

Yesterday evening during the meditation I felt so much love—I felt waves, vibrations of love. But this love pours itself out on others. Before, when I felt a lot of love it remained silent; I became more serious and I did not express it. But this time, on the contrary, I allowed the love to express itself because I don’t find it undesirable. But if You think it necessary, I will turn it inwards.

The love that one contains in silence acts within oneself for purification and transformation. The love that one turns outwards—if one does it in a pure and disinterested way—may occasionally help others. But most often they receive it wrongly... So you must do as your instinct guides you.” (CWM 17: 53)

7.

“This transformation [of mind, vital and body] is precisely the point that ordinary thought finds most difficult to accept, for it is almost the faculty of thought itself which must be changed. Its whole functioning has to be changed for this transformation to be possible, and we are so used to identifying the faculty with its functioning that we wonder if it is possible to think otherwise than in the way we ordinarily do.

It is possible only when one has had the experience of complete silence in the mental region and when the spiritual force with its light and power descends through the mind and makes it act directly without its following its usual method of analysis, deduction, reasoning. All these faculties which are usually considered the normal activities of the mind, must be stopped, and yet the spiritual Light, Knowledge and Power must be able to transform them into a channel of direct expression, without using these means to express themselves.” (CWM 9: 398–399)

XXXIV—Silence and Solitude

1.

"Should I spend some time in solitude?"

It is the old methods of yoga which demand silence and solitude.

The yoga of tomorrow is to find the Divine in work and in relation with the world.

Look within yourself, reflect upon it and tell me what your choice is." (CWM 14: 49)

2.

"Here we face the first difficulty to be overcome; if we want to be able to truly think, that is, to receive, formulate and form valid and viable thoughts, we must first of all empty our brain of all this vague and unruly mental agitation. And this is certainly not the easiest part of our task. We are dominated by this irrational cerebral activity, we do not dominate it.

Only one method is worth recommending: meditation. But as I was telling you last time, there are many ways of meditating; some are very effective, others less so.

Each one should find his own by successive trial and error. However, one thing can be recommended to everyone: reflection, that is to say, concentration, self-

observation in solitude and silence, a close and strict analysis of the multitude of insignificant little thoughts which constantly assail us.

During the few moments you devote each day to this preliminary exercise of meditation, avoid, if possible, the complacent contemplation of your sensations, your feelings, your states of mind.” (CWM 2: 23)

3.

“Moreover, it was to escape the distortion of an environment made up of habit and fixity that the schools of ancient times where the young prophets were educated were established far from the cities.

That is also why the great instructors of men began their apprenticeship in solitude. For if too many things are absent for the thought to be able to express itself in the minds of unrefined men, too many things are also absent from the mind of the cultivated man shaped by the artificial life of human societies.

How much silence is needed—not the outer, illusory and momentary silence, but on the contrary the true, profound, integral, permanent silence—to be able to hear the far-off voices of thought!

That is why the sincere lover of knowledge also knows that the greatest sages are always the most modest and the most unknown. For one who has the knowledge and the capacity prefers silence and retirement where he

is free to accomplish his work without being disturbed by anything, to the fanfares of glory which would throw him as fodder to men.

The lover of thought knows that he will find thought everywhere around him, in the little flower as in the radiant sun; nothing and no one appears to him too humble or too obscure to be for him an intermediary of the idea he is ever seeking." (CWM 2: 83–84)

4.

"The man of Knowledge [in the ordinary paths of Yoga], self-confined by a deliberate choice to the force and activities of discriminative thought, finds release in the mind's hushed inward-drawn endeavour. He concentrates on the idea of the self, succeeds by a subtle inner discernment in distinguishing its silent presence amid the veiling activities of Nature, and through the perceptive idea arrives at the concrete spiritual experience. ... The endless difficulties that arise from the environing world are dismissed by erecting firmly against them a defence of outer physical and inner spiritual solitude; safe behind a wall of inner silence, he remains impassive and untouched by the world and by others. ...

But for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga this inner or this outer solitude can only be incidents or periods in his spiritual progress. Accepting life, he has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden too

along with it, as a continuation of his own sufficiently heavy load.” (CWSA 23: 76–77)

XXXV—Silence and Rest

1.

“The real rest is in the inner life founded in peace and silence and absence of desire. There is no other rest—for without that the machine goes on whether one is interested in it or not. The inner mukti is the only remedy.”
(CWSA 31: 753)

XXXVI—Silence Need Not Bring Inertia

1.

"Silence need not bring lassitude; there is all possible strength in silence." (CWSA 31: 394)

2.

"If the calm and silence are perfectly established in the physical, then if inertia comes it is itself something quiet and unaggressive, not bringing such disturbances. But to get rid of inertia altogether a strong dynamic calm is needed." (CWSA 31: 394)

3.

"If the physical being has felt and assimilated the silence and peace, then inertia ought not to rise up." (CWSA 31: 394)

4.

"Sweet Mother,

How can one get out of this mental laziness and inertia?

By wanting to do so, with persistence and obstinacy. By doing every day a mental exercise of reading, organisation and development.

This should alternate in the course of the day with exercises of mental silence in concentration.” (CWM 16: 336)

5.

“What you are experiencing is the condition which comes when the whole consciousness has come down into the physical—with the object of bringing down the higher consciousness into the external nature. At first there seems to be the external nature only with a tendency to more peace and quiet than before, but no new positive experience. The first thing the physical consciousness is worked on to acquire is quiet, peace and equanimity as a basis for other things—but what comes is a tendency to neutral quiet which looks like inertia with occasional peace and silence. What is necessary is to bring down peace and silence and a strong equanimity within into the external nature and the very cells of the body. But the difficulty is that the physical nature has little tendency to aspiration, its habit is to wait for the higher forces to do their work and remain passive. I think it is this difficulty that you are feeling. I felt it myself very often and for long periods at that stage of the sadhana. A steady development of the habit of a very quiet but persistent tapasya in the form of a quiet concentration of will to progress could be very helpful at this stage.” (CWSA 35: 378)

6.

"Either because the silence deepened or because the dullness increased, I felt a little sleepy after work. After waking I found my thoughts were moving about very slowly in a dull way. During meditation the mental lethargy passed away, but something of it remained in the body.

It is sometimes a little difficult to say whether it is silence or the physical's translation of the silence into a kind of inertia. I have experienced that very often in the rather difficult task of turning the *tamas* into *sama*, physical *tamas* into spiritual rest and peace which is its divine counterpart." (CWSA 35: 379)

XXXVII—Silence and Emptiness

1.

“Emptiness is not in itself a bad condition, only if it is a sad and restless emptiness of the dissatisfied vital. In sadhana emptiness is very usually a necessary transition from one state to another. When mind and vital fall quiet and their restless movements, thoughts and desires cease, then one feels empty. This is at first often a neutral emptiness with nothing in it, nothing in it either good or bad, happy or unhappy, no impulse or movement. This neutral state is often or even usually followed by the opening to inner experience. There is also an emptiness made of peace and silence, when the peace and silence come out from the psychic within or descend from the higher consciousness above. This is not neutral, for in it there is the sense of peace, often also of wideness and freedom. There is also a happy emptiness with the sense of something close or drawing near which is not yet there, e.g. the closeness of the Mother or some other preparing experience. What you describe is the neutral quiet. There is no need for anxiety. When it comes, one has only to remain quiet and open and turned to the Mother till something develops from within.”
(CWSA 30: 75–76)

2.

“Keep the quiet and do not mind if it is for a time empty; the consciousness at times is like a vessel which has to be

emptied of its mixed and undesirable contents; it has to be kept vacant for a while till it can be filled with the right contents. The one thing to be avoided is the refilling of the cup with the old contents. Meanwhile wait, open yourself upwards, call very quietly and steadily, not with a too restless eagerness for the peace to come into the silence and, once the peace is there, for the joy and the presence.” (CWSA 30: 72)

3.

“You have written of the Force coming down [*during a period of emptiness*]—even sometimes of its filling all parts—so what is this ‘never’? I did not at all mean that there is a mechanical process by which every time there is emptiness afterwards there comes an entire filling up. It depends on the stage of the sadhana. The emptiness may come often or stay long before there is any descent—what fills may be silence and peace or Force or Knowledge and they may fill only the mind or mind and heart or mind and heart and vital or all. But there is nothing fixed and mechanically regular about these two processes.” (CWSA 30: 72–73)

4.

“An emptiness in the mind or vital may be spiritual without emptiness being an essential characteristic of the higher consciousness. If it were, there could be no Force, Light or

Ananda in the higher consciousness. Emptiness is only a result produced by a certain action of the higher Force on the system in order that the higher consciousness may be able to come into it. It is a spiritual emptiness as opposed to the dull and inert emptiness of complete *tamas* which is not spiritual.” (CWSA 30: 73)

5.

“The emptiness that you described in your letter yesterday was not a bad thing—it is this emptiness inward and outward that often in Yoga becomes the first step towards a new consciousness. Man’s nature is like a cup of dirty water—the water has to be thrown out, the cup left clean and empty for the divine liquor to be poured into it. The difficulty is that the human physical consciousness feels it difficult to bear this emptiness—it is accustomed to be occupied by all sorts of little mental and vital movements which keep it interested and amused or even if in trouble and sorrow still active. The cessation of these things is hard to bear for it. It begins to feel dull and restless and eager for the old interests and movements. But by this restlessness it disturbs the quietude and brings back the things that had been thrown out. It is this that is creating the difficulty and the obstruction for the moment. If you can accept emptiness as a passage to the true consciousness and true movements, then it will be easier to get rid of the obstacle.” (CWSA 30: 74)

6.

"You must dismiss the fear of the concentration. The emptiness you feel coming on you is the silence of the great peace in which you become aware of your self, not as the small ego shut up in the body, but as the spiritual self wide as the universe. Consciousness is not dissolved; it is the limits of the consciousness that are dissolved. In that silence thoughts may cease for a time, there may be nothing but a great limitless freedom and wideness, but into that silence, that empty wideness descends the vast peace from above, light, bliss, knowledge, the higher Consciousness in which you feel the oneness of the Divine. It is the beginning of the transformation and there is nothing in it to fear." (CWSA 30: 276)

7.

Sri Aurobindo writes on the poetry of D H Lawrence

"He [Lawrence] speaks of the transition as a darkness created by the rejection of the outer mental light, a darkness intervening before the true light from the Invisible can come. Certain Christian mystics have said the same thing and the Upanishad also speaks of the luminous Being beyond the darkness. But in India the rejection of the mental light, the vital stir, the physical hard narrow concreteness leads more often, not to a darkness, but to a wide emptiness and silence which begins afterwards to fill with the light of a deeper greater truer consciousness, a

consciousness full of peace, harmony, joy and freedom.”
(CWSA 27: 561)

8.

“In his latest book, 'The Two Sources of Morality and Religion', Bergson says that the imagelessness or blankness of mind is a pure myth and an impossibility. As a Vedantist, I have always cherished the imagelessness of mind as the highest ideal. But I must admit that I have not made any appreciable advance in this direction, even after many years' practice.

European scientists and thinkers have no authority in the matter, as they are perfectly ignorant of even the rudiments of these things. It is certainly impossible for any man to have experience of such a condition without practice of Yoga, or alternatively, a state of Grace. But among Yogis it is a well-known state; they can attain to this state and keep it at will or if they allow any external activity, it does not touch the inner silence and they can always have the complete silence at will. You [*Sri Aurobindo's secretary*] can refer him to the *Bases of Yoga*, but also say that it is best to prepare oneself first. Usually it does not come except after a long discipline of self-purification etc.—it can be called down, but that is not always safe, if the outer nature is not yet ready.” (CWSA 27: 527)

9.

"Usually the cessation of the lower activities brings a sense of freedom, release, repose. The inner consciousness does not miss the mental jumpings or the vital swirl—it feels as if the silence were its native element." (CWSA 30: 75)

10.

"The voidness (if by that you mean silence and emptiness of thoughts, movements etc.) is the basic condition into which the higher consciousness can flow." (CWSA 30: 77)

11.

"It is good. Emptiness and silence of the consciousness prepare the being to live within, with the outer consciousness only as a means of communication and action on the physical world instead of living in the external only." (CWSA 31: 599)

12.

"Sometimes I feel a sort of void, as if I was just an immobile statue. My mind, life and body are emptied of energy. As a result I find it almost impossible to work."

What you describe is not at all a drawing away of life-energy; it is simply the effect of voidness and stillness caused in the lower parts by the consciousness being located above. It is quite consistent with action, only one

must get accustomed to the idea of the possibility of action under these conditions. In a greater state of emptiness I carried on a daily newspaper and made a dozen speeches in the course of three or four days—but I did not manage that in any way; it happened. The Force made the body do the work without any inner activity.

I am not able to distinguish this voidness caused by the drawing of life-energy and that produced by a spiritual emptiness.

The drawing of the life-energy leaves the body lifeless, helpless, empty and impotent, but it is attended by no experience except a great suffering and unease sometimes." (CWSA 35: 260–261)

13.

"Is what I feel really yogic emptiness or has my mind misunderstood it? It has lasted for a long time. In other people, I believe, it only lasts for a day or two.

When I got the emptiness, it lasted for years. Whatever else came, came in the emptiness and I could at any time withdraw from the activity into the pure silent peace." (CWSA 35: 260)

"You write: 'When I got the emptiness, it lasted for years. Whatever else came, came in the emptiness. . . .' In my case, I do not see anything coming in. It remains always the same, or grows. But of course it may be preparing the nature for a higher descent.

I had the sheer emptiness with nothing in it for many months together. It is not emptiness really—for there is no such thing as emptiness—but the pure experience of the Self. Your mind accustomed to all sorts of movements looks at it in a negative way, that is all." (CWSA 35: 260)

XXXVIII—Silence and Listening to Music

1.

"What should one try to do when one meditates with your music at the Playground?"

This music aims at awakening certain profound feelings.

To hear it one should make oneself as silent and passive as possible. And if, in the mental silence, a part of the being can take the attitude of the witness who observes without reacting or participating, then one can take account of the effect which the music produces on the feelings and emotions; and if it produces a state of deep calm and of semi-trance, then that is quite good." (CWM 12: 239) (CWM 16: 233)

2.

"I don't know if any of you are so fond of music as to know how to hear it. But if you want to listen to music, you must create an absolute silence in your head, you must not follow or accept a single thought, and must be entirely concentrated, like a sort of screen which receives, without movement or noise, the vibration of the music. That is the only way, there is no other, the only way of hearing music and understanding it. If you admit in the least the movements and fancies of your thought, the whole value of the music escapes you. Well, to understand a teaching

which is not quite of the ordinary material kind but implies an opening to something more deep within, this necessity of silence is far greater still. If, instead of listening to what you are told, you begin to jump on the idea in order to ask another question or even to discuss what is said under the false pretext of understanding better, all that you are told passes like smoke without leaving any effect." (CWM 8: 235–236)

3.

"Sweet Mother, how can one enter into the feelings of a piece of music played by someone else?"

In the same way as one can share the emotions of another person by sympathy, spontaneously, by an affinity more or less deep, or else by an effort of concentration which ends in identification. It is this last process that one adopts when one listens to music with an intense and concentrated attention, to the point of checking all other noise in the head and obtaining a complete silence, into which fall, drop by drop, the notes of the music whose sound alone remains; and with the sound all the feelings, all the movements of emotion can be perceived, experienced, felt as if they were produced in ourselves." (CWM 12: 239) (CWM 16: 230)

XXXIX—How to Keep Silence Constant

1.

"What should I do to keep the silence alert and constant while reading, talking and working."

The same thing—do all with a quiet mind, not throwing yourself out in what you do, but seeing quietly what is done and what happens." (CWSA 32: 479)

2.

" 'Silence is... more easily established by a descent from above.' 'From above' means what, Sweet Mother?"

From the higher regions of consciousness. You see, if you open to the higher regions of consciousness and the force descends from above, quite naturally it establishes a silence in the lower regions, for they are governed by this higher power which descends. This comes from higher regions of the mind or from beyond, even from the supermind. So when this force and consciousness come down and enter into the consciousness of a lower plane, this consciousness becomes naturally quiet, for it is as though invaded, flooded by that higher light which transforms it.

In fact, this is even the only way of establishing a constant silence in one's mind. It is to open oneself to

higher regions and let this higher consciousness, force, light descend constantly into the lower mind and take possession of it. And here, when this happens, this lower mind can remain constantly quiet and silent, because it is this one which acts and fills the whole being. One can act, write and speak without the mind being active, with this force which comes from above penetrating the mind and using it; and the mind itself becomes just a passive instrument. And in fact, this is the only way of establishing silence; for once this is established, the silence is established, the mind does not stir any longer, it acts only under the impulsion of this force when it manifests in it. It is like a very quiet, very silent field and the force when it comes puts the elements into movement and uses them, and it finds expression through the mind without the mind's being agitated. It remains very quiet." (CWSA 6: 328–329)

3.

"The sense of peace, purity and calm felt by you is brought about by a union or strong contact of the lower with the higher consciousness; it cannot be permanent at first, but it can become so by an increased frequency and durability of the calm and peace and finally by the full descent of the eternal peace and calm and silence of the higher consciousness into the lower nature." (CWSA 28: 66)

4.

"If the peace or silence is once absolutely established, no amount of movements on the surface can impair or abolish it. It can bear all the movements of the universe and yet be the same." (CWSA 29: 150)

5.

"When one sits for meditation, one can sometimes succeed in establishing mental silence. But how can one fix this as a constant experience? Because the moment one throws oneself into activity, the mental disturbance begins again!"

One can have a quiet mind without being in a complete state of silence; one can carry on an activity without being disturbed. The ideal is to be able to act without coming out of the mental quietude.

One can do everything while keeping the mind quiet, and what one does is better done." (CWM 16: 344)

6.

"The silence can remain when the blankness has gone. All sorts of things can pour in and yet the silence still remains, but if you become full of force, light, Ananda, knowledge etc. you can't call yourself blank any longer." (CWSA 30: 80)

7.

“It is very good indeed. The peace and silence must settle deep in, so deep that whatever comes from outside can only pass over the surface without troubling the settled calm within—it is good also that the meditation comes of itself. It means that the Yoga-Force is beginning to take up the sadhana.” (CWSA 29: 149)

XL—The Mental Silence Is Only the First Step

1.

"... he has made the right start to a certain extent and has been able to establish the beginning of mental calm and some kind of psychic opening but neither of these has yet been able to go very far. The reason probably is that he has done everything by a strong mental control and forcible stilling of the mind and emotional and vital movements, but has not yet established the true spiritual calm which can only come by experience of or surrender to the higher being above the mind. It is this that he has to get in order to make a foundation for a more substantial progress.

1. He is right in thinking that an inner calm and silence must be the foundation, not only of external work but of all inner and outer activities. But the quieting of the mind in a mental silence or inactivity although often useful as a first step is not sufficient. The mental calm must be changed first into the deeper spiritual peace, Shanti, and then into the supramental calm and silence full of the higher light and strength and Ananda. Moreover, the quieting of the mind only is not enough. The vital and physical consciousness have to be opened up and the same foundation established there. ...

2. The void he feels in the mind is often a necessary condition for the clearing of it from its ordinary movements so that it may open to a higher consciousness and a new experience, but in itself it is merely negative, a mental calm without anything positive in it and if one stops there, then the dullness and inertia of which he complains must come. What he needs is, in the void and silence of the mind, to open himself to, to wait or to call for the action of the higher power, light and peace from above the mind.” (CWSA 36: 364–365)

XLI—Description of the Experience of the Silence of the Divine

1.

“These are the ordinary normal experiences of the sadhana when there is an opening from above—the contact with the peace of the Brahman, Self or Divine and the contact with the higher Power, the Power of the Mother. He does not know what they are, quite naturally, but feels very correctly and his description is quite accurate. ‘How beautiful, calm and still all seems—as if in water there were not even a wave. But it is not Nothingness. I feel a Presence steeped in life but absolutely silent and quiet in meditation’,—there could hardly be a better description of this experience,—the experience of the peace and silence of the Divine or of the Divine itself in its own essential peace and silence.”
(CWSA 30: 428)

XLII—Development of Mental Silence: A True Mental Education

1.

“A true mental education, which will prepare man for a higher life, has five principal phases. Normally these phases follow one after another, but in exceptional individuals they may alternate or even proceed simultaneously. These five phases, in brief, are:

- (1) Development of the power of concentration, the capacity of attention.
- (2) Development of the capacities of expansion, widening, complexity and richness.
- (3) Organisation of one’s ideas around a central idea, a higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life.
- (4) Thought-control, rejection of undesirable thoughts, to become able to think only what one wants and when one wants.
- (5) Development of mental silence, perfect calm and a more and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being.” (CWM 12: 24–25)

2.

Mental Education

“For this purpose, it is good to set apart some time every day when one can quietly go over one’s thoughts and put

one's synthesis in order. Once the habit is acquired, you can maintain control over your thoughts even during work and action, allowing only those which are useful for what you are doing to come to the surface. Particularly, if you have continued to cultivate the power of concentration and attention, only the thoughts that are needed will be allowed to enter the active external consciousness and they then become all the more dynamic and effective. And if, in the intensity of concentration, it becomes necessary not to think at all, all mental vibration can be stilled and an almost total silence secured. In this silence one can gradually open to the higher regions of the mind and learn to record the inspirations that come from there.

But even before reaching this point, silence in itself is supremely useful, because in most people who have a somewhat developed and active mind, the mind is never at rest. During the day, its activity is kept under a certain control, but at night, during the sleep of the body, the control of the waking state is almost completely removed and the mind indulges in activities which are sometimes excessive and often incoherent. This creates a great stress which leads to fatigue and the diminution of the intellectual faculties.

The fact is that like all the other parts of the human being, the mind too needs rest and it will not have this rest unless we know how to provide it. The art of resting one's mind is something to be acquired. Changing one's mental

activity is certainly one way of resting; but the greatest possible rest is silence. And as far as the mental faculties are concerned a few minutes passed in the calm of silence are a more effective rest than hours of sleep.

When one has learned to silence the mind at will and to concentrate it in receptive silence, then there will be no problem that cannot be solved, no mental difficulty whose solution cannot be found. When it is agitated, thought becomes confused and impotent; in an attentive tranquillity, the light can manifest itself and open up new horizons to man's capacity." (CWM 12: 28–29)

3.

"A new consciousness is coming based upon inner silence and quietude. You must wait quietly for that to develop. True knowledge, true perceptions of people and things will come in that new silent consciousness." (CWSA 31: 268–269)

XLIII—Control of Speech Is More Important Than Complete Silence

1.

“Last night, I got the idea that I would try to observe absolute silence, not even laughing or thinking. Thinking only of the Mother. Praying to the Divine.

Not laughing or thinking, that is going a bit too far!

I said to myself: But why not observe silence all day? I shall try to do so.

That is a bit too much. Control over one’s speech is more important than complete silence. The best thing is to learn to say only what is useful in the most accurate and truthful way possible.” (CWM 17: 7–8)

2.

The Mental Austerity

“The question of mental austerity immediately brings to mind long meditations leading to control of thought and culminating in inner silence. This aspect of yogic discipline is too well known to need dwelling upon. But there is another aspect of the subject which is usually given less attention, and that is control of speech. Apart from a very few exceptions, only absolute silence is set in opposition to

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loose talk. And yet it is a far greater and far more fruitful austerity to control one's speech than to abolish it altogether.

Man is the first animal on earth to be able to use articulate sounds. Indeed, he is very proud of this capacity and exercises it without moderation or discernment. The world is deafened with the sound of his words and sometimes one almost misses the harmonious silence of the plant kingdom.

Besides, it is a well-known fact that the weaker the mental power, the greater is the need to use speech. Thus there are primitive and uneducated people who cannot think at all unless they speak, and they can be heard muttering sounds more or less loudly to themselves, because this is the only way they can follow a train of thought, which would not be formulated in them but for the spoken word.

There are also a great many people, even among those who are educated but whose mental power is weak, who do not know what they want to say until they say it. This makes their speech interminable and tedious. For as they speak, their thought becomes clearer and more precise, and so they have to repeat the same thing several times in order to say it more and more exactly.

Some need to prepare beforehand what they have to say, and splutter when they are obliged to improvise,

XLIII—Control of Speech Is More Important Than Complete Silence because they have not had time to elaborate step by step the exact terms of what they want to say.

Lastly, there are born orators who are masters of the spoken word; they spontaneously find all the words they need to say what they want to say and say it well.

None of this, however, from the point of view of mental austerity, goes beyond the category of idle talk. For by idle talk I mean every word that is spoken without being absolutely indispensable. One may ask, how can one judge? For this, one must first make a general classification of the various categories of spoken words.” (CWM 12: 57–58)

3.

“First, in the physical domain, we have all the words that are spoken for material reasons. They are by far the most numerous and most probably also the most useful in ordinary life. A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one’s inner peace and concentration.

If you are not alone and live with others, cultivate the habit of not externalising yourself constantly by speaking aloud, and you will notice that little by little an inner understanding is established between yourself and

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others; you will then be able to communicate among yourselves with a minimum of words or even without any words at all. This outer silence is most favourable to inner peace, and with goodwill and a steadfast aspiration, you will be able to create a harmonious atmosphere which is very conducive to progress.” (CWM 12: 58–59)

4.

“Without going to this extreme, one should always control the words one speaks and never allow one’s tongue to be prompted by a movement of anger, violence or temper. It is not only the quarrel that is bad in its results, but the fact of allowing one’s tongue to be used to project bad vibrations into the atmosphere; for nothing is more contagious than the vibrations of sound, and by giving these movements a chance to express themselves, one perpetuates them in oneself and in others.

Among the most undesirable kinds of idle talk must also be included everything that is said about others.

Unless you are responsible for certain people, as a guardian, a teacher or a departmental head, what others do or do not do is no concern of yours and you must refrain from talking about them, from giving your opinion about them and what they do, and from repeating what others may think or say about them.

It may happen that the very nature of your occupation makes it your duty to report what is taking

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place in a particular department, undertaking or communal work. But then the report should be confined to the work alone and not touch upon private matters. And as an absolute rule, it must be wholly objective. You should not allow any personal reaction, any preference, any like or dislike to creep in. And above all, never introduce your own petty personal grudges into the work that is assigned to you.

In all cases and as a general rule, the less one speaks of others, even to praise them, the better. It is already so difficult to know exactly what is happening in oneself—how can one know with certainty what is happening in others? So you must totally abstain from pronouncing upon anybody one of those final judgments which cannot but be foolish if not spiteful.

When a thought is expressed in speech, the vibration of the sound has a considerable power to bring the most material substance into contact with the thought, thus giving it a concrete and effective reality. That is why one must never speak ill of people or things or say things which go against the progress of the divine realisation in the world. This is an absolute general rule. And yet it has one exception. You should not criticise anything unless at the same time you have the conscious power and active will to dissolve or transform the movements or things you criticise. For this conscious power and active will have the capacity of infusing Matter with the possibility to react and

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refuse the bad vibration and ultimately to correct it so that it becomes impossible for it to go on expressing itself on the physical plane.

This can be done without risk or danger only by one who moves in the gnostic realms and possesses in his mental faculties the light of the spirit and the power of the truth. He, the divine worker, is free from all preference and all attachment; he has broken down the limits of his ego and is now only a perfectly pure and impersonal instrument of the supramental action upon earth.” (CWM 12: 59–60)

5.

“Control over what one says is more important than complete silence. The best is to learn to say what is useful in the most exact and true way possible.” (CWM 14: 202)

6.

“To be free from all attachment does not mean running away from all occasion for attachment. All these people who assert their asceticism, not only run away but warn others not to try!

This seems so obvious to me. When you need to run away from a thing in order not to experience it, it means that you are not above it, you are still on the same level.

Anything that suppresses, diminishes or lessens cannot bring freedom. Freedom has to be experienced in the whole of life and in all sensations.

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As a matter of fact I have made a whole series of studies on the subject, on the purely physical plane.... In order to be above all possible error, we tend to eliminate any occasion for error. For example, if you do not want to say any useless words, you stop speaking; people who take a vow of silence imagine that this is control of speech—it is not true! It is only eliminating the occasion for speech and therefore for saying useless things.” (CWM 10: 194)

7.

“That is not the way. Absolute silence and looseness of talk are two extremes; neither is good. I have seen many people practising *maunavrata*, but afterwards they are just as talkative as before. It is self-mastery you must get.” (CWSA 31: 92)

8.

“*Mauna* is seldom of much use. After it is over, the speech starts again as on the old lines. It is in speech itself that the speech must change.” (CWSA 31: 93)

9.

“When, in ignorance, one speaks ill of others, he debases his consciousness and degrades his soul.

A respectful and modest silence is the only attitude befitting a disciple.” (CWM 14: 205–206)

10.

"Mother, we were late with our drying work because they were behind with the washing. However, I am happy to say that I was not carried away by the violent discussions of my co-workers. With difficulty, I could do it. From now on I shall try to take this attitude. Give me the strength of Your Silence.

"Yes, it is very good to know how to remain silent and not take part in discussions that are always useless and unwholesome." (CWM 14: 203)

11.

"It is no use giving up talking altogether—the proper course is to speak usefully to people but not to talk for the sake of talking." (CWSA 31: 93)

12.

"If only people did remain a little quiet before speaking, acting or writing, much trouble could be avoided. So many things are said uselessly, they bring misunderstandings and bad feelings which could have been saved with silence.

If were spoken only the words that needed to be spoken, the world would be a very silent place." (CWM 14: 203)

13.

“There is not much utility in complete outer silence or absolute retirement. Unless one is very strong spiritually, these things often end by creating a moribund [declining] condition of the consciousness.” (CWSA 31: 93)

“If the peace is very strong within, talking does not cloud it—because this peace is not mental or vital even when it pervades the mind and vital—or else it is a cloud that quickly passes without touching deeply. Usually however such talk [*about others*] disperses the consciousness and one can lose much. The only disadvantage of not talking is that it isolates too much, if it is absolute, but by not talking these things one loses nothing.” (CWSA 31: 94)

14.

“If one keeps the inner silence even when among the friends, that is the real thing; the outer silence need only be relative until the time comes when speech itself is an expression out of the silence.” (CWSA 31: 94)

15.

“There are also all the words that are uttered to express ideas, opinions, the results of reflection or study. Here we are in an intellectual domain and we might think that in this domain men are more reasonable, more self-controlled, and that the practice of rigorous austerity is less

XLIII—Control of Speech Is More Important Than Complete Silence indispensable. It is nothing of the kind, however, for even here, into this abode of ideas and knowledge, man has brought the violence of his convictions, the intolerance of his sectarianism, the passion of his preferences. Thus, here too, one must resort to mental austerity and carefully avoid any exchange of ideas that leads to controversies which are all too often bitter and nearly always unnecessary, or any clash of opinion which ends in heated discussions and even quarrels, which are always the result of some mental narrowness that can easily be cured when one rises high enough in the mental domain.

For sectarianism becomes impossible when one knows that any formulated thought is only one way of saying something which eludes all expression. Every idea contains a little of the truth or one aspect of the truth. But no idea is absolutely true in itself.

This sense of the relativity of things is a powerful help in keeping one's balance and preserving a serene moderation in one's speech. I once heard an old occultist of some wisdom say, 'Nothing is essentially bad; there are only things which are not in their place. Put each thing in its true place and you will have a harmonious world.' (CWM 12: 60–61)

16.

"And yet, from the point of view of action, the value of an idea is in proportion to its pragmatic power. It is true that

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this power varies a great deal according to the individual on whom it acts. An idea that has great impelling force in one individual may have none whatsoever in another. But the power itself is contagious. Certain ideas are capable of transforming the world. They are the ones that ought to be expressed; they are the ruling stars in the firmament of the spirit that will guide the earth towards its supreme realisation.

Lastly, we have all the words that are spoken for the purpose of teaching. This category ranges from the kindergarten to the university course, not forgetting all the artistic and literary creations of mankind that seek to entertain or instruct. In this domain, everything depends on the worth of the creation, and the subject is too vast to be dealt with here. It is a fact that concern about education is very much in vogue at present and praiseworthy attempts are being made to make use of new scientific discoveries in the service of education. But even in this matter, austerity is demanded from the aspirant towards truth." (CWM 12: 61)

17.

"It is generally admitted that in the process of education a certain kind of lighter, more frivolous, more entertaining productions are necessary to reduce the strain of effort and give some relaxation to the children and even to adults. From a certain point of view, this is true; but unfortunately

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this concession has served as an excuse to justify a whole category of things which are nothing but the efflorescence of all that is vulgar, crude and base in human nature. Its coarsest instincts, its most depraved taste find in this concession a good excuse to display and impose themselves as an inevitable necessity. They are nothing of the kind, however; one can relax without being dissolute, take rest without being vulgar, enjoy oneself without allowing the grosser elements in the nature to rise to the surface. But from the point of view of austerity, these needs themselves change their nature; relaxation is transformed into inner silence, rest into contemplation and enjoyment into bliss.

This generally recognised need for entertainment, slackening of effort and more or less long and total forgetfulness of the aim of life and the purpose of existence should not be considered as something altogether natural and indispensable, but as a weakness to which one yields because of lack of intensity in the aspiration, because of instability in the will, because of ignorance, unconsciousness and sloth. Do not justify these movements and you will soon realise that they are unnecessary; there will even come a time when they become repugnant and unacceptable to you. Then the greater part of human creation, which is ostensibly entertaining but in reality debasing, will lose its support and cease to be encouraged.” (CWM 12: 61–62)

18.

"However, one should not think that the value of spoken words depends on the nature of the subject of conversation. One can talk idly on spiritual matters just as much as on any other, and this kind of idle talk may well be one of the most dangerous. For example, the neophyte is always very eager to share with others the little he has learnt. But as he advances on the path, he becomes more and more aware that he does not know very much and that before trying to instruct others, he must be very sure of the value of what he knows, until he finally becomes wise and realises that many hours of silent concentration are needed to be able to speak usefully for a few minutes. Moreover, where inner life and spiritual effort are concerned, the use of speech should be subjected to a still more stringent rule and nothing should be said unless it is absolutely indispensable." (CWM 12: 62–63)

XLIV—Silence About One's Own Spiritual Experience Is Advisable

1.

"As regards secrecy, a certain discretion or silence about the instructions of the Guru and one's own experiences is always advisable, but an absolute secrecy or making a mystery of these things is not. Once a Guru is chosen, nothing must be concealed from him. The suggestion of absolute secrecy is often a trick of the astral Powers to prevent the seeking for enlightenment and succour." (CWSA 28: 576)

2.

"It is a well-known fact that one must never speak of one's spiritual experiences if one does not want to see vanishing in a flash the energy accumulated in the experience, which was meant to hasten one's progress. The only exception which can be made to the rule is with regard to one's guru, when one wants to receive some explanation or teaching from him concerning the content and meaning of one's experience. Indeed, one can speak about these things without danger only to one's guru, for only the guru is able by his knowledge to use the elements of the experience for your own good, as steps towards new ascents.

It is true that the guru himself is subject to the same rule of silence with regard to what concerns him personally.

In Nature everything is in movement; thus, whatever does not move forward is bound to fall back. The guru must progress even as his disciples do, although his progress may not be on the same plane. And for him too, to speak about his experiences is not favourable: the greater part of the dynamic force for progress contained in the experience evaporates if it is put into words. But on the other hand, by explaining his experiences to his disciples, he greatly helps their understanding and consequently their progress. It is for him in his wisdom to know to what extent he can and ought to sacrifice the one to the other. It goes without saying that no boasting or vainglory should enter into his account, for the slightest vanity would make him no longer a guru but an imposter." (CWM 12: 63)

3.

"In all spiritual disciplines the first thing that you are taught is not to narrate your experiences to others. If you need to clarify your mind, tell your experiences to your spiritual teacher and to no one else, and even before your spiritual teacher you must be very careful. When you present or explain to him what has happened in you, if you observe yourself closely, you will see that there are things in you of which you are not wholly aware; in your experiences often there are gaps, interruptions in the continuity (it is extremely difficult to get at the continuity of consciousness and to follow the movement to the end); then, if you

narrate your experience without wanting to add anything whatsoever, without failing in sincerity, even so you put in what is not there. When people come and tell me something, an inner event, they find me at times inattentive, not attaching much importance to what I am being told—it is not that, it is that I listen to what is within, I see what is perfectly exact and the little facts that have been added. And it is because of this that generally I do not encourage these things. I know that people may feel relieved, comforted, if they can tell me what has happened, but then one must come with a wonderfully scientific spirit.” (CWM 4: 76)

4.

“To try to solve this problem ascetics used to go away into forests and sit under a tree; there, of course, they had not to fear any contagion from other human beings. But it is very difficult to go to the very end of this resolution, for it quickly gets known that a saint is sitting under a tree in meditation, and immediately everybody rushes there! Not only does he not escape from the difficulty, but he increases it, for there is not a thing more dangerous than to teach others. You know just a little and you begin to teach others, and you are immediately compelled to say more than you know, because people put questions to you which you cannot answer, unless you are a hero of silence. In the world, those who want to pass themselves off as

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spiritual teachers—when people come and ask them something they do not know, they invent it. Therefore, if in your inner discipline you begin to pretend, you may be sure of falling into the worst hole—of all things pretence is the most ruinous. In the world you may perhaps pass for what you are not, for people allow themselves to be easily deceived, and that will not lead you to a catastrophe (although if you exaggerate, it always leads to a catastrophe), but in the spiritual world, you don't have to deal with human beings, you have to deal with the Divine; it is impossible for you to pretend that you are this or that, for the Divine knows better than you, doesn't He? He knows what you are and it is not what you will say which will influence Him." (CWM 4: 75–76)

XLV—How Speech Can Have the Power of the Word

1.

“In conclusion, I would say this: if you want your speech to express the truth and thus acquire the power of the Word, never think out beforehand what you want to say, do not decide what is a good or bad thing to say, do not calculate the effect of what you are going to say. Be silent in mind and remain unwavering in the true attitude of constant aspiration towards the All-Wisdom, the All-Knowledge, the All-Consciousness. Then, if your aspiration is sincere, if it is not a veil for your ambition to do well and to succeed, if it is pure, spontaneous and integral, you will then be able to speak very simply, to say the words that ought to be said, neither more nor less, and they will have a creative power.” (CWM 12: 64)

XLVI—Keep Silent When There Is Nothing Pleasant to Say

1.

"A good advice to all the Ashramites in their dealings with visitors and foreigners
(and even among themselves):

‘When you have nothing pleasant to say about something or somebody in the Ashram, *keep silent*.

‘You must know that this silence is faithfulness to the Divine’s work’." (CWM 13: 145) (CWM 17: 216–218)

2.

"I was painfully shocked when I heard the translation of the leaflet you are distributing here in the Ashram. I never imagined you could have such a complete lack of understanding, respect and devotion for our Lord who has sacrificed himself totally for us. Sri Aurobindo was not *crippled*; a few hours before he left his body he rose from his bed and sat for a long time in his armchair, speaking freely to all those around him. Sri Aurobindo was not compelled to leave his body, he chose to do so for reasons so sublime that they are beyond the reach of human mentality.

And when one cannot understand, the only thing to do is to keep a respectful silence." (CWM 13: 7–8)

3.

(On 20 October 1962 China invaded India on her north-eastern and north-western borders. Between 20 and 28 October Chinese troops captured several military posts and forced Indian troops to retreat. During this time Mother made the following four statements.) (Below is a statements where the Mother advices to remain silent.)

"Sometimes I have the impression that our leaders do not seem to have backbone to the same extent as Kennedy with his decision about Cuba.

This kind of thinking is quite out of place at this moment. One should never criticise someone if one has not proved indisputably that, in the same circumstances, one can do better than he.

Do you feel yourself capable of being an unequalled Prime Minister of India? I reply: certainly not, and advise you to keep silent and to remain quiet." 24 October 1962 (CWM 13: 355–356)

4.

"(About letters written to two high-ranking government officials)

"I have read your letter to X and I am sorry I had not the opportunity of reading the one you wrote to Y.

The very fact that you wanted to despatch these letters without showing them to me ought to have put you on your guard concerning the origin of the impulse which you were obeying, as obviously it could not be a divine origin.

This said, I must add that there is nothing essentially wrong in the letter itself. What you say is correct, but surely it is not meant for the person to whom you wanted to send it, nor to any similar person, that is to say, someone in a prominent political position. Statesmen believe only in their own knowledge and power and, moreover, they receive hundreds of letters from people who think they have found a solution to the world situation, and, as in general these political leaders have no power of discernment, they cannot distinguish between what is true and what is false—and they believe that such letters are the product of the heated brain of religious fanatics. We cannot allow ourselves to be mixed up with them and for that it is better to keep a dignified silence.

In any case there is more than a ninety-nine per cent chance that your letter would never reach its destination and might fall into undesirable hands.” (CWM 15: 248–249)

XLVII—The Master's Silence When There Is Nothing Pleasant to Say

1.

"I do not know why you suppose that the Mother was displeased with you for your letter. I think my answer was quite kind and without any touch of displeasure in it. I was silent about most of what you had written, because when there are letters of this kind I take it as an unburdening of the mind and always either remain silent in so far as it concerns others or else I say that we must rely on the growth of inner consciousness to get rid of the faults and deficiencies and mistakes of the sadhaks. Silence does not imply that these defects and mistakes do not exist. But all have defects in various forms and make mistakes and the best sadhaks are not exempt." (CWSA 32: 389)

2.

"In most cases we pass over all quarrels and clashes in silence and almost all sadhaks have ceased to write about their conflicts because they get no answer." (CWSA 32: 396)

3.

"The Mother takes no sides in any quarrel or antagonism or dispute, but her silence does not mean that she approves what they may say or do when it is improper. The

Asram or the spiritual life is not a stage in which some are to be prominent or take a leading part or a field of competition in which one has a claim or can rightly consider himself superior to others." (CWSA 32: 398)

4.

"It seems that there is friction between you and X. He says that you are keeping him at a distance from his work and asks to be given work elsewhere. The Mother does not approve of this and she wants all friction to be removed and work harmoniously done. Personal feelings ought not to be allowed to come into the work or disturb it in any way. It is you and X who know the Bakery work thoroughly and are the best workers; for some time you two carried it on between you. Mother has relied on this collaboration for the Bakery work to go on well. If personal misunderstandings are allowed to break up the collaboration, it will be bad for the Mother's work and also for the sadhana of both. If misunderstandings arise, they ought not to be cherished in silence on either side, but cleared up by a frank and friendly explanation. I am writing to X to the same effect. Mother expects you both to remove all misunderstanding between you and work together in a friendly spirit." (CWSA 32: 443–444)

XLVIII—To Conceal the Truth by Silence Is Permissible

1.

“If you want to be an instrument of the Truth, you must always speak the truth and not falsehood. But this does not mean that you must tell everything to everybody. To conceal the truth by silence or refusal to speak is permissible, because the truth may be misunderstood or misused by those who are not prepared for it or who are opposed to it—it may even be made a starting point for distortion or sheer falsehood. But to speak falsehood is another matter. Even in jest it should be avoided, because it tends to lower the consciousness.” (CWSA 31: 9091)

2.

“No one is bound to speak the truth when it would be harmful or to speak whatever is in one’s mind; it is always permissible to keep silence or evade a reply and not to say what one does not wish or think it right to tell. But to tell a lie is superfluous and not justifiable.

It is usually out of weakness (mind and vital) that people lie; those who are strong in nature do not need to lie. A sadhak has to be strong and not weak—straightforward when necessary, silent when necessary, but not a liar. Straightforwardness does not mean of course that one has to babble out everything to everybody—to keep things to oneself, not to tell what should not be told

is very necessary; but falsehood is not the right way to conceal things that have not to be told, the right way is silence.” (CWSA 31: 9192)

3.

“If it [*what one has said to someone*] is true, it should not be withdrawn [*even if the person is troubled by it*]. But the truth need be told only when it helps the person spoken to, otherwise silence is better.” (CWSA 31: 92)

4.

“If I write about these questions from the Yogic point of view, even though on a logical basis, there is bound to be much that is in conflict with your own settled and perhaps cherished opinions, e.g. about ‘miracles’, persons, the limits of judgment by sense data etc. I have avoided as much as possible writing about these subjects because I would have to propound things that cannot be understood except by reference to other data than those of the physical senses or of reason founded on these alone. I might have to speak of laws and forces not recognised by physical reason or science. In my public writings and my writings to sadhaks I have not dwelt on these because they go out of the range of ordinary knowledge and the understanding founded on it. These things are known to some, but they do not usually speak about it, while the public view of such of them as are known is either

credulous [naive] or incredulous, but in both cases without experience or knowledge. So if the views founded on them are likely to upset, shock or bewilder, the better way is silence.” (CWSA 35: 64)

5.

“To keep silence and not reveal one’s motives is one thing—to say I did not act from that motive when I actually did so, is not silence, it is falsehood. It is a matter not of moral, but spiritual importance. The Mother cares for the Truth and she has always said that lying and falsehood create a serious obstacle to realisation. How then can she herself do that?

I do not remember any lies or half-lies told by Krishna, so I can say nothing on that point. But if he did according to the Mahabharat or the Bhagwat, we are not bound either by that record or by that example. I think Rama and Buddha told none.” (CWSA 32: 363)

XLIX—Silence in Matrimandir

1.

“Oh yes, it has to be... it should be like a sort of half-light with these rays of sunlight, so that the ray can be *seen*. A ray of sunlight. Then according to the time of day, the sun will turn (with the time of day and the month of the year). And then at night, as soon as the sun disappears, spotlights are lit which will have the same effect and the same colour. And day and night the light remains there. But no windows or lamps or anything like that—nothing. Ventilation with air-conditioners (they are built into the walls, it is very easy). And silence. Inside no one speaks! (*Mother laughs*) That will be good.” (CWM 13: 287)

2.

Matrimandir Talks

“And it must be able to hold from a hundred to two hundred people. And then, to support the roof there will be twelve columns inside (not outside), and right at the centre, well, the object of concentration.... And with the collaboration of the sun, all the year round the sun should enter as rays: no diffusion, an arrangement must be made so that it can enter as rays. Then according to the time of day and the month of the year, the ray will turn (there will be an arrangement up above) and the ray will be directed onto the centre. At the centre there will be the symbol of

Sri Aurobindo, supporting a globe. A globe which we shall try to make from something transparent like crystal or... A big globe. And then, people will be allowed in to concentrate—(*Mother laughs*) to learn to concentrate! No fixed meditations, none of all that, but they must stay there in silence, in silence and concentration.” (CWM 13: 285)

L—How Sri Aurobindo Silenced His Mind

1.

"The Yogi goes still farther; he is not only a master there, but even while in mind in a way, he gets out of it, as it were, and stands above or quite back from it and free. For him the image of the factory of thoughts is no longer quite valid; for he sees that thoughts come from outside, from the universal Mind or universal Nature, sometimes formed and distinct, sometimes unformed and then they are given shape somewhere in us. The principal business of our mind is either a response of acceptance or refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the environing Nature-Force. It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. 'Sit in meditation,' he said, 'but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*, before they can enter throw them away from you till your mind is capable of entire silence.' I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think of either questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw a thought and then another thought coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in

three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought or a labourer in a thought-factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free too to choose what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire." (CWSA 31: 44)

2.

"I am glad you are getting converted to silence, and even Nirvana is not without its uses—in my case it was the first positive spiritual experience and it made possible all the rest of the sadhana; but as to the positive way to get these things, I don't know if your mind is quite ready to proceed with it. There are in fact several ways. My own way was by rejection of thought. 'Sit down,' I was told, 'look and you will see that your thoughts come into you from outside. Before they enter, fling them back.' I sat down and looked and saw to my astonishment that it was so; I saw and felt concretely the thought approaching as if to enter through or above the head and was able to push it back concretely before it came inside.

In three days—really in one—my mind became full of an eternal silence—it is still there. But that I don't know how many people can do. ...

The usual way, the easiest if one can manage it at all, is to *call down* the silence from above you into the brain, mind and body." (CWSA 35: 247)

3.

"He [Sri Aurobindo] started his sadhana at Baroda in 1904 on his own account after learning from a friend the ordinary formula of Pranayama. Afterwards the only help he received was from the Maharashtrian Yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who instructed him how to reach complete silence of the mind and immobility of the whole consciousness. This Sri Aurobindo was able to achieve in three days with the result of lasting and massive spiritual realisations opening to him the larger ways of Yoga. Lele finally told him to put himself entirely into the hands of the Divine within and move only as he was moved and then he would need no instructions either from Lele himself or anyone else. This henceforward became the whole foundation and principle of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana. From that time onward (the beginning of 1909) and through many years of intensive experience at Pondicherry he underwent no spiritual influence from outside." (CWSA 36: 91)

4.

Sadhana 1908 – 1909

"Under the auspices of the Bombay National Union, Sri Aurobindo addressed a large gathering on the 19th

January 1908. He went to the meeting almost in a mood of inexplicable vacancy. . . .

Not inexplicable certainly; it was the condition of silence of the mind to which he had come by his meditation for 3 days with Lele in Baroda and which he kept for many months and indeed always thereafter, all activity proceeding on the surface; but at that time there was no activity on the surface. Lele told him to make namaskar to the audience and wait and speech would come to him from some other source than the mind. So in fact, the speech came, and ever since all speech, writing, thought and outward activity have so come to him from the same source above the brain-mind." (CWSA 36: 110–111)

5.

"I found it difficult to read, because the higher consciousness was trying to come down and I felt much pressure on the head.

It ought to be possible to read with the inner consciousness looking on and, as it were, seeing the act of reading. In the condition of absolute inner silence I was making speeches and conducting a newspaper, but all that got itself done without any thought entering my mind or the silence being in the least disturbed or diminished." (CWSA 35: 260)

6.

"While at the top of the staircase, after leaving my letter for you, I felt an intense force of thought coming in. I felt it in the head—but as if it was an open space.

That is a liberation, if completed. Since 1908 when I got the silence, I never think with my head or brain—it is always in the wideness generally above the head that the thoughts occur." (CWSA 35: 259)

7.

"You have written that you saw in me one who achieved through the perfection of the intellect, its spiritualisation and divinisation; but in fact I arrived through the complete silence of the mind and whatever spiritualisation and divinisation it attained was through the descent of a higher supra-intellectual knowledge into that silence. The book, *Essays on the Gita*, itself was written in that silence of the mind, without intellectual effort and by a free activity of this knowledge from above. This is important because the principle of this Yoga is not perfection of the human nature as it is but a psychic and spiritual transformation of all the parts of the being through the action of an inner consciousness and then of a higher consciousness which works on them, throws out the old movements or changes them into the image of its own and so transmutes lower into higher nature." (CWSA 35: 585)

8.

"I spent the first part of my imprisonment in Alipore jail in a solitary cell and again after the assassination of Noren Gosain to the last days of the trial when all the Alipore case prisoners were similarly lodged each in his own cell. In between for a short period we were all put together. ... I was carrying on my yoga during these days learning to do so in the midst of much noise and clamour but apart and in silence and without any participation of the others in it. My yoga begun in 1904 had always been personal and apart; those around me knew I was a sadhak but they knew little more as I kept all that went on in me to myself. It was only after my release that for the first time I spoke at Uttarpara publicly about my spiritual experiences." (CWSA 36: 97–98)

9.

In a letter to the Mother and Paul Richard

"A great silence and inhibition of action has been the atmosphere of my Yoga for the last year and it is only now beginning to lift from me. The most serious part of my difficulties,—the inward struggle,—is over; I have conquered, or rather One whose instrument I am has conquered for me." (CWSA 36: 284)

10.

"To be spontaneous means not to think out, organise, decide and make an effort to realise with the personal will.

I am going to give you two examples to make you understand what true spontaneity is. One—you all know about it undoubtedly—is of the time Sri Aurobindo began writing the *Arya*, in 1914. It was neither a mental knowledge nor even a mental creation which he transcribed: he silenced his mind and sat at the typewriter, and from above, from the higher planes, all that had to be written came down, all ready, and he had only to move his fingers on the typewriter and it was transcribed. It was in this state of mental silence which allows the knowledge—and even the expression—from above to pass through that he wrote the whole *Arya*, with its sixty-four printed pages a month. This is why, besides, he could do it, for if it had been a mental work of construction it would have been quite impossible.

That is true mental spontaneity.

And if one carries this a little further, one should never think and plan beforehand what one ought to say or write. One should simply be able to silence one's mind, to turn it like a receptacle towards the higher Consciousness and express as it receives it, in mental silence, what comes from above. That would be true spontaneity.

Naturally, this is not very easy, it asks for preparation.

And if one comes down to the sphere of action, it is still more difficult; for normally, if one wants to act with some kind of logic, one usually has to think out beforehand

what one wants to do and plan it before doing it, otherwise one may be tossed about by all sorts of desires and impulses which would be very far from the inspiration spoken about in *Wu Wei*; it would simply be movements of the lower nature driving you to act. Therefore, unless one has reached the state of wisdom and detachment of the Chinese sage mentioned in this story, it is better not to be spontaneous in one's daily actions, for one would risk being the plaything of all the most disorderly impulses and influences." (CWM 8: 281–282)

11.

"It is probable that Sri Aurobindo was thinking of his own experience. After three years of spiritual effort with only minor results he was shown by a Yogi the way to silence his mind. This he succeeded in doing entirely in two or three days by following the method shown. There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movements of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction. The sense of ego disappeared and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone which was not felt as belonging to oneself. But the perception which remained saw all things as utterly unreal; this sense of unreality was overwhelming and universal. Only some undefinable Reality was perceived as

true which was beyond space and time and unconnected with any cosmic activity but yet was met wherever one turned. This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world-consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from this realisation remained permanently behind all surface movements and the essence of the realisation itself was not lost.” (CWSA 29: 406) (CWSA 35: 258–259)

LI—The Mother's Experience of Silencing Her Physical Mind

1.

"And this began when the doctors declared that I was very ill, [During the spring of 1962] that was the beginning. Because the entire body was emptied of its habits and its forces, and then slowly, slowly, slowly the cells woke up to a new receptivity and opened themselves to the Divine Influence directly.

Otherwise there would be no hope. If this matter that started by being ... unconscious, inert, absolute; and then, little by little, little by little that woke up. ... At the time when I was said to be ill, the mind was gone, the vital was gone, the body was left to itself—purposely. Yes, it is that, it is just because the vital and the mental were gone that it gave the impression of a very serious illness. And then, in the body left to itself, little by little the cells began to wake up to the consciousness (*gesture of aspiration rising up*); this consciousness that was infused into the body by the vital (from the mental into the vital, from the vital into the body), when both had disappeared, the consciousness emerged slowly, slowly. That started with a burst of the Love from the highest summit, the last supreme altitude, and then little by little, little by little, it came down into the body. And then this physical mind, that is to say, something altogether, altogether stupid, which used to turn round and

round, repeating always the same thing, a hundred times the same thing, little by little it was illumined, became conscious, was organised, and then it entered into the silence; then in the silence the aspiration expressed itself in prayers.

(Silence)

It is the contradiction of all the spiritual assertions of the past: 'If you want to live fully conscious of the divine life, give up your body—the body cannot follow'; well, Sri Aurobindo came and said: the body, not only can it follow, it can even be the base for manifesting the Divine.

The work remains to be done.

But now a certitude is there." (CWM 11: 94–95)

2.

"The cells of the body are becoming something conscious, wholly conscious.

A consciousness that is independent, not depending at all upon the vital or the mental consciousness: it is a bodily consciousness.

(Silence)

And this physical mind of which Sri Aurobindo said that it was an impossibility, that it was something that turns round and round and will always turn round and round,

precisely without consciousness, like a kind of machine, that mind has been converted, has become silent, and in the silence it has received the inspiration of the Consciousness. And it has begun again to pray: the same prayers that were there before in the mind.

I quite understand what can happen in you, but...

But since it is happening in one body, it can happen in all bodies! I am not made of something different from the others. The difference is in consciousness, that is all. It is made exactly of the same thing, with the same things, I eat the same things, and it was made in the same way, absolutely.

And it [the Mother's body] was as stupid, as obscure, as unconscious, as obstinate as all the bodies of the world." (CWM 11: 93–94)

3.

"This discipline of the physical mind is... I do not know by which end to catch it. I find it very difficult.

Very difficult. It is very difficult.

You must begin by obtaining the silence at will. To obtain the silence at any moment. I believe that is the starting-point.

Yes, but to get the silence at will is not difficult, you concentrate for a second and it truly falls silent. And as long as you are concentrated, it is perfectly silent. But the moment you relax your concentration, finished. (Mother laughs) That moves, moves this way, moves that way.

The mind now has lost the habit of running about. That habit it must lose.

How to do it?

I do not know, because for me it was spontaneous. Only when someone speaks to me or when something comes to shake me out of it... otherwise, left to itself, quite naturally it is like that (*gesture of immobility, turned upward*).... Perhaps that is the way (*same gesture*): contemplating the Divine in this manner." (CWM 11: 293–294)

4.

30 December 1972

So it is going to be the new year....

Do you feel anything for this new year?

(*After a silence*) Things have taken an extreme form. So there is, as it were, an uplift of the atmosphere towards a splendour... almost inconceivable, ...

LI—The Mother's Experience of Silencing Her Physical Mind

So, the body, the body has one prayer—and it is always the same:

Make me worthy of knowing Thee,
Make me worthy of serving Thee,
Make me worthy of being Thee.

I feel in myself a growing force... but it is of a new quality...
in silence and in contemplation." (CWM 11: 330)

LII—The Mother Helps and Conveys in Silence

1.

"My poor little X,

I am truly very sorry to have to disappoint you, but the interview you want certainly cannot take place until the war is over.

Besides, for inner growth, I do not believe that words are necessary. In silence all our help is there at its most powerful." (CWM 17: 194)

2.

"My dear child,

Your good and kind letter has made me happy.

Last night, in silence, I told you, 'To arrive at that to which you aspire, the way is Love and the goal too is Love'—is it not the best answer to your letter?...

With my love and blessings." (CWM 16: 208)

"My dear child,

Well—the best thing you could do is not to listen to what people say; it would save you from many falls of consciousness. This afternoon when I looked at you in silence I told you, '*Be faithful to your love.*' I suppose this is a sufficient answer and you do not expect me to justify my love in front of the foolish ignorance of such

interpretations. Whether you believe or doubt, my love and blessings are with you.” (CWM 16: 210)

3.

“I am not eager to be the Guru of anyone. It is more spontaneously natural for me to be the universal Mother and to act in silence through love.” (CWM 13: 83)

4.

“Influence is more important than example. Influence is not the outward authority of the Teacher over his disciple, but the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another, infusing into it, even though in silence, that which he himself is and possesses. This is the supreme sign of the Master. For the greatest Master is much less a Teacher than a Presence pouring the divine consciousness and its constituting light and power and purity and bliss into all who are receptive around him.” (CWSA 23: 67)

5.

“My dear little smile,

You have described your condition very well and since you are so conscious of it, I feel that soon you will be able to master it.

It goes without saying that our help is always with you to bring you peace and silence, and it is absolutely

certain that peace and silence will be established in you some day never to leave you again.” (CWM 16: 98)

6.

“Mother,

I shall tell You frankly when I don't feel happy: it is when someone joyfully tells me about his beautiful and happy experiences that I feel so poor; I feel then that I do not yet have in me what I should have.

And I always ask You for silence and peace (as I told You the other day) because I know that if one can always keep that silence and peace one never feels poor for any reason.

I don't want to be, I don't want to feel so poor.

You have already had this experience of peace and silent joy; you know what it is and it is sure to come back stronger and steadier. Remain confident, do not torment yourself—in this way you will hasten its coming.

Tender love from your mother.” (CWM 16: 100)

7.

“My dear sweet mother,

Transform my whole nature. I shall be what you want me to be. Give me your peace, your silence in my heart. I cannot express everything in words, but, mother, you know everything.

LII—The Mother Helps and Conveys in Silence

Yes, I understand you very well, my dear child, and my affection is always with you and it wants you to have a vast and lasting peace, a deep and luminous silence, a calm and concentrated force, and the immutable joy that comes from a constant contact with the Light.” (CWM 16: 148–149)

LI—Teaching Children That a True Answer Can Be Found In Silence

1.

“Mother, now there is one question, another important question. You have often told us that it is only in the inner silence that we can find the true answer to a question. What is the best way to make the children discover how this silence is established? Is this how consciousness is substituted for knowledge?”

(Long silence)

You see, in this system of classes where everyone is sitting down, the teacher is there and they have a limited time in which to do the work, it is not possible. It is only if you have absolute freedom that you can establish the silence when you need to be silent. But when all the students are in class and the teacher is in class... when the teacher is establishing the silence in himself, all the students... then it is not possible.

He can establish the silence at home, at night, the day before, to prepare himself for the next day, but you cannot... It cannot be an immediate rule. Naturally, when you are at the very top of the scale and you are used to keeping your mind absolutely silent, you cannot help it; but you have not reached that point, none of you. So it is better

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Silence

not to speak about it. So I think that during the... Especially with this system, classes with a fixed time, with a fixed number of students, with a fixed teacher, and a fixed subject... you must be active while you are there.

It must be... If the students want to practise meditation, concentration, to try to come into... it is to come into contact with the intuitive plane, it is—instead of receiving a purely mental reply which is like that—to receive a reply from above which is a little luminous and living. But that habit should be acquired at home.” (CWM 12: 421–422)

2.

“And then, concerning the question I was asking you just now, the working conditions in the morning are rather different, since the work will be free. So, in these conditions, perhaps the children will be able to...”

Yes, there, the morning work, like the work they do there, ‘Vers la Perfection’ [4 The name given by Mother to a group of classes based on the Free Progress System.] They can very well do that: remain silent, concentrated for a moment, silence all that, everything that is noisy inside, like that, and wait. In the morning, they can do that. No, I mean, when you have an hour’s class, or three-quarters of an hour’s class with... all together with the teacher... you have to keep yourselves busy. It would be amusing if for

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Silence

three-quarters of an hour everyone could stay...
(*laughter*).

One thing could be done once, at least once: you set a subject, like that, from the course of subjects, you set it and tell them, 'For a quarter of an hour we shall remain silent, silent; no noise, no one should make any noise. We shall remain silent for a quarter of an hour. For a quarter of an hour try to remain completely silent, still and attentive, and then we shall see in a quarter of an hour what comes out of it.' You can reduce it to five minutes to begin with, three minutes, two minutes, it doesn't matter. A quarter of an hour is a lot, but you should do... try that... see. Some of them will start to fidget. Very few children, perhaps, know how to keep still; or else they fall asleep—but it doesn't matter if they fall asleep. You could try that at least once, see what happens: 'Let's see! Who will answer my question after ten minutes' silence? And not ten minutes which you will spend trying to get hold of everything you may know mentally about the subject, no, no—ten minutes during which you will be just like this, blank, still, silent, attentive... attentive and silent.'

Now, if the teacher is a true teacher, during these ten minutes, he brings down from the domain of intuition the knowledge which he spreads over his class. And so you do some interesting work, and you will see the results. Then the teacher himself will begin to progress a little. You can try. Try, you will see!" (CWM 12: 423–424)

3.

"We have tried that, Mother.

You see, for those who are sincere, sincere and very—how to put it?—very straight in their aspiration, there is a marvellous help, there is an absolutely living, active consciousness which is ready to... to respond to any attentive silence. You could do six years' work in six months, but there should... there should not be any pretension, there should not be anything which tries to imitate, there should be no wanting to put on airs. There should... you should be truly, absolutely honest, pure, sincere, conscious that... you exist only by what comes from above. Then... then... then you could advance with giant strides.

But don't do it daily, regularly, at a fixed time, because it becomes a habit and a bore. It should be... unexpected! Suddenly you say, 'Ah! Supposing we did this'... when you feel a little like that yourself, a little ready. That would be very interesting." (CWM 12: 424)

4.

"It would be interesting to formulate or to elaborate a new method of teaching for children, to take them very young. It is easy when they are very young. We need people—oh! we would need remarkable teachers—who have, first, an ample enough documentation of what is known so as to be

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able to answer every question, and at the same time, at least the knowledge, if not the experience—the experience would be better—of the true intuitive intellectual attitude, and—naturally the capacity would be still more preferable—at least the knowledge that the true way of knowing is mental silence, an attentive silence turned towards the truer Consciousness, and the capacity to receive what comes from there. The best would be to have this capacity; at least, it should be explained that it is the true thing—a sort of demonstration—and that it works not only from the point of view of what must be learned, of the whole domain of knowledge, but also of the whole domain of what should be done: the capacity to receive the exact indication of how to do it; and as you go on, it changes into a very clear perception of what must be done, and a precise indication of when it must be done.” (CWM 12: 404)

5.

“In silence, one comes into contact with the Truth. Later, the idea descends, passes through the ‘library’ of words and picks out the most suitable ones. At first it comes hazily. You must continue until it becomes precise. You can note it down, but you should remain quiet and continue. Then you get the exact word. The word that comes then is used in its essential sense, but not in its conventional sense.

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It is not quite the reality; they are the words which come closest to the reality. ...

I don't know whether you have tried to get mental silence. You can spend your whole life on that and achieve almost nothing, whereas this is extremely interesting.

At first nothing happens. You must stay like that: not actively—be in an aspiration towards the Divine. There must be no movement in the mind; it is not even surrender, it is a movement of perfect... something between self-giving and self abdication. And if the mind makes an offering of its way of being, one day the answer comes spontaneously. It falls like a light.

The calmer you are, the more confidence you have, the more attentive you are, the more clearly it comes. A time comes when one has only to do that (*gesture of opening*).... The student asks a question. You remain (*same gesture*)....

And above all, do not think actively: 'I want to know...What should I say to him?' No!

Then you will always get the answer for the student. Perhaps not the answer to the question he has asked, but the answer he needs. And it will always be interesting....

Up there, one knows. When you come to believe that the mind is powerless, that it knows nothing, you fall silent. You are more and more convinced that up there, there is a consciousness that not only knows but has the power, perceives the smallest detail and consequently the

student's need, and replies to that. When you are convinced of that, you give up your personal intervention and say: 'Take my place.' (CWM 12: 187–188)

6.

"What should be done so that Mother can act in the class?"

There is nothing, no method, no process, which is bad in itself; everything depends on the spirit in which it is done.

If you want my help, it is not by accepting one principle of action and rejecting another that you can have it, but by concentrating before the class, by establishing silence and peace in your heart (and in your head too, if possible) and *by calling my presence* with a sincere aspiration that I should be behind all your actions, not in the way you think that I would act (for that can only be an arbitrary opinion and therefore necessarily wrong), but in silence and calm and inner spontaneity. This is the only true way of getting out of your difficulty.

And until you are able to achieve this, do your best quietly and perseveringly, according to your own capacities and the circumstances, with simplicity and without tormenting yourself.

The Grace is always there with anyone who wishes to do well." (CWM 12: 333–334)

7.

"Yes, but the children are very noisy."

A minimum of silence is necessary. I know that the most undisciplined children are usually the most intelligent. But to be tamed they must feel the pressure of an intelligence that is more powerful than their own. And for that, one must be able not to come down to their level, and above all know how to remain unaffected by what they do. In fact, it is a yogic problem.

Can calm in the teacher provide the solution to all these problems?

Yes, but for that the calm must be perfect in all parts of the being so that the power can express itself through him." (CWM 12: 329)

8.

(Reply to some practical questions)

1. It is better not to lock the children up in the classroom, even to play.

2. A moment of silence and concentration is always good for *all the children*. But the prayer *should not be compulsory*. Those who want to do it will be encouraged.

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I suggest that you put up a notice-board in the classroom with these words written on it in large letters:

‘Mother is always here amongst us to help us and guide us.’

Most of the children will understand, and some are capable of *feeling*.” (CWM 12: 332)

9.

“*Sweet Mother,*

We have a minute of concentration before and after group every day. What should we try to do during this concentration?

Before, make an offering to the Divine of what you are going to do, so that it may be done in a spirit of consecration.

Afterwards, ask the Divine to increase the will for progress in us, so that we may become instruments that are more and more capable of serving Him.

You may also, before starting, offer yourselves to the Divine in silence.

And at the end, give thanks to the Divine in silence.

I mean a movement of the *heart* without any words in the head.” (CWM 12: 354–355)

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10.

"What can I do to achieve a silent atmosphere in the classroom?"

Be completely silent yourself.

Bring a piece of cardboard with you, about one metre long, on which you write in very big letters, black on white,

SILENCE

(much bigger than that) and as soon as the students start talking, put the cardboard in front of you." (CWM 12: 196)

LIV—Utter SILENCE Must Be Observed in Sri Aurobindo's Room

“Utter SILENCE must be observed in the room.

Whoever pronounces a word in the presence of Sri Aurobindo will have to leave the place immediately.” (CWM 13: 180)

LV—The Strength of Stillness and Silence

1.

“There are two great forces in the universe, silence and speech. Silence prepares, speech creates. Silence acts, speech gives the impulse to action. Silence compels, speech persuades. The immense and inscrutable processes of the world all perfect themselves within, in a deep and august silence, covered by a noisy and misleading surface of sound—the stir of innumerable waves above, the fathomless resistless mass of the ocean’s waters below. Men see the waves, they hear the rumour and the thousand voices and by these they judge the course of the future and the heart of God’s intention; but in nine cases out of ten they misjudge. Therefore it is said that in History it is always the unexpected that happens. But it would not be the unexpected if men could turn their eyes from superficies and look into substance, if they accustomed themselves to put aside appearances and penetrate beyond them to the secret and disguised reality, if they ceased listening to the noise of life and listened rather to its silence.” (CWSA 13: 57)

2.

“The greatest exertions are made with the breath held in; the faster the breathing, the more the dissipation of energy. He who in action can cease from breathing,—

naturally, spontaneously,—is the master of Prana, the energy that acts and creates throughout the universe. It is a common experience of the Yogin that when thought ceases, breathing ceases,—the entire kumbhak effected by the Hathayogin with infinite trouble and gigantic effort, establishes itself easily and happily,—but when thought begins again, the breath resumes its activity. But when the thought flows without the resumption of the inbreathing and out breathing, then the Prana is truly conquered. This is a law of Nature. When we strive to act, the forces of Nature do their will with us; when we grow still, we become their master. But there are two kinds of stillness—the helpless stillness of inertia, which heralds dissolution, and the stillness of assured sovereignty [control] which commands the harmony of life. It is the sovereign stillness which is the calm of the Yogin. The more complete the calm, the mightier the yogic power, the greater the force in action.” (CWSA 13: 57–58)

3.

“In this calm, right knowledge comes. The thoughts of men are a tangle of truth and falsehood, *satyam* and *anrtam*. True perception is marred and clouded by false perception, true judgment lamed by false judgment, true imagination distorted by false imagination, true memory deceived by false memory. The activity of the mind must cease, the chitta be purified, a silence fall upon the restlessness of

Prakriti, then in that calm, in that voiceless stillness illumination comes upon the mind, error begins to fall away and, so long as desire does not stir again, clarity establishes itself in the higher stratum of the consciousness compelling peace and joy in the lower. Right knowledge becomes the infallible source of right action. *Yogaḥkarmasu kauśalam.*

The knowledge of the Yogin is not the knowledge of the average desire-driven mind. Neither is it the knowledge of the scientific or of the worldly-wise reason which anchors itself on surface facts and leans upon experience and probability. The Yogin knows God's way of working and is aware that the improbable often happens, that facts mislead. He rises above reason to that direct and illuminated knowledge which we call *vijñānam*. The desire-driven mind is emmeshed in the intricate tangle of good and evil, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, of happiness and misfortune. It strives to have the good always, the pleasant always, the happiness always. It is elated by fortunate happenings, disturbed and unnerved by their opposite. But the illuminated eye of the seer perceives that all leads to good; for God is all and God is *sarvamaṅgalam*. He knows that the apparent evil is often the shortest way to the good, the unpleasant indispensable to prepare the pleasant, misfortune the condition of obtaining a more perfect happiness. His intellect is delivered from enslavement to the dualities." (CWSA 13: 58)

4.

“Therefore the action of the Yogin will not be as the action of the ordinary man. He will often seem to acquiesce in evil, to avoid the chance of relieving misfortune, to refuse his assent to the efforts of the noble-hearted who withstand violence and wickedness; he will seem to be acting *piśācavat*. Or men will think him *jaḍa*, inert, a stone, a block, because he is passive, where activity appears to be called for; silent, where men expect voicefulness; unmoved, where there is reason for deep and passionate feeling. When he acts, men will call him *unmatta*, a madman, eccentric or idiot; for his actions will often seem to have no definite result or purpose, to be wild, unregulated, regardless of sense and probability or inspired by a purpose and a vision which is not for this world. And it is true that he follows a light which other men do not possess or would even call darkness; that what is a dream to them, is to him a reality; that their night is his day. And this is the root of the difference that, while they reason, he knows.

To be capable of silence, stillness, illuminated passivity is to be fit for immortality—*amṛtatvāya kalpate*. It is to be *dhīra*, the ideal of our ancient civilisation, which does not mean to be tamasic, inert and a block. The inaction of the tamasic man is a stumbling-block to the energies around him, the inaction of the Yogin creates, preserves and destroys; his action is dynamic with the

direct, stupendous driving-power of great natural forces. It is a stillness within often covered by a ripple of talk and activity without,—the ocean with its lively surface of waves. But even as men do not see the reality of God's workings from the superficial noise of the world and its passing events, for they are hidden beneath that cover, so also shall they fail to understand the action of the Yogin, for he is different within from what he is outside. The strength of noise and activity is, doubtless, great,—did not the walls of Jericho fall by the force of noise? But infinite is the strength of the stillness and the silence, in which great forces prepare for action." (CWSA 13: 58–59)

LVI—In Absolute Silence Sleeps an Absolute Power

1.

"In absolute silence sleeps an absolute Power.
Awaking, it can wake the trance-bound soul
And in the ray reveal the parent sun:
It can make the world a vessel of Spirit's force,
It can fashion in the clay God's perfect shape.
To free the self is but one radiant pace;
Here to fulfil himself was God's desire."

Savitri (CWSA 33: 311–312)

We find that sleeping within absolute silence is the absolute power. When the power of silence is awakened it can wake the soul that is in trance. This absolute power can make the world, the entire manifestation a vessel of the force of the Spirit. This absolute power of silence can use the matter of our bodies to create perfect expression of the Divine. This absolute power of silence can divinise matter and all material forms. (Adapted from 'The English of *Savitri*' Book Three by Shraddhavan, page 72–73)

2.

" 'The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.' [p. 16
Savitri]

You perhaps felt it to be an ordinary line with a superficial significance; perhaps it conveyed to you not much more than the stock phrase about the 'strong silent man' admired by biographers, while to me it meant very much and expressed with a bare but sufficient power what I always regarded as a great reality and a great experience." (CWSA 27: 326)

3.

"There is a greater power in silence than in words, however forceful." (CWM 17: 366)

4.

Comments of Sri Aurobindo on a few Lines from 'Savitri'

"Spiritual that can make all things divine.
For even her gulfs were secrecies of light.
At once she was the stillness and the word,
A continent of self-diffusing peace,
An ocean of untrembling virgin fire;
The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.
In her he found a vastness like his own,
His high warm subtle ether he refound
And moved in her as in his natural home.
In her he met his own eternity." (CWSA 33: 16)

“As for the line about the strength and silence of the gods, that has a similar motive of completeness. The line about the ‘stillness’ and the ‘word’ gives us the transcendental element in Savitri,—for the Divine Savitri is the word that rises from the transcendental stillness; the next two lines render that element into the poise of the spiritual consciousness; this last line brings the same thing down to the outward character and temperament in life. A union of strength and silence is insisted upon in this poem as one of the most prominent characteristics of Savitri and I have dwelt on it elsewhere, but it had to be brought in here also if this description of her was to be complete. I do not find that this line lacks poetry or power; if I did, I would alter it. Your objection to the substitution of wideness for vastness is quite justified though not because of any reason of repetition, but because vastness is the right word and wideness is much inferior; the change was not deliberate but came by inadvertence due to a lapse of memory. I have restored vastness in the poem.” (CWSA 27: 291–292)

“I am afraid I shall not be able to satisfy your demand for rejection and alteration of the lines about the Inconscient and the cloak any more than I could do it with regard to the line about the silence and strength of the gods. I looked at your suggestion about adding a line or two in the first case, but could get nothing that would either improve the

passage or set your objection at rest. I am quite unable to agree that there is anything jargonish about the line any more than there is in the lines of Keats,

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know'." (CWSA 27: 324)

LVII—The Quiet Mind

1.

“Silence is always good; but I do not mean by quietness of mind entire silence. I mean a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to be open to the Force that will change the nature.” (CWSA 29: 160–161)

2.

“The first step is a quiet mind—silence is a farther step, but quietude must be there, and by a quiet mind I mean a mental consciousness within which sees thoughts arrive to it and move about, but does not itself feel that it is thinking or identify itself with the thoughts or call them its own. Thoughts, mental movements may pass through it as wayfarers appear and pass from elsewhere through a silent country—the quiet mind observes them or does not care to observe them but in either case does not become active or lose its quietude.” (CWSA 29: 141–142)

3.

“A quiet mind does not involve itself in its thoughts or get run away with by them; it stands back, detaches itself, lets them pass, without identifying itself, without making them its own. It becomes the witness mind watching the thoughts when necessary, but able to turn away from them

and receive from within and from above.” (CWSA 29: 161–162)

4.

“Quietness is when the mind or vital is not troubled, restless, drawn about by or crowded with thoughts and feelings. Especially when either is detached and looks at these as a surface movement, we say that the mind or vital is quiet.

Calmness is a more positive condition, not merely an absence of restlessness, over-activity or trouble. When there is a clear sense of great or strong tranquillity which nothing troubles or can trouble, then we say that calm is established.” (CWSA 29: 137–138)

5.

“It is not by mental activity that you can quiet your mind, it is from a higher or deeper level that you can receive the help you need. And both can be reached in silence only.” (CWM 12: 140)

6.

“A quiet mind is a mind that does not get disturbed, is not restless and always vibrating with the need of mental action.” (CWSA 29: 141)

7.

“Quiet does not mean inert and tamasic.” (CWSA 29: 144)

LVIII—When the Mind Is Quiet, the Force Can Work Easily

1.

“The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it more difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily. It should be possible to see things that have to be changed in you without being upset or depressed; the change is the more easily done.” (CWSA 29: 160–161)

2.

“Remember first that an inner quietude, caused by the purification of the restless mind and vital, is the first condition of a secure sadhana.” (CWSA 29: 138)

LIX—Why Quietude Is Needed in Yoga

1.

“It is not possible to make a foundation in Yoga if the mind is restless. The first thing needed is quiet in the mind. Also, to merge the personal consciousness is not the first aim of the Yoga; the first aim is to open it to a higher spiritual consciousness and for this also a quiet mind is the first need.” (CWSA 29: 141)

2.

“Your mind is too full of demands and desires. If you want to be able to practise the Yoga here, you must throw them from you and learn quietude, desirelessness, simplicity and surrender. It is these you must get first; other things can come afterwards—for this is the only true foundation of the sadhana.” (CWSA 29: 139)

3.

“Quiet means to keep the inner quietude and keep turned to the Mother with the aspiration towards or call for the return of the right condition.” (CWSA 29: 138)

4.

“Always get back to quietude. It is through the quietude that the right attitude and understanding and movements come back. It is natural for the lower vital to be made up

of feelings, impulses and desires and to be attached to outer things—but that is only a part of you. There is also the psychic and the higher mind and higher vital which only need quietude and the help of the Force and Peace behind them to come forward more strongly and dominate over the lower vital and help to change it.” (CWSA 29: 139)

5.

“You are too easily invaded by these things [*from outside*]. You must call for a calm quietness in the vital and physical and a Force in you and around you which will repel all foreign forces the moment they appear. If there is entire quietude and strength in the nerves, these outside forces will not easily be able to touch you.” (CWSA 29: 139)

6.

“You should realise that while quiet surroundings are desirable, the true quiet is within and no other will give you the condition you want.” (CWSA 29: 139–140)

7.

“To remain quiet within, firm in the will to go through, refusing to be disturbed or discouraged by difficulties or fluctuations, that is one of the first things to be learned on the Path. To do otherwise is to encourage the instability of consciousness, the difficulty of keeping experience of which you complain. It is only if you keep quiet and steady

within that the lines of experience can go on with some steadiness—though they are never without periods of interruption and fluctuation; but these, if properly treated, can then become periods of assimilation and exhaustion of difficulty rather than denials of sadhana.

A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress." (CWSA 29: 140)

8.

"If you can achieve quietude followed by an upward openness, it is better than the effort which sways between strong experiences and strong adverse reactions." (CWSA 29: 140)

9.

"Even to have the quietude and calm somewhere behind or in a passive way is more important and helpful than it seems. It provides a sort of permanent ground on which ultimately a lasting peace, power and joy can be built. If one can feel one part of the being always quiet in spite of the disturbances in another part, then one has made the first firm step towards a permanent change." (CWSA 29: 140–141)

10.

“This state of emptiness and quietude and absence of reactions is regarded by Yogins as a great step in advance, especially the equality and indifference to what is said or done. For the moment it is a neutral condition only, but that it is usually at first. Afterwards it changes into peace or even into an equal Ananda undisturbed by anything that can happen.” (CWSA 29: 141)

11.

“The quiet and calm have to be increased so as to be a firm basis for the love and Ananda.” (CWSA 29: 141)

12.

“How can you throw away the mind unless you want to disappear from manifested existence? It has first to be made quiet and open to the higher consciousness and transformed by the descent of the higher consciousness.” (CWSA 29: 142)

13.

“First aspire and pray to the Mother for quiet in the mind, purity, calm and peace, an awakened consciousness, intensity of devotion, strength and spiritual capacity to face all inner and outer difficulties and go through to the end of the Yoga. If the consciousness awakens and there is devotion and intensity of aspiration, it will be possible for

the mind, provided it learns quietude and peace, to grow in knowledge.” (CWSA 29: 142–143)

14.

“It is in the quiet mind that the true observation and knowledge come.” (CWSA 29: 143)

15.

“All quietude of the mind makes good conditions for the receptivity to act.” (CWSA 29: 143)

16.

“As I have said already, in all matters, work and study as well as in the inner progress in the Yoga, the same thing is needed if you want perfection—quietude of mind, becoming aware of the Force, opening to it, allowing it to work in you. To aim at perfection is all right, but restlessness of mind is not the way towards it. To dwell upon your imperfections and be always thinking how to do and what to do, is not the way either. Remain quiet, open yourself, allow the consciousness to grow—call the Force to work. As it grows and as the Force works, you will become aware not only of what is imperfect, but of the movement which will take you (not at one step, but progressively) out of the imperfection and you will then only have to follow that movement. ...

To work but quietly so as to have a steady progress is the right way.” (CWSA 29: 143)

17.

“1. A quiet mind makes consciousness easier.

2. If you keep a quiet mind and a constant contact with myself and the Mother and the true Light and Force, then things will become easy and straight—it is the *only* way to get to the realisation.

...

7. Do not be impatient, because full knowledge does not come to you at once. In quietude of mind keep the contact, let the true Light and Force work and with time all knowledge will come and the Truth will grow in you.” (CWSA 29: 144)

18.

“Do you imagine that a quiet mind cannot reject anything and it is only the unquiet mind that can do it? It is the quiet mind that can best do it. Quiet does not mean inert and tamasic.” (CWSA 29: 144)

19.

“A quiet mind does not mean that there will be no thoughts or mental movements at all, but that these will be on the surface and you will feel your true being within separate from them, observing but not carried away, able to watch

and judge them and reject all that has to be rejected and to accept and keep to all that is true consciousness and true experience.

Passivity of the mind is good, but take care to be passive only to the Truth and to the touch of the Divine Shakti. If you are passive to the suggestions and influences of the lower nature, you will not be able to progress or else you will expose yourself to adverse forces which may take you far away from the true path of Yoga.

Aspire to the Mother for this settled quietness and calm of the mind and this constant sense of the inner being in you standing back from the external nature and turned to the Light and Truth.” (CWSA 29: 150)

20.

“But to quiet the mind and get the spiritual experience it is necessary first to purify and prepare the nature. This sometimes takes many years. Work done with the right attitude is the easiest means for that—i.e. work done without desire or ego, rejecting all movements of desire, demand or ego when they come, done as an offering to the Divine Mother, with the remembrance of her and prayer to her to manifest her force and take up the action so that there too and not only in inner silence you can feel her presence and working.” (CWSA 29:226)

21.

“To quiet the mind in such a way that no thoughts will come is not easy and usually takes time. The most necessary thing is to feel a quietude in the mind so that if thoughts come they do not disturb or hold the mind or make it follow them, but simply cross and pass away. The mind first becomes the witness of the passage of thought and not the thinker, afterwards it is able not to watch the thoughts but lets them pass unnoticed and concentrates in itself or on the object it chooses without trouble.” (CWSA 30: 321)

22.

“To be calm, steady, fixed in the spirit, *dhīra*, *sthira*, this quietude of the mind, this separation of the inner Purusha from the outer Prakriti is very helpful, almost indispensable. So long as the being is subject to the whirl of thoughts or the turmoil of the vital movements one cannot be thus calm and fixed in the spirit. To detach oneself, to stand back from them, to feel them separate from oneself is indispensable.” (CWSA 29: 160)

LX—Buddhist Practice to Make the Mind Quiet

1.

“There are innumerable small Buddhist sects of all kinds, in China, in Japan, in Burma, and each one follows its own methods; but the most widespread among them are those whose sole practice is to make the mind quiet.

They sit down for a few hours in the day and even at night and quiet their mind. This is for them the key to all realisation—a quiet mind that knows how to keep quiet for hours together without roving. You must not believe however that it is a very easy thing to do, but they have no other object. They do not concentrate upon any thought, they do not try to understand better, to know more, nothing of the kind; for them the only way is to have a quiet mind and sometimes they pass through years and years of effort before they arrive at this result—to silence the mind, to keep it absolutely silent and still; for, as it is said here in the Dhammapada, if the mind is unbalanced, then this constant movement of ideas following one another, sometimes without any order, ideas contradicting and opposing each other, ideas that speculate on things, all that jostles about in the head, makes holes in the roof, as it were. So through these holes all undesirable movements enter into the consciousness, as water enters into a house with a leaky roof. ...

So from every point of view, and not only from the spiritual point of view, it is always very good to practise silence for a few minutes, at least twice a day, but it must be a true silence, not merely abstention from talking.

Now let us try to be completely silent for a few minutes.” (CWM 3: 194–196)

2.

“Already someone has told me, quite rightly, that while practising this half-silence, or at any rate this continence [self restraint] of speech, one achieves quite naturally the mastery of numerous difficulties in one’s character and also one avoids a great many frictions and misunderstandings. This is true.” (CWM 3: 264)

3.

THIS IS FROM Dhammapada

“One who observes silence does not by that become a sage, if he is ignorant and foolish; but he who can weigh good and evil as in a balance and make his choice, him one can call a sage.” (CWM 3: 267)

LXI—If the Mind Is Not Silent

1.

“Silence is indispensable, but also there is needed wideness. If the mind is not silent, it cannot receive the lights and voices of the supernal Truth or receiving mixes with them its own flickering tongues and blind pretentious babble. Active, arrogant, noisy, it distorts and disfigures what it receives. If it is not wide, it cannot house the effective power and creative force of the Truth. Some light may play there but it becomes narrow, confined and sterile. Or the force that is descending is cabined and thwarted and withdraws again from this rebellious foreign plane to its vast native heights. Or even if something comes down and remains, it is a pearl in the mire; for no change takes place in the nature or else there is formed only a thin intensity that points narrowly upward to the summits but can hold little and diffuse less upon the world around it.”
(CWSA 12: 256)

2.

“Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in on you from all around you.

But only if the mind is no less intense in its purity than its silence. For in an impure mind the silence will soon fill with misleading lights and false voices, the echo or sublimation of its own vain conceits and opinions or the response to its secret pride, vanity, ambition, lust, greed or desire. The Titans and the Demons will speak to it more readily than the divine Voices.” (CWSA 12: 256)

3.

“One may get influences from above, but so long as the mind is not full of the higher calm, peace, silence, one cannot be in direct contact. These influences get diminished, mentalised, vitalised and are not the powers of the higher planes in their native character. Nor is this sufficient to get control of the hidden forces of all the planes of consciousness, ...” (CWSA 30: 428)

4.

“Whoever clings to the desires and weaknesses of the flesh, the cravings and passions of the vital in its turbulent ignorance, the dictates of his personal mind unsilenced and unilluminated by a greater knowledge, cannot find the true inner law and is heaping obstacles in the way of the divine fulfilment.” (CWSA 23: 187)

LXII—Visions Signifying Silence

1.

"I see a rough rock. Sunlight falls upon it and the rock changes: in the centre a hollow circle is made and rocks arrange themselves round the circle. In the centre of the circle appears a stone image of Shiva nearly two feet high. Afterwards, out of this image the Mother emerges. She is in meditation. The sunlight falls just behind the Mother's body. What does it signify?"

Rocks = the physical (most material) being.

An opening in the material making room for the formation of the spiritual consciousness there.

Stone image of Shiva = the realisation of the silent Self or Brahman there (peace, silence, wideness of the Infinite, purity of the witness Purusha).

Out of this silence emerges the Divine Shakti concentrated for the transformation of the material.

Sunlight = Light of Truth." (CWSA 32: 280)

2.

"Once I saw the Mother sitting on the peak of an icy mountain; a narrow path led there and I was gradually advancing towards that."

This is simply a symbol of the purity and silence of the higher consciousness which has to be reached by the path of sadhana. The narrowness symbolises the difficulty because one has not to slip to one side or the other, but go straight." (CWSA 32: 281)

3.

"The Mother's consciousness with the wideness of the light, the white light in the vital, the golden light in the silence of the outer mind, the change in the vital, the quiet and natural trust and confidence are all signs and circumstances of this opening to the true consciousness. As you say, there must be established the fixing of this consciousness. The constant openness of part of the mind to the higher light will bring the silence of the whole mind and it is in the silent mind that the true knowledge will come—and indeed it has begun already to come." (CWSA 32: 284–285)

4.

"Over my head I see a plane of infinite and eternal Peace. The Mother is the Queen of this plane. From there I feel a ceaseless flow coming down towards me. It first touches the higher being and then the lower parts. When they are prepared, the Peace or silence descends like a current of water which passes through the Brahmic hole.

That is quite correct. In many however it descends in a mass through the whole head and not in a current through the Brahmic hole.” (CWSA 32: 287–288)

5.

“The vision you saw of the snow is probably a symbol of the consciousness in a condition of purity, silence and peace like a snowy ground; in that a new life (psychic, spiritual as indicated by the flowers) appears in place of the old mental and vital life which has been covered by that mantle of snowy whiteness.” (CWSA 30: 149)

6.

“The bridge you saw was the symbol of transition from the ordinary to the spiritual consciousness; the wide plain was a symbol of the large peace and silence which comes with the spiritual consciousness when one rests in the Divine.” (CWSA 30: 370–371)

LXIII—Poems by Sri Aurobindo in Which Silence Is Referred To

(1)

The Silence

Into the Silence, into the Silence,
Arise, O Spirit immortal,
Away from the turning Wheel, breaking the magical Circle.
Ascend, single and deathless:
Care no more for the whispers and the shoutings in the
darkness,
Pass from the sphere of the grey and the little,
Leaving the cry and the struggle,
Into the Silence for ever.

Vast and immobile, formless and marvellous,
Higher than Heaven, wider than the universe,
In a pure glory of being,
In a bright stillness of self-seeing,
Communing with a boundlessness voiceless and intimate,
Make thy knowledge too high for thought, thy joy too deep
for emotion;
At rest in the unchanging Light, mute with the wordless
self-vision,
Spirit, pass out of thyself; Soul, escape from the clutch of
Nature.

All thou hast seen cast from thee, O Witness.

Turn to the Alone and the Absolute, turn to the Eternal:

Be only eternity, peace and silence,

O world-transcending nameless Oneness, Spirit immortal.”

(CWSA 26: 383) (CWSA 2: 581)

(2)

Beyond the Silence

Out from the Silence, out from the Silence,

Carrying with thee the ineffable Substance,

Carrying with thee the splendour and wideness,

Ascend, O Spirit immortal.

Assigning to Time its endless meaning,

Blissful enter into the clasp of the Timeless.

Awake in the living Eternal, taken to the bosom of love of
the Infinite,

Live self-found in his endless completeness,

Drowned in his joy and his sweetness,

Thy heart close to the heart of the Godhead for ever.

Vast, God-possessing, embraced by the Wonderful,

Lifted by the All-Beautiful into his infinite beauty,

Love shall envelop thee endless and fathomless,

Joy unimaginable, ecstasy illimitable,

Knowledge omnipotent, Might omniscient,

Light without darkness, Truth that is dateless.

One with the Transcendent, calm, universal,
Single and free, yet innumerably living,
All in thyself and thyself in all dwelling,
Act in the world with thy being beyond it.
Soul, exceed life's boundaries; Spirit, surpass the universe.
Outclimbing the summits of Nature,
Transcending and uplifting the soul of the finite,
Rise with the world in thy bosom,
O Word gathered into the heart of the Ineffable.
One with the Eternal, live in his infinity,
Drowned in the Absolute, found in the Godhead,
Swan of the supreme and spaceless ether wandering
winged through the universe, Spirit immortal.
(CWSA 2: 581–582) (CWSA 26: 384)

(3)

The Word of the Silence

A bare impersonal hush is now my mind,
A world of sight clear and inimitable,
A volume of silence by a Godhead signed,
A greatness pure of thought, virgin of will.

Once on its pages Ignorance could write
In a scribble of intellect the blind guess of Time
And cast gleam-messages of ephemeral light,
A food for souls that wander on Nature's rim.

But now I listen to a greater Word

Born from the mute unseen omniscient Ray:

The Voice that only Silence' ear has heard

Leaps missioned from an eternal glory of Day.

All turns from a wideness and unbroken peace

To a tumult of joy in a sea of wide release.

(CWSA 2: 609)

(4)

Silence is all

1

Silence is all, say the sages.

Silence watches the work of the ages;

In the book of Silence the cosmic Scribe has written his
cosmic pages:

Silence is all, say the sages.

2

What then of the word, O speaker?

What then of the thought, O thinker?

Thought is the wine of the soul and the word is the beaker;
Life is the banquet-table as the soul of the sage is the
drinker.

3

What of the wine, O mortal?

I am drunk with the wine as I sit at Wisdom's portal,
Waiting for the Light beyond thought and the Word
immortal.

Long I sit in vain at Wisdom's portal.

4

How shalt thou know the Word when it comes, O seeker?
How shalt thou know the Light when it breaks, O witness?
I shall hear the voice of the God within me and grow wiser
and meeker;

I shall be the tree that takes in the light as its food, I shall
drink its nectar of sweetness. (CWSA 2: 644–645)

5

To the hill-tops of silence

To the hill-tops of silence from over the infinite sea,
Golden he came,
Armed with the flame,
Looked on the world that his greatness and passion must
free." (CWSA 2: 649)

6

In the silence of the midnight

In the silence of the midnight, in the light of dawn or
noontide

I have heard the flutings of the Infinite, I have seen
the sun-wings of the seraphs.

On the boundless solitude of the mountains, on the
shoreless roll of ocean,

Something is felt of God's vastness, fleeting touches
of the Absolute

Momentary and immeasurable smite the sense
nature free from its limits,—

A brief glimpse, a hint, it passes, but the soul grows
deeper, wider:

God has set his mark upon the creature.

In the flash or flutter of flight of bird and insect, in the
passion of wing and cry on treetops,

In the golden feathers of the eagle, in the maned and
tawny glory of the lion,

In the voiceless hierophants of Nature with their
hieratic script of colour,

Orchid, tulip and narcissus, rose and nenuphar and
lotus,

Something of eternal beauty seizes on the soul and
nerves and heartstrings.(CWSA 2: 679)

Silence is round me, wideness ineffable;
White birds on the ocean diving and wandering;
A soundless sea on a voiceless heaven,
Azure on azure, is mutely gazing.

Identified with silence and boundlessness
My spirit widens clasping the universe
Till all that seemed becomes the Real,
One in a mighty and single vastness.

Someone broods there nameless and bodiless,
Conscious and lonely, deathless and infinite,
And, sole in a still eternal rapture,
Gathers all things to his heart for ever.
(CWSA 26: 369)

8

Few Passages on Silence from 'Savitri'

"A heart of silence in the hands of joy
Inhabited with rich creative beats
A body like a parable of dawn
That seemed a niche for veiled divinity
Or golden temple-door to things beyond." (CWSA 27: 289)
(CWSA 33:15)

"In the mind's silence the Transcendent acts" (CWSA 33: 315)

"A power of silence in the depths of God;
She is the Force, the inevitable Word," (CWSA 33: 314)

"Self-guarded in the silence of her strength
Her solitary greatness was not less." (CWSA 33: 357)

"As into a heaven of strength and silence thought
Is ravished, all this living mortal clay
Is seized and in a swift and fiery flood
Of touches shaped by a Harmonist unseen.
A new sight comes, new voices in us form
A body of the music of the Gods." (CWSA 33: 572)

"Silence, the nurse of the Almighty's power,
The omniscient hush, womb of the immortal Word," (CWSA 33: 41)

LXIV—Silence in *Prayers and Meditations* of the Mother

1.

December 5, 1912

“In Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests; allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there. . . . Yes, we should not put too much intensity, too much effort into our seeking for Thee; the effort and intensity become a veil in front of Thee; we must not desire to see Thee, for that is still a mental agitation which obscures Thy Eternal Presence; it is in the most complete Peace, Serenity and Equality that all is Thou even as Thou art all, and the least vibration in this perfectly pure and calm atmosphere is an obstacle to Thy manifestation. No haste, no inquietude, no tension, Thou, nothing but Thou, without any analysis or any objectivising, and Thou art there without a possible doubt, for all becomes a Holy Peace and a Sacred Silence. And that is better than all the meditations in the world.”
(CWM 1: 10)

2.

December 7, 1912

“Like a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I

trust myself to Thee that Thy Will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. ...

Thy Peace is in me, and in that Peace I see Thee alone present in everything, with the calm of Eternity.” (CWM 1: 11)

3.

May 11, 1913

“As soon as I have no longer any material responsibilities, all thoughts about these things flee far away from me, and I am solely and entirely occupied with Thee and Thy service. Then, in that perfect peace and serenity, I unite my will to Thine, and in that integral silence I listen to Thy truth and hear its expression. It is by becoming conscious of Thy Will and identifying ours with Thine that there is found the secret of true liberty and all-puissance, the secret of the regeneration of forces and the transfiguration of the being.” (CWM 1: 19)

4.

June 15, 1913

“Even he who might have attained a perfect contemplation in silence and solitude would have arrived at it only by withdrawing from his body, by disregarding it; and so the substance of which the body is constituted would remain as impure, as imperfect as before, since he would have left

it to itself; and by a misguided mysticism, through the lure of supraphysical splendours, the egoistic desire to unite with Thee for his own personal satisfaction, he would have turned his back upon the very reason of his earthly existence, he would have refused like a coward to accomplish his mission—the redemption and purification of Matter.” (CWM 1: 20)

5.

August 2, 1913

“This morning, as I was glancing over the month that is beginning and wondering how I could serve Thee better, I heard the small voice within like a murmur in the silence, and this is what it said to me: ‘See how very little all outer circumstances matter. Why strive and strain so to realise thy own conception of Truth? Be more supple, more trusting. The only duty is not to let oneself be troubled by anything. To torment oneself about doing the right thing causes as much harm as a bad will. Only in a calm as of deep waters can be found the possibility of True Service.’

And this reply was so luminous and pure, it carried within itself such a striking reality, that the state it described was communicated without any difficulty. It seemed to me I was floating in the calm of deep waters; I understood; I saw clearly what the best attitude would be; and now I have only to ask Thee, O Sublime Master, my

Supreme Teacher, to give me the strength and clear-sightedness I need to remain constantly in this state.

‘Do not torment thyself, child. Silence, peace, peace’.” (CWM 1: 26)

6.

August 15, 1913

“In this even-fall, Thy Peace deepens and grows more sweet and Thy Voice more clear and distinct in the silence that fills my being.” (CWM 1: 28)

7.

August 16, 1913

“... O Thou whom I cannot understand, in the silence of the purest devotion I adore Thee.” (CWM 1: 29)

8.

“O Divine Master, sublime Friend, marvellous Teacher, in a fecund [productive] silence I bow to Thee.” (CWM 1: 31)

9.

November 22, 1913

“A few minutes passed in silence before Thee are worth centuries of felicity. . . .

Grant, O Lord, that all shadows may be dispelled and that I may be more and more Thy faithful servant in

constancy and serenity. Before Thee may my heart be pure as a pure crystal, so that wholly it may reflect Thee.

Oh! the sweetness of abiding in silence before Thee....” (CWM 1: 34)

10.

November 25, 1913

“The greatest enemy of a silent contemplation turned towards Thee is surely this constant subconscient registering of the multitude of phenomena with which we come into contact. So long as we are mentally active, our conscious thought veils for us this overactivity of our subconscious receptivity; an entire part of our sensibility, and perhaps not the smallest, acts like a cine-camera without our knowledge and indeed to our detriment. It is only when we silence our active thought, which is relatively easy, that we see this multitude of little subconscious notations surging up from every side and often drowning us under their overwhelming flood. So it happens that, as soon as we attempt to enter the silence of deep contemplation, we are assailed by countless thoughts—if thoughts they could be called—which do not interest us in the least, do not represent for us any active desire, any conscious attachment, but only prove to us our inability to control what may be described as the mechanical receptivity of our subconscient. A considerable labour is needed to silence all these useless noises, to stop this

wearisome train of images and to purify one's mind of these thousand little nothings, so obstructing and worthless. And it is so much time uselessly lost; it is a terrible wastage.

...

There is certainly another remedy. What is it? Undoubtedly, one must learn to control one's subconscious just as one controls one's conscious thought. There must be many ways of achieving this. Regular introspection in the Buddhist manner and a methodical analysis of one's dreams—formed almost always from this subconscious registration—are part of the method to be found. But there is surely something more rapidly effective. . . .

O Lord, Eternal Master, Thou shalt be the Teacher, the Inspirer; Thou wilt teach me what should be done, so that after an indispensable application of it to myself, I may make others also benefit from what Thou hast taught me.

With a loving and trustful devotion, I bow to Thee.”
(CWM 1: 35–36)

11.

“O Lord, my sweet Master, Thou whom I adore in silence and to whom I have entirely consecrated myself, Thou who governest my life, kindle in my heart the flame of Thy pure love that it may burn like a glowing brazier, consuming all imperfections and transforming into a comforting warmth and radiating light the dead wood of egoism and the black coals of ignorance.” (CWM 1: 40)

12.

January 2, 1914

"This marvellous silence manifests Thee despite the mad human agitation—the immutable and constant silence so living in all things that one has but to listen to hear it, in contrast with all that is futile noise, vain agitation, useless dispersion of energies. Let it flower in our being as a source of light and peace; may its power radiate over all in beneficent streams." (CWM 1: 44)

13.

"Thou art eternal silence and perfect peace in what we are able to perceive of Thee.

Thou art all the perfection we must acquire, all the marvels to be realised, all the splendour to be manifested.

And all our words are but children's babblings when we venture to speak of Thee.

In silence is the greatest reverence." (CWM 1: 48)

14.

"O inaccessible summit which we unceasingly scale without ever reaching Thee, sole Reality of our being whom we believe we have found only to see Thee immediately escape us, marvellous state which we think we have seized but which leads us farther and farther into ever unexplored depths and immensities; no one can say, 'I have known Thee,' and yet all carry Thee in themselves, and in the

silence of their soul can hear the echo of Thy voice; but this silence is itself progressive, and whatever be the perfection of the union we have realised, as long as we belong by our body to the world of relativity, this Union with Thee can always grow more perfect.” (CWM 1: 52–53)

15.

“O Lord, eternal Master, enlighten us, guide our steps, show us the way towards the realisation of Thy law, towards the accomplishment of Thy work.

I adore Thee in silence and listen to Thee in a religious concentration.” (CWM 1: 64)

16.

February 13, 1914

“In the silence of an intense concentration I would unite my consciousness with Thy absolute consciousness, I would identify myself with Thee, O sovereign Lord of our being, divine Master of love, so that Thy law may become clear and perceptible to us and we may live only by it and for it.” (CWM 1: 73)

17.

March 8, 1914

“In front of this calm sunrise which turned all within me into silence and peace, at the moment when I grew

conscious of Thee and Thou alone wast living in me, O Lord, it seemed to me that I adopted all the inhabitants of this ship, and enveloped them in an equal love, and that so in each one of them something of Thy consciousness would awake. Not often had I felt so strongly Thy divine power and Thy invincible light, and once again total was my confidence and unmixed my joyful surrender.” (CWM 1: 92)

18.

March 10, 1914

“In the silence of the night Thy Peace reigned over all things, in the silence of my heart Thy Peace reigns always; and when these two silences were united, Thy Peace was so powerful that no disturbance of any kind could resist it.” (CWM 1: 94)

19.

March 21, 1914

“Every morning my aspiration rises ardently to Thee, and in the silence of my satisfied heart I ask that Thy law of Love may be expressed, that Thy will may manifest. And in anticipation I adhere with joy and serenity to those circumstances which will express this law and this will.” (CWM 1: 105)

20.

"O Lord, all thought seems dead within me, now that I have asked these questions. I search for my conscious mind and I do not find it; I search for my individuality and I cannot discover it anywhere; I search for my personal will and it is not there. I search for Thee, and Thou art silent. . . . Silence, silence. . . .

Now I seem to hear Thy voice: 'Never hast thou known how to die integrally. Always something in thee has wanted to know, to witness, to understand. Surrender completely, learn how to disappear, break the last barrier that separates thee from me; accomplish unreservedly thy act of surrender.' Alas, O Lord, for a long time have I wanted it, but I could not. Now wilt Thou give me the power to do so?" (CWM 1: 119–120)

21.

"At no moment, in no circumstances must we forget that our 'I' has no reality outside Thee.

O my sweet Master, my divine Lord, tear out from my heart this illusion so that Thy servant may become pure and faithful and faithfully and integrally bring back to Thee all that is Thy due. In silence let me contemplate and understand this supreme ignorance and dispel it for ever. Chase the shadow from my heart, and let Thy light reign in it, its uncontested sovereign." (CWM 1: 127)

22.

“Something in this being aspires for solitude and absolute silence for a little while, so as to come out of this unsatisfactory transition; and something else knows that it is Thy will that this instrument be consecrated to the service of all, even if this must apparently be harmful to its self-perfecting.” (CWM 1: 147)

23.

May 21, 1914

“Outside all manifestation, in the immutable silence of Eternity, I am in Thee, O Lord, an unmoving beatitude. In that which, out of Thy puissance and marvellous light, forms the centre and reality of the atoms of matter I find Thee; thus without going out of Thy Presence I can disappear in Thy supreme consciousness or see Thee in the radiant particles of my being. And for the moment that is the plenitude of Thy life and Thy illumination.

I see Thee, I am Thyself, and between these two poles my intense love aspires towards Thee.” (CWM 1: 150)

24.

May 26, 1914

“In the silence I beheld Thy infinite and eternal Beatitude.” (CWM 1: 157)

25.

"Yet it is in the deep silence of my mute and total adoration that I best understand Thee." (CWM 1: 159)

26.

May 31, 1914

"WHEN the sun set in the indrawn contemplation of the calm twilight, all my being prostrated itself before Thee, O Lord, in mute adoration and complete self-giving. Then I was the whole earth and the whole earth prostrated itself before Thee, imploring the benediction of Thy illumination, the beatitude of Thy love. Oh, the kneeling earth that supplicates to Thee, then is ingathered in the silence of the night, waiting in both patience and anxiety for the illumination so ardently desired. If there is a sweetness in being Thy divine love at work in the world, there is as great a sweetness in being the infinite aspiration which rises towards that infinite love." (CWM 1: 162)

27.

June 12, 1914

"O My sweet Master, eternal splendour, I can only unite with Thee in silence and peace, saying that Thy Will may be done in every detail as in the whole. Take possession of Thy kingdom, master all that revolts against Thee, heal the souls who do not know Thee and the intellects that do not want to submit and be consecrated to Thee. Awaken our

slumbering energies, stimulate our courage, enlighten us,
O Lord, show us the Way.

My heart is overflowing with a sovereign peace, my
thought is calm and silent.

At the core of all that is, of all that will be, of all that
is not, is Thy divine and unchanging smile.” (CWM 1: 170)

28.

“And now, O Lord, Thou must create in this being a
constant aspiration, uninterrupted, intense, passionate, in
an immutable serenity. Silence, peace are there: there
must also be the persistence of the intensity. Oh, Thy heart
sings a hallelujah of gladness as if what Thou wilt were
on the way to its fulfilment.” (CWM 1: 176)

29.

“O Thou source of all love and all light, Thou whom we
cannot know in Thyself but can manifest ever more
completely and perfectly, Thou whom we cannot conceive
but can approach in profound silence, to complete Thy
incommensurable boons Thou must come to our help until
we have gained Thy victory.” (CWM 1: 179)

30.

July 5, 1914

“All that belongs to the outer, lower being which is still
obscure, prostrates itself before Thee in a mute and

fervent adoration, calling with all its strength Thy purifying action which will make it fit to manifest Thee fully.

And in this adoration is found perfect silence and perfect beatitude.

Thou replest mercifully to the call: 'What has to be done will be done. The necessary instruments will be prepared. Strive in the calm of certitude.' (CWM 1: 193)

31.

"Why torment oneself and suffer, why this bitter struggle and painful revolt, why this vain violence, why this inconscient, heavy sleep? Awake without fear, appease your conflicts, silence your disputes, open your eyes and your hearts: the Force is there; it is there, divinely pure, luminous, powerful; it is there as a boundless love, a sovereign power, an indisputable reality, an unmixed peace, an uninterrupted beatitude, the Supreme Benediction; it is self-existence, the endless bliss of infinite knowledge . . . and it is something more which cannot yet be told, but which is already at work in the higher worlds beyond thought as the power of sovereign transfiguration, and also in the inconscient depths of Matter as the Irresistible Healer. . . ." (CWM 1: 195)

32.

"Despite myself, in the silence of all thought, that is, of all conscious formulas, something in my being, deeper than

words, turns to Thee, O ineffable Lord, in an ardent aspiration, giving Thee in offering all its activities, all its elements, all its modes of being, and imploring for all these the supreme illumination.” (CWM 1: 227)

33.

August 28, 1914

“O LORD, O eternal Master, my thought lies mute and powerless before Thee but my heart calls to Thee; awaken all my being that it may be for Thee, entirely, the needed instrument, the perfect servitor.

Oh, to be infinitely Thou, Thou in all things, Thou everywhere, Thou always, the absolute silence, the absolute movement . . .

To be nothing other than the One, all-containing, contained in all—free from every limitation and from all blindness.” (CWM 1: 234)

34.

September 1, 1914

“O Mother Divine, with what fervour, what ardent love I came to Thee in Thy deepest consciousness, in Thy high status of sublime love and perfect felicity, and I nestled so close into Thy arms and loved Thee with so intense a love that I became altogether Thyself. Then in the silence of our mute ecstasy a voice from yet profounder depths arose and the voice said, ‘Turn towards those who have need of

thy love.' All the grades of consciousness appeared, all the successive worlds." (CWM 1: 238) (CWSA 32: 633)

35.

September 13, 1914

"With fervour I hail Thee, O divine Mother, and in deep affection identify myself with Thee. United with our divine Mother I turn, O Lord, to Thee, and bow to Thee in mute adoration and in an ardent aspiration identify myself with Thee.

Then all becomes a marvellous Silence; Being is absorbed in Non-Being, all is suspended, at rest, motionless.

How shall one express the inexpressible?" (CWM 1: 245)

36.

September 20, 1914

"My pen is mute, for thought is silent, but my heart aspires to Thee, O Lord, uniting Thee with our divine Mother in one love, one veneration. And through Thee the entire being strains towards the Ineffable; beyond Being, beyond the very Silence, that is united with That." (CWM 1: 249)

37.

"In the absolute silence all is, now and eternally; in the universal manifestation all will be in a perpetual becoming.

In the perfection of consciousness and the integral life, the being sings a canticle of gladness for That which at once is and will be eternally.” (CWM 1: 250)

38.

“And Thou, O Lord, who art all this made one and much more, O sovereign Master, extreme limit of our thought, who standest for us at the threshold of the Unknown, make rise from that Unthinkable some new splendour, some possibility of a loftier and more integral realisation, that Thy work may be accomplished and the universe take one step farther towards the sublime Identity, the supreme Manifestation.

And now my pen falls mute and I adore Thee in silence.” (CWM 1:255) (CWSA 32: 634)

39.

October 5, 1914

“In the calm silence of Thy contemplation, O Divine Master, Nature is fortified and tempered anew. All principle of individuality is overpassed, she is plunged in Thy infinity that allows oneness to be realised in all domains without confusion, without disorder.” (CWM 1: 256) (CWSA 32: 635)

40.

October 10, 1914

"MAY the offering of my being, constantly renewed and growing more and more integral, be laid before the Supreme Reality, the Unthinkable who cannot be formulated, but who, in time, expresses himself eternally in an ever completer and more perfect manifestation. O Thou whom I cannot name, Thou whose will I perceive in supreme silence and total surrender, let me be the representative of all the earth, so that, united with my consciousness, it may give itself unreservedly to Thee.

Thou art the perfect peace and the marvellous accomplishment; Thou art all that the universe is, immutably, beyond time, and wants to be more and more in the consciousness of time and space." (CWM 1: 260)

41.

October 12, 1914

"It was their sorrow and suffering which the physical being was feeling, Lord. When will ignorance dissolve? When will pain cease? O Lord, grant that each element of the universe may become conscious of its principle of being and, without disappearing, be transformed; may the veils of egoistic blindness which hide Thee be removed and mayst Thou appear resplendent in the total manifestation. All this is eternally in Thy absolute silence; but it is through an infinite progression that it manifests in the integral consciousness." (CWM 1: 262)

42.

October 14, 1914

“Mother Divine, Thou art with us; every day Thou givest me the assurance and, closely united in an identity that grows more and more total, more and more constant, we turn to the Lord of the Universe and to That which is beyond in a great aspiration towards the new Light. All the earth is in our arms like a sick child who must be cured and for whom one has a special affection because of his very weakness. Cradled on the immensity of the eternal becomings, ourselves those becomings, we contemplate hushed and glad the eternity of the immobile Silence where all is realised in the perfect Consciousness and immutable Existence, miraculous gate of all the unknown that is beyond.” (CWM 1: 263) (CWSA 32: 636)

43.

October 23, 1914

“O Lord, the entire being is ready and it calls Thee to take possession of what is Thine; of what service can be the instrument if the Master will not use it? And whatever be the mode of manifestation, it shall be well, from the most humble, most obscure, most material, most outwardly limited, to the vastest, most brilliant, most powerful, most intellectual.

The entire being is ready and waits in a passive silence until it is Thy Will to manifest.” (CWM 1: 266)

44.

"In the perfect silence of my contemplation all widens to infinity, and in the perfect peace of that silence Thou appearest in the resplendent glory of Thy Light." (CWM 1: 267) (CWSA 32: 637)

45.

November 8, 1914

For the plenitude of Thy Light we invoke Thee, O Lord!
Awaken in us the power to express Thee.

All is mute in the being as in a desert crypt; but in the heart of the shadow, in the bosom of the silence burns the lamp that can never be extinguished, the fire of an ardent aspiration to know Thee and totally to live Thee.

The nights follow the days, new dawns unweariedly succeed to past dawns, but always there mounts the scented flame that no storm-wind can force to vacillate." (CWM 1: 270) (CWSA 32: 637)

46.

December 4, 1914

"After long days of silence, entirely occupied by outer work, it is at last given to me to resume these pages and continue with Thee, Lord, this conversation which is so sweet to me. . . ." (CWM 1: 279)

47.

December 10, 1914

"Listen, O Lord . . . in the silence of deep meditation my prayer rises ardently to Thee." (CWM 1: 281)

48.

March 7, 1915

"It is past, the time of sweet mental silence, so peaceful, so pure, through which could be felt the profound will expressing itself in its all-powerful truth." (CWM 1: 297)

49.

"The entire earthly life of this being, from its very beginning to the present moment, gives it the impression of an unreal dream, very remote from it, having almost no further contact with it; all this outer mechanism is now only a machine which it moves, for such is the will of its central Reality, but it is no longer interested in it, perhaps sometimes even less than the neighbouring mechanism or even the unknown mechanism that will be the product of the earth of tomorrow. But this earth itself is strange to it, and as it is not aware of anything else except the Eternal Silence, all life that has form appears remote and almost unreal to it; it seems strange to it that anyone could desire anything since it does not exist, or prefer one thing to another since neither is there." (CWM 1: 300–301)

50.

"All this gives the feeling of a sort of void full of light, peace, immensity, eluding all form and all definition. It is the Nought, but a Nought which is real and can last eternally, for it is, even while having the perfect immensity of that which is not. . . . Poor words which try to say what silence itself cannot express." (CWM 1: 301)

51.

"What words will sing Thy ineffable Peace and celebrate the majesty of Thy Silence and the grandeur of Thy all-powerful Truth?" (CWM 1: 306)

52.

November 7, 1915. 3 a.m.

"Without any external sign, any special circumstance, the moments passed by so majestically, in so solemn an inner silence, a calm so deep and vast, that my tears began to flow profusely. For the last two days the earth seems to have been going through a decisive crisis; it seems that the great formidable contest between material resistances and spiritual powers is nearing its conclusion, or, in any case, that some element of capital importance has made or is going to make its appearance in the play." (CWM 1: 309)

53.

"What will be Thy decree, what is Thy sentence? O Lord of Truth, this individual world blesses Thy truth which it does

not yet know, but which it calls, and to which it adheres with all the joyful energy of its living forces.

Death has passed, vast and solemn, and all was hushed in a religious silence while it was passing by.

A superhuman beauty has appeared upon earth.

Something more marvellous than the most marvellous bliss has brought a foretaste of its Presence.”
(CWM 1: 310)

54.

December 4, 1916

“SINCE Thou hast permitted it, O Lord, I have once again begun to come to Thee daily, freeing myself for a few brief moments from an activity of which I know the complete relativity, even while I am engaged in it. Thou hadst plunged me back into action and the ordinary consciousness, and now Thou grantest me the possibility of regularly taking my flight again to Thee, to soar awhile in the immutable Silence and eternal Consciousness.

Thou hast willed, O Lord, that the being should grow wider and richer. It could not do so without entering once again, at least partially and temporarily, into ignorance and obscurity.” (CWM 1: 321)

55.

“ ‘Turn towards the earth.’ The usual injunction was heard in the silence of the immutable identification.” (CWM 1: 322)

56.

December 26, 1916*

"Always the word Thou makest me hear in the silence is sweet and encouraging, O Lord." (CWM 1: 338) (CWSA 32: 640)

57.

January 8, 1917

"Thou hast made my heart and mind fall silent; but no voice has arisen from the depths of this silence. Peace alone has reigned, a sweet and beneficent guest." (CWM 1: 347)

58.

March 27, 1917

(Communication in dialogue received during meditation)

"Look: thou seest the living form and the three inanimate images. The living one is clad in violet, the other three are made of dust, but cleansed and purified. It is in the calm of silence that the living form can, by penetrating the other three, unite them in order to transform them into a living and acting vesture." (CWM 1: 355)

59.

"Thy silence is not yet deep enough: something stirs within thy mind. . . .

‘The fire of the soul must be seen through the veils of the manifestation; but these veils must be clear and distinct like words traced upon a luminous screen. And all this should be preserved in the purity of thy heart, as the sown meadow is shrouded and protected under the snow.

“Now that thou hast sown the seeds in the field and traced the signs on the screen, thou mayst return to thy calm silence, thou mayst go back to thy calm retreat to renew thy strength in a deeper and truer consciousness. Thou canst forget thy own person and find again the charm of the universal.” (CWM 1: 356)

60.

April 9, 1917

“ONCE the threshold of the kingdom of Thy Omniscience has been crossed, each time there is a return to the mental world, every thought one has there seems a marvellous and unfathomable problem one had never dreamed of before.

Above, no question is put; in that calm silence all is known from all eternity. Below, all is new, unknown, unexpected.

And the two meeting in one single consciousness bring a trustful wondering, source of Peace and Light and Joy.” (CWM 1: 365)

61.

“Why, when Thou hast given me this great inner silence, sufferest Thou the tongue to be so active and the thought to be occupied with things so futile? Why? . . . I could go on questioning indefinitely and, to all likelihood, always in vain. . . .

I have only to bow to Thy decree and accept my condition without uttering a word.

I am now only a spectator who watches the dragon of the world unrolling its coils without end.” (CWM 1: 370)

LXV—A Higher State than Immobile and Static Peace

1.

“That is why all spiritual disciplines begin with the necessity of surrendering all responsibility and relying on a higher principle. Otherwise peace is impossible.

And yet, consciousness has been given to man so that he can progress, can discover what he doesn't know, develop into what he has not yet become; and so it may be said that there is a higher state than that of an immobile and static peace: it is a trust total enough for one to keep the will to progress, to preserve the effort for progress while ridding it of all anxiety, all care for results and consequences. This is one step ahead of the methods which may be called 'quietist', which are founded on the rejection of all activity and a plunging into an immobility and inner silence, which forsake all life because it has been suddenly felt that without peace one can't have any inner realisation and, quite naturally, one thought that one couldn't have peace so long as one was living in outer conditions, in the state of anxiety in which problems are set and cannot be solved, for one does not have the knowledge to do so.

The next step is to face the problem, but with the calm and certitude of an absolute trust in the supreme Power which knows, and can make you act. And then,

LXV—A Higher State than Immobile and Static Peace
instead of abandoning action, one can act in a higher peace
that is strong and dynamic.” (CWM 9: 305)

LXVI—Other Quotations on Silence

1.

The Voices of the Poets

“Out of the infinite silence of the past, peopled only to the eye of history or the ear of the Yogin, a few voices arise which speak for it, express it and are the very utterance and soul of those unknown generations, of that vanished and now silent humanity. These are the voices of the poets. We whose souls are drying up in this hard and parched age of utilitarian and scientific thought when men value little beyond what gives them exact and useful knowledge or leads them to some outward increase of power & pleasure, we who are beginning to neglect & ignore poetry and can no longer write it greatly & well,—just as we have forgotten how to sculpture like the Greeks, paint like the mediaeval Italians or build like the Buddhists,—are apt to forget this grand utility of the poets, one noble faculty among their many divine and unusual powers.” (CWSA 12: 405)

2.

Yoga and Human Evolution

“The progress of mankind has been placed by many predominatingly in the development of the human intellect, and intellectual development is no doubt essential to self-conquest. ... The development of intellect enables a man to find the deeper self within and partially replace what our

philosophy calls the *dehātmaka-buddhi* [the state of perception in which the body is identified with the Self], the sum of ideas and sensations which make us think of the body as ourself, by another set of ideas which reach beyond the body, and, existing for their own delight and substituting intellectual and moral satisfaction as the chief objects of life, master, if they cannot entirely silence, the clamour of the lower sensual desires." (CWSA 13: 19)

3.

"The language of the Upanishad makes it strikingly clear that it is no metaphysical abstraction, no void Silence, no indeterminate Absolute which is offered to the soul that aspires, but rather the absolute of all that is possessed by it here in the relative world of its sojourning. All here in the mental is a growing light, consciousness and life; all there in the supramental is an infinite life, light and consciousness. That which is here shadowed, is there found; the incomplete here is there the fulfilled. The Beyond is not an annulation, but a transfiguration of all that we are here in our world of forms; it is sovran Mind of this mind, secret Life of this life, the absolute Sense which supports and justifies our limited senses." (CWSA 18: 22–23) Kena Upanishad

4.

"But such is not the full intention of Brahman in the universe or in the creature. The greatness of the gods is

His own victory and greatness, but it is only given in order that man may grow nearer to the point at which his faculties will be strong enough to go beyond themselves and realise the Transcendent. Therefore Brahman manifests Himself before the exultant gods in their well-ordered world and puts to them by His silence the heartshaking, the world-shaking question, 'If ye are all, then what am I? for see, I am and I am here.' Though He manifests, He does not reveal Himself, but is seen and felt by them as a vague and tremendous presence, the Yaksha, the Daemon, the Spirit, the unknown Power, the Terrible beyond good and evil for whom good and evil are instruments towards His final self-expression." (CWSA 18: 80)

5.

"The feeling of being dead in a vision or dream experience comes when something in the being is to be silenced into entire inactivity and ceases to exist as a part of the nature. It may be a very small part, but as during the process the consciousness is concentrated in it and identified with it for the purpose of the working, the feeling is that 'I am dead'. When you said, 'I am dead, now let me get up and go', it simply meant, 'The thing is done and the process is over. There is no need to identify myself with this part any longer.' There is no indication in the experience as to what

the thing was that passed through this experience.” (CWSA 30: 164)

6.

On the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

“I would have preferred silence in the face of these circumstances that surround us. For any words we can find fall flat amid such happenings. This much, however, I will say that the Light which led us to freedom, though not yet to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers. I believe firmly that a great and united future is the destiny of this nation and its peoples. The Power that brought us through so much struggle and suffering to freedom, will achieve also, through whatever strife or trouble, the aim which so poignantly occupied the thoughts of the fallen leader at the time of his tragic ending; as it brought us freedom, it will bring us unity. A free and united India will be there and the Mother will gather around her her sons and weld them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people.” (CWSA 36: 497)

7.

“This mind in you makes the most fanciful mistakes and likes to cling to them even when they are pointed out to you. Thus it erected a sheer imagination about an ‘interior circle’ from which you were excluded in the arrangement of places, took it as a true and ‘profound’ impression and

seems to want still to cling to its own falsehood after the plain and simple practical reason of the arrangement had been clearly told to you. It is because of this continued false activity of the mind that you were told to silence the mentality and keep yourself open to the Light alone.” (CWSA 36: 402–403)

8.

Dear M.

Your letter, money etc have reached me without delay or mishap. Please make it a rule, in future, not to be anxious or troubled when you get no answer; when I do not reply, it is not because I have not received your letters, but because silence was necessary, for my siddhi, for yours or for the work that has to be done. At such times, keep calm, repel any suggestions of perplexity or anxiety and do not allow any disturbing mental waves to interfere between. A still heart, a clear mind and untroubled nerves are the very first necessity for the perfection of our Yoga.” (CWSA 36: 185–186)

9.

“Suicide solves nothing—it only brings one back to life with the same difficulties to be faced in worse conditions. If one wishes to escape from life altogether, it can only be by the way of complete inner renunciation and merging oneself in the Silence of the Absolute or by a bhakti that becomes

absolute or by a karmayoga that gives up one's own will and desires to the will of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 174)

10.

"With your silent consciousness, it should be possible to draw from the highest planes with the slightest pull.

The highest planes are not so accommodating as all that. If they were so, why should it be so difficult to bring down and organise the supermind in the physical consciousness? What happy-go-lucky fancy-web-spinning ignoramuses you all are. You speak of silence, consciousness, overmental, supramental etc. as if they were so many electric buttons you have only to press and there you are. It may be one day but meanwhile I have to discover everything about the working of all possible modes of electricity, all the laws, possibilities, perils etc., construct modes of connection and communication, make the whole far wiring system, try to find out how it can be made fool-proof and all that in the course of a single lifetime. And I have to do it while my blessed disciples are firing off their gay or gloomy a priori reasonings at me from a position of entire irresponsibility and expecting me to divulge everything to them not in hints—but at length. Lord God *in omnibus!*" (CWSA 27: 212)

11.

“Next know that you are an eternal portion of the Eternal and the powers of your nature are nothing without him, nothing if not his partial self-expression. It is the Divine Infinite that is being progressively fulfilled in your nature. It is the supreme power-to-be, it is the Shakti of the Lord that shapes and takes shape in your swabhava. Give up then all sense that you are the doer; see the Eternal alone as the doer of the action. Let your natural being be an occasion, an instrument, a channel of power, a means of manifestation. Offer up your will to him and make it one with his eternal will: surrender all your actions in the silence of your self and spirit to the transcendent Master of your nature. This cannot be really done or done perfectly so long as there is any ego sense in you or any mental claim or vital clamour. Action done in the least degree for the sake of the ego or tinged with the desire and will of the ego is not a perfect sacrifice.” (CWSA 19: 587)

12.

“The inner spiritual state to which this supreme Yoga will take us, will be above all that is here and yet comprehensive of all things in this and other worlds, but with a spiritual transformation of all, without limitation, without bondage, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. The infinite existence, consciousness and delight of the Godhead in its calm silence and bright boundless activity will be there, will

be its essential, fundamental, universal stuff, mould and character.” (CWSA 19: 560)

13.

“The Gita also demands of us renunciation of desire, attachment and ego, transcendence of the lower nature and the breaking up of our personality and its little formations. The Gita also demands of us to live in the Self and Spirit, to see the Self and Spirit in all and all in the Self and Spirit and all as the Self and Spirit. It demands of us like the Taoist thinker to renounce our natural personality and its works into the Self, the Spirit, the Eternal, the Brahman, *ātmani sannyasya, brahmani* And there is this coincidence because that is always man’s highest and freest possible experience of a quietistic inner largeness and silence reconciled with an outer dynamic active living, the two coexistent or fused together in the impersonal infinite reality and illimitable action of the one immortal Power and sole eternal Existence. But the Gita adds a phrase of immense import that alters everything, *ātmani athomayi*. The demand is to see all things in the self and then in ‘Me’ the Ishwara, to renounce all action into the Self, Spirit, Brahman and thence into the supreme Person, the Purushottama. There is here a still greater and profounder complex of spiritual experience, a larger transmutation of the significance of human life, a more mystic and heart-felt sweep of the return of the stream to

the ocean, the restoration of personal works and the cosmic action to the Eternal Worker.” (CWSA 19: 548)

14.

“Here, as in the Gita, the highest way would seem to be a complete openness and self surrender to the Eternal. ... And here too a vast perfection and liberated action are the dynamic result of the soul’s surrender. The works of ego personality are a separative running counter to the bias of universal nature. This false movement must be replaced by a wise and still passivity in the hands of the universal and eternal Power, a passivity that makes us adaptable to the infinite action, in harmony with its truth, plastic to the shaping breath of the Spirit. The man who has this harmony may be motionless within and absorbed in silence, but his Self will appear free from disguises, the divine Influence will be at work in him and while he abides in tranquility and an inward inaction, *naiskarmya*, yet he will act with an irresistible power and myriads of things and beings will move and gather under his influence.” (CWSA 19: 547–548)

15.

“The words express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man; they are instinct with the concentrated force of religious feeling that springs from the human being’s absolute adoration, his upward

surrender of his whole existence, his unreserved and perfect self-giving to the transcendent and universal Divinity from whom he comes and in whom he lives. This stress of feeling is in entire consonance with the high and enduring place that the Gita assigns to bhakti, to the love of God, to the adoration of the Highest, as the inmost spirit and motive of the supreme action and the crown and core of the supreme knowledge. The phrases used and the spiritual emotion with which they vibrate seem to give the most intense prominence possible and an utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. It is no abstract Absolute of the philosopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations to whom this complete surrender of all our works can be made and this closeness and intimacy of oneness with him in all the parts of our conscious existence imposed as the condition and law of our perfection or of whom this divine intervention and protection and deliverance are the promise. It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Spirit of our life, an indwelling and overdwelling Lord of all our personal and impersonal self and nature who alone can utter to us this near and moving message.” (CWSA 19: 541)

16.

“This decisive departure of the Gita’s thought is indicated in the next two verses, of which the first runs with a

significant sequence, 'When one has become the Brahman, when one neither grieves nor desires, when one is equal to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me.' But in the narrow path of knowledge bhakti, devotion to the personal Godhead, can be only an inferior and preliminary movement; the end, the climax is the disappearance of personality in a featureless oneness with the impersonal Brahman in which there can be no place for bhakti: for there is none to be adored and none to adore; all else is lost in the silent immobile identity of the Jiva with the Atman. Here there is given to us something yet higher than the Impersonal,—here there is the supreme Self who is the supreme Ishwara, here there is the supreme Soul and its supreme nature, here there is the Purushottama who is beyond the personal and impersonal and reconciles them on his eternal heights. The ego personality still disappears in the silence of the Impersonal, but at the same time there remains even with this silence at the back the action of a supreme Self, one greater than the Impersonal. There is no longer the lower blind and limping action of the ego and the three gunas, but instead the vast self-determining movement of an infinite spiritual Force, a free immeasurable Shakti. All Nature becomes the power of the one Divine and all action his action through the individual as channel and instrument. In place of the ego there comes forward conscious and manifest the true spiritual individual in the freedom of his real nature, in the

power of his supernal status, in the majesty and splendor of his eternal kinship to the Divine, an imperishable portion of the supreme Godhead, an indestructible power of the supreme Prakriti *mamaivāṁśah sanātanah, parā prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā.*" (CWSA 19: 535–356)

17.

"Then evidently the straight and simplest way to get out of the close bondage of the active nature and back to spiritual freedom is to cast away entirely all that belongs to the dynamics of the ignorance and to convert the soul into a pure spiritual existence. That is what is called becoming Brahman, *brahmabhūya*. It is to put off the lower mental, vital, physical existence and to put on the pure spiritual being. This can best be done by the intelligence and will, buddhi, our present topmost principle. It has to turn away from the things of the lower existence and first and foremost from its effective knot of desire, from our attachment to the objects pursued by the mind and the senses. One must become an understanding unattached in all things, *asakta-buddhih sarvatra*. Then all desire passes away from the soul in its silence; it is free from all longings, *vigata-sprhah..* That brings with it or it makes possible the subjection of our lower and the possession of our higher self, a possession dependent on complete self-mastery, secured by a radical victory and conquest over our mobile nature, jit atma. And all this amounts to an absolute inner

renunciation of the desire of things, *sannyāsa* ." (CWSA 19: 530)

18.

All works must be excised from our life is not possible so long as we are in the body and alive

The silence of Samadhi does not abrogate the difficulty, for as soon as the breath comes again into the body, we are once more in action

"The question still arises, what works are to be done? Those even who stand for a final physical renunciation are not at one in this difficult matter. Some would have it that all works must be excised from our life, as if that were possible. But it is not possible so long as we are in the body and alive; nor can salvation consist in reducing our active selves by trance to the lifeless immobility of the clod and the pebble. The silence of Samadhi does not abrogate the difficulty, for as soon as the breath comes again into the body, we are once more in action and have toppled down from the heights of this salvation by spiritual slumber. But the true salvation, the release by an inner renunciation of the ego and union with the Purushottama remains steady in whatever state, persists in this world or out of it or in whatever world or out of all world, is self-existent, *sarvathā vartamāno'pi*, and does not depend upon inaction or action." (CWSA 19: 495)

19.

Sattwic tapasya or self-discipline of mental and moral perfection means the purifying of the whole temperament, gentleness and a clear and calm gladness of mind, self-control and silence

“Sattwic tapasya is that which is done with a highest enlightened faith, as a duty deeply accepted or for some ethical or spiritual or other higher reason and with no desire for any external or narrowly personal fruit in the action. It is of the character of self-discipline and asks for self-control and a harmonising of one’s nature. The Gita describes three kinds of sattwic askesis. First comes the physical, the askesis of the outward act; under this head are especially mentioned worship and reverence of those deserving reverence, cleanness of the person, the action and the life, candid dealing, sexual purity and avoidance of killing and injury to others. Next is askesis of speech, and that consists in the study of Scripture, kind, true and beneficent speech and a careful avoidance of words that may cause fear, sorrow and trouble to others. Finally there is the askesis of mental and moral perfection, and that means the purifying of the whole temperament, gentleness and a clear and calm gladness of mind, self-control and silence. Here comes in all that quiets or disciplines the rajasic and egoistic nature and all that replaces it by the happy and tranquil principle of good and virtue. This is the askesis of the sattwic dharma so highly prized in the

system of the ancient Indian culture. Its greater culmination will be a high purity of the reason and will, an equal soul, a deep peace and calm, a wide sympathy and preparation of oneness, a reflection of the inner soul's divine gladness in the mind, life and body." (CWSA 19: 489)

20.

The Buddhistic dogma of the succession of rebirths as a chain of Karma from which the soul must escape into the eternal silence

This notion has strongly affected Hinduism; and whatever is depressing in it, belongs to elements stigmatised as an ascetic pessimism

"There is too another turn given to this belief which increased with time, the Buddhistic dogma of the succession of rebirths as a chain of Karma from which the soul must escape into the eternal silence. This notion has strongly affected Hinduism; but whatever is depressing in it, belongs not properly to the doctrine of rebirth but to other elements stigmatised as an ascetic pessimism by the vitalistic thought of Europe.

Pessimism is not peculiar to the Indian mind: it has been an element in the thought of all developed civilisations." (CWSA 20: 129)

21.

The Divine supports the immobility of eternal silence and calm

The Divine is manifest in a double soul, a twofold power

The Divine supports at once the spirit of mutable things that is all these existences

The Divine also supports the immutable spirit that stands above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm

The Divine is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the Soul of mutable things

“Thus the Divine is manifest in a double soul of his mystery, a twofold power, *dvāv imau puruṣau*, he supports at once the spirit of mutable things that is all these existences, *kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, and the immutable spirit that stands above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm. And it is by the force of the Divine in them that the mind and heart and will of man are so powerfully drawn in different directions by these two spirits as if by opposing and incompatible attractions one insistent to annul the other. But the Divine is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara. He is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the Soul of mutable things. If he is capable of being both at once, it is because he is other than they, *anyah*, the Purushottama above all cosmos and yet extended in

the world and extended in the Veda, in self-knowledge and in cosmic experience. And whoever thus knows and sees him as the Purushottama, is no longer bewildered whether by the world-appearance or by the separate attraction of these two apparent contraries.” (CWSA 19: 447)

22.

“The world for the Gita is real, a creation of the Lord, a power of the Eternal, a manifestation from the Parabrahman, and even this lower nature of the triple Maya is a derivation from the supreme divine Nature. Nor can we take refuge altogether in this distinction that there is a double, an inferior active and temporal and a superior calm, still and eternal reality beyond action and that our liberation is to pass from this partiality to that greatness, from the action to the silence. For the Gita insists that we can and should, while we live, be conscious in the self and its silence and yet act with power in the world of Nature. And it gives the example of the Divine himself who is not bound by necessity of birth, but free, superior to the cosmos, and yet abides eternally in action, *varta eva ca karmaṇi*. Therefore it is by putting on a likeness of the divine nature in its completeness that the unity of this double experience becomes entirely possible.” (CWSA 19: 440)

23.

"That Eternal or that Eternity is the Brahman. Brahman is That which is transcendent and That which is universal: it is the free spirit who supports in front the play of soul with nature and assures behind their imperishable oneness; it is at once the mutable and the immutable, the All that is the One. ... But once seen in the substance and light of this eternity, the world also becomes other than it seems to the mind and senses; for then we see the universe no longer as a whirl of mind and life and matter or a mass of the determinations of energy and substance, but as no other than this eternal Brahman. A spirit who immeasurably fills and surrounds all this movement with himself ... and who throws on all that is finite the splendor of his garment of infinity, a bodiless and million-bodied spirit whose hands of strength and feet of swiftness are on every side of us, whose heads and eyes and faces are those innumerable visages which we see wherever we turn, whose ear is everywhere listening to the silence of eternity and the music of the worlds, is the universal Being in whose embrace we live." (CWSA 19: 416)

24.

"The perfect union is that which meets the Divine at every moment, in every action and with all the integrality of the nature. But those also who seek by a hard ascent after the indefinable unmanifest Immutable alone, arrive, says the

Godhead, to Me. For they are not mistaken in their aim, but they follow a more difficult and a less complete and perfect path. At the easiest, to reach the unmanifest Absolute they have to climb through the manifest Immutable here. This manifest Immutable is my own all-pervading impersonality and silence; vast, unthinkable, immobile, constant, omnipresent, it supports the action of personality but does not share in it. It offers no hold to the mind; it can only be gained by a motionless spiritual impersonality and silence and those who follow after it alone have to restrain altogether and even draw in completely the action of the mind and senses. But still by the equality of their understanding and by their seeing of one self in all things and by their tranquil benignancy of silent will for the good of all existences they too meet me in all objects and creatures. No less than those who unite themselves with the Divine in all ways of their existence, *sarva-bhāvena*, and enter largely and fully into the unthinkable living fountainhead of universal things, *divyam puruṣam acintya-rūpam*, these seekers too who climb through this more difficult exclusive oneness towards a relationless unmanifest Absolute find in the end the same Eternal. But this is a less direct and more arduous way; it is not the full and natural movement of the spiritualised human nature.” (CWSA 19: 400)

25.

"That immutable Self of all existences seems indeed to stand back from any active intervention in the workings of Nature; but it is not void of all relation whatever and remote from all connection. It is our witness and supporter; it gives a silent and impersonal sanction; it has even an impassive enjoyment. The many-sided action of Nature is still possible even when the soul is poised in that calm self-existence: for the witness soul is the immutable Purusha, and Purusha has always some relation with Prakriti. But now the reason of this double aspect of silence and of activity is revealed in its entire significance,—because the silent all-pervading Self is only one side of the truth of the divine Being." (CWSA 19: 342)

26.

"In living beings, the Godhead tells Arjuna, I am consciousness by which they are aware of themselves and their surroundings. I am mind among the senses, mind by which they receive the impressions of objects and react upon them. I am man's qualities of mind and character and body and action; I am glory and speech and memory and intelligence and steadfastness and forgiveness, the energy of the energetic and the strength of the mighty. I am resolution and perseverance and victory, I am the sattwic quality of the good, I am the gambling of the cunning; I am the mastery and power of all who rule and tame and

vanquish and the policy of all who succeed and conquer; I am the silence of things secret, the knowledge of the knower, the logic of those who debate. I am the letter A among letters, the dual among compounds, the sacred syllable OM among words, the Gayatri among metres, the Sama-veda among the Vedas and the great Sama among the mantras. I am Time the head of all reckoning to those who reckon and measure. I am spiritual knowledge among the many philosophies, arts and sciences. I am all the powers of the human being and all the energies of the universe and its creatures.” (CWSA 19: 364)

27.

Passive silence and active silence

“The passive silence is that in which the inner consciousness remains void and at rest, not making any reaction on outer things and forces.

The active silence is that in which there is a great force that goes out on things and forces without disturbing the silence.” (CWSA 29: 163)

28.

The Indian Sannyasins sought by silence, by concentration inwards and pass into a thought-free trance from which, if one returns, no communication or expression could be brought back of what was there except a remembrance of ineffable existence and bliss

“For we would have nothing before us to go upon other than the bare fact of a certain unaccountable translation by one way or another from consciousness to an incommunicable Supraconscience. That is indeed what much mystical seeking actually held up as the one thing essential both in Europe and India. Many Christian mystics spoke of a total darkness through which one must pass into the Ineffable Light and Rapture, a falling away of all mental lights and all that belongs to the ordinary activity of the nature; they aimed not only at a silence but a darkness of the mind protecting an inexpressible illumination. The Indian Sannyasins sought by silence, by concentration inwards, to shed mind altogether and pass into a thought-free trance from which, if one returns, no communication or expression could be brought back of what was there except a remembrance of ineffable existence and bliss.” (CWSA 28: 367)

29.

“It is not enough to have that equality and silence and freedom only when you are in communion with the sky and sea. It is at all times that you must be able to receive it from above—then there will be a true foundation of the sadhana.” (CWSA 29: 135)

30.

“I never heard of silence descending in other Yogas—the mind goes into silence. Since however I have been writing

of ascent and descent, I have been told from several quarters that there is nothing new in this Yoga—so I am wondering whether people were not getting ascents and descents without knowing it! or at least without noticing the process. It is like the rising above the head and taking the station there—which I and others have experienced in this Yoga. When I spoke of it first, people stared and thought I was talking nonsense.” (CWSA 29: 377)

31.

“One can meet the Divine in speaking as well as in silence, in action as well as in physical solitude and quietude. An entire retirement can only be a personal case—and as a condition for an inward or outward work, but it is no general rule indispensable for the sadhana. In many cases, most indeed, it would do more harm than good as has been seen in many cases where it has been unduly attempted. A cheerful and sunny life is as good an atmosphere for Yoga as any the Himalayas can give.” (CWSA 29: 381)

32. Nirguna and Saguna.

“In a realistic Adwaita there is no need to regard the Saguna as a creation from the Nirguna or even secondary or subordinate to it: both are equal aspects of the one Reality, its position of silent status and rest and its position of action and dynamic force; a silence of eternal rest and peace supports an eternal action and movement. The one

Reality, the Divine Being is bound by neither since it is in no way limited; it possesses both. There is no incompatibility between the two, as there is none between the Many and the One, the sameness and the difference. They are all eternal aspects of the universe which could not exist if either of them were eliminated, and it is reasonable to suppose that they both came from the Reality which has manifested the universe and are both real. We can only get rid of the apparent contradiction—which is not really a contradiction but only a natural concomitance—by treating one or the other as an illusion. But it is hardly reasonable to suppose that the eternal Reality allows the existence of an eternal illusion with which it has nothing to do or that it supports and enforces on being a vain cosmic illusion and has no power for any other and real action. The force of the Divine is always there in silence as in action, inactive in silence, active in the manifestation. It is hardly possible to suppose that the Divine Reality has no power or force or that its only power is to create a universal falsehood, a cosmic lie— *mithyā*." (CWSA 29: 394)

33.

Descent of light in the vital may purify and silence and immobilise the vital being

"There must be a descent of the light not merely into the mind or part of it but into all the being down to the physical

and below before a real and total transformation can take place. A light in the mind may spiritualise or otherwise change the mind or part of it in one way or another, but it need not change the vital nature; a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, but leave the body and the physical consciousness as it was, or even leave it inert or shake its balance. And the descent of Light is not enough, it must be the descent of the whole higher consciousness, its Peace, Power, Knowledge, Love, Ananda.” (CWSA 29: 398–399)

34.

The ordinary Yogas go straight from Mind into some featureless condition of the cosmic Silence and through it try to disappear upward into the Highest

The Integral Yoga aims at the conscious union with the Divine in the supermind and the transformation of the nature

In the Integral Yoga one has to transcend mind and enter into the Divine Truth of Sachchidananda which is not only static silence but dynamic and raise the whole being into that Truth

“This Yoga aims at the conscious union with the Divine in the supermind and the transformation of the nature. The ordinary Yogas go straight from Mind into some featureless condition of the cosmic Silence and

through it try to disappear upward into the Highest. The object of this Yoga is to transcend mind and enter into the Divine Truth of Sachchidananda which is not only static but dynamic and raise the whole being into that Truth.” (CWSA 29: 412)

35.

Asanas and Pranayama

“No use doing asanas and pranayam. It is not necessary to burn with passion. What is needed is a patient increasing of the power of concentration and steady aspiration so that the silence you speak of may fix in the heart and spread to the other members. Then the physical mind and subconscious can be cleared and quieted.” (CWSA 29: 439)

36.

“The Shankara knowledge is, as your Guru pointed out, only one side of the Truth; it is the knowledge of the Supreme as realised by the spiritual Mind through the static silence of the pure Existence. It was because he went by this side only that Shankara was unable to accept or explain the origin of the universe except as illusion, a creation of Maya. Unless one realises the Supreme on the dynamic as well as the static side, one cannot experience the true origin of things and the equal reality of the active Brahman. ... It is only if you approach the Supreme through his double aspect of Sat and Chit-Shakti, double

but inseparable, that the total truth of things can become manifest to the inner experience. The other side was developed by the Shakta Tantrics. The two together, the Vedantic and the Tantric truth unified, can arrive at the integral knowledge.” (CWSA 29: 448)

37.

“The realisation of the Yoga of Knowledge is when one feels that one lives in the wideness of something silent, featureless and universal (called the Self) and all else is seen as only forms and names; the Self is real, nothing else. The realisation of ‘*my* self in other forms’ is a part of this or a step towards it, but in the full realisation the ‘*my*’ should drop so that there is only *the* one Self or rather only the Brahman. For the Self is merely a subjective aspect of the Brahman, just as the Ishwara is its objective aspect. That is the Vedantic ‘Knowledge’. Its result is peace, silence, liberation. As for the active Prakriti, (mind, vital, body), the Yoga of Knowledge does not make it its aim to transform them—that would be no use as the idea is that if the liberation has come, it will all drop off at death. The only change wanted is to get rid of the idea of ego and realise as true only the supreme Self, the Brahman.” (CWSA 29: 500)

38.

“Your experience is the beginning of the fundamental and decisive realisation which carries the consciousness out of

the limited mental into the true spiritual vision and experience in which all is one and all is the Divine. It is this constant and living experience that is the true foundation of spiritual life. There can be no doubt about its truth and value, for it is evidently something living and dynamic and goes beyond a mental realisation. It may add to itself in future different aspects, but the essential fundamental realisation you now have. When this is permanent, one can be said to have passed out of the twilight of the mind into the light of the Spirit.

What you have now to do is to allow the realisation to grow and develop. The necessary movements will probably come of themselves as these have come—provided you keep your will single and faithful towards this Light and Truth. Already it has brought you the guidance towards the next step, cessation of the flow of thought, the inner mind's silence. Once that is won, there is likely to come a settled peace, liberation, wideness. The sense of the need of simplicity and transparency is also a true movement and comes from the same inner guidance. That is necessary for the deepest inmost divine element within behind the mind, life and body to come forward fully in you—when it does you will be able to become aware of the inner guide within you and of a Force working for the full spiritual change.” (CWSA 30: 1314)

39.

“Certainly, the vital cannot take an interest in a blank condition. If you depend on your vital you cannot prolong it. It is the spirit that feels a release in the silence empty of all mental or other activities, for in that silence it becomes self-aware. For the blankness to be real one must have got into the Purusha or Witness consciousness. If you are looking at it with your mind or vital, then there is not blankness,—for even if there are no distinct thoughts then there must be a mental attitude or mental vibrations—e.g. the not feeling interest.” (CWSA 30: 80)

40.

“The experience you have of a division in the being with the inner void and indifferent, *udasīna*,—not sorrowful, but neutral and indifferent,—is an experience which many pass through and is highly valued by the Sannyasis. For us it is a passage only to something larger and more positive. In it the old small human feelings fall away and a sort of calm neutral void is made for a higher nature to manifest. It must be fulfilled and replaced by a sense of large silence and freedom into which the Mother’s consciousness can flow from above.” (CWSA 30: 240–241)

41.

In an absence of attachment to things, people or events there should be inner peace and silence

“It seems as if this condition [an absence of attachment to things, people or events] were trying to come in you; but it is still imperfect. For instance in this condition (1) there should be no disgust or impatience or anger when people talk, only indifference and an inner peace and silence. Also (2) there should not be a mere neutral quiet and indifference, but a positive sense of calm, detachment and peace. Again (3) there should be no going out of the body so that you do not know what is happening or what you are doing.” (CWSA 30: 242)

42.

The unborn Self above, the Atman of the Upanishads is experienced through the silence of the thinking mind
“What you have felt is indeed a touch of the Self,—not the unborn Self above, the Atman of the Upanishads, for that is differently experienced through the silence of the thinking mind, but the inner being, the psychic supporting the inner mental, vital, physical being, of which I have spoken.” (CWSA 30: 262)

43.

Liberation is to live in the peace, silence, purity, freedom of the Self

“Liberation is the first necessity—to live in the peace, silence, purity, freedom of the Self. Along with that or

afterwards if one wakens to the cosmic consciousness, then one can be free, yet one with all things.

To have the cosmic consciousness without the liberation etc. is possible, but then there is no freedom anywhere in the being from the lower nature and one may become in one's extended consciousness the playground of all kinds of forces without being able to be either free and detached from the Prakriti or free and master." (CWSA 30: 279)

44.

With the peace and silence there should come a wideness that can receive any amount of Force without any reactions "If the pressure is too great, the remedy is to widen the consciousness. With the peace and silence there should come a wideness that can receive any amount of Force without any reactions, whether heaviness or compulsion to remain withdrawn or the difficulty of the eyes etc." (CWSA 30: 473)

45.

"As all words come out of the Silence, so all forms come out of the Infinite.

When the word goes back into the silence is it extinct for ever or does it dwell in the eternal harmony? When a soul goes back to God is it blotted out from existence or does it know and enjoy that into which it enters? ...

Neither for soul nor universe is extinction the goal, but for one it is infinite self-possessing and for the other the endless pursuit of its own immutably mutable rhythms.” (CWSA 12: 144)

46.

“These three, Sat, Chit and Ananda are one Trinity, Sachchidananda. They are not three different factors making a single sum, neither are any two of them merely attributes, even inseparable & invariable attributes, of the third. No doubt, they are always coexistent. ... But their coexistence is only an exterior sign of their essential unity. They do not exist separately, because they are not different from each other,—all three are one thing-in-itself seen diversely; seen sensationally, touching the fibres of conscious life in us it is delight; seen mentally, touching the fibres of living consciousness, it is comprehension; seen spiritually, touching the very core of this living & conscious I, it is being. But the thing-in-itself is one; it is Brahman. ... This is all that you can know fundamentally about yourself; you are That which Is, which, being, comprehends Its own existence, which, comprehending, has in its silence of being or in its play of comprehension a self-existent delight. It is all we can know fundamentally & all we need to know, for, this once grasped & pursued in knowledge, the whole of life begins to unroll itself in its secret motion & purpose to our gaze.” (CWSA 12: 85)

47.

The moment man tries to get at the absolute of the spirit, he feels himself obliged to reject body, to silence mind, and to draw back from life.

It is this necessity, this inability of mind and life and body to hold and answer to the spirit that is the secret of asceticism, the philosophical justification of the illusionist "There can indeed be great descents of spiritual light, purity, power, love, delight into the earth consciousness in its human formula; but man as he is now can hold only a little of these things and he can give them no adequate organisation and shape and body in his mental movements or his life-action or his physical and material consciousness and dynamis. The moment he tries to get at the absolute of the spirit, he feels himself obliged to reject body, to silence mind, and to draw back from life. It is that urgent necessity, that inability of mind and life and body to hold and answer to the spirit that is the secret of asceticism, the philosophical justification of the illusionist, the compulsion that moves the eremite and the recluse. If on the other hand he tries to spiritualise mind and life and the body he finds in the end that he has only brought down the spirit to a lower formulation that cannot give all its truth and purity and power." (CWSA 13: 430–431)

48.

By Vidya one may attain to the state of the silent Brahman without actively participating in the universe

But this path of Vidya is not the full and perfect thing undertaken by the individual in the manifestation

But the highest goal of man is neither fulfilment in the movement as a separate individual nor in the Silence separated from the movement

“Pursued with a less entire attachment the paths of Vidya and Avidya have each their legitimate gains for the human soul, but neither of these are the full and perfect thing undertaken by the individual in the manifestation.

By Vidya one may attain to the state of the silent Brahman or the Akshara Purusha regarding the universe without actively participating in it or to His self-absorbed state of Chit in Sat from which the universe proceeds and towards which it returns. Both these states are conditions of serenity, plenitude, freedom from the confusions and sufferings of the world.

But the highest goal of man is neither fulfilment in the movement as a separate individual nor in the Silence separated from the movement, but in the Uttama Purusha, the Lord, He who went abroad and upholds in Himself both the Kshara and the Akshara as modes of His being. The self of man, the Jivatman, is here in order to realise in the individual and for the universe that one highest Self of all. The ego created by Avidya is a necessary mechanism for affirming individuality in the universal as a starting-point for this supreme achievement.” (CWSA 17: 5354)

49.

Man not knowing how to apply the eternal Veda in ourselves carry it away with them into the eternal Silence
“It is perfectly true, or so at least the Indian Yogin has always held, that we have in ourselves the eternal Veda. Available by God’s grace or our own effort there is always in each human being that hidden salvation. But it is hard to arrive at, harder to apply. Many of the greatest, not seeing how it can be applied to the conditions of phenomenal life, carry it away with them into the eternal Silence. They put away from them the Veda, they seek in the Vedanta or in their souls only so much knowledge as will help them to loosen the coils of thought & sense wound round them by the Almighty Magician. But the Vedanta is not useful only for the denial of life; it is even more useful for the affirmation of life.” (CWSA 17: 341)

50.

If the theory of the Illusionist is true, life is an inexplicable breach of Truth, an unjustifiable disturbance in the silence & stillness of the Eternal

This theory of the Illusionist has produced tremendous negation upon India and a decaying society of an inert, effete & helpless people

Gita had announced the grave warnings against the consequences of inaction

“There have been notable exceptions, but the general trend hardly varies. The majority of the pre-Buddhistic Hindus answered the question, if I am not mistaken, in a different sense & attained to a deeper consummation. They answered it in the sense of the Isha Upanishad & the Gita; they held divine life in the Brahman here to be a possibility.

The supreme importance of the question is apparent. If the theory of the Illusionist is true, life is an inexplicable breach of Truth, an unjustifiable disturbance in the silence & stillness of the Eternal. It is a freak to be corrected, a snare to be escaped from, a delusion to be renounced, a mighty cosmic whim & blunder. The results upon the nation which produced this tremendous negation, have been prodigious [abnormal]. India has become the land of saints & ascetics, but progressively also of a decaying society and an inert, effete & helpless people. The indignant denunciation of the Vishnu Purana against the certain results to society of the Buddhist heresy has been fulfilled in the fate of our strongly Buddhicised Hindu nation. We see increasing upon it through the centuries the doom announced in the grave warnings of the Gita against the consequences of inaction, ‘utsideyur ime lokah . . sarirayatrapī akarmanah . . sankarasya cha karta syam upahanyam imah prajah . . buddhibhedam janayed ajnanam karmasanginam’ etc.” (CWSA 17: 372–373)

51.

The great Vivekananda, who was reaching always to the rare, remote & icy-pure linga of Amarnath, the still & silent Mahadeva, as his inmost self & goal

If this goal of Silence is the final & unsurpassable resting place then the gospel of the Isha Upanishad is either a vain message or a halting place for inferior souls

The Seer says Thou shalt act, for thus has God made thee & not otherwise

Silence is a fruit of Vidya alone & not the supreme gain

“Even the latest of the mighty Ones, the great Vivekananda, who was in outward seeming a storm of speech and thought & force and action, was yet reaching always to the rare, remote & icy-pure linga of Amarnath, the still & silent Mahadeva, as his inmost self & goal; in him too the millennial endeavour, the irresistible yearning endured. But is then this sacrifice really the ultimate sacrifice, this yearning the supreme human tendency, this goal the final & unsurpassable resting place? If so, the gospel of the Isha Upanishad is either a vain message or a halting place for inferior souls. But the Seer will not have it so. Thou shalt act, he says; for thus has God made thee & not otherwise; other is the fruit of Vidya alone & not the supreme gain, the param sreyah. Nor is he in this insistence departing from the highest teaching of Vedanta. For this sacrifice is not really the ultimate sacrifice; the

ultimate sacrifice is the renunciation even of mumukshutva [passion for release, desire for liberation], the giving up to God even of the desire for stillness & peace and of the attachment to inaction and the acceptance in its place, no longer with desire, attachment and passion, but with a free soul, of the Lila as well as the Silence, the great eternal play of the Ishwara no less than his vast eternal peace, the complex and progressively self-fulfilling movement of the Jagati no less than the single & ever-fulfilled immutability of the Ish, the joy of the ejad as well as the calm of the anejad Brahman. That, say the sages, is the final perception of the Vedantin and the supreme consummation of his knowledge when he discovers that there is none bound, none freed, none desiring freedom, but only Brahman variously manifesting, only God in the infinite rest & play of His own Being & becomings,—God & Brahman whom none can bind & who, therefore, even when figured to Himself as man in this apparent cage of a mind and body is still in Himself free—infinately and for ever.” (CWSA 17: 487–488)

52.

In God’s infinity we shall find & repeat in our own lives at once the utter reality of His self-collected calm and the perfection of His divine force at work

This action is the fulfilment of a mighty Silence expressing itself in waves of power & bliss

"We have not either to descend back from non-ego into ego or to take refuge in world-oblivion, but to ascend into God's infinity whose action is eternally unegoistic, cosmic & purely self-fulfilling, nirahankara and nishkama. There we shall find & repeat in our own lives at once the utter reality of His self-collected calm and the perfection of His divine force at work, shama & tapas united in an action which is the fulfilment of a mighty silence expressing itself in waves of power & bliss. That harmony & oneness of divine calm & divine work is man's ultimate experience & the true nature of God active in the world." [Lines from Isha Upanisha] (CWSA 17: 492)

53.

"By this conscious surrender of mind, life and senses to the Master of our senses, life and mind who alone really governs their action, by this turning of the cosmic existence into a passive reflection of the eternal being and a faithful reproducer of the nature of the Eternal we may hope to know and through knowledge to rise into that which is superconscient to us; we shall enter into the Silence that is master of an eternal, infinite, free and all-blissful activity." (CWSA 18: 84)

54.

"The repetition of these touches and visitings from the Beyond fixes the gods in their upward gaze and

expectation, constant repetition fixes them in a constant passivity; not moving out any longer to grasp at the forms of the universe mind, life and senses will more and more be fixed in the memory, in the understanding, in the joy of the touch and vision of that transcendent glory which they have now resolved to make their sole object; to that only they will learn to respond and not to the touches of outward things. The silence which has fallen on them and which is now their foundation and status will become their knowledge of the eternal silence which is Brahman; the response of their functioning to a supernal light, power, joy will become their knowledge of the eternal activity which is Brahman. Other status, other response and activity they will not know. The mind will know nothing but the Brahman, think of nothing but the Brahman, the Life will move to, embrace, enjoy nothing but the Brahman, the eye will see, the ear hear, the other senses sense nothing but the Brahman.” (CWSA 18: 85–86)

55.

“It is therefore a state not belonging to the Ignorance, but to Knowledge. It is, in fact, the infinite existence and beatitude of the soul in the being of the all-blissful existence; it is too the higher status, the light of the Mind beyond the mind, the joy and eternal mastery of the Life beyond the life, the riches of the Sense beyond the senses. And the soul finds in it not only its own largeness but finds

too and possesses the infinity of the One and it has firm foundation in that immortal state because there a supreme Silence and eternal Peace are the secure foundation of eternal Knowledge and absolute Joy.” (CWSA 18: 91)

56.

If you want the supramental Light, you must not tie yourself to mental ideas, but draw back from them

If you want the supramental Light observe the ideas with an impartial equality in the silence of the spirit

“Only the supermind can be a true mediator and interpreter. But if you want the supramental Light, you must not tie yourself to mental ideas, but draw back from them and observe them with an impartial equality in the silence of the spirit. When the supramental Light touches them, it will put them in their place and finally replace them by the true truth of things.” (CWSA 31: 5–6)

57.

“The slight dryness must have been the reaction caused in the physical vital by the ‘uninterest’ in external things—because the physical vital depends very much on this external interest.

When it gets more accustomed to the silence, then the dryness disappears.” (CWSA 31: 135136)

58.

"It is true about living and doing all for oneself, but that is the nature of man, he is centred in his ego, ego-centric, and does all for his ego; even his love and liking is mostly based on ego. All that has to be changed and all has to be centred in the Divine, done for the Divine Mother. It is the work of the sadhana to get that done. The silence, the growth of the psychic and all else is meant to bring about that—but it cannot be done all at once." (CWSA 31: 228–229)

59.

In the subconscious the auto-suggestions of good health silence the suggestions of death and illness that prevent the return of health

In the subliminal the auto-suggestions of good health set in action the powers of the inner being, its occult power to make thought, will or simple conscious force effective on the body

Auto-suggestions of good health is really faith in a mental form

"These auto-suggestions [*of being restored to good health*]*—it is really faith in a mental form—act both on the subliminal and the subconscious. In the subliminal they set in action the powers of the inner being, its occult power to make thought, will or simple conscious force effective on the body—in the subconscious they silence or block the*

suggestions of death and illness (expressed or unexpressed) that prevent the return of health.” (CWSA 31: 559)

60.

To bear in silence does help to release from the reaction of grief

“To bear quietly and in silence does help to release from the reaction of grief, if one makes the vital quiet; but it should be at the same time surrendered to the Mother. For the Mother to know from within is not enough; there must be this laying before her and giving up to her so that the reaction may disappear.” (CWSA 31: 560)

61.

The Shankara knowledge is only one side of the Truth; it is the knowledge of the Supreme as realised by the spiritual Mind through the static silence of the pure Existence

It was because Shankara went by the static silence side only that he was unable to accept or explain the origin of the universe except as illusion, a creation of Maya

“The Shankara knowledge is, as your Guru pointed out, only one side of the Truth; it is the knowledge of the Supreme as realised by the spiritual Mind through the static silence of the pure Existence. It was because he went by this side only that Shankara was unable to accept or explain the origin of the universe except as illusion, a

creation of Maya. Unless one realises the Supreme on the dynamic as well as the static side, one cannot experience the true origin of things and the equal reality of the active Brahman.” (CWSA 32: 56–57)

62.

“When I asked what attitude I should hold during the silence of the mind, you replied, ‘Consecration.’ Please explain this to me in a wider sense.

It means the devoting of all that comes to you, all your experiences and progress to the Mother.” (CWSA 32: 479)

63.

“Turn to the Mother only and let her consciousness and her will work in you. Then you will recover what you had got, silence the mind and be free.” (CWSA 32: 486)

64.

“Concentrate, open yourself and let the Mother bring you back to the psychic condition by what she will pour into you in meditation and silence.” (CWSA 32: 525)

65.

“It is now clear that all along during meditation and pranam I have approached the Mother with a wrong consciousness. My approach was not passive, but always fully active—I

pulled from above and below as intensely as I could. The result was that the centres were active, especially the eyebrow centre and the muladhara.

All that is in place in ordinary meditation, so long as there is not the complete silence of the mind and the automatic action in the silence. But the quiet mind is entirely necessary if you meditate with the Mother. Otherwise the mind goes on with its activities on its own lines and cannot be conscious of or receptive to the Mother's movement." (CWSA 32: 529–530)

66.

"Are flowers mere symbols and nothing more? Can the flower symbolising silence, for example, help in the realisation of silence?"

It is when Mother puts her force into the flower that it becomes more than a symbol. It then can become very effective, if there is receptivity in the one who receives." (CWSA 32: 559)

67.

"If silence does not contain the fire within, will it not be the silence of a dead man? What can one accomplish without fire, zeal, enthusiasm?"

Zeal and enthusiasm are all right and very necessary but the spiritual condition combines calm with intensity. Psychic fire is different—what you are speaking of here is the rajasic vital fire of self-assertion, aggressive self-defence, exerting lawful rights etc.” (CWSA 35: 46–47)

68.

Sri Aurobindo receives sadhaks on Darshan days with a smile, a smile of the silence rather than a radiant substitute for cordial and bubbling laughter

On Darshan days Sri Aurobindo is a receptacle of a certain Power receiving for those who come to see him

There is no grimness, sternness or ferocious in the silence which one feels at the time of Darshan

“... I did not mean that I regard the Darshan as I would a political meeting or a public function. But all the same it is not in the nature of a private interview; I feel it is an occasion on which I am less a social person than a receptacle of a certain Power receiving those who come to me. I receive the sadhaks (not X or others) with a smile however unsatisfactory or invisible to you—but I suppose it becomes naturally a smile of the silence rather than a radiant substitute for cordial and bubbling laughter. *Que voulez-vous?* ...

All that I really wanted to say was that the inwardness and silence which you feel at the time of

Darshan and dislike is not anything grim, stern, ferocious (Nrisinha) or even marble. It is absurd to describe it as such when there is nothing in me that has any correspondence with these epithets. What is there is a great quietude, wideness, light and universal or all-containing oneness. To speak of these things as if they were grim, stern, fierce and repellent or stiff and hard is to present not the fact of my nature but a caricature. I never heard before that peace was something grim, wideness repellent, light stern or fierce or oneness hard and stiff like marble. People have come from outside and felt these things, but they have felt not repelled but attracted. ... Even casual visitors have sometimes felt a great peace and quiet in the atmosphere and wished that they could stay here.” (CWSA 35: 49–50)

69.

“A year of silence and expectation... let us find, O Lord, our entire support in Thy Grace alone.” 1940 (CWM 16: 54)
(CWM 15: 166)

70.

For study group programme given by the Mother silence after reading Sri Aurobindo’s book

MESSAGES FOR CENTRES AND ORGANISATIONS

(Suggested programme for a study group)

1. Prayer

(Sri Aurobindo, Mother—grant us your help in our endeavour to understand your teaching.)

2. *Reading of Sri Aurobindo's book.*

3. A moment of silence.

4. One question can be put by whoever wants to put a question on *what has been read*.

5. Answer to the question.

6. No *general discussion*.

This is *not* the meeting of a *group* but simply a class for studying Sri Aurobindo's books." (CWM 15: 202) (CWM 12: 215–216)

71.

A mentally formulated reply, however complete it may be, can never be real answer that can silence every doubt and quietens the mind

Certitude can only come with spiritual experience, and the most beautiful philosophical works can never equal or replace a few minutes of Knowledge that is lived

"Your letter has been communicated to me and the questions you ask in it were for me, at a certain state of my development, of such intense interest that I shall take great pleasure in replying to them. Nevertheless, a reply which is formulated mentally, however complete it may be, can never be *the reply*, the one which silences every doubt and quietens the mind. Certitude can only come with

spiritual experience, and the most beautiful philosophical works can never equal or replace a few minutes of Knowledge that is lived.” (CWM 15: 244)

72.

“The psychological method [for attaining the perception of the psychic presence in us and ultimately achieving identification with the psychic presence] is far more difficult but far more effective: through your actions, to be in a state of inner will to express nothing in yourself but the Truth of your being, and to make everything dependent on that Truth. Of course, if you do nothing, it is easier, but it is also easier to deceive yourself. When you sit down in isolation, in complete silence and far away from everybody, and examine yourself with more or less indulgent eyes, you may imagine that you are realising something wonderful. But when you are put to the test at every minute of your life, when you have the occasion to become aware of your imperfections, your infirmities, your little movements of bad will a hundred times a day, you soon lose the illusion of being... and so your efforts are more sincere.” (CWM 15: 304)

73.

“Silence: the name given by the Mother to the Wild Passion-flower (*passiflora incarnata*).” (CWM 16: 59)

74.

"Mother,

Today I have nothing to write. As usual I worked all day.

I hope that this new month will bring you the realisation you desire: a happy calm, an invariable peace, a luminous silence.

Such is my wish and my blessing." (CWM 16: 93)

75.

"Peace, peace, my little child, the sweet peace of inner silence and outer calm. May it always be with you." (CWM 16: 121)

76.

In the silence of a peaceful mind one can best commune with Nature

"Love of Nature is usually the sign of a pure and healthy being uncorrupted by modern civilisation. It is in the silence of a peaceful mind that one can best commune with Nature." (CWM 16: 401)

77.

"Sometimes I become absolutely calm. I speak to nobody, I walk about alone, thinking of the Divine. If someone talks

to me and sometimes speaks unnecessarily, I don't answer him. Is it all right to keep this condition all the time?

It is an excellent condition which can be maintained without any harm, but it must be sincere. That is, it must not be an appearance of calm, but a true and deep calm which spontaneously keeps you silent." (CWM 17: 8)

78.

"Nowadays I don't know what to write; everything I need to know, you tell me inwardly. Then how shall I hear it?"

Listen in a total silence of your whole being—mental, vital and physical." (CWM 17: 15)

79.

"I would like to know something about silence. Is it more beneficial than concentrating on the lower nature?"

Concentrating on the lower nature is NEVER good; you should concentrate on what you want to develop, not on what you want to destroy.

I think that one should be peaceful and silent outwardly too.

Peaceful, certainly; silence is not always possible.” (CWM 17: 105)

80.

“O Mother, let me weep in the silence of my heart for union with You.

Enter into a *strong* and *luminous peace*. It is there that you can best realise the union.” (CWM 17: 165)

81.

(In September 1937 the disciple went to France for six months, returning to the Ashram in March 1938.)

“Do not fear; I can see beyond appearances and understand in silence or beyond words.

My arm will always be around you, to uphold and guide you.

Certainly you are my dear child, but I want her to be happy, not sorrowful, illumined, not ignorant.

My blessings are very affectionately with you.” (CWM 17: 190)

82.

“Do not worry; you told me long ago—in silence—what you ‘confessed’ to me this evening. And I have always given you the same answer: do not worry; not all gifts need to

be material ones—and self-giving is surely the best gift of all.” (CWM 17: 192)

83.

If your body is no longer fit for physical work, take advantage of all the time at your disposal to develop your inner consciousness by reading, meditation, contemplation, self-giving, in silence

“Sweet Mother,

I ardently pray to You to pull me out of this condition of bad health and make me progress integrally. You know that my soul’s only aspiration is to love You and serve You. Make me physically active in Your service.

You have been and still remain a faithful servitor. Do not worry: if your body is no longer fit for physical work, take advantage of all the time at your disposal to develop your inner consciousness and unite more and more consciously with the Divine.

Reading, meditation, contemplation, self-giving, in silence and concentration, to the Divine who is always present to hear you and guide you.” (CWM 17: 349–350)

84.

“To take this step towards the new creation, one must learn to silence the mind and rise above into Consciousness.” (CWM 17: 373)

85.

The voices of the silence will gladden your soul and awaken within you the echo of the depths, the chant of divine harmonies

“If ordeal or fault has cast you down, if you have sunk into the nether depths of suffering, do not grieve—for there indeed the divine love and the supreme blessing can reach you! Because you have passed through the crucible of purifying sorrows, the glorious ascents are yours.

You are in the wilderness: then listen to the voices of the silence. The clamour of flattering words and outer applause has gladdened your ears, but the voices of the silence will gladden your soul and awaken within you the echo of the depths, the chant of divine harmonies!” (CWM 2: 45)

86.

“I listened to the voice of the waves and it told me of many marvels. It spoke to me of the joy of life and of the ecstasies of movement. O Sea, in a song without end and ever renewed, thou didst tell me again of the power of love which makes all things true. Contemplating the splendour of thy invincible action, I perceived the irresistible surge that carries the universe towards the Supreme Reality. The force that lifts thee and changes thy surface into mountains

is like the force that raises the world out of its inertia and awakens in it the aspiration for the Divine.

Then as I watched thee in the silence, thou didst speak to me more deeply still, and thou didst tell me of the great mystery of eternal Love that loves itself in all forms and is self-revealed in all activities. Already in my being this ineffable Love lived self aware, but at that hour its life took on an exceptional intensity, or perhaps the individual perception was exceptionally clear.” (CWM 2: 120)

87.

The War

“I have visited trains, each one bringing between five and six hundred wounded from the front. It is a moving sight, not so much because of all that these unfortunate men are suffering, but above all because of the noble manner in which most of them bear their sufferings. Their soul shines through their eyes, the slightest contact with the deeper forces awakens it. And from the intensity, the fullness of the powers of true love which could, in their presence, be manifested in perfect silence, it was easy to realise the value of their receptivity.

Then the mentality which takes pleasure in making constructions for realisation begins to imagine all that could be accomplished with the help of this receptivity. And scenes, both vast and complex, of possible realisations

follow one after another, streaming endlessly in the splendour of their light and love.” (CWM 2: 141)

88.

“Besides, at present, the smallest incident, the slightest contact with the outside world serves as a pretext for innumerable constructions which to the mentality appear vast, luminous, full of an intense life and a great power for realisation. They are like so many outer frames or forms of manifestation offered for the approval and the choice of That which wants to manifest—but at the side of the daring constructor stands the loving and docile child who, in an ardent aspiration towards the Supreme Principle of Truth, softly murmurs: ‘Lord, I am ignorant of Thy Will in its entirety, I construct events which are commensurate with my paltry individual limitations and which probably fit very badly into the immensity of Thy plan. But Thou knowest that they are nothing but fleeting constructions which are dissolved as soon as they are created and which in no way mar the purity of the mental mirror ready to reflect at each moment the appropriate transcription of what Thou wilt the integral instrument to execute.’ And then the whole being, in a vast and luminous and objectless ecstasy, ceases to be ‘a being’ and becomes the Boundless. And in the silence of contemplation the mentality knows that all these diverse constructions which present themselves to it are part of a whole which will be given to it to manifest

progressively, perhaps through the medium of several bodily instruments. And the simultaneous vision of That which is and that which is becoming takes hold of this consciousness and does not leave it for many hours, hours ever more frequent and lasting.” (CWM 2: 141–142)

89.

Exterior calm, rest and silence are there in Japan, but not that blissful sense of the infinite

“Indeed, nothing in Japan can be compared to the pure divine atmosphere which pervades India and makes of her such a unique and precious country; not even in the temples and the sacred monasteries always so wonderfully situated, sometimes on the summit of a high mountain covered with huge cedar trees, difficult to reach, far from the world below.... Exterior calm, rest and silence are there, but not that blissful sense of the infinite which comes from a living nearness to the Unique. True, here all speaks to the eyes and mind of unity—unity of God with man, unity of man with Nature, unity of man with man. But this unity is very little felt and lived.” (CWM 2: 1584)

90.

“And that is precisely the first principle of the universal form. In Hindu terminology it is called ‘Sachchidananda’. It is there, everything leans upon that; without that nothing could exist. It is that which upholds and allows existence. Then, if you enter a certain state of consciousness and find

yourself, for instance, in the higher mind (for generally it is more easily there that this happens; you have started from the physical and climbed slowly, rung by rung, as far as the higher mind), but instead of continuing your ascent on the ladder you enter into a kind of interiorisation and try to go out of the form, you pass into a kind of silence outside the form. You pass in between the bars of your ladder and enter straight into Sachchidananda which supports everything from behind. And then you can have mentally the experience of Sachchidananda. I have known people who had it and thought they had reached the heights of the Supreme. For there is a similarity in the experience, a very great likeness, only it is limited to the mind, the mind alone participates in it.” (CWM 4: 399)

91.

“I can say this, that the most precious gifts are given in silence.” (CWM 8: 95)

92.

[A part narration of the Mother’s experience she had on February 3]

“I was on a huge boat which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This boat, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had certainly already been functioning for some time, for its organisation was complete. It is the place where people who are destined

for the supramental life are trained. These people—or at least a part of their being—had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the boat itself and everything on board was neither material nor subtle-physical nor vital nor mental—it was a supramental substance. This substance was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance which is closest to the physical world, the first to manifest. ... The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything went on regularly and in silence. And at the same time one could see all the details of an education, a training in all fields, by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people who were destined to become the future inhabitants of this supramental world were to disembark.” (CWM 9: 272–273)

93.

[A part narration of the Mother’s experience]

“When one looks at the world of men from the supramental consciousness, the predominant feature is a feeling of strangeness, of artificiality—of a world that is absurd because it is artificial. This world is false because its material appearance does not at all express the deeper truth of things. ... Thus, the boat in my experience had no need of any mechanism to move it; it was the will which modified the substance according to its needs. When it was

time to land, the wharf took shape of itself. When I wanted to send the groups ashore, those who were to land knew it automatically without my having to say a word, and they came up in turn. Everything went on in silence, there was no need to speak to make oneself understood; but the silence itself on board the ship did not give that impression of artificiality it does here. Here, when one wants silence, one must stop talking; silence is the opposite of sound. There the silence was vibrant, living, active and comprehensive, comprehensible." (CWM 9: 281)

94.

"At first whenever I fell back into sin, I used to weep and rage against myself and against God for having suffered it. Afterwards it was as much as I could dare to ask, 'Why hast thou rolled me again in the mud, O my playfellow?' Then even that came to my mind to seem too bold and presumptuous; I could only get up in silence, look at him out of the corner of my eyes—and clean myself. (CWSA 12: 487)

Thoughts and Aphorisms

95.

"So long as man prides himself on his virtue, the Supreme Lord will make him fall into sin to teach him the necessity of modesty." (CWM 10: 340)

96.

"When I received the question, it was altogether as if the person was telling me, 'Yes, yes, all that is very good, but after all what is this that is the Divine?' Then I read his letter; there came a silence, a total silence, of everything, and as though a *single* look, a single look gathering together everything and wanting to see.... I remained in this way, looking, till the words came; then I wrote: 'Here is *one* answer; there could be a hundred, one as good as another.'

At the same time, when there was this look towards the 'something' that needed definition, there was a great silence everywhere and a great aspiration (*gesture as of a flame rising up*), and all the forms which this aspiration took." (CWM 11: 65)

97.

To be conscious of the divine presence in oneself one silence the ego and desires must disappear

"They [true Aurovilians] must be conscious of the divine presence in themselves, and for that, the ego must be silenced and desires must disappear." (CWM 13: 220)

98.

"Concentrating together is indeed a very good thing and helps you to become conscious. But it cannot be imposed.

I advise you [At Aspiration, Auroville] and them to organise this moment of silence daily for all those who want to participate, but without imposing anything on the others. It is not compulsory but it is good.” (CWM 13: 238)

99.

“Between March and August of 1970, Mother met weekly in her room a small number of Aurovilians, many from Aspiration community—hence the name ‘Aspiration Talks’. After an offering of flowers and the introduction of new persons, there was usually a period of conversation, though sometimes only what Mother called a ‘bath of silence’.” (CWM 13: 310)

100.

“If anyone wants a ‘bath of silence’ they can come, it doesn’t matter. If anyone wants a ‘bath of silence’ more often than once in a while, they can come, it doesn’t matter. They can sit there at the back.

I’ll leave the arrangements to you.” (CWM 13: 324)

101.

“(To A) I have some work for you. (*Mother asks A to read the text of ‘To Be a True Aurovilian’.*)

Well then, what would you prefer: silence first and that afterwards, or that first and silence after? It is in writing: what an Aurovilian must be. Not easy.

A: Silence afterwards." (CWM 13: 338)

102.

"In activity and in silence, in taking and in giving, always the glad remembrance of Thee." (CWM 14: 15)

103.

"At times I try to silence the mind, at times to surrender and at times to find my psychic being. Thus I cannot fix my attention on a single thing. Which one should I try first?"

All should be done and each one when it comes spontaneously." (CWM 14: 51)

104.

"For supramental Love brings an active ecstasy that surpasses the void passive peace and stillness which is the heaven of the liberated Mind and does not betray the deeper greater calm which is the beginning of the supramental silence. " (CWSA 23: 169)

105.

If the motion of Prakriti, is also to become free, it must be by a quiescence of action in a luminous peace and silence

"This is the greater consciousness into which our inferior consciousness has to be transformed, this nature of the

Ignorance with its unquiet unbalanced activity of the three modes changed into this greater luminous supernature. At first we become free from the three gunas, detached, untroubled, *nistraigunya*; but this is the recovery of the native state of the soul, the self, the spirit free and watching in its motionless calm the motion of Prakriti in her force of the Ignorance. If on this basis the nature, the motion of Prakriti, is also to become free, it must be by a quiescence of action in a luminous peace and silence in which all necessary movements are done without any conscious reaction or participation or initiation of action by the mind or by the life being, without any ripple of thought or eddy of the vital parts: it must be done under the impulsion, by the initiation, by the working of an impersonal cosmic or a transcendent Force.” (CWSA 23: 241–242)

106.

A pure transcendent Self-Power and Bliss can come in the Yoga of knowledge by the cessation of thought, the silence of the mind, the opening of the whole being to the cosmic Consciousness

“A cosmic Mind, Life, Substance must act, or a pure transcendent Self-Power and Bliss other than our own personal being or its building of Nature. This is a state of freedom which can come in the Yoga of works through

renunciation of ego and desire and personal initiation and the surrender of the being to the cosmic Self or to the universal Shakti; it can come in the Yoga of knowledge by the cessation of thought, the silence of the mind, the opening of the whole being to the cosmic Consciousness, to the cosmic Self, the cosmic Dynamis or to the supreme Reality; it can come in the Yoga of devotion by the surrender of then heart and the whole nature into the hands of the All-Blissful as the adored Master of our existence.” (CWSA 23: 242)

107.

“In him we no longer stand separate, but lose our active ego in the universal movement, even as by the Witness who is without qualities and for ever unattached and unentangled, we lose our static ego in the universal peace.

And yet there remains a contradiction between these two terms, the aloof divine Silence and the all-embracing divine Action, which we may heal in ourselves in a certain manner, in a certain high degree which seems to us complete, yet is not complete because it cannot altogether transform and conquer.” (CWSA 23: 256)

108.

“This pure Jnanayoga comes by the intellect, although it ends in the transcendence of the intellect and its workings. The thinker in us separates himself from all the rest of what we phenomenally are, rejects the heart, draws back from

the life and the senses, separates from the body that he may arrive at his own exclusive fulfilment in that which is beyond even himself and his function. There is a truth that underlies, as there is an experience that seems to justify this attitude. There is an Essence that is in its nature a quiescence, a supreme of Silence in the Being that is beyond its own developments and mutations, immutable and therefore superior to all activities of which it is at most a Witness. And in the hierarchy of our psychological functions the Thought is in a way nearest to this Self, nearest at least to its aspect of the all-conscious knower who regards all activities but can stand back from them all. The heart, will and other powers in us are fundamentally active, turn naturally towards action, find through it their fulfilment,—although they also may automatically arrive at a certain quiescence by fullness of satisfaction in their activities or else by a reverse process of exhaustion through perpetual disappointment and dissatisfaction. The thought too is an active power, but is more capable of arriving at quiescence by its own conscious choice and will. The thought is more easily content with the illumined intellectual perception of this silent Witness Self that is higher than all our activities and, that immobile Spirit once seen, is ready, deeming its mission of truth-finding accomplished, to fall at rest and become itself immobile. For in its most characteristic movement it is itself apt to be a disinterested witness, judge, observer of things more

than an eager participant and passionate labourer in the work and can arrive very readily at a spiritual or philosophic calm and detached aloofness. And since men are mental beings, thought, if not truly their best and highest, is at least their most constant, normal and effective means for enlightening their ignorance. Armed with its functions of gathering and reflection, meditation, fixed contemplation, the absorbed dwelling of the mind on its object, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, it stands at our tops as an indispensable aid to our realisation of that which we pursue, and it is not surprising that it should claim to be the leader of the journey and the only available guide or at least the direct and innermost door of the temple.” (CWSA 23: 288–289)

109.

What we gain at first with the knowledge gained and immeasurable silence and quietude is only the eternal self-realisation by the individual in the essence of his conscious being

There will still remain on that foundation, not annulled by the silence, one with the release and freedom, the infinitely proceeding self-fulfilment of Brahman

“The culmination of the path of knowledge need not necessarily entail extinction of our world-existence. For the Supreme to whom we assimilate ourselves, the Absolute and Transcendent into whom we enter has always the

complete and ultimate consciousness for which we are seeking and yet he supports by it his play in the world. Neither are we compelled to believe that our world-existence ends because by attaining to knowledge its object or consummation is fulfilled and therefore there is nothing more for us here afterwards. For what we gain at first with its release and immeasurable silence and quietude is only the eternal self-realisation by the individual in the essence of his conscious being; there will still remain on that foundation, unannulled by the silence, one with the release and freedom, the infinitely proceeding self-fulfilment of Brahman, its dynamic divine manifestation in the individual and by his presence, example and action in others and in the universe at large,—the work which the Great Ones remain to do. Our dynamic self-fulfilment cannot be worked out so long as we remain in the egoistic consciousness, in the mind's candle-lit darkness, in the bondage. Our present limited consciousness can only be a field of preparation, it can consummate nothing; for all that it manifests is marred through and through by an ego-ridden ignorance and error. The true and divine self-fulfilment of Brahman in the manifestation is only possible on the foundation of the Brahman-consciousness and therefore through the acceptance of life by the liberated soul, the Jivanmukta." (CWSA 23: 298–299)

110.

"In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought ... and this is no easy task, for not only do our intuitions come to us incrustated in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. In this way it is possible to transmute a great part of our intellectual thinking into the luminous truth conscious vision,—the ideal would be a complete transition,—or at least to increase greatly the frequency, purity and conscious force of the ideal knowledge working behind the intellect. The latter must learn to be subject and passive to the ideal faculty." (CWSA 23: 315–316)

111.

"I do not agree that children should work at home. At home, they must be free to do what they wish.

The solution to the problem can be found in the silence room." [A room where students sit or study in silence.] (CWM 12: 198)

112.

"I am beginning to know what is going to happen, what people are going to tell me, all that... how to explain?... It is as though I had become the circumstances, the people, the words, the...

The body is more and more conscious, but not in a mental way, not at all—but as... as things lived. I do not know how to explain. It is difficult to say... it is to feel (but, really, I do not know how to explain that) how in manifestation the human consciousness deforms the divine Action (*gesture of a direct flow*).... It is the constitution which is miserable. We belittle, we deform, we diminish everything—*everything*. ...

Then when I am quiet (*gesture of open hands*), it is as though there was nothing any more and all were wonderful. And then as soon as people begin to speak to me or as soon as I see someone, all the complexities come in—they make a mess of everything.

I am sure that it is the passage from this life to that Life.... When one will completely go over to that side, oh! all speculation will stop, all desire to explain, all desire to deduce, conclude, arrange—to all that there will be an end.... If one could ... be—be, simply be, *be*. But for us (I have noticed it), if we do not speak, if we do not think, if we do not decide, we believe we are outside life.... And then it is not always the same silence. The silence of the unspoken word, it is not that: it is the silence of the

contemplation... that is dynamic. Silence of a dynamic contemplation. It is that.

Certainly it is the new mode of life that is preparing itself; therefore the other one must give place to it.” (CWM 11: 264–265)

113.

“But in the Rajayogic Samadhi there are different grades of status,—that in which the mind, though lost to outward objects, still muses, thinks, perceives in the world of thought, that in which the mind is still capable of primary thought-formations and that in which, all out-darting of the mind even within itself having ceased, the soul rises beyond thought into the silence of the Incommunicable and Ineffable.” (CWSA 23: 319)

114.

When the mental Purusha takes up the attitude of mere witness and observer, a tendency to silence, solitude, physical calm and bodily inaction grows upon the being
The power to rest absolutely from action is as necessary for the Jnanayogin as the power to remain indefinitely in sheer solitude and silence

“It is ordinarily considered that [in the path of knowledge] the Yogin should draw away from action as much as possible and especially that too much action is a hindrance because it draws off the energies outward. To a certain extent this is true; and we must note farther that when the

mental Purusha takes up the attitude of mere witness and observer, a tendency to silence, solitude, physical calm and bodily inaction grows upon the being. So long as this is not associated with inertia, incapacity or unwillingness to act, in a word, with the growth of the tamasic quality, all this is to the good. The power to do nothing, which is quite different from indolence, incapacity or aversion to action and attachment to inaction, is a great power and a great mastery; the power to rest absolutely from action is as necessary for the Jnanayogin as the power to cease absolutely from thought, as the power to remain indefinitely in sheer solitude and silence and as the power of immovable calm. Whoever is not willing to embrace these states is not yet fit for the path that leads towards the highest knowledge; whoever is unable to draw towards them, is as yet unfit for its acquisition.” (CWSA 23: 347)

115.

“When the sanction is withdrawn, another significant phenomenon takes place; the emotional mind becomes normally calm and pure and free from these reactions, and even when they come, they no longer rise from within but seem to fall on it as impressions from outside to which its fibres are still able to respond; but this habit of response dies away and the emotional mind is in time entirely liberated from the passions which it has renounced. Hope and fear, joy and grief, liking and disliking, attraction and

repulsion, content and discontent, gladness and depression, horror and wrath and fear and disgust and shame and the passions of love and hatred fall away from the liberated psychic being.

What takes their place? It may be, if we will, an entire calm, silence and indifference. But although this is a stage through which the soul has usually to pass, it is not the final aim we have placed before us. Therefore the Purusha becomes also the master who wills and whose will it is to replace wrong by right enjoyment of the psychic existence. What he wills, Nature executes." (CWSA 23: 353)

116.

"Thus a division is created between the mind that thinks and wills and the mind that observes and the Purusha becomes the witness only; he sees, he understands the process and laws of his thought, but detaches himself from it. Then as the master of the sanction he withdraws his past sanction from the tangle of the mental undercurrent and the reasoning intellect and causes both to cease from their importunities. He becomes liberated from subjection to the thinking mind and capable of the utter silence.

For perfection there is necessary also the resumption by the Purusha of his position as the lord of his Nature and the will to replace the mere mental undercurrent and intellect by the truth conscious thought that lightens from above. But the silence is necessary; in the silence and not

in the thought we shall find the Self, we shall become aware of it, not merely conceive it, and we shall withdraw out of the mental Purusha into that which is the source of the mind. But for this withdrawal a final liberation is needed, the release from the ego-sense in the mind.” (CWSA 23: 355)

117.

“In the path of Knowledge one attempts this abolition, negatively by a denial of the reality of the ego, positively by a constant fixing of the thought upon the idea of the One and the Infinite in itself or the One and Infinite everywhere. This, if persistently done, changes in the end the mental outlook on oneself and the whole world and there is a kind of mental realisation; but afterwards by degrees or perhaps rapidly and imperatively and almost at the beginning the mental realisation deepens into spiritual experience—a realisation in the very substance of our being. More and more frequent conditions come of something indefinable and illimitable, a peace, a silence, a joy, a bliss beyond expression, a sense of absolute impersonal Power, a pure existence, a pure consciousness, an all-pervading Presence.” (CWSA 23: 363)

118.

“The ego persists in itself or in its habitual movements, but the place of the one becomes more and more loosened,

the others are broken, crushed, more and more rejected, becoming weak in their intensity, limp or mechanical in their action. In the end there is a constant giving up of the whole consciousness into the being of the Supreme. In the beginning when the restless confusion and obscuring impurity of our outward nature is active, when the mental, vital, physical ego-sense are still powerful, this new mental outlook, these experiences may be found difficult in the extreme: but once that triple egoism is discouraged or moribund and the instruments of the Spirit are set right and purified, in an entirely pure, silent, clarified, widened consciousness the purity, infinity, stillness of the One reflects itself like the sky in a limpid lake." (CWSA 23: 363)

119.

"The impersonalised Jiva, one with the universal or possessed by the Transcendent, lives high-seated above and looks down undisturbed at whatever remnants of the old working of Nature may revisit the system. He cannot be moved by the workings of the three modes of Prakriti in his lower being, nor can he be shaken from his station by the attacks even of grief and suffering. And finally, there being no veil between, the higher peace overpowers the lower disturbance and mobility. There is a settled silence in which the soul can take sovereign possession of itself above and below and altogether." (CWSA 23: 365)

120.

"Such possession is not indeed the aim of the traditional Yoga of knowledge whose object is rather to get away from the above and the below and the all into the indefinable Absolute. But whatever the aim, the path of knowledge must lead to one first result, an absolute quietude; for unless the old action of Nature in us be entirely quieted, it is difficult if not impossible to found either any true soul-status or any divine activity. Our nature acts on a basis of confusion and restless compulsion to action, the Divine acts freely out of a fathomless calm. Into that abyss of tranquillity we must plunge and become that, if we are to annul the hold of this lower nature upon the soul. Therefore the universalised Jiva first ascends into the Silence; it becomes vast, tranquil, actionless." (CWSA 23: 365)

121.

"In reality, the Prakriti does not act for itself or by its own motion, but with the Self as lord; for out of that Silence wells all this action, that apparent Void looses out as if into movement all these infinite riches of experience." (CWSA 23: 366)

122.

"But if we cannot define the Eternal, we can unify ourselves with it. It has been said that we can become the

Impersonal, but not the personal God, but this is only true in the sense that no one can become individually the Lord of all the universes; we *can* free ourselves into the existence of the active Brahman as well as that of the Silence; we can live in both, go back to our being in both, but each in its proper way, by becoming one with the Nirguna in our essence and one with the Saguna in the liberty of our active being, in our nature. The Supreme pours Himself out of an eternal peace, poise and silence into an eternal activity, free and infinite, freely fixing for itself its self-determinations, using infinite quality to shape out of it varied combination of quality. We have to go back to that peace, poise and silence and act out of it with the divine freedom from the bondage of qualities but still using qualities even the most opposite largely and flexibly for the divine work in the world. Only, while the Lord acts out of the centre of all things, we have to act by transmission of His will and power and self-knowledge through the individual centre, the soul-form of Him which we are.” (CWSA 23: 3801)

123.

If we remain mere inactive witnesses of the world-play what we do is to approach the inactivity of the silent Brahman

In this approach we have stilled our mind and silenced the activity of the thought and we have arrived at an entire inner peace and indifference

This is the final aim of the ascetic Yoga which refuses life but is evidently not our aim

By the alternative choice we can have an activity in outward appearance along with an entire inner passivity, mental silence

"If we rest here, there are only two possible attitudes towards the world. Either we must remain as mere inactive witnesses of the world-play or act in it mechanically without any participation of the conscious self and by mere play of the organs of sense and motor-action. In the former choice what we do is to approach as completely as possible to the inactivity of the passive and silent Brahman. We have stilled our mind and silenced the activity of the thought and the disturbances of the heart, we have arrived at an entire inner peace and indifference; we attempt now to still the mechanical action of the life and body, to reduce it to the most meagre minimum possible so that it may eventually cease entirely and for ever. This, the final aim of the ascetic Yoga which refuses life, is evidently not our aim. By the alternative choice we can have an activity perfect enough in outward appearance along with an entire inner passivity, peace, mental silence, indifference and

cessation of the emotions, absence of choice in the will.”
(CWSA 23: 403)

124.

“This status of an inner passivity and an outer action independent of each other is a state of entire spiritual freedom. The Yogin, as the Gita says, even in acting does no actions, for it is not he, but universal Nature directed by the Lord of Nature which is at work. He is not bound by his works, nor do they leave any after effects or consequences in his mind, nor cling to or leave any mark on his soul; they vanish and are dissolved by their very execution and leave the immutable self unaffected and the soul unmodified. Therefore this would seem to be the poise the uplifted soul ought to take, if it has still to preserve any relations with human action in the world existence, an unalterable silence, tranquillity, passivity within, an action without regulated by the universal Will and Wisdom which works, as the Gita says, without being involved in, bound by or ignorantly attached to its works. And certainly this poise of a perfect activity founded upon a perfect inner passivity is that which the Yogin has to possess, as we have seen in the Yoga of Works. But here in this status of self-knowledge at which we have arrived, there is an evident absence of integrality; for there is still a gulf, an unrealised unity or a cleft of consciousness between the passive and the active Brahman. We have still to possess consciously

the active Brahman without losing the possession of the silent Self. We have to preserve the inner silence, tranquillity, passivity as a foundation; but in place of an aloof indifference to the works of the active Brahman we have to arrive at an equal and impartial delight in them; in place of a refusal to participate lest our freedom and peace be lost we have to arrive at a conscious possession of the active Brahman whose joy of existence does not abrogate His peace, nor His lordship of all workings impair His calm freedom in the midst of His works." (CWSA 23: 405–406)

125.

"The Self as the All, not only in the unique essence of things, but in the manifold form of things, not only as containing all in a transcendent consciousness, but as becoming all by a constituting consciousness, this is the next step towards his true possession of existence. In proportion as this realization is accomplished, the status of consciousness as well as the mental view proper to it will change. Instead of an immutable Self containing name and form, containing without sharing in them the mutations of Nature, there will be the consciousness of the Self immutable in essence, unalterable in its fundamental poise but constituting and becoming in its experience all these existences which the mind distinguishes as name and form. All formations of mind and body will be not merely figures reflected in the Purusha, but real forms of which Brahman, Self, conscious Being is the substance and, as it were, the

material of their formation. The name attaching to the form will be not a mere conception of the mind answering to no real existence bearing the name, but there will be behind it a true power of conscious being, a true self-experience of the Brahman answering to something that it contained potential but unmanifest in its silence. And yet in all its mutations it will be realised as one, free and above them. The realisation of a sole Reality suffering the imposition of names and forms will give place to that of eternal Being throwing itself out into infinite becoming. All existences will be to the consciousness of the Yogin soul-forms and not merely idea-forms of the Self, of himself, one with him, contained in his universal existence." (CWSA 23: 407)

126.

"The mentality when it arrives at the idea or the realisation of the Spirit, the Divine, tends to break existence into two opposite halves, the lower and the higher existence. It sees on one side the Infinite, the Formless, the One, the Peace and Bliss, the Calm and Silence, the Absolute, the Vast and Pure; on the other it sees the finite, the world of forms, the jarring multiplicity, the strife and suffering and imperfect, unreal good, the tormented activity and futile success, the relative, the limited and vain and vile. To those who make this division and this opposition, complete liberation is only attainable in the peace of the One, in the featurelessness of the Infinite, in the non-becoming of the Absolute which

is to them the only real being; to be free all values must be destroyed, all limitations not only transcended but abolished.” (CWSA 23: 414)

127.

“When, then, by the withdrawal of the centre of consciousness from identification with the mind, life and body, one has discovered one’s true self, discovered the oneness of that self with the pure, silent, immutable Brahman, discovered in the immutable, in the Akshara Brahman, that by which the individual being escapes from his own personality into the impersonal, the first movement of the Path of Knowledge has been completed. It is the sole that is absolutely necessary for the traditional aim of the Yoga of Knowledge, for immergence, for escape from cosmic existence, for release into the absolute and ineffable Parabrahman who is beyond all cosmic being. The seeker of this ultimate release may take other realizations on his way, may realise the Lord of the universe, the Purusha who manifests Himself in all creatures, may arrive at the cosmic consciousness, may know and feel his unity with all beings; but these are only stages or circumstances of his journey, results of the unfolding of his soul as it approaches nearer the ineffable goal. To pass beyond them all is his supreme object. When on the other hand, having attained to the freedom and the silence and the peace, we resume possession by the cosmic consciousness

of the active as well as the silent Brahman and can securely live in the divine freedom as well as rest in it, we have completed the second movement of the Path by which the integrality of self-knowledge becomes the station of the liberated soul.” (CWSA 23: 419)

128.

“It finds it in the unmanifest Absolute, but not so much in the manifestation, finds it purer in the Impersonal than in the Personal, complete in the Nirguna, not so complete in the Saguna, satisfyingly present in the silent and inactive Brahman, not so satisfyingly present in the active. Therefore it places all these other terms of the Absolute below their opposites in the scale of ascent and urges their final rejection as if it were indispensable to the utter realisation. The integral knowledge makes no such division; it arrives at a different kind of absoluteness in its vision of the unity. It finds the same oneness in the Unmanifest and the Manifest, in the Impersonal and the Personal, in Nirguna and Saguna, in the infinite depths of the universal silence and the infinite largeness of the universal action. It finds the same absolute oneness in the Purusha and the Prakriti; in the divine Presence and the works of the divine Power and Knowledge; in the eternal manifestness of the one Purusha and the constant manifestation of the many Purushas; in the inalienable unity of Sachchidananda keeping constantly real to itself

its own manifold oneness and in the apparent divisions of mind, life and body in which oneness is constantly, if secretly real and constantly seeks to be realised. All unity is to it an intense, pure and infinite realisation, all difference an abundant, rich and boundless realisation of the same divine and eternal Being.” (CWSA 23: 420)

129.

“We have therefore to make that the basis of all effectuation whether of consciousness or force or being, whether of knowledge or will or delight. We have, as we have seen, to live in the consciousness of the Absolute transcendent and of the Absolute manifested in all relations, impersonal and manifest as all personalities, beyond all qualities and rich in infinite quality, a silence out of which the eternal Word creates, a divine calm and peace possessing itself in infinite joy and activity.” (CWSA 23: 421)

130.

“But for the vital plane also it is possible, even as on the physical, to rise to a certain spiritual greatness in its own kind. It is open to the vital man to lift himself beyond the conceptions and energies natural to the desire-soul and the desire-plane. He can develop a higher mentality and, within the conditions of the vital being, concentrate upon some realisation of the Spirit or Self behind or beyond its forms and powers. In this spiritual realisation there would be a

less strong necessity of quietism; for there would be a greater possibility of an active effectuation of the bliss and power of the Eternal, mightier and more self-satisfied powers, a richer flowering of the dynamic Infinite. Nevertheless that effectuality could never come anywhere near to a true and integral perfection; for the conditions of the desireworld are like those of the physical improper to the development of the complete spiritual life. The vital being too must develop spirit to the detriment of his fullness, activity and force of life in the lower hemisphere of our existence and turn in the end away from the vital formula, away from life either to the Silence or to an ineffable Power beyond him. If he does not withdraw from life, he must remain enchained by life, limited in his selffulfilment by the downward pull of the desire-world and its dominant rajasic principle. On the vital plane also, in its own right alone, a perfect perfection is impossible; the soul that attains only so far would have to return to the physical life for a greater experience, a higher self-development, a more direct ascent to the Spirit.” (CWSA 23: 469–470)

131.

In the end of Yoga of Knowledge is to possess God in his action and in his silence

“We have now completed our view of the path of Knowledge and seen to what it leads. First, the end of Yoga of Knowledge is God-possession, it is to possess God and

be possessed by him through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Reality. But not merely in some abstraction away from our present existence, but here also; therefore to possess the Divine in himself, the Divine in the world, the Divine within, the Divine in all things and all beings. It is to possess oneness with God and through that to possess also oneness with the universal, with the cosmos and all existences; therefore to possess the infinite diversity also in the oneness, but on the basis of oneness and not on the basis of division. It is to possess God in his personality and his impersonality; in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities; in time and beyond time; in his action and in his silence; in the finite and in the infinite. It is to possess him not only in pure self, but in all self; not only in self, but in Nature; not only in spirit, but in supermind, mind, life and body; to possess him with the spirit, with the mind, with the vital and the physical consciousness; and it is again for all these to be possessed by him, so that our whole being is one with him, full of him, governed and driven by him.” (CWSA 23: 511)

132.

“Love is the power and passion of the divine self-delight and without love we may get the rapt peace of its infinity, the absorbed silence of the Ananda, but not its absolute depth of richness and fullness. Love leads us from the

suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation." (CWSA 24: 547)

In other Yoga's the final object is a dissolution of the human and individual into the silence of self-being or on a higher plane in another existence

"The common initial purpose of all Yoga is the liberation of the soul of man from its present natural ignorance and limitation, its release into spiritual being, its union with the highest self and Divinity. But ordinarily this is made not only the initial but the whole and final object: enjoyment of spiritual being there is, but either in a dissolution of the human and individual into the silence of self-being or on a higher plane in another existence." (CWSA 24: 613)

133.

The seeker of the Silence has to cast the thinking mind away from him

"By itself this pragmatic mind can give us no firm foundation and no fixed goal; it lives in the truth of the hour, not in any truth of eternity. But when purified of dependence on the customary understanding, it is a great creator and in association with the highest mental reason it becomes a strong channel and bold servant for the effectuation of Truth in life. The value of its work will

depend on the value and the power of the highest truth-seeking reason. But by itself it is a sport of Time and a bondslave of Life. The seeker of the Silence has to cast it away from him; the seeker of the integral Divinity has to pass beyond it, to replace and transform this thinking mind intent on Life by a greater effectuating spiritual Will, the Truth-Will of the spirit.” (CWSA 24: 671)

134.

“But the moment the individual soul leans away from the universal and transcendent truth of its being, leans towards ego, tries to make this will a thing of its own, a separate personal energy, that will changes its character: it becomes an effort, a straining, a heat of force which may have its fiery joys of effectuation and of possession, but has also its afflicting recoils and pain of labour. It is this that turns in each instrument into an intellectual, emotional, dynamic, sensational or vital will of desire, wish, craving. Even when the instruments *per se* are purified of their own apparent initiative and particular kind of desire, this imperfect tapas may still remain, and so long as it conceals the source or deforms the type of the inner action, the soul has not the bliss of liberty, or can only have it by refraining from all action; even, if allowed to persist, it will rekindle the pranic or other desires or at least throw a reminiscent shadow of them on the being. This spiritual seed or beginning of desire too must be expelled, renounced, cast away: the sadhaka must either choose an active peace and complete

inner silence or lose individual initiation, *sankalpārambha*, in a unity with the universal will, the tapas of the divine Shakti. The passive way is to be inwardly immobile, without effort, wish, expectation or any turn to action, *niśceṣṭa*, *anīha*, *nirapekṣa*, *nivṛtta*; the active way is to be thus immobile and impersonal in the mind, but to allow the supreme Will in its spiritual purity to act through the purified instruments.” (CWSA 24: 676)

135.

“The divine Being, we may say, may either exist in his silence or act in Nature through her instrumentation, but in that case must put on the appearance of her strife and imperfection. That may be true of the ordinary deputed action of the Divine in the human spirit with its present relations of soul to nature in an embodied imperfect mental being, but it is not true of the divine nature of perfection.” (CWSA 24: 688–689)

136.

“The truth of all things is in the calm of their depths, not in the shifting inconstant wave form on the surface. The supreme conscious Being in his divine knowledge and will and love governs their evolution—to our ignorance so often a cruel confusion and distraction—from these depths and is not troubled by the clamour of the surface. The divine nature does not share in our gropings and our passions;

when we speak of the divine wrath or favour or of God suffering in man, we are using a human language which mistranslates the inner significance of the movement we characterise. We see something of the real truth of them when we rise out of the phenomenal mind into the heights of the spiritual being. For then we perceive that whether in the silence of self or in its action in the cosmos, the Divine is always Sachchidananda, an infinite existence, an infinite consciousness and self-founded power of conscious being, an infinite bliss in all his existence." (CWSA 24: 699)

137.

"All this existence can therefore be approached by a Yoga of positive and active in place of the negative and passive equality. This requires, first, a new knowledge which is the knowledge of unity,—to see all things as oneself and to see all things in God and God in all things. ... There must be an identification of myself with the self of the universe, a vision and a feeling of oneness with all creatures, a perception of all forces and energies and results as the movement of this energy of my self and therefore intimately my own; not, obviously, of my ego-self which must be silenced, eliminated, cast away,—otherwise this perfection cannot come,—but of a greater impersonal or universal self with which I am now one. For my personality is now only one centre of action of that universal self, but a centre intimately in relation and unison with all other

personalities and also with all those other things which are to us only impersonal objects and forces: but in fact they also are powers of the one impersonal Person (Purusha), God, Self and Spirit." (CWSA 24: 715)

138.

"It is possible again for the Purusha to stand back entirely and by a refusal of sanction allow the whole normal action of the mind to exhaust itself, run down, spend its remaining impetus of habitual action and fall into silence. Or else this silence may be imposed on the mental energy by rejection of its action and a constant command to quietude. The soul may through the confirmation of this quietude and mental silence pass into some ineffable tranquillity of the spirit and vast cessation of the activities of Nature. But it is also possible to make this silence of the mind and ability to suspend the habits of the lower nature a first step towards the discovery of a superior formulation, a higher grade of the status and energy of our being and pass by an ascent and transformation into the supramental power of the spirit." (CWSA 24: 758)

139.

"The widest natural action of the Shakti combines all these methods. It creates, sometimes at first, sometimes at some later, perhaps latest stage, the freedom of the spiritual silence. It opens the secret intuitive being within the mind

itself and accustoms us to refer all our thought and our feeling and will and action to the initiation of the Divine, the Splendour and Power who is now concealed in the heart of its recesses.” (CWSA 24: 807)

140.

“These characteristics, it must be remembered, do not fully apply even to the strongest action of the intuitive mentality, but are there seen only in their first glimpses. Nor can they be entirely or unmixedly evident so long as supramentality is only forming with an undercurrent, a mixture or an environment of mental action. It is only when mentality is overpassed and drops away into a passive silence that there can be the full disclosure and the sovereign and integral action of the supramental gnosis.” (CWSA 24: 861)

141.

“All the other senses undergo a similar transformation. All that the ear listens to, reveals the totality of its sound body and sound significance and all the tones of its vibration and reveals also to the single and complete hearing the quality, the rhythmic energy, the soul of the sound and its expression of the one universal spirit. There is the same internality, the going of the sense into the depths of the sound and the finding there of that which informs it and extends it into unity with the harmony of all sound and no

less with the harmony of all silence, so that the ear is always listening to the infinite in its heard expression and the voice of its silence. All sounds become to the supramentalised ear the voice of the Divine, himself born into sound, and a rhythm of the concord of the universal symphony. And there is too the same completeness, vividness, intensity, the revelation of the self of the thing heard and the spiritual satisfaction of the self in hearing.” (CWSA 24: 869–870)

142.

“Shankara’s wordless, inactive Self and his Maya of many names and forms are equally disparate and irreconcilable entities; their rigid antagonism can terminate only by the dissolution of the multitudinous illusion into the sole Truth of an eternal Silence.

The materialist has an easier field; it is possible for him by denying Spirit to arrive at a more readily convincing simplicity of statement, a real Monism, the Monism of Matter or else of Force. But in this rigidity of statement it is impossible for him to persist permanently. He too ends by positing an unknowable as inert, as remote from the known universe as the passive Purusha or the silent Atman. It serves no purpose but to put off by a vague concession the inexorable demands of Thought or to stand as an excuse for refusing to extend the limits of inquiry.” (CWSA 21: 9)

143.

"The divine soul will be aware of all variation of being, consciousness, will and delight as the outflowing, the extension, the diffusion of that self-concentrated Unity developing itself, not into difference and division, but into another, an extended form of infinite oneness. It will itself always be concentrated in oneness in the essence of its being, always manifested in variation in the extension of its being. All that takes form in itself will be the manifested potentialities of the One, the Word or Name vibrating out of the nameless Silence, the Form realising the formless essence, the active Will or Power proceeding out of the tranquil Force, the ray of self-cognition gleaming out from the sun of timeless self-awareness, the wave of becoming rising up into shape of self-conscious existence out of the eternally self-conscious Being, the joy and love welling for ever out of the eternal still Delight. It will be the Absolute biune in its self-unfolding, and each relativity in it will be absolute to itself because aware of itself as the Absolute manifested but without that ignorance which excludes other relativities as alien to its being or less complete than itself." (CWSA 21: 164–165)

144.

"Matter Mind is more than half blind, its wings clipped, its feet tied to a narrow perch and held back from the vastness and freedom above of which it is conscious. Therefore the exclusive spiritual seeker is justified from his view-point if,

disgusted with the mud of Matter, revolted by the animal grossness of Life or impatient of the self-imprisoned narrowness and downward vision of Mind, he determines to break from it all and return by inaction and silence to the Spirit's immobile liberty. But that is not the sole viewpoint, nor, because it has been sublimely held or glorified by shining and golden examples, need we consider it the integral and ultimate wisdom. Rather, liberating ourselves from all passion and revolt, let us see what this divine order of the universe means, and, as for this great knot and tangle of Matter denying the Spirit, let us seek to find out and separate its strands so as to loosen it by a solution and not cut through it by a violence." (CWSA 21: 257)

145.

"It is only when we follow the yogic process of quieting the mind itself that a profounder result of our self-observation becomes possible. For first we discover that mind is a subtle substance, a general determinate—or generic indeterminate—which mental energy when it operates throws into forms or particular determinations of itself, thoughts, concepts, percepts, mental sentiments, activities of will and reactions of feeling, but which, when the energy is quiescent, can live either in an inert torpor or in an immobile silence and peace of self-existence. Next we see that the determinations of our mind do not all proceed from itself; for waves and currents of mental energy enter into

it from outside: these take form in it or appear already formed from some universal Mind or from other minds and are accepted by us as our own thinking. We can perceive also an occult or subliminal mind in ourselves from which thoughts and perceptions and will-impulses and mental feelings arise; we can perceive too higher planes of consciousness from which a superior mind energy works through us or upon us. Finally we discover that that which observes all this is a mental being supporting the mind substance and mind energy; without this presence, their upholder and source of sanctions, they could not exist or operate. This mental being or Purusha first appears as a silent witness and, if that were all, we would have to accept the determinations of mind as a phenomenal activity imposed upon the being by Nature, by Prakriti, or else as a creation presented to it by Prakriti, a world of thought which Nature constructs and offers to the observing Purusha. But afterwards we find that the Purusha, the mental being, can depart from its posture of a silent or accepting Witness; it can become the source of reactions, accept, reject, even rule and regulate, become the giver of the command, the knower.” (CWSA 22: 322–323)

146.

“At the basis of the refusal to recognise the universe as real is the concept or experience of the Reality as immutable, featureless, non-active and realised through a

consciousness that has itself fallen into a status of silence and is immobile. The universe is a result of dynamis in movement, it is force of being throwing itself out in action, energy at work, whether that energy be conceptive or mechanical or a spiritual, mental, vital or material dynamis; it can thus be regarded as a contradiction—or a derogation from self—of the static and immobile eternal Reality, therefore unreal. But as a concept this position of the thought has no inevitability; there is no reason why we should not conceive of the Reality as at once static and dynamic. It is perfectly rational to suppose that the eternal status of being of the Reality contains in it an eternal force of being, and this dynamis must necessarily carry in itself a power of action and movement, a kinesis; both status of being and movement of being can be real.” (CWSA 22: 474–475)

147.

“The result happens in both cases because our individual consciousness rests from an ignorant limited action and opens itself to the supreme status or to the supreme action. In the latter, the more dynamic opening, there is power and play of knowledge and action, and that is Tapas; but in the former also, in the static consciousness, there is evidently a power for knowledge and a concentration of knowledge or at least a concentration of consciousness in immobility and a self-realisation, and that

too is Tapas. Therefore it would seem that Tapas, concentration of power of consciousness, is the character of both the passive and the active consciousness of Brahman, and that our own passivity also has a certain character of an unseen supporting or instrumentalising Tapas. It is a concentration of energy of consciousness that sustains, while it lasts, all creation, all action and kinesis; but it is also a concentration of power of consciousness that supports inwardly or informs all status, even the most immobile passivity, even an infinite stillness or an eternal silence.

But still, it may be said, these are in the end two different things, and this is shown by their difference of opposite results; for a resort to the passivity of Brahman leads to the cessation of this existence and a resort to the active Brahman leads to its continuance." (CWSA 22: 593)

148.

"The passive consciousness of Brahman and its active consciousness are not two different, conflicting and incompatible things; they are the same consciousness, the same energy, at one end in a state of self-reservation, at the other cast into a motion of self-giving and self-deploying, like the stillness of a reservoir and the coursing of the channels which flow from it. In fact, behind every activity there is and must be a passive power of being from which it arises, by which it is supported, which even, we

see in the end, governs it from behind without being totally identified with it—in the sense at least of being itself all poured out into the action and indistinguishable from it. ... When we get back into our own conscious being, when we stand back from our own action and see how it is done, we discover that it is our whole being which stands behind any particular act or sum of activities, passive in the rest of its integrality, active in its limited dispensation of energy; but that passivity is not an incapable inertia, it is a poise of self-reserved energy. A similar truth must apply still more completely to the conscious being of the Infinite, whose power, in silence of status as in creation, must also be infinite.

It is immaterial for the moment to inquire whether the passivity out of which all emerges is absolute or only relative to the observable action from which it holds back. It is enough to note that, though we make the distinction for the convenience of our minds, there is not a passive Brahman and an active Brahman, but one Brahman, an Existence which reserves Its Tapas in what we call passivity and gives Itself in what we call Its activity.” (CWSA 22: 594–595)

149.

“The concentration may be essential; it may be even a sole indwelling or an entire absorption in the essence of its own being, a luminous or else a self-oblivious self-immersion.

Or it may be an integral or else a total-multiple or a part-multiple concentration. Or it may be a single separative regard on one field of its being or movement, a single-pointed concentration in one centre or an absorption in one objective form of its self-existence. The first, the essential, is at one end the superconscient Silence and at the other end the Inconscience; the second, the integral, is the total consciousness of Sachchidananda, the supramental concentration; the third, the multiple, is the method of the totalising or global overmental awareness; the fourth, the separative, is the characteristic nature of the Ignorance. The supreme integrality of the Absolute holds all these states or powers of its consciousness together as a single indivisible being looking at all itself in manifestation with a simultaneous self-vision.” (CWSA 22: 603–604)

150.

“On the one side, then, presented to us as the Reality, we have an absolute Self-Existence, an eternal sole self-being, and through the experience of the silent and inactive Self or the detached immobile Purusha we can move towards this featureless and relationless Absolute, negate the actions of the creative Power, whether that be an illusory Maya or a formative Prakriti, pass from all circling in cosmic error into the eternal Peace and Silence, get rid of our personal existence and find or lose ourselves in that sole true Existence. On the other side, we have a Becoming which is a true movement of Being, and both the Being and

the Becoming are truths of one absolute Reality.” (CWSA 22: 663)

151.

“There would be a self-shaping of the one consciousness in correspondence with the type of each created being, but it could very well begin in each individual body with the appearance of the physical form and end with its cessation. Individual would follow individual as wave follows wave, the sea remaining always the same; each formation of conscious being would surge up from the universal, roll for its allotted time and then sink back into the Silence. The necessity for this purpose of an individualised consciousness persistently continuous, assuming name after name and form after form and moving between different planes backward and forward, is not apparent and, even as a possibility, does not strongly impose itself; still less is there any room for an evolutionary progress inevitably pursued from form to higher form such as must be supposed by a theory of rebirth that affirms the involution and evolution of the Spirit in Matter as the significant formula of our terrestrial existence.” (CWSA 22: 783–784)

152.

“This hampering, this obstacle of the mind, life and body,—the heavy inertia and persistence of the body, the turbid

passions of the life-part, the obscurity and doubting incertitudes, denials, other-formulations of the mind,—is an impediment so great and intolerable that the spiritual urge becomes impatient and tries rigorously to quell these opponents, to reject the life, to mortify the body, to silence the mind and achieve its own separate salvation, spirit departing into pure spirit and rejecting from it altogether an undivine and obscure Nature. Apart from the supreme call, the natural push of the spiritual part in us to return to its own highest element and status, this aspect of vital and physical Nature as an impediment to pure spirituality is a compelling reason for asceticism, for illusionism, for the tendency to other-worldliness, the urge towards withdrawal from life, the passion for a pure and unmixed Absolute.” (CWSA 22: 891)

153.

“It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between mind and supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can

be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation,—there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature.” (CWSA 22: 924)

154.

“A higher endeavour through the mind does not change this balance; for the tendency of the spiritualised mind is to go on upwards and, since above itself the mind loses its hold on forms, it is into a vast formless and featureless impersonality that it enters. It becomes aware of the unchanging Self, the sheer Spirit, the pure bareness of an essential Existence, the formless Infinite and the nameless Absolute. This culmination can be arrived at more directly by tending immediately beyond all forms and figures, beyond all ideas of good or evil or true or false or beautiful or unbeautiful to That which exceeds all dualities, to the experience of a supreme oneness, infinity, eternity or other

ineffable sublimation of the mind's ultimate and extreme percept of Self or Spirit. A spiritualised consciousness is achieved and the life falls quiet, the body ceases to need and to clamour, the soul itself merges into the spiritual silence. But this transformation through the mind does not give us the integral transformation; the psychic transmutation is replaced by a spiritual change on the rare and high summits, but this is not the complete divine dynamisation of Nature." (CWSA 22: 935–936)

155.

"If we regard this aspect of the one Reality and put it in close connection with the other aspects, we can get a complete view of the relation between the eternal Self-Existence and the dynamics of the Consciousness-Force by which it manifests the universe. If we place ourselves in a silent Self-existence immobile, static, inactive, it will appear that a conceptive Consciousness-Force, Maya, able to effectuate all its conceptions, a dynamic consort of the Self of silence, is doing everything; it takes its stand on the fixed unmoving eternal status and casts the spiritual substance of being into all manner of forms and movements to which its passivity consents or in which it takes its impartial pleasure, its immobile delight of creative and mobile existence." (CWSA 21: 369–370)

156.

"At the moment it happened [to come down totally into the physical], the peace and silence of the Atman and the movement upward to realisation of the Self above the head in the higher consciousness were about to establish themselves." (CWSA 35: 335–336)

157.

"This soul in Nature is therefore the *ksara purusa*, it is the mutable soul, the eternal activity of the Godhead: the same soul in the Brahman drawn back from her is the *aksara purusa*, the immutable self, the eternal silence of the Godhead." (CWSA 19: 293)

158.

"It is the knowledge of the divine Purusha luminous in his transcendent eternity, the form of whose being escapes from the thought of the mind but not from its silence; it is the entire living experience of him as absolute Self, supreme Brahman, supreme Soul, supreme Godhead: for that seemingly incommunicable Absolute is at the same time and even in that highest status the originating Spirit of the cosmic action and Lord of all these existences." (CWSA 19: 537)

159.

"Why do some children take interest in things only when there is some excitement?"

They are tamasic. It is due to the large proportion of tamas in their nature. The more tamasic one is, the more does one need something violent and exciting circumstances. ... For it is this need of excitement which shakes you up a little, makes you come out of yourself. And one must also learn, there, to distinguish between those who are exclusively tamasic and those who are mixed, and those who are struggling within themselves with their different parts. One can, one must know in what proportion their nature is constituted, so as to be able to insist at need on one thing or another. Some people constantly need a whipping from life in order to move, otherwise they would spend their time sleeping. Others, on the contrary, need soothing things, silence, a retreat in the country-side—all things that do a lot of good but which must disappear as soon as one needs to make an effort for progress or to realise something or struggle against a defect, conquer an obstacle.... It is complicated, don't you think so?" (CWM 5: 414)

160.

"Sri Aurobindo, as he has himself related, while at the Karmayogin Office, heard of an approaching search and his intended arrest: he suddenly received an adesh to go to Chandernagore and carried it out immediately without informing or consulting anybody—even his colleagues and co-workers. Everything was done in fifteen minutes or so

and in the utmost secrecy and silence. He followed Ram Majumdar to the Ghat, Suresh Chakravarty and Biren Ghose following at a little distance; a boat was hailed and the three got in and went off immediately.” (CWSA 36: 93)

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